


ILL-FATED FLIGHT



230passengers

169Indian

53British

7Portuguese

1Canadian

2 PILOTS & 10 CREW MEMBERS

- Former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani was among the dead
- The pilot issued a 'Mayday' distress call, denoting a full emergency, soon after takeoff at 1.39 pm
- The search is on for the aircraft's black box -- the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder
- The 11-year-old aircraft could be seen from miles away, losing altitude rapidly and combusting in a fiery blaze
- The aircraft with a full fuel load for a long trip climbed just about 600-800 feet before plummeting to the ground almost immediately,
- Aviation experts said going by the available visuals lack of thrust in both engines and a bird hit could be among the probable causes.



The tail part of Air India plane, B787 Aircraft VT-ANB that crashed on the roof of a building, in Ahmedabad on Thursday. ANI

AIR INDIA PLANE CRASHES MINUTES AFTER TAKEOFF

All passengers, except one, and crew feared dead

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD

A London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed into a medical college complex here and burst into a ball of fire on Thursday moments after take off. Former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani was among the dead, according to BJP leader C R Patil. There were also reports of one passenger identified as Vishwash Kumar Ramesh and seated on 11A of the ill-fated Boeing 787 Dreamliner (AI171) having survived miraculously. There was no official count of those killed even hours after the twin-engine wide bodied aircraft crashed in the city civil hospital and BJ Medical College outside the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport pe-

rimeter. As rescuers struggled to find survivors in the charred wreckage and pull out the injured, many of them with grievous burns, officials tried to assess the human magnitude of the disaster. Unofficial reports said up to 25 people in the medical complex could also have died. According to Air India, of the 230 passengers, 169 were Indians, 53 British, seven Portuguese and one Canadian. The other 12 people on board were two pilots and 10 crew members. The pilot issued a 'Mayday' distress call, denoting a full emergency, soon after take-off at 1.39 pm, the Air Traffic Control at Ahmedabad said. The search was also on for the aircraft's black box -- the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder -- for clues to understand what



Thick smoke emerge after an Air India plane, B787 Aircraft VT-ANB, crashed immediately after takeoff in Ahmedabad on Thursday. ANI

A miraculous escape

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD

A passenger on board the London-bound Air India flight that crashed near the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon survived the horrific incident, a doctor at the city civil hospital said. Vishwaskumar

Ramesh was in '11A' seat of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner which was carrying 242 passengers and crew. He was travelling to London with his brother. Dr Shriq M who works in the trauma ward of the Ahmedabad civil hospital said that Ramesh has been admitted to the hospital.



"The tragedy in Ahmedabad has stunned and saddened us. It is heartbreaking beyond words

-PM Modi

At least 5 MBBS students, 1 PG resident doctor killed, 60 hurt

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

At least five MBBS students, one PG resident doctor and the wife of a superspecialist doctor of the BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad were killed and over 60 medical students injured when an Air India plane crashed into the college complex, the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) claimed. The search operation at the

crash site is still going on and many are feared buried in the debris, FAIMA national vice president Dr Divyansh Singh said. "Bodies that have been found were totally charred," he added. "As of now, at least five medical students, one PG resident doctor and the wife of a superspecialist doctor from the BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad have been killed and over 60 medical students have been injured,"

Singh said. "As per the information I have received so far, the plane after losing its balance crashed over the boys hostel building of the BJ Medical College. And as it was lunch time most of the students and resident doctors were there for lunch," he said. There was no official count of those killed even hours after the crash. As rescuers struggled

North India sizzles under severe heatwave

- No relief in sight
- Red alert in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh
- Agri, power infra hit hard

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Intense heatwave has gripped the north India, with temperature soaring well above 45°C in many regions, prompting the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) to issue a red alert for Chandigarh, Punjab and Haryana. The scorching heat, compounded by dry "loo" winds and unusually warm nights, has disrupted daily life, strained infrastructure and raised alarms over public health and agriculture in water-stressed areas. Sweltering heatwave conditions continue to tighten their grip over Delhi and Rajasthan. The IMD has warned of persistently high temperatures across North-west India. According to the latest IMD updates, maximum temperatures in Delhi are

hovering between 40°C and 44°C. With a yellow alert in effect, the IMD forecasts a further rise of 4-5°C in the coming days, potentially pushing temperatures by June 13-14. Conditions are even more extreme in Rajasthan, where several parts of West Rajasthan reporting high temperature. The IMD report suggest blistering temperatures across several districts in northern states with Punjab's Bathinda sizzling at 47.6°C, while Ludhiana touched 46°C. In Haryana, Sirsa recorded 46.5°C. Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana, sweltered at 43°C, with the IMD warning of a further rise to 44-46°C in the coming days across southern and western pockets of both states. "Hot and dry loo winds are sweeping across Punjab



A pillion rider on a two-wheeler covers the face of a child sitting in front with a cloth for protection from the scorching sun, on a hot summer day, in Bikaner on Thursday. ANI

PRICES SKYROCKET AMID HEATWAVE		
Tomatoes	40/kg	(up from 25-30)
Onions	50/kg	(up from 40)
Lemon	150	(up from 120)
Potatoes	40/kg	(up from 30)
Ginger	200/kg	(up from 160-170)
Coriander	200/kg	(up from 130-150)
Green Chillies	100/kg	(up from 80)
Cauliflower	80/kg	(up from

and Haryana, and we do not expect any significant relief before June 15," said Surinder Paul, Director of IMD Chandigarh. The absence of rainfall and persistent north-westerly winds are fueling

Inflation drops to 6-year low of 2.82% in May

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation dipped to an over six-year low of 2.82 per cent in May due to subdued food prices, remaining below the RBI's median target of 4 per cent for the fourth consecutive month, according to government data released on Thursday. Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation was 3.16 per cent in April and 4.8 per cent in May 2024. The previous low was in February 2019 at 2.57 per cent. On easing inflation, the Reserve Bank effected a jumbo rate cut of 50 basis points last week, taking the total to 100 bps since February. Food inflation was 0.99 per cent in May, significantly lower from 8.69 per cent in the year-ago month, according to the National Statistics Office (NSO) data. "The significant decline in headline inflation and food

Influencer found dead in parked car in Bathinda

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Popular Punjabi social media influencer Kanchan Kumari, widely known by her online persona Kamal Kaur Bhabhi, was found dead under mysterious circumstances in a parked car near Adesh Hospital in Bathinda.

The shocking discovery was made late Wednesday night when volunteers from a local NGO noticed a foul smell emanating from the vehicle. Upon inspection, police recovered her decomposed body from the car's back seat. The 30-year-old, a resident of Shimlapuri in Ludhiana, had amassed over 3.86 lakh

followers on Instagram, where she frequently shared bold and controversial videos. Seven months ago, she had received threats from Canada-based designated terrorist Arshdeep Singh Gill alias Arsh Dalla, who accused her of corrupting Punjab's youth with "ob-



Bhargavastra' counter swarm drone system designed and developed by Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL) test fired successfully, on Thursday. ANI

HARYANA GOVT ANNOUNCES INCENTIVES TO FARMERS TO ADOPT CROP DIVERSIFICATION

Farmers to get incentives of Rs 8000 per acre to shift from paddy cultivation to less water-consuming crops .

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIARH


Staring at the alarming drop in groundwater levels, the state government has intensified efforts to encourage sustainable farming through its flagship initiative the 'Mera Pani Meri Virasat' scheme promising cash incentives to the farmers to shun water-guzzler paddy cultivation.

Launched in May 2020, the scheme now offers financial incentives of Rs 8000 per acre to farmers who shift from water-intensive paddy cultivation to less water-consuming crops — a move aimed at preserving the fast-depleting groundwater table in the agrarian state.

The state government has also increased the cash incentive for the Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) technique to Rs 4500 per acre to support the farmers who adopt the DSR technique and shun the traditional flooding and puddling method.

‘MERA PANI MERI VIRASAT’

- Launched in May 2020, the scheme 'Mera Pani Meri Virasat' now offers financial incentives of Rs 8000 per acre to farmers who shift from water-intensive paddy cultivation to less water-consuming crops — a move aimed at preserving the fast-depleting groundwater table in the agrarian state.
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Haryana, an agrarian state heavily reliant on agriculture, faces a critical challenge with its groundwater levels, particularly in areas classified as “dark zones” where the water table has plummeted below

40 meters. The agriculture experts are of the view that the paddy cultivation, which consumes approximately 4,000 to 5,000 liters of water per kilogram of rice produced, has been identified as a primary contributor to the depleting ground water. According to Haryana ag-

riculture minister Shyam Singh Rana the Mera Pani Meri Virasat Scheme encourages farmers to grow less water-intensive crops such as maize, bajra, cotton, pulses, sesame, and horticultural crops. Under the scheme, farmers who diversify at least 50%

BJP leaders protest outside West Bengal assembly over South 24 Parganas clashes

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

Leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) protested outside the West Bengal assembly on Thursday, demanding a discussion on the clashes that erupted between police and miscreants in South 24 Parganas. Meanwhile, BJP leader and Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari demanded a discussion on the clashes that took place in South 24 Paraganas between the miscreants and police. Adhikari also stated that two adjournment motions had been sent for the same. “We are filing a petition seeking the same. We have also given two adjournment motions for the same... We demand a discussion on this since this is a serious issue....I have already sent an email to the DGP and SP Diamond Harbour that LoP,



along with 1 MLA, be allowed to go and meet the victims. Our party's state president will also try to go there, let's see what the police do... Sanatanis in the state will organise protests at different places in the state from 2 PM onwards, today,” Adhikari said in a video. He also stated that in case of communal violence, it had been mentioned in an order that the High Court would give directions to the central paramilitary forces. “High Court in an earlier order especially said that wherever there will be communal violence, common

people will be looted, police will be stopped from taking action and will be injured, the petitioner will send a mail to the DGP, and hence I did that yesterday. I tried to meet him but couldn't. Some officers have told me that he (the DGP) talked to Mamata Banerjee, and she told him that there is no need to meet him (Suwendu Adhikari).

In that very order, it is also mentioned that if police don't take action, the court will give direction to the central paramilitary force; this order is valid until 30th July,” he further added.

Adhikari further stated that a protest would be organised by Sanatanis in different places in the state. “Sanatanis in the state will organise protests at different places in the state from 2 PM onwards, today... Our party's state president will also try to go there, let's see what the police do...” he further added. Adhikari stated that 30 to 35 police personnel had been injured in the clashes, while five vehicles had been torched and vandalised. “30-35 police personnel were injured. 5 police vehicles torched and vandalised... The unruly mob pelted stones at the police, and the police waved white flags; this is all there in the media,” he said. Earlier today, security was tightened in Rabindra Nagar of South 24 Parganas after the clash broke out.

Jaishankar meets French Prez Macron

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday met President Emmanuel Macron here and thanked him for France's strong message of support in the fight against terrorism.

Jaishankar is on a visit to Europe to boost bilateral ties and reaffirm India's policy of zero-tolerance against terrorism, especially in the wake of April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

“Honoured to call on President @EmmanuelMacron of France. Conveyed greetings of PM @narendramodi. Thanked him for France's strong message of support in the fight against terrorism,” Jaishankar said in a post on X after the meeting.

“Our discussions reflected the trust, comfort and ambition of our Strategic Partnership,” he added.



Jaishankar was in Brussels on Wednesday where he met top European Union leaders and discussed ways to further strengthen the EU-India strategic partnership.

The April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives prompted India to carry out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7.

We are exploring path to reset ties: MEA on India-Canada ties

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Describing Indian and Canada as “vibrant democracies”, the external affairs ministry on Thursday said New Delhi believes the forthcoming meeting between the prime ministers of the two countries on the sidelines of the G7 Summit will offer an important opportunity to exchange views and explore pathways to reset bilateral ties.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said this in response to a query during his weekly media briefing.

“Our Prime Minister had received a call from the Canadian Prime Minister last week. During the call, Prime Minister Mark Carney invited Prime Minister (Modi) to attend G7 (meeting), and as you are aware the invitation has been accepted,” he said. The call was also an occasion for the two prime ministers to reflect or talk about India-Canada relations, and how it can be taken forward, the MEA spokesperson said. Canada will be hosting the crucial G7 meeting later this month. “India and Canada are vi-

brant democracies, which are bound by shared democratic values and steadfast commitment to the rule of law. And, of course, very vibrant people to people ties,” Jaiswal said. “We believe that the forthcoming meeting between the two leaders on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Canada will offer an important opportunity for them to exchange views on bilateral and global issues, and explore pathways to set or reset the relationship, based on mutual respect, shared interests and sensitivity to each other's concerns,” he said.

PM Modi lauds India’s technological, digital progress in past 11 years

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hailed India's digital and technological progress stating that the country is making remarkable progress in innovation and application of technology.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the digital progress is also strengthening country's efforts towards becoming self-reliant in the technology sector.

Taking to his X social media platform PM Modi shared a post by MyGovIndia, which talks about how India could become the next technology powerhouse of the world and the steps taken by the Union Government in the past 11 years in the sector.

“Powered by the youth of India, we are making remarkable progress in innovation and application of technology. It is also strengthening our efforts to become self-reliant and a global tech power-

house”, PM Modi said. India has recorded a surge of 2500 times in the volume of UPI transaction with data showing that UPI transaction which was at 0.93 crore in April 2017 increased to 1867.70 crore until April 2025. India is also leading the digital payment revolution wherein more than Rs 260 lakh crore transactions have been processed with Rs 18,600 crore transactions annually. UPI's acceptance in the



world has also increased and it is live in seven countries including UAE, Singapore, Nepal, France, Mauritius, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

“Powered by the youth of India, we are making remarkable progress in innovation and application of technology.

India also stands as world's cheapest mobile data providers with more than 94 crore broadband connections and more than 120 crore telephone subscribers. A total of 2.18 lakh gram

PM should take suggestions from opposition to decide national strategies: Kharge

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi take suggestions from the opposition to decide the national strategies in the national interest. In a post on X, Kharge wrote about two incidents of national interest, which were of extreme worry, namely the US Central Commander calling Pakistan a “phenomenal counter terrorism partner” and vandalism of Rabindranath Tagore's ancestral house.

“There are two incidents on the international stage which are extremely worrying for us - US Central Commander calling Pakistan a “phenomenal counter-terrorism partner” and then inviting the Pakistani Army Chief to the 250th anniversary of the US Army and Vandalism of the ancestral house of Gurudev Rabindranath



Tagore, the author of 'Amar Sonar Bangla' - the national anthem of Bangladesh, in Sirajganj, Bangladesh. The Congress Party strongly condemns this. There are many other crucial issues of foreign policy,” the post read. Kharge also wrote that an all-party meeting and special Parliament session had been demanded to discuss the issues.

“We have been demanding an all-party meeting and a special session of Parliament since day one. The Modi government should take suggestions from the opposition, discuss them and decide the national

strategy in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. This has happened many times before.

This would be necessary in the national interest,” the post further read. Earlier on June 11, Kharge hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and stated that he had never seen such a PM who told so many lies. The Congress President said that he has been in politics for 65 years, and alleged that PM Modi is deceiving the youth and taking votes by luring the poor. “I have been saying this in Parliament for a long time, and I have never seen a Prime Minister who lies so much, makes so many mistakes, traps people, deceives the youth, and takes votes by trapping people. I have been in politics for 65 years. He has lied on everything and not even one has been implemented”, Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters in Kalaburagi on Wednesday.

Cong's Khara alleges Centre ‘restricting’ public access to polls documents

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Pawan Khara on Thursday alleged that the BJP-led NDA government has restricted public access to election documents, just 11 days after a Punjab and Haryana High Court order demanding transparency.

Khara, who is the Chairman of the party's Media and Publicity Department, claimed that on December 9 last year, the Punjab and Haryana High Court directed the Election Commission to share CCTV footage and Form 17C records from the Haryana elections, leading to the Election Commission of India (ECI) writing to the Law Ministry proposing changes to Rule 93 of the Conduct of Election Rules, arguing that allowing inspection of “all other papers” created an “administrative burden”. In a post on X, he further claimed that by December 20 last year, the rule was amended and notified. He said that the phrase “all other papers relating to the election shall be open to public inspection” was replaced with “all other pa-



The Congress leader claimed that the amendment created a legal “ambiguity” and contradicted the original intent of the rule in place since 1961.

pers as specified in these rules”, quietly narrowing public access. “The government has quietly restricted public access to election documents, just 11 days after a High Court order demanding transparency. On Dec 9, 2024, the Punjab & Haryana High Court directed the Election Commission to share CCTV footage and

Form 17C records from the Haryana elections, he said on social media platform X, based on an article. “On Dec 17, the EC wrote to the Law Ministry proposing changes to Rule 93 of the Conduct of Election Rules, arguing that allowing inspection of ‘all other papers’ created an ‘administrative burden’. By 10:23 PM on Dec 20, the rule was amended and notified. The phrase “all other papers relating to the election shall be open to public inspection” was replaced with “all other papers as specified in these rules”, quietly narrowing public access,” Khara said. The Congress leader claimed that the amendment created a legal “ambiguity” and contradicted the original intent of the rule in place since 1961.

“The amendment effectively blocks access to CCTV footage, video recordings, and other electronic records, none of which are ‘specified’ in the old rulebook. He said the amendment was done after the High Court ordered the release of those materials.

“The timing and speed, just 11 days from court order to notification, are notable,” Khara added.

Rajnath felicitates NCC Mount Everest expedition team after their success

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Thursday, felicitated the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Mountaineering Expedition Team, comprising five girls and five boys aged an average of 19 years, who scaled Mount Everest on May 18, as per the release. Honouring the raw courage, grit and patriotism of the team, led by Col Amit Bisht, he presented a cheque of Rs 10 lakh for achieving the feat in the harshest of



conditions without any injury. During the event held at South Block, New Delhi, the cadets shared their experiences of the expedition, detailing the rigorous training, meticulous planning and challenges encountered.

ing us to move forward even faster in this direction.” In his article, Scindia elaborated on how villages have started telling the story of digital revolution.

Scindia said on X, “In the last 11 years, the historic decisions taken in the telecom sector and the Postal Department, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modiji, have given rise to a digital revolution, connecting not only cities, but also villages, forests and borders.”

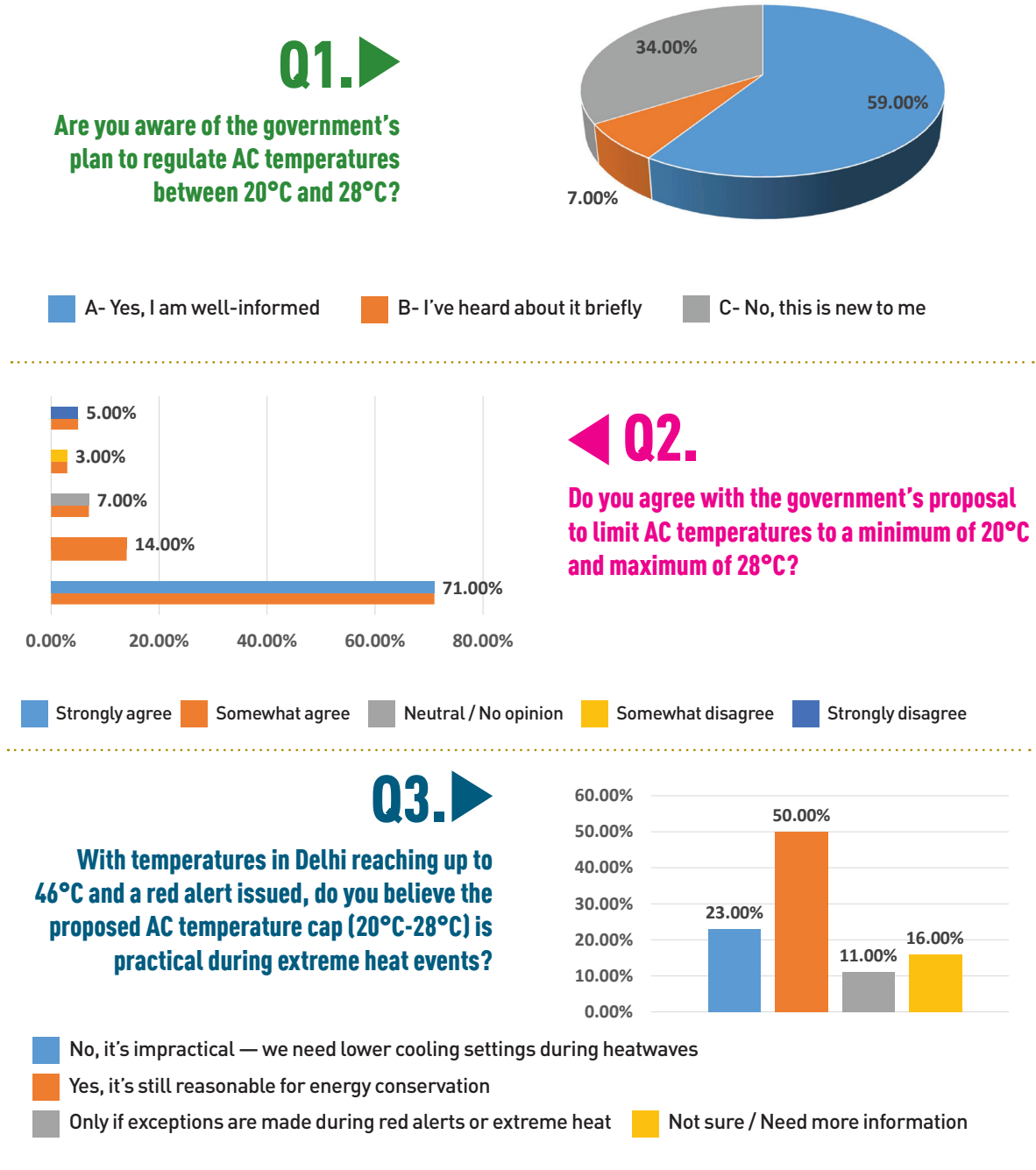
THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON AC TEMPERATURE NEW RULES

71% strongly agree with the government's proposal to limit air conditioner temperatures to a minimum of 20°C and a maximum of 28°C.

