

Congress woke up after BRS Padayatra call on PRLIS, says Niranjn Reddy

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) has alleged that the Congress government woke up to the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS) issue only after the party announced a padayatra against the delay in executing the project works. Former Minister S. Niranjn Reddy said the Congress government responded to the issue after remaining inactive for nearly two-and-a-half years. He claimed the decision came only after the BRS announced a padayatra (foot march) over the delay in completing the project. The BRS regime, he alleged, the Congress government's deliberate negligence over the past two-and-a-half years had led to a sharp escalation in the project cost. Niranjn Reddy said that if the Congress government had completed the remaining works, it would have been possible to store 45 tmc ft of water this year in the



Narlapur, Yedula, Vattam and Karivena reservoirs. He recalled that the BRS had decided on May 15 to undertake a padayatra from Narlapur to Udandapur to protest against the stalled project works. According to him, the party had also proposed inviting K Chandrashekhara Rao to attend the concluding ceremony of the padayatra. Niranjn Reddy said the Congress government realised that public resistance was inevitable after the BRS decided to mobilise farmers and people for protests.

Better Services Will Build Trust in Government Hospitals

Nalgonda: Yadadri-Bhongir district collector Anuraag Jayanti directed doctors and staff at Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to remain available to patients and ensure quality treatment, stating that better services alone would build public trust in government hospitals. Inspecting the PHC at Tangeda pally in Choutuppal Muncipality, he inquired about medical services being provided and the availability of ultrasound scan facilities for pregnant women. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 He directed medical officials to make special arrangements for regular medical tests, including blood pressure



and blood sugar checks for pregnant women. He also instructed them to identify high-risk pregnancies and ensure timely supply of medicines. Stating that the number of outpatients visiting the PHC was not satisfactory, the collector said improvement in medical services and availability of doctors would encourage people to visit government hospitals. He asked doctors and hospital staff to work with dedica-

tion. Also Read - TG Govt's Youth & Sports Week Begins With Marathons, Walkathons, Yoga He also inquired about the number of deliveries being conducted every month at government services in a healthcare facilities. Later, he inspected the IKP paddy procurement centre at Tangeda pally. He underlined the need to carry out paddy procurement without delay. Choutuppal Mandal was also present.

PM Discusses Trade, Green Energy With Nordic Counterparts



Oslo: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral ties in areas such as clean energy, trade, sustainability and digitalisation during separate meetings with his counterparts from Iceland, Finland and Denmark. The prime minister held the meetings ahead of the 3rd India-Nordic Summit. During his talks with Iceland Prime Minister Kristrunn Frostadottir, Finland Prime Minister Petteri Orpo and Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, PM Modi discussed the overall trajectory of bilateral relations between India and the three Nordic nations. Also Read - 55 AAP MLAs Meet Sunita, Say

Jailed Kejriwal Should Not Resign "Had a wonderful meeting with Prime Minister Kristrunn Frostadottir of Iceland. India deeply values the friendship with Iceland," Modi said in a social media post after the meeting with the Icelandic premier. He said the two sides discussed ways to improve ties in areas such as clean energy, fisheries, sustainability, geothermal energy and carbon capture and storage. "Iceland's prowess in sectors relating to the Blue Economy is admirable. We are hopeful that the historic India-EFTA TEPA will give an impetus to trade and investment linkages as well," Modi said.

Revanth Reddy Asks MLAs to Fast-Track Land Acquisition for Palamuru Project

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here on Tuesday instructed MLAs from Mahabubnagar district to complete land acquisition process for the Palamuru-Rangareddy lift irrigation project on a war footing. Participating in a meeting with district Ministers and MLAs at MCRHRD, he made several key suggestions regarding the irrigation projects of erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. Revanth Reddy made several key suggestions regarding the irrigation projects of erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. He ordered that land acquisition for other projects in the district be completed as soon as possible.

Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Revanth Reddy said he will ensure that payments were made immediately without any delay for acquiring land for the project and clarified that the government is ready to pay the pending bills for other projects in the district. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy participating in a meeting pay the pending bills for with Mahabubnagar district Ministers and MLAs at MCRHRD in Jubilee Hills on Tuesday. The Chief Minister Mpay the pending bills for minister Ministers and MLAs at asked the district ministers to hold a review



with officials concerned in the district and monitor effects from time to time. on the irrigation projects the progress of the project.

Fishing Ban Period Relief: Naidu Disburses Rs.262 Crore

Tummalapenta (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday disbursed over Rs 262 crore under 'Matsyakarula Sevalo' (in the service of fishermen) scheme for the benefit of over 1.3 lakh fishermen families across the state during the annual fishing ban period. Fishing in the sea is banned between April 15 and June 15 every year to facilitate breeding, Naidu said, addressing a public meeting at Tummalapenta village in Nellore district. Also Read - Complete Mulapet, Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam Ports By Year End: Minister "The chief minister extended a financial aid of Rs 261.5 crore to 1.3 lakh fishermen families during the fishing ban period," a press release said. The state offers financial aid of Rs 20,000 to each eligible fisherman's family. "The government is committed to ensuring that fishermen's families do not face hardship during the annual fishing ban period, and financial assistance is being provided directly to beneficiaries," Naidu said. Also Read - AP Emerging As An Education And Innovation Hub: Governor Abdul Nazeer He noted that the government has provided financial assistance to the tune of Rs 505 crore to the fishermen's families during the fishing ban period over the last two years. The Chief Minister further stated that the government has taken

measures to support the families of fishermen who lose their lives in accidents while fishing. He noted that Rs 3.15 crore was released towards 63 insurance claims during 2024-25, while Rs 5.65 crore was disbursed towards 113 pending claims during 2025-26. Naidu also observed that the government is promoting seaweed cultivation to improve livelihood opportunities and enhance income generation for the families across the state.



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Minister Seethakka Writes LLM Entrance Exam, To Pursue Constitutional Law



Hyderabad: Telangana Minister Dasari Anasuya (See thakka) appeared for an entrance examination to pursue a master's in law. She appeared for the Telangana PG Law Common Entrance Test at a college in Moulali on Monday. The Minister continues to pursue academic excellence after having already completed LLB, an LLM in Corporate Law, and a PhD in Political Science from Osmania University. Her thesis was on "Social

Exclusion and Deprivation of Migrant Tribals of Erstwhile Andhra Pradesh State - A Case Study of Gotti Koya Tribes in Warangal And Khammam Districts." The Minister is now aspiring to pursue another LLM specialization in Constitutional Law out of her deep interest in the Indian Constitution. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Seethakka, a former Naxalite, had joined the Naxal movement in the late

1980s, given up arms, and joined the mainstream in the 1990s. A fiery ST leader, she was first elected to the Assembly from Mulugu (ST) constituency on a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) ticket in 2009. In 2018, she was elected to the Assembly on a Congress ticket. She was re-elected in 2023 and joined the Council of Ministers led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy as minister for Panchayat Raj and Women and Child Welfare.

Operation Sindoor Reflected Smart Power In Its Most Complete Expression, Says Indian Army Chief

New Delhi: Under Operation Sindoor, Indian forces dismantled terror infrastructure, punctured a long-standing strategic assumption, and then stopped "deliberately and purposefully", and it reflected "smart power" in its most complete expression, Army Chief Gen Uday Shankar said on Tuesday. In his address at a seminar hosted at the Manekshaw Centre here, he also said that twelve months ago, India offered the world a "partial answer" to the so-called smart power question. Also Read - 2020 Delhi Riots: Court Rejects Umar Khalid's Bail Plea to Care for Ailing Mother "On the intervening night of May 6-7 in 2025, Bharat acted. In a precisely defined 22-minute operation window, Operation Sindoor delivered military precision, information control, diplomatic signalling and economic resolve, as one coherent national act. We struck deep,



dismantled terror infrastructure, punctured a long standing strategic assumption, and then stopped, deliberately and purposefully," the Army chief said. True Picture: Ashok Gehlot Questions Govt Over Fuel Shortage Reports "The deliberation thought after 88 hours, was smart power in its most complete expression, knowing exactly which instrument to apply, at what intensity, and in its most d precisely when to convert a military moment into a strategic one," he asserted. The seminar, titled, 'Security to Prosperity: Smart Power for Sustained National Growth', hosted by defence think-tank Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), was attended by PM, BJP power in its most on Oil Price Hike, Adani "Free Pass" Gen Dwivedi said today, the "world around us is sending a morose message to reorganise prosperity," he argued. In his address, he asked the audience if smart power is the "defining currency" of sustained national growth, or has the "raw calculus of hard power", once again reclaimed the centre stage of the global order.

Adilabad touches 44.5 degrees heatwave tightens grip on Telangana

Hyderabad: The intense summer heat continues to batter Telangana, with mercury crossing the critical 44 degrees Celsius mark in the state's northern pockets. According to official data released by the India Meteorological Department, Hyderabad, in the last 24 hours till 8.30 am on Tuesday, Adilabad recorded the state's highest maximum temperature of 44.5 is 1.8 degrees Celsius above normal. The IMD, Hyderabad weather data highlights a stark regional divide, with extreme heat in northern districts and heavily humid, oppressive conditions in the central and southern regions. After Adilabad, Nizamabad trailed closely with 44.2 degrees Celsius, while Medak and Nalgonda clocked peak temperatures of



42.2 and 41.5 degrees Celsius respectively. Even areas experiencing slightly lower temperatures are facing immense discomfort due to soaring morning relative humidity levels, which peaked at an intense 86 per cent in Hanmakonda

and 75 per cent in Bhadrachalam. Within the Greater Hyderabad region, the Rajendranagar region recorded the highest at 40 degrees Celsius, followed by Begumpet tancheru, and Hayath Nagar hovered uncomfortably close to the 40 degrees Celsius threshold.

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Complete Mulapet, Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam Ports By Year End: Minister

Amaravati: R&B minister BC Janardhan Reddy directed the officials to ensure completion of Mulapet, Machilipatnam and Ramayapatnam ports by the end of this year. The TD coalition government is considering the port construction prestigiously, he said. The minister reviewed the progress of green-field ports, shipping harbours at the Secretariat on Monday. He asked the officials to bring issues, if any, during the construction to his notice for early resolution. The dredging works for the Mulapet port can be completed by expediting the rehabilitation works in Mulapet village. That would help in completing the port by the end of this year. Also Read - AP Emerging As An Education Hub: Governor Abdul Nazeer



struction to his notice for early resolution. The dredging works for the Mulapet port can be completed by expediting the rehabilitation works in Mulapet village. That would help in completing the port by the end of this year construction, And Innovation Hub: Governor Abdul Nazeer He also directed the offi-

cial to resolve the Salt land issue and expedite the road and railway construction, along with infrastructure works. On Machilipatnam port, the minister said that the officials should align the railway line construction, along with the port and completion of electricity and drinking water facilities. The

dredging and rehabilitation of Ramayapatnam port should also be completed at the earliest, he told the officials. The minister asked the officials to complete land acquisition and get forest clearances for the national highways, railway projects sanctioned to the state and ensure they are completed fast.

