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RAHUL: WON'T ALLOW BIHAR POLLS RIGGING



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Jaguar fighter jet crashes, two pilots killed

10 killed in bridge collapse in Vadodara

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Two pilots of the Indian Air Force (IAF) were killed on Wednesday morning in a crash of a Jaguar fighter jet near Churu in Rajasthan, the third such accident since March involving the twin-engine bomber.

The IAF said a court of inquiry has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident.

“An IAF Jaguar Trainer aircraft met with an accident during a routine training mission and crashed near Churu in Rajasthan, today,” it said in a brief statement.

“Both pilots sustained fatal



Charred part of an IAF Jaguar Trainer aircraft that crashed during a routine training mission near Churu, on Wednesday. ANI

injuries in the accident. No damage to any civil property has been reported,” it said.

Flames and smoke coming out of the jet created panic among the villagers. The jet

surrounded by flames fell with a bang in the field, due to which a big crater was formed at the spot and the plane broke into pieces.

Before falling on the

March 7: A Jaguar fighter jet crashed near Ambala air base; pilot ejects safely

April 2: Another Jaguar jet crashed at a village near Jamnagar IAF station; one pilot killed

ground, the plane was surrounded by flames. After this, the plane fell in the field with a loud bang and smoke spread all around.


As soon as it fell on the ground in village Bhanuda

AGENCIES
VADODARA

Ten persons, including two siblings, were killed and nine others rescued, some of them with injuries, after multiple vehicles plunged into the Mahisagar river when a portion of a four-decade-old bridge collapsed in Vadodara district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

A slab of the Gambhira bridge, which connects central Gujarat to the Saurashtra region and is located near Padra town, caved in, killing ten persons, Superintendent of Police (Vadodara rural) Rohan Anand said.

Visuals from the site



A truck hangs loosely as the Gambhira bridge on the Mahisagar river collapses in Vadodara on Wednesday. ANI

showed the entire chunk of the slab of the bridge between two piers has collapsed. The slab collapse caused the vehicles, which were passing through the

bridge, to plunge into the river.

Five out of nine persons who were rescued were getting treated at state-run SSG Hospital in Vadodara

The nearly 900-metre-long Gambhira bridge has 23 piers and connects Vadodara and Anand districts of Gujarat. It was inaugurated in 1985

city, Anand said, adding none of them is in a critical condition.

The SP said the 10 to 15 metres long slab of the bridge came crashing down at around 7.30 am.

The rescue operation, in-

Mann urges Centre to divert Indus waters to Punjab, Haryana

NEERAJ MOHAN/TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

In a significant move aimed at ending the decades-old Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute, Punjab on Wednesday proposed that the Central Government divert waters from the western rivers of the Indus basin—currently suspended under the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan—towards Punjab and Haryana. The proposal was made during a meeting convened by Union Jal Shakti Minister C. R. Paatil, in line with Supreme Court directions to mediate the dispute between the two states.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann,

who attended the meeting alongside Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, said both the Union Minister and the Haryana



CM responded positively to the suggestion.

“How long will we live with an ulcer? Why should waters from the Indus and western rivers go to Pakistan, a country that continue to shed our blood? Who should we fight—Haryana or Pakistan?” Mann said af-

ter the meeting.

The Central government on Wednesday held another round of crucial talks to settle the decades-old Sut-

lej-Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal dispute between Punjab and Haryana. However the talks remained inconclusive and the next meeting has been fixed for August 5.

Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil chaired the meeting held at New Delhi

FIRST REPORT ON DREAMLINER CRASH TO BE OUT THIS WEEK

AAIB informs House panel report not finalised, probe under way

the aircraft were intact and data was being investigated, the sources said.

They said that the help of foreign players, including aircraft manufacturer Boeing, was sought to carry out detailed and thorough investigations.

The AAIB had initiated an investigation a day after the crash and had constituted a multi-disciplinary team headed by its Director General GVG Yugandhar in line with globally prescribed norms.

The sources said this is the first time such an important investigation is being held in India.

The members were also miffed with the Ministry of Civil Aviation over the way AAIB has not briefed about the air crash of Ahmedabad in which over 270 people died.

According to sources, the Parliamentary Standing Committee reviewed the aviation sector safety.

The source said that the committee expressed concern over delays by the AAIB in releasing the reports over the Air India AI171 crash involving Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner.

The source said that the civil aviation secretary and

MANDAVIYA'S LABOUR REFORMS

A push for modernisation, transparency and social security

RAKESH SINGH
NEW DELHI

Since taking over as Union Minister of Labour & Employment in June 2024, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya has led a major push to modernise India's labour system. His focus has been on using technology, simplifying laws and expanding social security for workers, especially those in the unorganised sector.

One of the key achievements of the ministry has been the introduction of digital tools like the e-Shram Microsites and the Occupational Shortage Index. These help track employment trends and match workers with job opportunities more efficiently. The ministry is also working on a Unified Employment Data Platform by integrating various job-related databases such as e-Shram, NCS, and state portals. This aims to improve employment planning and the delivery of welfare benefits.



benefits. More informal and gig workers are now being registered under e-Shram to bring them into the safety net.

To create more jobs and bridge the skills gap, the ministry is promoting Model Career Centres, skill training programmes and employment-linked incentive schemes. Efforts are also being made to boost women's participation in the workforce.

Labour reforms have shown early success. Unemployment has declined to 3.2% in 2023-24 from 6% in 2017-18, and labour force participation has risen by nearly 10%. Social security coverage has also expanded from 24% to 49% — a considerable jump in short time.

However, challenges remain, especially in rural areas and in ensuring effective implementation by states. Still, the Ministry's reforms mark a strong step toward a modern, inclusive labour system for India's future.

A major reform has been the simplification of India's labour laws. The government is replacing 29 old laws with four new Labour Codes. These are expected to make compliance easier for employers while offering better protection to workers. Most states are expected to adopt these codes by the end of fiscal year 2025.

The ministry has also pushed to expand social security. The government is linking ESIC with Ayushman Bharat to provide better health

Arunachal shares border with Tibet, not China, says CM

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday said his state shares a border with Tibet, not China.

If that sounds factually ignorant, think again. In fact, the 1,200 km international border in Arunachal Pradesh is with Tibet, not with China, he said.

His statement comes amidst sensitivities surrounding the region and China's assertive claims over Arunachal Pradesh as well as its frequent renaming of places in the state.

When suggested in an interview with a news agency that Arunachal Pradesh shares a 1,200 km border with China, Khandu quickly intervened and said, “Let me correct you here. We share a border with Tibet and not China.”


“Officially, Tibet is under China now. That can't be ruled out. But originally, we share a border with Tibet. And in Arunachal Pradesh, we share three international

ECI: Committed to universal adult suffrage

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As tensions rise over the ongoing Bihar Bandh and debates surrounding voter list revisions, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has taken a significant step to reaffirm constitutional principles.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has posted an image on its 'X' account highlighting Article 326 of the Constitution of India, which mandates universal



adult suffrage, ensuring every Indian citizen above 18 years of age can vote unless disqualified.


The provision, introduced in 1989 to lower the voting age from 21, underscores India's commitment to broader democratic participation.

“Article 326 - Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be on the basis of adult suffrage. The elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assembly of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage, that is to say, every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than eighteen years of age on such date as may be fixed in that behalf by or under any law made by the appropriate authority.”

Bid to steal Bihar polls, says Rahul

PATNA: Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday participated in a mammoth march of I.N.D.I.A bloc in Patna, to protest against the 'Special Intensive Revision' (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

DETAILS



PM Modi conferred with the highest civilian award of Namibia by President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah. REPORT

UAE rejects reports on 'Golden Visa'

AGENCIES
DUBAI

The UAE's Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security (ICP) has dismissed claims in media reports suggesting that lifetime Golden Visas for some nationalities could be obtained for all categories from outside the UAE via consulting or commercial entities under simplified conditions, saying it had “no legal basis.”

Meanwhile, in a statement sent to Khaleej Times

WON'T ALLOW POLLS RIGGING IN BIHAR: RAHUL

Key I.N.D.I.A bloc leaders including Tejashwi, Mukesh Sahni, and CPI leaders join Rahul in the protest againsts SIR in Bihar

ANAND SINGH
PATNA

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday alleged that the 2024 Maharashtra assembly elections were “rigged” to favour the BJP and claimed that the NDA government at the Centre wants to repeat it in the Bihar polls due later this year.

Rahul Gandhi participated in a mammoth march of the INDIA bloc in Patna, to protest against the ‘Special Intensive Revision’ (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

He arrived in Patna on Wednesday morning and was also accompanied by senior leaders of the INDIA bloc including RJD’s Tejashwi Yadav, VIP’s Mukesh Sahni and others.

Addressing INDIA bloc workers during a protest march to the Election Commission’s office in Patna against the ongoing special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, Gandhi said, “Maharashtra assembly elections were rigged to favour the BJP and the NDA. They want to repeat it in Bihar, which we will not allow.”

The Mahagathandhan



Rahul Gandhi claimed the 2024 Maharashtra assembly elections were “rigged” to favor the BJP through the addition of nearly 75 lakh bogus voters, and warned that the BJP is planning to replicate the same model in Bihar.

had called for ‘chakka jam’ in Bihar And attended by hundreds of party workers.

Addressing the huge gathering, Rahul said, the special intensive revision is “an attempt to steal the election of Bihar”, the way the BJP stole the Maharashtra election.

He also said that since the BJP had realised that

its Maharashtra model of increasing voters and votes had been exposed, now it has come out with the new Bihar model.

He asserted, the INDIA bloc will not let that happen.

The former Congress president warned the Election Commissioners against acting in a partisan way like the

BJP and the RSS workers.

He told them that they are not there to do the bidding of the RSS and the BJP, but to protect the Constitution and the electoral rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The Gandhi scion also made it categorically clear that the law of the land will eventually catch up with all those who were acting in a partisan manner. “No matter how big you are and no matter where you go, the law of the land will catch up with you and you will be held accountable for everything”, he told the partisan officials in no ambiguous terms. Giving an example of the partisan role played by

the poll panel, he said, “The Congress and the INDIA bloc had been demanding that they be provided the video footage of the polling process and also the electoral rolls used during the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Maharashtra. However, the EC had still not provided any of the requested material and had instead changed the rules on providing video footage.”

While cautioning the people of Bihar against the BJP’s attempts to steal the elections, he pointed out how the BJP had managed to steal Maharashtra Assembly elections, just within a few months after losing the Lok Sabha elections in the state. He disclosed that nearly 75 lakh new voters were added within a short span of time. He said, all the constituencies where the voters were added in unusually huge numbers were won by the BJP. “This is not merely an attempt to steal your election, but also to steal your future”, he told the cheering crowds, while assuring them that the INDIA bloc will not let the BJP deny the poor their voting right and steal the election.

Rail, road traffic disrupt in ‘Bihar Bandh’ over SIR

TDG NETWORK
PATNA



reached Sachiwalay Halt railway station and tried to disrupt the movement of railway traffic.

Yadav’s supporters blocked rail and road traffic in several parts of Patna as well as in other parts of the state, including Araria, Purnea, Katihar and Muzaffarpur.

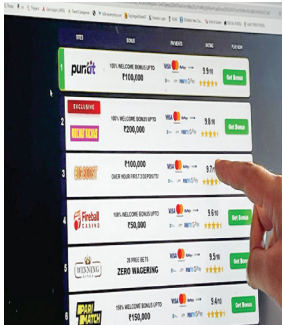
Speaking to reporters in Patna, he said, “The Election Commission, through its special intensive revision of electoral rolls, is snatching voting rights from migrants,

Dalits, Mahadalits, and poor voters. It’s a conspiracy to block votes ahead of the Bihar assembly polls due later this year.” Workers from the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Congress, CPI(ML) Liberation and CPM burnt tyres and blocked roads in support of the Bihar Bandh in Arwal, Jehanabad and Darbhanga as well.

Meanwhile, adequate security arrangements have been made for bypolls to nagar panchayats in different parts of Patna district.

Online gambling causing financial ruin, mental distress in Kashmir

ASHIQ MIR
SRINAGAR



Online gambling has quietly emerged as a serious menace in Kashmir, driving many families into severe financial and emotional turmoil.

With easy access to betting apps and websites, a growing number of people particularly the youth are being drawn in by the illusion of quick and easy money. Instead of prosperity, it has resulted in mounting debts, emotional distress, and fractured families.

As per reports, several youths in Kashmir have fallen victim to the growing addiction of online gambling. In one such case, a young man initially won Rs 10,000 within a few days, which gave him a false sense of confidence. Encouraged by the early success, he borrowed lakhs from neighbours and relatives, assuring them he would return double the amount in no time. However, as he started placing higher bets, he lost everything. The youth went

missing for several days before his family eventually traced him and managed to clear his mounting debts.

Another youth recounted a similar ordeal. “I made Rs 10 lakh quickly at first, and thought I had found a way to get rich. But I soon lost everything, including another Rs 5 lakhs I invested,” he said. “I realised too late that even when you win, you end up losing. This addiction has destroyed my business and devastated my family.”

While online betting and gambling platforms are legally permitted in India, their addictive nature has had alarming consequences. Many families suffer in silence, too ashamed to come forward due to soci-

etal stigma. The pressure to maintain a respectable image in society often forces them to hide their struggles.

Experts say the psychological toll of online gambling can be just as devastating as the financial losses. Victims often suffer from anxiety, depression, and a deep sense of hopelessness. Relationships within families deteriorate, and the emotional strain weakens the support system.

Dr Waseem Mir, a psychologist, termed the spread of online gambling “a plague”. “People must realise how destructive it is. Even financially sound individuals can lose everything. It’s important to have support systems and counselling in place to help such individuals recover and rebuild their lives,” he said. Dr Farooq Ganaie, a psychiatrist, warned about how gaming behaviours often transition into gambling-like habits.

“Many online games offer attractive deals, microtransactions, and loot boxes that mimic gambling.

India now a global leader in disaster management: PK Mishra

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At the Silver Jubilee Foundation Day of the Centre for Public Policy (CPP) at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, on Friday, Dr. P.K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, delivered a compelling lecture highlighting India’s transformative journey in disaster management over the past 25 years. Drawing from the theme “From Gujarat to Myanmar: Evolution of India’s Disaster Management Policy and Practice during the Last 25 Years,” Dr. Mishra reflected on how India evolved from a reactive relief-focused system to a globally recognized

leader in disaster risk management.

He credited this transformation to consistent investment in institutional frameworks, legislation, capacity building, and financing mechanisms. Emphasizing measurable outcomes, Dr. Mishra pointed out a significant reduction in disaster-related mortality, particularly due to improved early warning systems, better planning, and responsive financial support. He cited India’s commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as a guiding principle behind these developments.

Dr. Mishra identified the Gujarat earthquake recovery programme as a turn-

ing point in India’s disaster management journey. The establishment of the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority (GSDMA) following the 2001 quake became a model for comprehensive disaster governance. He highlighted the GSDMA’s work in not only reconstruction but also in formulating policies, building community awareness, enhancing preparedness, and initiating legal reforms.

Reflecting on major past disasters such as the 1991 Odisha Super Cyclone, the 1993 Latur earthquake, the 2004 tsunami, and the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, Dr. Mishra explained how each incident contributed critical lessons.

Haryana amends RTS Act, commission can now act on redressal delays suo motu

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Taking a big step towards ensuring timely services to its citizens, the state government has amended the Haryana Right to Service Act, 2014.

As per the amendment, if the designated officer or grievance redressal authority does not decide on the application or appeal within the stipulated time period, the Right to Service Commission will be able to take suo motu cognizance in such cases.

While providing this information to an official spokesperson of Haryana government, If undue delay is found in the disposal of the application or appeal, the Commission will be able to pass appropriate orders.

According to a notification issued by Chief Secretary Sh. Anurag Rastogi, a new provision has been added replacing Rule 9 of the Haryana Right to Service Rules, 2014. These rules will be called ‘Haryana Right to Service (Amendment) Rules, 2025’.

If before the application for availing any notified service, the matter concerned is pending before any Court or the Revisional Authority of the concerned Department, then the Commission shall not exercise its powers under section 17 of the Act against the designated officer or the First or Second Grievance Redressal Authority until a final decision is given by the Court or the Revisional Authority.

Patil reviews river rejuvenation, IITs bring forward tech solutions

ARZU SETH
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Jal Shakti C.R. Patil on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to discuss use of technology and innovations for rejuvenation of rivers across the country under the Namami Gange programme.

Discussions held about future technology and innovations in management of rivers in general and small rivers in particular.

Reiterating the Government’s commitment to



“Aviral aur Nirmal Ganga,” Union Minister directed all stakeholders to accelerate implementation and scale initiatives across critical river systems, ensuring a cleaner, healthier, and water-secure future for the nation.

On this occasion, IIT (BHU) and IIT Delhi in partnership with international collaborators from Denmark and the Netherlands, showcased a series of breakthrough innovations and given detailed presentation aimed at sustainable river management.

The spotlight was firmly on India’s second-largest river, the Ganga, and its tributary, Varuna, as Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil reviewed ongoing efforts under the IND-RIVERS and Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) initiatives.

Trade union-backed strike sees sporadic violence in Bengal

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Normal life was not impacted in most parts of the country due to a nationwide strike called by several trade unions to protest against labour policies of the central government, though some sporadic incidents of violence were reported from West Bengal.

However, the trade unions claimed that the strike was successful, and a large number of workers abstained

from work, impacting the postal, banking, insurance, and mining sectors.

Although the agitation remained by and large peaceful, reports of violence were received from pockets of West Bengal after Left-wing activists clashed with police and TMC supporters in various districts. In a statement, a forum of 10 trade unions said there was a bandh-like situation in many areas of the country, like Puducherry, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Kerala,

West Bengal, Odisha, Karnataka, Goa, Meghalaya, and Manipur etc. Reports of partial bandhs were also received in many segments of Rajasthan, Haryana, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, among others. There were industrial and sectoral strikes held in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Gujarat, it added. They have called the one-day strike in support of their demand for doing away with four labour codes, contractualisation.

Delhi Congress sabotages Rahul efforts, expels senior leader

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

While the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi is busy empowering the district presidents to strengthen the Congress at the grassroots level, Delhi Congress, ignoring the rules and regulations of the party, expelled a district president from the party who was a loyal soldier of the party for more than 40 years. He had worked in many important positions including that of a councillor.

The only fault of the loyal party worker was that he

had complained to the high command about the mistreatment meted out to him. The name of the expelled District President is Gurcharan Singh Raju. Gurcharan was the District President of Krishnanagar. He was also a member of the AICC.

The interesting thing about his expulsion is that the reply to the notice was not even waited for 24 hours, and the President of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Discipline Committee, Narendra Nath, handed him the letter of expulsion. Whereas

according to the rules, the State Congress can only recommend expulsion to the AICC because the decision to appoint District Presidents is taken by the AICC. Gurcharan was also a member of the AICC. Therefore, the Discipline Committee of the State cannot take the decision of expulsion unilaterally.

But in this case, it seems that the decision of expulsion was taken in a hurry at the behest of the interim President of Delhi, Devendra Yadav. However, the State In-charge, Qazi

Nizamuddin, says that he has been appointed as the In-charge by the AICC, and therefore, he allowed the expulsion. The Discipline Committee took the decision on the recommendation of the State Congress President, Devendra Yadav.

In fact, whatever statement the party makes in defense of Gurcharan, it seems to be a hasty decision. Gurcharan is a well-known Sikh leader and has also been an important face of the party. Gurcharan says that whether it was the 1984 riots or any matter after that,

he remained a loyal soldier of the Congress.

When the party asked him to contest the election from the Krishnanagar assembly seat this year, he fought strongly. Gurcharan says that his son had participated in the Youth Congress elections. Some leaders were angry with him because of this—especially interim president Devendra Yadav.

After this, on June 25, in a meeting of the Delhi Congress, Devendra Yadav misbehaved with him, so he complained about it to the high command. He wrote

a letter to party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and former president Sonia Gandhi, and gave full information.

Before the high command could act on his letter, a notice was sent to him on July 3, and before he could respond, the expulsion letter arrived the next day.

The condition of the party is so worrying that loyal leaders are being removed from their posts. This has caused great disappointment among the workers. Gurcharan is an example.

Consumer court raps MakeMyTrip over fraud, orders Rs 1.37 lakh payout

VIPIN PARMAR
NEW DELHI

Preparations for the Goa surprise tour on his daughter’s 16th birthday in Chandigarh weighed heavily on the family. Navpreet Singh said he booked the trip through MakeMyTrip, but the company failed to arrange the flight and pressured them to cancel the tour.

Disturbed by this, the family approached the Chandigarh Consumer Court. The court found the company guilty of service negligence and ordered it to refund Rs 15,000 as damages, Rs 80,809 with 9% annual interest, and pay Rs 10,000 as case expenses.

Navpreet Singh, a resident of Sector 41A, told the court that he wanted to celebrate his daughter’s 16th birthday in Goa on May 26, 2023, along with his wife Harpreet Kaur, mother Manjeet Kaur, daughter Parneet Kaur, and son Mehtab Singh. He booked a package called ‘Amazing Goa Flights Inclusive Deal UN’ from MakeMyTrip’s online portal, costing Rs 82,809. The booking was made with an advance of Rs 9,000 on February 12, 2023, and the remaining Rs 73,809



was paid online on April 30, 2023.

According to Navpreet, an email from the company on May 18, 2023, after the booking was completed, stated there were operational issues with the flight and they could not provide the service. They asked the family to make alternative arrangements on their own.

Despite multiple requests for a second flight, the company refused each time and denied a refund. Instead, MakeMyTrip pressured the family to cancel the package. Navpreet clarified that he had booked the trip trusting the company and was unaware of any flight issues at the time of booking.

MakeMyTrip argued that it is only an online facilitator and that bookings for hotels and air tickets are made through respective service providers.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BIHAR VOTER LIST CONTROVERSY

78% respondents believed stopping trains, arson, and harassing people in the name of protest was not justified

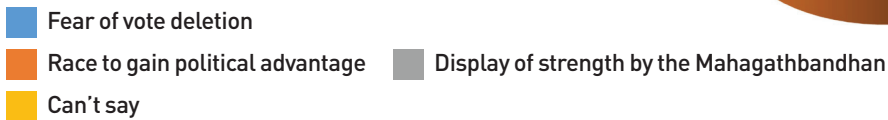
The survey on Bihar's voter list controversy reveals strong public opinions. Most respondents believe the uproar is politically motivated.

A large section opposes violent protests, emphasizing peaceful discourse. Confidence in the Election Commis-

sion remains high, though a third still question its impartiality. Political strategy overshadows concerns of fairness and governance.

