

Gift Exchanges Are Normal in Diplomacy: Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad: Telangana BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Thursday hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding a gift given to his Italian counterpart, Giorgia Meloni. Speaking to ANI in Hyderabad, the senior BJP leader defended the Prime Minister's gesture, terming the exchange of gifts as a "normal activity" in diplomatic relations. In diplomatic relations, exchanging gifts is a normal activity. "I do not know why Rahul Gandhi feels that there is a controversy in gifting a toffee to the Italian PM," Rao said. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The BJP leader further emphasised that Prime Minister Modi's visit was aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and boosting trade between the two nations. He accused the Leader of



the Opposition of unnecessarily politicising a light-hearted diplomatic gesture. "Rahul Gandhi should remember that PM Modi has gone to improve diplomatic relations and trade ties. Rahul Gandhi is very irresponsible for politicising the gift given by the PM," he stated. Rao further advised the Congress leader to refrain from such remarks and adopt a more constructive approach. "We advise Rahul Gandhi to behave like a responsible Opposition," he added.

Jagan Accuses CM Naidu Of Misleading People Over Amaravati Project

Amaravati: YSRCP Supremo Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday accused Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of "misleading" people in the name of the Amaravati capital project for his "scams," despite knowing that the project was unviable as basic infrastructure alone would cost Rs 2 lakh crore. Addressing a press conference at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, the former chief minister alleged that Naidu was creating "false impressions" about the capital city project and undermining the possibility of building a permanent capital. Also Read -



AP CM Reviews Investment Proposals Worth Rs 11.47 Lakh Crore Cleared By SIPB "Despite knowing that the Rs 2 lakh crore project cannot be implemented, Naidu is creating false impressions about the capital city for his scams and cheating people," Reddy said. Alleging that claims of a self-financing capital had collapsed, the opposi-

tion leader asserted that the TDP-led coalition government had so far borrowed Rs 47,387 crore for the greenfield capital city and earmarked another Rs 9,200 crore in the budget. Also Read - AP Government Approves 25 Artistes to Nataka Academy The YSRCP chief further alleged that the Naidu-led government was creating false impressions about the capital city for his scams and cheating people," Reddy said. Alleging that claims of a self-financing capital had collapsed, the opposi-

Harish Rao calls for reunification of Telangana forces during US visit



Hyderabad: BRS deputy leader T Harish Rao called for the reunification of Telangana forces, emphasising that those who fought for statehood with commitment and sacrifice must always be remembered and honoured. Speaking at a gathering of Telangana supporters in New York during his personal visit to the United States, Harish Rao said the spirit of the movement should continue to unite people across the world. The event was hosted at the residence of NRI Lakshman Enugu in Long Island and attended by Telangana natives from New York and New Jersey. Recalling the role of the diaspora during the statehood agitation, Harish Rao said many NRIs extended financial and moral support, despite living abroad. He

said several activists and supporters worked tirelessly with the sole objective of achieving a separate State. He urged Telangana proponents in the US to unite and support the BRS, which was the only party fighting for Telangana's interests. He appreciated NRI businessman Dr Paila Malla Reddy for supporting Telugu people in the United States by providing employment and livelihood opportunities, and lauded host Lakshman Enugu for organising cultural events such as "Dhoom Dhaam" in the US and promoting Telangana artists, poets, and leaders abroad. During the interaction, several NRIs reportedly expressed concern over the alleged injustice faced by some movement activists and conveyed dissatisfaction among sections of supporters.

Revanth Seeks Special Parliament Session on Women's Reservation Bill

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy here on Thursday demanded that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi immediately convene a special session of Parliament and introduce Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha. "India Alliance will extend full support for the 33 percent Women's Reservation Bill. If you want to do politics under the guise of women's reservation, then it will not be accepted," he said. He was speaking after paying tributes in connection with the death anniversary of Rajiv



Gandhi. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 According to the Chief Minister, the People's government is moving for-

ward in the state with the inspiration of former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi, who introduced technology to the country. Rajiv Gandhi is a great visionary who always strove for the welfare of women. Rajiv Gandhi ensured the development of the country with simplified policies. UPA former Chairperson Sonia Gandhi's bold decision made the dream of Telangana a reality. Telangana has an inextricable relationship with the Gandhi family and it is more than a family relationship, he added.

Revanth claims only 20 per cent of paddy to be procured

Hyderabad: Even as farmers are staging protests and burning paddy sacks over the inordinate delay in procurement, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy claimed that the government had procured 80 per cent of the paddy and that only 20 per cent remained to be procured. He maintained that nearly 45 lakh metric tonnes had been procured and that only 20 per cent of the procurement was pending. The remaining stocks would also be procured, he said. Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, the Chief Minister also charged that a few rice mill managements had colluded with the opposition party BRS. After



stocks were sent from procurement centres to the mills, a few BRS leaders did not allow the unloading of stocks, he alleged. "As the trucks were held up at the mills, there was a shortage of trucks for shifting the stocks from other procurement centres," Revanth Reddy said. He found fault with the main opposition BRS for failing to support the

farmers. The farming community had suffered losses due to unseasonal rains. Rather than supporting the farmers, the BRS leaders were taking selfies at the damaged stocks, he charged. "A few farmers lost their lives. The BRS has heavy funds and it should have offered Rs. 2 lakh or Rs. 5 lakh as financial assistance to farmers. After taking photos with the families of deceased farmers, the BRS leaders are politicising the issue," Revanth Reddy alleged, charging that the BRS leaders were behaving without any humanity.

Drawing a comparison between the past and current procurement process, the Chief Minister maintained that the Civil Supplies Corporation used to deposit money into farmers' accounts after six months. Now, the State government was depositing the mon in a shortage of personnel, he said. "There are a few issues and we are concerned. The government is trying to expedite things and the opposition should give some suggestions. They should be ashamed of politicising farmers' deaths," Revanth Reddy said. Regarding the POCSO case, the Chief Minister dismissed claims that the accused had surrendered before the police.

"Our police arrested him. In case he had surrendered, the family would have handed over the accused to the police. Is APPA Junction your home or my home? Bandi Bagareeth was caught by the police when they were checking vehicles at APPA Junction," Revanth Reddy said. "Neither the court nor the people have found fault with the government's action. KTR worked as a judge and RS Praveen Kumar as IO. He investigated the case and delivered judgment," Revanth Reddy shared. They also shared the victim's photo and her parents' pictures, he said, asking, "Is KTR a human band her parents' pictures, or is he behaving like a sadist by politicising the issue?"

AP CM Reviews Investment Proposals Worth Rs 11.47 Lakh Crore Cleared By SIPB



Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu chaired a review meeting at the Secretariat on Thursday on investments and the progress of industrial projects. Along with a committee of ministers, the Chief Minister reviewed the implementation of agreements signed during the Visa khatnam Partnership Summit and projects cleared by the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB). The CM said 282 projects worth Rs 11.47 lakh crore have been approved through the SIPB so far. Nara Lokesh, Chairman of the Ministerial Com-

mittee on Job Creation, informed him that 114 of these projects have already been taken up. Also Government approved 25 Artistes to Nataka Academy. Lokesh explained that 114 of these projects have already reached the grounding stage, and through them, employment opportunities can be generated on a massive scale. The Chief Minister emphasised that measures must be taken to ensure that the agreements reached with investors are not confined merely to paper but are effectively implemented. CM Chandrababu direct-

US Team Likely To Visit India Next Month For Trade Talks

New Delhi: The US team is likely to visit India next month for trade talks with their counterparts here, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday. The Indian side visited Washington, DC, in April for an in-person round of meetings with their US counterparts to finalise the details of the interim pact and take forward the negotiations under the broader bilateral trade agreement (BTA). Also Read - Reserve Bank of India To Transfer Record Dividend To Treasury, Economists Say When asked if the US chief negotiator for the BTA will accompany US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Goyal said "he's not coming with him, but there is some plan for them to come next month". Rubio will undertake a four-day visit to India beginning May 23 to further cooperation in the fields of trade, defence and energy. This will be his first visit to India. India and the US issued a joint state-



ment on February 7 finalising a framework for an interim trade agreement. However, a US Supreme Court ruling struck down all reciprocal tariffs, which had served the Trade Act for 150 days from February 24 this year. It also opened two probes under Section 301 of the Act against key exporters for their excess production capacities and labour standards. Under Section 122, tariffs of up to 15 per cent can be imposed for a maximum period of 150 days. However, under Section 301, there is no cap on the duties that can be levied by the US if investigations conclude that measures adopted by trading partners are harming US interests. India has submitted its response to both the invest each other," he said. Also Read - Zuckerberg Says Meta Unquantum computing equipment, and medical devices. "We can provide scale in terms of 1.4 billion aspirational Indians, a rising middle class, rising incomes, growing economy. And therefore, it does not surprise me that in the middle of such a global crisis, we had the Ukraine war already on, we landed up in the West Asia crisis, and we are all witness to the way the world is going through very tumultuous times," he said.