Amit Shah To Chair 26th Central Zonal Council Meet In Bastar Today

Raipur/Jagdalpur: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will preside over the 26th meeting of the Central Zonal Council in Bastar on Tuesday. This significant meeting is scheduled to commence at 11 am at Hotel Ambition in Jagdalpur, the divisional headquarters of Bastar in Chhattisgarh. The Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, alongside Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, will participate in the meeting. The primary objective of the Council meeting, which is hosted by the Chhattisgarh government, is to deliberate on mutual issues between the Centre and the States and to facilitate their harmonious resolution. The Council serves as a consultative forum to iron out interstate matters and align regional growth with national development targets. Over a dozen critical issues are slated for the agenda of the scheduled meeting. These include enhancing interstate border coordination, count-



er-insurgency measures and regional connectivity, along with improving nutrition, tracking health metrics and managing crimes against women and children. The other agenda of the meeting is to deliberate on accelerating the setting up of brick-and-mortar rural banking networks in distant villages, deploying the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112), expanding the cooperative sector and

addressing energy or urban planning overlaps. The Zonal Councils are statutory bodies formed under the States Reorganisation Act of 1956 with the purpose of bridging administrative gaps between the centre and provincial governments. Shah, who arrived in the state on a two-day visit on Monday, also met with the security personnel who have played a crucial role in eradicating Naxalism in the state. Addressing

people at the Bastar Academy of Dance, Art and Literature (BADAL) campus on Monday, the Home Minister declared that India has become free from Naxalism, saying the decades-long insurgency had finally been defeated after immense sacrifices by security forces. He credited the achievement to the sacrifices made by security personnel over the years during anti-Naxal operations.

Multiple Violations Detected in Lulu Hypermarket in Kukatpally

Hyderabad: Telangana Food Safety officials detected multiple serious violations in Lulu Hypermarket in KPHB Colony during inspection. Based on a complaint, the officials conducted an inspection and found in-house kitchen violations apart from observing poor hygiene conditions and leftover food stored in refrigerators. The leftover food was discarded on the spot. Presence of pests and decayed vegetables were found along with near-expiry packed food articles with torn and misleading labels detected. Officials detected retail area violations. They also found insect infestation in besan flour, atta and dals and packed food articles with expired FSSAI licence were also identified. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The labeling and display violations were detected including absence of nutritional information, FSSAI licence details and manufacturer address. In meat processing area, the drains were clogged with meat waste emitting pungent smell, posing serious public health concern. The officials seized approximately 150 kg of food articles



including sweets, oils, flour and pulses with infestation. They collected food samples on suspicion of adulteration or excess artificial colour usage and pest-infested besan flour and sent for analysis. In a public advisory, officials asked consumers to remain vigilant while purchasing food products from retail outlets, supermarkets, bakeries and eateries. In the bakery unit of the store, 10 kg Atta Bread Mix, and 15 kg loose Baguette Bread Mix were found to be infested and discarded. Moreover, expired products including Sesame Seeds (20 kg), Toned Milk (20 liters), Biscuit



packets, Glaze (7.5 kg), Gems (five kg), and Fruit Juice (two packets) were also discarded by the food safety officers. Hyderabad: LuLu Mall draws massive crowds, causes traffic chaos. While an updated FSSAI license copy was not displayed at the entrance of the premises, pest con-

trol records, and Medical Fitness Certificates of food handlers were available. All workers in the food section were found wearing hair caps, gloves, masks, and uniforms. 40 FoSTaC trained supervisors were also available at the premises.

AP Emerging As An Education And Innovation Hub: Governor Abdul Nazeer

Amaravati: Governor S. Abdul Nazeer, while highlighting Andhra Pradesh's growth, stated that it was fast emerging as an education and innovation hub with several premier institutions, including AIIMS Mangalagiri, IIT Tirupati, IISER Tirupati, and IIM Visakhapatnam. He was interacting with students from Maharashtra who were visiting the State under the Yuva Sangam programme, organised as part of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, at Lok Bhavan in Vijayawada. Addressing graduate, postgraduate, and research scholars from various educational Governor said AP and Maharashtra share strong historical, cultural, and trade connections. Also Read -



Complete Mulapet, Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam Ports By Year End: Minister The State has emerged as a major investment destination and a leading exporter of marine products, the Governor said, and that Amaravati is being developed as a smart and

sustainable capital city with world-class infrastructure and innovation-driven projects such as the Amaravati Quantum Valley. As part of the visit, the student delegation also toured the APCRDA Headquarters at Rayapudi in Am

aravati. Officials briefed the students on the development of Amaravati Capital City and showcased key infrastructure projects at the Amaravati Integrated Command and Control Centre, including the Assembly, High Court, and government complex.

Ramgopalpet Police Recovers Cash Bag, Returns to Owner Swiftly

Hyderabad: The Ramgopalpet police swiftly responded to a citizen's distress and successfully recovered a forgotten bag containing cash worth Rs.1.20 lakh within a short time, restoring it safely to its rightful owner. On May 18, 2026, a complaint was received from Sai Kumar. The complainant stated that at around 2 pm, he arrived at KIMS hospital in an auto-rickshaw for his father's surgery. In his anxiety, he accidentally forgot his bag inside the auto-rickshaw. The bag contained a crucial amount of Rs.1.20 lakh meant for medical expenses. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Upon receiving the complaint, Ramgopalpet Inspector B. Suresh Kumar swung



into action and deployed a specialized crime team, which verified the CCTV footage along the route, successfully traced the registration number of the auto-rickshaw, and located its driver. Following the prompt tracking by the police team, the auto-

rickshaw driver came to the Ramgopalpet police station and safely handed over the complainant's bag, containing the entire cash intact. Sai Kumar expressed his profound and sincere gratitude to the Ramgopalpet police for their response and dedi-

cation during his hour of crisis. In appreciation of exemplary honesty, the auto-rickshaw driver was formally felicitated with a shawl by the Inspector who also commended both the crime team for their efficiency and the auto driver for his integrity.

YSRC Leaders, Activists Stage Stir in Protest Against Hike in Fuel Prices

Vijayawada: The opposition YSRC leaders and supporters staged a state-wide protest on Monday against the recent hike in prices of petrol and diesel and demanded their rollback across Andhra Pradesh. The party leaders and supporters staged rallies, dharnas and padayaras and submitted memorandums to the district collectors, RDOs and tahsildars demanding an immediate rollback of fuel prices. In Guntur, former minister Ambati Rambabu led a protest and alleged that AP had the highest fuel prices in the country and slammed minister Nara Lokesh for going back on his pre-election promise to reduce taxes on fuels. Also Read - Man Gets 20-Year Jail For Sexually Assaulting Minor In Vijayawada, former minister Vellampalli Srinivas staged a protest by pulling an auto-rickshaw with ropes near the Vidhayadharapuram tahsildar's office. In NTR district, YSRC district president Devineni Avinash led

a massive rally in which bikes were placed on bullock carts to symbolise the burden imposed on commoners. In Nellore, a protest rally led by YSRC district president Kakani Govardhan Reddy and MLC Parvathareddy Chandrasekhar Reddy was taken out from the Barkas Centre to the collectorate, drawing huge crowds. Also Read - Tense Situation in Madakasira After Police Hit Villager In a symbolic protest, Govardhan Reddy and Chandrasekhar Reddy rode a cycle rickshaw during the rally and submitted a memorandum to the DRO urging the state government to reduce VAT on petrol and diesel. In the erstwhile twin districts of Godavari, YSRC leaders and activists staged protests and expressed in Madakasira After Police raised slogans against the alliance leaders and shaw against the alliance leaders and shaw Hit Villager In a symbolic protest, Govardhan Reddy and



Chandrasekhar Reddy rode a cycle rickshaw during the rally and submitted a memorandum to the DRO urging concern over hike in prices of fuels and

they raised slogans against the alliance leaders and shaw with ropes near the Vidhayadharapuram tahsildar's office. In NTR district, YSRC district presi-

dent Devineni Avinash led the chief minister. They raised slogans against the alliance leaders and shaw

Anticipatory Bail to Pawan Khera in Alleged Defamation Case Linked to Assam CM's Wife

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has granted an anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in matter linked to alleged forgery and defamation case linked to the allegedly making false allegations against the wife of Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma. This comes after earlier on Thursday, Supreme Court had reserved its verdict on a plea filed by Congress leader Pawan Khera challenging a Gauhati High Court order denying him anticipatory bail in a defamation and forgery case linked to allegations against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Also Read - Didi: Exit Poll BJP-sponsored, Rigged A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Atul S Chandurkar heard submissions by Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi for Khera and counter-arguments by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Assam government before reserving judgment. Singhvi strongly criticised statements attributed to the Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and argued that he is acting like a constitutional cowboy. "Dr



BR Ambedkar would turn over in his grave if he had imagined a constitutional functionary behaving like a 'constitutional cowboy' or a 'constitutional Rambo,'" the senior lawyer said. He argued that the custody of arrest of Khera was unnecessary in a defamation case when his client is not a flight risk. "Interrogation is available; there is no flight risk. The question is the necessity of arrest. Why is it necessary to humiliate by custodial arrest?" he said. Also Read - West Bengal Assembly: Will Mamata Banerjee Win a Fourth Term? Singhvi argued that the charges invoked against Pawan Khera are bailable, including Section 339 (forgery under BNS), which he claims was wrongly added later and does not even form part of the original FIR. He stated that arrest should be a

last resort, particularly in such offences. He said the Gauhati High Court order states that he (Khera) doesn't deserve the 'privilege' of an anticipatory bail, when the liberty is a matter of right and not privilege. Also Read - LDF, UDF Claim Victory Post Exit Poll Results Singhvi added that it's a case where "venom" and "malice" are spewing out of the prosecution. He stressed the need for a thorough investigation. He stressed the need for a thorough investigation such as passport seals, QR codes and other official markers. Mehta submitted that the investigation must uncover who forged the documents, whether Khera acted with accomplices and whether the alleged acts have wider implications, including possible foreign links during an election period.