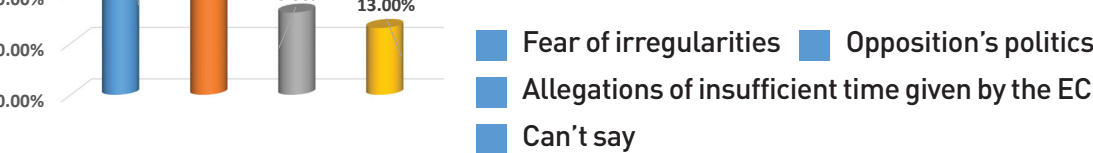
Q1. ►

Why is the Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) creating an uproar over the voter list in Bihar?



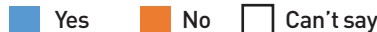
Q2. ◄

Why is there opposition to voter list verification in Bihar?



Q3. ►

Is stopping trains, arson, and harassing people in the name of protest justified?



Q4. ◄

Is it right to question the impartiality of the Election Commission?



Mann urges Centre to divert Indus waters to Punjab, Haryana

CONTINUED FROM P1

where Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, along with senior officials, participated.

This was the fourth such meeting called by the Centre ahead of the Supreme Court's August 13 deadline to resolve the issue.

During the meeting, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann said that Punjab was facing a severe water crisis and could not give water unless it also received water from the Ravi-Beas rivers.

He said, "SYL can be constructed, but Punjab must get water too. Haryana is not our enemy, it's our brother."

"If we get 23 million acre feet (MAF) of Chenab waters and it is diverted towards Punjab and Haryana, the whole dispute will be resolved forever," Mann suggested during the meeting raising the issue of suspended Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan.

Mann said that the another round of talks with Union minister Paatil on August 5 to finalise a joint statement to be submitted to the Supreme Court regarding the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute.

The apex court had earlier, in May, directed the Jal Shakti Minister—who it had appointed as mediator—to help resolve the decades-old issue between the two states.

Mann also informed the media that he had raised a strong objection with the Union Minister against the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB), accusing it of siphoning off Punjab's rightful share of river waters. He further proposed that a massive 23 million acre feet (MAF) of water from the Chenab river could potentially be diverted to Punjab—and from there to Haryana and even Madhya Pradesh.

"We are fighting over a few MAF of water. If 23 MAF from the Chenab is diverted, this entire dispute can be resolved permanently," Mann said. Sources said the Centre has taken note of the proposal and may explore feasibility studies on the western tributaries of the Indus—namely the Chenab and Jhelum—to assess the possibility of diverting water towards Punjab and Haryana.

On the other hand, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini said the discussion was meaningful and stressed that the issue must be resolved soon as the Punjab Chief Minister also acknowledged that this issue should be resolved, as it has remained pending for far too long.

Saini expressed confidence that a positive outcome will be achieved on this issue. He added that the upcoming discussions in the next meeting are expected to lead to a better

solution and yield positive results.

Union Minister Paatil acted as a mediator and assured both states that the Centre wants a solution before the next Supreme Court hearing.

The SYL canal is a 214-kilometre-long project that was meant to connect the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers for water sharing between Punjab and Haryana. An agreement was signed in 1981, and while Haryana completed its 92-km stretch, Punjab stopped work on its 122-km portion in 1982 citing lack of surplus water.

Later in 2004, Punjab passed a law to cancel the 1981 agreement. However, the Supreme Court struck down that law in 2016 and directed Punjab to resume construction. Despite this, work on the canal has remained stalled.

The Supreme Court has made it clear that Punjab cannot deny water to Haryana based on the availability of water and that the SYL canal must be completed. The apex court also stayed Punjab's move to return canal land to farmers and appointed a court receiver. In May 2025, the Court instructed both states to cooperate with the Centre in resolving the matter.

However the water disputes has become a political hot-potato in Punjab and Haryana. Since the assembly elections in Punjab due in 2027, the Aam Aadmi

Party government in Punjab using this water dispute with BJP ruled Haryana as a political tool to gain support from farmers. Meanwhile, the BJP government at the Centre and Haryana was facing a tough situation as any decision against Punjab may cost it heavily in the 2027 elections.

Meanwhile the opposition leaders in Haryana were strongly raising this issue and demanding the government to ensure Haryana gets its share.

Former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda slammed the BJP governments at the Centre and in Haryana, saying they should stop holding repeated meetings and instead file a contempt of court case against Punjab for not implementing the Supreme Court's order.

Due to the canal not being built, Haryana claims to have lost Rs 19,500 crore over the years. Around 10 lakh acres of farmland in southern Haryana are facing desertification due to lack of irrigation. Officials say the state also loses around 20 lakh tonnes of foodgrain production every year.

During a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi two years ago, then CM Manohar Lal had presented data showing that had the SYL canal been completed in time, Haryana could have produced 130 lakh tonnes more foodgrains and other crops.

Jaguar fighter jet crashes

CONTINUED FROM P1

of Rajaldesar police station area, a big crater was formed on the spot and the debris of the plane was scattered all around. The bodies of both the pilots were also found in a mutilated state near the debris.

This Jaguar fighter plane was flown from Suratgarh Airbase, which was on a training mission. The Air Force has not yet given any official information about the reasons for its crash. In the preliminary investigation, the cause of the plane crash is being told to be a technical fault. The Air Force says that detailed information about the reasons for the plane crash will be

given only after the investigation is completed.

The India Air Force has constituted A Court of Inquiry to find out the reasons for the accident. Before

The IAF said it "deeply regrets" the loss of lives and stands firmly with the bereaved families in this time of grief.

"A court of inquiry has been constituted, to ascertain the cause of the accident," it said.

The IAF is yet to make public the names of the deceased pilots.

Earlier, Rajasthan Police officials said the jet crashed at around 1.25 pm.

The aircraft crashed in an agriculture field in Bhanoda village around 1.25

pm, SHO of Rajaldesar, Kamlesh, said. He said human body parts were found near the crash site.

Shortly after the crash, locals rushed to the site and found burning debris.

Policemen from Rajaldesar and Ratangarh police stations, fire brigade and ambulance also rushed to the spot, Ratangarh Circle Officer Anil Kumar said.

It was the third incident involving Jaguar aircraft.

On March 7, a Jaguar fighter jet crashed following a system malfunction shortly after taking off from the Ambala air base. The pilot had maneuvered the aircraft away from any habitation on ground, before ejecting safely.

First report on Dreamliner crash to be out this week

CONTINUED FROM P1

the Director General of DGCA were present at the meeting.

The DGCA made a presentation before the committee, the source said, adding that the members then questioned the lax implementation of previous standing committee recommendations.

Concerns were also raised

about the dual mandate of the AAIB (investigating both aviation and railway accidents) during the meeting, the source said, adding that members questioned the absence of Boeing representatives at the meeting.

The committee urged the government to seriously implement its recommendations to ensure passenger safety.

The source also said that

the members of the BJP as well as the opposition raised the issues of data extraction from the AI171 plane crash and demanded for the report, to which the MoCA informed them that the preliminary report is yet to be submitted with the Ministry.

Meanwhile, another source said that some members raised concerns over the way in which Air India

responded to the crash saying that it has not dealt with the matter professionally.

The opposition members also demanded that the report over the Ahmedabad crash is yet to be prepared and the passengers are in panic over safety concerns.

Some members also raised the issue of the chopper crashed in recent months and questioned

several players who were present during the meeting.

The opposition members also questioned the MoCA over the formation of new probe under Home Secretary saying if the government doesn't believe in the AAIB probe.

It also asked the Ministry that who are the members of the AAIB investigating AI crash and what is their expertise.

UAE rejects reports on 'Golden Visa'

CONTINUED FROM P1

on Wednesday, a day after the ICP's rejection of claims, the daily said the Dubai-based Rayad group has "apologised" for the "public confusion" over the purported nomination-based resident initiative, including references to a "fixed AED 100,000 fee" and a so-called "lifetime visa" arrangement.

A story was released on July 6 that the UAE government has started a new type of Golden Visa and India and Bangladesh have been

selected for the first phase of testing, and a consultancy named Rayad Group has been chosen to test the initial form of the nomination-based Golden Visa in India.

Reports said Indians could enjoy the UAE's Golden Visa for life by paying a fee of AED 100,000 (around Rs 23.30 lakh) under the "new nomination-based visa policy".

The Khaleej Times said on its website that the Rayad Group issued a statement saying: "The Rayad Group acknowledges the recent media coverage and public

discussions regarding a purported nomination-based UAE Golden Visa initiative, including references to a fixed Dh 100,000 fee and a so-called 'lifetime visa' arrangement."

It further said the Rayad Group has "apologised unreservedly for the public confusion caused by recent reports and commentary, adding: "We take full responsibility for ensuring future communications are clear, accurate, and consistent with the UAE's stringent regulatory frameworks."

Arunachal CM on border

CONTINUED FROM P1

boundaries -- with Bhutan, approximately 150 km, with Tibet, around 1,200 km, which is one of the longest in the country, and on the eastern side, with Myanmar, around 550 km," he said.

The chief minister insisted that no state in India directly shares a border with China, only with Tibet, and that re-

gion was forcibly occupied by China in the 1950s.

Khandu said historical facts back the fact it was an Indo-Tibet border and referred to the Shimla Convention of 1914 in which representatives of British India, China and Tibet participated.

On China's habit of giving its own names to places in Arunachal Pradesh, he said

the neighbouring country has renamed places not once but five times.

"I think the last time they renamed many places in Arunachal... if I am not mistaken, I think this was their fifth attempt in total. So it is not surprising for us. We know China's habit, and I think officially the MEA has dealt with it and has given them a reply," he said.

SHIV SENA MLA SLAPS CANTEEN STAFFER FADNAVIS, OPPOSITION CONDEMN ACT

Gaikwad defended his actions, citing ignored complaints about poor food quality

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Shiv Sena legislator Sanjay Gaikwad slapped an employee at the MLAs' hostel canteen in Mumbai after being served stale food, drawing condemnation from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis as well as the opposition parties.

As a video of the assault went viral and led to an outrage, CM Fadnavis said such a conduct does not behave anyone and sends out a wrong message about all legislators that they indulge in misuse of power.

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who heads the Shiv Sena, also termed his party leader's actions as "inappropriate".

Gaikwad, the MLA from Buldhana, however, defended his conduct, saying he



was compelled for the "Shiv Sena style" of response as his earlier complaints about the food's quality were not addressed, and asserted he does not regret his action.

A video of the incident, which took place on Tuesday night at the Akashvani MLA hostel, has gone viral on social media platforms.

In the video, Gaikwad is seen berating the canteen

operator, refusing to pay the bill, and repeatedly slapping the staff member seated at the billing counter, causing him to fall down.

"I had complained about the poor quality of food two or three times earlier. This time the food was absolutely unacceptable. I will raise this issue in the ongoing legislature session," Gaikwad, whose actions have earlier

also invited criticism, told a regional news channel.

Gaikwad ordered dinner from the canteen at the MLA hostel on Tuesday night. He found the dal and rice delivered in his room to be stale and foul-smelling, according to sources.

Angered by this, the leader, belonging to the Shiv Sena led by Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, stormed into the canteen and confronted the manager, they said.

The MLA was furious over the condition of the meal and told others not to pay for it either. In the midst of the altercation, he hit the canteen operator on his face, as per the eyewitnesses.

Speaking to reporters in the Vidhan Bhavan premises on Wednesday, a defiant Gaikwad said he has raised the issue of food quality (at the MLAs' hostel) several

times, including with FDA Minister Narhari Zirwal.

"Zirwal told me he sent some samples for testing some three months back and has not yet received the reports. Thousands of people visit the Akashwadi MLA hostel during the legislature session with a hope of getting quality food, but the contractor never improved it," he said.

Despite several complaints by people against the food quality, the same contractor somehow gets the contract everytime, he said.

"I have been visiting the MLAs' hostel for last 10-15 years and raised complaints several times. On Tuesday night, when I went down to meet the staff of the canteen, even other people also admitted that the food delivered to me was not only bad in taste, but it was rotten. It was stinking," he claimed.

Near-total shutdown in Kerala, normal life hit

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala witnessed a near-total shutdown on Wednesday as a result of the 24-hour nationwide general strike called by trade unions to protest the Centre's "anti-labour" policies, which brought daily life to a standstill.

Shops, offices and schools remained shut, while public vehicles stayed off the roads, leaving the streets deserted in the state.

Cutting across cities, towns and villages, the CPI(M)-ruled southern state is experiencing a complete shutdown after the strike began Tuesday midnight.

Only private vehicles could be seen plying on the state roads, and several people were stranded in bus stands and railway stations in many places.

Police personnel came to their rescue in several areas



and ferried them in official vehicles to their respective destinations, including hospitals.

Protesters, belonging to various trade unions, took out marches raising slogans against the union government across the state and stopped buses and autos that attempted to operate.

Agitators blocked the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) buses in Kochi and Kollam in the morning, leading to arguments with its staff.

In Kochi, bus employees said they belonged to the

BJP's trade union BMS and they decided not to cooperate with the agitation.

However, the police didn't ensure them adequate support to complete the trip, they alleged.

A photo of a KSRTC driver driving the bus wearing a helmet, became viral on social media platforms.

The driver, Shibu, later said he did not take part in the protest and used the helmet out of fear of attack from protesters.

The Kollam-bound bus from Pathanamthitta driven by him, was also blocked by the protesters later.

No cabinet reshuffle in Karnataka, DKS clarifies 'buzz is just media noise'

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

With the strong buzz of change of guard and a cabinet reshuffle in Karnataka, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday again clarified that the buzz of change is in media only and there is no cabinet reshuffle in the southern state on the cards.

Shivakumar had arrived in the national capital on Tuesday morning, while Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is all set to arrive in Delhi this afternoon.

Shivkumar had come to the national capital for the meeting with Union Forest Minister and Jal Shakti Minister, whereas the Chief Minister will be meeting Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in the evening today.



Presence of these two leaders in Delhi has given air to the speculation of some political churning in the state.

However, Shivakumar refuted the speculation.

When asked about the rotational Chief Minister formula in Karnataka, the Deputy Chief Minister, who is also the Congress unit chief said:

"The 'speculation is in your side and not in my eye and ear' he also said no 'cabinet reshuffle is in the cards in Karnataka."

To another question about his meeting with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, he said, "I will be meeting the senior leaders of the party tomorrow."

He said that Rahul Gandhi is in Patna for the chakka jaam.

Sources suggested that Shivakumar had also met party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi at 10 Janpath in the morning today.

Earlier on many occasions, party as well as the Chief Minister had clarified that there is no plan to change the Chief Minister in the state.

Even Siddaramaiah had maintained that he will complete the five year term in Karnataka as the Chief Minister.

DK Shivakumar takes CM suite at K'taka Bhawan; Sidda stays in annexe suite

ANAND SINGH
BANGALORE

Amid the strong buzz of change in guard in Karnataka, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar occupied the Chief Minister's suite in the new Karnataka Bhawan in the national capital.

According to sources, Shivakumar, who arrived in the national capital on Tuesday occupied the 5th floor CM suite at new Karnataka Bhawan located in Chanakyapuri area of central Delhi.

The fifth floor of the Karnataka Bhawan is reserved for the CM suite.

He also met the party leaders at the fifth floor suite of the newly inaugurated Karnataka

According to sources, Shivakumar, who arrived in the national capital on Tuesday occupied the 5th floor CM suite at new Karnataka Bhawan located in Chanakyapuri area of central Delhi.

Bhawan.

However, when Chief Minister Siddaramaiah arrived on Wednesday, he chose the old Karnataka Bhawan annexed 5th floor CM suite.

Sources said that Siddaramaiah had stayed at the new CM suite, when he had come to Delhi last time.

However, he complained of lack of facilities especially the ventilation issue in the new Karnataka Bhawan and thus he chose to stay in old Annexe

CM suite.

The source also revealed that as the new CM suite was not occupied, Shivakumar had requested Siddaramaiah and the latter then permitted him to stay there.

Earlier, Shivakumar used to stay on the third floor of the old Annexe building of Karnataka Bhawan, during his stay in Delhi.

The new Karnataka Bhawan was inaugurated earlier this year.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are in Delhi to meet the party leadership. Sources indicated that both will be meeting KC Venugopal, who is Congress General Secretary (Organisation) on Thursday. Even Shivakumar is set to meet Rahul Gandhi on Thursday evening.

The Congress has repeatedly denied the change of guard in the southern state, where it came to power in 2023. However, reports suggest that there was a rotational Chief Minister formula that was brought up in the state after the polls.

Siddaramaiah had stated that he will complete his tenure of five years as Chief Minister of the state, amid the speculations of change of guard.

Centre assures fertilisers shortage in Telangana will be addressed

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA
HYDERABAD

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers JP Nadda has assured that the centre will extend all possible support to address fertilizers and urea shortage and provide a relief to the farmers during the farming season. The union ministry made a statement to this effect on Wednesday.

An Official state delegation led by Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy met the Union Minister in Delhi on Tuesday and requested Nadda to supply adequate urea and fertilizers to the state. The Chief Minister briefed the union minister about the shortage of urea and appealed to uninterrupted supply of urea in July and August for Kharif season.

Responding to the CM's request, Union Minister Nadda assured him of full support to meet the demand of fertilizers from the farm-



ers. Nadda instructed the officials of his ministry to ensure adequate supply of urea to Telangana.

The union minister also instructed the state government officials to take necessary steps to ensure equal distribution of urea to various districts without diverting the stocks for non-agricultural needs.

Expressing serious concern over the increased urea consumption in the

Telangana state, Nadda said that urea sales during Rabi (Yasangi) season in 2024-25 increased by 21 percent compared to Rabi in 2023-24.

The union minister of Fertilizers and Chemicals highlighted that the Center is providing incentives to state governments through the 'Pranam scheme' to reduce the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and promote organic and natural farming.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (R) felicitates Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran during a meeting at the state secretariat Nabanna, in Howrah.

Bihar becomes West Bengal in NITI Aayog map; Mamata demands apology

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday wrote to the Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog expressing her strong disapproval over the state being mislabelled as Bihar in their official summary report. She condemned the error and demanded an apology from them, taking immediate corrective measures in this connection.

Earlier in the day, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale, in a post on X, shared a screenshot of the map in which Bihar was shown as West Bengal.

"I am writing with deep concern and unequivocal disapproval that in the 'summary report for the state of West Bengal' published by NITI Aayog

and available on its website, the map intended to represent the state of West Bengal has depicted the territory of Bihar in its place," Banerjee wrote to Vice Chairperson of the NITI Aayog Suman K Bery.

Describing the error as a "grave lapse" of the NITI Aayog, the CM claimed that such a blunder in an official publication of NITI Aayog reflects an "alarming lack of diligence and respect" towards the states of the Union.

"The government of West Bengal strongly condemns this inaccuracy and calls upon NITI Aayog to issue a clarification and apology and take immediate corrective action to rectify the document and to institute robust mechanisms to prevent such lapses in future," she added.

Govt positive about addressing issues of teachers, opposition playing politics: Fadnavis

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said the government is positive about addressing the issues of teachers from aided and unaided schools who have been protesting here.

Speaking in the legislative council, he also hit

out at the opposition, accusing it of playing politics over the matter.

It is not right if the teachers are indulging in politics, and it won't be tolerated, he said.

"The government is positive about resolving the matter. It's our commitment, but we have our issues. We will invite them (for discussion)," he said.



Fadnavis said BJP minister Girish Mahajan has

been coordinating with the protesting teachers.

Teachers from aided and partially aided schools have launched an agitation at the Azad Maidan in south Mumbai, claiming that the government has not increased grants to their institutes despite announcements. Also, whatever grants they receive are now being released in instalments, which hampers the man-

agement of their schools, they have said.

NCP (SP) leader Sharad Pawar, who met the teachers in the morning, has demanded that the Maharashtra government take immediate action to resolve the ongoing protest.

"The opposition is raising a finger at us, but their four fingers are pointed towards them. You (the

previous Congress government) gave approval to all these institutes that they would be permanently unaided. You removed the word 'permanently'. Then you never gave them a single penny," he said.

The first instalment was released when he was the CM, Fadnavis said. The second instalment was paid by the BJP govern-

ment. He claimed that when Uddhav Thackeray was the CM for two and a half years, the government did not give a penny to the teachers. "We took the decision and it is a fact. We agree that there was a delay in making the payment," he said.

Hitting out at the opposition, he said it is playing politics even though "this is not a matter of politics".

HC SEEKS ED'S REPLY ON KEJRIWAL'S CHALLENGE TO EXCISE CASE SUMMONS

Delhi HC questions ED over Kejriwal's summons challenge in excise case.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in response to a petition filed by former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The plea challenges a Sessions Court order that upheld a summons issued to him by a magisterial court in connection with the ED's money laundering investigation into the alleged excise policy scam.

Justice Ravinder Dudeja directed the ED to file an affidavit addressing all objections, including preliminary ones, and scheduled the next hearing for September 10, 2025.

Representing Kejriwal were Senior Advocate Ramesh Gupta and Advocate Mudit Jain, while Advocate Zohab Hossain appeared for



The ED claims Kejriwal deliberately avoided appearing despite receiving multiple notices.

the ED.

Kejriwal's petition contests the Sessions Court's September 17, 2024, ruling, which dismissed his challenge to two summonses issued after the magisterial court took cognisance of ED complaints.

These complaints

stemmed from Kejriwal's alleged repeated non-compliance with summonses during the investigation into the now-defunct Delhi excise policy.

The ED claims Kejriwal deliberately avoided appearing despite receiving multiple notices. Based on these al-

KEJRIWAL EXCISE CASE SUMMONS ROW

- Kejriwal challenged Sessions Court's upholding of ED summons in excise case.
- HC asked ED to respond; next hearing scheduled for September 10, 2025.
- ED alleges Kejriwal repeatedly ignored summons and delayed legal action.
- He is currently out on bail in related ED and CBI cases.

legations, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra issued summonses on February 7 and March 7, 2024.

On March 16, 2024, Kejriwal was granted bail in one of the complaints. A day earlier, the Sessions Court had refused to stay the summons, denying his request for interim relief. The ED also accused Kejriwal of attempting to influence judicial proceedings by filing his challenge at the eleventh hour. Arvind

Kejriwal is currently out on bail granted by the Supreme Court in connection with the Delhi liquor policy case. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21, 2024, and later by the CBI on June 26, 2024, while still in custody. On July 12, 2024, the apex court granted him interim bail in the ED's money laundering case, and subsequently, on September 13, 2024, he was granted regular bail in the CBI's corruption case linked to the same excise policy probe.

Delhi HC reserves order on bail pleas of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam

SAMBHAV SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday reserved its order on the bail pleas of Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, both of whom are accused in the larger conspiracy behind the 2020 Northeast Delhi Riots.

Both are accused in the larger conspiracy related to the 2020 Northeast Delhi Riots.

High Court bench of Justice Naveen Chawla and Justice Shalinder Kaur reserved the order after hearing detailed arguments from both sides.

Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Delhi Police amde detailed arguments in the matter.

He strongly opposed the



grant of bail. Mehta said this is not a routine bail case.