Swachhata Drive Held at Historic Gunfoundry Monument

Hyderabad: The Department of Heritage Telangana, under the leadership of Prof. Arjun Rao Kuthadi, Director of Heritage Telangana, conducted a Swachhata Drive Programme at the historic Gunfoundry Monument, Hyderabad, in association with INTACH Hyderabad Chapter. The programme witnessed active participation from officials, heritage activists, volunteers, and members of the public with the objective of creating awareness regarding the cleanliness, preservation, and protection of heritage monuments. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The drive included cleaning activities around the monument premises and sensitiza-



tion on maintaining heritage sites in a clean and sustainable manner. During the programme, Dr. P. Nagsaravari, Deputy Director (Museum), explained the importance of monuments and emphasized the respon-

sibility of citizens in safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations. He highlighted the need for regular conservation efforts and public participation in preserving monuments and heritage structures. The Swachhata drive was

successfully conducted with enthusiastic participation from all stakeholders and contributed towards promoting awareness on heritage conservation and cleanliness, Prof Arjun Rao Kuthadi, Director, Department of Heritage Telangana.

Lokesh to Inaugurate 600 MW Solar Projects in Kadapa

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh is scheduled to inaugurate SAEL Limited's 600 MW solar power projects in Kadapa district on Friday, marking one of the state's largest renewable energy developments. The minister said that the projects, SAEL Solar MHP1 and SAEL Solar MHP2 have been commissioned in a record 11 months with an investment of nearly Rs 3,000 crore. "Lokesh is scheduled to inaugurate SAEL Solar MHP1 and SAEL Solar MHP2 in Kadapa district tomorrow," an official release said. Also Read - APSDMA Warns of Severe Heatwave Conditions across Andhra Pradesh The integrated solar facility spans over 2,400 acres and is expected to strengthen Andhra Pradesh's position as an emerging clean energy investment destination. The two 300 MW projects, operated by SAEL Solar MHP1 private limited and SAEL Solar MHP2 private limited, com-



menced commercial operations earlier this year, with MHP1 commissioned on January 30 and MHP2 on March 13. The projects deploy more than 12 lakh TOPC on bifacial solar modules, most of which were assembled at SAEL's manufacturing facilities in Punjab and Rajasthan, the release said. Also Read - Youth Murdered, Body Dumped In Borewell In Prakasam Power generated from the facility will be supplied to the national grid under a 25-year power purchase agreement with solar energy corporation of India. The projects are expected to avoid nearly

11 lakh tonne of carbon dioxide emissions annually while generating local economic activity. During the construction phase, over 1,000 workers were engaged directly and indirectly, with nearly 80 per cent drawn from local communities, it said. Also Read - Clay Being Mined Indiscriminately from Pond in Konaseema's Pedapalla Village The projects are expected to provide long-term economic opportunities to farmers through structured land lease arrangements extending close to 25 years, it said. The solar projects were executed under SAEL's

integrated EPC and operations and maintenance framework with support from the Andhra Pradesh government and local authorities in facilitating land use, approvals and grid connectivity. The inauguration assumes significance as Andhra Pradesh advances implementation of its Integrated Clean Energy Policy 2024, under which the state aims to attract investments worth Rs 10 lakh crore across renewable energy, storage, green hydrogen, transmission and manufacturing sectors by 2029. Lokesh is expected to highlight the state's vision of positioning Andhra Pradesh as a renewable energy hub through faster industrial execution and investor-friendly governance. The company is also expected to explore additional investments in Andhra Pradesh in renewable energy and agriculture waste-to-energy projects.

NIA Arrests Kolkata Man For Allegedly Spying For Pakistani Intelligence For 'Pak Citizenship'

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a man from Kolkata for allegedly sharing sensitive security-related information with Pakistani intelligence officers (PIOs) in exchange for money and promises of Pakistani citizenship. The agency said that the Pakistan-backed spy was involved in clandestinely passing confidential security-related information to PIOs as part of an anti-India terror conspiracy. A resident of Kolkata, Zafar Riaz alias Rizvi, had a Look Out Circular issued against him and proceedings were also underway to declare him a Proclaimed Offender when he was taken into custody. He has been arrested under various sections of BNS, Official Secrets Act and UA(P) Act. The accused was married to a Pakistani national, with his children also being citizens of Pakistan, officials said. NIA investiga-



tions have revealed that Zafar was once convicted earlier in an espionage case under IPC and Official Secrets Act, and he had been travelling frequently between India and Pakistan since 2005. During one such visit, he was contacted and cultivated by PIOs to carry out espionage activities in India in lieu of financial inducements and the promise of Pakistani citizenship, NIA said in a state-

ment. The agency further said that to facilitate other espionage and terror operatives, the accused had provided One-Time Passwords (OTPs) of Indian telecom mobile numbers to a PIO to help him activate WhatsApp accounts. The alleged intelligence officer had used these accounts to secretly communicate with one Motiram Jat, also an accused in the instant case. Jat was also

engaged in conveying secret security-related information to the PIO, NIA stated. Following Zafar's arrest, NIA has intelligence officer had used these accounts to secretly communicate with one Motiram Jat, also an accused in the instant case. Jat was also intensified its investigation to trace others involved in the espionage racket and unravel the larger conspiracy behind the plot.

Hyderabad: Massive fire guts shops at Pathergatti complex; losses estimated in crores

Hyderabad: Property worth lakhs of rupees was gutted down when a major fire broke out at a shopping complex at Pathergatti on Thursday morning. No casualties were reported in the incident. According to officials, the fire started in the SYJ Shopping Complex on Pathergatti main road around 8.30 am and a local watchman, Shaik Wali, alerted the shopkeepers and the fire department. By 9.30 pm, five fire tenders reached the spot and given the magnitude of the fire, more fire tenders were directed to the spot. In all 10 fire tenders with around 70 fire personnel and supported by water tankers from the nearby water reservoir, battled the fire for



around five hours and brought it under control. Mohd Faisal Younus, owner of Younus Hosiery, said on Wednesday that the power department had removed the supply connection to a few shops that have not paid the power bills. "The fire started in the electrical panel board located next to my shop on the first floor. From there, it

spread to my shop and other establishments. I had stocked goods for Bakrid festival, due to fire, I have suffered a loss of around Rs 2 crore," said Faisal. On the top floor, two banks - State Bank of India and Canara Bank are located. The Deputy Commissioner of Police (Charminar), Khare Kiran Prabhakar, said: "The fire spread to three

shops, there was no major damage in the banks and a diagnostic centre." In the bank, some property was reportedly damaged, while there was more damage on the bank located above the Younus Hosiery store. District Fire Office Hyderabad, T Venkanna, said, "The cause of the fire is not known. Our priority was to control the fire from spreading to the complex housing scores of shops. The reasons will be ascertained later." The traffic on the road was diverted for a few hours to facilitate the firefighting operations. AIMIM Charminar MLA, Mir Zulfeqar Ali and local revenue officials visited the spot.

BRS to launch padayatra next month over Palamuru-Rangareddy project delay

Hyderabad: Opposing the Congress government's alleged delay in completing the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, the BRS will undertake a padayatra in June to demand its immediate completion. The party will soon announce the exact dates for the foot march from Narlapur to Uddandapur to highlight the Congress government's alleged neglect of irrigation projects in the Palamuru region. "The government woke up to this issue only after we announced our agitation. For two-and-a-half years, it has done nothing except hold review meetings, and the latest review meeting did not even have irrigation officials present," former Minister V Srinivas Goud said. Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Thursday, Srinivas Goud said the Narlapur and Yedula reservoirs were nearly 95 per cent complete and canal works were 98 per cent finished under the previous BRS regime. However, he said the Congress government cancelled tenders after assuming power and delayed completion of the project. He demanded that fresh ten-



ders be issued immediately to complete the project within six months. Targeting Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the former Minister said Telangana's irrigation interests were being compromised. He objected to the appointment of former Andhra Pradesh Special Chief Secretary Adityanath Das as irrigation advisor to Telangana, calling it detrimental to Telangana's interests. He objected to the appointment of former Andhra Pradesh Special Chief Secretary Adityanath Das as irrigation advisor to Telangana, calling it detrimental to Telangana's interests. He alleged that linking approvals for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project with the proposed Godavari-Kaveri

river-linking project amounted to a betrayal of Telangana. He criticised the Centre and the Andhra Pradesh government, accusing them of acting against Telangana's interests. He also slammed BJP and Congress MPs for said Telangana's irrigation interests were being compromised. He objected to the appointment of former Andhra Pradesh Special Chief Secretary Adityanath Das as irrigation advisor to Telangana, calling it detrimental to Telangana's water interests. He alleged that linking approvals for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project with the proposed Godavari-Kaveri

ing approvals for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project with the proposed Godavari-Kaveri river-linking project, accusing them of acting against Telangana's interests. He also slammed BJP and Congress MPs for said Telangana's irrigation interests were being compromised. He objected to the appointment of former Andhra Pradesh Special Chief Secretary Adityanath Das as irrigation advisor to Telangana, calling it detrimental to Telangana's water interests. He alleged that linking approvals for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project with the proposed Godavari-Kaveri