Fire Incident On Rajdhani Express: Railway Team Inspects Burnt Coaches, Report Likely On May 20

Kota: Constituted to probe the fire incident aboard train no. 12431, the Rajdhani Express, which was going from Trivandrum to Hazrat Nizamuddin, a railway team on Monday inspected the incident site in Madhya Pradesh, located between the Luni Richha and Vikramgarh Alot stations. The team, led by Principal Chief Security Commissioner Manoj Gurumukhi, conducted a thorough inspection of the Third AC (B-1), SLR, and guard coaches, which were completely gutted by the blaze on Sunday. Additionally, as part of this investigation, the team recorded statements of more than a dozen railway personnel. Saurabh Jain, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of the Kota Railway Division, said that the



high-level inquiry committee constituted by Dilip Kumar Singh, general manager of West Central Railway, inspected the incident site and assessed the burnt coaches at Luni Richha station. This committee is investigating the causes of the incident, as

well as its technical aspects and safety standards. Full report on the incident is expected to be released on May 20. The six-member team remained engaged in the investigation for over five hours. The committee members

Mukesh (principal chief electrical engineer, West Central Railway), M Vijay Kumar (principal chief mechanical engineer), Rajiv Kumar (principal chief security commissioner), N S Prasad (principal chief mechanical engineer, Integral Coach

Factory [ICF] Chennai), and Mahendra Singh (executive director of Power Supply and EMU, Research Designs and Standards Organisation [RDSO] Lucknow). A massive fire gutted two coaches of the Delhi-bound Rajdhani Express in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district early Sunday. Senior DCM Jain said that the train had come to a halt immediately after the fire broke out. This was triggered by the automatic fire detection and alarm system (AFDAS). Subsequently, the train's guard, Upendra Kumar, instructed all crew members to remain alert and evacuate the passengers. Acting on these instructions, the entire staff assisted in evacuating the passengers. As a result, there was no loss of life in this incident.

Loud Ring On Phone: Nationwide Cell Broadcast Alert System Launch Evokes Mixed Reactions

New Delhi: The Centre's initiative of rolling out nationwide cell broadcast alerts evoked mixed reactions on Saturday particularly from elderly citizens, housewives and those unfamiliar with smartphone technology. "I was alone at home when my phone suddenly made a loud alarm I had never heard before. The message said 'extremely severe alert'—I thought something terrible had happened," said 70-year-old Shanti Devi, a resident of West Delhi. "I was tense and confused as I didn't know it was just a test," she said. However, Shanti Devi was not the only person surprised by the cell broadcast alerts. Even septuagenarian Malay Das was unprepared to receive such a message on his phone. "I was watching TV. Suddenly, I got an emergency siren on my mobile and I thought something bad happened. When I opened my mobile, I saw the alert message," said Das, a resident of Noida. What surprised Das was the fact that several fire incidents had taken place in high rise buildings in the national capital region (NCR) area in the last few days. "I thought something of that sort (fire incident) had taken place," said Das. On paper, the system is designed as a life-saving tool—delivering instant warnings about natural disasters or emergencies



directly to mobile phones, even without internet connectivity. However, recent test alerts evoked mixed reactions on Saturday particularly from elderly citizens, housewives and those unfamiliar with smartphone technology. "I was alone at home when my phone suddenly made a loud alarm I had never heard before. The message said 'extremely severe alert'—I thought something terrible had happened," said 70-year-old Shanti Devi, a resident of West Delhi. "I was tense and confused as I didn't know it was just a test," she said. However, Shanti Devi was not the only person surprised by the cell broadcast alerts. Even septuagenarian Malay Das was unprepared to receive such a message on his phone. "I was watching TV. Suddenly, I got an emergency siren on my mobile and I thought something bad happened. When I opened my mobile, I saw the alert message," said Das, a resident of Noida. What surprised Das was the fact that several fire incidents had taken place in high rise buildings in the national capital region (NCR) area in the last few days. "I thought something of that sort (fire incident) had taken place," said Das. On paper, the system is designed as a life-saving tool—delivering instant warnings about natural disasters or emergencies

being sent in multiple languages, the formatting and urgency of the message can still be overwhelming for those not accustomed to digital interfaces," he said. In such cases, family members," said Diptesh M have maintained that these alerts are essential for building a robust early warning system, paExperts suggest that advance public notices, awareness campaigns, and simpler messaging could significantly improve the mixed response from today's drill shows that bile phonAs part of the rollout, a nationwide test was successfully conducted earlier in the day, during which mtry, to save the lives of our people, a confluence of human resources and technology has been done today. C-DOT conducted the Indian governme the cell broadcasting solution, an atmanirbhar solution was sent to all Indians in 21 different languages," said Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia against the backdrop of a pan-India testing of an indigenous cell broadcast system for rapid disaster alerts.

Cash Discovery: Probe Panel Submits Report On Justice Varma To Speaker; To Be Tabled In Parliament

New Delhi: An inquiry committee investigating allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma -- against whom removal proceedings were initiated over the alleged discovery of unaccounted cash from his official residence -- has submitted its report to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The report, which was presented in accordance with statutory requirements under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, on Monday, will be laid before both Houses of Parliament in "due course", the Lok Sabha Secretariat said. The Monsoon Session, which usually commences in the third week of July, will be the next time Parliament is likely to meet. The three-member inquiry committee was constituted by the speaker on August 12, 2025. During a fire that broke out in the official residence of Justice Varma on



the night of March 14, 2025, firefighters allegedly discovered massive amounts of burnt currency at a storeroom in the Delhi bungalow. He was then a judge of the Delhi High Court and was later repatriated to his parent High Court of Allahabad. An in-house committee constituted by then CJI Sanjiv Khanna concluded that Justice

Varma had "active or tacit control" over the specific storeroom where the cash was allegedly hidden. In July 2025, over 200 MPs signed a motion to remove the judge. A Supreme Court or high court judge and the chief election commissioner can only be removed by Parliament by a procedure mentioned in the Judges (Inquiry) Act.

In August last year, Speaker Birla constituted a three-member Judges Inquiry Committee to look into the charges. However, facing the prospect of being removed by Parliament, Justice Varma recently resigned as a judge of the Allahabad High Court, rendering the removal proceedings against him "infructuous". People aware of the process to appoint and remove Supreme Court and high court judges said, according to a top court judgment, a judge is once he or she tenders resignation to the President, and "circulates" its copy (makes it public). A judge's resignation is not "subject to acceptance" by the President, procedure, the President gives "formal acceptance," following which it is notified by the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry. Justice Varma's

name still appears as a sitting judge of the Allahabad High Court. As per an SC ruling and precedence, Justice Varma has resigned and is now a private citizen. "Going by this, a former judge cannot be removed by Parliament," a person aware of the procedure noted. Justice Varma was to otherwise retire on January 5, 2031 on attaining the age of 62 years. The probe committee started working when Varma was a sitting judge nation had no bearing on the panel's work. "When the panel investigates charges, it is considered judicial work. They submitted a report of their work...it is a parallel issue," explained the domain expert. Once the report is tabled in Parliament, it is to be seen what the Houses decide, said the person cited above.

Police Find Skeletal Remains Of Woman 'Killed' 34 Years Ago In Ahmedabad, Send Them For Forensic Test

Ahmedabad: Acting on a tip-off, the Crime Branch on Thursday recovered the skeletal remains of a woman who was suspected to have been murdered in Ahmedabad's Vatva area 34 years ago. The police exhumed the remains from a 20-foot-deep house pit and sent them for forensic examination. ACP (Crime Branch) Bharat Patel said that although this case is very old, important evidence has been found based on technical and scientific investigation. After DNA testing of the human remains, the correct identification and further legal action will be taken. Strict action will be taken against all the accused involved in this matter. Case background According to sources,



the victim, Farzana, was married in Surat, but got divorced after a year. Later, she returned to her father's house at Dholka and then started living in Ahmedabad. She was rumoured to have been involved in prostitution and had relationships with many men. In Ahmedabad, she met Samsuddin and fell in

love with him. Later, the two got married. Sources said even after marriage, when Farzana's behaviour did not change, Samsuddin hatched a conspiracy to kill her and discussed the plan with his brother Iqbal and friend Abdul Karim. Karim's acquaintance Sadia Bibi too was included in this plan.

Since Bibi lived alone, the plan was made to kill her at her house. Farzana and Samsuddin stayed there at night. At midnight, sources said, all four accused allegedly strangled Farzana to death. Before the murder, a pit was dug outside Sadia Bibi's house. After the murder, the body was hidden in the pit and covered with brickwork. During this entire incident, a relative of Sadia Bibi witnessed this scene, whom the accused threatened to kill. ACP Patel said the woman's husband and his brother have been detained for questioning while other suspects are no longer alive. Since the brother of Farzana is alive, the identity will be confirmed through DNA test, the police said.

MEA Shuts Down Reports From 'Ignorant NGOs' As Questions Raised In Oslo Over Press Freedom, Human Rights

New Delhi: The Ministry of External Affairs on Monday strongly defended India's record on press freedom and human rights after a Norwegian journalist asked at a press conference in Oslo why "India should be trusted" and why Prime Minister Modi does not take questions from the press. MEA Secretary (West) Sibi George, addressing the press conference in Oslo, said many people misunderstand India after reading reports published by "ignorant NGOs." George also engaged in a tense exchange with the journalist while highlighting the scale and diversity of India's media ecosystem. "You know how many stories are up here. We have how many breaking news coming every day in the evening. At least 200 TV channels in Delhi alone, in English language, in Hindi language and multiple languages. People have no understanding of the scale of India. People have no understanding. They read, you know, one or two news reports published by some god-forsaken, ignorant NGOs and then come and ask questions," George said. We are 1/6th of the world's population, but not 1/6th of the



world's problems," he retorted. The MEA Secretary (West) highlighted how India's Constitution gives every citizen the fundamental right to approach the courts if he or she feels their rights have been infringed upon. He said India ensured equal voting rights for women from the time of Independence. India believes in equality and human rights, adding that the right to vote and change governments remains the strongest example of democratic freedom, he said. "We have a constitution which guarantees the rights of the people, fundamental rights of the people. We have, you know, we have equal rights for the women of our country, which is

very important. In 1947, we gave the freedom to vote for our women," he said. "We won the freedom together. Many countries I know, the voting rights for women came after several decades after India gave that freedom. We believe in equality, we believe in human rights. And what is the best example of human rights? The right to change government, the right to vote. And that is what is happening in India. We are so proud of that," said Sibi George. Emphasising India's adherence to legal norms and international standards, he added, "India is a country which believes in the rule of law. We have always been following rules wherever it is. We play by the book. That is

India's reputation." Responding to a question on why the world should trust India, Sibi George referred to the country's role during global challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and highlighted India's civilisational legacy. George also cited India's contributions to mathematics, culture and global heritage. He said, "You look around and you see an India connect everywhere in the world. India has the numbers you see on your phones—it originated in India. Shooonya, zero, originated in India. Chess originated in India. So we are proud of that civilisation. Yoga, which the world admires today, originated in India. India had epics and books."