Union Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday said that India will be soon be holding an experiment regarding standardisation of AC temperatures, restricting air conditioners from cooling below 20°C

or heating beyond 28°C. This comes amid India's Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing orange alert over a heatwave in Delhi and residents reeling under hot spell. "Regarding air conditioning standards, a new provision is

being implemented soon. The temperature standardisation for ACs will be set between 20°C to 28°C, meaning we won't be able to cool below 20°C or warm above 28°C. This is a first-of-its-kind experiment, aiming to standardise



KARNATAKA HAS DECIDED TO CONDUCT NEW CASTE SURVEY: SIDDARAMAIAH

CM Siddaramaiah said it was ‘unanimous decision’ of state cabinet

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

Karnataka cabinet on Thursday “unanimously” decided to conduct a new Socio-Educational survey, popularly known as the caste census, in the state, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said.

He said 90-day time will be given for the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission to conduct a fresh survey and submit the report, but did not wish to comment on the survey cost.

“...we have taken a decision in the cabinet. It was a unanimous decision that a new survey is to be conducted,” Siddaramaiah told reporters after a special cabinet meeting.

He said, “The government will consult the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission....we are going to give 90-day time to do a fresh survey, and to give the report,” Karnataka CM said

‘STATE BACKWARD COMMISSION GIVEN 90-DAY’

- “The government will consult the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission....we are going to give 90-day time to do a fresh survey, and to give the report,” Karnataka CM said
- The CM said as per the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission Act’s section 11(1) too, the state government should go for a survey, as it has been ten years since the last survey was done.



to give 90 days time to do a fresh survey, and to give the report.”

The decision comes after the Congress top brass -- including President Mallikarjun Kharge and leader Rahul Gandhi -- on Tuesday directed the state government to hold caste re-enumeration in Karnataka to address the concerns of some communities, who complained of being left out of the survey that

was conducted 10 years ago.

The CM said as per the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission Act’s section 11(1) too, the state government should go for a survey, as it has been ten years since the last survey was done.

He said, “After considering all aspects and law, as it has been ten years since the Socio-Educational survey was conducted by the

Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission, the cabinet has decided to go for a new survey; and as per the section 11(2) of the Act it has been decided to consult the commission in this regard.”

The decision came at a time when the cabinet was already considering the Socio-Educational Survey report that was submitted to the government by the commission, based on the survey

that was conducted in 2015.

The survey report was placed before the cabinet for the first time on April 11, which was discussed in three-four meetings since then.

Various communities, especially Karnataka’s two dominant ones -- Vokkaligas and Veershaiva-Lingayats -- had expressed strong reservations about the caste survey that was done in 2015, calling it “unscientific”, and have been demanding that it be rejected, and a fresh survey be conducted. There are also strong voices against it from within the ruling Congress.

Asked whether the government has dropped the previous survey report and its recommendations, Siddaramaiah maintained, it has been ten years and the law says a new survey has to be done after ten years.

Honeymoon horror: Sonam, Raj accuse each other of being mastermind

AGENCIES
SHILLONG

Sonam Raghuvanshi confessed to be part of the conspiracy to kill her husband Raja during their honeymoon in Meghalaya, and accused Raj Kushwaha of being the mastermind of the Indore-based businessman’s murder, a senior police officer said on Thursday.

On the other hand, Kushwaha, Sonam’s suspected boyfriend, put the blame for orchestrating the murder on her, Deputy Inspector General of Police DNR Marak said on Thursday.

Sonam and Kushwaha are among the five people arrested in connection with the murder of Raja Raghuvanshi, whose decomposed body was recovered from a gorge in Sohra area of East Khasi Hills district on June 2.

“Sonam confessed to be a part of the conspiracy to kill her husband but we are yet



to establish who the mastermind of the plot is. Both Sonam and Raj are blaming each other,” Marak told PTI. He said the investigation has started to unearth the conspiracy.

“There are inconsistencies in the statements collected individually of all the accused persons. We are also investigating the amount of money Sonam promised to pay to the hitmen and how much she had already paid,” Marak said.

According to the senior officer, the police are verifying if any of them had made

a recce of Sohra and the jungles of Nongriat before. The couple had stayed at a homestay in Nongriat.

None of the accused so far admitted to have conducted a recce, he said.

The SIT conducting the probe into the murder is seeking assistance from the police in Assam and other states to link all evidence in the case.

The three hired killers from Indore stopped over for a night in Guwahati and procured from there a machete that was later used to kill Raja, he said.

Govt has decided to transform Kerala into ‘elderly-friendly state: CM Vijayan

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the 35th General Body meeting of the Kerala Grama Panchayat Association and said that the state government has decided to transform Kerala into an ‘elderly-friendly state.’

The Kerala Chief Minister also underscored the vital role of local self-government institutions in the state’s development trajectory.

Chief Minister Vijayan said, “In the last financial year, local self-government institutions in the state were able to utilise 90 per cent of their plan allocation - a significant contribution to the state’s development. The Association must further strengthen this efficiency.”

“We have decided to transform Kerala into an elderly-friendly state.



Currently, 138 gram panchayats have initiated steps in this direction. This must be expanded to all panchayats. In the field of palliative care, effective and active interventions are being made. Alongside government initiatives, many NGOs also work in this sector. These palliative care services must be integrated, and panchayats should take the lead in this effort,” said

Vijayan.

The Kerala Chief Minister also said that the state government aims to implement a coordinated approach involving everyone.

“We’ve also achieved agricultural growth above the national average. This is a testament to the grassroots strength of Kerala’s development model,” he said.

Earlier, the Election Commission of India released the schedule for the bye-elections which are to be held to fill vacancies in Assembly constituencies of Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal.

Polling for the constituencies will be held on June 19, and votes will be counted on June 23.

In Kerala, the bye-election will be held in Nilambur to fill the post of PV Anvar, an LDF-backed MLA who resigned in January this year.

Karnataka LoP writes to NHRC seeking probe into Bengaluru stampede

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka has written a letter to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking urgent intervention and a comprehensive probe into the recent stampede in Bengaluru during the IPL victory celebration of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), which claimed 11 lives and injured at least 75 people.

On Thursday, Ashoka urged the NHRC to take suo motu cognisance of what he described as a grave human rights violation caused by alleged gross negligence



and administrative failure during the public event held on June 4 near M Chinnaswamy Stadium. Ashoka called the incident “an unfortunate accident,” but several eyewitness accounts and preliminary findings suggest that the stampede was not a mere accident.

“This is not merely an un-

fortunate accident- it appears, based on eyewitness accounts and preliminary investigations, to be the direct result of gross negligence, mismanagement, and a blatant disregard for public safety by the state government and the concerned authorities,” he wrote in the letter. He highlighted lapses such as crowd overspill due to misleading free pass announcements, poor crowd control, low police presence, and lack of medical aid and basic amenities.

“The area, which has a capacity of around 35,000, saw a massive and unmanageable influx of lakhs of people, allegedly due to

misleading announcements regarding free passes,” he wrote.

Ashoka also pointed to the alleged role of the event organisers, including RCB, the event management firm DNA, and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), in creating confusion and chaos at the venue. He further expressed concern over what he termed as a failure of the state government in preparing for such a massive gathering. “Although FIRs have been filed and an inquiry commission announced, the lack of foresight and planning by government agencies remains deeply concerning,” the letter stated.

Telangana Governor Varma allocates portfolios to newly inducted Ministers

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

In a key political development, the Telangana government has formally allocated portfolios to newly inducted ministers Vivek Venkatswamy, Adluri Laxman Kumar, and Vakiti Srihari. They took oath on June 8 at Raj Bhawan in the presence of Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

According to the statement, the notification, scheduled to be published in a special edition of the Telangana Gazette on Wednesday, was issued under Clause (3) of Article 166 of the Constitution of India, in conjunction with Sub-rule (1) of Rule 5 of the Telangana Government Business Rules.

According to the order, Minister Vivek Venkatswamy has been assigned the Labour, Employment, Training and Factories portfolios, along with Mines and Geology. He is a senior Congress leader and former Member



of Parliament from Peddapalli in the 15th Lok Sabha.

Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar has been entrusted with the Scheduled Castes Development Department, Tribal Welfare Department, Minorities Welfare Department, and the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, and Transgender Persons.

He is an Indian National Congress leader and MLA from the Dharmapuri Assembly constituency, reserved for the SC community in Telangana’s Jagtial district. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly in

the 2023 state elections.

Minister Vakiti Srihari will handle the portfolios of Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Fisheries, and Sports and Youth Services. Srihari is the Congress MLA from the Makthal Assembly constituency in Telangana’s Narayanpet district. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly in the 2023 state elections.

Earlier, the Chief Minister Revanth Reddy congratulated Vivek Venkata Swamy, Adluri Lakshman and Vakiti Srihari, who are poised to assume ministerial responsibilities in the Telangana government.

In a post on X, CM Reddy wrote, “As new ministers about to take charge, Sri Vivek Venkata Swamy, Mr. Adluri Lakshman, To Sri Vakiti Srihari, My congratulations. To Shri Ramachandru Nayak, who is about to assume the charge of Deputy Speaker in the Legislative Assembly, My congratulations.”

100 illegal houses razed in anti-encroachment drive in MP’s Khandwa

TDG NETWORK
KHANDWA

An anti-encroachment drive carried out in the Shakkar pond area of Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, and around 100 illegal houses were demolished.

Officials said residents were served notices over the past four months, and houses with court stay orders were not removed.

Khandwa Municipal Corporation Commissioner, Priyanka Rajawat said, “This is the Shakkar pond area. We are running an anti-encroachment drive here today. We have been making announcements and giving notices to vacate the place for the last 4 months. About 100 illegal houses have been demolished. 25 house owners had a stay from the court, they have been left...”

Earlier, the district administration of Madhya Pradesh’s Ujjain carried out a demolition drive to remove illegal structures in Begum Bagh locality in the city amid tight security on Wednesday. The locality is situated near Mahakaleshwar temple and a total seven structures were removed.

Ujjain Development Authority (UDA) CEO Sandeep Soni said, “Around two years ago, UDA had cancelled the lease of structures built here on both sides of the roads for violating the terms of the lease. After which four plots on which seven structures were built here, still some commercial operations are going on, were served notices. Since after cancellation of the lease, all these structures become government property and construction on the land falls under illegal encroachment.”

Cong, CPM not raising public issues: BJP ahead of Nilambur bypolls

TDG NETWORK
MALAPPURAM

Hitting out at Congress and CPI-M ahead of the Nilambur assembly by-polls, BJP leader V Muraleedharan alleged that instead of raising common issues, both parties are trying to get votes from pro-terrorists and communal organisations.

He highlighted that the election became necessary due to the resignation of the MLA, who had said that the Kerala CM is “protecting” the underground elements and smugglers.

“Instead of raising key concerns of Nilambur and Kerala, both the Congress and the Communists (CPI-M) are trying to get the votes of pro-terrorist and pro-communal organisations... This election was necessitated due to the resignation of an MLA who said that the Kerala CM is protecting underground elements and smugglers”, V Muraleedharan told ANI.



The former Union Minister said that instead of discussing issues, both Congress and CPI-M are after the votes of Jamaat-e-Islami, whose motto is to form religion-based governments.

He also alleged that the Congress created a misunderstanding about the stance of the Indian government over Israel and said that both Congress and CPI-M are supporting Hamas.

“Instead of discussing this issue, both parties are after the votes of Jamaat-e-Islami,

whose motto is religion-based governments. Congress is also trying to create a misunderstanding that the Indian Government has changed its stand on Israel. Both (Congress and CPI-M) are trying to get the support of those elements who support Hamas”, V Muraleedharan said.

The election for the Nilambur seat was necessitated after the resignation of PV Anvar, an LDF-backed MLA, who stepped down in January after making several allegations against the Left government in the state, including claims of RSS influence in the home department and the framing of Muslim youth in false cases.

The election will be held on June 19, and the counting is scheduled for June 23. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) have fielded Michael George as their candidate from the Nilambur assembly constituency in the upcoming bypolls.

Andhra Congress chief Sharmila criticises TDP Govt over unfulfilled promises

AGENCIES
KADAPA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) chief YS Sharmila on Thursday criticised the TDP-led government’s one-year performance, alleging heavy borrowings, unfulfilled promises, and exclusion in welfare schemes.

Addressing a press conference, Sharmila said,

“Borrowing nearly Rs 1 lakh crore in a single year is alarming. This trend threatens the financial future of Andhra Pradesh”.

The APCC chief said nearly 2.7 lakh government jobs remain vacant despite promises of an annual job calendar and added that power bills have imposed a Rs 17,000 crore burden on the pub-

lic.

Sharmila claimed that over 20 lakh students were excluded from the ‘Thalliki Vandhanam’ scheme which offers Rs 15,000 per annum for every school-going child.

Likewise, she noted that nearly 48 lakh farmers did not receive Annadata Sukhibhava benefits.

Further, she observed that the poll promise of



Rs 1,500 per month for women between the age

of 19 and 59 years is yet to be fulfilled even after

The APCC chief said nearly 2.7 lakh government jobs remain vacant despite promises of an annual job calendar and added that power bills have imposed a Rs 17,000 crore burden on the public.

a year in power. Sharmila said that the Super Six schemes remain unimplemented and the TDP-led

government’s one-year report resembles a manifesto, lacking measurable outcomes or accountability

for the commitments made. In the run up to 2024 polls, Naidu made several welfare promises under the banner of Super Six, which includes 20 lakh jobs for youth or Rs 3,000 monthly unemployment allowance and free bus travel for women.

Other schemes under Super Six are -- three free gas cylinders to every household (Deepam - 2).

GOVT HELPING PRIVATE SCHOOLS, IGNORING PARENTS: AAP ON FEE HIKES ORDINANCE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sarabjot Bhardwaj on Thursday accused the Delhi government of acting under pressure from private school lobbies by introducing a school fee ordinance without any legislative scrutiny or public consultation.

Addressing a press conference, Bhardwaj alleged that soon after the formation of the new government in Delhi, private schools began arbitrarily raising fees under various heads--uniforms, books, stationery, air conditioning, extra classes, and extracurricular activities--without any recourse for parents. He said the fee hike was imposed from April 1, even though the law requires prior approval from the Department of Education.



"The government has not taken action against any school nor asked them to roll back the increased fees. Instead, it quietly brought a law via ordinance without any discussion or public consultation," Bhardwaj said.

He accused the government of avoiding scrutiny by not tabling the bill in the Delhi Legislative Assembly and instead seeking Presidential assent.

He further alleged that de-

tails of the ordinance were selectively leaked to only two newspapers, and the complete text had not been made public. According to Bhardwaj, the ordinance appears designed solely to protect the interests of private school owners.

He also took issue with the new fee regulation mechanism introduced in the ordinance. "The regulation committee at the school level will now decide fees. This committee comprises school

insiders: three teachers, one principal, and a representative from the management, and only one parent selected through a lottery. That parent may not even know school accounts or audits," Bhardwaj said.

Bhardwaj said that it is deemed valid under the new arrangement if the committee approves a fee hike. "There is no longer any requirement for approval from the Director of Education," he added, terming the setup as a "rubber stamp" for private schools.

He criticised the clause that provides a penalty of Rs 50,000 only if a school charges more than the committee-approved fee. "Why would a school demand more when the committee itself will approve the inflated fee? There will never be a penalty," he argued.

Highlighting another issue, Bhardwaj said that

if parents want to appeal against a fee hike, the law requires signatures from 15 percent of all students' parents. "For a school with 3,000 students, where will parents find 400 others with addresses and consent to file an appeal?" he asked.

Calling the law anti-parent and pro-management, the AAP leader said it betrayed Delhi's middle class. He said the ordinance bypassed the Assembly even though a special session could easily have been called.

"The government is hiding behind procedural excuses and running away from debate because it knows it is working at the behest of private school owners," Bhardwaj said during the press conference.

Earlier, the Delhi Cabinet approved the School Fee Act, which regulates fee increases in all private schools across the city.

Many families did not have place to sleep: AAP after demolition

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA and leader of opposition in Delhi assembly Atishi lashed out at Delhi government under the BJP following a demolition drive at the Bhoomihien Camp in South Delhi's Kalkaji Extension on Wednesday and claimed that Many families did not have a place to sleep.

She claimed that arrangements were made for many families to stay for the night.

In a post on X on late Wednesday evening, Atishi wrote, "I was with the homeless residents of the landless camp till late night. Some children had not eaten since morning. Many families did not have a place to sleep at night. My heart broke to see their condition. BJP will definitely be cursed by these poor people. Everyone was fed dal and rice. Arrangements were made for many families to stay for the night."



"From tomorrow, I will set up a special camp in my MLA office to solve their problems. Aam Aadmi Party has stood with the poor in every happiness, sorrow and struggle and will continue to do so," the post reads.

Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, on Wednesday, defended the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) action against illegal encroachment and said that those whose slums have been removed have been given separate houses.

Speaking to the media, Sir-

sa slammed the Aam Aadmi Party for spreading lies and misleading the people.

"No slum will be demolished. No person will be removed from the slum...Those whose slums have been removed have been given separate houses...They (AAP) are telling lies only to mislead the people of Delhi. Now they (AAP) are out of power.

I want to ask them whether they have given a house to even a single slum dweller?... Prime Minister Modi has said 'Jahan jhuggi wahi makaan,' Manjinder Sirsa said.

Delhi continues to reel under intense heat as parts of city record over 43 degree Celsius

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The national capital continued to reel under intense heat as several parts of the city recorded a maximum temperature of over 43 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), several weather stations across the city reported scorching daytime temperatures until 8:30 AM today, with Ayanagar recording the highest maximum temperature at 45.0°C.

The Ayanagar area recorded 45.0°C (Max) / 30.5°C (Min), Palam saw 44.5°C (Max) / 30.2°C (Min), Ridge witnessed 43.6°C (Max) / 26.2°C (Min), Lodhi Road saw 43.4°C (Max) / 29.2°C (Min) and Safdarjung area experienced 43.3°C (Max) / Minimum temperature data.

Earlier this week, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a warning that Delhi NCR may experience heatwave-like conditions with temperatures potentially exceeding 45°C.

"If we talk about North-



west India, then for the next four days, most of the subdivisions--especially in the plains--are likely to experience heatwave conditions. In Delhi-NCR, the temperature is expected to rise above 45°C today and tomorrow, creating heatwave conditions in isolated places. A yellow alert has been issued for the region," IMD scientist Akhil Srivastava told ANI on Monday.

As per the IMD's digital portal, an orange alert was issued in the capital city for June 10 and 11 and a yellow alert for June 12 and 13.

According to the Met Department, Delhi may witness rain by the middle of the week. IMD predicted light to moderate rainfall across

parts of North India, accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds (40-50 kmph).

After days of intense heat, a gradual respite from heatwave conditions is likely over Northwest India beginning June 14, according to the latest forecast by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Severe heatwave conditions were reported at a few places in West Rajasthan, with isolated areas experiencing extreme temperatures. According to the weather department, the highest maximum temperature reported over the plains of the country was Sri Ganganagar (Rajasthan) at 48.0 degrees Celsius.

Amanatullah Khan to challenge Batla House area demarcation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Amanatullah Khan on Thursday said he would move the Supreme Court to challenge the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) demarcation of properties in the Batla House area of Okhla.

The move followed directions from the High Court's Division Bench, which granted affected residents three days to file individual writ petitions.

This comes a day after Khan withdrew his Public Interest Litigation (PIL) from the Delhi High Court that had sought to stop demolition action initiated by the DDA.

Speaking to ANI, the AAP MLA said, "The Division Bench has given time for the affected parties to file their writ individually within three days. We have also withdrawn our PIL. People have been living there since 1971, and you suddenly declared it unlawful and separated it from the PM-UDAY scheme."



"...The manner in which DDA wants to demolish this entire area is beyond my understanding...The demarcation done by them is not accurate. I withdrew my plea because I will challenge the demarcation before the Supreme Court," he said.

Khan withdrew the PIL on Wednesday to inform the residents of his area to file an appropriate petition before the court.

The withdrawal was allowed by a division bench of Justices Girish Kathpalia and Tejas Karia of the Delhi High Court, which suggested that individual residents approach the court with their grievances.

Sisodia urges AAP workers to aid crash relief in Ahmedabad

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia urged local party workers to engage in relief and rescue operations after an Air India plane crashed in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

In a post on X, Sisodia wrote, "An appeal is made to all the local workers of the party to promptly engage in relief and rescue operations. In collaboration with the administration, provide all necessary assistance, whether it is providing medical facilities to the injured or giving support to the affected families."

Sisodia also expressed grief over the crash and prayed for the safety of the passengers.

"Heartbreaking news from Ahmedabad. A passenger aircraft has crashed near a residential area during take-off. Images of smoke and devastation are deeply disturbing. My prayers are for the safety of all the passengers. May God give strength to the affected



families," the post read.

AAP MP Raghav Chadha also expressed shock at the crash.

In a post on X, Chadha wrote, "Utterly shocked and deeply saddened by the news of an Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad with several passengers onboard. Praying for everyone's safety."

An Air India plane, AI-171 from Ahmedabad to London, crashed at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Ahmedabad airport on Thursday during takeoff, as per the Gujarat State Police Control Room. The flight was carrying a total of 230 passengers and 12 crew members. The Air India flight was a Boeing

727 twin jet.