He called it a 'well-organised and orchestrated conspiracy' with an intent to tarnish India's image globally.

Mehta said that Imam and Khalid deliberately chose the day to internationalise unrest.

Mehta said the accused used WhatsApp groups to coordinate communal vio-

lence.

He alleged the use of dangerous weapons, including a large iron slingshot ('gulel') capable of launching petrol bombs and bricks.

He said 58 witness statements under Section 164 CrPC have been recorded and emphasized that the riots were not spontaneous, but a premeditated effort to divide the country on religious lines.

BJP MLA runs campaign to rename his constituency Shakur Basti to Sri Rampuram

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP MLA from Shakur Basti constituency in North Delhi, Karnail Singh, has undertaken a signature campaign for renaming his constituency to Sri Rampuram. Singh said he has already collected signatures of over 60,000 people in support of the demand. The target is to collect signatures of one lakh people, he said. "There are around 1.5 lakh voters in Shakur Basti out of which about 99,000 voted in the assembly elections in February this year, so I have been seeking their support," he said. Singh, who defeated Satyendar Jain, the three-time MLA from the constituency and former health minister of the AAP government, in the last assembly polls, said the de-



mand for renaming Shakur Basti is not a "political" move. "This is the demand of the people in the area. During elections, many people informed that they wanted the name of Shakur Basti to be changed as it has now developed into a well-developed area with high rises and it no longer remains a habitation with small houses," Singh said. The MLA, who was the richest candidate with assets worth over Rs 259 crore in the assembly polls, said the initiative undertaken by him was in the knowledge of his party organisation.

MCD plans to install rooftop solar panels on 989 buildings

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is likely to install rooftop solar power plants on 989 municipal buildings in a bid to reduce dependency on conventional power sources and lower electricity costs, officials said on Wednesday.

The project will be executed in collaboration with NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVN), a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTPC.

Under the RESCO model, the executing agency bears the cost of installation, operation, and maintenance and is reimbursed over time through a fixed tariff per unit of solar energy generated, as agreed upon in a Power Purchase Agreement



(PPA). In a push towards renewable energy adoption and reducing dependency on conventional power sources, the civic body has estimated a potential of 10 to 15 megawatt (MW) solar capacity across the proposed buildings. However, this is subject to the outcome of a detailed investment-grade energy audit.

At present, the MCD has installed a total of 574 solar photovoltaic (PV) plants on its buildings, with a cumulative capacity of 13.25 MWp. These include installations carried out under various models across the erstwhile

South, North, and East Delhi municipal corporations.

Notably, under an agreement signed between 2022 and 2024 with NVVN, 26 rooftop plants with a combined capacity of 1.08 MWp were commissioned at a levelised tariff of Rs 4.72 per kWh. With NVVN currently having around 10-15 MW of spare capacity available from its ongoing rooftop solar projects on Delhi Police buildings under the Ministry of Home Affairs, the MCD plans to utilise this surplus to fast-track solar deployment on its properties.

DJB begins pipeline replacement in East Delhi following Delhi HC rebuke

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has initiated a project to replace decades-old water pipelines in eastern parts of the national capital, days after being pulled up by the high court for supplying "sewage-mixed" water to residents of the area.

According to DJB officials, tenders have been issued to replace 35-year-old pipelines in several localities, including Yojna Vihar, Jagriti Enclave, Shanti Mohalla, Jhilmil Industrial Area, Dilshad Garden, Gandhi Nagar, and IP Extension.

The deadline to submit these tenders is between



July 14 and July 16. Once finalised, the groundwork is expected to begin promptly.

Inspections had revealed that corroded and outdated pipelines were the primary cause of water contamination in these areas. The DJB aims to replace the pipeline.

In Yojna Vihar's C-block, where the problem caused

by "sewage-mixed" water is particularly severe, the DJB will carry out replacement work at a cost of Rs 22 lakh. The project is expected to be completed within two months after the work begins. Similarly, in Jagriti Enclave, a new 300 millimetre pipeline will be installed to replace a dam-

aged 100 mm line at an estimated cost of Rs 15 lakh.

"We expect the work to be completed in the next few days. Tenders have been floated, and the last date of submission is between July 14 and July 16. After finalising the tender, work will start on the ground," an official said.

On July 4, while examining a PIL filed by the residents of Yojna Vihar, Anand Vihar, and Jagriti Enclave, the Delhi High Court pulled up the DJB for supplying contaminated water in colonies and asked how the authorities could expect the citizens to "drink sewage-mixed water".

NGO asked to file fresh plea seeking probe into Karol Bagh fire tragedy

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In the aftermath of the tragic fire at Vishal Mega Mart in Delhi's Karol Bagh that claimed two lives, NGO Kutumb has moved the Delhi High Court seeking a court-monitored investigation into alleged lapses by the store's management, Delhi Police, Fire Services, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

The application was filed in connection with an ongoing matter related to another recent tragedy, the July 27, 2024, incident in Old Rajinder Nagar, where three UPSC aspirants died after a

drain burst caused basement flooding in a coaching centre. A bench headed by Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and also comprising Justice Anish Dayal observed that such a plea must be presented separately rather than being tagged with an ongoing matter. "It will be in the interest of the cause to file a separate petition," the bench noted, stating that the current matter already involves a list of actions and developments. The application was subsequently dismissed as withdrawn.

Advocate Rudra Vikram Singh appeared on behalf of the petitioner NGO in

the matter. In its submissions, Kutumb flagged serious violations of safety regulations and raised concerns over the issuance of licenses and No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to commercial establishments operating in congested urban zones without compliance with fire and safety norms. The NGO's plea had sought a court-monitored probe into the conduct of MCD, Fire Services, and Delhi Police for alleged regulatory failures. The plea also sought scrutiny into the licensing and NOC status of Vishal Mega Mart and nearby establishments.

The plea also pray for the immediate closure of unlicensed shopping complexes, eateries, coaching institutes, and similar entities in Karol Bagh and adjacent areas until a detailed report is submitted.

Directions to the Delhi Police to file a status report on the FIR and preserve CCTV footage from July 4 to July 5.

The fire, which broke out on July 5, led to the death of 25-year-old Dhirender Pratap, who was found inside a lift, suspected to have died from suffocation. His final messages to his brother revealed he was trapped and gasping for air.

23-year-old posing as cop held at IGIA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old impersonating himself as a Delhi Police Sub-Inspector was arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, police said on Wednesday.

The accused, identified as Sahil Kumar, had forged documents to pose as a police officer, thereby misleading his female acquaintances and social circle, the police said.

Police recovered one fake Delhi Police ID card



(marked as PSI), one forged appointment letter, one handbag containing some blank case diaries, one blank page having stamp marks of DPA (Delhi Police Academy) & mobile phone containing photographs in Delhi Police uniform, from

his possession.

On Monday, during routine surveillance and profiling operations at the departure forecourt of Terminal 3, Indira Gandhi International Airport, the Vigilance Team of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in-

tercepted and detained the accused. Upon questioning, he was unable to provide a credible explanation regarding his current posting in the Delhi Police and offered vague and unconvincing excuses. He was also found in possession of a Delhi Police identity card, which appeared to be forged, the police said. Based on a formal complaint lodged by CISF personnel, Delhi police registered the case, and the investigation of the case was taken up. During the investigation,

Auroville Foundation , IIT Madras ink MoU to combine spirituality, sustainability

BRYAN THOMAS
NEW DELHI

Auroville and IIT Madras have signed a landmark agreement to create the Auroville Foundation-IIT Madras Sustainability Campus, bringing together spirituality, science, and sustainability in one of the most ambitious collaborations of its kind.

Backed by the Ministry of Education and rooted in the G20 sustainability declaration of 2023, the project marks a shift from blueprint to breaking ground. As part of the MoU, Auroville will lease 100 acres of land to IIT Ma-

dras for 33 years—no equity exchange, just shared vision. In a new dual-MoU structure, IITM Incubation Cell joins the partnership as the execution arm, with clauses ensuring Ministry oversight and long-term stability.

As Dr. Jayanti Ravi, Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, put it, "We are all now coming under one mother—the Divine Mother of Auroville."

The ceremonial signing was held in the presence of Tamil Nadu Governor and Foundation Chairman R.N. Ravi, with top names from both institutions and the Ministry in attendance.

IIT Madras Director V. Kamakoti re-

inforced the unity of purpose, saying, "We all come under one mother—the Ministry of Education."

The collaboration aims to incubate climate tech, sustainable design, and social innovation. With IITM having already fostered over 100 startups this year, Dr. Ravi set a new aspiration: "Perhaps we should incubate 150 in FY26—marking Sri Aurobindo's 150th centenary." For Auroville, it's a continuation of its experimental legacy. For IIT Madras, it's a chance to ground research in lived practice. Together, they're building more than a campus—they're cultivating a future.

PUBLIC-GRIEVANCE HEARINGS BRIDGE BETWEEN GOVT, CITIZENS: DELHI CM

CM Rekha Gupta resumes public hearings to promote direct citizen-government engagement.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday said her government aims not merely to administer but to transform the national capital into an “empowered” city, where public participation will be central to governance.

Gupta made the remarks while holding her first “Jan-sunwai” at her camp office on Raj Niwas Marg, where she met residents and took steps to resolve their griev-

JANSUNWAI INITIATIVE STRENGTHENS PUBLIC TRUST

- Public hearings held at newly-inaugurated Jan Seva Sadan, Civil Lines.
- Citizens raised issues on water, education, crime, health, and roads.
- CM pledged time-bound resolutions, called public service her life’s mission.
- Emphasised responsive governance focused on empathy, empowerment, and people-centric policies.



ances. The chief minister resumed her public hearings in a newly-formalised space at 2/8, Civil Lines with enhanced arrangements and improved facilities, according to an official statement.

She said her government’s goal is not just to administer but to build Delhi as a sensitive, empowered and just city, where public participation in governance is fundamental.

Highlighting the essence of democracy, Gupta said, “True democracy lies in knowing people’s pain, understanding their strug-

gles and shaping policies based on their real needs. Public hearings are proof that people have faith in democracy and expect constructive changes from the government.”

She said previous governments lacked such communication mechanisms, which often left people helpless in getting their problems resolved. Gupta asserted that the Mukhyamantri Jan Seva Sadan would now act as a bridge between the government, governance and people, ensuring a continuous and

empathetic dialogue.

“Our government considers the people’s pain as its own. The Jan Seva Sadan will not only bring governance closer to citizens, but will also reaffirm that this is a responsive, sensitive and people-centric government. We are here not to rule, but to serve,” she said.

Citizens submitted their complaints, requests and suggestions directly to Gupta and senior officials, with the chief minister issuing immediate instructions to the departments concerned for redressal.

Meat shops on Kanwar Yatra route to remain shut: Kapil Mishra

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Culture and Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra on Wednesday said the meat shops on the Kanwar Yatra route, most of which are run illegally, will be shut down during the religious event beginning later this month.

The minister reviewed the preparations for the Kanwar Yatra route in the city along with several ruling BJP MLAs.

“Its a decision of the Delhi government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) that the meat shops will remain closed. Nevertheless, most of them are illegal and they should not be there. No such shop will be opened and there is no exemption,” said Mishra during the inspection.



“It will be specially ensured that no such unwanted thing happens anywhere,” he told reporters.

The Kanwar Yatra will be undertaken by the devotees during the auspicious month of ‘Shravan’ from July 11 to 25. The devotees during the Kanwar Yatra carry water from rivers and other sacred water bodies and offer it at prominent temples of Lord Shiva, covering long distances on foot.

Mishra accompanied by BJP MLAs Ajay Mahawar, Tilak Ram

Gupta, Anil Sharma, Pradyumn Rajpoot and Sanjay Goel inspected the Kanwar Yatra route and camps from Apsara Border to Karol Bagh.

“Every year around 2.5 to 3 crore Kanwariyas pass through Delhi. Our government is providing them every facility like setting up camps for them, erecting grand entry gates at various points and showering flower petals on them,” he said.

The minister said the government has already declared providing financial assistance to Kanwar Samitis through direct benefit transfer and also provided camps with 1,200 units of free electricity.

Under Chief Minister Rekha Gupta’s leadership, a single window system has been set up to facilitate the Kanwar Samitis in making preparations for the event, he added.

Rains lead to waterlogging, traffic snarls in Delhi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Monsoon showers lashed parts of Delhi on Wednesday, bringing much-needed relief from the humidity, but also triggering waterlogging and traffic snarls.

Waterlogging and traffic disruptions were reported from several parts of the city, including Nehru Place, Aurobindo Marg, Kailash Colony, Lajpat Nagar, Siri Fort Road, the Chirag Delhi flyover, Outer Ring Road, G K Marg, Rail Bhawan, Akshardham, Ashram, ITO, Pul Prahladpur, M B Road, M G Road, Old Rohtak Road, Shadipur, Madhuban Chowk and National Highway 8.

Between 5:30 pm and 8:30 pm, the Najafgarh weather station recorded 60 mm of rainfall, followed by Aya Nagar (50.5 mm), Pragati Maidan (37 mm), North Campus (22 mm), Pusa (30 mm), Palam (14.4 mm), IGNOU (11.5 mm), Janakpuri (4 mm), Naraina (6.5 mm) and Lodhi Road (1.5 mm).

Meanwhile, the primary weather station at Safdarjung recorded just 1.4 mm of



Delhi PWD minister inspects Minto Bridge amid rains

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As rains lashed several parts of Delhi on Wednesday, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Verma hit the ground taking stock of the waterlogging situation in the city.

The minister visited the Minto Bridge underpass and found it free from any water-

logging.

“We have taken several steps to avoid waterlogging at the Minto Bridge underpass. Every year, we used to see photos of buses submerged at the underpass, but all the pump operators are alert currently and carrying out the de-watering exercise. There is no waterlogging here, even though it has been raining for an hour,” Verma said.

rainfall.

According to the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), only one complaint of waterlogging was received at the Integrated Command

and Control Centre (ICCC).

The complaint, related to waterlogging at 4A Harish Chandra Mathur Lane, was marked as “work in progress”.

Fuel ban favours auto tycoons, says AAP’s Bharadwaj

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) Delhi President Saurabh Bharadwaj on Wednesday lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Delhi government, claiming its role in “orchestrating” the fuel ban on old vehicles to favour automobile tycoons.

“What began as a policy stunt has ballooned into a full-blown crisis, dragging multiple neighbouring cities into chaos and placing two crore vehicle owners under siege. Saurabh Bharadwaj denounced the farce as a reckless betrayal, crafted in collusion, defended with lies, and destined to



collapse under the weight of its own hypocrisy,” Bharadwaj said in a press statement.

While addressing a press conference, Bharadwaj accused the BJP government in Delhi of “relentlessly lying” to the people.

“To cover one lie, they are now forced to tell a hundred more. They’re now caught in this web of deception, every lie they tell demands a hundred new

Himachal Pradesh: CM Sukhu and LoP Thakur jointly inspect the disaster-hit Thunag

TDG NETWORK
SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur jointly inspected the Thunag market area on Wednesday, which was severely affected by flash floods during the recent cloudbursts in the Seraj assembly constituency.

According to an official press release, both leaders met with the people who suffered due to this natural calamity and assured them of every possible help.

While speaking to the media, the CM said that he will travel to Delhi to meet the Union Ministers and will strongly place the demand for a special relief package to rehabilitate and provide relief to the disaster-affected people.

The press release also mentioned that CM Sukhu visited the home of Budhi Raj, who lost his life during



the flash floods, and assured the family of adequate assistance.

Earlier in the day, the students of the College of Horticulture and Forestry, Thunag in Himachal Pradesh’s Mandi district, which was severely impacted by torrential rains and flash floods on the night of June 30 and July 1, have urged the state government to postpone their university examinations and consider relocation or merger of the

college with safer campuses.

A delegation of students met Horticulture and Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi at the Himachal Pradesh Secretariat to submit their demands and seek immediate relief.

Aditi Sood, a fourth-year forestry student at the flood-hit college, described the trauma they went through, calling it a night that changed their lives.

“What we witnessed during the

cloudburst on the night of June 30 was beyond imagination. We are still trying to recover mentally. First-year students are completely unstable. We cannot travel back, nor are we mentally or physically fit to stay there. The situation is unsafe. Even parents are refusing to send their children back to a place that felt like a death trap,” she said. “Our mental stability is shattered. How can we write exams?” Sood said.

“We have requested that the government that the first-year exams should be either based on internal assessment or postponed. We also demanded that the college be relocated or merged with another institute. The minister has assured full cooperation, but we need clear and urgent action,” she said.

“We’ve been granted leave till July 11, but after that, nothing is certain. We won’t go back unless the situation is declared safe,” Sood added.”

Eviction drive against illegal encroachments will continue: Assam BJP

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

The Assam unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday reiterated its support for the state government’s ongoing eviction drive to remove what it termed as illegal encroachments on government and forest land, asserting that the campaign will continue in the coming days.

In a statement issued by BJP Assam spokesperson Pankaj Borbora, the party alleged that a large portion of protected land and forest areas had been occupied by “illegal infiltrators of East Bengal origin,” posing a threat to the rights and future of the indigenous Assamese



population.

Borbora said, “Encroachment by illegal infiltrators on government-protected lands and forest areas in Assam has become a grave threat to the indigenous people of the state. These lands, particularly in sensitive regions, have been overtaken largely by infiltrators of East Bengal origin. However, under the leadership of Dr. Himanta

Biswa Sarma, the Assam Government has launched a robust eviction drive rooted in legal processes, an initiative fully supported by the Bharatiya Janata Party.”

Borbora stated that the previous Congress governments, for the sake of vote-bank politics, settled East Bengali-origin infiltrators on protected lands and indulged in appeasement.

Kerala couple flees to Kenya after Rs 40 crore chit fund scam in Bengaluru

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

A massive chit fund scam has rocked Bengaluru with over 400 victims coming forward to file complaints against a Kerala-based couple who allegedly cheated investors out of nearly Rs 40 crore before fleeing the country to Kenya.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bengaluru East, D Devaraja,

the accused operated under the name A&A Chit Fund and hailed from Alappuzha, Kerala.

While speaking to ANI on Wednesday, DCP Devaraja said, “This was owned by a couple hailing from Alappuzha, Kerala. On 5th July, some people came to PS Ramamurthy Nagar and registered a complaint, saying that they had invested in the A&A Chit Fund company, and now the owners,



the couple, are absconding.”

DCP Devaraja added, “We registered a criminal case under BNS 318, 317, Chit Funds Act of 1982, and different sections of the BUDS Act (Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019).

Initial investigation revealed that the couple had sold their assets, including a house and vehicles, at undervalued prices, raising suspicions about a planned

escape.

“During the preliminary investigation, we came to know that they had made preparations to abscond. They had sold their house and cars to different people at off-price. The accused have left the country on 3rd July for Kenya on a tourist visa...”, DCP Devaraja informed.

To date, over 400 complaints have been registered, with the majority of victims

originating from Kerala.

DCP Devaraja said, “From 5th July till today, the total number of complaints received is more than 400... The total amount cheated is almost Rs 40 crores... Most of the complaints are from Kerala.”

Police are currently scrutinising bank records and financial transactions linked to the couple to trace the money trail and identify any possible accomplices.

Commenting on the incident, Congress leader Ramesh Babu highlighted that chit funds fall under the jurisdiction of the state; however, he also pointed to the Centre’s responsibility in regulating non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). Speaking to ANI, Babu said, “Chit Fund comes under the jurisdiction of the state because we have to give a license to the Chit Fund to function.”

AUSTRALIA COMMITS TO BACKING INDIA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PUSH

Australia's High Commissioner to India, Philip Green, says India is important to world

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Australia's High Commissioner to India, Philip Green, on Wednesday reflected on Australia's support for India's push towards renewable energy.

While speaking at the India Energy Storage Week (IESW), Phillip Green said, "We strongly support India's drive towards renewables. India is very important to the world."

Green emphasised the scale and seriousness of Australia's involvement. "We have more than 22 companies and around 40 people here, virtually all the Australian states are involved," he said.

Australia's High Commissioner to India also outlined about the deep comple-

AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO INDIA'S GREEN GOALS

- High Commissioner Philip Green affirms support at India Energy Storage Week.
- Over 22 Australian firms and all states participating in renewable collaboration.
- Emphasised Australia's strengths in critical minerals, skills, and green tech innovation.
- Stressed need for scalable solutions and smoother critical mineral supply chains to India.



mentarity between the two nations, especially in the context of green technology and energy.

"We are very strong in minerals and metals that are essential for battery storage. We are very strong in skills and capabilities, and universities and technical

colleges are very important for upskilling and the Indian population for the new green energy revolution," he noted.

Highlighting Australia's strength in innovation, Green added, "We also have a very high level of. Of green tech, nine Australia is a

place with a large amount of innovation, but the population is small and a long way from a large supply chain."

Additionally, Green also reflected on the scalability of Australian solutions in India's vast market. Green emphasised the long-term vision for collaboration.

Vedanta shares slip over 3% after US short seller report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Shares of Vedanta Ltd ended over 3 per cent lower on Wednesday after US short seller Viceroy Research released a report charging billionaire Anil Agarwal's mining conglomerate to be "financially unsustainable" and posing a severe risk to creditors.

The stock tanked 7.71 per cent to Rs 421 in intra-day trade on the BSE. Later, it recovered most of the lost ground and ended at Rs 440.80, down 3.38 per cent.

On the NSE, the stock ended 3.28 per cent down at Rs 441.30 after dropping 7.81 per cent to Rs 420.65 in intra-day.

The company's market valuation eroded by Rs 6,021.99 crore to Rs 1,72,369.91 crore.

Viceroy said it was shorting the debt stack of Vedanta Resources, the parent company and majority owner of Mumbai-listed Vedanta Ltd, as it released the 85-page report.



Shorting debt, also known as short selling of bonds, is a trading strategy where an investor looks to profit from a decline in the price of bonds or other debt instruments. It involves borrowing the bond, selling it at the current market price, and then buying it back later at a potentially lower price to return to the lender, pocketing the difference as profit.

Calling Vedanta Resources Ltd (VRL) a "heavily indebted parent", Viceroy said, "The entire group structure is financially unsustainable, operationally compromised, and poses a severe, under-

appreciated risk to creditors".

Responding to the report, Vedanta, in a statement, said, "The report is a malicious combination of selective misinformation and baseless allegations to discredit the Group."

"It has been issued without making any attempt to contact us with the sole objective of creating false propaganda. It only contains a compilation of various information, which is already in the public domain, but the authors have tried to sensationalise the context to profiteer from market reaction," it said.

Nvidia becomes world's most valuable company at \$ 4 trillion in value

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

Chipmaker Nvidia became the first public company to top \$4 trillion in value on Wednesday after two-year investor frenzy.

Nvidia shares rose 2.5%, or \$3.97, in early trading Wednesday, topping \$164 each. At the beginning of 2023, Nvidia shares were around \$14 each.