Food Safety Raids Expose Major Hygiene Violations at Nagole Eateries

Hyderabad: As part of the statewide food safety inspections, gross food safety and hygiene violations of serious public health concern were detected by Telangana Food Safety officials at two eateries - Urban Monk Fine Baking and Cyber Pearl Brewing Pvt. Ltd. (Meld House) on Nagole Main Road. Violations included pest infestation, expired and mislabeled food products, improper food storage, suspected repeated use of cooking oil, and poor sanitary conditions. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Similarly, during inspections in Karimnagar, serious violations were detected at Ganesh Bangalore



Bakery, Subhash Nagar, Mancherla Chowrasta. Officials said 750 damaged, foul-smelling and housefly-infested eggs were found and 20 kg cakes suspected to be prepared using them were also discarded on the spot. They said they

discarded the suspected reused oil and expired and spoiled food articles on the spot. They lifted samples and sent them for analysis. Necessary action is being initiated against the food business operators' unsamples and sent them to the

Food Safety and Standards Act. In a public advisory, officials asked consumers to purchase food only from hygienic licensed establishments and report unsafe food practices to food safety authorities.

Delhi-NCR Transport Sector Faces Uncertainty Amid EV Push And BS-4 Restrictions

New Delhi: The transport sector, especially in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), is currently going through a major phase of transition and uncertainty. Amid the ongoing agitation and protest calls by transporters in Delhi-NCR, discussions around converting commercial vehicles, particularly heavy trucks, into Electric Vehicles (EVs) have intensified. Meetings between the Ministry of Heavy Industries and transporters are reportedly taking place regularly, with the primary objective of persuading transport operators to shift their fleets to electric vehicles. However, experts say the ground reality is far more complex than it appears. Former Deputy Commissioner of the Delhi Department and transport expert Anil Chhikara spoke to ETV Bharat and highlighted several technical and practical concerns regarding the issue. According to



Chhikara, transporters across the country are already struggling with constant policy transitions, first BS-3, then BS-4, followed by BS-6, and now increasing pressure to vehicles. Chhikara said the biggest issue is the appar-

ent lack of policy coordination between the Ministry of Road Transport and the Ministry of Heavy Industries. According to him, the Heavy Industries Ministry is facing global pressure over why India's truck sec-

tor has not yet adopted electric vehicles on a large scale. However, he argued and economic conditions cannot be compared directly with those of developed countries. Can Electric Commercial Vehicles Succeed?

On whether electric commercial vehicles can succeed in India, Chhikara said they certainly can, but only if the government first develops strong infrastructure. He cited the example of Delhi's CNG transition. When diesel buses were initially ordered to switch to CNG, people faced severe difficulties because there were few CNG stations. However, once the CNG infrastructure improved around 2005-06, vehicle owners voluntarily converted their vehicles without depending on government subsidies. He said, "If world-class EV charging stations are developed along national highways and major transport routes, there may not even be a need for subsidies," he said.

Madhya Pradesh: One Tiger Death Every 4 Days Leaves Wildlife Experts Worried

Bhopal: In Madhya Pradesh, projects aimed at wildlife conservation and rehabilitation are being continuously advanced. Over the past 15 years, the state has also witnessed a rapid increase in its tiger population. While the forests of Madhya Pradesh are estimated to harbour around 1,000 tigers, the recent surge in reports of tiger deaths has become a cause for deep concern among wildlife experts. In the first 135 days of 2026, the state has lost 32 tigers. This translates to the death of one tiger every four days, the highest tiger mortality rate in the state's history. Already, to curb tiger deaths in the state's reserve forests, a control room is being established at the Forest Department headquarters, to monitor all tiger reserves in the state. Samita Rajoura, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) of the Forest Department's Wildlife Wing, said the control room to monitor and manage incidents occurring within forest areas is modeled after police control rooms, and will serve as a central hub for monitoring events, including res-



cue operations. One Tiger Dying Every 4 Days The first tiger death of 2026 was recorded at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. With the exception of deaths caused by the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) infection at Kanha Tiger Reserve in May, the majority of the tiger deaths have been due to territorial fights. B a n d h a v g a r h National Park currently accounts for the highest number of tiger deaths in the country. This is attributed to the fact that the tiger population within the forest area has exceeded its carrying capacity. Consequently, the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has of tigers. Cases of now sought expert advice from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), based in Dehradun. Recently, Subharanjan Sen, the Head of the Forest

Department, requested the WII to conduct an assessment of the tiger carrying capacity within designated forest areas and to develop a scientific methodology for this purpose, with the aim of preventing tiger deaths resulting from mutual conflicts. Tiger deaths in Madhya Pradesh (ETV Bharat) Most Deaths Caused by Mutual Conflicts An analistemper Virus spread in Kanha, resulting in the deaths of five tigers. "He added, "Villagers are laying live electric wires across agricultural fields next to forests, leading to the deaths of tigers. Cases of poaching have also come to light. Therefore, there is an urgent need to significantly strengthen the surveillance mechanism to ensure the effective conservation of tigers."

Delhi-NCR Transport Strike From May 21 May Hit Essential Supplies, Traffic Movement

New Delhi: The proposed three-day transport strike by transporters on May 21, 22, and 23 may affect traffic movement and the supply of essential goods, such as milk, medicines, fruits, and vegetables, across Delhi and the entire National Capital Region (NCR). More than 68 transport unions and associations from Delhi-NCR, under the leadership of the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC), are set to participate in the agitation. Transport organisations said the protest is being held against policies of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), courts and the Delhi government, which they described as anti-transporter and impractical. What Are The Issues Of Transport Unions? According to the transport unions, the steep hike in the Environmental Compensation Charge (ECC), the proposed ban on the entry of BS-IV



commercial vehicles into Delhi, the imposition of ECC even on BS-VI vehicles, and toll plaza-related arrangements are putting a heavy financial burden on the transport business. The organisations alleged that, contrary to the Supreme Court's intent, ECC is now being

imposed on almost all goods vehicles entering Delhi, whereas earlier vehicles carrying essential commodities were exempted. Livelihood Concerns Raised AIMTC national president Harish Sabharwal claimed that around 95 lakh truck drivers, 50 lakh bus, taxi and

maxi cab operators, and over 3,500 transport organisations across the country are associated with the sector. Nerly 20 crore people are directly or indirectly dependent on the transport industry for their livelihood. Transporters said recent government decisions are affecting the livelihood of millions. A key meeting on these issues was held in Faridabad on May 15, during which several transport organisations and representatives extended their support to the agitation. Leaders present at the meeting had warned that if the government does not reconsider the anti-transporter policies, an indefinite transport strike may also be called in the future. Key Demands Of Transport Unions Rajendra Kapoor, presi-

dent of the All India Motors and Goods Transport Association, said the key demands include withdrawal of the increased ECC imposed on all goods vehicles entering Delhi, complete exemption of BS-VI vehicles from ECC, exemption for vehicles carrying essential goods, and roll-back of the proposed ban on BS-IV commercial vehicles from November 1, 2026. During the strike on May 21, 22, and 23, the supply of fruits, vegetables, milk, medicines and other essential commodities in Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad and Faridabad may be affected. Additionally, the movement of heavy vehicles on major roads and at border points could be disrupted, impacting traffic management across the NCR region. Commuters and residents may also face inconvenience due to the strike.