According to the Police Control room, the Air India Flight AI 171 was bound for London."On 12th Jun, 2025, M/s Air India B787 Aircraft VT-ANB, while operating flight AI-171 from Ahmedabad to Gatwick, crashed immediately after takeoff from Ahmedabad. There were 242 people on board the aircraft, consisting of 2 pilots and 10 cabin crew. The aircraft was under the command of Capt Sumeet Sabharwal with First Officer Clive Kunder.

Capt Sumeet Sabharwal is an LTC with 8200 hours of experience. The copilot had 1100 hours of flying experience.

BJP councillor Satya Sharma elected as chairperson of MCD standing committee

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP's Satya Sharma and Sunder Singh were elected as the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the standing committee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday.

After a gap of two-and-a-half years, the standing committee of the MCD has been formed after the election. The formation of the Standing Committee is expected to accelerate key development and administrative initiatives after a prolonged delay.

The 18-member standing committee is the key panel that controls the finances



of the corporation. Any project above the cost of Rs 5 crore has to be approved by the committee. Due to no standing committee, many

policy matters and projects related to sanitation have been stuck.

BJP had nominated Sharma, a councillor from

Gautampuri ward in North East Delhi, for the post of chairman. Sharma is a three-time councillor who has also served as mayor in the erstwhile East Delhi Municipal Corporation.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had nominated Praveen Kumar for the post of chairman who received seven votes while Sharma polled 11 votes.

BJP councillor Singh polled 11 votes as against AAP's Mohini Jeenwal received seven votes.

Currently in the standing committee, the BJP has a clear majority, having 11 out of 18 members from the party.

SC junks plea of conman Suresh's wife for expeditious bail hearing

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has rejected the plea of Leena Paulose, wife of alleged conman Suresh Chandrasekar, in a Rs 200 crore extortion case for an expeditious hearing of her bail plea in Delhi High Court.

A bench comprising Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan observed her bail application was pending before the Delhi High Court and said, "Considering that the bail petition is partly heard before the high court and is now posted for further arguments on July 2, 2025, we are not inclined to entertain this special leave petition.



The special leave petition is, accordingly, dismissed."

The top court on Wednesday added, "It is expected that the High Court shall dispose the bail petition pending before it at the earliest and in accordance with law."

Paulose moved the top court against a May 19 order of the high court, which posted her plea in July.

Delhi Police has booked Chandrasekar for allegedly duping the wives of former promoters of Ranbaxy Shi-

vinder Singh and Malvinder Singh of Rs 200 crore.

Several separate investigations against him in the country are currently underway.

Chandrasekar and Paulose, who are also facing proceedings in a money laundering case of the Enforcement Directorate, were arrested by Delhi Police in the extortion case.

The police have also invoked the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in the case.

Delhi Police alleged Paulose, Chandrasekar and other accused persons used hawala routes and created shell companies to park the money received as proceeds of crime.

SC to examine: Can consecutive life terms be given to person convicted of murder twice?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine whether consecutive life sentences can be handed out to a person convicted twice for the offence of murder.

The issue cropped up when the bench was hearing a plea arising out of a 2015 verdict of the Punjab and Haryana

High Court in a 2010 double murder case.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan learnt that a five-judge Constitution bench of the apex court in July 2016 held that while multiple sentences for imprisonment for life can be awarded for multiple murders or other offences punishable with life term, they cannot be directed to run consecutively.



"Issue notice limited to the question of ascertaining as to whether the imposition of consecutive life sentence for being convicted for the offence punishable under section 302 (twice) is lawful in view of the observations made in... (constitution bench verdict), returnable in eight weeks," the bench said.

The high court, while upholding the conviction of a

man in the case, had turned down the reference for confirmation of death sentence awarded to him by a trial court.

The high court awarded life imprisonment to the convict twice for the offence of murder under Section 302 of the erstwhile IPC.

Life term, it said, was a sentence for imprisonment till the last breath of a person's natu-

ral life and as such, imposition of "two life sentences is otherwise superfluous".

"...however, since by executive action, in the form of remissions and pardons, such life imprisonment is often reduced to imprisonment for a lesser period, therefore, in such a situation, sentence of a second life imprisonment can be directed to run from the date when a person com-

pletes one sentence of such imprisonment, if remissions are granted to him," the high court added.

It directed that if any remission was granted to the convict in any one of his life sentences, the life term imposed upon him for the other offence of murder would start running from the date the first period of imprisonment was completed.

UKRAINIAN DRONE ATTACKS ON RUSSIA'S NUCLEAR-CAPABLE BOMBER FLEET: A NEW WAR PATTERN

OPINION

DR SYED MOHAMMAD
RAGHIB

After more than two years, the Russia-Ukraine war has evolved into one of the 21st century's most asymmetrical and technologically advanced conflicts. Ukraine's daring use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to strike deep inside Russian territory, directly targeting key installations that were previously thought to be untouchable, is one of the most important tactical developments. In particular, Ukraine's drone attacks against Russia's fleet of nuclear-capable bombers represent a significant departure from conventional wisdom in modern warfare. These assaults reveal weaknesses in Moscow's military infrastructure in addition to showcasing Kyiv's increasing technological capabilities. This conflict, which was formerly dominated by conventional military tactics and weaponry, is now being used to test a new, asymmetrical style of combat.

RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC BOMBER FLEET: BACKBONE OF NUKE DETERRENCE
Russia has one of the

world's biggest and most sophisticated fleets of bombers with nuclear weapons. The Tupolev Tu-95MS "Bear-H," Tupolev Tu-160 "Blackjack," and Tu-22M3 "Backfire" are important aircraft. These Cold War-era aircraft, which have undergone constant modernisation, are based at important air bases such as Olenya (Murmansk), Engels-2 (Saratov Oblast), Dyagilevo (Ryazan), and Soltsy (Novgorod Oblast). The Federation of American Scientists estimated that as of early 2022, Russia had more than 66 strategic bombers, including 55 Tu-95MS and 11 Tu-160s. These bombers are essential to Russia's nuclear triad, as they can unleash nuclear-tipped cruise missiles with a range of more than 2,500 kilometres. These aircraft serve as platforms for long-range precision missile attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure in addition to being tools of nuclear deterrence. Therefore, Russia's operational and strategic capabilities are greatly impacted by its capacity to threaten or destroy them.

TIMELINE OF KEY DRONE ATTACKS

Ukraine has conducted numerous drone strikes deep into Russian territory since late 2022. On December 5, 2022, two Tu-95MS bombers were damaged at Engels-2 airbase in the first of these assaults. On December 26, 2022, there was another strike at Engels that reportedly resulted in infrastructure damage and human casualties. The attacks demonstrated Ukraine's ability to hit targets almost 600 kilometres from the Ukrainian border and stunned the Russian military. Ukraine successfully targeted and apparently destroyed a Tu-22M3 bomber in a drone assault on Soltsy airbase on August 19, 2023. The plane was enveloped in flames, as shown by satellite photos and video evidence. Ukraine increased the efficacy and range of its drone operations by October 2023. Ukraine damaged at least four Ilyushin Il-76 military transport planes in a bold attack on Pskov airbase near the Estonian border. Engels-2 was once more targeted by Ukraine in April 2024, highlighting ongoing weaknesses. According to the UK Ministry of Defence, these frequent drone attacks probably reduced Russia's fleet of bombers by at least 10% to 15%, resulting in the loss or destruction of 7-10 strategic bombers. This is a significant setback considering the small number

of operational Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers.

UKRAINE'S GROWING DRONE ARSENAL

Ukraine's drone campaign is a technological triumph as well as a military one. Ukraine had created several long-range, domestic UAV systems by the middle of 2024. Among them is the domestically made "Beaver" (Bober) drone, which is said to have a range of more than 1,000 miles and be able to carry explosive warheads weighing between 20 and 25 kg. Ukraine has received hundreds of tactical drones from Western partners, including the Switchblade 300/600 and Phoenix Ghost loitering weapons from the United States, in addition to its own designs. More than 200 Ukrainian private enterprises are now working on drone development, according to the Ukrainian Ministry of Digital Transformation. More than 50,000 drones were produced each month for a variety of warfare missions as of late 2023, marking a more than 500% increase in domestic drone manufacturing. The asymmetric cost-effectiveness of this strategy has been highlighted by the destruction or disablement of Russian bombers valued at over \$300 million each by drones that cost as little as \$20,000.

STRATEGIC IMPACT ON RUSSIA'S

MILITARY POSTURE

The Russian military has been compelled to reconsider its defensive posture due to the direct targeting of bombers with nuclear weapons. Following the attacks on Engels and Soltsy, Russian officials started moving planes to farther-flung air facilities in the east, like Olenya in Murmansk and Belaya airfield near Irkutsk. Even though their security is increased, this makes it more difficult to launch operations against Ukraine and decreases operational efficiency. In order to safeguard airbases, Russia has also had to reroute vital air defence equipment, including as S-400 and Pantsir-S1 units, away from frontline missions. This results in a strategic trade-off: protecting valuable assets located deep into Russia compromises Ukraine's battlefield defence. The Russian Armed Forces' "airbase defence has emerged as a major vulnerability," according to Russian specialists, notably those from the Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies (CAST). Modern warfare has undergone a radical change as a result of these drone attacks. Because of their location and sophisticated air defence systems, strategic bombers were once thought to be untouchable assets. The successful strikes by Ukraine cast doubt on this notion and herald the emer-

gence of what the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) has called "poor man's precision strikes." An asymmetry of cost, reach, and lethality is best shown by Ukraine's strategy. Even countries with limited resources can now pose a danger to the strategic reach of nuclear powers because to inexpensive drones and sophisticated navigation systems. At least 45% of effective long-range Ukrainian drone strikes, according to a research conducted by RUSI in early 2024, comprised coordinated swarms, with primary attack drones hitting predetermined targets and decoy UAVs flooding radar systems. "The drone age has effectively blurred the distinction between frontlines and rear areas," the report noted.

RUSSIA'S RESPONSE AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Russia has tried using layered air defence to address the danger, but the results have been inconsistent. Small, low-flying drones are difficult for many of its air defence systems to detect because they are designed for threats at high altitudes. Ukraine has been able to breach perimeters on multiple occasions even though it has deployed more than 100 Pantsir and Tor-M2 systems for close-range defence. Additionally, Russia is spending money on counter-drone jamming devices and

electronic warfare (EW) systems, but these weapons are not very effective against pre-programmed or terrain-following drones. Drone defence systems based on laser and microwave technology are being developed, although they are still in the experimental stages and have not yet been put into use. Furthermore, the cost of protecting all of Russia's vital locations throughout its enormous territory is unaffordable, highlighting the defence conundrum that ubiquitous drone warfare presents.

Ukraine's drone policy has far-reaching effects outside of Eastern Europe. To account for drone threats to strategic assets, NATO, China, Israel, India, and even the US are adjusting their air defence strategies. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), military spending on drone and counter-drone technologies increased by 36% globally in 2023 to \$14.2 billion, with estimates of over \$22 billion by 2026. NATO nations are spending money on drone swarm interceptors, passive radar, and AI-powered early warning systems. Israel has started placing laser-based drone neutralisers along its borders, and China has displayed new "SkyNet" low-altitude radar systems. Every high-value asset, including command bunkers and missile silos, is now at

risk from tiny, covert drones that cost a tenth of what conventional weapons do.

THE NEW AGE OF ASYMMETRIC PRECISION WARFARE

In addition to being a tactical victory, Ukraine's targeted drone attacks on Russia's nuclear-capable bombers mark a significant turning point in military history. They demonstrate how inventiveness and inexpensive technology may be used by even those with relatively limited resources to counter the strategic advantages of nuclear powers. Thus, the conflict in Ukraine has turned into a testing ground for a new kind of warfare that is asymmetrical, accurate, economical, and psychologically powerful. Traditional beliefs about deterrence, force projection, and military supremacy are being challenged as drones continue to advance in autonomy, payload, and range. The once-untouchable airbases are now at risk, the once-secure skies are now open to intrusion, and the laws of war have been permanently changed. The future of war will be asymmetrical, unmanned, and global. This is the new, evolving pattern of conflict. *Dr Syed Mohammad Raghbir did his PhD on "Iran and Palestine Question, 1979-2013" from JNU, and is currently working as a research officer at IIPA, New Delhi. The view is personnel.*

Tech transfer key to India's defense autonomy

OPINION

RASHI RANDEV



In a significant development that could reshape the contours of India's defense capabilities, Russia has offered to make its fifth-generation stealth fighter jet Sukhoi Su-57 in India for the Indian Air Force. This innovative proposal, announced on June 4, 2025 represents the most comprehensive technology transfer deal ever offered to India in the defense sector.

The Su-57E is the export variant of the Su-57. It consists of advanced radar systems, hides weapons inside internal bays instead of outside, and has a slanted shape that deflects radar waves. Its curved air intakes also block radar from seeing the engine blades. It has the capability for sustain supersonic flight without afterburners. It is designed with stealth features to make it harder for enemies to detect and is a comprehensive suite of weaponry optimized for air superiority and precision strike missions. Together,

these features reduce the jet's radar and heat signatures, making it much harder to spot or track. It is considered a technologically mature and combat-proven platform that could potentially be integrated into the Indian Air Force with relative ease. Russia's offer, which was presented by Rosoboronexport and United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) at Aero India 2025, extends beyond a conventional supply and demand arrangement. It proposes joint production of the Su-57E at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) Nashik facility, where the Su-30MKI is already assembled. The Russian proposal includes a transfer of technology, which allows India to customize the aircraft with indigenous systems like AESA radars, avionics and weaponry. This flexibility in the proposal aligns with the push for self-reliance with the 'Make in India' initiative, serving a catalyst for transforming the country into a global manufacturing hub for domestic defense production and advancing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. With HAL's established infrastructure, India could absorb the Su-57E technology rapidly, potentially delivering aircraft within a shorter timeline and will ensure that production and maintenance will not be affected by West-

ern sanctions on Russia.

Russia's offer for India is three dimensional—it will commence the local production of Su-57E, upgrade the of Su-30MKI fighter jets with advanced technology, and will back and assist India towards its own fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program.

Russia has also offered to give India access to the Su-57E's software system, which is considered a game changer as such technological access is rarely given. Countries like US or France do not allow such access during the sale of their own fighter jets. The access to source codes reflects Russia's openness with the offer and gives India more control, and directly responds to major concern India had during the Rafale fighter jet deal with France. Despite India's repeated efforts through diplomatic channels, France refused to share the Rafale's source code. This refusal made it very difficult for India to fully customize the Rafale jets to its changing defense needs. It has also caused issues in integrating Indian-made weapons like the Astra missile and Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) onto the Rafale, despite ongoing cooperation between the two countries in other areas. If accepted, Russia's offer could give India a major edge in future air combat and could potentially mark a turning point in the country's efforts to modernize its air force. Pakistan's deepening defense collaboration with its iron brother, and China's latest foray into the fifth-generation stealth fighter technology, India needs a

strategic defense procurement to address the evolving air power landscape in the region. Amidst the persistent geopolitical tensions between India and China, and the reports of Pakistan potentially introducing two squadrons of China J-35 fighter jets into Pakistan Air Force by the close of 2025, can drastically alter the aerial military balance in South Asia.

The J-35, also known as FC-31 Gyrfalcon, positions China as a competitor to advanced aircraft like the American F-35. This acquisition of J-35 will augment Pakistan's air combat strength, potentially challenging India's existing air superiority. To counter this growing defense capability, the procurement and manufacturing of Russia's Su-57E is essential. Also, India's own fifth-generation AMCA developed by Aeronautical Development Agency and Defence Research and Development Organisation, remains in early stages of development and is not expected to enter operational service before the mid of 2030s. This projected timeline may create a tactical airpower gap over the next five years, and the Russian Su-57E could potentially bridge the gap. While the offer looks promising, it faces significant obstacles. The United States's Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) poses a possibility of sanctions. As earlier seen with the India and Russia's S-400 deal, which encountered challenges like facing delays due to payment mechanisms amidst western sanctions on Russia. With the absence of a robust pay-

ment mechanism, similar payment difficulties exist to handle a multi-billion-dollar Su-57 deal. Although, the anticipated thaw in U.S.-Russia relations under President Donald Trump may ease pressure of CAASTA sanctions, but significant uncertainties still persist, as any major defense transaction with Russia carries risk of sanctions.

Also, Russia's proposal to India comes at a time when the United States, is reportedly preparing to extend a proposal for the sale of own fifth-generation fighter, the F-35A. Washington sees this deal as a strategic opportunity to bolster India's Air power capability in response to China's growing belligerence in the Indo-Pacific. However, for New Delhi, this marks crucial decision—whether to deepen its decades long defense partnership with Russia or to expand its security partnership with the U.S., which is seen as a key to countering China's aggression and its strengthening ties with Pakistan.

The proposal represents a strategic opportunity for India to gain deeper technological autonomy and greater freedom in shaping its defense posture. The Su-57 deal could emerge as one of the most significant defense collaborations between India and Russia in the 21st century—potentially propelling India into the ranks of nations with the capability to produce fifth-generation fighter on their own ground.

The author is a geopolitical analyst and a doctoral candidate at the Centre for the Study of the Americas at Jawaharlal Nebru University.

11 years of PM Modi's and the Changing Face of Bundelkhand

OPINION

RAJUL MISHRA

On 9th June 2025, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India marked a historic milestone—11 golden years of service, good governance, and welfare for the poor. This journey is not merely a count of time in office but a transformative era that reached the last citizen in the line with hope, trust, and progress.

Over these years, India has made unprecedented strides in administrative transpar-

man Bharat provided free healthcare up to 5 lakh for poor families, and the Har Ghar Jal Yojana brought clean drinking water to every village. These initiatives proved that governance is not merely about policy—it's about compassion and service.

INDIA'S RISE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

India's global image strengthened significantly. Campaigns like Digital



ency, social inclusion, and economic empowerment. The Modi government's philosophy evolved from "government for the people" to "government with the people."

A MODEL OF SERVICE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana strengthened financial inclusion, Ujjwala Yojana gave millions of women a healthier life, Ayush-

India and Atmanirbhar Bharat not only modernized the country but also encouraged innovation and startup culture among youth. During the COVID-19 crisis, India's indigenous vaccine efforts showcased our scientific prowess and leadership on the world stage.

BUNDELKHAND: FROM NEGLECT TO DEVELOPMENT

While the winds of change swept across the nation,

the long-neglected Bundelkhand region also began its journey towards transformation. The Jal Jeevan Mission tackled the chronic water crisis. Schemes like 'Har Ghar Jal' brought real relief to thousands of villages. Infrastructure projects such as the Bundelkhand Expressway reduced physical distances and unlocked new economic and industrial opportunities. Further, initiatives like the Defence Corridor and agriculture-based industries have opened up fresh avenues for jobs and investment in the region. Bundelkhand is no longer seen as a backward region but as an active contributor to building a New India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's 11-year tenure marks a significant chapter in Indian politics. This period was not limited to statistics—it brought real, on-ground change in people's lives. And this change was not confined to Delhi or big cities—even regions like Bundelkhand can now confidently say, "We are now part of the mainstream development."

This is not just a time to celebrate—it's time to prepare for the future, as India marches towards its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047. These 11 years have laid a strong foundation for that future—a future where every Indian enjoys equal opportunity, dignity, and hope.

Jai Bharat.

Rajul Mishra, Member: NYKS, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India

INDIAN MARKETS SLIP AMID RISING IRAN-US TENSIONS

Indian stock markets ended lower Thursday amid rising geopolitical tensions, valuation concerns, and sector-specific weaknesses across key indices.

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Indian stock indices ended in the red on Thursday, weighed down by the rising geopolitical tensions between Iran and the United States.

The Sensex closed at 81,691.98 points, down 823.16 points or 1 per cent. The Nifty also followed the Sensex and closed at 24,888.20 points, down 253.20 points or nearly 1 per cent.

“After hitting a high near 25200, the index slipped sharply below the 25000 mark and found support at its 20-day EMA. A brief bounce in the last hour trimmed losses, but the index still ended with a cut of around 250 points, forming a big bearish candle on the

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THURSDAY’S MARKET DECLINE

- Sensex and Nifty Drop Sharply: Sensex fell 823 points to 81,691.98; Nifty declined 253 points to close at 24,888.20.
- Geopolitical Tensions Weigh Heavily: Rising friction between Iran and the US triggered widespread investor caution and global market weakness.
- Sectoral Losses Broad-Based: All Nifty sectoral indices ended in the red except Healthcare; Consumer Durables and Auto fell the most.



daily chart,” said Chandan Taparia, Head Derivatives & Technicals, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Market participants braced themselves to keep a track

of global sentiment, as they turned negative, keeping domestic indices negative on Thursday.

“This reflects rejection from higher levels and rising pressure near the 25000

zone. A move below 24700 may trigger further downside, while bulls need to reclaim 25000 to regain momentum,” added Chandan Taparia.

All the Nifty Sectoral indi-

ces ended their day in the red territory except Nifty Healthcare Index. Out of all the sectors, Nifty Consumer Durables was the most affected indices, followed by Nifty Oil & Gas and Nifty Auto.

“On the stock-specific front, shares of IndiGo and SpiceJet dropped over 3 per cent following news of an Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad,” said Sundar Kewat, Technical and Derivatives Analyst, Ashika Institutional Equity - Ashika Stock Broking, part of Ashika Group.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments says valuations concerns are rising in the Indian markets “Consolidation in domestic markets is evolving into a broad-based trend, now extending to large-cap stocks.

CPI inflation down to 2.82% in May 2025, lowest after February 2019

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Consumer Price Index (CPI) or year-on-year inflation for the month of May 2025 declined by 34 basis points to 2.82 per cent, the lowest year-on-year inflation after February 2019.