The poster child of the AI boom, Nvidia has grown into largest company on Wall Street, surpassing Microsoft, Apple, Amazon and Google — it is now worth over \$3 trillion — and the stock's movement

carries more weight on the S&P 500 and other indexes than every company except Apple.

Two years ago, Nvidia's market value was below \$600 billion.

Nvidia and other companies benefiting from the AI boom have been a major reason the S&P 500 has climbed to record after record recently, with the latest coming last week.

Their explosion of profits has helped to propel the market despite worries about stubbornly high inflation and possible pain coming for the US economy from tariffs and other policies of President Donald Trump.



Gold declines Rs 700 to Rs 98,420 per 10 g ahead of US Fed's FOMC minutes

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined by Rs 700 to Rs 98,420 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in line with weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,120 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 600 to Rs 98,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,600 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Additionally, silver prices plunged by Rs 800 to Rs 1,04,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. The white metal had ended

at Rs 1,04,800 per kg in the previous market close.

"Gold prices are experiencing selling pressure on Wednesday due to reduced expectations for a Federal Reserve rate cut in July and a strengthening US dollar."

"The US dollar remains strong, trading near a two-week high, as market participants anticipate that the Fed will maintain elevated interest rates considering expected worsening inflation driven by higher import taxes and a resilient US labour market," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

On the global front, spot gold went lower by USD 11.66 or 0.35 per cent to USD 3,289.81 per ounce.



Seven states raise total of Rs 13,300 crore via auction of government securities

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Seven major Indian states raised a total of Rs 13,300 crore in the latest round of auction of State Government Securities (SGS), according to the data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

All participating states accepted the full amount they had notified for the auction. Madhya Pradesh led the fundraising drive, mobilising Rs 4,800 crore through two securities. The state offered the highest yields in the auction, 7.14 per cent on a 16-year security and 7.15 per cent on an 18-year security.

Following Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra raised a substantial amount of Rs 4,000 crore. The state



floated two securities with 20-year and 21-year tenors, both offering a yield of 7.14 per cent.

Bihar, on the other hand, raised Rs 2,000 crore at the lowest yield in this round of auction. The state offered a 10-year security at 6.88 per cent, which was the most economical in terms of interest cost.

Other participants in the

auction included Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, and Telangana. Haryana raised Rs 1,000 crore with a 16-year bond at a cut-off yield of 7.12 per cent.

Jammu and Kashmir and Mizoram both offered 15-year bonds with yields of 7.14 per cent, raising Rs 400 crore and Rs 100 crore respectively.

India's deal-making declines in Q2 2025 amid global instability

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's deal-making landscape cooled in Q2 2025, with overall deal volumes and values taking a hit amid ongoing global instability, according to Grant Thornton Bharat's latest Dealtracker report.

India Inc recorded 582 transactions (including IPOs and QIPs) worth USD 17 billion, down 13 per cent in volume and a sharp 48 per cent in value from the previous quarter.

The decline was largely driven by geopolitical and macroeconomic headwinds, including the Iran-Israel conflict, US policy uncertainty, and the pro-



longed Russia-Ukraine war.

The report further reveals that domestic M&A saw significant deceleration, with only one billion-dollar deal, Sumitomo Mitsui's USD 1.57 billion investment in YES Bank, compared to four such deals in Q1.

Still, some sectors and segments showed signs of resilience. Private equity

held relatively steady with 357 deals totalling USD 7.4 billion, supported by 18 high-value investments. Warburg Pincus and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority's USD 862 million infusion into IDFC FIRST Bank was the largest PE transaction of the quarter.

Public markets reflected cautious optimism. While IPO volumes dropped for

the third consecutive quarter, June saw renewed interest with major listings like Leela Hotels (USD 407 million) and Ather Energy (USD 343 million). QIPs also held firm, raising USD 2.2 billion, with the banking sector contributing nearly half the total.

Sectoral trends revealed a shift in investor focus. Banking and financial services led in value with USD 4.5 billion across 73 deals. Infrastructure followed with USD 1.2 billion, buoyed by major investments in road and urban development.

Meanwhile, manufacturing achieved record volumes, driven by favourable policy momentum, despite a decline in deal value.

NBFC, insurance may outperform in H2 FY2026, says report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The NBFC and insurance segments are expected to perform better in the second half of FY26, supported by a friendlier regulatory environment and continued growth push from both regulators and the government, according to a report by Emkay Research.

The report noted that easing regulations in both the NBFC and insurance sectors, along with growth-focused measures by authorities, are setting the stage for a stronger performance in the



second half of the fiscal year.

It stated, "Easing of the regulatory environment in both—the NBFC and Insurance spaces, and growth impetus by the regulators and the government, set the platform for stronger performance in H2FY26."

However, the performance

in the first quarter (and possibly the second quarter) has not been very encouraging. For NBFCs, key indicators such as AUM growth, asset quality, and credit cost have shown limited improvement.

Similarly, insurance companies have not reported

strong growth in recent quarters.

A positive development highlighted in the report is that the stress in the unsecured personal loan segment and the challenges in the microfinance institution (MFI) space are now largely behind, with consensus forming around this view.

However, for a broader and more sustained revival in credit growth, recovery in vehicle sales will play an important role.

The report also cautioned that recent and upcoming regulatory changes could lead to near-term volatility

in capital market-linked stocks. However, such volatility may also present attractive entry opportunities for investors.

Despite some short-term uncertainties, investors continue to see NBFCs, insurance companies, and capital market players as structural investment stories. The recent outperformance of their shares appears to reflect expectations of the H2FY26 revival, which may cap any near-term upside.

The report further added that a frontloaded 100 basis points repo rate cut by the RBI in CY25, the reversal

of increased risk weights on bank loans to NBFCs, and more lenient provisioning norms for project finance are all expected to support stronger growth and profitability for NBFCs, mainly driven by net interest margin (NIM) expansion. This improvement may come with a slight delay.

In addition, better temporal and spatial distribution of the monsoon so far is aiding rural recovery. Coupled with multiple government initiatives aimed at boosting growth, this is likely to support increased credit demand across sectors.

Indian banks see robust market cap growth in Q2 2025: Report



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian banks witnessed significant gains in market capitalisation during the April-June quarter of 2025, driven by falling interest rates and increased liquidity, which collectively attracted investor confidence.

According to S&P Global Market Intelligence data, 18 of the top 20 Indian lenders, including the nation's three largest, saw their market cap rise.

HDFC Bank Ltd., India's largest bank by market cap, registered a strong 9.70 per cent increase in its market capitalisation. Its private sector counterpart, ICICI Bank Ltd., also posted a healthy gain of 7.43 per cent.

State Bank of India, the country's biggest lender by assets, saw its market cap climb by 6.33 per cent.

The positive sentiment in the banking sector mirrored broader market trends, with India's benchmark Nifty 50 index rising 8.5 per cent and the Nifty Bank index, comprising the most liquid and largest Indian banks, surging 11.1 per cent over the same period. Global investor confidence was also buoyed by expectations that planned tariff measures by US President Donald Trump would be less disruptive to global

supply chains than initially anticipated.

Despite these positive trends, concerns linger regarding slowing credit and deposit growth, which could potentially pressure bank margins in an environment of declining interest rates.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported on June 25 that credit growth for commercial banks slowed to 9.9 per cent year-over-year in May, down from 16.2 per cent a year ago.

The central bank has projected the nation's GDP to grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal, a rate similar to the previous year. The RBI has cut its benchmark interest rate by 100 basis points since February.

To counter slowing credit growth and inject liquidity, the central bank has taken many other measures as well this including reducing the ratio of deposits banks must maintain as cash. Banks, in turn, have lowered interest rates on deposits and indicated that stress in unsecured retail loans may be reaching its peak, according to a Nomura note dated June 25.

The report adds that, among the top-performing banks in the second quarter, AU Small Finance Bank led the pack with an impressive 53.05 per cent surge in market cap.

HOW ‘COMPLEX’ IS THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER DISPUTE ?

OPINION

UPAMANYU BASU

Recently, on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Defence Ministers’ Conclave, India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized that “India and China should work towards resolving the complex issues under a structured roadmap. And should de-escalate tensions along the LAC”. In response, in a later press review Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning remarked “the border dispute is complicated and takes time to resolve”. She also reiterated that Beijing is ready to hold discussion on delimitation.

She highlighted that China and India have already established the Special Representative mechanism (SR) on the boundary question and reached the Agreement on the “Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the China-India Boundary Question”. On answering why there is delay in resolving the border issue even after 23 rounds of SR level talks, she remarked “it is a complex issue”. This brings us to the fundamental question of this piece “How complex is the India-China border issue?”

WHY IS THE INDIA CHINA BORDER A COMPLEX ISSUE ?

India was the first non communist country to recognise the People’s Republic of China and also backed China’s recognition into the United Nations in the early 1950s. But this bonhomie considerably changed giving way to tensions for a variety of reasons. But the question of unresolved issues of territoriality remains a prime contestation between these two Asian powers. The initial rift between the two countries regarding territorial recognition started with Beijing’s unique position regarding Tibet. In 1954, India and China agreed to sign the Panchsheel agreement to regulate India’s relations with India restricting the right to trade and travel without visa etc. Later, India published maps which showed Ladakh’s Aksai Chin plateau as Indian territory. This move coincided with the growing unrest in Tibet, the flight of Tibetan refugees into India, and the Dalai Lama’s historic escape to Indian soil in 1959—all of which further strained bilateral ties. This was followed by China publishing its own version of maps in 1958 showing parts of India as Chinese territory. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai

during his visit to India in 1960, proposed a compromise to solve this contesting war of territories by proposing India giving up its claim on Aksai Chin, in return of China giving up its claim on Arunachal Pradesh in the east of India. It is argued that the rejection of this proposal set the stage for the 1962 Sino-India War.

The period from 1967 to 1975, remained largely conflicted but were largely stable years as Beijing agreed to delink the border dispute from the broader bilateral relationship. But this detente was short lived, as Beijing soon reversed its stance and started to demand concessions from India which included transfer of Tawang, in Arunachal Pradesh citing its religious significance to the Tibetan Buddhists.

A renewed effort to stabilize ties came during former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao’s 1993 visit to Beijing, where an accord was chalked out between the two countries to acknowledge the status quo along the LAC and work a negotiable solution. Both sides mutually wanted to clarify the position of the entire LAC, largely with exchanging maps and reaching an understanding.

This understanding again started to fade away, when Beijing started questioning India’s sovereign rights on Pakistan-occupied parts of Kashmir on the western front of the border. During Atal Behari Vajpayee’s tenure as the Prime Minister, there was a fresh attempt to appoint special representatives (SR) for this process, which was later formalized by his successor Prime Min-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in a group photograph with Chinese Defence Minister Admiral Dong and other participating leaders ahead of the official proceedings of the SCO Defence Ministers’ Meeting in Qingdao, China. File photo

ister Manmohan Singh during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao’s New Delhi Visit in 2005. The proposal again was structured with Beijing’s confirmation on how troops should behave in case of encounters and mutual commitments to take additional meetings each year to manage tensions.

Yet, the fragile equilibrium was challenged with conditions starting to change with Beijing increasing its patrolling and transgression of the LAC since 2007, while shifting its original stance regarding Arunachal Pradesh. Later in 2013, Chinese troops entered Depsang Plains in Ladakh and set up a 19-km encampment inside the LAC, as a provocation. From the Chinese side, it was in response to India making observation posts in Chumar- an elevated area in eastern Ladakh. This altercation finally resulted in a new Border Defence Cooperation Agreement with China in October 2013.

Since 2014, Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi’s government has been consistent in strengthening and building considerable border infrastructure in the region. Indian troops have increased their patrolling including in areas where there was lack of access. Despite frequent high-level interaction between President Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi, the standoffs have kept increasing and got more violent over the years with Doklam in 2017, followed by “more than 663 transgressions in 2019, 108 aerial crossings in 2019”. Matters took a grave turn in May 2020, when over 5,000 Chinese troops advanced into Indian territory at multiple points— Galwan Valley, Gogra Hot Springs, and Pangong Lake. The defense ministry officially reported that “Chinese aggression has been increasing along LAC and more particularly in Galwan Valley since 5 May 2020. The Chinese transgressed in areas of Korang Nala, Gogra and Pangong

Tso on 17-18 May”.

What remains consistent throughout decades of engagement is the negotiability of the India-China border dispute, dating back to the 1950s. However, the pattern is also marked by Beijing’s repeated exaggeration of territorial claims, whether in Ladakh or Arunachal Pradesh. After the 2008 economic crisis, when Beijing was fast enough to recover in the global economic order, its transgressions kept increasing. Similarly, as India has deepened its strategic ties with the United States and contributed to the larger security architecture in the Indo Pacific region, Chinese transgressions have consistently gone up since 2014. Post 2020, the angle of US-China competition, fall of domestic legitimacy after the emergence of Covid 19, largely has triggered Beijing’s anxiety of foreign players meddling with its domestic legitimacy as well. Hence, the transgres-

sions are often seen as a way of diverting attention and projecting an image of a resolute and uncompromising China.

In such a situation, how can the two countries negotiate a settlement, when one party continues to aggressively expand and exaggerate its territorial claims, using negotiations as a tactical pause rather than a path to resolution?

4 ‘D’s IN INDIA CHINA CONTEXT: A WAY FORWARD

During the SCO Meet, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh proposed a four-point framework to negotiate a sustainable solution to the India-China rift. These 4 D’s include: adherence to the 2024 disengagement agreement, continuous de-escalation measures to avoid flare ups along the LAC, and fast tracking of the boundary demarcation and delimitation process.

In order for these 4 D’s to operate efficiently, it is im-

portant to realise that the heart of the dispute lies in lack of agreement on what LAC is. The understanding changed after 2002, so the possible start of discussion should be from there itself. While the middle sector of the border sees relatively fewer disputes, the real friction lies at the western and eastern extremities.

The creation and maintenance of buffer zones or no patrolling zones are ideally the best ways of reaching a larger consensus in case of disputed areas along the LAC. However, China should consider that its strategic leanings with Pakistan only makes this understanding more suspicious for New Delhi. India will be an assertive power in the future as well, and this should be a well digested fact for Beijing. However, if China continues using Pakistan as an irresponsible ally in the region to deter India’s position, it risks undermining the overall stability of South Asia as a whole.

Despite these challenges, there are substantial areas of convergence between India and China, particularly in advocating for the Global South within multilateral forums. Both nations share common interests in reforming global governance structures and amplifying non-Western voices. In this context, Beijing must carefully weigh the long-term costs of prolonging its border standoff with a rising, responsible, and assertive power like India.

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Assessing feasibility of simultaneous polls

OPINION

VIDISHA SHEKHAWAT & DR. ALISHA VERMA



The idea to synchronise elections in India, including the parliamentary arena, state assemblies, and, possibly, local bodies, under One Nation, One Election (ONOE) has been re-invigorated by its proponents citing administrative efficiency and financial discipline. First experimented with in the 1950s but derailed by early dissolutions starting in 1967, the idea has returned to popularity. However, its implementation would require deep deliberation of constitutional, logistic, and social consequences.

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERHAUL

The first and the most significant barrier to implementation is the legal one. Articles 83 and 172 of the Constitution now provide separate five-year terms for the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies respectively. ONOE would

require significant changes to at least five articles of the constitution, and changes to the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and other electoral measures. The Law Commission of India in its draft report of 2018 noted that simultaneous elections are desirable, but the current legal framework does not allow such a change without significant structural changes.

Any constitutional amendment, which changes the federal balance, must be ratified by Parliament as well as by half the states. This question presents a political factor: will the states of regional parties support a model that centralises the electoral calendars and might nationalise the political discourse? In its report of 2023, the High-Level Committee on One Nation, One Election, chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind, asserted that broad-

based consensus is essential and would have to precede any formal move towards synchronisation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE DEMANDS

The potential of significant fiscal savings is commonly promoted by proponents of ONOE. According to the data submitted to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in 2015, the 2014 Lok Sabha elections did cost 3,870 crores. When added to the amount spent on state and local elections, the total amount spent per year amounts to tens of thousands of crores. This recurring expenditure can be reduced materially by conducting concurrent polls.

However, the financial viability is based not only on the reduction of the electoral frequency but also on the cost of initial capital investment to reinforce electoral infrastructure. The Election Commission of India (ECI) would require the existing number of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to be doubled to conduct concurrent elections in the country. A 2017 estimate by ECI indicated that it would take about 9,300 crores to procure and maintain a new stock of EVMs and VVPATs.

In addition to equipment, the number of administrative staff, police, polling places, and training facilities



would have to be increased exponentially.

TECHNOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS AND ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

The ONOE initiative will be enabled and tested by technology it relies on. Even though India has moved steadily towards the modernization of its electoral system, with the introduction of digital voting machines in all elections, the idea of holding the country-wide elections simultaneously will put these systems to the unprecedented tests. The Election Commission of India should hence confirm that all the equipment is tamper-proof, cyber secure and compatible to function across more than 10 lakh polling stations.

The possibility of a single electoral roll and voter ID as advocated by the Law Commission in 2020 supported by the ECI will require close cooperation between

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the national body and State Election Commissions, which is a jurisdictionally complicated exercise. The corresponding recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee on Law and Justice in 2020 to unify the electoral rolls at all levels of government has not been implemented yet; however, it’s essential to the successful realization of ONOE.

THE ROLE OF LITERACY AND VOTER AWARENESS

According to the results of the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23, the lit-

eracy rate in India has increased to 80.9%, but there is still a huge gap. Literacy in the urban areas stands at 88.9% and in rural at 77.5%. These statistics highlight the necessity of voter education approaches that emphasise the maximisation of democratic participation, especially if the ONOE proposal is to be implemented.

One multilayered ballot sheet with multiple choices of Lok Sabha, state, and local representatives may confuse new voters or the ones with low literacy. Any implementation should be preceded by effective

voter education campaigns, more so in rural areas and marginalised groups. This gap must be bridged by the Election Commission, NGOs, and the local governance institutions working in harmony. Informed participation may necessitate multilingual audio-visual materials, community workshops, and door-to-door campaigns.

URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The urban-rural digital divide in India adds further complexity to the execution of the ONOE. The urban centres have higher internet penetration and more stable access to political content, but a significant part of rural India still does not have reliable digital infrastructure. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) found that only 33% of women in rural areas had regular access to the Internet, compared to more than 60% of men in urban areas.

This difference implies that voters might not receive the same level of election-related information such as polling dates, information about candidates, and changes in procedure. Therefore, the government should ensure that a variety of communication devices are used such as regional newspapers, community radio, folk performances, and mobile exhibitions, especially in remote and rural areas.

WEIGHING THE TRADE-OFFS:

BENEFITS AND CONCERNS

The strengths of the ONOE model are based on several convenient aspects of governance. A harmonised electoral cycle may allow seamless governance, and planning across a longer term, and simplify policy implementation. However, the critics argue that national and state elections are controlled by different electoral interests and a co-ordinated timing might obscure these differences, thus defeating the democratic voice of regional interests. Moreover, the issue of what would happen in case a state government would fall mid-term is still not answered. Would President Rule be enforced till the next cycle or would staggered elections come back again, thus nullifying the entire essence of ONOE?

Although the concept of ONOE is not flawless, it must be implemented in phases, inclusively, and with the help of data, infrastructure, and agreement. Potentially there can be pilot projects in a few states or clusters that can give insight into feasibility. Simultaneous elections are a means, not an end, and the success of ONOE will depend upon whether the democratic process can be made more efficient, more representative, and more participatory. *Ms. Vidisha is a Doctoral Research Scholar at Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan and Dr. Alisha is an Assistant Professor of Law at Symbiosis Law School, Pune, Maharashtra.*

LAWRENCE IN SABARMATI JAIL, YET HIS TERROR UNABATED

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Stooping down from celebrities to local businessmen, Lawrence Bishnoi is spreading terror not only in Punjab but across the country. From threatening Bollywood star Salman Khan, orchestrating the murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, targeting political figure Baba Siddique, to now gunning down a humble businessman in Abohar, the gangster's reach shows no bounds, and his impunity grows stronger from behind bars. But the horror is no longer confined to headlines. It now burns in the cries of ordinary families.

A GRIEVING BROTHER'S CRY TURNS INTO A NATIONAL QUESTION

"Why should a man who pays taxes, who gives jobs to thousands, be gunned down like this, on the road, in daylight?" "Why are these monsters being kept safe in jails? Why is the government sheltering them? What do they expect them to do for the country? Why aren't they being finished?"

These were not political slogans. These were the howling cries of elder brother Jagat Verma, collapsing in grief beside the funeral pyre of Sanjay Verma, a respected cloth merchant from Abohar. His body still smouldering, Jagat's cries rang out through the crowd gathered at Shivpuri cremation ground, breaking the silence of mourning and reflecting the collective rage of a state under siege.

DAYLIGHT MURDER SPARKS PANIC ACROSS ABOHAR

Sanjay Verma was more than a trader, he was an employer, a known philanthropist, and an honest man. And yet, on July 7, he was shot dead in broad daylight, just steps from his shop. And the gangsters who ordered it? Still breathing, still issuing threats, from jail.

The brazen murder happened around 10:15 am. CCTV footage shows masked assailants approaching Verma outside his "New Wear Well Gents Tailor" showroom, firing multiple bullets, and fleeing. Their escape motorcycle skidded a short distance away, after which they snatched another bike from a passerby and vanished. Within hours, gangster Aarzoo Bishnoi, a close associate of Lawrence and Anmol Bishnoi, claimed responsibility for the killing on social media.

FEAR SHUTS DOWN THE CITY, ANGER MOUNTS

The police have confirmed an FIR under arms and organized crime sections and launched a massive manhunt in and around Fazilka district. But the shock had already ripped through Punjab's business community. Markets shut down, fear gripped families, and public confidence crumbled again.

From Salman Khan to Sanjay Verma: How Lawrence Bishnoi's Shadow Has Plunged Punjab and the Nation into Fear



“Why is Bishnoi still being held under special protection in Gujarat? Despite all these restrictions, he's still calling shots. What is the Centre trying to protect?”

— Aman Aroram, Punjab Cabinet Minister

Code, which barred his physical movement out of jail — even for court trials. In July 2025, this restriction was extended under Section 303 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), India's new criminal code. The latest MHA notification confirms that no state police or agency can move or interrogate Lawrence Bishnoi outside Sabarmati Jail until August 2025.

SABARMATI JAIL UNDER WATCH, YET INTERNATIONAL NEXUS EMERGES

According to DIG Shweta Shrimali, Superintendent of Sabarmati Central Jail, Bishnoi remains under these restrictions and is classified as a high-risk national security detainee. However, recent investigations have uncovered disturbing allegations — including reports of Bishnoi coordinating with ISI-backed gangster Shehzad Bhatti. A viral video purportedly shows Bhatti and Bishnoi in contact, sparking fears of cross-border planning from within Indian prison walls.