India's Economic Transformation Post 2014 Anchor Point Of Ties With US: Kwatra

Washington: India's economic transformation since 2014 has been the anchor point of its expanding engagement with the US, Indian envoy to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra said here. Addressing the Capitol Hill Summit 2026 organised by the US-India Friendship Council here on Monday, Kwatra said the passage of the SHANTI Act has unlocked opportunities for private sector collaboration in the civil nuclear power domain. "One of the drivers, I must point out, is a set of transformational journeys that are currently taking place in India," he said, addressing the conference that was attended by US lawmakers,



including Ro Khanna, Deborah Ross, Tim Moore and Senator Steve Daines. Kwatra said India and the US had set a target to increase bilateral trade from approximately USD 220 billion annually to USD 500 billion by 2030. He said defence and security cooperation was one of the fastest-growing pillars of the India-US partnership, and New Delhi was the

largest user of some American platforms outside the US. "Today, India is the largest user of a couple of American platforms outside the US. But this is also covered by what we are able to do together at an operational level at the level of various commands in terms of addressing the shared challenges that we face in the defence and security space," the envoy said. "We are nat-

ural partners not because of geography or compulsions of geography, but because of our shared values," he said, citing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the US Congress in 2023. Kwatra said every US administration over the past two decades had built upon the achievements of its predecessor in strengthening ties with India. "If you look at the thread of the relationship over the previous decades and through the successive administrations, you will find that each administration has tried, sought and successfully built on the achievements of the previous administration," he said.

Trump Says US Not Likely To Accept New Iran Peace Proposal

West Palm Beach: US President Donald Trump said Saturday he was going to review a new Iranian peace proposal but cast doubt over its prospects, as a senior military officer in Tehran indicated renewed fighting was "The dour outlook came after Iran's Tasnim and Fars news agencies said Tehran had submitted a 14-point proposal to mediator Pakistan. Details included ending the conflict on all fronts and enacting a new framework for the crucial Strait of Hormuz. "I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity and the World, over the last 47 years," Trump said on his Truth Social platform. In a brief interview with reporters in West Palm Beach, Florida, he declined to specify what could trigger new military action against the Islamic republic. "If they misbehave, if they do something bad, but right now, we'll see," he said. "But it's a possibility that could happen. The war, launched by the United States and Israel in late February, has been on hold since April 8, with one failed round of peace talks having taken place in Pakistan on Saturday, Mohammad Jafar Asadi, a senior figure in the Iranian military's central command, said "a renewed conflict between Iran and the United States is likely." "Evidence has shown that the United States is not committed to any promises or agreements," he added, according to Fars news.



Deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi told diplomats in Tehran "the ball is in the United States' court to choose the path of diplomacy or the continuation of a confrontational Iran, he said, was "prepared for both paths." US news site Axios reported earlier in the week that Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff had asked for Tehran's nuclear program to be put back on the negotiating table. Iran's mission to the UN pointed to the massive US nuclear arsenal, accusing Washington on Saturday of "hypocritical behaviour" towards Iran's own atomic following evacuation of Iranian military forces. "There was no legal restriction on the level of uranium enrichment, so long as it is conducted under the IAEA's supervision, as was the case with Iran," it said, using the abbreviation for the UN nuclear watchdog. Iran has maintained a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz since the war began, choking off major flows of oil, gas and fertilizer to the world economy, while the United States has imposed a counter-blockade on Iranian

Oil prices are about 50 percent above pre-war. The vice speaker of Iran's parliament, Ali Nikzad, said that under draft legislation being considered for managing the waterway, 30 percent of tolls collected would go towards military infrastructure, with the rest earmarked for "economic development." "Managing the Strait of Hormuz is more important than acquiring nuclear weapons," he said. Fighting meanwhile continued Saturday in Lebanon, where Israel has carried out deadly strikes despite a separate truce with the Iran-backed armed group. The Israeli military said it had struck dozens of Hezbollah targets across southern Lebanon following evacuation warnings for nine villages following evacuation of civilians. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported three deaths in Hezbollah, for its part, claimed several attacks targeting Israeli troops. The Israeli strikes included one in the village of Yaroun on what its military called a "religious building," which

The French Catholic charity L'Oeuvre d'Orient said the troops had "destroyed" a convent belonging to the Salvatorian Sisters, a Greek-Catholic religious order with which the charity is affiliated. Iran's economic toll in Washington, lawmakers were wrestling over whether Trump had breached a deadline to seek congressional approval for the war. Administration officials argue the ceasefire pause a 60-day clock, after which congressional authorisation would be required -- a claim disputed by opposition Democrats. In Iran, the war's economic toll is deepening, with oil exports crimped and inflation surging past 50 percent following evacuation warnings. "Everyone is trying to endure it, but... they are falling apart," a 40-year-old Amir, a Tehran resident, told an AFP reporter based outside. "We still have not seen much of the economic effects because everyone had a bit of savings. They had some gold and dollars for a rainy day. When they run out, things will change."

Strong Congressional Backing For India-US Ties Despite Differences Among Governments: Lawmakers

Washington: India-US relationship enjoys bipartisan support in the US Congress despite disagreements between the governments of the two countries over trade and tariffs, US lawmakers said here, and urged New Delhi to play a greater role in addressing global issues. Participating in the Capitol Hill Summit 2026 on Monday, Democratic Congressmen Ro Khanna and Ami Bera said India should play a larger role in addressing global issues such as the long-drawn Ukraine conflict. Senator Steve Daines, a Republican from Montana, said India was among America's most important geopolitical partners and the two countries shared strategic interests beyond trade and diplomacy. "We didn't need this kind of friction with one of the most important relations we have, and that's between the United States and India," said Daines, referring to the hiccups in ties over the issue of tariffs. Daines recalled his visit to India in January when he heard directly from the Indian leadership about the unease over the issue of tariffs, which were



addressed in a phone call between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump in February. The Summit was organised by the US-India Friendship Council, co-founded by Swadesh Chatterjee, who played a key role in garnering support among the US lawmakers for the India-US Civil Nuclear deal. Bera, a Congressman from California, admitted that disagreements over tariffs and trade had created friction between India and the US, but said that the US Congress continued to strongly support closer ties with India. "From the congressional perspective, nothing

really has changed going back three decades. Ties between the two countries had steadily expanded under successive administrations — from President Bill Clinton through George W Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump's first term and Joe Biden," he said. The Indian-origin lawmaker said India must assume greater global responsibilities as it emerges as a major world power. According to Khanna, also a Congressman from California, and Bera, India should play an important diplomatic role in helping end the war in Ukraine because of its longstanding relationship with Russia.

"You can't say you want to be a world leader, but then shrink away from responsibility," said Khanna, who is also of Indian descent. He said the US-India partnership should be rooted in democratic ideals rather than narrow geopolitical calculations. "We must, as the United States, build a multiracial democracy and work with India as a multiracial democracy," Khanna said. "My North Star is the ideals that at its best define the United States and at its best define India and should define the next generation of our relationship," he said. Congresswoman Deborah Ross said India and the United States

Putin Visits China To Reaffirm Russia Ties As Xi Also Seeks Stable US Relations After Trump Summit

Beijing: Russian President Vladimir Putin is traveling to China to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping less than a week after U.S. President Donald Trump wrapped up his own trip to Beijing. Putin is scheduled to be in China on Tuesday and Wednesday in a visit likely to be closely watched as Beijing seeks to maintain stable relations with the United States while also preserving strong ties with Russia. The Kremlin has said Putin and Xi plan to discuss economic cooperation between the two countries, but also "key international and regional issues." The visit coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship signed in 2001. "The Trump visit was about stabilizing the world's most important bilateral relationship; the Putin visit is about reassuring a long-standing strategic partner," said Wang Zichen, deputy secretary-general for the Beijing-based think tank Center for China & Globalization. "For China, these two tracks are not mutually exclusive." Putin and Xi call each other "friend" Putin last visited China in September 2025 to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tianjin, watch a military parade honoring



the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and hold talks with Xi. At the time, Xi called his counterpart an "old friend" while Putin addressed Xi as "dear friend." In April, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Beijing and met Xi, who described the bilateral relationship as "precious" in the current international context. Xi said China and Russia needed to use a stronger strategic collaboration to defend their legitimate, shared interests and safeguard the unity of Global South countries. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said over the weekend that Putin's trip also would allow Russia to receive direct updates and exchange views with China concerning its talks with the U.S. During Trump's visit, Xi described the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and China as the world's most important and said they should see each other as partners rather

than rivals. By the end of the two-day summit, the countries said they would work on a new framework to manage "a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability." Wang of the enter for China & Globalization observed, "Beijing wants stable relations with the West, continued strategic trust with Moscow, and enough diplomatic room to present itself as an unbiased major power capable of talking to all sides." China is Russia's primary trade partner. For some, Putin's visit is meant to reinforce the partnership between Russia and China that has strengthened since Russia's primary trade partner in recent years, in particular after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. China has said it is neutral in the Ukraine conflict while maintaining Russian trade ties despite economic and financial sanctions by the U.S. and Europe.

China has become Russia's top trading partner. Beijing is now the top customer for Russian oil and gas supplies and Moscow expects the war in Iran to increase the demand. China also has ignored demands from the West to stop providing high-tech components for Russia's weapons industries. Putin noted earlier this month that Moscow and Beijing have reached "a very substantial step forward in our cooperation in the oil and gas sector." "Practically all the key issues have been agreed upon," the Russian leader said. "If we succeed in finalizing these details and bringing them to a conclusion during this visit, I will be extremely pleased." Putin also hailed their bilateral relationship as a crucial, balancing force in international relations. "Interaction between such nations as China and Russia undoubtedly serves as a factor of deterrence and stability," he said. Moscow welcomes China's dialogue with the U.S. as another stabilizing element for the global economy, Putin added. "We stand only to benefit from this, from the stability and constructive engagement between the U.S. and China," he said.