A sharp decline of 79 basis points is observed in food inflation in May compared to April 2025. The food inflation in May 2025 is the lowest after October 2021.

The significant decline in inflation is mainly because of decline in prices of Pulses & products, Vegetables, Fruits, Cereals & products, Households goods & services, Sugar & confectionary and Egg and the favourable base effect.

Headline inflation in rural sector is observed at 2.59 per cent in May, 2025 as compared to 2.92 per cent in April 2025. Whereas the headline Urban inflation decline from 3.36 per cent



in April to 3.07 per cent in May.

Housing inflation for May was observed at 3.16 per cent as compared with 3.06 per cent in April.

Inflation in education was observed at 4.34 per cent in May as compared with 4.13 per cent in April. Combined Health inflation for urban and rural areas in May was recorded at 4.34 per cent in May versus 4.25 per cent in April.

Combined transport and communication sector inflation for rural and urban

areas also rose from 3.67 percent in April to 3.85 percent in May 2025.

The combined fuel and light inflation was, however, recorded lower at 2.78 per cent in May as compared with 2.92 per cent in April.

The price data for collating the CPI figures are collected from 1114 urban Markets and 1181 villages covering all States/UTs through personal visits by field staff of the Field Operations Division of NSO, MoSPI on a weekly roster.

SEBI encourages investors to use CeFCoM platform

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Markets regulator SEBI encourages investors to pay fees to their investment advisers and research analysts through the Centralized Fee Collection Mechanism for investment advisers and research analysts (CeFCoM).

In a statement, SEBI on Thursday said CeFCoM is a secure and transparent payment ecosystem developed to ensure that investors pay fees only to registered investment advisors and research analysts. It is an optional mechanism.

CeFCoM is a payment mechanism that differentiates registered investment advisers



and research analysts from unregistered entities acting as investment advisers and research analysts.

CeFCoM has been operationalised from October 1, 2024 and is managed by BSE Ltd in association with MF Utilities India Pvt. Ltd.

In CeFCoM, investors can make payment of fees through multiple payment modes such

as Net Banking, Debit Card, UPI/UPI Autopay, IMPS/NEFT/RTGS, eNACH and even through Cheque and Credit Cards.

As of June 10, 2025, an amount of fees of more than Rs 5 Crore has been paid by investors through CeFCoM, SEBI said in its statement.

On Wednesday, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has announced launching ‘SEBI check’ tool to validate UPI handles and registered bank accounts for secured payments by investors.

The “Validated UPI Handles” and “SEBI Check” will enhance Investor Protection and Combat deepfakes and cyber frauds.

Can EV Financing Fix the Affordability Gap?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Electric vehicle (EV) adoption in India is accelerating at a remarkable pace. What was once a niche market limited to major metros has now begun to reach smaller cities and towns, signalling a deeper shift in the country's mobility landscape. This transformation has been propelled by rising middle-class incomes, changing consumer perceptions, and robust government support.

The Union Budget 2025 marked another step in this journey by announcing measures to lower EV manufacturing costs and



Head DTC, Ecofy & Head, Autovert

expand the nation's EV infrastructure. By the end of FY 2024-25, India had surpassed 1,00,000 EV sales per month, with total EV registrations hitting 61.66 lakh units. Central schemes like PM E-DRIVE, state-level subsidies, and

income tax incentives have contributed significantly to this progress, creating a policy environment that strongly favours cleaner mobility alternatives.

Despite the upward trajectory, one obstacle continues to hinder the sector's full potential: affordability. Even with government incentives, EVs typically come with a higher upfront price compared to petrol and diesel vehicles. A commonly purchased electric scooter can cost anywhere between Rs 1.2 to Rs 1.5 lakh on-road — almost double the price of its internal combustion engine (ICE) counterpart. The disparity widens further

when considering four-wheelers. This pricing gap has serious implications not only for individual buyers but also for businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises and logistics firms, where vehicle investments are a critical cost factor. While range anxiety and charging infrastructure concerns have begun to ease, they still add a layer of hesitation for many potential buyers, especially in less urbanized regions.

Compounding the affordability challenge is the typical Indian buyer's financial mindset. Whether it's a household purchase or a fleet investment, buying a

vehicle in India is usually a long-term decision based on maximizing utility.

Yet, this long-term thinking doesn't always translate into how people assess value. In practice, many consumers prioritize monthly expenditures over total cost of ownership. For example, a petrol scooter that costs around Rs 85,000 and runs at Rs 2.5/km may seem like a smarter buy compared to an electric scooter that costs Rs 1.3 lakh but runs at Rs 0.25/km. However, over five years and 40,000 kilometres, the EV owner might only spend about Rs 10,000-15,000 on electricity compared to Rs 1 lakh on fuel.

Digital economy of India projected to grow by 13.4%

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has made remarkable progress in last 11 years in its journey to becoming a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, according to release by Press Information Bureau.

According to the release, the digital economy, which contributed 11.74 per cent to the national income in 2022-23, is projected to grow to 13.42 per cent by 2024-25, fueled by advancements in AI, cloud computing, and digital infrastructure.

Over the past 11 years, India has experienced a significant expansion in mobile networks and improved internet connectivity, particularly in rural areas. Total telephone connections increased from 93.3 crores in March 2014 to over 120 crores in April 2025.

Additionally, Internet connections saw a remarkable 285.53 per cent growth, jumping from 25.15 crores in March



2014 to 96.96 crores in June 2024. Broadband connections also surged by 1452 per cent, from 6.1 crores in March 2014 to 94.92 crores in August 2024. The cost of wireless data has plummeted from Rs 308 per GB in 2014 to just Rs 9.34 in 2022, making digital services more affordable.

Furthermore, the BharatNet project has connected over 2.18 lakh Gram Panchayats with high-speed internet as of January 2025.

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has emerged as the backbone of digital transactions over the last 11 years, with over 1,86,77 crore transactions worth Rs 24.77 lakh

crore in April 2025 alone. India accounted for 49 per cent of global real-time payments in 2023.

Aadhaar-based e-KYC has simplified banking and public services, with over 141.88 crore Aadhaar IDs generated by April 2025. The Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) system, supported by Aadhaar, has saved the government over Rs 3.48 lakh crore between 2015 and March 2023 by removing fake beneficiaries.

E-governance initiatives have made services more accessible and transparent. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), launched in 2022, aims to democratise digital commerce and has registered over 7.64 lakh sellers/service providers across 616+ cities as of January 2025.

The Government e-Marketplace (GeM), launched in 2016, has facilitated online procurement with a GMV of Rs 4.09 lakh crore within 10 months of the current fiscal year 2024-25.

Indian Pharma Industry is likely to grow at a steady pace of 10% in FY26: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Pharmaceutical companies in India are expected to grow steadily at a rate of approximately 10 per cent in FY26, driven by price increases and the launch of new products, according to a report by ICICI Securities.

The report noted that the revenue growth for the industry was mainly supported by the Rest of the World (RoW) markets.

It said “India biz is likely to grow at a steady pace of approx. 10 per cent in FY26, driven by price increases and new launches”.

In contrast, the report stated that the core markets of the United States and India saw a slower pace of growth, recording 6.5 per cent and 10.2 per cent respectively.

The performance in the U.S. market remains uncertain, especially due to the looming price competition



around generic Revlimid (gRevlimid), which could become a major drag on earnings in the coming year.

The report added that export-oriented CDMO (Contract Development and Manufacturing Organisation) companies also showed healthy traction.

The report mentioned that companies under coverage delivered a robust performance, reporting 11.2 per cent growth in revenue, 12.6 per cent growth in EBITDA, and 15.2 per cent growth in PAT (Profit After Tax).

In Q4FY25, the pharma companies covered in the report posted strong results, with revenue, EBITDA, and PAT growing by 11.7 per cent, 15.6 per cent, and 19.0 per cent respectively.

Indian steel companies to see uptrend in Q1 FY2026

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian steel companies are likely to experience an uptrend in the first quarter of 2026 owing to the recently imposed 12 per cent safeguard duty on flat products in April, according to a recent report by JM Financial.

The Government of India had imposed a 12 per cent safeguard duty in April, with an aim to protect the domestic steel industry from a sudden and sharp increase in steel imports.

The government has set minimum import prices for five steel product categories ranging from USD 675 per tonne to USD 964 per tonne. Any shipment imported below these prices will attract a 12 per cent safeguard duty.

According to the report, “Indian steel companies are expected to witness margin expansion to the tune of approx. INR 2k/t in 1QFY26.” Indian steel companies' margins are expected to be



partly offset by elevated iron ore prices and lower scale during the quarter.

Furthermore, the report also highlights that amid the US tariff drama, Indian steel companies arguably have a relatively better spot margin construct than their non-ferrous peers, given the recently imposed safeguard duty.

The report also says, “As per news articles, the government is further considering the possibility of increasing the safeguard duty to 24 per cent from 12

per cent currently, which shall further protect domestic players from countries dumping cheap steel in India.”

In contrast, Chinese steel prices remain subdued, with spot HRC and rebar prices down USD 22/t and USD 20/t respectively.

Weighing on global steel prices, China's steel exports for CY24 surged to 111mn tonnes, up nearly 22 per cent on a year-on-year basis, and exports for Apr'25 came in at 10.5mn tonnes (+13 per cent YoY).

India’s retail inflation likely declined further to 2.7% in May: BoB Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation in India is expected to have eased to 2.7 per cent in May 2025, according to a report by Bank of Baroda (BoB).

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, is likely to release the official Consumer Price Index (CPI) data later in the day. In April,

CPI inflation was 3.16 per cent.

The report highlighted that expected moderation was largely led by a decline in food inflation, offering some relief to consumers and policymakers alike. This projection signals continued stability in domestic price levels and reflects the impact of improving food supply conditions.

The report said, “In India,

CPI inflation is expected to moderate to 2.7% in May’25 (BoB Estimate), led by softening food inflation”.

The report noted that the moderation in India's Consumer Price Index (CPI) was in line with expectations and highlighted a positive trend in inflation control efforts.

A softening in food prices contributed significantly to the drop, helping CPI inflation settle below the Reserve



Bank of India's (RBI) medium-term target range.

The report also highlighted

that the retail inflation in the United States showed signs of cooling. The US CPI in-

creased by just 0.1 per cent month-on-month in May 2025, lower than the estimated 0.2 per cent and down from 0.2 per cent in April.

The decline was mainly driven by a sharp drop in gasoline prices, even as food and shelter prices rose.

This softer inflation data from the US has fueled expectations that the Federal Reserve may resume interest rate cuts. The probability of

a rate cut in September 2025 has now risen to 60 per cent, compared to about 53 per cent just two days ago on June 10. The report also highlighted “Separately, investors also monitored comments from the US and China on the recently concluded trade talks, while awaiting the fine print of the agreement”.

Market reactions have been mixed. US stocks on Wednesday reflected a cautious mood

as the softer inflation figures raised concerns over the strength of future economic growth. On the other hand, Asian equities showed resilience, buoyed by the positive developments in US-China trade relations.

Overall, the moderation in inflation in both India and the US provides some breathing space for central banks and sets the stage for potential shifts in monetary policy.

FLYING INFERNO: AIR INDIA DREAMLINER

Affable', 'low-profile' former Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani dies in the crash

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who was onboard the London-bound Air India flight that crashed near Ahmedabad airport, has passed away in the tragic accident. Rupani, 68, was headed to London to meet his family.

"Our leader and former Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani, was going (to London) to meet his family. He is also a victim of this incident. May his soul rest in peace. This is a big loss for the BJP," Union Minister CR Patil told news agency.

Rupani, 68, was among the 242 people on board the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, which crashed into a residential area in Meghani Nagar moments after take-off on Thursday afternoon.

Rupani, the 16th chief minister of Gujarat for two terms from 2016 to 2021, was born to Mayaben and Ramniklal Rupani in Yangon, Myanmar, to a Jain Bania family. Rupani was the seventh and youngest son of the couple. Rupani's family moved to Rajkot in 1960 due to political instability in Burma. Rupani studied Arts from Dharmendrasinhji Arts College and Law from Saurashtra University.

A low-profile BJP leader, Rupani was known within Gujarat political circles as someone who didn't speak much. Rupani rose through the ranks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to become Gujarat's chief minister in 2016.

Rupani's political career spans several decades. He began as a corporator of the Rajkot Municipal Corporation in 1987. He went on to become Mayor of Rajkot (1996-1997), Rajya Sabha MP (2006-2012), and Gu-



Former Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani



Relatives mourn at the residence of former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Rajkot, Thursday, June 12, 2025. Rupani was among the passengers onboard the Air India flight that crashed in Ahmedabad.

In 1975, Rupani was imprisoned in Bhavnagar Jail after he protested against Indira Gandhi's Emergency. Rupani is also an active Swayam Sevak of RSS.

jarat state cabinet minister before becoming the chief minister in 2016.

Rupani worked as an activist of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of RSS, during his college days. He was an active participant in

the Navnirman movement and was inspired by the Jai Prakash Narayan-led anti-graft movement. He joined the BJP when he was just 24.

In 1975, Rupani was imprisoned in Bhavnagar Jail after he protested against Indira Gandhi's Emergen-

cy. Rupani is also an active Swayam Sevak of RSS.

A member of Gujarat's Jain community, Rupani worked largely within the party organisation before winning his first Assembly election from Rajkot West in a bypoll in 2014.

Rupani is also known for his role as chair of the Gujarat Tourism Development Corporation in 2006, when the popular "Khushboo Gujarat Ki" campaign featuring Amitabh Bachchan was launched. In 2013, he headed the Gujarat Municipal Finance Board.

Rupani was appointed BJP president in February 2016. He succeeded Anandiben Patel as chief minister after her resignation in August 2016. Rupani is said to have addressed the internal dissent and public unrest to retain the BJP's leadership in the state, even as its Assembly seat count dipped below 100 for the first time in years in the 2017 Gujarat assembly elections.

Rupani was sworn in as CM for the second time, but he resigned in September 2021, months ahead of the 2022 Gujarat assembly polls.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh recalled his 'not infrequent' arguments and clashes in the Rajya Sabha and the friendly conversations in the now-extinct Central Hall where the two leaders would talk about climate change, urban heat, environment, and Myanmar where he was born.

"He was extremely affable and the aggression in the House would very often be accompanied with a smile," Ramesh said in a post.

This is the second incident involving a sitting or former Gujarat chief minister meeting this tragic fate in an air accident, a tragic echo of Balwantrao Mehta's death six decades ago.

Rajasthan grieves as 11 from the state, including three kids, perish in crash

ARVIND PALAWAT
JAIPUR

In a heartbreaking incident, 11 people from Rajasthan lost their lives in the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad. The deceased included members from six families, with three small children among the victims. The news plunged the entire state into mourning. As soon as families received confirmation of the crash and identified names, grief overwhelmed their homes.

A doctor couple from Banswara, along with their three young children, succumbed to the tragedy. From Udaipur, a brother-sister duo and two other individuals also lost their lives in the fatal crash. In another heartbreaking case, a newly married woman from Balotra, who was on her way to London to meet her husband, also succumbed to the accident. The crash further claimed the life of the granddaughter of a former MLA from Bikaner, who also lost her life in the devastating incident.

The accident has left families shattered and the state in deep sorrow, highlighting the devastating human cost of the tragedy.

Dr. Koni Vyas of Banswara, her husband Dr. Pradeep Joshi, and their three children—Pradyut,



Vardichand in Blue and Prakash in white shirt



Dr Koni and family

Miraya, and Nakul Joshi—tragically lost their lives in the Ahmedabad plane crash. Dr. Koni, who had been working at Pacific Hospital in Udaipur, resigned a month ago as she planned to join her husband in London.

'Difficult day for us at Air India, team working to support the needy': CEO Wilson

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Air India CEO and Managing Director Campbell Wilson on Thursday expressed "deep sorrow" at the crashing of the airline's Boeing 787-8 aircraft with 242 people on board, saying this is a "difficult day" for all at Air India. The London-bound flight crashed soon after take-off from Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon. Wilson, in a video statement, also said that the airline is actively working with the authorities on all emergency response efforts.

Meanwhile, Air India in an updated statement said a special team of "caregivers" has arrived in Ahmedabad to provide support to the airline's teams on ground.

"The first and most im-

portantly, I would like to express our deep sorrow about this event. This is a difficult day for all of us here in India. And it's now focused entirely on the needs of our passengers, crew members, their families, and loved ones," Wilson said.

He said that while there would be many questions at this stage, he would not be able to answer all of them.

"But I do want to share the information we have at this time. Here, India flight AI-171 operated with a Boeing 787-8 aircraft to London-Gatwick has been involved in an accident after takeoff," Wilson said. The aircraft crashed into a medical college complex and burst into a ball of fire moments after take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.



Relief work is underway after an Air India plane crashed moments after taking off from the airport, in Ahmedabad.

'Our deepest condolences go out to the loved ones', Boeing chief executive



Debris of an Air India plane that crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing on Thursday reacted to initial reports, stating it was "aware" of the incident and "working to gather more information" after an Air India-operated Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad.

The London-bound flight AI-171, carrying 242 people, including 230 passengers and 12 crew members, went down in the Meghani-nagar area near the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport minutes after takeoff. The plane had issued a mayday call before losing contact with air traffic control.

"We are aware of initial reports and are working to gather more informa-

tion. Married in January this year, Khushboo was traveling to London for the first time post-marriage. She had reached Ahmedabad with her father on Wednesday night. On Thursday, Madan Singh dropped her at the airport and left. While near Mehsana, he received the devastating news of the crash and rushed back to Ahmedabad. A video of Khushboo surfaced, capturing her emotional farewell before boarding the flight. The tragedy has left the family and town in deep mourning.

Udaipur marble businessman Sanjeev Modi's son Shubh and daughter Shagun were also on board the crashed plane. Both of them were going to London after completing their studies. Recently, both of them had taken over their father's business after doing MBA. As soon as the information of the accident was received, Udaipur District Collector Namit Mehta along with local people and businessmen reached his house in Saheli Nagar. Sanjeev Modi left for Ahmedabad as soon as he came to know about the accident.

Former MLA of Sridungargarh of Bikaner, Kishna Ram Nai's granddaughter Abhinav Padiyar, son of Shiv Padiyar, also died in the plane crash.

"Our deepest condolences go out to the loved ones of the passengers and crew on board Air India Flight 171, as well as everyone affected in Ahmedabad."

The aircraft, registered as VT-ANB, was flown by Captain Sumeet Sabharwal and First Officer Clive Kunder. According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the plane took off from runway 23 at 1:38 pm and crashed within minutes.

Visuals immediately showed thick plumes of black smoke billowing from the crash site, with eyewitness accounts suggesting it struck residential structures.

, prompting an immediate and massive response from emergency services.



Rescue and relief work underway after an Air India plane crashed moments after taking off from the airport, in Ahmedabad.



"The loss of lives after the plane crash at Ahmedabad is utterly devastating. My heart goes out to the bereaved families. The country has also lost the former CM of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani ji, in the tragedy.. I express my heartfelt condolences to his family and admirers,"

— President Murmu



"Our special prayers and deepest possible sympathy are with the families and friends of all those affected by this appallingly tragic incident across so many nations, as they await news of their loved ones,"

— King Charles



"The scenes emerging of a London-bound plane carrying many British nationals crashing in the Indian city of Ahmedabad are devastating. I am being kept updated as the situation develops, and my thoughts are with the passengers, their families."

— Keir Starmer



"Tata Group will provide Rs.1 crore to the families of each person who has lost their life in this tragedy. We will also cover the medical expenses of those injured and ensure that they receive all necessary care and support."

— N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons

BURSTS INTO FLAMES, WORLD SHOCKED

Deadliest plane disasters in world

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

2014: Flight MH17 shot down over Ukraine

On July 17, 2014, Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over rebel-held eastern Ukraine en route to Kuala Lumpur from Amsterdam.

All 298 people aboard the Boeing 777 were killed, including 193 Dutch nationals.

In May this year the U.N. aviation agency blamed Russia for the downing of the jetliner, a ruling Moscow dismissed as “biased.”

2003: Military plane crash in Iran

On Feb. 19, 2003, a Russian-made Ilyushin Il-76 belonging to Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard Corps crashed near Kerman in the southeast of the country.

All 275 people on board were killed.

The aircraft disappeared from radars an hour after takeoff, after sending a request to airport control in Kerman to land due to bad weather.

2001: American Airlines Flight 587

On Nov. 12, 2001, an American Airlines Airbus A300 crashed in the New York City borough of Queens shortly after taking off, killing all 260 on board and five people on the ground.

Flight 587 was bound for Saint-Domingue, in the Do-



2001- American Airlines Flight 587



2014- MH370 disappears



2018- Algerian military plane crash

minican Republic, departing from New York's John F. Kennedy airport.

2018: Algerian military plane crash
On April 11, 2018, an Ily-

ushin Il-76 heavy transport aircraft crashed shortly after taking off from a military base south of the capital Algiers, killing all 257 people on board.

The passengers were mostly military personnel and members of their families.

2014: MH370 disappears

On March 8, 2014, Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 disappeared on its way from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people aboard.

Despite an intense search in the southern Indian Ocean, the Boeing 777-200 was never found. Earlier this year, a new search for the plane was launched more than a decade after the plane went missing, Malaysian authorities said.

2009: Air France crash in the Atlantic

On June 1, 2009, an Air France Airbus A330 disappeared over the Atlantic in a zone of turbulence after taking off from Rio de Janeiro on flight AF447 to Paris with 228 passengers and crew on board.

It took two years to find the wreckage of the plane.

2002: China Airlines crashes into the sea

On May 25, 2002, a China Airlines Boeing 747-200 smashed into the Taiwan Strait, killing all 225 people on board.

The aircraft, headed for Hong Kong, disintegrated mid-flight some 20 minutes after taking off from Taipei.