DESPITE LEGAL SEALS, BISHNOI'S GANG OPERATES FREELY

Despite the legal barricades and constant surveillance, Bishnoi's gang continues to spread terror across state lines, prompting questions not just about policing, but about the effectiveness of legal confinement as a deterrent.

PUNJAB'S ANTI-GANGSTER CRACKDOWN: IMPRESSIVE STATS, GRIM REALITY

Back in Punjab, DIG AGTF Gurmeet Chauhan said that

law enforcement continues to push back, even as the threat morphs with technology and youth manipulation. Under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Punjab formed the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) in April 2022, and since then, the state has witnessed one of the most intensive crackdowns on organized crime. Between April 6, 2022 and June 30, 2025, AGTF and field units have:

PUNJAB'S ANTI-GANGSTER DRIVE

- 2,112 gangsters and criminals arrested
- 20 gangsters neutralized in encounters
- 782 gangster/criminal modules busted
- 1,811 illegal weapons recovered
- 473 vehicles seized

OF THESE, AGTF ALONE ACCOUNTED FOR:

- 36 arrests
- 6 gangsters neutralized
- 130 modules busted
- 311 weapons recovered
- 87 vehicles seized.

JUVENILES RECRUITED, GANG BRAND USED FOR FAKE THREATS

Yet, even with these staggering numbers, Chauhan points to a deeper crisis. "These gangsters have become role models for some youngsters," he said. "They're using juveniles to carry out violent crimes, knowing they'll face softer legal consequences. Even worse, ordinary criminals are now impersonating Bishnoi's gang in extortion calls — because the name alone terrifies."

AAP'S AMAN ARORA TURNS THE HEAT ON BJP

Cabinet Minister Aman Arora added his voice to the outrage, accusing the BJP of politicizing law and order instead of taking accountability for national-level sheltering of criminals. Referring to the recent grenade attack at the residence of former BJP Minister Manoranjan Kalia in Jalandhar, Arora said Punjab Police had arrested the accused within 12 hours, and that the attack was masterminded by Zeeshan Akhtar, linked to both Shehzad Bhatti and Lawrence Bishnoi. "Instead of applauding Punjab Police, Sunil Jakhar is misleading the public," Arora said. "Why is Bishnoi



still being held under special protection in Gujarat? Despite all these restrictions, he's still calling shots. What is the Centre trying to protect?"

A NETWORK BEYOND BORDERS, AND A BROTHER'S HAUNTING QUESTION

Meanwhile, the country continues to watch as a gangster once known only in Punjab grows into a syndicate with arms stretching across India, Canada, Italy, and Australia. With over 75 FIRs, many under UAPA, Lawrence Bishnoi has transformed from a student of law to a lawless icon of digital-era gangsterism.

And back in Abohar, Sanjay Verma's elder brother, Jagat, still mourns. But more than that — he still demands answers.

His voice is not just that of a grieving brother. It now echoes as a question for a state, for a country, for those in power: "Why are gangsters safe in jail while honest men burn on pyres?"

THE ISI BACKED NETWORK OF LAWRENCE

The murder of Abohar-based businessman Sanjay Verma has once again drawn attention to a disturbing and



Jagat Verma, younger Brother of Sanjay Verma

evolving threat — the growing nexus between Indian gangster networks and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Investigative agencies have confirmed that jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi has maintained indirect communication with ISI-backed operatives, most notably Pakistani national Shehzad Bhatti. Bhatti, who has long been under the radar for his role in cross-border smuggling and targeted attacks in Punjab, is believed to be operating with the support of ISI handlers. Sources in Indian intelligence agencies have linked Bhatti to recent drone drops of arms and explosives, grenade attacks, and the recruitment of sleeper cells in border districts. A recent viral video, allegedly showing Bhatti and Bishnoi in contact, has intensified concerns of a broader design to destabilize Punjab through targeted killings and psychological warfare.

According to Cabinet Minister Aman Arora, the grenade attack on former BJP Minister Manoranjan Kalia's Jalandhar residence was masterminded by Zeeshan Akhtar, an associate of both Bhatti and Bishnoi.

"Despite being in Sabarmati Jail under high-security restrictions, Bishnoi continues to conspire with ISI-backed criminals like Bhatti," Arora stated, citing intelligence inputs.

Senior jail authorities confirmed that Bishnoi is being held under Section 303 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, which replaced CrPC Section 268, prohibiting his movement or physical production. Yet, reports of his gang's operational continuity and international connections raise troubling questions.

Security officials believe the Bishnoi-Bhatti-ISI triangle is part of a calculated strategy to provoke communal unrest and terrorize Punjab's business class and civil society — without crossing the LOC. This emerging nexus marks a dangerous shift: from gang war to hybrid terrorism.

FROM HOSTEL TO HIGH-SECURITY CELL: TRACING LAWRENCE'S CRIMES, JAIL TRAIL

Once a law student at Panjab University, Lawrence Bishnoi has now become the face of India's most dangerous criminal syndicate, with deep operational roots in Punjab. Known for orchestrating



Slayed Businessman Sanjay Verma from Abohar and Bishnoi's Gangster claim on this murder

The next year, he won the post and deepened his association with Goldy Brar, who would later become one of the key international arms of the Bishnoi gang. Another associate, Sampat Nehra from Haryana, joined in 2012, helping Lawrence expand his influence into neighbouring states. What started as hostel-based violence turned into a statewide crime network.

By 2014, Lawrence Bishnoi was a known name in Punjab's criminal records. He was arrested repeatedly in cases of extortion, illegal arms, and murder attempts in Muktsar, Faridkot, and Bathinda. He reportedly ran extortion modules from jail using mobile phones smuggled in through visitors and sympathizers.

In 2018, Bishnoi came under national focus when Delhi Police uncovered a plot to assassinate Bollywood actor Salman Khan. Sampat Nehra had even done a reconnaissance of Khan's residence in Mumbai. The motive was symbolic — the blackbuck case, where Khan was accused of killing an animal revered by the Bishnoi community.

Even as he was lodged in jails in Rajasthan, Punjab, and Delhi, Bishnoi's gang expanded, particularly in Punjab. His name was linked to extortion threats to singers, businessmen, liquor contractors, and developers in Mohali, Moga, Ludhiana, and Amritsar. His growing digital network included foreign-based handlers and juvenile foot soldiers.

The most high-profile crime that tied Bishnoi firmly to Punjab was the murder of singer Sidhu Moosewala on May 29, 2022, in Mansa. Goldy Brar, operating from Canada, claimed responsibility on behalf of the gang. Punjab Police named Lawrence as the main conspirator. At the time, he was lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail.

JAIL TRANSFER TIMELINE:

- June 14, 2022: Punjab Police received custody of Bishnoi from Tihar Jail and brought him to Punjab in connection with the Moosewala murder.
- July–August 2022: He was held and interrogated in various Punjab jails including Bathinda and Ferozepur.
- April 24, 2023: Produced in Gujarat's Nalia court for the first time in a Rs 194 crore drug smuggling case.

This case involved 40 kg of heroin seized from a Pakistani boat off Jakhau coast — a consignment allegedly ordered by Bishnoi.

● August 24, 2023: Brought from Bathinda Jail to Gujarat under court orders.

● August 28, 2023: Formally lodged in Sabarmati Central Jail, Ahmedabad.

● August 30, 2023: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) invoked Section 268 of the CrPC, prohibiting his physical movement.

● July 2025: Under the new Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, the restriction was extended under Section 303 till August 2025.

● While in Sabarmati Jail, intelligence agencies linked Bishnoi to ISI-backed gangster Shehzad Bhatti, with reports suggesting that Bishnoi was coordinating extortion and targeted killings with foreign handlers.

PUNJAB CRIME TIMELINE (KEY INCIDENTS):

- 2010–2014: Multiple extortion and assault cases in Muktsar, Faridkot, and Moga.
- 2015–2018: Expansion into inter-state crimes; cases registered in Ludhiana and Amritsar.
- 2020: Extortion threats to liquor contractors and hotel owners; Mohali-based gang module uncovered.
- 2021: Involvement in the murder of a youth named Akashdeep in Ferozepur over gang rivalry.
- 2022 (May 29): Murder of Sidhu Moosewala in Mansa; Bishnoi named key conspirator.
- 2022 (May–Dec): Multiple extortion calls made to realtors and singers across Punjab using encrypted apps.
- 2023: Accused of facilitating the RPG attack on the Intelligence HQ in Mohali by providing shelter to operatives.
- 2025 (July 7): Sanjay Verma, a businessman in Abohar, gunned down in daylight; responsibility claimed by Bishnoi aide Aarzoo.

Punjab Police and the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) have continued to crack down on his modules, but the persistence of these crimes even during Bishnoi's high-security confinement raises chilling concerns. His transformation from student leader to gangland mastermind marks one of the most disturbing chapters in Punjab's criminal history.

TRAVEL- STAY CONNECTED TO YOUR ROOTS WHILE MOVING FORWARD IN LIFE



MURARI GUPTA

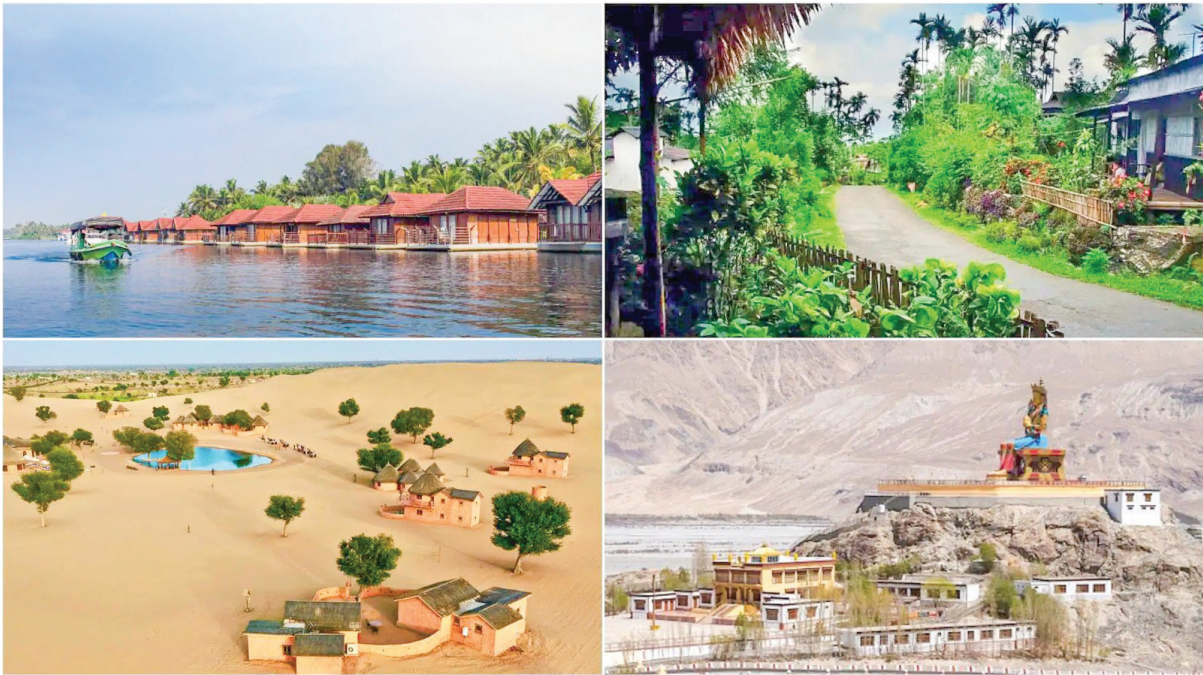
In a fast-changing world driven by technology, rapid urbanization, and a global mindset, it's easy to drift away from our cultural roots, traditions, and values. As lifestyles evolve, the connection to where we come from — our heritage, language, and community — can begin to fade. However, one of the most powerful ways to reconnect with our roots while also embracing personal and societal progress is through travel. Traveling is not just about visiting new places; it's a journey into self-awareness, learning, and growth.

When we travel, especially within our own country or ancestral regions, we get a chance to experience the customs, rituals, and ways of life that shaped earlier generations. Visiting a grandparent's village, a hometown that once belonged to parents, or a historically significant site allows us to see the values and traditions that have shaped our identity. This connection with the past helps to preserve family history, cultural heritage, and personal stories that may

otherwise be lost over time. For example, when someone from a city visits rural areas where their ancestors lived, they not only gain knowledge of traditional lifestyles but also a deeper understanding of the hardships, resilience, and community life that defined those generations. Observing traditional farming methods, celebrating local festivals, listening to regional dialects, or even participating in family rituals can be deeply grounding. These experiences remind us of our origins, fostering a sense of belonging and identity that can be both comforting and inspiring.

Cultural travel also promotes respect for diversity and heritage. By visiting temples, mosques, churches, forts, palaces, and museums, we learn about the complex history that has shaped a nation or region. This can awaken a deep sense of pride in our roots while encouraging us to preserve and promote our cultural legacy. Understanding how our ancestors lived, how they fought for survival, or contributed to arts, literature, and social change builds emotional and intellectual strength.

At the same time, travel plays a significant role in individual progress. It expands horizons, enhances awareness, and sharpens our thinking. By stepping out of our comfort zones and encountering different lifestyles, we begin to question our assumptions



By visiting temples, mosques, churches, forts, palaces, and museums, we learn about the complex history that has shaped a nation or region. This can awaken a deep sense of pride in our roots while encouraging us to preserve and promote our cultural legacy.

and adapt to new perspectives. This makes us more open-minded, compassionate, and socially aware. For students and professionals, travel is often a practical teacher — offering lessons in communication, problem-solving, planning, and critical thinking.

Learning is most impactful when it's experienced. Seeing how water is conserved in desert villages, how traditional crafts are passed down, or how small communities function without

modern conveniences can teach resourcefulness and innovation. These lessons often lead to new ideas that can be applied in modern life, leading to personal and societal progress.

Moreover, traveling can be an inspiration for career growth, entrepreneurship, and creativity. Many people find their purpose or passion during their travels. Writers find stories, artists find subjects, entrepreneurs find opportunities, and students discover fields of study. For

example, witnessing sustainable practices in a village can inspire someone to start an eco-friendly business. Visiting a region rich in folk art might motivate a designer to work with local artisans and revive traditional crafts. In this way, travel becomes a bridge between the past and the future.

Another way travel contributes to progress is by encouraging social responsibility. When we connect with communities that lack resources or face develop-

ment challenges, we are moved to act. Volunteering during travel, supporting local economies, or participating in community-based tourism all contribute to the betterment of society. Travel helps build empathy, a quality essential for leadership, cooperation, and social harmony.

Travel also plays a major role in building unity in a diverse country like India. Each region has its own language, customs, cuisine, and lifestyle. By traveling across different states and interacting with people from various backgrounds, we develop national integration and mutual respect. It creates awareness about shared history, challenges, and aspirations — strengthening the idea of unity in diversity.

For families, traveling together to places of historical,

religious, or cultural importance can be a way of passing on values and traditions to the next generation. Children learn best when they are engaged, and seeing their roots in action makes the experience meaningful. Whether it's visiting a freedom movement site, a cultural festival, or a place of worship, these journeys help instill pride, identity, and curiosity in young minds.

In a globalized era, where young people are often encouraged to move abroad or live in cities far from their origins, travel becomes even more important to keep the link to one's roots alive. Reconnecting with one's village, region, or country doesn't mean giving up modern aspirations — it simply means being rooted while reaching high. When people know

where they come from, they are better equipped to decide where they are going.

In conclusion, travel is a powerful tool that connects us to our roots and propels us toward progress. It helps preserve cultural identity while also enabling growth, learning, and innovation. Whether we are visiting a historical monument, a traditional village, or a modern city, every journey holds the potential to deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. In reconnecting with our heritage, we find strength and inspiration. In learning from others, we find purpose and direction. Travel is not just a path to places — it's a journey of the heart and mind that shapes a more balanced, aware, and progressive individual and society.

War Museums of Rajasthan: Preserving history and honoring bravery

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, known for its rich cultural heritage and desert landscapes, also holds a prominent place in India's military history. The border regions of the state have witnessed significant battles, especially during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. To honor the sacrifices and educate future generations, several war museums and memorials have been established, particularly around Jaisalmer, near the western front.

JAISALMER WAR MUSEUM

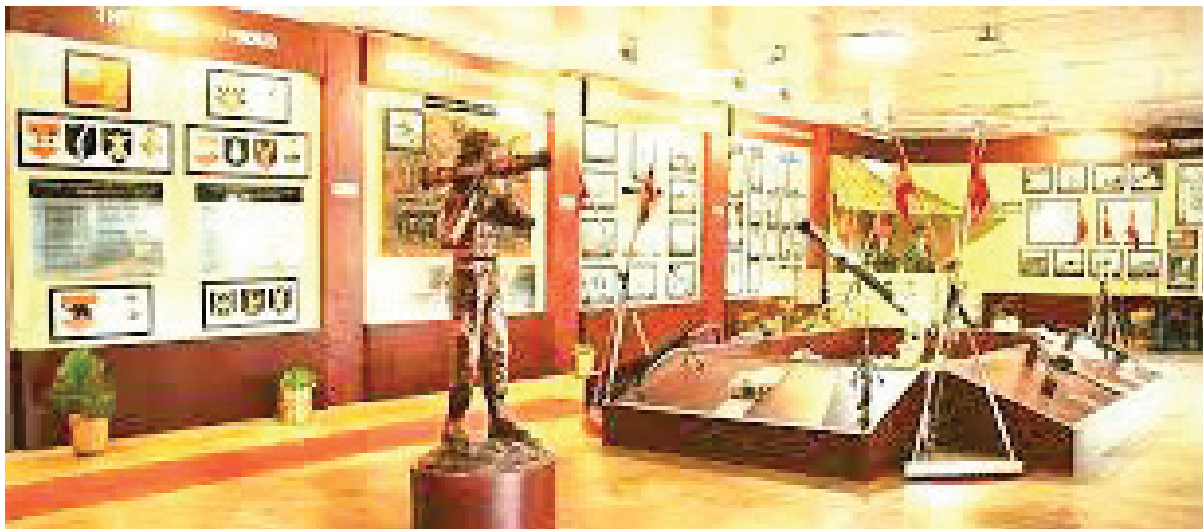
Located about 10 kilometers from Jaisalmer on the Jodhpur-Jaisalmer Highway, the Jaisalmer War Museum was inaugurated in 2015 by Lt. Gen. Ashok Singh. Conceptualized by Lt. Gen. Bobby Mathews, this museum commemorates the bravery of Indian soldiers who fought in the desert terrain during past wars, especially the Battle of Longewala in 1971.

THE MUSEUM IS DIVIDED INTO VARIOUS HALLS:

Laungewala Hall showcases the 1971 battle through 3D models, detailed maps, and original weapons, including a Pakistani tank captured during the conflict.

Indian Army Hall displays the history of the Indian Army from 1947 to the Kargil War in 1999. It features arms, uniforms, photographs, and equipment captured during conflicts.

An Audio-Visual Room screens documentaries and short films based on real-life battlefield stories.



An Honour Wall displays the names of gallantry award winners, including recipients of the Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra.

Outdoor exhibits include Indian and Pakistani tanks, artillery guns, military vehicles, and an aircraft used during the battle. The museum is open daily and also offers a light-and-sound show in the evening that narrates war stories in an engaging manner.

LONGEWALA WAR MEMORIAL

Situated about 150 kilometers from Jaisalmer, the Longewala War Memorial marks the site of one of India's most decisive victories during the 1971 war. This location, where a small group of Indian soldiers defended their post against a much larger Pakistani force, has been turned into a memorial with preserved tanks, bunkers, and a museum.

THE MEMORIAL INCLUDES:

- A monument with an eternal flame
- A display of captured enemy tanks and vehicles
- A small museum highlighting the timeline and details of the battle

The site remains open to the public and continues to inspire a sense of national pride.

OTHER SITES IN THE

BORDER AREA

The Tanot Mata Temple, located close to the Indo-Pak border, is another place of historical significance. It is believed that during the 1965 and 1971 wars, enemy shells fired at the temple failed to explode, leading to widespread belief in divine protection. The temple is now managed by the Border Security Force (BSF).

In addition to these, various smaller memorials and installations near military



posts showcase weapons, uniforms, and photographs from different regiments. Though many of these are not open to the general public, they remain an important part of the region's military heritage.

IMPORTANCE OF WAR MUSEUMS

War museums in Rajasthan serve several purposes:

They educate the public, especially students, about India's military history.

They honour the sacrifices of soldiers who fought to protect the country.

They inspire patriotism and pride in the armed forces.

They also contribute to tourism, attracting history enthusiasts and travelers.

The best time to visit these sites is between October and March, when the weather in the desert is more favorable. The Jaisalmer War Museum and Longewala Memorial are

accessible by road from Jaisalmer city. Entry to the museum is nominal, and guided tours and shows are also available.

These war museums are more than just collections of military artifacts; they are spaces of remembrance, education, and national pride. For anyone visiting Rajasthan, a trip to these sites offers a powerful and moving experience into the lives and sacrifices of India's armed forces.

TRUMP'S TARIFFS AND THREATS: A NEW GLOBAL GAMBLE

Trump's coercive diplomacy reshapes alliances, combining military threats with tariffs.

T Trump's Tariffs and Tanks: What His 2025 Power Play Means for the World
July 9, 2025 — In a dramatic escalation of both economic and military policy, former U.S. President Donald Trump has issued a stern warning to Vladimir Putin, promised a fresh round of military aid to Ukraine, and unveiled sweeping new global tariffs on imports — including those from U.S. allies. The moves mark a decisive shift away from diplomatic engagement and signal a return to Trump's signature brand of protectionism and hard power.

FROM DIPLOMACY TO DETERRENCE



Russian President Vladimir Putin is in no rush to end the war amid the fissures between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Angela Stent, a former national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia. (AP)

Trump's cryptic reference to a "surprise move" against Putin — widely believed to involve an undisclosed military or economic action — accompanied an announcement of expanded weapons shipments to Ukraine. Unlike the Biden administration's cautious coalition-building, Trump's approach hinges on direct pressure and unilateralism. His rhetoric on Truth Social was blunt: Putin could "end this war the easy way or the hard way," implying harsher measures if Russia does not withdraw. Simultaneously, Trump approved up to \$40 billion in new arms transfers to Kyiv, including long-

Trump's twin thrust — military buildup in Europe and economic walls at home — signals a new era of coercive diplomacy. It places pressure not just on Russia, but on long-standing allies, asking them to choose between sovereignty and U.S.-led security."

range artillery and additional missile systems. This reflects a shift from diplomacy to deterrence: punishing adversaries swiftly, and publicly leveraging U.S. strength. The posture is starkly transactional. Where Biden emphasized diplomatic sanctions and multilateral coordina-



Trump orders pause of military aid for Ukraine. This comes after President Trump blasted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for saying a peace deal is "very far." Credit: X

tion, Trump now suggests military aid and economic punishment as simultaneous tools — not of negotiation, but of dominance.