APSDMA Warns of Severe Heatwave Conditions across Andhra

Amaravati: The APSDMA on Thursday warned that severe heatwave conditions and high temperatures are likely to continue across several parts of Andhra Pradesh over the next four days and advised people to avoid travel during peak daytime hours. According to Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Man agement Authority (APSDMA), the highest temperature of this summer season so far was recorded at 47.6 degrees Celsius in Piduguralla of Palnadu district, while temperatures crossed 45 degrees Celsius in 11 districts. evels in the state and similar conditions are likely to continue for the next four days. People should postpone travel as much as possible between 11 am and 4 pm," APSDMA Managing Director Prakhari Jain said in an official release. He said temperatures between 45 degrees Celsius and 47 degrees Celsius are likely on Thursday in parts of Parvathipuram M anyam, Alluri Sitharama Raju, Pol avaram, Anakapalli, Kaki nada, Konase ma, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru, Krishna, NTR, Guntur, Bapatla, Palnadu and Prakasam districts. Also Read - Youth Murdered, Body Dumped In Borwell In Pr akasam Temperatures between 44 degrees Celsius and 45 degrees Celsius are expected in parts of Vizianagaram and Markapuram districts, while temperatures between 40 degrees



Celsius and 43 degrees Celsius are likely in Sr ikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Nellore, Kurnool, Nandyal, Anantapur, Sri Sathya Sai, Kadapa, Annamayya, Chittoor and Tirupati districts. Further, Jain said that severe heatwave conditions are likely in 74 mandals, while heatwave conditions are expected in 232 mandals today and severe heatwave conditions are likely in 24 mandals and heatwave conditions in 270 mandals the following day. Also Read - Clay Being Mined Indiscriminately in Kolluru of Bapatla district and Torragudipadu of NTR district, 45.7 degrees in Allipalli of Eluru district and 45.6 degrees in Kondapi of Prakasam district. Temperatures also touched 45.5 degrees Celsius in Chityala of East Godavari district. The APSDMA advised people to remain alert, avoid heat exposure, and consume sufficient water, lemon water, buttermilk and coconut water. Elderly people, pregnant women, lactating mothers and people suffering from heart ailments, diabetes and blood pressure conditions were advised to take extra precautions, he added.

GST; Subsidy on LPG Cylinders On Wednesday, a maximum temperature of 47.6 degrees Celsius was recorded in Piduguralla of Palnadu district, followed by 46.1 degrees Celsius each in Kankipadu of Krishna district and Nandanamarella of Markapuram district. Other temperatures recorded included 46 degrees Celsius in Tanuku of West Godavari district, 45.9 degrees in Kolluru of Bapatla district and Torragudipadu of NTR district, 45.7 degrees in Allipalli of Eluru district and 45.6 degrees in Kondapi of Prakasam district. Temperatures also touched 45.5 degrees Celsius in Chityala of East Godavari district. The APSDMA advised people to remain alert, avoid heat exposure, and consume sufficient water, lemon water, buttermilk and coconut water. Elderly people, pregnant women, lactating mothers and people suffering from heart ailments, diabetes and blood pressure conditions were advised to take extra precautions, he added.

'This Is New India, We Won't Tolerate Nuclear Blackmail: Rajnath Singh In Seoul

New Delhi: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said India "will not tolerate any form of nuclear blackmail", asserting that the country's commitment to peace should not be mistaken for weakness. Addressing members of the Indian diaspora in Seoul during his three-day visit to South Korea, Singh underscored the rise in India's global stature due to unprecedented progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Around 12-13 years ago, India was perceived as a weak nation, but, today, due to the transformation the country has undergone in the last decade, the world carefully listens to what we have to say. We're now emerging as a global power that offers solutions to the world. Whether internal or external security, our policy has undergone a fundamental transformation; it has become assertive, bold, consistent, and decisive," he said. Referring to Operation Sindoor, he said



it reflected India's transformation into a strong, confident and capable nation. "The operation was proof that India will not tolerate terrorism in any form. As a responsible nuclear power, we firmly adhere to a policy of No First Use," Singh said. "However, there are times when people mistake our restraint and commitment to peace for weakness. While India remains committed to its 'No First Use' policy, it will not tolerate any form of nuclear blackmail. This is new India," he added, in an apparent message to Pakistan.

The Defence Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to achieve self-reliance in defence manufacturing, stating that the all-time high figures of approx. Rs 1.54 lakh crore worth of defence production and nearly Rs 40,000 crore worth of defence exports in Financial Year 2025-26 are results of persistent efforts. He added that defence exports are poised to reach Rs 50,000 crore within the next 1-2 years, while defence production is projected to rise to Rs 1.75 lakh crore in the next couple of months.

Earlier in the day, India and South Korea resolved to widen defence cooperation into emerging technology and joint production. Both the nations are looking to build on the K-9 Vajra artillery programme model in other defence sectors amid growing regional security tensions. Talks in this regard were held between Defence Minister Singh and Minister of National Defence, Republic of Korea (RoK) Ahn Gyu-back in Seoul. The two Ministers reviewed the entire spectrum of defence cooperation and discussed ways to further expand collaboration in areas such as industry, production, maritime security, emerging technologies, military exchanges, logistics and regional security. Both sides acknowledged the growing convergence between India's Act East Policy and RoK's regional strategic vision, reiterating their commitment to strengthening defence ties in line with the shared objectives of maintaining

a free, open, inclusive and rule-based Indo-Pacific. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were inked in key areas of defence cooperation, reflecting the expanding scope and depth of the bilateral partnership. Agreements were exchanged on promoting cooperation in the field of Defence Cyber; training between India's National Defence College and Korea National Defence University; and UN Peacekeeping Cooperation, making the partnership stronger and multidimensional. Singh also met Defence Acquisition Program Administration, Republic of Korea Lee Yong-chul, with both leaders agreeing to harness the symbiotic efforts to create avenues for joint development, joint production and joint exports. A roadmap to unlock the potential of the India-Korea Defence Innovation Accelerator Ecosystem (KIND-X) to synergise the innovation ecosystems of the two countries was discussed.

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



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 brick-work. 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.

PM Modi To Visit Norway Today For Third India-Nordic Summit, Bilateral Engagements

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will arrive in Norway on Monday to participate in the 3rd India-Nordic Summit and hold bilateral engagements with Norwegian leaders. The visit marks PM Modi's first trip to Norway and the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in 43 years. During the visit, he is scheduled to call on King Harald V and Queen Sonja, besides holding bilateral talks with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store. Prime Minister will also address the India-Norway Business and Research Summit along with the Norwegian Prime Minister.



According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the visit will provide an opportunity to review the progress made in India-Norway relations and explore avenues to further strengthen them, with a focus on trade and investment, capitalising on the India - EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as on clean & green tech and blue economy. "The visit will also be an opportunity to

induce momentum in bilateral trade worth around USD 2.73 billion (2024), and investments Government Pension Fund (GPF) of close to USD 28 billion in the Indian capital market," the MEA stated. The 3rd India-Nordic Summit will take place in Oslo on May 19, 2026. PM Modi will be joined by the Prime Minister of Norway, Jonas Gahr Store; Prime Minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen; Prime Minister of Finland, Petteri Orpo; Prime Minister of Iceland, Ms. Kristrun Frostadottir; and Prime Minister of Sweden, Ulf Kristersson for the

Summit. The Summit will build upon the two previous Summits held in Stockholm in April 2018 and in Copenhagen in May 2022, and will impart a more strategic dimension to India's relationship with the Nordic countries, especially in technology and innovation; green transition and renewable energy; sustainability; blue economy; defence; space and the Arctic. "The visit will also provide an impetus to India's bilateral trade (USD 19 billion in 2024) and investment ties with Nordic countries as well as help build resilient supply chains following the India-EU FTA and India-EFTA TEPA," the MEA stated.

20.47 % Turnout In 1st Two Hours As Voting Underway For Repoll In Bengal's Falta

Kolkata: During a completely peaceful repolling for the Falta Assembly constituency in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Thursday, voter turnout reached 20.47 per cent in the first two hours, up to 9 a.m. There were no reports of violence, tension, or electoral malpractices at any of the 285 polling booths across Falta. After Trinamool Congress candidate Jahangir Khan announced his withdrawal from the contest last week, the party's polling agents were absent from all polling booths. Not a single temporary camp office of the former ruling party could be seen anywhere in the constituency. The main party office, once associated with Khan, whose influence previously dominated the Falta region, remained shuttered and locked. Even the Trinamool Congress candidate was not available at his residence in the Srirampur area in Falta. However, the agents of other candidates of the major political parties, namely the Bharatiya Janata Party, CPI(M) and Congress were present at all 285



polling booths. The temporary camp offices of these parties were also seen operating in different parts of Falta with the Election Commission of India (ECI)-stipulated number of party workers. However, despite his announcement of withdrawal from the contest, Khan's name appeared on the EVM pads, making his announcement merely symbolic. Long queues of voters were witnessed in front of the polling booth since the beginning of the repolling at 7 a.m. The scorching summer heat could not dampen the

enthusiasm of the voters. Many voters claimed that the last time they were able to cast their votes was in the 2011 West Bengal Assembly elections, which marked the end of the 34-year Left Front regime and the beginning of the 15-year Trinamool Congress regime. "My entire family has been traditionally the ECI," a voter told inamool Congress supporters. But even after that, we were not allowed to cast our votes in any of the elections after 2011. Jahangir trusted no one except his own confidant follow-

ers. We could not even vote on April 29, when the polls here were held in the second phase of the two-phase West Bengal Assembly elections. But this time we are voting without fear, thanks to the security arrangements made by the ECI," a voter told media persons standing in the queue. A total of 35 companies of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) have been deployed for repolling, which is significantly high for a single Assembly constituency. (With inputs from agencies).