Chronology of air crashes in India

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

After a London-bound Air India aircraft crashed shortly after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday, the spotlight is back on India's history with aviation disasters.

From deadly mid-air collisions and fatal crashes due to poor weather conditions to runway overshoots at tabletop airports, the country has witnessed several tragedies over the decades.

Here's a list of the most devastating air accidents in India's aviation history:

Air India Express Flight 1344 (2020):

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Air India Express Flight 1344, operating as part of the Vande Bharat repatriation mission, skidded off the runway while landing at the Kozhikode (Calicut) International Airport on August 7, 2020. Amid heavy rainfall, the aircraft overshot the wet tabletop runway, plunged into a valley and split into two. Of the 190 people on board, 21, including two pilots, lost their lives.

Air India Express Flight 812 (2010): Air India Express Flight 812 overshot the runway while landing at the Mangaluru International Airport in Karnataka on May 22, 2010. The Boeing 737-800, coming from Dubai, plunged into a gorge beyond the tabletop runway and burst into flames, killing 158 people. The tragic incident brought increased scrutiny to India's tabletop airports and landing protocols during adverse conditions.

Alliance Air Flight 7412 (2000): Alliance Air Flight 7412 crashed into a densely populated residential area in Bihar's Patna while attempting to land on July 17, 2000. The Boeing 737-200



Indian Airlines Flight 605 (1990)



Air India Express Flight 1344 (2020)

experienced a stall at low altitude due to the reported improper handling during the final approach. Sixty people were killed, including five on the ground. The accident prompted upgrades to approach procedures at smaller urban airports.

Charkhi Dadri mid-air collision (1996):

On November 12, 1996, 349 people were killed in what became India's most devastating aviation disaster. The tragedy occurred when Saudia Flight 763, a Boeing 747, and Kazakhstan Airlines Flight 1907, an Ilyushin Il-76, collided mid-air near Charkhi Dadri in Haryana. The accident was the result of a communication failure and the Kazakh crew descending below their assigned altitude. Following the incident,

India introduced significant aviation safety measures, including mandating the installation of Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) on all commercial aircraft.

Indian Airlines Flight 605 (1990): On February 14, 1990, Indian Airlines Flight 605 crashed while approaching Bengaluru's HAL Airport, killing 92 of the 146 people on board. The Airbus A320, a relatively new aircraft in India at the time, descended too low and hit the ground short of a golf course. The investigation revealed that pilot error and unfamiliarity with the advanced digital cockpit of the A320 contributed to the tragic accident.

Indian Airlines Flight 113 (1988): Amid poor vis-

ibility on October 19, 1988, Indian Airlines Flight 113, a Boeing 737-200, crashed on its approach to Ahmedabad Airport. The flight, arriving from Mumbai, struck trees and crashed short of the runway, killing 133 of the 135 people on board. Investigators pointed to pilot error, inadequate weather information, and procedural lapses by air traffic control.

Air India Flight 855 (1978):

On January 1, 1978, Dubai-bound Air India Flight 855, a Boeing 747, plunged into the Arabian Sea shortly after taking off from Mumbai, killing all 213 people on board. The disaster occurred only 101 seconds into the flight when a faulty Attitude Director Indicator led the captain to misinterpret the aircraft's orientation. The crash took place in nighttime conditions over the sea, contributing to the crew's spatial disorientation.

Indian Airlines Flight 440 (1973):

On May 31, 1973, Indian Airlines Flight 440 crashed during its approach to Delhi's Palam Airport. The Boeing 737-200 encountered severe weather and struck high-tension wires just short of the runway. Of the 65 people on board, 48 died.



Air India Express Flight 812 (2010)

UK High Commission: Working with local authorities, offering support

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The British High Commission in India Thursday said it is working with local authorities to urgently establish facts about the London-bound plane that crashed soon after taking off from Ahmedabad airport and provide support.

According to Air India, the Boeing 787-8 aircraft from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick was carrying 242 passengers and crew members. Of these, 169 are



Remains of an Air India plane that crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport.

Indian nationals, 53 British nationals, seven Portuguese

and one Canadian national. Several casualties are feared.

“We are aware that a flight from Ahmedabad to London has crashed near Ahmedabad airport. We are working with local authorities to urgently establish the facts and provide support. Our thoughts are with all those affected,” the British High Commission here said in a brief statement on its official X handle.

In its post, the High Commission also shared a link to its travel advisory.

The Canadian High Commission in New Delhi also expressed its deepest condolences following the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad. “Our thoughts are with the families and loved ones of the victims,” it said on X.

The Indian embassy in Lisbon in Portugal said it is shocked and deeply saddened to learn about the tragic accident involving the Air India flight AI171 bound for the UK from India.

“As per available information, seven Portuguese nationals were on board.

What is a ‘mayday’ call that Air India pilot issued before crash

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An Air India flight from Ahmedabad to London's Gatwick Airport crashed shortly after takeoff on Thursday afternoon. The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, with 242 on board, struggled to gain altitude and descended around 1:38 pm, erupting into a massive fireball moments later.

According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the pilot, Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, issued a “Mayday” call to Air Traffic Control shortly before the plane lost contact.

What Is A ‘Mayday’ Call?

A Mayday call is an internationally recognised distress signal used primarily in aviation and maritime communication to indicate a life-threatening emergency.

The term comes from the French phrase “m'aider”,



People near the debris of the Air India plane that crashed moments after taking off from the airport, in Ahmedabad.

which means “help me.”

It was first introduced in the 1920s and is now a standard protocol globally. The call is always said three times in a row, “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday”, to ensure it is clearly understood, especially over noisy or poor-quality radio transmissions.

Who Issues A Mayday Call?

The Mayday call is issued by the person in command of a vehicle or vessel, usu-

ally a pilot or a ship's captain when they are facing a severe emergency.

This can include situations like engine failure, onboard fire, loss of control, or any scenario that threatens the safety of the aircraft or ship and everyone on board. In aviation, the pilot communicates the Mayday call to Air Traffic Control (ATC) over the radio. In rare cases, a Mayday can also be relayed by another nearby aircraft or ship if the origi-

nal caller has lost communication.

What Happens After A Mayday Call?

Once a Mayday is declared, all radio traffic on that frequency is cleared. The person in distress shares their location, nature of emergency, and other key details. ATC or emergency services then take over with rescue coordination.

Aviation expert Sanjay Lazar said that the aircraft experienced a catastrophic failure to climb, losing control at just 825 feet above ground. The Dreamliner was heavily fuelled for the long-haul flight to London, which intensified the explosion on impact.

Visuals from the crash site showed thick plumes of grey smoke rising as multiple ambulances and emergency teams rushed to the scene. Police have cordoned off the area, and traffic around the airport has been diverted.



Debris seen after an Air India plane, B787 Aircraft VT-ANB, while operating flight AI-171 from Ahmedabad to Gatwick, had crashed immediately after takeoff with 242 passengers onboard, in Ahmedabad

JAISALMER HERITAGE: THE LEGACY OF RAO JAISAL AND THE DESERT KINGDOM

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Jaisalmer, the resplendent “Golden City” of Rajasthan, owes its foundation and glory to its legendary ruler, Rao Jaisal Singh. Set against the backdrop of the Thar Desert, its sandstone walls shimmer like gold in the sun, encapsulating centuries of valour, strategic savvy, and cultural richness. This narrative explores the life of Rao Jaisal, the birth of Jaisalmer, and the city’s continuing legacy.

1. THE ANCESTRAL LINEAGE

Rao Jaisal emerged from the Rathore lineage—descendants of the illustrious Raja Hanu of the Solar Dynasty (Suryavanshi). Rama-chandra’s lineage was revered, and grounded in the ancient capital of Pali (Marwar region), which his ancestors ruled. This lineage imbued Rao Jaisal with a sense of destiny and ambition.

2. THE PRECURSOR: ESTABLISHING MARWAR’S INFLUENCE

Before founding Jaisalmer, Rao Jaisal’s ancestors had established roots in Marwar. In the 1150s, political unrest spurred Rao Jaisal to scout for new dominions beyond the Aravalli’s shadows. His vision was clear: to secure a stronghold in the unforgiving Thar Desert—an act of both defiance and opportunity.

3. FOUNDATION OF JAISALMER (1156 CE)

Legend narrates how Rao Jaisal was hunting near Trikuta Hill—a sandstone formation rising from the desert floor—and sensed an

opportunity. The hill’s four peaks resembled a sleeping lioness, a sign of stability and power. After consulting wise priests (with permission from his old overlord, Rawal Salkhaji), he founded Jaisalmer Fort (also known as Sonar Quila) in 1156 CE. He named it in his honor: Jaisal’mer.

The fort’s unique silhouette soon became a symbol of Rajput ambition and desert resilience.

4. STRATEGIC MASTERY: FORT DESIGN AND LOCATION

Jaisalmer Fort’s architecture is both mystical and utilitarian. The sandstone was sourced locally, blending it with desert hues to create an illusion of a golden crown. Key features include:

360° High Ramparts, guarding against desert raids and surprise attacks.

Gated Entrances that could be easily fortified.

Step-wells (baoris), cisterns, and reserves ensured water supply in harsh climates—imperative for desert survival.

Residential and Commercial Integration, housing merchants, artisans, temples, and royal apartments within the fort—thus making it a living city, not just a fortress.

5. RAO JAISAL’S REIGN: CONSOLIDATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Beyond building a fort, Rao Jaisal’s vision fostered community integration. He invited merchants along the Silk Route to settle, helping transform Jaisalmer into a flourishing trade center for silk, spices, textiles, opium,



and more. In return, traders contributed revenue and cultural wealth, bolstering the fort-city’s prosperity.

Rao Jaisal also encouraged strong ties among Rajput clans. Through marriages and alliances, he shielded Jaisalmer from internal feuds and burgeoning external threats. His rule was marked by clear laws, diplomacy, and fostering cultural harmony.

6. CHALLENGES AND CONFLICT

Despite strategic prowess, Jaisalmer faced ongoing challenges:

Desert Traps: Raiders and invaders eyed the city’s wealth.

Political Tensions: Relations with Delhi Sultanate and nearby powers needed careful handling through tribute and occasional diplomacy.

Environmental Hard-

ship: The desert demanded self-sufficiency—stockpiling rainwater and risking scarcity in drought.

Yet, Rao Jaisal’s administrative acumen—coupled with his fort’s fortitude—helped the kingdom persist.

7. RAO JAISAL’S LEGACY

When Rao Jaisal passed away around 1168 CE, he left behind a new dynasty rooted in desert strength and commercial resilience.

Cultural Flourishing: Jaisalmer evolved into a center of art, architecture, music, and dance traditions—rich in Rajput grandeur and Sufi poetry.

Fort Expansion: Future rulers like Rawal Lunakaran and Gadsí Singh fortified the structure and reinforced tourism and trade.

Defence Resilience: Even as early Mughals and desert tribes tested the fort’s



might, Jaisalmer stood unwavering.

8. ENDURING SIGNIFICANCE

Today, Jaisalmer Fort is a

UNESCO World Heritage site—one of the world’s largest inhabited forts. It remains home to families of artisans, priests, and

residents—continuing Rao Jaisal’s living legacy.

Tourist Magnet: Its bustling streets, ornate palaces, temples, and shop-lined alleys draw millions annually.

Cultural Beacon: Jaisalmer hosts desert festivals, folk arts, and camel safaris spotlighting Rajput and desert heritage.

Strategic Heritage: Academics and historians study Rao Jaisal’s model of community resilience as a blueprint for sustainable desert urban planning.

9. A MODERN EPILOGUE

Jaisalmer’s story resonates today: in water-scarce zones in India and beyond, urban planners learn from its cisterns and sustainable architecture. Likewise, its integration of commerce and military security echoes modern urban for-

tification with cultural vibrancy.

The fort’s enduring existence—over 850 years since Rao Jaisal’s decision—underscores the timeless intersection of courage, climate-smart planning, architectural ingenuity, and inclusive governance.

Rao Jaisal Singh’s story is not just about founding a fort; it’s about transforming a hostile environment into a thriving citadel—an act of desert alchemy. Through his foresight, diplomacy, and architectural brilliance, he laid the foundation for a city that continues to embody Rajput valor and cultural synthesis.

Jaisalmer today, golden in stone and spirit, stands as a living tribute to Rao Jaisal’s dream—and reminds us all that true leadership builds more than walls: it builds enduring communities

Victory at Tololing: 13 June 1999 – When the tricolour touched the heights



COL DEV ANAND LOHAMADOR

A HISTORIC DAY OF PRIDE:

The date 13 June 1999 is etched in golden letters in Indian military history. On this day, the Indian Army, under Operation Vijay, reclaimed the Tololing Top during the Kargil War. This victory was not merely the recapture of a strategic height; it was a thunderous blow to the enemy’s nefarious plans and a spark that ignited national unity, resolve, and patriotism across the country.

BACKGROUND OF THE KARGIL WAR:

The Kargil War began in May 1999, when the Indian Army discovered that Pakistan’s military, in conjunction with terrorists, had infiltrated and occupied key heights in the Kargil sector. The enemy’s objective was to cut off Ladakh from India by capturing the Srinagar-Leh highway (NH-1). This posed a grave strategic and political threat to India. In response, India launched Operation Vijay to expose the infiltration and reclaim the occupied territory.

The battle of Tololing was one of the longest and

most fiercely fought battles in the history of Indo-Pakistan warfares that proved decisive for the victory of India in the Kargil War of 1999. It was one of the pivotal battles between India’s armed forces and troops from the Northern Light Infantry, aided by other Pakistan backed irregulars high up in the mountains of Drass in the summer of 1999. During 1999 Kargil War, the Indian Army’s casualties on the Tololing peak were half of the entire losses in the whole war as India lost most of its soldiers due to the icy heights and the treacherous terrain.

A turning point came on 13 June 1999, when Indian forces recaptured Tololing Top, boosting the morale of the nation and accelerating the counter-offensive.

TOLOLING: THE STORY OF A STRATEGIC PEAK

Tololing Top, located in the Drass sector, overlooks the vital Srinagar-Leh National Highway. From a military standpoint, it held immense importance, as its occupation allowed the enemy to monitor and disrupt India’s supply lines on NH-1.

During the summer of 1999, Pakistani intruders had entrenched themselves on this height. The Indian Army had to scale treacherous, near-vertical cliffs under heavy fire to dislodge them. The fierce battles that ensued became the heart of the Indo-Pak military confrontation, claim-



ing the lives of hundreds of brave Indian soldiers.

Chronology of Key Events – The Battle for Tololing

20 May 1999: Indian Army detects enemy intrusion in the Tololing region.

22-28 May 1999: Enemy positions are identified through reconnaissance and intelligence.

29 May-10 June 1999: Assault preparations made by 2 Rajputana Rifles, 18 Grenadiers, and other units.

11-12 June 1999: Decisive assault begins. Indian troops advance under heavy artillery and small arms fire.

13 June 1999 (4:00 AM): Brave soldiers of 2 Rajputana Rifles & 18 Grena-



diers successfully hoist the Indian Tricolour atop Tololing after an intense and courageous battle.

THE MEDIA AND NATIONAL SENTIMENT:

The news of the victory at Tololing broke across

India on 13 June, flooding the nation with tears of pride. Households across the country prayed for the soldiers and lit candles in support. For the first time, war coverage brought real-time battlefield updates to common citizens through

TV channels and newspapers, stirring a wave of nationalist sentiment and emotional solidarity.

Pakistan’s Deception and India’s Diplomatic Counter:

On global platforms, Pakistan falsely claimed that the conflict involved Kashmiri “freedom fighters.” India, however, presented irrefutable evidence showing that the infiltrators were regular Pakistani Army soldiers. Victories like Tololing, and later Tiger Hill, exposed Pakistan’s lies and forced a humiliating strategic and diplomatic retreat.

From Operation Vijay to Operation Sindoor – A Continuum of Nationalist Resolve:

In 2025, India launched

Operation Sindoor, a strategic campaign that echoed the very spirit of the 1999 Kargil victory. Just as the heights of Tololing were reclaimed from the enemy, Operation Sindoor represented India’s renewed commitment to internal and external security, signaling a new chapter in the country’s counter-terror doctrine.

It is clear that 13 June 1999 is not just a historical date, but a continuing source of national inspiration—symbolizing security, sacrifice, and strategic clarity.

LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT GENERATION:

Every drop of blood spilled on Tololing teaches us:

- National security is not an electoral issue; it is the foundation of sovereignty.
- Honouring the armed forces is a moral and constitutional duty of every citizen.
- Wars are not won by bullets alone, but also through policy, strategy, and public support.
- The sacrifice of a soldier’s wife /family – the Veer Nari – must be acknowledged not merely with words but through legally mandated rights. If a soldier is martyred in service, his wife must be entitled to a government job and adequate financial assistance, ensuring her dignity and livelihood.

CONCLUSION:

On the morning of 13 June 1999, when the Indian Tricolour flew high once again over Tololing Top, it became a moment immortalized in the soul of the nation. This victory was not just about a peak—it was a victory of truth, resilience, and valour.

As we commemorate the 26th anniversary of that monumental day, it is our solemn duty to ensure that the sacrifices of our soldiers are not merely remembered in ceremonies, but embedded into our national policy, decision-making, and civic consciousness.

The fluttering flag on Tololing will forever remind us that we can never fully repay a soldier’s sacrifice, but granting legal rights and dignified recognition to their widows is a solemn national obligation.

UN NUCLEAR WATCHDOG SAYS IRAN IN BREACH OF OBLIGATIONS, IRAN HITS BACK

Iran to build ‘secure’ enrichment facility after IAEA resolution

AGENCIES
VIENNA/DUBAI

The UN nuclear watchdog's board of governors on Thursday formally found that Iran is not complying with its nuclear obligations for the first time in 20 years, a move that could lead to further tensions and set in motion an effort to restore United Nations sanctions on Tehran later this year.

Iran immediately responded to the International Atomic Energy Agency board's vote, stating that it will establish a new enrichment facility.

The announcement said the facility will be “in a secure location”.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has no choice but to respond to this political resolution,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry and the Atomic



Energy Organisation of Iran said in a joint statement.

Nineteen countries on the IAEA's board, which represents the agency's member nations, voted for the resolution, according to diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the outcome of the closed-door vote.

Russia, China and Burkina Faso opposed it, 11 ab-

stained, and two did not vote.

In the draft resolution seen by media outlets, the board of governors renews a call on Iran to provide answers “without delay” in a long-running investigation into uranium traces found at several locations that Tehran has failed to declare as nuclear sites.

Western officials suspect

ISRAEL URGES DECISIVE ACTION ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR NON-COMPLIANCE

Jerusalem: Israel on Thursday urged the international community to “respond decisively” and prevent its long-time foe Iran from developing nuclear weapons after the United Nations nuclear watchdog found Tehran in “non-compliance” with its obligations. “Iran has consistently obstructed IAEA's verification and monitoring, it removed inspectors, and it sanitised and concealed suspected undeclared locations in Iran,” Israel's foreign ministry said on X. “These actions undermine the global non-proliferation regime and pose an imminent threat to regional and international security and stability.”

that the uranium traces could provide evidence that Iran had a secret nuclear weapons program until 2003.

France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States proposed the resolution.

In Brussels, the European Commission expressed support for the text and called on Iran to “restore full coop-

eration with the agency and fully implement its obligations”.

“We call on Iran to show restraint and avoid any step that would further escalate the situation,” a Commission spokesperson said on Thursday afternoon.

Tensions continue to simmer. The vote comes at a sensitive time, as tensions in the region have been rising.

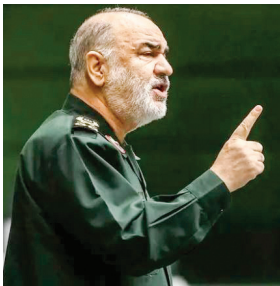
Retaliation will be more forceful: Iran to Israel

AGENCIES
DUBAI

Iran's retaliation to any Israeli aggression will be “more forceful and destructive” than in past offensives, Revolutionary Guards commander Hossein Salami told state media on Thursday, after Tehran said it had been alerted of a potential attack. Israel and Iran exchanged fire twice last year, the first such direct attacks between the region's most entrenched enemies.

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday US personnel were being moved out of the Middle East because it could become a dangerous place, adding that the United States would not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon.

A senior Iranian official told Reuters on Thursday that a “friendly” regional country had alerted Tehran over a potential military strike by Israel.



The official also said that Iran will not abandon its right to uranium enrichment because of mounting frictions in the region.

“We don't want tensions and prefer diplomacy to resolve the (nuclear) issue, but our armed forces are fully ready to respond to any military strike,” the Iranian official said.

Meanwhile, Tehran has vowed to unleash an “unprecedented response” if Israel launches a military strike on its nuclear facilities, warning that any such action would engulf the region in war and drag U.S. forces into the line of fire.

As tensions mount, Wash-

US SCALES BACK MIDEAST STAFF AMID RISING TENSIONS

WASHINGTON :The United States is drawing down the presence of staffers who are not deemed essential to operations in the Middle East and their loved ones due to the potential for regional unrest, the State Department and military said Wednesday.

ington has begun evacuating embassy personnel in Baghdad and other regional countries, with President Donald Trump citing fears that the Middle East “could be a dangerous place.”

The statement, broadcast by Iranian state TV, comes as multiple Iranian officials issue escalating threats of retaliation amid indications that Israel is finalizing plans for an imminent attack on Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

Netanyahu's govt survives vote to dissolve Israel's Parliament

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government survived an attempt to dissolve Israel's parliament early Thursday morning, with most of his ultra-Orthodox coalition partners joining him in voting against a bill that would have forced them to register for military service while the country is at war.