ECONOMIC SHOCK-WAVES OF TRUMP'S TARIFF BLITZ

Trump's reintroduction of tariffs — ranging between 25% and 40% — targets not only adversaries like China and Russia but key U.S. trade partners such as Japan, South Korea, Germany, and Canada. Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand are also hit. This is more than a return to "America First." It is a challenge to the global-

ized trading order. Trump argues the tariffs will bring jobs back home, but analysts warn of severe inflationary pressure, disrupted supply chains, and retaliatory measures by allies. Estimates suggest the new tariffs could cost the

tech, now risk losing competitive access to foreign markets as trade tensions escalate. Crucially, Trump's tariffs blur the line between economic and security alliances. By punishing close allies economically while demanding military

Japan and South Korea — key bulwarks against China — now face economic penalties even as Washington seeks their strategic support.

A REALIGNMENT IN MOTION?

Trump's twin thrust — military buildup in Europe and economic walls at home — signals a new era of coercive diplomacy. It places pressure not just on Russia, but on long-standing allies, asking them to choose between sovereignty and U.S.-led security. This policy cocktail of protectionism and power projection may deter Putin in the short term. But it also threatens to fracture global alliances, inflate domestic costs, and accelerate the search for alternatives to U.S. leadership — both in trade and geopolitics. As the world braces for Trump's promised "sur-



average U.S. household \$700–900 annually in higher prices for goods. American exporters, especially in agriculture and

cooperation on Ukraine or Indo-Pacific issues, he risks undermining NATO unity and trust in U.S. leadership. For instance,

prise," one thing is clear: global order, as we knew it, is no longer guaranteed.

• TDG NETWORK

Emirates goes crypto: This is bigger than just bitcoin on plane ticket

Emirates' move to accept cryptocurrency payments is not just a marketing gimmick—it's a symbol of the UAE's wider post-oil transformation. As one of the first major airlines to embrace Bitcoin and stablecoins for ticket purchases, Emirates is showcasing how traditional sectors like aviation are being integrated into the country's digital economy blueprint. This aligns with the UAE's Vision 2031, which aims to position the country as a leader in innovation and financial technology. By promoting crypto adoption in tourism, real estate, and now aviation, the UAE is slowly pivoting away from oil dependency. This also sends a powerful message: future Gulf prosperity won't be built on fossil fuels alone, but on code, capital, and connectivity. A new fintech frontier in the gulf Dubai and Abu Dhabi have spent the last few years constructing a pro-crypto, innovation-friendly ecosystem. From Dubai's Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (VARA) to the Abu Dhabi Global Market's licensing of global exchanges, the UAE offers one of the most mature and clear regulatory environments for digital assets. Major players like



Dubai department of Finance (DoF) & Crypto.com partner to enable cryptocurrency payments for government services in Dubai. This initiative positions Dubai as one of the first governments globally to accept Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies for public service fees. Credit: X

How the UAE is leveraging crypto to become a tech-savvy, independent global power

Binance, Crypto.com, and Ripple have either moved or expanded operations there, citing regulatory clarity as a key reason. Unlike Western frameworks that remain fragmented and enforcement-driven, the UAE's approach is proactive and sandbox-based. It actively encourages experimentation while laying out strict compliance for consumer protection. This combination of agility and control has helped the Gulf nation

emerge as a serious fintech and blockchain hub. Financial independence and gulf soft power By embracing crypto at a national level, the UAE is also carving out financial sovereignty from Western-dominated systems like SWIFT and dollar-based trade. Initiatives like the Digital Dirham and regionally backed stablecoins signal the country's intent to build independent monetary rails—an essential step in a multipolar financial world. In doing so, the UAE is not just gaining economic tools—it's projecting soft power. Hosting major crypto conferences, creating friendly policies

for web companies, and integrating blockchain into everyday sectors are cementing its status as a quiet leader in digital diplomacy. Emirates accepting Bitcoin is just the tip of the iceberg—it's a sign that Gulf power is now being exerted through networks, not just oil wells or skyscrapers. Emirates' crypto announcement is part of a much broader vision: a digital-first, politically neutral, and globally influential UAE. What looks like a tech upgrade in aviation is, in fact, a bold declaration of where the future of finance—and power—may lie.

• TDG NETWORK

Deepfake diplomacy: How AI voice clones are redefining cybersecurity

A disturbing new incident involving a deepfake voice of the U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has thrown light on the growing threat of AI-generated impersonations in global diplomacy. According to a classified cable revealed this week, an unknown actor used a realistic AI voice clone of Rubio to contact foreign ministers, a U.S. governor, and a sitting member of Congress. The outreach came through Signal voice notes, spoofed texts, and even a fake "@state.gov" email, lending credibility to what officials now call a failed but alarming attempt at digital deception.

While none of the targets fell for the impersonation, the effort was convincing enough to raise red flags across diplomatic and cybersecurity circles. The AI-generated voice mimicked Rubio's tone, pacing, and speech patterns with disturbing accuracy, proving that even short public recordings—such as speeches or press clips—can be weaponized using modern voice cloning tools. Voice cloning technology uses machine learning to replicate human speech after analyzing a few seconds of audio. It is increasingly accessible, cheap, and powerful. Once trained on someone's voice, the system can generate new speech from any typed text, often bypassing detection tools. While earlier deepfakes focused on visual manipulation, audio deepfakes have quietly emerged as a more dangerous frontier—less visible, harder to detect, and more intimate.

WHY PUBLIC OFFICIALS ARE PRIME TARGETS—AND HOW CYBERSECURITY IS LAGGING

Public figures like politicians are particularly vul-



In early 2025, an AI voice pretending to be President Biden was used in a robocall ahead of the New Hampshire primary. Credit: X

nerable because of the vast troves of high-quality audio data available online. Their voices are routinely captured in public addresses, interviews, and debates—raw material for cloning software. But it's not just availability that makes them targets. Their identities carry authority and trust, allowing impersonators to open digital doors that would otherwise remain closed. In the Rubio case, a diplomatic source noted that the message delivery via Signal added to its believability, as such apps are commonly used for discreet, secure communication among officials. This isn't the first major incident. In early 2025, an AI voice pretending to be President Biden was used in a

robocall ahead of the New Hampshire primary. Another deepfake mimicking Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba reached out to U.S. lawmakers. Even the White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles has reportedly been impersonated using similar methods. These cases suggest that what was once a fringe threat is now becoming a regular tactic in digital espionage and political manipulation. Despite the rising danger, cybersecurity systems remain behind the

curve. Few official communication protocols include two-step voice verification. Most institutions lack real-time tools to detect voice deepfakes. Legally, the issue exists in a murky zone—AI-generated impersonations aren't always clearly classified as fraud, identity theft, or espionage. This gap in both detection and regulation is now being called a major national security risk. Experts argue that without swift regulatory and technical responses, these attacks will only grow in sophistication. They recommend legally mandating digital watermarks for AI-generated content, expanding laws on impersonation, and introducing mandatory dual-verification for sensitive communications. The Rubio incident has become a wake-up call: in a world where trust is built on voice, even a few seconds of stolen speech can cause global damage.

• TDG NETWORK



PM MODI STRENGTHENS INDIA-NAMIBIA TIES DURING LANDMARK VISIT

PM Modi and Namibia President Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah review full range of India-Namibia relations

AGENCIES
WINDHOEK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a warm ceremonial welcome in Namibia, marking the final leg of his five-nation tour and the first visit by an Indian PM to the African nation in nearly three decades.

He received the ceremonial welcome at the State House in Namibia.

The Indian national anthem was played during the event.

Later, Prime Minister Modi laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, 'Heroes' Acre', which features a white obelisk rising against the Awas Mountains, with 174 burial plots for national heroes.

President Sam Nujoma established this memorial in 2002 after visiting Zimbabwe, marking the anniversary of Namibia's 1966 armed liberation struggle.

The memorial features a 5,000-seat grandstand, a viewing pavilion, a restaurant, and security personnel who maintain the grounds throughout operating hours.

PM Modi and the President of Namibia, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, also reviewed the full range of India-Namibia relations during the talks, which took place today.Sharing

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF PM MODI'S NAMIBIA VISIT

- Received ceremonial welcome; laid wreath at Namibia's National War Memorial.
- Held talks with President Nandi-Ndaitwah on trade, minerals, tech, and defence.
- Interacted with Indian diaspora, praised their cultural pride and optimism.
- Visit boosts ties; focus on energy, mining, and ongoing trade negotiations.



the details in a post on X, PM Modi said that discussions between India and Namibia were held on cooperation in areas such as digital technology, defence, security, agriculture, healthcare, education and critical minerals. PM Modi underscored that discussions also explored ways to boost linkages in trade, energy, and petrochemicals. He expressed gratitude for the assistance from Namibia in Project Cheetah.

https://x.com/narendramodi/status/1942913659736318152
https://x.com/narendramodi/status/1942913663075049776 Prime Minister Narendra Modi was warmly received by President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah at the State House in Windhoek, Namibia, where the two leaders shook hands. Earlier today, PM Modi arrived at the Hosea Kutako International Airport and was met with a warm reception, as he was greeted by the Namibian Minister of International Relations and Trade, Selma Ashipala-Musavyi.

PM Modi also warmly greeted members of the diaspora, shaking hands, listening to their enthusiastic messages, and graciously accepting gifts and portraits presented by the community.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister expressed his pride in the diaspora and how they have maintained their connection to their culture and traditions. "The Indian community in Namibia is extremely optimistic about closer India-Namibia friendship, and this is reflected in the special welcome in Windhoek. I am extremely proud of our diaspora, particularly how they have retained a connection with their culture and traditions," PM Modi stated.

Sharing a post on X, the Ministry of External Affairs stated, "PM Narendra Modi lands in the capital city of Windhoek, Namibia, to a warm welcome. He was received by Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, Minister of International Relations and Trade of Namibia, at the airport. This is the first visit of the PM to Namibia." The visit is expected to

PM Modi conferred with Namibia's highest civilian award

AGENCIES
WINDHOEK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the highest civilian award of Namibia on Wednesday. President of Namibia, Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, presented the award to him.

The Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis is the highest civilian award of Namibia. The award was established in 1995, shortly after Namibia gained independence in 1990, to recognise distinguished service and leadership. Named after the Welwitschia Mirabilis, a unique and ancient desert plant endemic to Namibia, the order symbolises resilience, longevity and the



enduring spirit of the Namibian people. This makes it the 27th award for PM Modi and the 4th award in this ongoing tour. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a warm ceremonial welcome in Namibia, the fifth country on his five-state visit. He received the ceremonial welcome at the State House in Namibia. The Indian national anthem was played during the event.

'Our friendship not born out of politics but out of struggle'

AGENCIES
WINDHOEK

After receiving Namibia's highest civilian award, the Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the honour to the people of Namibia and both nations' "unbreakable friendship."

Namibia's President, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, presented the award to him. He is the first Indian leader to receive this award. "Our friendship was not born out of politics but out of struggle, cooperation, and mutual trust. Our friendship has stood by each other since the time of their freedom struggle. Our friendship was not born out of politics but out of struggle, cooperation, and mutual trust," PM Modi said. "It is a witness to the everlasting friendship between India and Namibia, and I feel very proud to be associated with it today," PM Modi said. "I dedicate this honour to the people of Namibia and India, their continuous progress and development, and our unbreakable friendship."

Highlighting the strength of the India-Namibia relationship, PM Modi noted, "A true friend is recognised only in difficult times. India and Namibia have stood by each other since the time of their freedom struggle. Our friendship was not born out of politics but out of struggle, cooperation, and mutual trust. Democratic values and dreams of a bright future have nurtured it." Looking ahead, PM Modi emphasised the commitment of both nations to continue working together.

Trump to announce new trade tariffs for seven more countries

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

A day after Donald Trump announced reciprocal tariffs on 14 countries, two days ahead of his deadline day of July 9, the US President on Tuesday (local time) stated that his administration will be revealing a minimum of seven countries that the US will do trade with on Wednesday morning (local time).

In a post on Truth Social, the US President further stated that the names of additional countries will also be released by Wednesday afternoon. "We will be releasing a minimum of 7 Countries having to do with trade tomorrow morning, with an additional number of Countries being released in the afternoon. Thank you for your attention to this

matter!" Trump stated. Earlier on Monday (local time), the US President



shared letters sent by his administration to 14 countries, informing them of the reciprocal tariffs that will take effect from August 1.

He later also asserted that there will be no extensions to this deadline day and that "all money will be due and payable starting AUGUST 1, 2025 - No extensions will be granted." Trump first

shared the letters sent to Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol.

Around two hours later, he announced that similar letters had been sent to Malaysia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Myanmar, and Laos.

Later, he shared tariff letters sent to leaders of other countries, including Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Cambodia. In the letters

written to the South Korean President and the Japanese Prime Minister, Trump stated that Japan and South Korea will face a 25 per cent tariff from August 1. Meanwhile, Thailand and Cambodia each will face a tariff of 36 per cent, while Bangladesh and Serbia will each be hit with a tariff of 35 per cent.

Tibetans, not China, will choose successor, says Dalai Lama

AGENCIES
DHARAMSALA

The Dalai Lama's recent affirmation that only his office holds the authority to identify his successor is a strong counter to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) ongoing attempts to interfere in Tibetan religious affairs, according to the Human Rights Network for Tibet and Taiwan (HRNTT), as reported by Taipei Times.

The 14th Dalai Lama, who turned 90 on Sunday, declared last week that the institution of the Dalai Lama would continue and that his successor, the 15th Dalai Lama, would be born outside of China. "In accordance with past tradition, the search for my reincarnation and the naming of

a 15th Dalai Lama will be carried out," he said, firmly stating that only his office has the legitimate authority to determine his reincarnation, Taipei Times reported.



Tashi Tsering, HRNTT secretary-general, praised the Dalai Lama's remarks as "a powerful statement striking back at the CCP".

Baloch Liberation Army targets Pakistan military convoy, outposts in Kalat, Turbat

AGENCIES
QUETTA

In a series of coordinated strikes, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has claimed responsibility for four separate attacks targeting Pakistani military forces in the Kalat and Turbat regions of Balochistan.

According to a statement issued by BLA spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch, the attacks resulted in the deaths of at least six Pakistani army personnel and injuries to several others.

In Kalat's Makai area near Johan Cross, BLA fighters carried out two remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) attacks.

The first blast targeted on-foot personnel from the army's bomb disposal unit during a clearance opera-

tion, killing one soldier and critically injuring another. A second IED explosion at the same site reportedly killed two more personnel and wounded another.



In a separate incident in the Morgand area of Kalat, BLA snipers allegedly opened fire on Pakistani soldiers collecting rations, killing one on the spot. The group then launched a heavy weapons assault on a nearby military post, firing multiple grenade shells and claiming to have inflicted further casualties

and damage. The fourth attack took place in the Ghana area of Turbat on the night of July 6, where BLA fighters ambushed a Pakistani military

convoy. Two vehicles came under direct fire. While some personnel reportedly fled, two soldiers were killed, and others sustained injuries. The Baloch Liberation Army reiterated its commitment to what it describes as resistance against the "occupying" Pakistani military presence in Balochistan.

Trade war threat not 'passing storm', Malaysian PM warns Southeast Asia

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim warned Wednesday that global trade is being weaponised as Southeast Asia's foreign ministers held annual talks ahead of the looming threat of US trade tariffs.

Concerns about US tariffs have jolted the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a 10-member bloc that includes some of the world's



most trade-dependent economies.

Six ASEAN members are among the 14 countries that

could see duties on their exports to the US skyrocket on August 1.

Launching the group's foreign ministers' meeting, Anwar said the world is now witnessing an era where "power unsettles principle" and "tools once used to generate growth are now wielded to pressure, isolate and contain."

Without mentioning the US by name, he again urged ASEAN to work together to

respond to trade threats.

"Our cohesion must not end at declarations," he said, calling for members to increase intra-ASEAN trade, invest in regional integration, and reduce strategic dependencies on external powers. "This is no passing storm," he said. "It is the new weather of our time."

Trump first announced tariffs in April, but then delayed them for 90 days to allow for deals to be negotiated.

AGENCIES
ROME

Pope Leo XIV celebrated what has been dubbed as the first "green" papal Mass, using a new set of prayers imploring care for God's creation in a sign he intends to emphasise environmental stewardship and climate justice for the world's most vulnerable people.

The Mass, in the gardens of the Vatican's new ecological educational centre at the



papal summer estate in Castel Gandolfo, indicated a strong line of ecological

continuity with Pope Francis, who made environmental protection a hallmark of his pontificate.

The private Mass on Wednesday was celebrated for the Laudato Si centre, named for Francis' 2015 environmental encyclical in which the first pope from the Global South blasted the way wealthy countries and multinational corporations had exploited the Earth and its most vulnerable people for profit.

Leo approved the new Mass formula "for the care of creation," directing it to be added into the list of 49 Masses that have been developed over centuries for a specific need or occasion.

Officials said it was crafted in response to requests stemming from Francis' encyclical, which has inspired a whole church movement and foundation to educate, advocate and sensitise the world to the biblically mandated call to care for nature.

UK's ex-PM Rishi Sunak rejoins banking world to donate salary to charity

AGENCIES
LONDON

Britain's former prime minister Rishi Sunak has rejoined the banking world as he took charge of a new role as Senior Adviser at the Goldman Sachs Group, with plans to donate his earnings to the education charity he recently set up with his wife Akshata Murty.

The US-headquartered multinational investment

bank where Sunak worked prior to entering politics made the announcement on Tuesday after the requisite 12-month period lapsed since the British Indian leader's ministerial office term concluded, following a defeat in the general election on July 4 last year.

The UK Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, which is required to sign off on jobs taken on by

former ministers for at least two years after they leave office, gave its nod with a series of conditions "to mitigate the potential risks to the government" over the access of privileged information Sunak would have as a former PM.

It also noted that the salary from his new job would go towards the Richmond Project, a charity announced earlier this year as



a joint initiative with Murty focussed on improving the

mathematics and numeracy skills among children and young people in England.

"Goldman Sachs has a significant interest in UK government policy. As the former Prime Minister, there is a reasonable concern that your appointment could be seen to offer unfair access and influence within the UK government," reads the advice of the committee published this week.

"You and Goldman Sachs have confirmed to the committee that the role will not involve lobbying the government, which all former ministers are prevented from doing for two years on leaving office. The committee considered that it would be difficult to mitigate the risk of perceived lobbying if you initiated engagement of any kind with the UK government in this role, noting

this is not your stated intention," it notes.

Under the stipulations, Sunak is required not to draw on any privileged information available to him from his time in ministerial office.

"For two years from your last day in ministerial office, your role with the Goldman Sachs Group Inc should be limited to providing advice on strategy, macroeconom-

ic and geopolitical matters that do not conflict with your time as Prime Minister (including where you are working with parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients of Goldman Sachs)," the committee adds. It highlights that the advice was not an "endorsement" of Sunak's new role but is aimed at protecting the integrity of the government.

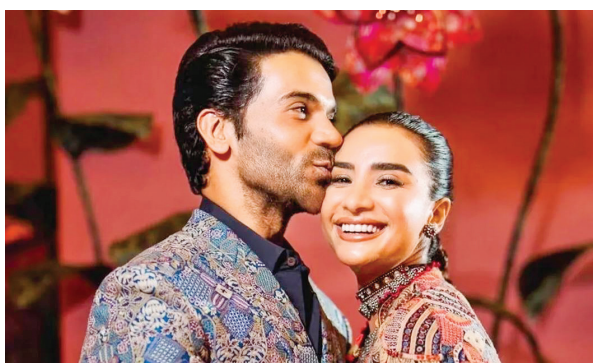
RAJKUMMAR RAO AND PATRALEKHAA TO BECOME PARENTS SOON

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Star couple Rajkumar Rao and Patralekhaa are elated to embark on the new chapter of their lives as parents. On Wednesday, Rajkumar and Patralekhaa took to social media and announced their pregnancy via a joint Instagram post.

Star couple Rajkumar Rao and Patralekhaa are elated to embark on the new chapter of their lives as parents. On Wednesday, Rajkumar and Patralekhaa took to social media and announced their pregnancy via a joint Instagram post.

'Maalik' trailer: Rajkumar Rao rains bullets in violent gangster drama

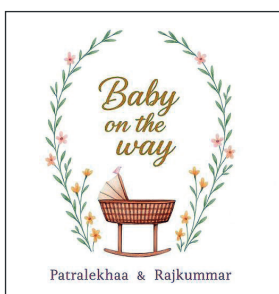


The couple posted a graphic picture with a cradle in the middle. The text on the image read, "Baby on the way." As soon as the duo shared the news, fans and members of the film industry sent their wishes to the couple.

The couple tied the knot on November 15, 2021, in an intimate ceremony in

Chandigarh. They worked together for the first time in Patralekhaa's debut Bollywood film Citylights in 2014. Meanwhile, on the work front, the couple recently launched their own production house, KAMPA Film.

The name KAMPA holds personal significance, as it combines the initials of



their mothers' names, paying tribute to them. "We've always believed in the power of storytelling," said Patralekhaa.

Star couple Rajkumar Rao and Patralekhaa are elated to embark on the new chapter of their lives as parents. On Wednesday, Rajkumar and Patralekhaa took to social media and announced their pregnancy via a joint Instagram post.

Guru Dutt's restored classics to return to big screens as part of nationwide retrospective

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

As part of the centenary celebrations of legendary filmmaker Guru Dutt, a special retrospective of his iconic films will be held across the country from August 8 to 10, Ultra Media and Entertainment has announced. The retrospective will feature restored versions of some of Dutt's most celebrated films, including "Pyasa", "Aar Paar", "Chaudhvin Ka Chand", "Mr. & Mrs. 55" and "Baaz".

The restoration of Pya-



sa and other titles has been undertaken by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the National Film Archive

of India (NFAI), under the central government's National Film Heritage Mission.

Sushilkumar Agrawal,

MD & CEO, Ultra Media and Entertainment Pvt Ltd, which holds the rights to these films, said they are honoured to present the timeless movies of the late filmmaker-actor for his fans and cinema lovers.

"Guru Dutt's films are timeless masterpieces that have influenced generations of filmmakers and audiences alike. We are honoured to present his classics in restored versions so that both devoted fans and new audiences can relive the magic on the big screen," Agrawal said in a statement.

Emraan, Himesh reunite for 'Gunmaaster G9'; take fans back to the 2000s

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Emraan Hashmi and Himesh Reshammiya, a pairing that ruled the 2000s with their iconic music and thrillers, are making a comeback.

The two are teaming up once again for an action-packed film titled 'Gunmaaster G9', set to release in 2026.

The makers dropped a gripping announcement teaser on Wednesday, which caught fans' attention in no time.