Your Memories Will Always Remain: PM Modi, Congress Leaders Remember Rajiv Gandhi On His Death Anniversary

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday led the nation in paying tributes to former PM Rajiv Gandhi on his 35th death anniversary. "Tributes to former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi Ji on his death anniversary," Modi said in a post on X. Top Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge also paid tributes to Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary and recalled the various initiatives undertaken by him for the country's progress. Gandhi was born on August 20, 1944, in Mumbai and was assassinated in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu on May 21, 1991. Besides members of the Gandhi family, many former chief ministers and union ministers paid their tributes to Rajiv Gandhi at his memorial Veer Bhumi here. Paying tribute, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said his father's teachings and values will always remain with him. "Papa, I will fully shoulder the responsibility of realising the dream of a skilled, prosperous, and strong India that you envisioned," Rahul Gandhi said in a post on X. "Your teachings, your values, and your memories will always remain with me," he said. After paying floral tributes to the former prime



minister, Congress chief Kharge recalled Rajiv Gandhi's words: "India is an old country but a young nation. I dream of India - strong, independent, self-reliant and in the front rank of the nations of the world, in the service of mankind". In a post on X, Kharge said, "On his martyrdom day, we pay our deepest respects to Former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna Rajiv Gandhi, a remarkable son of India who inspired hope and aspiration in millions across the nation." With vision, courage, and a deep belief in India's future, he laid the foundations for the country's journey into the twenty-first century, Kharge recalled. "His transformative initiatives included lowering the voting age to eighteen, empowering local self-governance through Panchayati Raj,

ushering in the telecom and information technology revolution, advancing computerisation, securing important peace accords, launching the Universal Immunisation Programme, and introducing a forward-looking education policy centred on inclusive learning." His legacy continues to shape modern India and remains a source of inspiration for generations," the Congress chief said in a post on X. Kharge said Rajiv Gandhi played a historic and visionary role in laying the foundation of modern India in the 21st century. He undertook numerous transformative initiatives to strengthen women's empowerment, social participation, and national unity, he said, adding his efforts to

bring stability to the country through peace and dialogue will always be remembered. "His vision was not limited to the present but was about shaping the India of future generations," Kharge noted. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and K C Venugopal, former chief ministers Bhopinder Singh Hooda and Ashok Gehlot, besides several former union ministers, were present at his memorial Veer Bhumi. Several Congress leaders also remembered Rajiv Gandhi as the architect of modern India. Rajiv Gandhi was born on August 20, 1944, in Mumbai and was assassinated in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu on May 21, 1991. He served as India's prime minister from October 31, 1984, to December 2, 1989.

Vijay-led TVK Expands Cabinet, 23 New Ministers Inducted; Congress Returns To Ministry After Decades



Chennai: The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)-led government in Tamil Nadu carried out its first major cabinet expansion, inducting 23 new ministers into the Council of Ministers in Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's Cabinet. -Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly inducted ministers at a ceremony held at the Secretariat in Chennai on Thursday. Of the 23 new inductees, 21 are from the ruling TVK, while two belong to the Congress party, marking the Congress' return to Tamil Nadu Cabinet after 59 years. Congress MLA S Rajesh Kumar from Killiyoor and P Viswanathan from Melur were among those sworn in as ministers.

Among the newly inducted are Srinath (Thoothukudi), Kamali S (Avinashi), C (Kumarapalayam), R V (Kancheepuram), Vinoth (Kumbakonam), Rajeev (Thiruvadanai), B Rajkumar (Cuddalore), V Gandhiraj (Arak kon am), Mathan Raja P (Ot tapidaram), Jega desh wari K (Raja palayam), and M Vijay Balaji Oth ers include Logesh Tamilselvan D, Vijay Tamilan Parthiban A, Ramesh, Kumar R, Then narasu K, V Sampath Kumar, Mohamed Farvas J, D Sarathku mar, N M The expansion comes arie Wilson and Vignesh K. However, despite intense political speculation over the past few days, no representatives from alliance parties such as the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi

(VCK) or the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) have been included in the present . The newly inducted ministers include several first-time MLAs and younger faces, indicating the government's attempt to project a mix of regional representation and generational expansion comes days after Vijay, president of TVK, took oath as Chief Minister on The expansion comes May 10 he initial ministry was complThe expansion comes eted on May 16, several major departments - including Agriculture, Forests, Revenue, Housing, Cooperatives and MSME - had remained without dedicated ministers, triggering speculation about an imminent . Political observers are now closely watching the allocation of portfolios and whether allies like the VCK and IUML may be accommodated in a future Cabinet reshuffle The Cabinet expansion is being viewed as a significant step in consolidating the newly formed TVK government following its victory in the recently-concluded Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

the allocation of portfolios and whether allies ber Cabinet. While portfolio allocation for the initial ministry was completed on May 16, several major departments - including Agriculture, Forests, Revenue, Housing, Cooperatives and MSME - had remained without dedicated ministers, triggering speculation about an imminent . Political observers are now closely watching the allocation of portfolios and whether allies like the VCK and IUML may be accommodated in a future Cabinet reshuffle The Cabinet expansion is being viewed as a significant step in consolidating the newly formed TVK government following its victory in the recently-concluded Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

India Slams Pakistan At UNSC, Says States Sponsoring Terrorism Must Be Held Accountable

New Delhi: India on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on Pakistan at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), accusing it of sponsoring cross-border terrorism, targeting civilians and violating international humanitarian law. Speaking at the annual UNSC Open Debate in New York on "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict", India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Harish Parvathaneni, said India remains "deeply concerned about the persistent threat posed by cross-border terrorism." "India has been a victim of such form of terrorism for decades. States that sponsor, shelter or support terrorism must be held accountable," he said. Parvathaneni asserted that terrorism in all its forms has been one of the gravest threats to civilians worldwide and said no cause or grievance can justify deliberate attacks against civilians. India Slams Pakistan At UNSC, Says States Sponsoring Terrorism Must Be Held Accountable (X/@IndiaUNNewYork) India also reiterated its commitment to the UN Charter and said protecting civilians during armed conflict remains central to maintaining international peace and security. Referring to the UN Secretary-General's report, the Indian envoy noted that more than 37,000 civilian deaths were recorded across 20 armed conflicts in 2025, even though it marked the first decline after three consecutive years of rising casualties. "Continued civilian casualties, displacement,



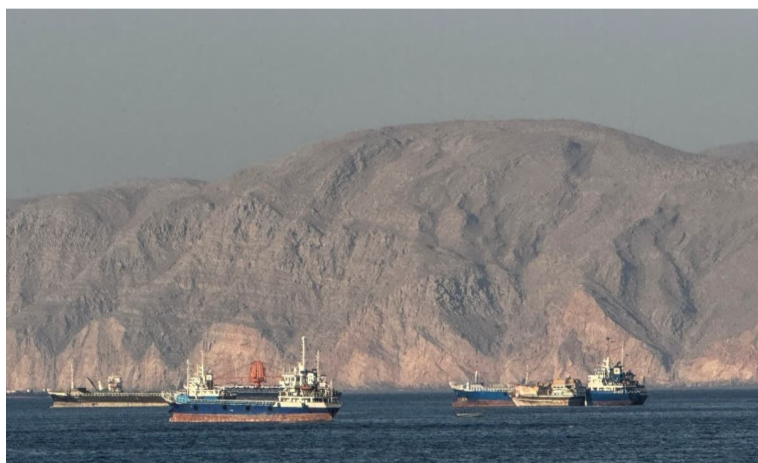
destruction of critical infrastructure and attacks on hospitals, schools, medical personnel and humanitarian workers remain deeply concerning," he said. Calling for zero tolerance to the loss of civilian lives, Parvathaneni said parties involved in armed conflicts must ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access while respecting international humanitarian law. He also raised concerns over the increasing use of missiles, bombs, drones and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, in populated urban areas. "The growing trend of use of drones to deploy explosive weapons in urban areas is especially concerning," he said, adding that safeguards must be put in place to prevent misuse and unintended harm to civilians. Slamming Pakistan, Parvathaneni said, "It is ironic that Pakistan, with its long-tainted record of genocidal acts, has chosen to refer to issues that are strictly internal to India." Citing findings of

the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), he alleged that Pakistani military forces were responsible for a large number of civilian deaths and injuries in Afghanistan due to cross-border armed violence. "The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has reported that in the first three months of 2026, 750 civilian deaths and injuries were documented in Afghanistan as a result of cross-border armed violence perpetrated by Pakistani military forces, most of which occurred due to air strikes," he said. According to Parvathaneni, UNAMA attributed 94 out of 95 incidents of civilian casualties to Pakistani security forces. Referring to an alleged strike in Kabul earlier this year, the Indian envoy said, "The world has not forgotten that it was during the holy month of Ramadan in March this year, at a time of peace, reflection, and mercy, that Pakistan conducted a barbaric airstrike on the Omid

Addiction Treatment Hospital in Kabul." "According to UNAMA, this cowardly and unconscionable act of violence claimed the lives of 269 civilians and injured a further 122 in a facility which can by no means be justified as a military target," he added. Parvathaneni further alleged that the strikes took place after tarawih prayers, when patients were leaving the mosque. "It is hypocritical to espouse high principles of international law while targeting innocent civilians in the dark," he said. The Indian envoy also referred to displacement caused by violence in Afghanistan and said UNAMA had assessed that over 94,000 people were displaced due to cross-border armed violence against Afghan civilians. Drawing a historical reference, Parvathaneni said Pakistan's actions reflects "repeated attempts over decades to externalize internal failures through increasingly desperate acts of violence both within and beyond its borders".