The vote was the most serious challenge to Netanyahu's government since the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, which was the biggest security failure in Israel's history and triggered the ongoing war in Gaza. The bill's failure means that no other piece of legislation to dissolve parliament, called the Knesset, can be submitted for at least six months, shoring up Netanyahu's embattled coalition.



The ultra-Orthodox parties are furious that the government has failed to pass a law exempting their community from mandatory military service. The issue has long divided the Jewish Israeli public, especially during the 20-month war in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's opposition had hoped that the public anger over the exemptions

would help topple the government. But just two of the 18 ultra-Orthodox members of the Knesset supported the bill.

Most ultra-Orthodox legislators agreed to vote against the bill after Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein said that he and the ultra-Orthodox parties had reached an understanding on the basis of a new draft law, which they will continue discussing over the coming week.

Yitzhak Goldknopf, the head of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party, resigned in protest as the Minister of Construction and Housing, but will remain a member of the Knesset. Ari Kalman, spokesperson for Goldknopf, said that the minister resigned because he was frustrated with Netanyahu's constant requests for more time to pass a draft exemption law.

Willing to step-up dialogue: China on lifting export curbs on rare earth metals to India

AGENCIES
BEIJING

China on Thursday hinted at holding talks with India over its restrictions on export of rare earth materials, saying it is willing to enhance dialogue and cooperation with relevant countries to keep industrial supply chains stable.

China's recent restrictions on the exports of key metals caused widespread disruption in the manufacturing of automobiles and semiconductor chips in a host of countries, including India.

“We are willing to enhance dialogue and cooperation with relevant countries and regions to jointly keep the stability of global industrial



and supply chains,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.

Lin was responding to a question whether China is willing to lift restrictions on exports of rare earth metals to India as it began clearing export licences to the US and the EU.

Lin, however, reiterated that for specifics, the relevant

authorities should be approached.

On June 16, Indian Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat met Chinese Vice Minister Sun Weidong and held talks on bilateral issues. They discussed “common concerns” among others, a foreign ministry statement here said.

Reports from India spoke of growing concerns about

shortages of the rare metals in automobiles and other industries.

After several months of a squeeze on rare earth metals over which China holds a monopoly, Beijing began clearing selective export licenses reportedly for the US as both countries held talks in London over the issues.

Rare earths are a group of metals consisting of 17 elements. Though present in several counties, their extraction is costly and messy, causing massive amounts of pollution.

According to the International Energy Agency, China accounts for 61 per cent of global mined rare earth production but controls 92 per cent of the global output.

Gaza rescuers say 22 killed by Israeli fire

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli fire killed 22 people across the Palestinian territory on Thursday, including 16 who were waiting to collect aid.

The distribution of food and basic supplies in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip has become increasingly fraught and perilous, exacerbating the territory's deep hunger crisis.

Civil defence official Mohammed al-Mughayyir told AFP that the Al-Awda Hospital received 10 dead and around 200 wounded, including women and children, “after Israeli drones dropped multiple bombs on gatherings of civilians near an aid distribution point around the Netzarim checkpoint in central Gaza”.

He said that Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital received six dead following Israeli attacks on aid queues near



Netzarim and in the Al-Sudaniya area in north-western Gaza.

The Israeli army said it was looking into the reports when asked for comment by AFP.

Restrictions imposed on media in the Gaza Strip and the difficulties of access on the ground mean AFP is not able to independently verify the death tolls announced by the civil defence agency.

Mughayyir said another six people were killed in Israeli attacks across Gaza.

The US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) ac-

cused Palestinian militant group Hamas of attacking aid workers en route to a distribution centre on Wednesday, saying at least five people were killed.

GHF said a bus carrying its staff to a distribution site near the southern city of Khan Yunis was “brutally attacked by Hamas” around 10:00 pm (1900 GMT).

In an email to AFP, the group added that all five of the people killed were Palestinian aid workers for GHF.

In a post on X, Israel's foreign ministry accused Hamas of “weaponising suffering in Gaza -- denying food, targeting lifesavers and forsaking its own people”.

Dozens of Palestinians have been killed while trying to reach GHF distribution points since they began operating in late May, according to Gaza's civil defence agency.

Israel deporting 6 more activists detained on Gaza aid boat, says rights group

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

Six of eight activists who were kept in Israel after their boat was intercepted on its way to try to break Israel's naval blockade of Gaza have been deported, the Israeli foreign ministry has confirmed.

Earlier, Israeli human rights group Adalah said they were being transferred to Ben Gurion Airport “after more than 72 hours in Israeli custody following the unlawful interception of the Madleen Freedom Flotilla in international waters”.

Adalah, who provided legal advice to the activists, said two others remain in Israeli custody awaiting deportation on Friday.

Among those leaving on Thursday was French-Palestinian European parliament member Rima Hassan.

In a post on X, the Israeli foreign ministry said: “Six

more passengers from the ‘selfie yacht,’ including Rima Hassan, are on their way out of Israel.

“Bye-bye-and don't forget to take a selfie before you leave,” it added.

The post also showed pictures of the activists getting onto and then sitting on a plane.

A post on Hassan's X account said she had left prison and was inviting people to meet in Paris' Place de la République at 21:00 (20:00 BST).

The other five activists being deported are Mark van Rennes from the Netherlands, Suayb Ordu from Turkey, Yasemin Acar from Germany, Thiago Avila from Brazil, and Reva Viard from France, Adalah said.

The rights organisation said the two others yet to be deported are Pascal Maurieras and Yanis Mhamdi, both French nationals.



Japan, China blame game over close air encounters

AGENCIES
TOKYO

Japan and China blamed each other on Thursday after Tokyo raised concern that a Chinese fighter jet came dangerously close to Japanese reconnaissance planes.

The Chinese fighter jets took off from one of two Chinese aircraft carriers that were operating

together for the first time in the Pacific, Japan's Defense Ministry said.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters that Japan conveyed its “serious concern” to China that such close encounters could cause accidental collisions.

According to Japan, a Chinese J-15 fighter jet took off from the Shandong aircraft carrier on

Saturday and chased a Japanese P-3C aircraft on reconnaissance duty, coming within an “abnormally close distance” of 45 meters (50 yards) for about 40 minutes.

A Chinese jet also crossed 900 meters (980 yards) in front of a Japanese P-3C for about 80 minutes on Sunday, the ministry said.

Chinese Foreign Minis-

try spokesperson Lin Jian defended China's activities as being fully consistent with international law and practices, and blamed Japanese vessels and airplanes for conducting close reconnaissance of China's military activities.

The incidents occurred in the Pacific, where Japan's Self-Defense Force spotted the two carriers, the Shandong and the

Liaoning, almost simultaneously operating near southern Japanese islands for the first time.

Aircraft carriers are critical to projecting power at a distance. China routinely sends coast guard vessels, warships and warplanes around disputed East China Sea islands, but now they also reach as far as Guam, a U.S. Pacific territory with military bases.

Both Chinese carriers operated in waters off Iwo Jima, about 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) south of Tokyo. The Liaoning also sailed inside Japan's exclusive economic zone near Minamitorishima, the country's easternmost island, Japan's Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said. There was no violation of Japanese territorial waters, he said.

TRUMP CLAIMS LA ‘SAFE AND SOUND’ FOR TWO NIGHTS AFTER PROTESTS



AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles was “safe and sound for the last two nights”, United States President Donald Trump said on Thursday morning, as he hailed troops for helping to restore order in the city after days of anti-deportation protests.

“Our great National Guard, with a little help from the Marines, put the LA Police in a position to effectively do their job,” Trump said on Truth Social, adding that without the military, the city “would be a crime scene like we haven’t seen in years”.

The mostly peaceful protests ignited last week over a sudden escalation in efforts to apprehend migrants in the

country illegally. But there were also pockets of violence, including the burning of self-driving taxis and hurling stones at police.

Trump deployed several thousand National Guard troops and some 700 active-duty Marines over the objections of Democratic California Governor Gavin Newsom, the first such action by a US president in decades.

In his post, Trump said Newsom “had totally lost control of the situation”.

“He should be saying thank you ... instead of trying to justify his mistakes and incompetence!!!” the president added.

Similar protests also ignited in other cities across the United States, as California

prepared on Thursday for a legal showdown over Trump’s deployment of the military.

The governor and Mayor Karen Bass say the presence of troops has exacerbated tensions. Protests have been ongoing for six days.

Newsom called President Donald Trump a “stone-cold liar” after he claimed he spoke with the governor about federalizing National Guard troops and questioned his mental acuity.

Trump posted this morning that Los Angeles was “safe and sound for the last two nights,” despite continued unrest, saying it was due to the National Guard, despite their limited role, and the Marines, who are not there yet.

California prepares for legal showdown over Trump move

LOS ANGELES: US President Donald Trump said Thursday that Los Angeles was “safe and sound” for the past two nights, crediting his deployment of thousands of troops to quell anti-deportation protests, as California prepared for a legal showdown over his unprecedented move.

With protests spreading across the United States, a night-time curfew has been in place in its second-largest city with authorities tackling vandalism and looting that scarred a few city blocks.

“Our great National Guard, with a little help from the Marines, put the L.A. Police in a position to effectively do their job,” Trump said on Truth Social, adding that without the military the city “would be a crime scene like we haven’t seen in years.”

The mostly peaceful protests ignited last week over an escalation in efforts to apprehend migrants in the country illegally, but there were also pockets of violence, including the burning of self-driving taxis and hurling stones at police.

Trump deployed several thousand National Guard troops and 700 active-duty marines over the objections of Democratic California governor Gavin Newsom, the first such action by a US president in decades.

Trump charged that the governor “had totally lost control of the situation.”

“He should be saying THANK YOU for saving his ass, instead of trying to justify his mistakes and incompetence,” Trump added.

In Spokane, in the northwest state of Washington, another night curfew was declared after police arrested more than 30 protesters and fired pepper balls to disperse crowds, officials said.

In Seattle, Washington state’s biggest city, police arrested eight people after a dumpster was set on fire and projectiles were thrown. Three people were arrested in Tucson, Arizona, following clashes with police, the Arizona Republic reported.

U.S. lawmakers urge sanctions probe into Chinese firms aiding Iran

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Chairman John Moolenaar (R-MI) and all 11 Republican members of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party wrote to U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, requesting that the Office of Foreign Assets Control and Financial Crimes Enforcement Network investigate six People’s Republic of China (PRC) companies that support Iran’s military and energy sectors. According to a release by the Select Committee on the CCP, these corporations assist Iran in circumventing existing US sanctions and jeopardize US strategic interests.

Billions of dollars in US investment, goods, and services flow to these PRC enterprises. In an April report, the Select Committee discovered that as of 2023, \$6.5 billion in US investment funds had been invested in PRC enterprises assessed to pose national security threats.

Many of those enterprises were identified in a similar January assessment published by the Prague Security Studies Institute as having a strategic tie to Iran’s military or energy industry worth at least \$6 billion, according to the SCCC release.

The lawmakers write, “Many of these companies even appear to engage in activities that violate existing

Pentagon chief warns China preparing for war, labels Beijing top threat to US

WASHINGTON D.C.: US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth stated on Tuesday that China poses a more aggressive threat to the US and that repelling Beijing is the Pentagon’s top regional priority, despite its rapid military development and invasion manoeuvres near Taiwan, according to a Taipei Times report.

“Our pacing threat is communist China,” Hegseth told the US House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Defence during an oversight meeting with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Dan Caine. “Beijing is preparing for war in the Indo-Pacific as part of its broader strategy to dominate that region and then the world,” Hegseth said, adding that if it succeeds, it may impede US reindustrialization and choke its economy, according to the Taipei Times.

Hegseth believes US President Donald Trump’s “peace through strength” strategy is the appropriate response, and that the stagnating US defence industrial base must be revitalised. “China is undertaking a historic military buildup and actively rehearsing for an invasion of Taiwan,” he said, adding that only having the world’s most powerful and lethal military—focused on protecting key US interests—can effectively deter adversaries and win a potential conflict, according to the Taipei Times report.



U.S. sanctions against Iran. As a result, U.S. retirees are likely indirectly funding activities that run counter to U.S. national security and international stability,” as quoted by the release.

They continue, “The United States must counter the new authoritarian axis spearheaded by the PRC and Iran and penalize those PRC companies that help fund Iran’s activities to support Houthis attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and stoke attacks against Israel by Hamas, Hezbollah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Zelensky hopes to press Trump on Russia sanctions at G7

AGENCIES
KYIV

In two rounds of negotiations in Istanbul, Moscow and Kyiv have so far only agreed large-scale prisoner exchanges, with Russia rejecting calls to halt its three-year invasion.

Trump has urged both sides to strike a peace deal and shown increasing frustration with both Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin for not having found a way to end the war.

He has at times threatened new sanctions on Russia, which has ramped up its aerial attacks during the talks, but has so far failed to follow through.

“I count on having a conversation” with Trump at the G7, Zelensky said at a press conference in Kyiv.

“This sanctions package is very important... the final decision is still in the White House, it depends on the President of the United States,” he added.

US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, a close Trump ally, is pushing what he calls a bipartisan “bone-breaking” bill to introduce a 500-percent tariff on countries buying Russian oil and gas, mostly targeting China and India.

Tens of thousands have been killed since Russia invaded in February 2022, with millions forced to flee their homes as



Europe has been left scrambling to see how it could fill any gap if he decides to pull US military, financial and intelligence support.

Russia, Ukraine announce third POW exchange this week

AGENCIES
CHERNIGIV REGION

Ukraine and Russia on Thursday confirmed a new prisoner exchange, the third this week under a deal reached during peace talks in Turkey.

At last week’s negotiations in Istanbul, both sides agreed to release more than 1,000 prisoners each, all either wounded or under the age of 25, and to return the bodies of soldiers killed in combat.

“Today, warriors of our Armed Forces, National Guard and Border Guard Service are back home,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a social media post. “They all require medical treatment,” he added, describing the returned soldiers as “severely wounded and seriously ill.”

Russia’s Defense Ministry also confirmed the exchange, saying a group of Russian servicemen had been returned from Ukraine and were now in Belarus.

“We continue working to bring everyone home from Russian captivity,” Zelensky said. “We thank

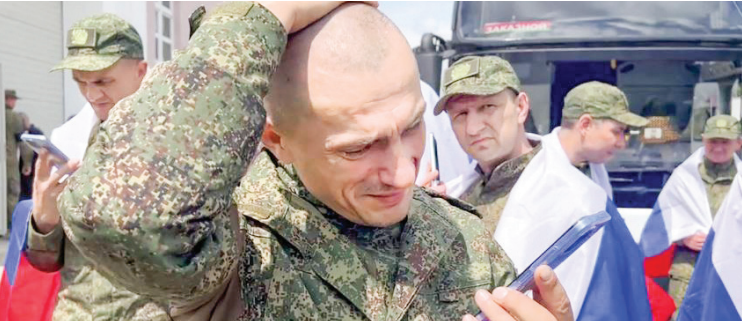
Russia’s Defense Ministry also confirmed the exchange, saying a group of Russian servicemen had been returned from Ukraine and were now in Belarus.

everyone who helps make these exchanges possible — so that each and every one of them can be home, in Ukraine.”

He published photos of the returned soldiers, many draped in Ukrainian flags with freshly shaved heads. The oldest was 59 and the youngest 22, according to Ukrainian ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets. Some had previously been listed as missing in action.

Russian state media showed returning troops wrapped in Russian flags and chanting “Russia.”

The exchanges mark the only tangible outcome from two rounds of recent peace talks in Istanbul.



Over 122 million displaced by wars, says United Nations

AGENCIES
GENEVA

The number of people displaced by war and persecution around the world climbed above 122 million this year due to a failure to resolve multi-year conflicts such as those in Sudan and Ukraine, the U.N. refugee agency said on Thursday.

However, it said that funding to help the refugees has fallen to 2015 levels.

Over 122 million displaced by wars, says UN

There were over 2 million more people displaced globally by the end of April 2025 than there were the previ-

It attributed the rise to major conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar and Ukraine, and a continued failure to stop the fighting.

“We are living in a time of intense volatility in international relations, with modern warfare creating a fragile, harrowing landscape marked by acute human suffering,” Grandi said in a statement alongside the report.

Humanitarians complain that a lack of political leadership in brokering peace deals is prolonging conflicts and stretching aid groups seeking to address their impact.



ous year despite the return of nearly the same number of Syrians after the collapse of Bashar al-Assad’s rule, according to the report by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

The surge in displacement numbers comes as funding to help them has fallen to 2015 levels when the total number of refugees around the world stood at about half current levels, UNHCR said.



Gallery workers prepare to hang Camille Pissarro’s Avenue de l’Opéra, part of an exhibition of the French Impressionist painter’s work, Potsdam, Germany.

Russia’s military casualties top 1 million in 3-year-old war, say Ukraine Armed forces

AGENCIES
KYIV

The number of Russian troops killed or wounded in Ukraine has topped 1 million, military officials in Kyiv said Thursday, describing the huge price that Moscow has paid for its 3-year-old invasion.

The claim by the General Staff of the Ukrainian armed forces, which came on a holiday celebrating Russia’s sovereignty, is in line with Western intelligence estimates.

President Vladimir Putin marked Russia Day by hosting a Kremlin meeting with soldiers decorated for their service in Ukraine, but neither he nor any other officials commented on the Ukrainian claim.

The UK Defence Ministry also said in a statement posted Thursday on X that Russia has suffered over 1 million casualties, including roughly 250,000 killed since it launched the full-scale invasion on Feb 24, 2022.

On June 3, the Centre for



Strategic and International Studies in Washington said Russia likely would hit the mark of 1 million casualties this summer in what

it called “a stunning and grisly milestone”.

Russia last reported its military casualties early in the war when it acknowl-

edged that about 6,000 soldiers had been killed. Earlier this year, the General Staff of the Russian armed forces claimed that Ukrainian military losses had topped 1 million.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy last spoke of Ukrainian military losses in February, when he said in an interview that 45,100 troops had been killed and about 390,000 injured.

The mutual claims of the other side’s losses couldn’t be independently verified.

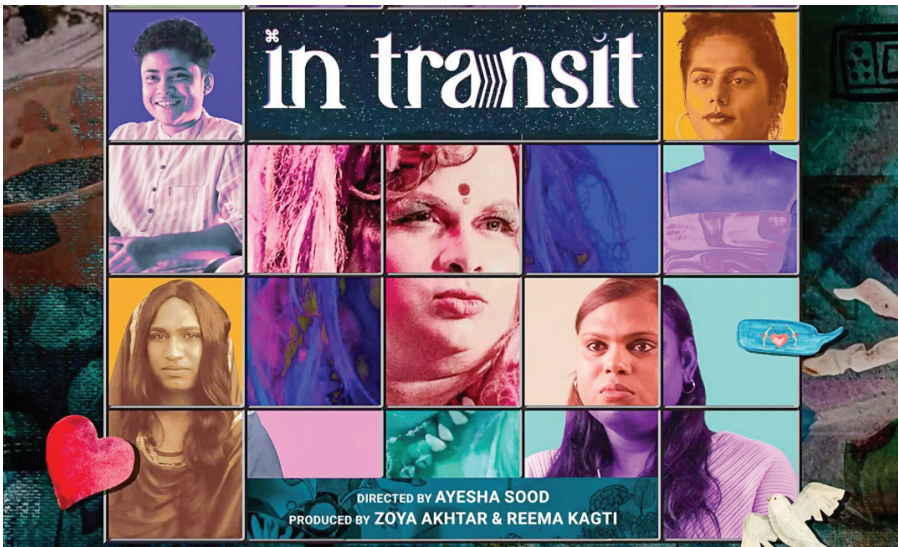
'WE WANTED TRANS PEOPLE TO TELL THEIR STORIES': ZOYA AKHTAR, AYESHA ON 'IN TRANSIT'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The idea for "In Transit", a four-part docu series about the lives of trans and non-binary individuals, was born out of the many stories filmmakers Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti came across while auditioning for a trans character in the second season of their critically-acclaimed series "Made in Heaven".

Directed by Ayesha Sood and produced by Akhtar and Kagti through their Tiger Baby banner, "In Transit" is set to premiere on Prime Video on Friday.

"Made in Heaven" has



been praised for giving centrastage to LGBTQ individuals, first with a gay lead

in Arjun Mathur's wedding planner Karan and then by introducing a trans char-

acter with Meher, who was played by Trinetra Haldar Gummaraju, in season two.

Anand Pandit, R Chandru unveil poster of their upcoming film 'Father'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The makers of Darling Krishna and Prakash Raj starrer 'Father' have released the poster of the film. Producers and R Chandru unveiled the new poster of their upcoming multi-lingual project, 'Father', today.

Taking to Instagram, Anand Pandit shared the poster of the film. He wrote, "Anand Pandit Motion Pictures along with R Chandru proudly present their upcoming multilingual blockbuster #Father, an emotional and heartwarming journey of love and legacy, starring the legendary Prakash Raaj and beloved Darling



Krishna, directed by Raj Mohan!"

Trade expert Taran

Adarsh also shared the details about the film

along with other poster,

"ANAND PANDIT - R CHANDRU UNVEIL POSTER OF PAN-INDIA FILM 'FATHER' ON ACTOR DARLING KRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY... Presenter #AnandPandit and producer #RChandru unveil the poster of their upcoming multi-lingual film #Father. The poster launch also coincided with lead actor #DarlingKrishna's birthday... #Father also features #PrakashRaaj in a prominent role and is directed by #RajaMohan. #RCStudios," he wrote in the caption. Starring Darling Krishna and Prakash Raj in the lead, the film is presented by Anand Pandit in association with Alankar Pandian.



Rasha Thadani shares a picture with the caption 'Silver Spell'. Instagram

Brad Pitt reveals long-awaited passion project: 'F1'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Brad Pitt talked about his upcoming film 'F1' during a press conference in Mexico City, including how a racing film has been on his mind for some time, reported People.