The film, directed by Aditya Datt, also stars Genelia Deshmukh and Aparshakti Khurana in key roles.

In a video shared on Instagram, a mysterious hand can be seen pulling a gun from a bucket of milk, while Emraan's voice is heard in a dramatic tone: "Mujhe mach mach kiya, chalega. Galti se family ko touch kiya toh yaad rakhna, dhandhe se doodh waala hun, banda baroodwala hun." (You messed with me—fine. But if you mess with my family by mistake, remember this: I may be in the milk business, but I'm a man who deals with gunpowder).

The second slide of the post



In a video shared on Instagram, a mysterious hand can be seen pulling a gun from a bucket of milk, while Emraan's voice is heard in a dramatic tone: "Mujhe mach mach kiya, chalega."

included a video showing a woman's hand pulling out a knife. Genelia's voice is heard in the background saying in Hindi, "I'm the daughter-in-law of the house. But it doesn't mean I'm only gentle and soft. If there are vegetables at home, I'll chop them. However, if goons and thugs show up, I won't just be chopping vegetables."

In the third slide of the post, Aparshakti can be heard adding his own wild flavour, introducing his role with, "Lohe Ki Kathi, Desu Rath. Haath mein hain

bomb. Gurgaon main log humse 70 kilometre door rehte hain kyunki bomb aur hum kabhi bhi fatt sakte hain." (Iron rod, Desu Rath. I have a bomb in my hand. People in Gurgaon stay 70 kilometres away from us because the bomb and I can explode at any moment.)

Along with the video, the makers added a caption that read, "Doodh to baroodh, Sabzi to Gundas, bullets to beats, Gunmaaster G9 is getting ready for mayhem... the team is locked, loaded, and lethal!"

Barbie joins hundreds of thousands of kids living with Type 1 Diabetes

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

Mattel announced the release of the first-ever Barbie doll with type 1 diabetes, complete with a continuous glucose monitor and an insulin pump in Barbie's signature pink.

"Introducing a Barbie doll with type 1 diabetes marks an important step in our commitment to inclusivity and representation," Krista Berger, Senior Vice President of Barbie and Global Head of Dolls, said in a statement.



"Barbie helps shape children's early perceptions of the world, and by reflecting medical conditions like T1D, we ensure more kids can see themselves in the stories they imagine and the dolls they love."

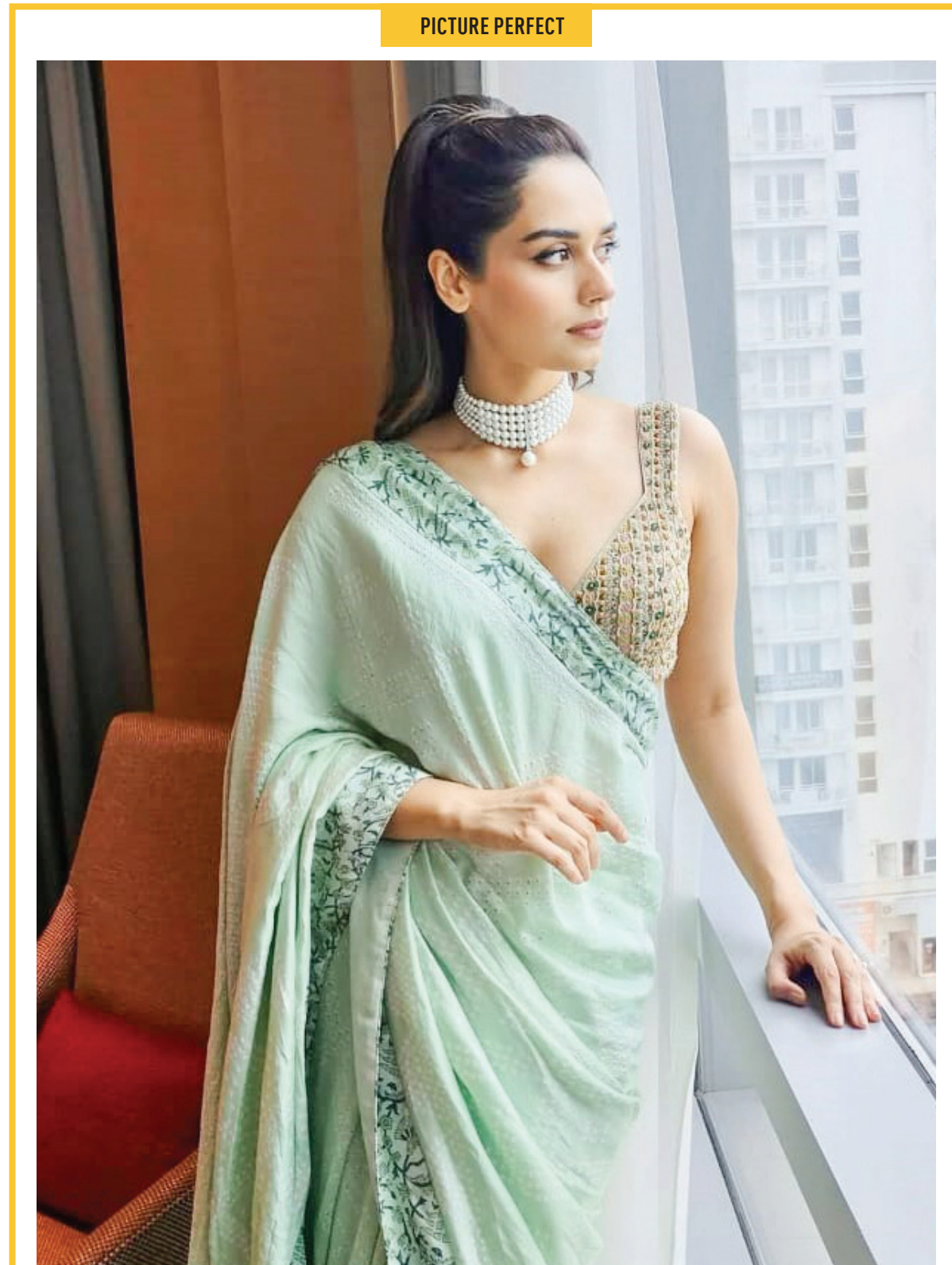
Mattel partnered with Breakthrough T1D, the leading global type 1 diabetes research and advocacy organization, to ensure that the doll accurately captured the community and to accurately depict the medical equipment those with the condition may use.

On her arm, the new doll

wears a continuous glucose monitor to help manage her type 1 diabetes, held in place with pink heart-shaped medical tape. It also comes with a Barbie phone that displays a CGM app to help track her blood sugar levels — just like the real-life monitors, which track glucose levels 24 hours a day via a sensor under the skin.

Barbie also has an insulin pump attached to her waist that can automatically administer insulin as needed.

Mattel even worked with Breakthrough T1D to deter-



Manushi Chhilar shares a picture on Instagram, saying 'promoting without her sarees is "#Naamumkin" and expresses excitement for Maalik'. (Instagram)

Akshay wishes Anupam Kher luck for his directorial 'Tanvi The Great'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Legendary Anupam Kher has been receiving loads of appreciation ever since he released the trailer of his directorial 'Tanvi The Great'. On Wednesday, Kher received a shout-out from his friend and 'Special 26' co-star Akshay Kumar.

Taking to Instagram, Akshay wrote, "A little late to the party, but so glad I watched this. Tanvi The Great is a moving, emotional ride that truly had me in tears and rooting with my all heart for Tanvi. Wishing my dear friend Anupam Kher and the entire team, all the love for this beautiful

film. Can't wait to watch it on the big screen."

'Tanvi The Great' follows the story of Tanvi Raina, who lives with her mother Vidya (played by Pallavi Joshi) and grandfather Colonel Pratap Raina.

Earlier, Kher recently opened up about the reac-



tion received by the audience at the Cannes film festival on the world premiere of his 'Tanvi The Great'.

While speaking to ANI, Kher said he was "overwhelmed" by how deeply the crowd connected with the film.

The actor also shared how people in the theatre clapped, laughed, cried, and stayed back to ask questions after the screening.

"I was very overwhelmed by the reaction of people. They were clapping in between because the theme of the film resonated with them. They were crying, laughing at the end of the film. They didn't want to leave.

Chris Pratt to return as Garfield in sequel to 2024 animated film

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

The much-loved orange cat is making a comeback. Actor Chris Pratt is all set to voice Garfield once again in a sequel to 2024's The Garfield Movie, which made more than \$230 million at the global box office, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Released by Sony Pictures



(except in China), the original film reintroduced the iconic comic strip character to a new generation of audiences. Following its success, the team behind the film is now ready for round two. Alcon Entertainment's co-CEOs Andrew Kosove and Broderick Johnson will return as producers, along with John Cohen, Steven P. Wegner, and Pratt himself. Prime Focus Studios,

led by Namit Malhotra, will co-produce the film, while DNEG Animation will again handle the animation work, as it did in the first film.

The rights to Garfield were acquired by Alcon from the character's creator, Jim Davis, before the first film began. Davis will continue as executive producer for the sequel, alongside Bridget McMeel from Amuse.

Samantha gives fans glimpse of her 'Detroit' trip with Raj Nidimoru

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently gave fans a peek into her relaxing vacation in Detroit, Michigan. She was joined by director Raj Nidimoru, who co-directed her latest project 'Citadel: Honey Bunny.'

On Tuesday, Samantha posted a series of photos on Instagram from her time in the U.S. The actor attended the 2025 edition of the Telugu Association of North



America (TANA) and spent some time sightseeing and relaxing with friends.

One of the first photos shows Samantha and Raj walking together on the streets of Detroit, both smiling.

Samantha wore an oversized brown sweatshirt with jeans, while Raj looked casual in a navy jacket and denim. Another photo captured the two enjoying a meal with friends at a restaurant.

HYUNDAI CRETA N-LINE MANUAL REVIEW



PHOTOS: ARINA HAIDER

SYED SHIRAZ SHAH

“You represent me now; do you think I would let you roll in a Hyundai,” said Han in the movie Tokyo Drift. This was 2006 and in 2007 a Schumann Motorsport Hyundai Coupé driven by Schumann brothers, Peter Cate, and Christian Hohenadel not only won the SP4 class but also finished 13th overall among 230 starters at the challenging Nürburgring 24 Hours race. In 2012, Hyundai decided that it would be a good idea to have its own in-house high-performance arm, much like AMG (Mercedes-Benz) and M (BMW). Thus, Hyundai’s N division was born.

Not only that, a couple of years later, Hyundai returned to the WRC and began its string of respectable positions each year to finally clinch the Manufacturer’s Title in 2019. It repeated the feat in 2020, silencing Han and other naysayers forever. Fittingly, in 2021, Hyundai introduced the first N-Line car for India, the i20 N-Line. Please note that unlike the Hyundai N cars that are full-on high-performance models with massive changes to the engine, suspension, etc., the N-Line cars are just “sporty-looking” variants of regular Hyundais with no changes to the powertrain. Therefore, ideally, the N-Line cars are not supposed to see any changes in the suspension tune either, but the i20 N-Line did, and I had come away so impressed from its first media drive in 2021 that I had concluded my review with the line, *“this is what the i20 should have been from the start.”* Will that be the concluding line of this review as well? You’ll have to read on to find out.

DESIGN

The Creta N-Line was launched last year so by now you must have seen hundreds of walkaround videos and read an equal number of brochure reprints masquerading as reviews. So you already know about the cosmetic changes and enhancements. Therefore, I shall skip the redundant information like new grille, upper lip, lower mascara, moustache, etc., and tell you the most essential bit for a prospective Creta N-Line owner: the public perception. You’ll be happy to know that despite being on the roads for around a year now, the Creta N-Line still does turn heads. I heard passers-by murmur *“which Creta is this”* and even *“is that a Creta”* multiple times during

my drive. So that’s mission accomplished for Hyundai India, and also for the aforementioned demographic.

INTERIORS

It’s the same story with the interiors. The all-black theme with red inserts do reinforce the fact that it’s not a regular Creta you’re sitting in. And since it’s a Hyundai, it obviously comes fully-equipped with stuff that continues to give nightmares to the competition.

Also, although you would know it already, the Creta N-Line, just like the regular Creta, remains as spacious and comfortable for all occupants, which, along with its best-in-segment in-cabin features, is in fact one of the major reasons for its mega sales numbers. My only two

also share that Hyundai is perhaps the only manufacturer in India to offer all four traditional gearboxes as options in a vehicle. You want a torque converter? It’s available. You want a six-speed manual? That’s available with two engine options. You want a CVT? That’s on the list as well (Hyundai calls its version an IVT). Then there’s the DCT too, of course.

The one I tested was the GDI manual, and it’s this combo which does full justice to the N-Line badge. It’s beautifully quick off the line and I am quite happy with the 10.0 s 0–100 km/h time I managed. That said, the handling certainly doesn’t complement the engine performance, which is a tad disappointing because

imagination; it’s just that I was expecting more not only because of the N-Line moniker but also because of the precedent set by the i20 N-Line.

I must also mention that back then the i20 N-Line was available only with the DCT, which is what I drove as well. The manual introduced later, in all probability, might have the same level of steering assistance as on the regular i20. However, I am almost certain that even the manual i20 N-Line would be sporting the same suspension tune as the DCT i20 N-Line. Here, on the Creta N-Line, I will stick my neck out and say that both the manual and DCT have skipped leg day...

I think Hyundai might have deliberately done that

quality over handling. Still, I will have to hand it over to Hyundai for keeping the ride and handling balance almost the same as the regular Creta’s because, like I just mentioned, that’s exactly what Creta owners want. They also want the steering to be light enough to not engage their triceps during three-point turns, and they’ll be happy to learn that the N-Line obliges here as well.

Thankfully, the steering is not too light at highway speeds, and sudden lane changes can be accomplished with precision without the vehicle getting all over the place. You’d also like the engine’s composure at these speeds—100 km/h in 6th gear comes at 2,100 rpm. The cabin remains

to me OR it was abused by novice YouTubers who, among other shenanigans, slipped the clutch way too much (due to inexperience and for Instagram reels), and as such this N-Line shuddered and juddered a bit in first gear while picking it up from idle and in second gear too if the rpm went even a smidgen below 1,000. Dear brochure readers, if by any chance you’re reading this review, please note that this has nothing to do with “turbo lag”—I am talking about driving sedately in traffic, and not pedal to metal antics where the turbo (and turbo lag) actually shows its presence. In even simpler words, a 1.5 liter petrol engine (even if turbocharged like this one), that too with

a manufacturing/quality defect. I might request the good chaps at Hyundai India PR & Comms. team to give me this particular unit itself after a thorough onceover, or a different unit (but GDI manual only) for a long term review where I shall follow up on this section and report whether the issue remains (if it’s the same unit) or it was an issue with this particular unit only (if I am given another unit).

I would also like to reiterate that despite this niggle, I totally enjoyed extracting most of the nearly 160 horses under its bonnet at every opportunity, and so would anyone else too who wants short bursts of dopamine legally.

FUEL EFFICIENCY

review, I had tested the Creta N-Line Manual for over 350 km, including a dedicated 160 km fuel efficiency test where exactly half of it was on the smooth Yamuna expressway while the other half was in obnoxious Delhi traffic which always comes to a standstill even if the skies as much as spit by mistake. Anyway, I got 12.8 km/l in this exclusive fuel efficiency test. Therefore, if driven sanely, you may expect anywhere around 10–13 km/l in city traffic and 14–16 km/l on highways.

ADAS

I rarely talk about ADAS in my reviews, let alone give it a separate heading altogether, because like most other features, you can read about ADAS too in the brochure. The only reason I am giving it premium real estate here is because the ADAS on Creta works flawlessly AND it happens to have the best combination of driver-aids for India. I absolutely abhor adaptive cruise control and, thankfully, it doesn’t have it (the DCT N-Line does). It has regular cruise control. More importantly, it has something that should ideally come in all cars in India: Rear Cross-Traffic Alert AND Assist, which works like a charm. For the uninitiated, while reversing, the feature not only alerts you of traffic coming from either side, it even brakes for you in case you’re thinking about your ex or something. But what really blew me away was that it (or it could have been the Blind Spot Alert & Assist) even warns you of approaching traffic while you’re opening the door to get out after switching off the ignition! A much needed feature in our conditions where the driver and the person coming from behind are both careless knobs mostly.

VERDICT

I have already run out of space, so I’ll give the verdict on the N-Line in just a line or two, tops. You want to buy a Creta for the space, features, and peace of mind it offers but you also want to stand out from the ocean of Cretas around, AND you don’t want to go to Karol Bagh, right? Plus, you are also a new member of a WhatsApp group called Manual Transmissions Only? If you just uttered “yes” at least twice, then the Creta N-Line Manual is the perfect vehicle for you.

That turned out to be more than two lines, but I know you wouldn’t mind, because it’s the N-Line...



minor complaints would be the lack of a request sensor on the left front door and that the switchgear on driver’s door is not illuminated.

PERFORMANCE, RIDE QUALITY, and HANDLING

If you want to buy a Creta 1.5 GDI turbo petrol engine with a six-speed manual gearbox, you will get it only as an N-Line. The DCT is also available as an N-Line, but it can be had in a regular Creta as well. At this point, I must

the i20 N-Line fully does. I don’t think that Hyundai altered the suspension even one bit on the Creta N-Line, and even if they did, it’s not at all perceptible. I didn’t notice any change in the steering feel either, though I must add that the DCT’s drive modes might vary the steering wheel’s electrical assistance for a more confidence-inspiring feel and “sense” of connection. Mind you, the manual’s steering isn’t bad by any stretch of

to preserve the ride quality because, after all, it’s a Creta and people would be buying it primarily for the family. These people want the aforementioned sporty looks but won’t compromise even a bit on ride quality. Moreover, while bigger wheels (18-inch) and comparatively lower profile tyres look great, along with playing a role in the handling department as well, they aren’t the best choice for those prioritizing ride

almost completely devoid of outside noise at such speeds, so, yes, the N-Line manual is definitely a good cruiser in my books. However, although dual clutch transmissions are generally the last in my recommendation list for Indian consumers, you should know that it would be able to cruise at even lower rpm because of its additional ratio.

Also, this particular unit was apparently not serviced properly before it was sent

direct injection, shouldn’t be behaving like this. Heck, even a 1.0 liter turbocharged engine shouldn’t. So, again, it’s not a turbo lag issue—there could be over ten (at least) possibilities but turbo lag isn’t one of them. I would start with TPS (Throttle Position Sensor) and ABV (Air Bypass Valve), but I am sure Hyundai’s technicians would have their own protocol. Again, like I mentioned earlier, this is most likely an upkeep/abuse issue and not

Extracting all those ponies would obviously result in fuel efficiency figures going down to single digits, and you really won’t mind because you’ll be driving like that only on weekends, whereas on weekdays your conduct behind the wheel would be similar to The Family Man’s protagonist in front of his children. Driving like that would ALWAYS yield double-digit fuel efficiency figures.

At the time of writing this

WHEN AI WATCHES THE ROAD: HOW PREDICTIVE INTELLIGENCE IS REDEFINING LOGISTICS SAFETY



THE NEXT
ABHISHEK ANAND

Modern logistics has always danced on a fine edge between speed and safety. As delivery timelines shrink and cargo volumes grow, fleet operators are left asking: how do we keep the momentum going without compromising lives on the road?

The answer is no longer just better drivers or faster vehicles. It's smarter systems-powered by predictive intelligence.

FROM REACTION TO PREVENTION

Traditional fleet safety was reactive. Brake failures were addressed after breakdowns. Fatigued

drivers were spotted after incidents. Routes were adjusted only after delays. But in today's hyper-connected landscape, logistics cannot afford to wait for problems to occur-they must be anticipated and neutralized in advance.

That's where AI changes the game.

By harnessing real-time data from GPS, onboard sensors, camera feeds, and weather APIs, AI platforms are now making sense of complex driving environments-learning not just to detect problems, but to predict them. The shift is from data collection to insight generation.

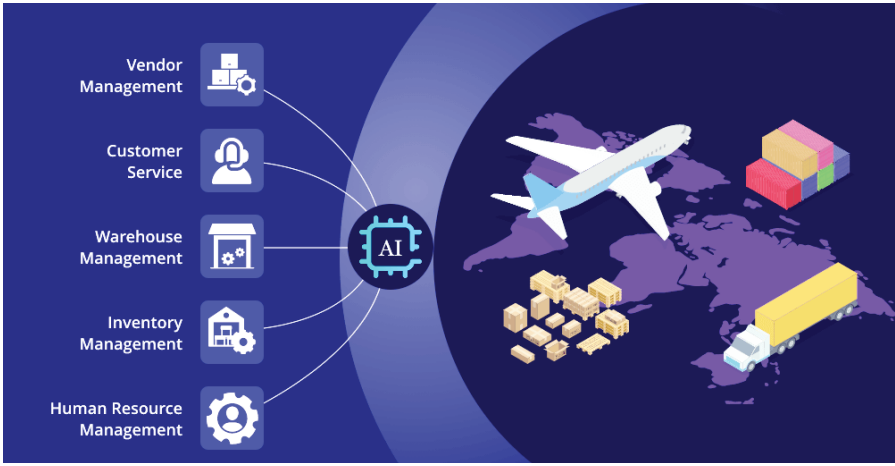
The Eyes That Never Blink

One of the most critical breakthroughs in logistics safety is the dual use of cabin-facing and road-facing cameras. Inside the vehicle, AI systems can track driver fatigue, distraction, or signs of impairment. Subtle cues-like repeated yawns, eyelid droop, or head-nodding-are analyzed in real time, enabling timely alerts or rest recommendations.

Externally, AI assesses traffic patterns, weather, braking behavior, and accident-prone zones to offer smarter route choices. These tools are evolving from passive observers into active safety companions.

As one logistics leader aptly put it:

"Logistics moves fast and with that speed comes risk. From human error to unpredictable road condi-



By harnessing real-time data from GPS, onboard sensors, camera feeds, and weather APIs, AI platforms are now making sense of complex driving environments-learning not just to detect problems, but to predict them.

tions, safety is a constant challenge. We believe AI can change that. We're using data not just to react to problems but to predict and prevent them before they happen... What makes it powerful is the context. Our AI doesn't just flag an issue, it understands why it's happening. And that means smarter, safer

decisions on the road."

- Mr. Rahul Mehra, CEO

DATA-DRIVEN SAFETY DECISIONS

The biggest advantage AI brings to fleet management isn't just visibility-it's contextual awareness. For example, repeated harsh braking isn't simply flagged-it's interpreted based on geography, traffic history, and vehicle condition. This understanding helps determine whether a driver needs coaching or a vehicle needs servicing.

Similarly, real-time weather data can be layered with route maps to avoid slippery or low-visibility stretches before the driver even gets there. Predictive intelligence means logistics managers no longer react to danger-they get ahead of it.

THE NEW STANDARD

In today's logistics land-

scape, safety can't be a post-incident conversation. It must be a strategic capability-baked into the systems that power every delivery and dispatch.