US Military Boards Iranian-Flagged Oil Tanker Suspected Of Trying To Breach Blockade

Washington: The U.S. military said Wednesday that it boarded an Iranian-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman that was suspected of trying to violate the American blockade, the latest action by the Trump administration to try to push Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. But President Donald Trump is facing his own pressure at home for shipping to resume through the vital corridor off Iran's coast. Fellow Republicans in Congress are battling political headwinds ahead of November's midterm elections as gasoline prices skyrocket and global energy markets chum. Meanwhile, the Senate on Tuesday advanced legislation seeking to force Trump to withdraw from the Iran war, with a growing number of Republicans defying the president in the 50-47 vote. U.S. Central Command said on social media that the M/T Celestial Sea was searched and redirected after being suspected of trying to head to an Iranian port. It's at least the fifth commercial vessel to be boarded since the Trump administration imposed the blockade on Iranian shipping in mid-April, several days into a ceasefire, to pressure Tehran into opening the strait and accepting a deal to end the war. The military boarded the tanker after Trump said Monday he had called off renewed military strikes on Iran in an effort to make progress in negotiations to end the war. Trump said he had planned "a very major attack" for Tuesday



but put it off, saying America's allies in the Gulf asked him to wait for two to three days because they feel they are close to a deal. Trump has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran and then backed off. Before the U.S. blockade, Tehran had allowed some ships perceived as friendly to pass while charging considerable fees, leading to accusations it is holding the global economy hostage. The U.S. military recently said that 1,550 vessels, from 87 countries, are currently stranded in the Persian Gulf. Nearly three months since the war began with U.S. and Israeli airstrikes on Feb. 28, Iran maintains a chokehold on the strait, while the U.S. military has enforced its blockade on Iran's ports as well as Iranian-linked ships that are far away from the Middle East. Last month U.S. forces boarded an oil tanker previ-

ously sanctioned for smuggling Iranian crude oil in the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean. A couple days later, the U.S. seized another tanker associated with smuggling Iranian oil in the Indian Ocean between Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In early May, Trump said the U.S. military would begin to "guide" stranded ships from the Iran-gripped strait. The next day, he announced that the effort to protect ships was paused to see if an agreement could be reached. Days later, U.S. forces fired on and disabled two Iranian oil tankers after exchanging fire with Iranian forces in the Strait of Hormuz. The U.S. military said the tankers were trying to breach the blockade. The day before, the military said it thwarted Iranian attacks on three Navy ships and struck Iranian military facilities in response.

Disgraceful Display: Israeli Minister Ben Gvir Sparks Outcry Over Video Of Bound Flotilla Activists

Ashdod: Israel's far-right national security minister posted a video on Wednesday showing detained activists from a Gaza-bound flotilla kneeling with their hands tied and foreheads on the ground, sparking international condemnation. The video, shared on X by firebrand minister Itamar Ben Gvir, was published after Israeli forces intercepted the flotilla's vessels at sea and began detaining hundreds of foreign activists at the southern port of Ashdod. The video drew swift international uproar and Ben Gvir was criticised by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Gideon Saar. Captioned "Welcome to Israel", the footage shows dozens of activists forced to kneel with their hands tied and foreheads on the ground. At some points, the Israeli national anthem can be heard playing in the background. The footage also shows Ben Gvir heckling and waving an Israeli flag among the detained activists. Ben Gvir drew the ire of Netanyahu, who said the minister's conduct with



the activists was "not in line with Israel's values and norms", adding that authorities would deport the activists "as soon as possible". US ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee denounced what he said were the national security minister's "despicable actions". "Universal outrage & condemnation from every high-ranking Israeli official... for despicable actions by Ben Gvir. Flotilla was stupid stunt, but Ben Gvir betrayed dignity of his nation," Huckabee wrote on X. European

Commissioner Hadja Lahbib also criticised Ben Gvir, saying on X that "no one should be punished for defending humanity" while Belgium and France summoned the Israeli ambassadors in their capitals over what Paris called his "unacceptable actions". Around 50 vessels under the Global Sumud Flotilla set sail from Turkey last week in the latest attempt by activists to breach Israel's blockade of Gaza, after Israeli forces intercepted a previous convoy last month.

Israeli authorities had said 430 activists aboard the flotilla were en route to Israel, while the Adalah rights group said some had already arrived at Ashdod port and were being held there. Disgraceful display/Israel's foreign minister Saar said Ben Gvir had "knowingly caused harm to our State in this disgraceful display -- and not for the first time". Ben Gvir hit back, saying: "I am proud to be the minister in charge of the organisations that today against those supporters of terror."

One Indian Among Four Killed In Ukrainian Drone Strikes On Russia

New Delhi: An Indian worker was killed and three others injured in a drone attack in the Moscow region, the Indian embassy said Sunday. One of Ukraine's largest drone strikes on Russia killed at least four people, including three near Moscow, and wounded a dozen others, AP reported, citing local authorities. Debris fell on Russia's largest airport without causing damage, it added. The incident comes amid escalating hostilities between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine carried out overnight attacks targeting installations in Moscow. "One Indian worker has lost his life and three others have been injured in a drone attack in (the) Moscow



region earlier today. Embassy officials have visited the location and met the injured workers in the hospital," the Indian Embassy in Russia said on X. "The Embassy connotes the loss of life and is working with the company management and local authorities to provide necessary assis-

tance to the workers," it said, even though it did not disclose the identities of the deceased or the injured persons. Russia and Ukraine have stepped up long-range drone and missile attacks in recent months, even as diplomatic efforts to find a negotiated settlement to the more than three-year-old

conflict have continued. 8 wounded in Russian drone strikes on Ukraine Russia attacked Ukraine with 287 drones overnight into Sunday, 279 of which were shot down or jammed, the Ukrainian air force reported. The strikes wounded 8 people in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region:

India's Approach To Migration Grounded In Dignity, Respect For Rights: MoS Kirti

United Nations: India's approach to migration remains people-centric and grounded in dignity, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said, underlining that mobility will remain an integral feature of a dynamic global economy. "India's approach to migration governance is holistic and pragmatic. It is driven by coordinated institutional efforts and broad societal engagement," Singh said here Tuesday. He emphasised that "welfare and protection of our people" remains central to India's approach. "We have strengthened mechanisms to support migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, through initiatives such as the Indian Community Welfare Fund and the MADAD portal," he said. "Our responsive consular services also provide timely assis-



tance, legal, financial, and insurance coverage to our nationals overseas," he said. Singh, who arrived here Sunday, is leading the Indian delegation for the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), being held under the auspices of the UN General Assembly from May 4-8. He addressed a round table at the UN headquarters on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In a post on X, Singh said that at the round table, he outlined measures taken by India

to facilitate safe and regular migration through leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure, strengthening consular services, concluding migration and mobility agreements, while upskilling, training and providing pre-departure training of the country's skilled labour. "Highlighted that our approach to migration remains people-centric - grounded in dignity, inclusion, and respect for rights," he said. India's experience underscores the importance of leveraging technology, strengthening

partnerships, and adopting a holistic lifecycle approach to migration governance, Singh said in his remarks. "We are also aware that challenges remain, especially when it comes to strengthening social protection, addressing vulnerabilities, and improving data systems," he said. Singh stressed that India recognises that mobility will be a part of an increasingly interconnected and dynamic global economy. India's policies remain closely aligned with the objectives and principles envisaged in the Global Compact, while evolving in response to emerging global dynamics. "With the objective that migration should be a choice, supported by opportunity and dignity, we have invested in inclusive growth, livelihood and financial inclusion," he said.