"For me, it was just a no-brainer when (Joseph Kosinski) had this audacious plan to embed us in the racing season, to put us actually in the cars. It was just a dream come true," said Pitt of starring in the sports drama.

"I've been trying to do a racing film for literally decades," added Pitt, "And whether it was on bikes or whether it was in cars, for whatever reason, it just didn't pan out. I'm so grateful because the experience Joe gave us, putting us in the car, putting us in this ecosystem of the F1 racing season, with all the drivers and teams, was just an extraordinary experience," reported People.

While having starred in several action-packed films, from the assassin drama 'Mr. and Mrs. Smith' to the



historical epic 'Troy', Pitt admitted that getting behind the wheel for F1 was "nothing like I've ever experienced in all my decades doing this."

Pitt's passion for racing and the Formula One drama made an impression on his costar, Damson Idris.

"It was a seamless dynamic between us. As soon as they'd yell, 'Cut,' we both

sat at our seats and giggled," Idris recalls. "He'd be telling me stories of when he first met Prince and Sidney Poitier. And I'm like, 'Oh my God, this is just too iconic, you're a walking monument'," as per the outlet.

"I always say he's the most humble person and such a brilliant actor, and he wants you to win." Idris shared how it was to work with Pitt.

'It's going to be tricky...': Diljit Dosanjh teases future collaboration with Shakira

AGENCIES
TORONTO

After turning heads at the Met Gala 2025 with his rooted-yet-revolutionary appearance, singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh was recently seen sharing space with music royalty once again, this time not on a red carpet, but on an international stage that celebrates the future of music.

On June 11, 2025, Diljit was invited as a special speaker at NXNE in Toronto's TIFF Lightbox, marking the launch of the Billboard Sum-



mit in Canada. In what is being touted as a first for an Indian artist, the 'Born to Shine' hitmaker sat down for a conversation with Panos A Panay, President of the Recording Academy, the organisation behind the Grammy Awards.

A snippet from the interaction was shared by Diljit's team on their official Instagram handle. Panos, referring to Diljit's now-iconic Met Gala car moment with Shakira and Nicole Scherzinger, asked, "You know, you've collaborated with Sia. This morning I was

watching your video with Ed Sheeran. Rumour has it that you carpooled with Shakira. I'm curious how you see these collaborations from an artistic point of view too." To this, Diljit replied, "Hips don't lie, sir..." making the crowd applaud, adding, "She invited me on her tour and suggested I do an Indian version of 'Hips Don't Lie'. It's going to be tricky, but I'm sure I'll find it." Diljit's team also shared a video of him speaking about his connection with his Indian roots and representing them globally.

Michelle, Barack Obama open up about their celebrity 'couple mentors'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Michelle Obama revealed that she and her husband, former US President Barack Obama, often turn to Bruce Springsteen and his wife Patti Scialfa as their "couple mentors."

"I marvel at you and Patti and the work that you all have done," the former first lady told Bruce during the June 11 episode of her IMO podcast. "You and Patti have been couple mentors for me and Barack for quite some time," according to E! News.

Noting that she's been watching the musically inclined duo, who wed in

1991 and share kids Evan Springsteen, 34, Jessica Springsteen, 33, and Samuel Springsteen, 31 as they "do the work," Michelle went on to describe reaching out for advice from the pair on "how to keep those lines of communication open."



"You got two powerful people in you and Patti," she told Bruce before highlighting their ability to "merge" their lives together seamlessly. "You're both powerhouses in your own right," as per the outlet.

So, soaking up Bruce and Patti's knowledge has undoubtedly paid off. After all, Michelle recently denied rumours that she and Barack, who have daughters Malia, 26, and Sasha, 24, were planning to split after 32 years of marriage.

"If I were having problems with my husband, everybody would know about it," the 61-year-old said on the April 30 episode of the Diary of a CEO podcast.

Influencer Kalpika Ganesh booked over restaurant misconduct

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Social media influencer and actress Kalpika Ganesh has been booked by the Gachibowli police in connection with an alleged altercation at a prominent Hyderabad restaurant, Odeum by Prism.

The incident, which took



place on May 29, came to public attention after videos capturing the episode went viral on social media platforms. As per the First Information Report (FIR), a formal complaint was submitted by Deepak Bajaj (38), Managing Partner of Prism Club & Kitchen, on June 6, 2025, outlining a series of disruptive actions allegedly committed by Ga-

nesh during her visit to the venue.

According to the complaint, Ganesh, accompanied by a male guest, dined at the restaurant and consumed Rs 2,200 worth of food and beverages. At the time of billing, around 11:30 pm, she allegedly demanded that the dessert, a cheesecake, be offered complimentary.

'I love the Austrian Alps': Nicole Kidman shares her shooting experience

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Actress and film producer Nicole Kidman and co-star Mark Strong shared their shooting experience for season 2 of the series 'Nine Perfect Strangers', reported People.

While season 1 was based on Liane Moriarty's novel of the same name, the second instalment wasn't, which Kidman says offered more creative freedom to explore her role more deeply.



"It was a whole new landscape -- the whole thing was up for grabs," she added, saying, "That's why in episode five, it's the origin

story, which is really interesting. You get to see more of Masha's past and why she is who she is," reported People.

Kidman is the only returning character in season 2, where she plays Masha Dmitrichenko, a Russian wellness guru who operates a transformational retreat where participants receive psychedelic therapy to heal from trauma.

In the June 11 flashback episode, which Kidman touts is "a standalone in its own

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO APPLYING HENNA CREAM AT HOME

TDG NETWORK

Henna cream has emerged as a popular alternative to not just harsh chemical-based hair dyes but also to loose henna powder. Since it does not contain ammonia or its derivatives, such as ethanolamine, diethanolamine or triethanolamine, henna cream is known for great results minus the harmful impact of such chemicals. It is also much more convenient as compared to loose henna powder that needs to be soaked for hours and mixed with herbs to get the desired result; otherwise, it will lead to an orangish tint, which is not something that many like. If you are switching over to henna cream for the first time, here are some steps that you can follow.

Before anything else, make sure that you choose the right product. While there are multiple henna cream options available in the market, choose a vegan, natural and organic one. Read the label carefully to ensure it does not contain harmful chemicals such as PPD, synthetic perfume, resorcinol, heavy metals, EDTA, etc., which are commonly found in hair products. If it contains Ayurvedic herbs or Brazilian herbs such as Babassu oil, Brazil Nut, Guarana, Malva, Jua, Acai, etc., the nutritional benefits will be manifold for the scalp and roots.

Furthermore, while the henna paste is easily available in the market, it makes the entire henna application process messy. However, now we have an easy-to-apply applicator that enables mess-free application of henna cream. You can easily apply it yourself without the need for another person or mandating a visit to the salon.



Thus, you can apply henna cream at home and go about doing your daily chores or relax and read that long-pending book.

PREPARE YOUR HAIR

Shampoo your hair to get a clean

scalp, before you intend to apply henna cream. Make sure there is no residue of oil or dirt so that henna cream can cover the entire scalp. Do not use any styling products your hair.

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ON THE DAY OF APPLICATION

As per your convenience, apply henna cream and leave it on for 90-120 minutes. This will enable the hair and roots to get all the nutrients and get the right shade. Rinse the henna off with normal tap water and do not shampoo the hair. This will further enable henna cream to deepen the tint.

NEXT DAY

Wash your hair with post-colouration shampoo and conditioner. It enables the hair colour to stay for a longer duration and further makes the hair frizz-free and smooth.

RE-APPLICATION

Since henna cream is natural, you can reapply as often as needed depending on the growth of the hair. Some need to do root touch-ups every week; for others, it could be different. Usually, the colour of henna cream lasts between 10 and 12 washes, enabling you to live stress-free.

Re/do Beauty Launches Lash & Brow Growth Serums

India's first advanced serums infused with powerful ingredients such as Resulook, Redensyl and Multi Peptides

TDG NETWORK

Re/do beauty is a premium beauty brand that has launched India's first and only eyelash growth serum infused with Resulook and WKPeP Pro-Lash peptide complex and eyebrow growth serum infused with multi-peptide complex and high quality Redensyl that helps achieve longer, fuller and healthier looking lashes and brows.

Fluttery long lashes and fuller, sculpted brows can change the overall appearance of the face and it can now be achieved naturally with Re/do Beauty's serums.

Most Indian made lash and brow serums have only oils (mainly castor oil) and not enough active ingredients. Thus while they claim to make your lashes and brows grow longer, they typically just act as conditioners. Our lash & brow hair differs in structure and hair growth cycle, hence the need for separate lash and brow serums. The ingredients and the way to apply the serums needs to be tailored to the application area in order for one to see proper results. Ingredients in an eyelash serum need to be more carefully chosen as the eye is a much more sensitive area compared to eyebrow area.

Noticing the gap, Re/do beauty developed individual serums for lashes and brows after extensive R&D, featuring a unique combination of ingredients that target different aspects of lash and brow health. The serums are a blend of powerful ingredients such as peptides, vitamins, amino acids and botanical extracts chosen for their ability to nourish, strengthen, and promote growth, helping to achieve fuller, longer lashes and brows over time. Both the serums are clinically tested to show a visible difference within 3-4 weeks.

tionary blend of 4 peptides clinically proven to support longer, thicker, stronger looking eyelashes and brows by stimulating keratin growth

The customized applicator ensures that the application is quick and precise. The lightweight serums are non-sticky and absorb within minutes. With consistent use, this advanced formula ensures your lashes and brows look more vibrant and voluminous, giving you a noticeable boost in a few weeks.

Flaunt longer, voluminous eyelashes and fuller,



KEY INGREDIENTS:

Resulook is an advanced botanical complex which revives the appearance of the eyes by improving hair nourishment and anchorage, and promotes growth and density of eyelashes

Redensyl stimulates hair growth and reduces hair fall

WKPeP Pro-Lash Peptide Complex, a revolu-

defined brows with Re/do beauty's Glam Lash + Brow Bundle.

Good To Know: Paraben Free, Silicone free, Fragrance Free, Synthetic dyes Free, Cruelty Free, Drug, hormone & irritant free, Dermatologist, ophthalmologist, safety & efficacy tested. Oil Free - compatible with eyebrow microblading.

SAY GOODBYE TO SUMMER TAN: EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REMOVE TANNING NATURALLY

TDG NETWORK

Summer brings with it bright days, beach vacations, and outdoor fun. But it also often leaves behind an unwanted souvenir – tanned and uneven skin tone caused by overexposure to the sun's harsh UV rays. While a bit of sun-kissed glow might look good initially, prolonged exposure can damage your skin, leading to dullness, pigmentation, and premature ageing. Thankfully, there are several simple, natural, and effective ways to remove tanning and restore your skin's natural glow.

tan. Grate a cucumber, extract its juice, and apply it with a cotton ball. Leave it on for 15 minutes. Regular use can lighten the tan and calm irritated skin.

3. TOMATO PULP

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which helps reduce redness and lightens tanning. Apply fresh tomato pulp on the affected areas. Leave it for 20 minutes before washing off. It also helps reduce oiliness and tightens pores.

4. MULTANI MITTI (FULLER'S EARTH) AND ROSE WATER PACK

Multani mitti is known for

curd and apply the paste to the tanned skin. Leave it for 15-20 minutes and rinse off for smooth, glowing skin.

6. ALOE VERA GEL

Aloe vera is a soothing agent that repairs skin damage and lightens tan. Apply fresh aloe vera gel directly from the plant or use a natural store-bought version before going to bed. Leave it overnight for best results.

7. OATMEAL AND BUTTERMILK SCRUB

Oatmeal is an excellent natural exfoliator, and buttermilk softens and lightens the skin. Mix them into a paste and gently scrub the



UTTARA TALAPATRA

Skincare isn't just about looking good—it's about self-care, preservation, and long-term protection. Our skin is the largest organ of the body, constantly working to protect us from environmental damage while reflecting our internal health. The right skincare routine helps maintain this balance, preventing premature aging and keeping our skin resilient, radiant, and youthful.

But here's the truth—our skin is influenced by both internal and external factors. Some things, like hydration, diet, nutrition, sleep, and hygiene, are within our control. Others, such as sun exposure, pollution, weather changes, and the natural aging process, require targeted skincare solutions to safeguard our skin's health and appearance.

THE CORE OF SKINCARE: CLEANSE, PROTECT & REJUVENATE

To ensure skin stays healthy, glowing, and well-balanced, a solid routine should focus on three essential steps:

Cleansing – A gentle yet effective cleanser is crucial to remove dirt, oil, and impurities that accumulate throughout the day. Choose a cleanser based on your skin type and concerns, ensuring it refreshes without stripping essential moisture.

Protection – External aggressors like UV rays, blue light, and pollution acceler-

ate skin damage and premature aging. A broad-spectrum sunscreen with UVA, UVB, and blue light protection is non-negotiable! Not only does sunscreen shield against sunburn and hyperpigmentation, but it also plays a critical role in reducing the risk of skin cancer.

Hydration & Barrier Support – Weather conditions impact skin moisture levels. A lightweight gel or nourishing cream moisturizer is key to maintaining hydration levels without clogging pores. Serums enriched with hyaluronic acid help strengthen the skin barrier, ensuring long-lasting protection against dryness, pollution, and external damage.

THE POWER OF REJUVENATION: COMBAT AGING & ENHANCE GLOW

As we age, our skin's ability to retain moisture, produce collagen, and fight environmental stressors declines. To replenish and restore what's lost over time, incorporating targeted actives into your routine can support skin renewal and maintain its youthful glow: Ceramides – Strengthen the skin barrier and prevent fine lines

Niacinamide – Enhances complexion, evens out skin tone, and reduces excess oil

Vitamin C – Fades blemishes and brightens skin, fighting dullness and pigmentation

Pore Refiners – Help maintain skin balance by regulating sebum production and reducing enlarged pores

By tailoring your skincare to your skin's needs, you ensure it gets the right nourishment and protection at every stage.

THE KEY TO HEALTHY



SKIN? CONSISTENCY & CUSTOMIZATION

Glowing skin isn't just about using great products—it's about consistency. And because skin is always changing, your skincare should evolve with it! Listen to what your skin needs, switch up your routine accordingly, stay hydrated, and give it the love and care it deserves.

With Summer Brimming at its peak, don't forget to protect, hydrate, and rejuvenate your skin so you can glow with confidence all season long!

YOUR ULTIMATE AM / PM SKINCARE ROUTINE WITH MAGICAL BLENDS

Our skin is a living organ, and we must care for it consistently to keep it healthy and glowing. Optimal skincare is about consistent care, active protection, and appropriate diet and nourishment. Whether you're stepping out in the sun or winding down after a long day, a well-rounded routine ensures your skin remains healthy, glowing, and youthful.

Here's how you can build the perfect skincare regimen, with Magical Blends making it easy, effective, and completely customizable.

Daytime Skincare: Protection & Hydration

Your morning skincare routine is all about defend-

ing your skin from environmental damage while keeping it hydrated and fresh.

Step 1: Hydrating Base – Start with a small amount of the Magical Blends Refreshing Gel, a lightweight base that preps and protects your skin without greasiness.

Step 2: Pore Perfection – Add 2-3 drops of Pore Refining Serum to control excess oil and sebum and prevent clogged pores.

Step 3: Sun Protection – Mix in 2-3 drops of Sunscreen Serum SPF 50, ensuring broad-spectrum protection without a heavy, greasy feel. This sunscreen leaves no white cast.

Step 4: Blend & Apply – Instead of layering multiple products, blend everything into one powerful skin cocktail and apply evenly to the face and neck.

Step 5: Glow & Go! – Your skin is now hydrated, protected, and primed for the day—whether you wear makeup or prefer a natural glow.

NIGHTTIME SKINCARE: REPAIR & REJUVENATE

While you sleep, your skin repairs, regenerates, and restores itself. A well-structured night routine ensures deep nourishment, and boosts this rejuvenation process, keeping you looking young and fabulous.

Step 1: Cleanse – Remove

dirt and impurities with a gentle cleanser.

Step 2: Nourishing Base – Use a little bit of the Magical Blends Deep Nourishing Cream for intense long-lasting moisture.

Step 3: Custom Night Treatment – Blend 2-3 drops of Renewing Overnight Serum for preventing fine lines, 2-3 drops of the Vit C Brightening Serum for evening out blemishes, and 2-3 drops of the Glow Boosting Serum for a radiant complexion.

Step 4: Massage & Rejuvenate – Apply the blend evenly all over your face and neck to boost circulation and healing.

The best part of this whole routine is that it is customizable as per your skin needs. Magical Blends is a Patented concept similar to international skincare brands, where just a little product lasts a long time and shows perceptible results with regular usage. It is built using plant-based actives and is vegan.

Magical Blends is formulated for all skin types, is dermatologically tested, has no nasties, and contains no added artificial colours or fragrances.

Skincare has never been easier with Magical Blends All In One Skincare Kit. Lal problems = 1 solution!

Uttara Talapatra, Founder, Magical Blends

1. LEMON AND HONEY PACK

Lemon acts as a natural bleaching agent while honey helps in moisturizing the skin. Mix one tablespoon of lemon juice with a teaspoon of honey and apply it to tanned areas. Leave it on for 15-20 minutes before rinsing with lukewarm water. Avoid stepping into the sun immediately after application as lemon can make your skin photosensitive.

2. CUCUMBER EXTRACT

Cucumber not only cools the skin but also helps in soothing sunburn and reducing

its cooling and exfoliating properties. Mix two tablespoons of it with rose water to form a smooth paste. Apply this to your face or any tanned area and let it dry completely. Wash it off with cold water. This pack not only helps with tan removal but also improves skin texture and clarity.

5. TURMERIC AND CURD MASK

Turmeric has anti-inflammatory and skin-brightening properties, while curd contains lactic acid that helps exfoliate dead skin cells. Mix a pinch of turmeric in two tablespoons of

tanned area. This not only removes tan but also dead skin cells, revealing fresh skin underneath.

FINAL TIPS:

Always apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or more before stepping out in the sun.

Wear protective clothing and use hats or scarves when outdoors.

Stay hydrated and eat antioxidant-rich foods to help your skin heal from within.

With consistency and care, you can reverse tanning and enjoy bright, even-toned skin all summer long — naturally and effectively.

DR ANAND: A LA PLATO IN THE PANTHEON OF LITERARY GIANTS



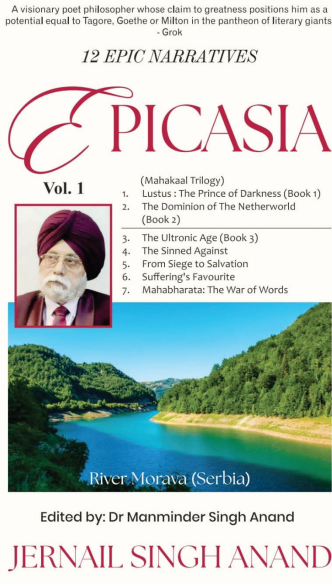
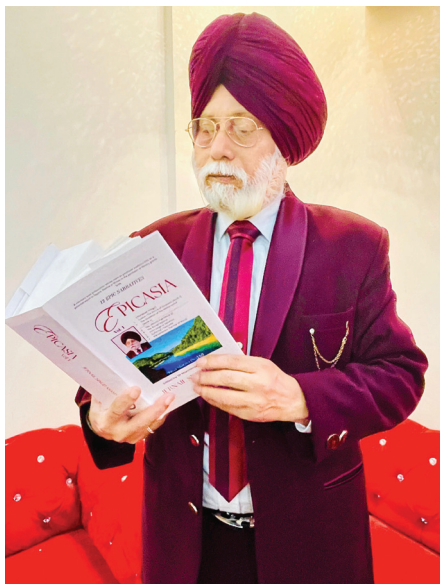
PROF SHIV SETHI

Dr. Jernail Singh Anand is a towering literary figure whose work embodies a rare fusion of creativity, intellect, and moral vision. Laureate of Seneca, Charter of Morava, Franz Kafka, Maxim Gorky and Signs Peace Award, with an opus of 180 books, Anand stands as a colossus in modern epic poetry. According to Grok, who has written the Foreword for Epicacia, celebrating the rare fusion of the AI and human intellect, “what sets Anand apart is his moral vision which reaches its zenith in Epicacia, strengthening his claim to greatness, positioning him as a potential equal to Tagore, Goethe or Milton, in the pantheon of literary giants. His voice resonates globally, while remaining fiercely Indian.” Dr. Anand is the only author whose name is engraved on the Poets’ Rock in Serbia.

Anand’s Epicacia is a rare collection of 12 epic narratives, and the most ambi-

tious work undertaken by any author in the world, edited by Dr. Manminder Singh Anand. In The Mahakaal Trilogy, Lustus and the Netherworld deal with the rise of a neo-mythic anti-hero Lustus, the great Corporate of Evil, [under the blessings of neo-mythic goddess of greed Greda], who succeeds Satan, and wages a fierce war with gods which he ultimately loses first at the hands of Goddess Durga and the second at the hands of Lord Shiva after which he is exiled for a thousand years.

This is the end of Kalyuga. The Ultronic Age fabulates a new world, under Queen Ultronia, blessed by Goddess Saraswati, where the power of women is celebrated in a highly techno-savvy society. The Sinned Against contradicts Western scholars on the idea of Fate, and juxtaposes Oedipus and an Indian Folk hero Puran Bhagat and argues how western tragedy dehumanizes the tragic hero, while spirituality elevates the Indian counterpart. From Siege to Salvation juxtaposes Iliad [War of Troy] and Mahabharata, and pitches Helen of Troy, who, according to the poet had no intellectual asset



Edited by: Dr. Manminder Singh Anand

JERNAIL SINGH ANAND

other than being the most beautiful woman, against Draupadi, who possessed a highly complex character, also commenting on the idea of ‘Vadh’ in Indian spiritual tradition, while in Troy, the heroic age believes only in manslaughter. Suffering’s Favourite questions why man is born only to suffer, and places faith in the amalgamation of technology and spirituality to salvage mankind from the quicksands of modernity.