Predictive AI doesn't just protect cargo or reduce insurance costs. It protects people-the humans behind the wheel, the ones sharing the road, and the communities logistics serves.

The future isn't just about faster deliveries. It's about safer ones. And in that future, AI will be watching the road -not to monitor, but to protect.

Abhishek Anand, Founder of Skill Bud Technologies Pvt. Ltd., a technology company specializing in Website Development, Digital Marketing, CGI Ads, Social Media, and emerging technologies including AI, AR/VR, and Generative Content.

The challenge of training AI



ARJUN SINHA

Rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries, much like the Industrial Revolution. However, with innovation come legal and ethical challenges, none more pressing than the issue of copyright in AI training and output generation. As large language models (LLMs) become increasingly sophisticated, their reliance on copyrighted material, has sparked significant legal debate worldwide, including in India.

The development of AI models, especially those designed for sector-specific applications, frequently involves training on extensive datasets. These datasets may include textbooks, research papers, and other written works, many of which are protected by copyright laws. For instance, an AI model designed to assist teachers may require training on educational materials, such

as school textbooks and lecture notes.

There are two primary legal concerns when it comes to copyright and AI:

If the use of copyrighted content to train LLMs constitutes infringement remains a contested issue

Who owns the copyrighted material

Does LLM generated content that uses extracts of copyrighted materials result in infringement.

Third-party materials used for training LLMs will typically have copyright protection. However, whether training LLMs on such materials itself constitutes infringement is an evolving legal question. Some jurisdictions recognize exceptions under fair use or fair dealing which allow limited use of copyrighted materials under specific conditions.

In India, the Copyright Act permits certain 'fair' uses of copyrighted works, such as reproduction for instruction or examination purposes. In the context of AI training, the fair dealing exemption for private use, including research, could be relevant.

Since AI training typically occurs in a private setting without direct public sharing of the training data, one could argue that fair dealing protections apply.

However, a key limitation is that such use should not be exploitative or harm the market value of the original works. Similarly, individuals are free to read books and compile their analysis for educational purposes. If AI functions similarly, using digital means instead of human cognition, should it not be permissible?

Ownership of AI-generated content depends on who is legally considered the author. Under Indian copyright law, the author of a computer-generated work is the person who causes the work to be generated. If a teacher uses an AI tool to generate content, they may be considered the author-unless a contract gives ownership to the institution. Alternatively, if the AI software company frames the tool to generate standard responses based on answers produced during the AI training process by individuals engaged by the company, then the company could be deemed the first owner. This framework carries its own risks. If an AI software company assumes authorship, it may lose intermediary protections and be held liable for copyright violations by its users and also opens itself to challenges in third party claims.

The question of whether

AI-generated content constitutes copyright infringement is fluid and contested. AI-generated content generally falls into two categories - facts and extracts of third party materials that have copyright.

Outputs that consist of factual information, such as solutions to mathematical problems or scientific data, are not subject to copyright, since they pertain to laws of nature. LLM outputs that rely on third-party copyrighted materials, such as excerpts from books, critiques of academic texts, or restructured exam questions, raise legal concerns. Also, courts have recognised and permitted the use of limited sections of literary works. For example, limited use of third party materials has been recognised in the preparation of instructional material, preparation of guidebooks to support popular educational material, or answer keys to text books. Significant copying of third party materials has been objected to by courts, as they may result in reduction in value of the original copyrighted work.

Given the evolving legal framework, businesses, AI developers, and educational institutions must proactively manage copyright

risks. While, a key strategy does include obtaining explicit licenses for copyrighted materials to avoid potential litigation, the use of materials for training as fair use should in our view get wider acceptance. Developers will also need to take steps to ensure that AI training and output generation adhere to fair use or fair dealing principles, and look to define ownership of AI-generated content through contractual agreements. Even when legal exceptions apply, the ethical implications of using copyrighted works for AI training should be carefully evaluated, especially if AI-generated content competes with original creators.

The intersection of AI and copyright law is a rapidly evolving space with high stakes for creators, businesses, and legal professionals. Courts worldwide are beginning to grapple with these issues. he challenge lies in balancing innovation with the rights of content creators. Though, one thing is certain: the legal discourse on AI and copyright is just beginning.

*This is a part of a series of articles on challenges faced in developing and deploying AI tools in India.

The author is Partner, AP & Partners

Upskilling for Tomorrow: The Role of AI and Digital Literacy in Education

AARUL MALAVIYA

Artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies' rapid advancement necessitates that students are upskilled for a future where tech-driven learning is the norm. AI literacy is now broadly understood as the ability to understand, evaluate, and interact with AI in everyday life and work, which also encompasses critical thinking, ethical awareness, and responsible digital citizenship. As industries worldwide integrate AI into their operations, the demand for digital literacy and AI proficiency is surging by the day, making these skills essential for tomorrow's workforce. Fuelled by the widespread adoption of digital learning platforms, and personalized and adaptive learning systems, the global AI in education market is projected to reach \$12.8 billion by 2028, with a CAGR of 33.5%.

AI and Digital Literacy: Preparing Students for the Future

Understand and Evaluate AI: Students are being taught not just to leverage AI effectively, but to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these systems function. This includes learning about algorithms, data inputs, and the processes behind machine learning. By understanding AI's strengths, such as processing large datasets quickly, and its limitations, like susceptibility to bias or errors, stu-

dents can critically assess when and how to trust AI outputs and when to dig deeper to get the answers they seek.

Collaborate with AI: Education is increasingly focusing on how students can work alongside AI systems to solve real-world problems. This might involve using AI in science projects to analyze data, in art classes to generate creative ideas, or in business studies to model market scenarios. By treating AI as a collaborative partner, students learn to harness its capabilities for innovation and productivity, while also developing teamwork and project management skills.

Consider Ethics and Responsibility: Students are encouraged to explore issues such as algorithmic bias, data privacy, transparency, and the societal consequences of automation. Almost half of Gen Z students scored poorly in evaluating AI's limitations and risks, such as recognizing when AI systems fabricate information. Through in-depth analysis and thorough examination, they learn to make informed decisions about when and how to use AI responsibly.

Use AI Tools Effectively: Modern classrooms are leveraging AI-powered platforms for everything from personalized learning and language translation to research and creative expression. Students use tools like intelligent tutoring systems, AI writing assistants, and

adaptive learning apps to enhance their educational experience. As per a study, 17% of educators reported better student learning outcomes with AI, while 25% highlighted personalized learning experiences and 18% saw improved student engagement.

Develop Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills: As students interact with AI, they are challenged to think critically about the information presented and to approach problems from multiple perspectives. This includes learning to ask probing questions, distinguish between credible and non-credible sources, and devise creative solutions that combine human insight with AI's analytical power.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Recognizing the urgency to prepare students for a technology-driven future, education systems worldwide are making AI and digital literacy core priorities. However, there is a need for formal guidance and structured curricula to ensure responsible and effective AI usage. Integrating AI literacy alongside traditional subjects, fostering interdisciplinary learning, and emphasizing ethical considerations are steps that need to be taken to empower students to thrive in future careers, drive innovation, and navigate the complexities of an AI-integrated world with confidence and purpose.

The author is Founder, Zamit

CellBot: An Innovative ChatBot That Redefines Medical Research with AI on the CellVerse Platform



VISHAL SINGHHAL

The world of medical research and digital healthcare has undergone tremendous changes in the last few years. The introduction of AI in Healthcare especially has revolutionised the industry and made information more accessible to people today. Against this backdrop, CellBot has emerged as an innovative solution that can change how clinicians, researchers, and pharmaceutical professionals interact with

biomedical knowledge.

What is CellBot?

Developed as a part of the CellVerse ecosystem by CellStrat, CellBot uses generative AI to streamline research and accelerate drug research. Using this chatbot, now health and life sciences professionals can review huge volumes of research data in real-time in easily, efficiently and quickly. This can help professionals immensely in more evidence-based decision-making. It is user-friendly and is constantly upgrading itself to keep abreast of the latest happenings in the medical field.

How it works

CellBot makes the entire process of literature review much more easier. Professionals get all their information with just one click. But how does it really work? Believe us, it is not complicated

at all. All you have to do is log in and give a prompt. For example, if you want to know more about the latest treatments for spinal muscular atrophy, just type it in the chat box. It will throw up all the information that you need in seconds. CellBot scans databases like PubMed in seconds and retrieves up to 100 relevant papers.

The user can use the information received to ask follow-up questions. Healthcare practitioners can use it for drug comparisons / interactions and treatment options. It can also be an invaluable tool for researchers as it can help with thesis writing, literature review and also provide a clinical model design.

CellBot is an advanced AI assistant specifically designed for medical professionals who require im-

mediate access to reliable clinical information. In today's healthcare environment, practitioners must stay current with evolving research while making critical decisions under time pressure and maintaining the highest standards of patient care. The system's core value proposition centers on empowering medical professionals to enhance their learning processes, accelerate decision-making capabilities, and implement evidence-based practices more effectively than traditional information retrieval methods. By providing immediate responses to complex clinical questions, CellBot enables practitioners to maintain their competitive edge while delivering superior patient care says Mr. Vishal Singhhal, CO Founder CELLSTRAT

Who is it meant for?

This AI tool can be of great help to medical students, researchers, pharma and bio-sciences professionals by helping them save time. It can throw up clinical protocol reviews in seconds, provide precise answers, drastically bring down the time needed for scientific evaluations and quickly summarize adverse events.

CellBot is setting the stage for the next generation of AI-driven healthcare solutions by bridging the gap between unstructured research data and actionable insights. It is currently being used by medical researchers in Europe and also in some parts of North and South India. Some teaching hospitals in India are also showing an increased interest in this chatbot that is set to revolutionise the future of healthcare.



INDIA V ENG: BUMRAH LIKELY TO REPLACE PRASIDH FOR LORD’S TEST

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Jasprit Bumrah is likely to replace Prasadh Krishna in the Indian playing 11 as India and England are all set to clash in the third Test of the five-match Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy series, starting July 10 at the Home of Cricket, Lord’s.

India created history with a 336-run win over England in the second Test at Birmingham, as they not only secured their first-ever win at Edgbaston but also achieved their biggest Test win away from home in terms of runs.

Having won the Edgbaston frontier, India will seek to continue the winning momentum in Lord’s, where they have lost just one Test in the last three tours. The series is levelled one-one. On the other hand, England, after chasing down the historic target of 371 to defeat India by five wickets at Headingley in



the first test, will be looking to bounce back in the third test.

Indian skipper Shubman Gill sits at the top of the run charts in the series with 585 runs in two Tests, four innings at an average of 146.25 and an attacking strike rate of over 73, with three centu-

ries and a marathon 269 (387 balls) at Edgbaston as his best score. England seamer Josh Tongue has claimed the most wickets in two tests. In four innings, he has grabbed 11 wickets at an average of 33.63. India is expected to stick with their opening pair of Yashasvi

Jaiswal and KL Rahul as both the batters have a fifty and a hundred each in first two fixtures.

Karun Nair, despite low scores, could retain his spot at No. 3. Coming from a double hundred, Gill will lead from No.4 and wicketkeeper/batter

Rishabh Pant, after historic centuries in both innings of the first test, will bat at No. 5. Ravindra Jadeja, with his experience, brings balance at No.6 and at No. 7, Washington Sundar could be preferred for his handy batting and off-spin, as he made a vital 42 in the 1st innings of the second test. Nitish Reddy could retain his spot at no.8 for depth in batting, though he is yet to perform. The duo of Akash Deep and Mohammed Siraj, after a brilliant outing in the 2nd test, could be seen again sharing the new ball in the Lords test. India could go with one change as Jasprit Bumrah, who was rested for the second test, will be back in place of Prasadh Krishna, who has been going through a tough outing in the opening two fixtures.

Krishna took five wickets in the first test combined in both innings, but gave away runs at an economy of 6+. In the second test, he only managed

Jofra Archer back in England XI for third Test

AGENCIES
LONDON

Jofra Archer has been named in England’s playing XI for the third Test against India at Lord’s, replacing Josh Tongue in the only change from the previous match, according to the official website of England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Wednesday.

Archer, 30, returns to the Test setup for the first time since February 2021. Known for his express pace, Archer’s inclusion is expected to bolster England’s relatively inexperienced bowling attack, which has lacked bite in patches during the ongoing series.

Recently, he made a red-ball return at first-class level for Sussex prior to joining up with the England squad for the second Test against India in Birmingham.

The five-match series is currently tied 1-1, after India bounced back in emphatic fashion with a



massive 336-run win at Edgbaston. The third Test is set to begin on Thursday at the iconic Lord’s Cricket Ground.

England’s selectors have opted for stability, making just one change to the side that featured in Birmingham. Archer comes in for Jos Tongue, with captain Ben Stokes continuing to lead the charge alongside senior players Joe Root and Chris Woakes.

Wicketkeeper-batter Jamie Smith retains his place in the XI, while young off-spinner Shoaib Bashir continues to get opportunities

as part of England’s spin strategy.

England playing XI for third Test: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (C), Jamie Smith (WK), Chris Woakes, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer, Shoaib Bashir. Coming to the second Test match, England once again opted to field first. After getting KL Rahul (2) early, a 80-run stand between Yashasvi Jaiswal (87 in 107 balls, with 13 fours) and Karun Nair (31 in 50 balls, with five fours) helped India gain some footing in the match.

Will Ben Stokes end his poor run with bat at Lord’s?

AGENCIES
LONDON

As England heads to London for the third Test at Lord’s, there will be eyeballs and question marks over their skipper Ben Stokes’ form, as the superstar has struggled to fire with the bat for a long while.

With series 1-1, each following a historic win at Edgbaston, Team India’s morale will be really high heading into a venue where they have won the last two of their three Tests. Stokes has had a moderate series so far, with just 86 runs in four innings, with the best score of 33. He has also taken six wickets so far, including a four-wicket haul at Leeds.

Stokes’ run of form has not been doing justice to his undeniable talent and



ability to produce absolute greatness when it matters the most. In 16 Tests since last year, Stokes has scored just 697 runs at an average of 26.81, with just five fifties and a best score of 80. But Stokes could find some form at the venue, given his brilliant record with the bat at the ‘Home of Cricket’, having made 843 runs in 12 matches and 20 innings

at an average of 44.36, with three centuries and five fifties. His best score is 155.

Stokes does not have a very good record against India either, having made just 1,058 runs at an average of 24.60, with five half-centuries and a best score of 128, with a century and five fifties. Will Stokes step up and give England a fresh breath of life in this series at Lord’s?

Pant slams Dukes ball for losing shape repeatedly

AGENCIES
LONDON

Ahead of his side’s third Test against England at Lord’s, Indian wicketkeeper-batter and vice-captain Rishabh Pant spoke on the ball getting out of shape too much during the matches, saying that such things have never happened and it is “not good for cricket”.

The third Test between India and England will take place at Lord’s from Thursday onwards. With the series one-one each, Team India heads into the match with massive morale, having won two of their last three matches at Lord’s.

So far in the series, the Dukes ball has frequently become out of shape, causing a lot of trouble to bowlers, who are not entitled to a ball change every time they

need it. A new ball is usually introduced 80 overs into an innings.

Speaking ahead of the match in the pre-match presser, Pant said, “I feel the gauge should be the same (to determine if the ball has gone out of shape, irrespective of the ball brand), but if it is a little smaller, it will be better. Definitely, I feel it is a big problem because the ball is getting out of shape. But at the same time, it is not up to us. Because visually, when you see the ball, you can see it’s de-shaped.” “The ball is getting de-shaped too much. That has never happened like this. It is definitely irritating for the players because every ball plays in a different way. Because when it becomes softer, sometimes it does not do too much. But as soon as it changes the ball, it starts to do enough.

Mendis’ sixth ODI ton powers Sri Lanka to 2-1 series win over B’desh

AGENCIES
PALLEKELE

Sri Lanka batter Kusal Mendis slammed his sixth ODI hundred, which guided the hosts to a comfortable 99-run victory over Bangladesh at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

With this win, the Islanders clinched the three-match ODI series 2-1, as per the International Cricket Council (ICC) official website.

Mendis smashed a superb 124 from just 115 deliveries as Sri Lanka amassed 285/7 in the series decider, and that proved too much for Bangladesh as they were bundled out for 186 in reply.

It saw Sri Lanka clinch a 2-1 series triumph, with Mendis hitting his sixth ODI century and deservedly named Player of the Series for his 225 runs across the



three matches.

For the right-hander, it was a case of redemption as he was dismissed for 56 in the second match of the series in Colombo when well set in Sri Lanka’s run chase as Bangladesh went on to record a series-levelling 16-run win.

Mendis was thrilled to make a contribution to the victory, especially after the disappointment surrounding the loss in the second match of the series.

“Very pleased with the knock today. I was disap-

pointed with what happened in Colombo. I had got a start and couldn’t finish. Here I was determined to bat through the innings and very satisfied,” he said after the match, as quoted by the ICC.

Bangladesh captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who was one of six batters to reach double figures in the Pallekele contest with 28, rued the lack of any meaningful partnerships during the run chase as the Asian side were dismissed in the 40th over in reply.

Iga Swiatek smashes Samsonova to reach Wimbledon semi-finals for first time

AGENCIES
LONDON

Iga Swiatek reached the Wimbledon semifinals for the first time with a 6-2, 7-5 victory over 19th-seeded Liudmila Samsonova that went from a stroll to a bit of a struggle in the late stages Wednesday.

“Even though I’m in the middle of the tournament, I already got goosebumps after this win,” said Swiatek, who will face unseeded Belinda Bencic on Thursday for a spot in the final. “I’m super happy and super proud of



myself.”

Bencic beat No. 7 Mirra Andreeva 7-6 (3), 7-6 (2) to reach her first Grand Slam semifinal since the 2019 U.S. Open. The other semifinal is No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka against No. 13 Amanda Anisimova

; they advanced with wins Tuesday.

Swiatek is a five-time major champion, with four of those titles on the red clay of the French Open, and the other on the hard courts of the U.S. Open. She’s also twice been a

semifinalist at the hard-court Australian Open.

The grass courts of the All England Club always had given her the most trouble as a pro, even though she did claim a junior championship there in 2018. In her five appearances in the Wimbledon women’s bracket before this year, she had made it as far as the quarterfinals just once, exiting in that round in 2023.

But the 24-year-old from Poland is enjoying a career-best run on the slick surface, thanks in part to being more comfortable with the footing required.

Karan Singh becomes India’s second-highest ranked Tennis player

AGENCIES
CHANDIGARH

Roundglass Tennis Academy’s Karan Singh has climbed to a career-high ranking of World No. 426 in the latest ATP Rankings, making him the second-ranked Indian singles player, just behind India’s No.1 Sumit Nagal (World No. 307). With an 11-place jump from 437, Karan has claimed the No. 2 spot among Indian men in the ATP singles standings.

This ranking leap comes

on the back of an impressive run of form for the 22-year-old, who has featured in three consecutive ITF World Tennis Tour M15 finals between May and June 2025, winning his maiden ITF title in Tehran, Iran, against Aleksandr Lobanov in straight sets 7-6, 6-2, and finishing runner-up in the other two at Tehran and Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Most recently, Karan competed in the ITF World Tour M25 tournament in Monastir, Tunisia, where he delivered a gritty perfor-

mance to reach the quarterfinals. He narrowly lost to Italy’s Fabrizio Andoloro in a thrilling three-set match: 6-4, 6-7(5), 6-7(7).

“This ranking jump is a reward for Karan’s resilience, discipline, and consistent performances over the last few months,” said Aditya Sachdeva, Technical Director of Roundglass Tennis Academy. “We’ve focused on building not just his physical game, but his tactical maturity and mental resilience. Breaking into the top 500 is a big step, and to

become India’s No. 2 at this stage of his career shows his hunger and potential. We believe this upward trajectory will continue in the months to come.”

Karan has been steadily progressing since his Davis Cup debut win for India in February 2025, where he helped the team seal a 4-0 win in the World Group I Playoff. He is currently part of the ATP Challenger Tour swing in India, using these higher-tier tournaments to push toward further ATP ranking gains.

Blue Tigresses target FIFA Women’s World Cup after Asian Cup qualifier

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

It’s been four days since India’s historic qualification for the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Australia 2026. But the dust from the celebrations isn’t settling anytime soon, and the women’s football hype is only on an upward curve.

“Honestly, it’s still hard to express,” said the centre-back. “There were so many mixed emotions. It didn’t even feel real. We kept reassuring each other, ‘Yes, it has happened, we’ve actually done it.’ That feeling... it’s indescribable. Anyone who supports women’s football or is part

of it would understand what it feels like to qualify. It was overwhelming.”

Overwhelming might still be an understatement considering the giant and historic achievement this is for the Indian women’s team. One that could shape the future of the women’s game in the country. The stakes were incredibly high, as the Women’s Asian Cup also serves as a pathway to the FIFA Women’s World Cup.

That’s exactly why the Blue Tigresses are in no mood to rest after this first-ever ‘qualification’ for the Asian Cup. Coach Crispin Chettri barely wasted any time after the full-



time whistle in conveying the task at hand to the girls.

After the outpouring of emotions and hugs and cries and tears, Chettri gathered every-

one in a huddle and said, “The top of the mountain is the bottom of another mountain. We must continue to learn and grow as a team. We’ve made it

to the Asian Cup. Our next target is the World Cup. We have to keep dreaming.”

These dreams have taken multiple hits in the past.

None as heartbreaking as the withdrawal from the AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2022, hosted by India, due to a COVID outbreak in the camp. The Blue Tigresses had only played one game, a 0-0 draw with Iran, and were theoretically only three matches away from qualifying for the World Cup before their dreams were shattered.

“I still get flashbacks from that. The regret lingered,” Sangita Basfore had said nine days before scoring both goals against Thailand, that will give India another shot at making the world stage. This is the second chance.

Sweety added, “It feels re-

ally relieving. The last time India hosted the tournament, we couldn’t play due to COVID. But this time, we played all our matches well, we went through everything, and we qualified. We’ve done it after 23 years. The World Cup dream is alive.”

And they didn’t just do it against any opposition. This was Thailand, a side ranked 24 places above them, a side that had beaten them 10-0 in the 2014 Asian Games, a side that had already played two World Cups. This was Futoshi Ikeda’s Thailand. The mastermind who coached Japan to the quarter-finals of the 2023 World Cup. He

might have thrashed eventual world champions Spain 4-0 that time, but last Saturday, he and his side had no reply to the roar of the Blue Tigresses. Captaining India on such a monumental day is a memory that will stay with Sweetie Devi forever, who, at only 25, already has 66 caps to her name. Chettri rotated captains during the Qualifiers, announcing it during the matchday morning team meeting and formally handing the armband in the dressing room. Sweetie was the captain against Mongolia, Sangita got the armband against Timor-Leste, and Sanju had the opportunity to lead the team against Iraq.