HCA launches sweeping measures for league and player development

The Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) annual league season will start from May 12, featuring the A-Division and B-Division T20 Championship, according to HCA Secretary M Jeevan Reddy. "Detailed schedules, team registrations and playing conditions will be communicated to all affiliated units well in advance to ensure smooth conduct of the league," he said on Tuesday. The HCA Secretary also informed that a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) committee will be constituted shortly to ensure a safe and inclusive



environment for all stakeholders. The committee will comprise members as mandated under the POSH Act, 2013, and will establish a strictly confidential and sensitive mechanism for reporting and addressing complaints, ensuring that no com-

plaintainant faces retaliation or bias. Reddy added that the HCA Academy will undergo comprehensive revamping to enhance player development, infrastructure and training standards. The revamped Academy will focus on structured age-group programs, qualified coaching staff, modern training equipment and regular assessment systems to identify and nurture talent at the

grassroots level. "The whole objective is to build elite-level cricketers through scientific training, provide year-round coaching and performance programmes, and establish Hyderabad as a high-performance cricket hub," the HCA official said. "These initiatives reflect the commitment of the Apex Council to promote transparency, professionalism and the overall growth of cricket in Hyderabad," he added. "A de redressal process to protect the identity and interests of the complainant," Reddy explained.

Irani Cup from October 1, Ranji in two-phased format

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is pleased to announce the schedule for the Indian Domestic Season 2026-27, which will feature 1,788 matches across age groups and formats in men's and women's cricket during the course of the season. The season will feature tournaments across Senior, Under-23, Under-19 and Under-16 categories in men's cricket, along with an extensive calendar across Senior, Under-23, Under-19 and Under-15 women's competitions. The domestic season will commence with the prestigious Duleep Trophy from 23rd August 2026, marking the beginning of another extensive and highly competitive calendar that continues to elevate the standards of domestic cricket in India. The 2026-27 domestic season reflects the BCCI's continued commitment to building a strong and competitive domestic structure while ensuring a balanced progression across formats and categories.



The red-ball segment of the season will begin with the Duleep Trophy featuring six zonal teams, followed by the Irani Cup from 1st October. The Ranji Trophy and the Col. C.K. Nayudu Trophy will continue to be played in a two-phase format, ensuring adequate recovery time for players while continuing to prioritise multi-day cricket in the domestic structure. The Ranji Trophy Elite Group will feature 32 teams across four groups, while the Plate Group will comprise six teams. The upcoming season

will witness the reinstatement of the Col. C.K. Nayudu Trophy Winners vs Rest of India fixture, scheduled from 1st to 4th October 2026. The match returns to the domestic calendar to provide an enhanced competitive platform for emerging U23 cricketers. As part of the BCCI's continued efforts to align domestic cricket with the evolving demands of the modern game, the Men's U23 State A Trophy and the Vizzy Trophy have been converted from One Day competitions to T20 tournaments. In another significant move, the

knockout stages of the Cooch Behar Trophy (Elite Group) will be played at Bengaluru and Mysuru. The move aims to ensure greater competitive balance for teams across all regions, particularly during the January knockout window when weather conditions can vary considerably. Additionally, the Vijay Merchant Trophy (Under-16) has been advanced in the domestic calendar and will now be played from November to January, allowing for improved scheduling and player preparation.

Aida Thimmaiah battles sprained ankle to retain lead at IGU Maharashtra Golf Championship

A brave Aida Thimmaiah played with a sprained ankle en route to a gritty one-over 66 to stay ahead of the field on the second day of the IGU Maharashtra Ladies & Junior Girls Golf Championship at the Willingdon Club in Mumbai on Wednesday. The 12-year-old took her two-day aggregate to even-par 130 for a one-shot lead over Yogya Bhalla, who also shot an identical 66. Janneya A Dasannnee, competing for honours in the Ladies category, returned an even-par 65 score to sit in third place, three strokes further back. The highlight of the day was Smira Bhambri's one-under 64, but the Haryana girl was seven shots off the pace in tied sixth spot. Aida hurt her left ankle on the way to the 13th tee box and played most of the round on painkillers. The Coorg girl, who started on the back nine, was a trifle

streaky with her putting, and her ball-striking wasn't as sharp as she would have hoped for. In the struggle, Aida held her own, mixing two birdies with three bogeys. She birdied the third and ninth holes, while dropping shots on the second (three-putt), fourth and 14th holes (missed a 15-foot putt). Uttar Pradesh's Vidushi Singh submitted a card of five-over 70 to vault to the top in Category 'C' (11-12 years) with a two-day total of 16-over 146. Karnataka's Aashna Amogha (78) slipped to the second spot at 19-over 149. Leading scores (after 36 holes, Combined Ladies, Category 'A' (15-17) & 'B' (13-14): 130: Aida Thimmaiah (Kar, 64, 66); 131: Yogya Bhalla (Del, 65, 66); 134: Janneya A Dasannnee (Guj, 69, 65); 135: Ayesha Gupta (Del, 66, 69); 136: Ceerat Kang (Har, 69, 67); 137: Smira Bhambri (Har, 73, 64),



Guntas Kaur Sandhu (Chd, 71, 66), Rabab Kahlon (Pun, 68, 69), Mehak Lohan (Har, 67, 70). Category 'C' (11-12): 146: Vidushi Singh (UP, 76, 70); 149: Aashna Amogha (Kar, 71, 78); 150: Nandini Rathee (Har, 72, 78); 151: Gairat Kaur Kahlon (77, 74); 154: Aaliyah Kalra (Har, 71, 83).

FDI Easing Under FEMA For Foreign Companies

The decision to ease foreign direct investment norms for overseas companies with up to 10 per cent stake in Chinese companies will be notified soon under the FEMA law, a senior government official said on Thursday. After that, the changes will come into effect. In March, the Union Cabinet approved amendments in the press note (PN) 3 of 2020 under which foreign companies having a Chinese shareholding of up to 10 per cent will be eligible to invest in India under the automatic route across sectors. However, the relaxed FDI rules will not apply to entities registered in China/Hong Kong or other countries sharing land borders with India. The government has also decided that FDI proposals in specified sectors/activities of manufacturing in capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot-wafer or any other sector/activity added by the committee of secretaries headed by the Cabinet Secretary will be processed within 60 days. Though the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has notified these changes, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) has not yet notified them. "The DEA will have to issue the notification under FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act). It will be notified very soon. It requires a lot of fine-tuning," DPIIT Joint Secretary Jai Prakash Shivhare told reporters here. He added that the department is working to bring during April-February 2025-26 against USD 959 million in the full fiscal year of 2024-25, the media, DPIIT Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia said the investment (FDI) is likely to reach USD 90 billion in the full 2025-26 fiscal. He said that reform measures, free trade agreements and fast-growing economic growth are helping the country to attract healthy investments. The depart-



ment also informed that Invest India, the national investment Promotion and facilitation agency, has facilitated the grounding of 60 projects worth over USD 6.1 billion during 2025-26. These investments span 14 states and are estimated to generate more than 31,000 potential jobs. About 42 per cent of the total grounded investment value originates from European nations. Continued participation from the United States, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and other key source markets affirms broad-based international confidence in India's regulatory environment and manufacturing capabilities. Emerging source nations such as Brazil, New Zealand, and Canada indicate diversi-

fication in the country's investment base. "India's investment momentum is a direct outcome of policy clarity, institutional commitment, and the trust global investors place in our systems," Bhatia said. Invest India MD and CEO Nivruti Rai said chemicals, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and food processing sectors account for about 65 per cent of grounded investments, driven by high-value projects. The agency, she said, key emerging sectors such as electronics system design and manufacturing, aerospace and defence, and auto/EV have recorded significant activity. She added that the agency is focusing on 11 countries for attracting greater inflows.

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Gold, silver prices fall over 1 pc amid US rate concerns and global tensions



Gold and silver prices declined sharply on Wednesday, with both precious metals falling over 1 per cent amid rising concerns over higher US interest rates. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5) declined as much as 0.7 per cent or Rs 1,121 to hit an intraday low of Rs 1,57,959 as of 11:17 am. The yellow metal was trading at Rs 1,58,369, down 0.45 per cent or Rs 711. It touched an intraday high of Rs 1,60,378, rising 0.81 per cent or Rs 1,298, according to the exchange. Meanwhile, silver futures (July 3) also witnessed selling pressure, slipping 1.21 per cent, or Rs 3,269, to Rs 2,66,850, its intraday low so far. The white metal was trading at Rs 2,68,970, down 0.43 per cent or Rs 1,149. It recorded an intraday high of Rs 2,69,605, lower by 0.19 per cent or Rs 514. Earlier in the day, gold and silver opened on the MCX at Rs 1,58,974 and Rs 2,67,230, respectively. In

the international market as well, precious metals were trading lower. COMEX gold declined 0.49 per cent to \$4,462 per ounce, while COMEX silver slipped 0.17 per cent to \$73.868 per ounce. According to commodity market experts, gold prices remained under pressure as investors assessed rising inflation risks and the possibility of higher US interest rates. They noted that geopolitical tensions also continued to weigh on sentiment after US President Donald Trump warned that Washington could resume strikes on Iran within "two or three days" if Tehran failed to accept Washington's peace terms. The ongoing conflict has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, pushing crude oil prices higher and intensifying global inflationary pressures. Gold and silver prices fell over 1 per cent on Wednesday amid concerns that Washington could that Washington

could over higher US interest rates and global geopolitical tensions. Domestic MCX trading reflected sharp intraday volatility, while international prices also weakened on inflation fears and policy uncertainty. Analysts added that rising inflation concerns have reduced expectations of US Federal Reserve rate cut. According to commodity market experts, gold prices remained under pressure as investors assessed rising inflation risks and the possibility of higher US interest rates. They noted that geopolitical tensions also continued to weigh on sentiment after US President Donald Trump warned that Washington could resume strikes on Iran within "two or three days" if Tehran failed to accept Washington's peace terms. The ongoing conflict has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, pushing crude oil prices higher and intensifying global inflationary pressures. Gold and silver prices n Wednesday, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty trading in negative territory during early trade.