Trump Says He's Called Off Iran Strike Planned For Tuesday At Request Of Gulf Allies

Washington: President Donald Trump said he is holding off on a military strike on Iran planned for Tuesday because "serious negotiations" are underway to end the war. "There seems to be a very good chance that they can work something out. If we can do that without bombing the hell out of them, I'd be very happy," Trump said at the White House on Monday evening, after first making the announcement in a social media post. Trump said he had planned "a very major attack" but put it off — "for a little while, hopefully, maybe forever." He said America's allies in the Gulf asked him to wait for two to three days because they feel they are close to a deal with Iran. Trump has been threatening for weeks that the ceasefire reached in mid-April could end if Iran did not make a deal, with shifting parameters for striking such an agreement. Over the weekend he warned, "For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them." The president has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran and then backed off. But he's also previously indicated he would hold off on military action to allow talks to continue — only to turn around and launch strikes. That's what happened at the war's outset, when he ordered strikes in late February shortly after indicating he would let talks play out. Trump said the current pause for negotiations was a "very positive development," while acknowledging there were times in the past when a deal seemed close but nothing came of it. "But this is a little bit different," he said. Trump credits Gulf allies The president, who had not previously disclosed that he was planning a strike for Tuesday, did not offer details about the planned attack but said in his social media post he had instructed the U.S. military "to be prepared to go forward with a full, large scale assault of Iran, on a moment's



notice, in the event that an acceptable Deal is not reached." Trump said he was calling off the attack at the request of allies in the Middle East, including the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Iran and allied Shiite militias in Iraq have launched drone attacks targeting the Gulf Arab states in the war. The United Arab Emirates has recently accused Iran of launching drone and missile attacks despite the ceasefire. On Sunday, a drone strike sparked a fire on the edge of the UAE's sole nuclear power plant in what authorities called an "unprovoked terrorist attack" while not assigning blame. Trump in recent days has also spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Chinese President Xi Jinping about the Iran war. Oil prices affected Trump's post quickly caused a fall in the price of oil, which had been rising on the prospect of a prolonged standoff that would keep the Strait of Hormuz effectively closed. Minutes before the president's announcement, petroleum futures had been trading at \$108.83 a barrel. His word about negotiations almost instantly shaved more than \$2 off the price, but it crept up again and ended on Monday at \$107.25 a barrel. Shortly after Trump's post, Iranian state TV called it a "retreat" based on "fear" in its broadcast ticker and on its X

account. It reported earlier that defense systems were activated late Monday on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz. It added the situation was "under control" there, the largest Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, home to about 150,000 people and a water desalination plant. Major sticking points remain Iran has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for the shipment of oil, gas, fertilizer and other petroleum products. The U.S. is blockading Iranian ports and has redirected 85 commercial vessels from mid-April through Monday, U.S. Central Command said in a social media post. Earlier Monday, Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the immediate concern of the negotiations between the U.S. and Iran was keeping the Strait of Hormuz open, but Iran's nuclear program remained a central issue. Speaking during a joint news conference with his German counterpart in Berlin, Fidan said much of Iran's enriched uranium that could potentially be used for a nuclear weapon was buried under collapsed tunnels following attacks in June that the U.S. launched with Israel. The U.S. has said it is closely monitoring any movements around the stockpile.

"At present, there isn't a situation that poses a real threat," Fidan

US: Teenage Gunmen Open Fire On San Diego Mosque, Killing 3 Men And Then Themselves

San Diego: Two teenage shooters opened fire at a San Diego mosque on Monday and killed three men — then killed themselves a few blocks away — in an attack police are investigating as a hate crime. There was no specific threat made against the Islamic Center of San Diego but authorities found evidence that the suspects engaged in "generalized hate rhetoric," San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl said. He declined to give more details, but said the "circumstances that led up to this" would come out in the days ahead. Before the attack, officers were already looking for one of the teenagers since his mother called police concerned that her son was suicidal and had run away, Wahl said. There were weapons missing from the home and the mother's vehicle was gone, he added. The search took on even more urgency as police learned that he was



dressed in camouflage and with an acquaintance — details that were unexpected for someone about to die by suicide, he said. Police began using whatever technology they could to find the 17- and 18-year-old, including automated license plate readers. The department dispatched authorities to a mall near where the car had been tracked by police, and officers alerted a school where at least one of the suspects had been a student, Wahl said. As officers continued interviewing the mother about places the teens might be, they got

reports of a shooting at the mosque. Among those killed was a mosque security guard, who police believe "played a pivotal role" in keeping the attack from being "much worse," Wahl said. "It's fair to say his actions were heroic," the chief said at a later news conference. "Undoubtedly he saved lives today." The center is the largest mosque in San Diego County and includes the Al Rashid School, which offers courses in Arabic language, Islamic studies and the Quran for students ages 5 and up, according to its website.

Police responded within four minutes of being called, Wahl said. As they arrived, gunshots rang out a few blocks away where a landscaper was shot at but uninjured. The shooters were found dead in a vehicle stopped in the middle of a road nearby, he said. Aerial TV footage showed more than a dozen children holding hands and being walked out of the parking lot of the center as it was surrounded by scores of police vehicles. The mosque is in a neighborhood of homes, apartments and strip malls with Middle Eastern restaurants and markets.

Israel Deports 2 Activists Detained For Leading An Aid Flotilla To Gaza

Tel Aviv: Israel deported two activists on Sunday after being detained for slightly over a week for leading an aid flotilla attempting to break the Israeli naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. The two, Spanish-Swedish citizen of Palestinian origin Saif Abukeshk and Brazilian citizen Thiago Avila, were among dozens of activists intercepted by the Israeli navy off the coast of Crete. Both are members of the Global Sumud Flotilla's steering committee, whose mission is to break Israel's naval blockade and bring some humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territory. The Israeli Foreign Ministry called the two activists in a post on X on Sunday "professional provocateurs," saying "Israel will not allow any breach of the lawful naval blockade on Gaza." At the time of the arrest, Israeli authorities said the two had been detained for questioning, and that Abukeshk was "suspected of affiliation with a terrorist organization" and Avila was "suspected of illegal activity," without providing evidence. No formal charges against them have been publicized. Spain and Brazil have condemned "the



kidnapping of two of their citizens in international waters by the Government of Israel" in a joint statement at the time. Their detention sparked solidarity protests in several countries. 22 boats and 175 activists were intercepted by the Israeli navy. Activists said Israeli forces stormed their vessels, smashed engines and detained some of those onboard. The incident occurred hundreds of miles (kilometers) from Gaza and Israel overnight from Wednesday to Thursday. Israeli officials said they needed to take early action against the flotilla before it reached Israeli waters because of the high number of boats involved. The flotilla's latest attempt to reach Gaza comes less than a

year after Israeli authorities foiled a previous effort by the group. That attempt involved about 50 vessels and around 500 activists, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, Nelson Mandela's grandson Mandla Mandela, and several lawmakers. Israel arrested, detained and later deported the participants, including Avila, who claimed Israeli authorities abused them while in detention. Israeli authorities denied the accusations. Israel strike kills two in Gaza. In Gaza, an Israeli strike hit a vehicle, killing at least two people, including a Hamas police officer, according to the Nasser hospital, which received the casualties. The vehicle was struck late Sunday morning in Al-Amal

neighborhood in the southern city of Khan Younis, said the civil defense, a first responders' agency operating under the Hamas-run Interior Ministry. The two killed included Col. Wessam Abdel-Hadi, who heads the police investigation department in Khan Younis, the hospital said. The Israeli military said it was reviewing the strike. The fatalities were the latest among Palestinians in the coastal enclave since an October fragile ceasefire deal attempted to halt a more than two-year war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. While the heaviest fighting has subsided, the shaky ceasefire has seen almost daily Israeli fire. Israeli forces have carried out repeated

US Extends Sanctions Waiver For Russian Oil Already At Sea

Washington: The United States has extended by a month a waiver from sanctions on Russian oil already at sea, according to an official statement. The US Department of the Treasury issued an order on Monday extending the waiver from sanctions on Russian oil stranded at sea on or before April 17 through June 17. "Effective May 18, 2026, General License No. 134B, which was dated April 17, 2026 and

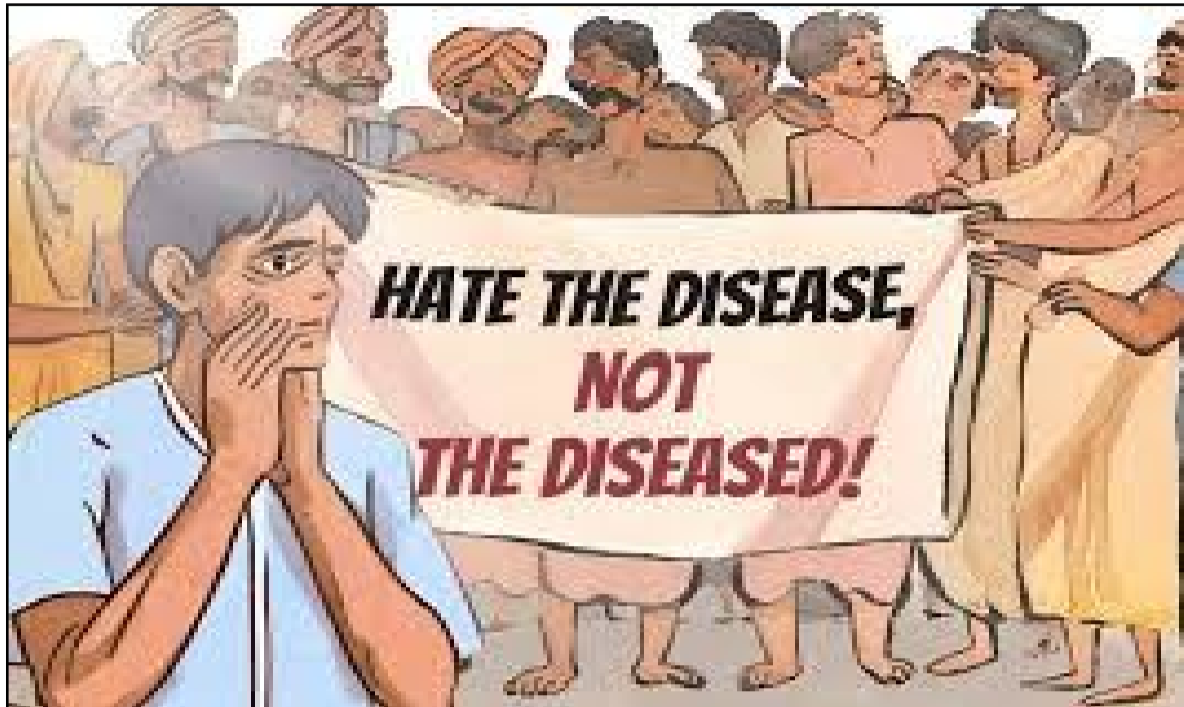


expired on May 16, 2026, is replaced and superseded in its entirety by this General License No. 134C," the order issued by the Office of

Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury said. Earlier, the US had granted an exemption from sanctions to India for buying

Russian oil for a month beginning March 5. A few days later, a similar waiver was extended to several other countries, which ended on April 11. The general license exempting India and other countries from sanctions on the purchase of Russian oil at sea was extended by a month on April 17. The general licence issued by the US on Monday does not authorize any transaction involving a person, entity or joint venture located in Iran,

Hard reality — living with HIV, dying in stigma



Living with HIV in India often unfolds very differently from the optimistic narratives that accompany the country's progress against the disease. National programmes led by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) have made significant strides in treatment and medical management, yet the lived realities of many patients remain shaped by silence, stigma, and social abandonment. A husband and wife rented a room in a private lodge far from their hometown so that the woman, who was in the terminal stages of HIV/AIDS, could spend her final months away from the scrutiny of their community. They lived there in isolation for nearly six months. She eventually died alone, and even her husband disappeared, leaving no one to witness her final moments. As a result, the police registered the case as an unnatural death, and the state assumed responsibility for her unclaimed body. This case is just the tip of the iceberg of what people living with HIV face in our society. Working closely with individuals living with HIV, both during their care and after death, has exposed us to difficult realities within the healthcare system. We have witnessed instances where seropositive individuals face subtle or overt disdain from some healthcare providers, despite the professional obligation to provide compassionate and unbiased care. They also encounter serious challenges in securing employment, and even healthcare workers living with HIV may struggle to find or retain jobs due to fear surrounding the virus. Although India enacted the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act in 2017, which explicitly prohibits discrimination in healthcare, employment, education, and housing, the reality on the ground often falls short of the protections envisioned by the law. The gap between legal protections and everyday experiences reveals the persistent stigma that continues to influence how people living with HIV are treated and the opportunities available to them.