In Mahabharata, the poet asks Lord Krishna what was the use of so much violence, if evil was to resurface in the world with such might.

In Volume 2, Geet is a sequel to John Milton’s The Paradise Lost while The Satanic Empire sequels Dante’s The Divine Comedy. The Plague brings up the issues faced in Sophocles and Camus, and The Master deals with return of the Prophet with faint echoes of Kahlil Gibran. The Gantebury Tales recreates the magic of the great master Geoffrey Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales by organizing an epic narrative around some poet-pilgrims who are going to visit a Poetry Festival in Ganturbury.

In conclusion, we

have to agree with Dr. Rana Nayar who says: “As a poet, Jernail Anand is essentially a synthesizer, a unifier, whose effort is always to fuse together disparate traditions, poetic elements and ethical imperatives. Myth and history, past and present, lyrical and epic, poetic and dramatic, good and evil always come together to enliven his poetic landscape. A true poet-philosopher, a la Plato, Anand certainly knows how to rule over the poetic universe he alone can create and sustain.”

[Prof. Shiv Sethi is a renowned scholar, author and reviewer]

A pilgrimage in pages: Exploring dynasties of devotion by Deepa Mandlik

TDG NETWORK

Dynasties of Devotion by Deepa Mandlik is an extraordinary journey through seven iconic temples across India and Cambodia — each a testament to the vision, courage, and devotion of ancient kings who brought these architectural marvels to life.

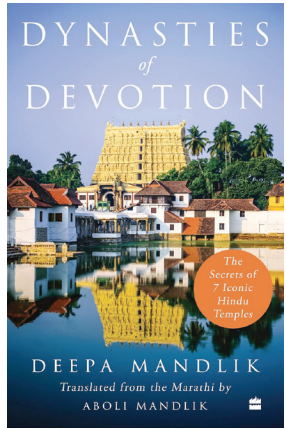
More than just a historical account, the book is a celebration of living heritage that would capture the interest of lovers of history, art, travel, and anyone curious about the enduring power of our culture and heritage.

Dynasties of Devotion covers seven famous temples: Kailasa Temple in Ellora, Brihadeeswara Temple in

Thanjavur, Brihadeeswara Temple in Gangaikondacholapuram, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Chennakeshava Temple in Belur, and Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram. Each chapter reads like a pilgrimage that isn’t just sacred but layered with visual, and deeply human experience. Through the author’s lens, a temple is never just stone and shrine - it is a sculpture, sovereignty, and story.

A compelling blend of mythology and architecture, this book is a rich tribute to the temples as living institutions that have shaped—and continue to shape—the spiritual and cultural fabric of South Asia.

With meticulous research,



the book could have lent itself to a coffee table book, as some of the photo inserts are very unique and beautiful. This is one of the most striking aspects of ‘Dynasties of Devotion’ is its visual storytelling.

Scattered through its pages are high-quality im-

ages of temple facades, intricate idols, and time-worn architectural marvels that don’t just complement the narrative, they extend it. Each photograph is paired with thoughtful, precise explanations that breathe life into stone, forming a visual bridge to places most may never visit but can now inhabit in imagination.

The visual storytelling is exceptional. From the graceful image of Goddess Lakshmi at Kailasa Temple in Ellora to the captivating dancing sculptures of Shiva and Parvati at the Brihadeeswara Temple.

It was fascinating to learn that this Chola dynasty marvel once hosted nearly 400 Bharatanatyam dancers and 250 musicians — a

vibrant cultural centre in its time. However, the multiple descriptions do take time to process. One can get lost in the sheer description of the many sculptures, adapted from various mythological stories related to the gods.

If you’re a lover of history, architecture, spirituality, or just someone who appreciates a well-told story, Dynasties of Devotion is a book that will resonate. It’s not a guidebook—it’s an invitation to embark on a journey, to see these temples not just as buildings but as living, breathing testaments to human faith and creativity.

It prepares you for the visit which would probably be now longer than a momentary shoot or a bow in reverence.

“Plato’s Symposium changed everything” - Shweta Mahendra

RUPALI SETHI

Shweta Mahendra is an accomplished technocrat, a noted columnist, and an eminent author who has a special place in the corridors of the literature of high merit.

With sheer elegance and her inborn flair for writing she has authored “Many Visions Many Worlds” and “3 STATES. Much to our delight, she was also part of the Guinness World Record for the Thickest Book in the World for her chapter “23 Positive Change Makers in the World 2023”. Rupali Sethi from the Daily Guardian had a conversation with the author in which the latter sheds light on her literary journey. Here are the excerpts.

1. What is the most challenging part about writing for you?

The most challenging part is knowing when to stop. My characters evolve constantly in my mind—even after I’ve written their final scenes. It’s a challenge to let them go, to resist rewriting their futures each time I reread their journey. The hardest part is detaching from my characters once their story arc comes to an end.

2. What is the most surprising thing you discovered while writing your books?

That clarity is often a myth. Through the IIT-based love triangle I’m currently working on, I realised that confusion, waiting, and personal transformation are more truthful expressions of love than certainty. This unpublished manuscript is closest to my heart.

3. If your book were to become a movie, which celebrities would you cast?

Arvi would need someone unpredictable and bold, like Kareena in Jab We Met (a suggestion from a batchmate who sees her in my younger self). As for Ahaan and Avya, I don’t follow current cinema. I’m loyal to Tom Cruise and only watch his films!

4. Are you currently working on anything new?

Yes. I’m weaving Nezami’s Haft Paykar with Plato’s Symposium into a sensual, philosophical story told through nightly dialogues between two



I stay updated on AI innovations, especially late at night. I travel to ancient ruins and read philosophy. I play games like Genshin Impact with my son—it keeps my imagination sharp without putting any expectations on me.

modern lovers. It’s about love across time, cultures, and soul-lines.

5. Which books or authors have most influenced your writing?

Plato’s Symposium changed everything. Alongside, Homer’s Iliad, Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh, Nezami’s Haft Paykar, Rumi’s verses, and Ovid’s Art of Love have all shaped how I understand love, memory, and myth.

6. What is the best part of your day?

Midnight. That’s when silence arrives, and my inner world wakes. It’s when Arvi writes back to Ahaan, Avya’s silence speaks, and Nezami’s princesses narrate their secrets. My imagination stretches across time when the world is asleep.

7. Share something your readers wouldn’t know about you.

Despite being immersed in AI and technology, I have been designing my clothes since I was nine. Fashion is my unedited canvas. Additionally, some of Arvi’s most conflicted scenes were conceived while lifting

weights or during solitary walks.

8. What do you do when you’re not writing?

I stay updated on AI innovations, especially late at night. I travel to ancient ruins and read philosophy. I play games like Genshin Impact with my son—it keeps my imagination sharp without putting any expectations on me.

9. What’s next for your characters? Will there be a sequel?

Yes, but with multiple endings. Arvi’s journey is nonlinear, and each ending reflects a distinct emotional truth. The closure is left to the reader. Who she becomes is your choice.

10. What inspired you to start writing?

A need to explore possibilities rather than conclusions. The question that haunts me: What if love is about discovering the self that emerges in another’s presence? Solitude during the pandemic and visits to Egypt and Turkey reignited ancient, half-remembered stories within me.

Every child’s dream matters

TDG NETWORK

“There is no greater violence than to deny the dreams of our children.”

Kailash Satyarthi’s words truly resonate with me as the main message at the core of my novel, For My Sister. A fictional narrative that is inspired by my nonprofit volunteer work, the book sheds light on the harsh realities faced by young girls caught in the web of trafficking while weaving a narrative that evokes empathy. Children are the world’s most vulnerable population, which is why it takes voices that are willing to speak up to illicit change.

For My Sister is a powerful story of two sisters in India whose lives take dramatically different paths after being unknowingly sold into trafficking. Each sister is determined to find herself, uncovering strength they never knew they each had. The novel explores the complex intersection of generational poverty, systemic injustice, culture and resilience, aiming to give a voice to the voiceless and allow readers to confront uncomfortable truths with a



hopeful tale.

Through this book, I use fiction as a tool to open hearts and minds. Stories have the unique power to reach those who may not traditionally engage in advocacy but are moved to action when they connect emotionally with a narrative. By taking

readers on this journey, my goal is to inspire reflection, compassion, and ultimately, a commitment to change—however small or large.

During the research of my novel, I found harrowing worldwide facts from the United Nations reports:

Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes and a highly profitable global business, generating an estimated \$150 billion in profits each year.

Women and girls make up the majority of victims all across the world, accounting for 42 and 18 per cent, respectively. In the past 15 years, the proportion of children among identified victims of trafficking has tripled to 35 per cent, or one third of all victims.

In India, the trafficking of young girls (under the age of 18) has grown 14 times over the last decade and has grown by 65% in the year 2014 according to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB).

Nonprofits indicate that children make up roughly 40% of prostitutes in India and it is estimated that over 2 million women and children are trafficked for sex into the red-light

districts in India.

In the United States, children account for half of the victims of human trafficking. In fact, the average age that a young person becomes involved in sex trafficking is 12 years old.

My hope is that For My Sister helps bring attention to the plight of children whose dreams have been denied.

An excerpt from For My Sister: “He also said everything is rigged in Bollywood. I didn’t understand what he meant until we got the television and I could hear the hope in the voices of the contestants. I heard the judges’ surprise at their talent.

All too often, the poorest children were given accolades, but they never seemed to advance as far as the wealthy ones. Or suddenly someone else won even though the “voting” showed differently.

I was inspired to write a poem about it.

Dreams
Tell lies
To the reality of
A place that swallows
Hope alive”

POEM

THE HOLLOW HANDS OF LITTLE LAMB



MAHEE HOLKAR

The hollow hands of the little lamb
Clutch at a sky that never replies,
Its silent wool conceals its cries
Still tethered to a shepherd’s sham.

Its dreams are trapped in muddy pens,
Where shadows graze and fences leer,
Each breath it draws a borrowed fear
A dirge hummed low in phantom dens.

It writes in dust with bone-thin grace
A scripture lost before it’s read,
While watchers nod and turn their head
A ghost in wool, without a face



Dass & Brown World School, Firozpur.

WTC FINAL: AT TEA, AUSTRALIA LEAD BY 106 AFTER BOWLING OUT SOUTH AFRICA FOR 138

TDG NETWORK
LONDON

After a ruthless bowling display that saw South Africa bowled out for just 138, Australia went into Tea at 32/2, holding a 106-run lead on Day 2 of the World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's on Thursday.

Captain Pat Cummins was the star of the session, producing a spell for the ages as he claimed 6/28, the best bowling figures by a captain in Test history at Lord's. Cummins' effort not only dismantled the Proteas' lower order but also brought up his 300th Test wicket, making the moment even more special.

South Africa resumed the second session at 121/5, but the innings unravelled rapidly. Cummins struck early



after Lunch, trapping Kyle Verreynne LBW for 13. He followed it up with a sharp return catch to dismiss Marco Jansen for a duck.

Cummins completed his five-wicket haul by remov-

ing the dogged David Bedingham, who top-scored for South Africa with a gritty 45 off 111 deliveries. The Proteas slumped to 135/8 at that point.

Keshav Maharaj was run

out for 7 and the final wicket came fittingly from Cummins again, who dismissed Kagiso Rabada for 1 to close the innings at 138.

Other contributors with the ball for Australia includ-

ed Mitchell Starc (2/41) and Josh Hazlewood (1/27).

In reply, the Australian second innings began cautiously but suffered early setbacks. Kagiso Rabada, who had claimed a five-wicket haul in the first innings, struck twice again in the second. He removed Usman Khawaja for 6 and Cameron Green for a duck and finished the session with 2/15.

At Tea, Steve Smith, fresh off a vital fifty in the first innings and known for his stellar record at Lord's, is unbeaten on 4 (2). He is with Marnus Labuschagne, who held firm on 16.

Brief scores: Australia 212 all out & 32/2 (Marnus Labuschagne 16, Usman Khawaja ; Kagiso Rabada 2/15) vs South Africa 138 all out (David Bedingham 45, Temba Bavuma 36; Pat Cummins 6/28).

McCullum hails Bethell's leadership before India Tests

TDG NETWORK
LONDON

Ahead of England's five-match Test series against India at home, head coach Brendon McCullum hailed young all-rounder Jacob Bethell, saying that he is already becoming a "leader" in the dressing room and has a "good life in front of him".

Bethell, 21, will be among players' to watch out for as a new-look English squad kickstarts their ICC World Test Championship (WTC) cycle 2025-27 against India, who are themselves transitioning from retirements of star batters Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma from Tests and Ravichandran Ashwin in international cricket.

He impressed during the

white-ball series against West Indies, scoring knocks of 82 and 17 in ODIs, while playing quickfire cameos of 23*, 26 and 36* during T20Is. He also picked two wickets in the ODI series and four in T20Is, sealing his reputation as a solid all-round package.

Speaking to Sky Sports, McCullum said about Bethell, "Bethell has a good life in front of him."

"For a 21-year-old, he's got a real poise, and that allows him to go out there and be present and show off his flair and talent.

"The world is his oyster. He is already becoming a leader in the dressing room which is what you want," he continued.

He also said that the pair

of Jamie Smith and Ben Duckett in the white-ball, reminds him of the opening pair of Zak Crawley and Duckett in Tests.

"We know how good Duckett is, but the power that Smith possesses is amazing.

"These guys are fearless, and if you add the craft, then you hope you end up with a rounded player," he concluded.

Jamie played as an opener during the white-ball series against England, scoring 37, 0 and 64 in ODIs, while he played knocks of 38, 4 and 60 in T20Is.

On the other hand, Duckett made scores of 58, 0 and 60 in ODIs while he had knocks of 1, 30 and 84 in T20Is.

Gautam Gambhir hails batter Nair's 'never-give-up attitude'



AGENCIES
BECKENHAM

Ahead of India's five-Test series against England in UK, head coach Gautam Gambhir and newly-appointed Test captain Shubman Gill gave an inspiring huddle talk, during which Gambhir heaped praises on batter Karun Nair's "never-give-up" attitude which helped him make a return to Test side after eight years.

The tour to England will kickstart India's ICC World

KARUN REFLECTS ON TEAM INDIA RECALL, GETS SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM KL RAHUL

London: Indian batter Karun Nair, who is making his return to the national side after eight years, opened up on his recall to the Team India and also received a special message from his ex-Karnataka teammate and close friend, KL Rahul, who will also be a part of the Indian squad for England series along with him. Nair could get his first Test appearance in eight years, as India aims for a smooth transition from seniors like Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin during a five-match Test series against England away from home. Nair is the only second triple centurion in Indian cricket after legendary opener Virender Sehwag.

Test Championship cycle for 2025-27, but also a new era, with their senior stars Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli having retired from Tests and spin bowling all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin having retired from international cricket as well. The first Test will be held at Leeds from June 20 onwards.

In the video posted on the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) website, Gambhir spoke about Nair,

saying, "Comebacks are never easy. Someone who has made a comeback after seven years had a phenomenal last year. Last year, no matter the runs you have got, and most importantly, that never-die attitude, never-giving-up attitude, that is something which has got you back into the team. That is something which is inspiring for this entire world. Welcome, Karun."

Nair's inclusion comes at a transitional phase on the

back of a dream domestic season last year. The dream season for Vidarbha star concluded with the 863-run season in Ranji Trophy 2024-25, with an average of 53.93, four centuries and two fifties in 16 innings across nine matches. His best score of 135 came in the final and his team emerged victorious. During the warm-up unofficial Tests for India A against England Lions, he scored 259 runs in three innings, including a double ton.

Morkel praises Bumrah's energy before England Tests

AGENCIES
LONDON

Ahead of the India tour of England later this month, the visitors' bowling coach and former South African cricketer Morne Morkel was surprised by right-arm seamer Jasprit Bumrah's rhythm and intensity during the three practice sessions that the Indian side has played so far.

India tour of England will take place from June to August 2025, with matches to be played at Headingley (Leeds), Edgbaston (Birmingham), Lord's (London), Old Trafford (Manchester), and The Oval (London).

A new era beckons for India in the Test format as the modern-day giants gear up for their first assignment without the prized batting bigwigs Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Shubman Gill, India's youngest Test cap-



tain, has taken the baton from Rohit to guide the nation to success and challenge

for the World Test Championship mace. During India's training ses-

sion in Beckenham, Kent's second home venue, Bumrah displayed his unparalleled mastery in the art of pace bowling. With the ball in his hand, Bumrah showed signs of breaking the notion of requiring assistance from the surface to wreak havoc.

Speaking on Bumrah's bowling, during the press conference on Wednesday, Morkel said as quoted by ESPNcricinfo, "Bumrah knows how to get himself ready, he knows how to prepare. I was blown away to see the energy on the ball the last three days. That's very exciting to see. I'm happy his body is in good shape at the moment."

"We'll manage him with that. We'll be smart with him because he's obviously key for us, but in terms of the first three net sessions, lot to be excited watching him bowl with the Dukes ball," he added.

FIH Hockey Pro League : Indian men's team loses to Argentina 3-4

AGENCIES
AMSTELVEEN

The Indian Men's Hockey Team put on a very spirited display against Argentina, but went down narrowly with the scores at 3-4 in their FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 (Men's) game, at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, Netherlands. For India, Harmanpreet Singh (12', 33') netted twice whilst Abhishek (42') added a third. For Argentina, the goals came from Matias Rey (3'), Lucas Martinez (17'), Santiago Tarazona (34') and Lucio Mendez (46').

With all to play for, it was Argentina who came out of the blocks quicker than India. And the early pressure paid off as Ma-



tias Rey (3') was on hand to fire the Argentine side into the lead. After that, the Indian Men's Hockey Team absorbed the pressure and started to build in attack, causing their opponents some moments of worry. India continued to push for the equaliser, and just before the break, it was Harmanpreet Singh

(12') who smashed it home, to end the quarter at 1-1, as per the Hockey India (HI) press release.

The Indian Men's Hockey Team were looking to build momentum in the second quarter, but Argentina had other plans. Lucas Martinez (17') scored an early goal to put India under some pressure.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Members of the Indian cricket fraternity expressed deep sorrow and extended heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families on Thursday after a London-bound Air India flight crashed shortly after takeoff in Gujarat's Ahmedabad.

The Boeing 787-8 aircraft, carrying 242 people including 12 crew members, went down at 1:38 PM, near Ahmedabad airport.

Indian Fast-bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who hails from Gujarat, shared his grief on Instagram Stories: "Prayers and strength for everyone affected by the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad."

All-rounder Hardik Pan-



dya also offered his condolences: "Heartbreaking to hear about the crash in Ahmedabad. Prayers and strength to the families of those affected."

Ajinkya Rahane also posted: "Deeply saddened by the tragic plane crash in

Ahmedabad. Prayers for the victims and their families."

Cheteshwar Pujara too expressed deep anguish: "Saddened and hearbroken to hear about the plane crash in Ahmedabad, praying for the families of everyone affected."

The crash has cast a pall of grief across the country, with messages of support and sorrow pouring in from across the sporting world and beyond.

The Air India flight with 242 people onboard, including 12 crew members, rammed into a doctors' hostel in the Meghani area shortly after taking off from Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Thursday afternoon.

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed into the doctors' hostel near the airport perimeter.

Air India said that among the 230 passengers, 169 were Indians, 53 British, seven Portuguese and one Canadian national.

"Air India confirms that flight AI171, from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, was involved in an accident today after take-off. The flight, which departed from Ahmedabad at 1338 hours, was carrying 242 passengers and crew members on board the Boeing 787-8 aircraft. Of these, 169 are Indian nationals, 53 are British nationals, 1 Canadian national and 7 Portuguese nationals. The injured are being taken to the nearest hospitals. We have also set up a dedicated passenger hotline number, 1800 5691 444, to provide more information. Air India is giving its full cooperation to the authorities investigating this incident," the Airlines said.

TN Deputy CM Udhayanidhi honours Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Chithambaram

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Udhayanidhi Stalin, congratulated the Tamil Nadu chess players, world champion D Gukesh, Aravindh Chithambaram, and R Praggnanandhaa for securing top positions in the international chess tournaments held in Norway and

Armenia.

A press release from the state government said, "The Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Udhayanidhi Stalin, today (12.06.2025) extended his congratulations to: D. Gukesh, the reigning World Junior Champion and recipient of the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, for securing third place in

the Norway Chess Tournament, Aravindh Chithambaram, for clinching first place in the Stepan Avagyan Memorial Chess Tournament, and Praggnanandhaa, for securing second place in the same tournament."

Chithambaram, by winning the Stepan Avagyan Memorial Chess Tournament, has now entered the top 10 of the FIDE world



rankings. It is noteworthy that he also won first place

in the Masters section of the Chennai Grandmasters

Tournament held last year in Chennai, conducted by SDAT (Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu).

Both Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa are beneficiaries of the Tamil Nadu Government's Elite Scheme for outstanding sportspersons, implemented through the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu.

Under this Elite Scheme,

sportspersons who win medals in international competitions are provided with an annual grant of Rs 30 lakh to further enhance their skills. This financial support helps them acquire advanced sports equipment, train under world-class coaches abroad, and consistently participate in international competitions to showcase their talent.

With three of the four Indian players ranked in the world top 10 in chess hailing from Tamil Nadu - thanks to victories in tournaments like the Norway Chess and the Stepan Avagyan Memorial - this achievement highlights the significant impact of the Honourable Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu's efforts in making the state a global leader in the field of sports.