intensifying global inflationary pressures. Gold and silver prices fell over 1 per cent on Wednesday amid cots while increasing speculation around possible rate hikes later this year. For silver, experts said the metal has additionally erased recent gains that were supported by optimism around AI-linked stocks and rising demand from data-centre infrastructure expansion. Meanwhile, domestic stock markets opened lower after US President Donald Trump warned that Washington could resume strikes on Iran within "two or three days" if Tehran failed to accept Washington's peace terms. The ongoing conflict has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, pushing crude oil prices higher and intensifying global inflationary pressures. Gold and silver prices n Wednesday, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty trading in negative territory during early trade.

Nayanthara-Vignesh Shivan's Vatican vacation has a 'Melodi' twist

Nayanthara is presently enjoying a fun family vacation with her director husband Vignesh Shivan and their two sons- Ulagam and Uyir in the Vatican City, Rome. It is the same city where Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni on Wednesday morning. The highlight was PM Modi gifting a packet of Melody toffee to Meloni, which went viral, breaking the internet. Coming back to Nayanthara, she shared some romantic pictures with her husband Vignesh on her official Instagram handle.

In one of the photos, the lovebirds were seen walking the streets of the Vatican hand-in-hand. Vatican City, despite being located within the city of Rome, is an independent sovereign state. It serves as the administrative centre of the Catholic Church.

One could also see Vignesh with his arms around his ladylove in one of the clicks. In some of the other snaps, Nayanthara and Vignesh were lovingly holding their little ones in their arms, along with giving them a peck on the lips. "Us from our favourite city... The VATICAN CITY... Surrounded by pure love & divine blessings (sic)," the 'Jawan' actress wrote the caption. Nayanthara looked as beautiful as ever in a stylish black dress,



while Vignesh kept it casual in cargo pants and a shirt, with a white t-shirt underneath. For those who do not know, Nayanthara and Vignesh reportedly fell for one another on the sets of the 2015 Tamil film, "Naanum Rowdy Dhaan". After being in a relationship for many

years, the lovebirds finally tied the knot in a traditional ceremony on June 9, 2022, in Mahabalipuram. The dreamy nuptials were attended by some of the biggest names from the industry, including Shah

Rukh Khan, Rajinikanth, AR Rahman, Suriya, Vijay Sethupathi, and Atlee, to name just a few. Later, on September 22, 2022, the couple entered the next chapter of their lives as they welcomed twin boys, Uyir RudroNeel N Shivan and Ulag Daiwik N Shivan, via surrogacy.

Main Vaapas Aaunga Trailer: Diljit, Sharvari And Vedang Bring Alive A Painful Partition-Era Love Story



The trailer of Main Vaapas Aaunga has been unveiled by the makers, and it promises an emotional story filled with love, loss and memories from the time of Partition. Directed by Imtiaz Ali, the film stars Diljit Dosanjh, Sharvari, Vedang Raina and Naseeruddin Shah in important roles.

Unlike commercial dramas, the trailer focuses on emotions and relationships. It tells the story of a love that could never find closure and continued to live on through generations. The film appears to blend romance with painful memories of separation during India's Partition. The trailer opens with Naseeruddin Shah's elderly character sharing

moments from his past. As his story unfolds, the audience is taken back in time to a younger phase of his life, where Vedang Raina and Sharvari play lovers torn apart by circumstances. Diljit Dosanjh's character seems to become deeply involved in this forgotten chapter while trying to understand the emotions attached to it.

The film moves between two timelines, showing how the past continues to affect people even trailer suggests that Main Vaapas Aaunga is not only a romantic film but also a story about longing, identity and the memories people carry throughout their lives. Imtiaz Ali appears to have returned to the kind of emotional storytelling

that audiences loved in his earlier films. The trailer avoids heavy action or dramatic twists and instead depends on heartfelt moments, meaningful dialogues and silence-filled scenes. The visuals carry a soft vintage look, adding to the old-world romance shown in the film. Talking about the story, Imtiaz Ali said the film is inspired by emotions and memories linked to Partition.

"Main Vaapas Aaunga is a personal story of love and longing which remained in someone's heart for 78 years after the partition of the country," the filmmaker shared. Music also plays a major role in the film. The movie marks the reunion of Imtiaz Ali

with music composer A. R. Rahman and lyricist Irshad Kamil. The trio earlier created memorable albums for films like Rockstar, Tamasha and Highway. The songs released from Main Vaapas Aaunga have already received appreciation online, and the trailer further highlights the emotional depth brought in by the music and background score. Several scenes in the trailer rely heavily on melodies and expressions rather than dialogue. Backed by Applause Entertainment, Birla Studios and Window Seat Films, the film is scheduled to arrive in cinemas on June 12, 2026. The music has been released under Tips Music.

Sidharth Malhotra gives major fitness goals with latest workout session



Actor Sidharth Malhotra decided to shell some much-needed motivation for all the fitness junkies out there through his latest social media post.

On Wednesday, the 'Shershaah' actor took to his official Instagram handle and provided a glimpse of his latest session at the gym. Sidharth was seen using gymnastic rings to work on those toned biceps. Later, he even performed some push-ups as part of his core strengthening routine.

"Muscle & hustle (Bicep emoji) #SidFit," Sidharth captioned the post. The 'Kapoor & Sons' actor even added the "Victory Lap" song by British record producer Fred Again as the

background score. Sidharth keeps on providing such inspiring peeks of his fitness sessions on social media. Back in April, the 'Hasee Toh Phasee' actor posted another video of himself sweating it out in the gym. He was seen working on his upper body with the help of gymnastic rings. Revaling his fitness mantra, Sidharth added the text, "No shortcuts. Just work". Sid's feed is also full of some adorable family

moments. During Mother's Day this year, Sidharth cooked special pancakes for his wife, Kiara Advani. Marking her first Mother's Day after embracing parenthood, Kiara took to her

official handle and shared a picture of their daughter Saraayah's t-shirt that read, "It's my mom's 1st Mother's Day (PS: I'm her gift)". Her post further included a long note, saying, "We take our celebrations very seriously! This year was extra special being my first, the husband decided to surprise me with his background score. Sidharth keeps on providing such inspiring peeks of his fitness sessions on social media.

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Kriti Kharbanda leads 'Melody' meme fest from Bollywood



After Prime Minister Narendra Modi revived the widely popular "#Melodi" moment by gifting a packet of "Melody", a chewy toffee, to his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni, Bollywood actress Kriti Kharbanda joined the light-hearted meme fest on social media with a cheeky caption. Kriti shared a string of pictures of herself dressed in earthy hues of brown, replicating the tones of the chewy toffee, which is filled with caramel. She wrote in the caption section: "Yeh melody itni chocolatey kyun hai." The "Melodi" phenomenon is a portmanteau combining the names of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Giorgia Meloni. It has frequently been used by social media users to

highlight their light-hearted interactions at global platforms, often turning into viral moments that generate memes, discussions and widespread online engagement, while also symbolising a perceived strengthening of India-Italy relations.

The viral 'Melodi' trend original COP28 summit in Dubai, where she captioned it, "Good friends at COP28, #Melodi". Till then, Melodi was just a meme hashtag used by Internet users. Talking about the informal exchange by the iconic leaders, the video was shared by the Italian PM on Instagram, where she also spoke about the gesture and the gift received from the Indian Prime Minister. Sharing the

video of the moment, Meloni said, "Prime Minister Modi brought us a gift — a very, very good toffee — Melody," as both leaders were seen sharing a laugh during the interaction. She further added in her caption, "Thank you for the gift." Meanwhile, Kriti was last seen in Rana Naidu 2, an action crime drama. The show, which is headlined by Rana Daggubati, is adapted from the popular American Showtime series Ray Donovan. The actress is married to actor Pulkit Samrat, with whom she got married in 2018, and they eventually started dating in 2019. The couple has worked together in films such as Veerey Ki Wedding, Pagalpanti and Taish. They got married in 2024.