Substantial Progress

India has made substan-

tial progress in controlling HIV/AIDS. According to the National AIDS Control Organisation and UNAIDS (2023), about 2.47 million people are living with HIV in India. Since 2010, new infections have declined by nearly 48%, while AIDS-related deaths have dropped by about 82% from their 2004 peak. These reflect the impact of national prevention programmes, expansion of antiretroviral therapy (ART), targeted interventions for high-risk groups, and strong community-based outreach. Regardless of the declining infection rate, the total number of people living with HIV continues to rise slowly because treatment allows individuals to live longer, healthier. ART coverage has reached roughly 76%, with improved viral suppression due to modern regimens such as Dolutegravir-based therapy, which has helped transform HIV into a manageable chronic condition. Healthcare systems in India still lack integrated care models capable of addressing both the physical and mental health complications associated with chronic HIV. Significant progress has also been achieved in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV through routine antenatal screening and the use of Nevirapine prophylaxis during pregnancy. Modern ATP not only prolongs life but also suppresses viral replication to undetectable levels. Scientific evidence now confirms the principle of "Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)", meaning individuals with sustained viral suppression do not transmit HIV sexually. However, as treatment improves and life expectancy increases, many People Living with HIV (PLHIV) now develop non-AIDS-defining conditions such as Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Kidney Disease, and certain cancers. These conditions may appear earlier or progress more rapidly due to chronic inflammation, long-term antiretroviral therapy, and underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities like financial and emotional strain. At the same time, mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety and sub-

stance abuse, are highly prevalent among PLHIV. Social Rejection Notwithstanding these evolving needs, healthcare systems in India still lack integrated care models capable of addressing both physical and mental health complications associated with chronic HIV. Employment discrimination remains another persistent barrier. Although the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, formally bans workplace discrimination, cases of job loss, forced disclosure, and hiring refusal continue to be reported. Healthcare workers living with HIV often face additional stigma, including unnecessary reassignment away from clinical duties, in spite of clear scientific evidence that standard precautions make occupational HIV transmission in healthcare settings extremely unlikely. Stigma remains one of the most powerful forces shaping the experience of HIV/AIDS in India. Much of this stems from a deeply rooted cultural association between HIV and sexual immorality, where the disease is often perceived as a consequence of promiscuity, infidelity, or moral wrongdoing. This moral framing has overshadowed scientific understanding of HIV transmission. Unlike other serious illnesses like TB, which causes over a thousand deaths daily in India, HIV attracts intense social judgment. As a result, many people living with HIV face rejection not only from society but also within their own families. Support Systems People living with HIV often experience isolation, which contributes to higher risks of depression, suicide, and self-harm. Women are particularly vulnerable; widows who test positive are frequently blamed for their husband's illness, expelled from marital homes, or denied custody of their children. Despite these challenges, support systems have emerged in the form of community networks, PLHIV collectives, support groups, and even HIV-positive matrimony platforms. These initiatives foster belonging, enmodels capable of addressing both the physical and mental health complications associated with chronic HIV. Significant progress has also been

achieved in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV through routine antenatal screening and the use of Nevirapine prophylaxis during pregnancy. Modern ATP not only prolongs life but also suppresses viral replication to undetectable levels. Scientific evidence now confirms the principle of "Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)", meaning individuals with sustained viral suppression do not transmit HIV sexually. However, as treatment improves and life expectancy increases, many People Living with HIV (PLHIV) now develop non-AIDS-defining conditions such as Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Kidney Disease, and certain cancers. These conditions may appear earlier or progress more rapidly due to chronic inflammation, long-term antiretroviral therapy, and underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities like financial and emotional strain. At the same time, mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety and sub-couragement treatment adherence, and help individuals navigate relationships, parenting, and employment—though they cannot fully offset the broader social exclusion many continue to face.

India's response to HIV must now move beyond simply controlling infection to rebuilding social inclusion. While legal protections exist, meaningful change must occur at three interconnected levels—within families, communities, and society at large. Addressing this requires comprehensive sex education, supportive community initiatives, holistic healthcare that links HIV care with other specialties, and workplace environments that actively show empathy, along with preventing discrimination. At the same time, HIV should no longer be seen only through the lens of viral suppression or terminal care. Families, communities, and institutions must learn to view HIV as a manageable chronic condition much like diabetes or hypertension, ensuring that no individual is made to feel alienated, and that dignity, belonging, and social acceptance remain as central to care as the medicines themselves.

BJP's Eastern surge — time for the rule of law



The political landscape of Eastern and North-eastern India has been fundamentally redrawn, and the implications are as staggering as they are sobering. The 'Lotus,' once a peripheral bloom in the humid, politically volatile soil of the East, has established a massive, seemingly immovable canopy. The 2026 Assembly elections in West Bengal and Assam represent more than just a change in administration; they signal a total metamorphosis of the region's power structures. Opinion: Electoral Roll Revision: Cleanup or calculated move? As the dust settles on the 2026 campaign trail, the new governments find themselves at a crossroads. The transition from "war mode" to "governance mode" requires shedding the very rhetoric — often dismissed as jhumlas — that brought them to power. To succeed, these administrations must now embrace the constitutional mandate of non-discrimination, fiscal responsibility, and the restoration of a state where the law, not the party, is supreme. The Rise of the saffron party in the East was not a spontaneous event but the result of a meticulously engineered campaign that attacked the systemic inertias of the Left and the Trinamool Congress (TMC). This ascent was built on a pillar of 'competitive populism'. For years, the TMC maintained its grip through a robust welfare architecture, most notably cash transfers to women. In 2026, the BJP did not attempt to dismantle this freebie culture; instead, it hijacked it. By proposing to double existing transfers to Rs 3,000 per month for all women, the saffron party neutralised the incumbent's primary emotional connection with the rural poor. In a State where public debt is nearly 39% of GSDP, this was a bold, some might say reckless, gamble that used the 'revdi' culture as a standard electoral weapon. The 2026 election will likely be remembered for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, where

nearly 9.1 million names were deleted in West Bengal alone. This 'invisible muscle power,' exercised through institutional machinery, created a tilted playing field that critics have likened to a sophisticated form of gerrymandering. When combined with a narrative centred on the spectre of the ghuspaithiya (infiltrator), the party successfully consolidated the majority vote by framing the election as a battle for 'indigenous' identity. This reached a crescendo in Bhabanipur, where victory was framed not as a collective mandate but as a victory for one community over another, claiming the mandate came specifically from Hindus. This polarising rhetoric served its purpose in winning the seat, but it left a deeply fractured society in its wake.

From the days of the polarising rhetoric will need to be dialled down significantly. The shift from candidate to Chief Minister requires a fundamental change in language. Upon being sworn in, Suwendu Adhikari said he was sokoler—now everyone's. To walk that talk, he will need to speak to all citizens of Bengal—those who voted for him and those who did not. This is not just a moral imperative, but a functional necessity for a State that has seen its social fabric stretched to the breaking point.

The Constitution demands equality before the law, and the new administration has a mandatory duty to ensure that minority communities, particularly Muslims, enjoy the same fundamental rights and access to state resources as the majority. Restoring peace and tranquillity is not merely about stopping pmore than just survival ost-poll violence; it is about dismantling the 50-year pattern where the line between party and government was dangerously blurred. Since at least 1977, West Bengal has had a unique and often destructive form of political culture. The CPI(M) made the party a parallel state, and the state an extension of

the party. This smudging of boundaries led to the systematic weakening of governance and accountability on one hand and normalised political violence on the other.

The administrations must embrace the Constitution's mandate of non-discrimination, fiscal responsibility, and the restoration of a State where the law, not the party, is supreme. The TMC under Mamata Banerjee did not dismantle these structures; it only deepened and expanded them. The BJP, first and foremost, needs to break this 50-year pattern that has eroded trust in the state. A citizen should not have to approach a party apparatchik to get the ration the government owes her. If the line continues to dissolve between the party and the government, who will check the members when violence and intimidation become part of the political arsenal? There is also a formidable economic challenge staring the new governments in the face. For long, even as its once-thriving industrial base has been hollowed out, Assam still remained industrially backward. Assam and Bengal's young have continued to migrate to other states in search of livelihoods and opportunities. It will be the Adhikari and Himanta Biswa Sarma government's task to create and expand opportunities at home, leveraging all the advantages to bring manufacturing and services back to the states. West Bengal's per capita income ranking has slipped from 11th to 16th over the last quarter-century. To move the State toward the levels of Haryana or Gujarat requires attracting massive private investment—an impossible task in a climate of social unrest or administrative partisanship. True Poriborton

If this victory remains based on "revdi" promises rather than structural development, it may not be a real and sustainable change—a true poriborton. The governments must move the States from their current economic stagnation to a higher growth trajectory, balancing welfare commitments with developmental expenditures. If the West Bengal and Assam governments decide to go ahead with their bold cash schemes, the obvious question remains: how do they plan to finance such a commitment without squeezing developmental expenditures? West Bengal is currently the second-most indebted major State in India, with total campaign outstanding liabilities estimated at 38.9 per cent of GSDP in 2026. The total outstanding debt is projected at Rs 2.06 lakh crore for Assam by March 2026. This is where the new government's real challenge begins. To succeed, they must distance themselves from electoral rhetorics—the jhumlas—and fulfil the developmental promises.

The rise of the saffron party in the East and Northeast is a testament to their ability to adapt, organise, and dominate the narrative. They have successfully tapped into a deep desire for change and a frustration with the status quo that had persisted for half a century. However, the true measure of their success will be in the quality of their governance. Can they provide a government that is non-discriminatory? Can they restore the rule of law in a region where political violence has been the norm? And can they provide an economic model that offers more than just survival throrton. The governments must move the States from their current economic stagnation to a higher growth trajectory, balancing welfare commitments with developmental expenditures. If the West Bengal and Assam governments decide to go ahead with their bold cash schemes, the obvious question remains: how do they plan to finance such a commitment without squeezing developmental expenditures? West Bengal is currently the second-most indebted major State in India, with total campaign outstanding liabilities estimated at 38.9 per cent of GSDP in 2026. The total outstanding debt is projected at Rs 2.06 lakh crore for Assam by March 2026. This is where the new government's real challenge begins. To succeed, they must distance themselves from electoral rhetorics—the jhumlas—and fulfil the developmental promises.

For the 'Lotus' to stay in bloom, it must nourish the entire garden, not just the soil that favoured its planting. The transition from a party of protest and polarisation to a party of stable, inclusive governance is the most difficult journey in politics. Whether the new leadership can complete this journey will determine the future of millions. The time for rhetoric has passed; the time for constitutional governance has begun.

Ishan Kishan, Klaasen Shine As SRH Beat CSK To Seal Playoff Berth

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Monday produced a clinical all-round performance to defeat Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in a high-scoring "Southern Derby" clash of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, chasing down 181 with six balls to spare. SRH overcame early setbacks with key contributions from Abhishek Sharma, Heinrich Klaasen and Ishan Kishan, before Smaran Ravichandran's late boundary sealed the win. The victory also confirmed SRH's qualification for the playoffs alongside Gujarat Titans, as Hyderabad successfully restricted CSK to 180/7 and then executed a composed chase under pressure. Earlier, the defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru, were the first team to qualify for the playoffs. Hyderabad opens Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma made a steady start, taking the team to 15 without loss in the first two overs. However, in the third over, the Super Kings pacer Mukesh Choudhary dismissed Travis Head for six runs. Ishan Kishan then joined Abhishek Sharma as the duo kept the scoring going, with SRH reaching 45/1 at the end of the powerplay. During the fourth delivery of the eighth over, left-arm spinner Akeal Hosenin sent back Abhishek for a battling 26 off 21 balls, leaving visitors at 57/2. After the end of the 10th over, Hyderabad reached 75/2. Heinrich Klaasen and Kishan then lifted the scoring rate with a series of well-timed boundaries, guiding SRH to 126/2 after 14 overs as they required just 55 runs from 36 balls. On the third ball of Noor Ahmad's 15th over, Sanju Samson produced sharp glovework to stomp the dangerous Klaasen, who fell for a 26-ball 47. Following the dismissal, Samson



and Klaasen were also involved in a brief verbal exchange. On the third ball of the 16th over, Ishan Kishan brought up his half-century off 37 deliveries, guiding Hyderabad to 143/3 as they needed 38 runs from 24 balls. Mukesh Choudhary then removed Nitish Reddy for 11 runs during the first ball of the 18th over, which left SRH to 153/4. During the third ball of the 19th over, Anshul Kamboj got the prized wicket of Kishan. The left-handed batter departed after playing a fantastic knock of 47-ball 70. By the time Kishan dismissed, SRH needed six runs in nine balls. On the final ball of Anshul Kamboj's over, Smaran Ravichandran struck a boundary as Sunrisers Hyderabad sealed a five-wicket win in the "Southern Derby" with six balls to spare. With the victory, SRH, along with the Gujarat Titans, secured qualification for the playoffs in the ongoing season. Earlier, a superb bowling display from Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins, along with decent spells from Sakib Hussain and Eshan Malinga, restricted the Super Kings to 180/7. Cummins led the bowling effort with three wickets, while young Sakib Hussain claimed two scalps. Eshan Malinga also made a valuable contribution with a wicket of his own. After winning the toss

well-made 32 and sending him back to the pavilion, bringing Dewald Brevis to the crease.

Cummins struck again in his next over, removing Rituraj Gaikwad, who was struggling to get going and find timing at the crease. With that breakthrough, Shivam Dube joined Dewald Brevis in the middle to steady the

innings. Brevis endured a difficult stay at the crease, scoring 15 off 21 deliveries without a single boundary to his name. His 21-ball stretch without a boundary also marked the longest such sequence by an opener in the 2026 Indian Premier League season. Above seventy strike rate by Gaikwad is the second-lowest in an innings of 20 balls faced in IPL 2026 after 70.93 by Arshin Kulkarni (LSG) vs RCB at Lucknow. The duo of Dewald Brevis and Shivam Dube steadied and carried the innings forward, guiding Chennai Super Kings to 132/4 after 15 overs. Brevis slammed boundaries on regular intervals, while Dube anchored the innings from the other end. However, Eshan Malinga in the 18th over cleaned up Brevis for 44, bringing Sharma opened up in the 8th over, taking Hinge for 16 runs with a flurry of aggressive strokes. However, Pat Cummins struck back in the very next over, dismissing the in-form Sharma for a Prashant Veer to the crease. SRH pulled back things as Hussain cleaned up Dube for 26, bringing Akeal Hosenin in the second last over. Hinge bowled a brilliant last over, conceding only 8 runs, and removed Prashant Veer to square off the home side at 180/7.

Italian Open: Novak Djokovic Suffers First-Round Exit With Shock Defeat Against Dino Prizmic

Novak Djokovic suffered a shock defeat in the first round of the Italian Open to a Croatian qualifier 18 years younger than him on Friday. Notably, he was returning to the action after staying on the sidelines for two months due to a right shoulder injury.—The 20-year-old Dino Prizmic outplayed the 24-time Grand Slam champion 2-6, 6-2, 6-4. Notably, he signed off the match with an ace on the match point. Notably, this is the first instance where Djokovic has exited from the Italian Open in the first round. The 38-year-old Djokovic has been out of action since March after losing to Jack Draper in the fourth round of the Indian Wells, California. The Serbian star had a tape on his right shoulder that was revealed when he changed shirts during the mid-game interval. Djokovic hopes to be fit for the French Open. Djokovic admitted that he is not in his best shape to compete at the highest level. "I see what



I'm missing. Late half a step. I'm not definitely where I want to be for the highest level and to compete at the highest level and to be able to get far," he stated. "Eventually, you have to play. You have to start somewhere. I wanted to start earlier, but I couldn't. The situation is as it is. You make the most out of it. I train hard. I train as much as the body allows me to. Then

how it turns out on the court, that's really unpredictable." Responding to a query around where he is in good shape to compete at the Roland Garros, Djokovic said that he hopes so. "I don't know, I hope so," he added. Djokovic reached the final of the Australian Open earlier this year but lost to Jannik Sinner in the Championship match.

The last meeting between the two players was in the 2024 Australian Open, where Djokovic won a four-setter. The Serbian told Prizmic after the recent loss that his forehand has improved and he can go very far if he stays healthy. Notably, Prizmic defeated No. 6 Ben Shelton at the Madrid Open in April.

Sebi Mulls Overhaul Of Buyback Framework; Seeks Comments

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday proposed a series of changes to the buyback framework, including the reintroduction of open market share buybacks through stock exchanges and shortening execution timelines. In a consultation paper, the regulator proposed that open market buybacks through stock exchanges should be completed within 66 working days from the date of opening of the offer, instead of the earlier framework that allowed a duration of as long as six months. Sebi said a six-month timeline, recommended by the Primary Market Advisory Committee (PMAC), appeared "relatively long" and may make buybacks less relevant due to changing market conditions. The regulator also proposed retaining the existing requirement that companies should utilise at least 40 per cent of the earmarked buyback amount during the first half of the offer period. To improve shareholder communication, Sebi suggested that companies should mandatorily send intimation regarding buyback offers through electronic mode to all shareholders as on the date of the public announcement within one working day of such announcement.



The regulator proposed doing away with the separate trading window mechanism that was earlier mandated for open market buybacks through stock exchanges. Sebi said buyback transactions could instead be executed through the normal trading mechanism, as the tax distinction between buyback investors and regular market investors and regular market investing an explicit provision to ensure that companies do not announce buybacks that may lead to breach of minimum public shareholding (MPS) norms. Further, Sebi proposed aligning the minimum interval between inserting an explicit provision to ensure that companies do not announce buybacks that may lead to breach of minimum two

and their associates during the buyback period. However, such freezing would not apply for the limited purpose of tendering shares in buybacks undertaken through the tender offer route. The regulator also proposed inserting an explicit provision to ensure that companies do not announce buybacks that may lead to breach of minimum public shareholding (MPS) norms. Further, Sebi proposed aligning the minimum interval between inserting an explicit provision to ensure that companies do not announce buybacks that may lead to breach of minimum two

buyback offers with the provisions under the Companies Act, 2013, instead of maintaining a separate timeline under buyback regulations. To promote ease-of-doing-business, Sebi suggested dispensing with the mandatory appointment of merchant bankers for buybacks. Several responsibility merchant bankers, including filing of offer and escrow-related operations, may instead be assigned to companies, stock exchanges, compliance officers and secretarial auditors. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has invited public comments on the proposals till May 29.

Gold Surges 1.83 Pc This Week Amid Persistent Tensions In Strait Of Hormuz



: Gold prices rose 1.83 per cent during the week over persistent geopolitical uncertainty and volatile crude prices. On Friday, MCX gold June futures gained 0.04 per cent while MCX silver May futures surged 1.34 per cent. Currently, gold futures stand at Rs 1,52,589, while silver futures stand at Rs 2,61,999 per kg. The price of 10 grams of 24-carat gold was at Rs 1,51,078 on Friday, up from Rs 1,48,357 seen on Monday market opening, according to data published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA). Precious metals continued to rise for four consecutive sessions as optimism over a potential US-Iran peace agreement and a softer US

dollar outweighed a stronger-than-expected US jobs report. US jobs data showed that employment rose more than forecast in April while the unemployment rate held at 4.3 per cent, underscoring resilience in the labour market and reinforcing expectations that the Federal Reserve may keep interest rates higher for longer. Central banks maintaining interest rates higher for longer could pressure non-yielding assets like gold. In international markets, Comex gold climbed about \$50 to a session high of \$4,760 per troy ounce, posting a weekly gain of nearly 1.5 per cent. Market participants said the prospect of eas-

ing regional tensions and a weaker dollar supported demand for non-yielding bullion. Gold and silver have fallen nearly 10 per cent since the US-Iran conflict began on February 28. The broader safe-haven structure remains intact, though the pace of the rally has moderated as the dollar steadies and broader risk sentiment shows tentative signs of improvement, market participants said. Despite the commodities flow disruption in the Strait of Hormuz dominating the macro narrative, markets are also entering a phase of technical consolidation following the sharp swings witnessed in recent weeks, analysts said.

Precious metals are witnessing mixed price action, with gold and silver attempting to stabilise after recent corrective pressure. West Asian tensions were rekindled on Thursday after US and Iranian forces exchanged attacks near the strait, though US officials said the ceasefire remained in place. Immediate resistance for MCX Gold is placed at Rs 1,54,000—Rs 1,55,500, and immediate support is seen near Rs 1,50,000—Rs 1,48,000, analysts said. For MCX Silver, the Rs 2,65,000 zone acts as immediate resistance, and the Rs 2,60,000—Rs 2,58,000 zone now serves as immediate support, they added.

Sobhita Dhulipala's viral comment on authenticity and self-trust wins praise online

Actress Sobhita Dhulipala's recent comment on trusting one's instincts, honouring oneself and living life with authenticity in response to a heartfelt appreciation post by Dubai-based Telugu influencer Srilata Adepalli has now gone viral. In her video, Dubai influencer Srilata spoke about powerful women with Telugu roots who are creating their own space across the world. From actress Sobhita Dhulipala to Chanel model Bhavitha Mandava, rapper Raja Kumari and beauty entrepreneur Deepica Mutyala, the post celebrated women who were confidently embracing their identity on a global stage and inspiring others along the way. But what truly caught everyone's attention was Sobhita Dhulipala's beautiful response in the comments section. Instead of a simple thank you, the actress shared a deeply personal note about trusting instincts, honouring oneself and living life with authenticity. "Lean in to your essence, no matter what. My most meaningful moments have come when I did what my instinct told me to, even when it's totally illogical or unproductive. And every single time I did something otherwise, only I know how it backfired. Honour yourself. This life is a short sail across the river, cherish the breeze and the current," Sobhita Dhulipala had commented. Her words instantly struck a chord online. Thousands praised the honesty,



warmth and calm wisdom in her message, while many called the exchange refreshing in a world filled with surface-level social media. On the work front, Sobhita Dhulipala next has director Pa Ranjith's upcoming gangster drama, 'Vettuvam', waiting for release. The film, which is being produced by Ranjith's production house Neelam Productions, has actor

Dinesh playing the lead. Apart from Dinesh, the film will also feature Arya, Kalaiyarasan, Mime Gopi, Guru Somasundaram and Shabeer Kallarakal in pivotal roles. The film has also triggered interest because of it being actress Sobhita Dhulipala's first Tamil film after her wedding. 'Vettuvam', which will talk about the sharing of power, has music by G V

Prakash. The film was in the spotlight in July last year after a stuntman died while performing a car stunt for the film. The news left the unit Well known Tamil film director Pa Ranjith's production house Neelam Productions, which is producing the film, had then said that the death of the dearly loved stunt man had sent them all into shock and heart break.

Panchayat Season 5: Release Date, Cast, Plot & What To Expect From Jitendra Kumar-Neena Gupta's Series

The wait for Panchayat Season 5 is finally over. After the emotional and dramatic ending of Season 4, the makers have officially confirmed that the next chapter of the popular rural comedy-drama is on the way. Starring Jitendra Kumar, Neena Gupta and Sanvikaa, the much-loved series will return with more village politics, emotional twists, and heartwarming moments from Phulera. The announcement was made as part of Amazon Prime Video's new Indian content slate. While the makers have not announced an exact premiere date yet, Panchayat Season 5 is expected to release sometime in 2026. Like the previous seasons, the new season will stream exclusively on Prime Video. Panchayat Season 5 Release Timeline Fans had been eagerly waiting for an update ever since Season 4 ended with several unanswered questions. Earlier this year, the makers confirmed that the new season had already gone on floors. Sharing the announcement, the team wrote that after spending six years in Phulera, the journey was far from over. Although the official



release month is still under wraps, reports suggest that viewers can expect the show to arrive in 2026. An official release date is likely to be announced closer to the premiere. Panchayat Season 5 Cast on 5 will once again feature Jitendra Kumar as Abhishek Tripathi, also known as Sachiv Ji. His journey from a confused engineering graduate to an important part of Phulera's life has become the emotional core of the series. The upcoming season is also expected to bring back the show's familiar faces, including Raghuraj Yadav, Neena Gupta, Sanvikaa, Faisal Malik, Chandan Roy, Durgesh Kumar, Sunita

Rajwar and Pankaj Jha. The series continues to be backed by The Viral Fever. The show is written by Chandan Kumar and directed by Deepak Kumar Mishra. What Happened In Panchayat Season 4? The previous season ended on an emotional note and left fans with many questions. Sachiv Ji cleared his CAT exam and started thinking seriously about his future outside Phulera. At the same time, his relationship with Rinki finally moved forward, giving fans one of the most-awaited moments of the series. Meanwhile, the village elections brought a shocking twist. Manju Devi lost the election to Kranti Devi, completely

changing the power dynamics in the village. Pradhan Ji was also left dealing with the emotional aftermath of the political drama and the attack that shook the village. What To Expect From Season 5 According to the makers, the new season will continue directly from where Season 4 ended. The story is expected to focus on the new political situation in Phulera and how it affects Sachiv Ji and the people around him. Earlier, writer Chandan Kumar had hinted that the next season would answer several major questions, including the future of Sachiv Ji and Rinki's relationship, the village politics after the

Lesser-Known Facts About The South Diva

As Sai Pallavi celebrates her 34th birthday on May 9, fans across the country are once again showering love on one of South cinema's most admired stars. Known for her natural acting, graceful dance moves, and simple personality, Sai Pallavi has created a unique place for herself in the film industry without following the usual glamour path. From being a medical student to becoming one of the most loved actresses in Indian cinema, her journey has been truly inspiring. Born on May 9, 1992, in Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, Sai Pallavi completed her schooling before pursuing medicine. She earned her MBBS degree from Tbilisi State Medical University in 2016. Even after finishing her studies and clearing the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) in 2020, she decided to follow her passion for acting instead of practising medicine. Apart from Tamil, she is also fluent in Telugu, Malayalam, English, and Georgian. Before entering films, Sai Pallavi was already familiar to television audiences through dance reality shows. As a young participant, she appeared in shows like Ungalil Yaar Adutha Prabhu Deva and Dhee. Her dancing talent later became one of her biggest strengths on screen. Sai Pallavi's life changed completely with Premam in 2015. Her role as Malar, a simple college teacher, won millions of hearts instantly. Audiences

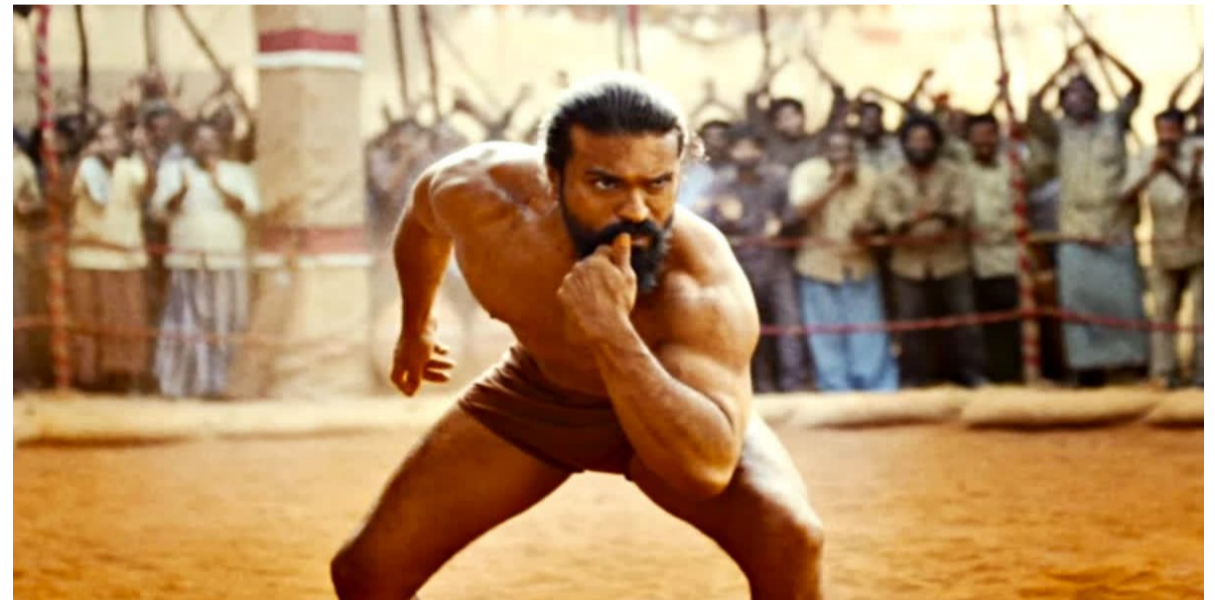


loved her expressive acting and natural beauty, while critics praised her refreshing screen presence. The film became a massive success and earned her the Filmfare Award for Best Female Debut - South. She later made a strong mark in Telugu cinema with Fidaa opposite Varun Tej. Her performance as Bhanumathi was widely appreciated and won her another Filmfare Award. Over the years, she continued to impress audiences

with films like Love Story, Virata Parvam, Gargi, Shyam Singha Roy, and Kali. One of the biggest reasons behind Sai Pallavi's popularity is her authenticity. In an industry often driven by glamour and heavy makeup, she became known for embracing her natural look both on and off the set. Now, the actress is preparing for a major new chapter in her career. Sai Pallavi is all set to make a big

Bollywood impact with Ramayana, directed by Nitesh Tiwari. She will reportedly play Sita alongside Ranbir Kapoor and Yash. She is also making headlines for Ek Din with Junaid Khan. Over the years, Sai Pallavi has won six Filmfare South awards and earned a place in Forbes India's 30 Under 30 list in 2020. But beyond the awards and success, what truly makes her special is the way she has stayed true to herself.

Ram Charan Reveals Peddi's Story, Thanks Salman And Aamir Khan For Inspiring Sports Films



South superstar Ram Charan has finally opened up about the story of his upcoming sports drama Peddi at the film's grand trailer launch event in Mumbai. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the film will show Ram Charan in a completely different avatar as a "crossover athlete" who plays not one but three different sports: cricket, wrestling and running. During the event, Ram Charan spoke about the intense physical transformation he underwent for the role. However, before talking about his preparation, the actor made sure to thank Bollywood superstars Aamir Khan and Salman Khan for inspiring films like Peddi through their sports dramas Dangal and Sultan. "First of all, thanks to Salman sir and Aamir sir for paving the path for such films with Sultan and Dangal. It gave us so much confi-

dence," Ram Charan said at the launch event. The actor further added, "Thank you, thanks to both of you for starting this journey, and we believed that this kind of film had worked in the past. And obviously, we followed the same route." Talking about the demanding process behind the film, Ram revealed that Peddi was not just physically exhausting but emotionally and spiritually challenging too. He shared that when director Buchi Babu Sana narrated the script to him, he was left speechless. "I remember at my house, he was going through the script while sitting on a carpet, reading one by one. For 2 hour 40 minutes, I had nothing to say. I knew this was going to be physically very tiring, but it's worth it for this man and the subject he has written," the actor recalled.

Ram Charan also revealed the emotional core of the film and explained that Peddi is essentially about a man trying to find his identity through sport. "This is about a man's search for his identity. Everybody needs some kind of identity to live and get through the day. This is about Peddi, who's finding his identity," he explained. The actor added that the character goes through an identity crisis before discovering his true purpose. "What leads him to become a crossover athlete and the same time, it's highly commercial," Ram said. Apart from Ram Charan, the film also stars Janhvi Kapoor, Shiva Rajkumar, Divyendu and Jagapathi Babu in important roles. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings, Peddi is scheduled to release in theatres on June 4, 2026.