



THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS

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J&K TO REOPEN DESTINATIONS CLOSED AFTER PAHALGAM ATTACK IN PHASES

Jammu & Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said closed parks at tourist places will be reopened in a phased manner starting June 17

8 PARKS IN JAMMU TO REOPEN IN FIRST PHASE

Sinha said the tourist spots that would be reopened include Beetab Valley and the parks near Pahalgam market. In Srinagar, Badamwari Park, Duck Park and Taqdeer Park will be reopened. Sarthal and Dhaggar in Kathua, Devipindi, Siyad Baba, and Sula Park in Reasi, Guldanda and Jai valley in Doda, and Pancheri in Udhampur—all in Jammu—will also be reopened

TIGHT SECURITY FOR AMARNATH YATRA

The committee comprising divisional commissioners and IGPs will take reports from districts and then some more places will be reopened in consultation with the tourism department, the L-G said | P8
Security has been beefed up for the Amarnath Yatra starting July 3, the L-G said, adding that he expects a large number of pilgrims

48

OUT OF 87 TOURIST SPOTS IN KASHMIR CLOSED AFTER APRIL 22 PAHALGAM ATTACK

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UNITED BY CRICKET

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma with the World Test Championship mace after beating Australia in the final. This is SA's first ICC trophy in 27 years | AP | P11

DANGEROUS ESCALATION

Iran threatens to hit US, UK bases in West Asia; Israel vows to destroy Tehran's nuclear infra

AGENCIES @ Jerusalem / Dubai

IRAN and Israel on Saturday carried out waves of deadly attacks at each other, ignoring pleas from various countries including India for an immediate de-escalation of hostilities.

Reports said Israeli drones struck the South Pars—the world's largest natural gas oil field co-owned by Qatar—forcing Iran to halt production.

Israel's attacks on Iran's military and nuclear sites on Friday and Saturday killed 78 people. Israel said it eliminated 20 army and Revolutionary Guard commanders. Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's top advisor Ali Shamkhani was also killed, according to reports.

Iran's retaliatory strikes in the wee hours on Saturday killed three persons and injured 80 others in Israel.

The developments come amid talks between Iran and the US seeking to reach a deal on Tehran's nuclear programme. A sixth round of negotiations scheduled in Oman on Sunday was cancelled after Iran said it was 'meaningless'.



Destroyed residential buildings in Ramat Gan, near Tel Aviv, Israel, hit by a missile fired from Iran on Saturday | AP/PTI



1,595 Indian students are stranded in Iran, including 140 medical students at Tehran University. Additionally, 183 Indian pilgrims are stuck in Iraq. I've contacted JS (PAI), Mr. Anand Prakash, and shared details of those stranded. Urgent evacuation is needed, @DrSjaishankar. I request @TelanganaCMO to ensure their safe return to Telangana - Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM president

Israel said it has destroyed Iran's air defence systems claiming its jets flew for nearly two hours over Iranian airspace, hitting targets. "Tehran

is no longer immune; the capital is exposed to strikes," an IDF spokesperson said, adding Israel plans to dismantle Iran's nuclear capabilities.

As for Iran, it threatened to attack the regional military bases of Israel's allies US, UK, and France if they helped Tel Aviv. The warning came after reports said US shot down Iranian missiles.

With Israel and Iran hardening their positions, it could become a protracted, full-fledged war that could disrupt global economy by making the Red Sea more unsafe. P9

Toll 270, probe panel formed

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

THE death toll in the Air India flight tragedy here went up to 270, even as a body was extracted from the tail of the crashed aircraft on Saturday. The London-bound flight had rammed into the BJ Medical College hostel moments after takeoff on Thursday.

As of Saturday night, DNA matches of 19 crash victims with their families have been established. Since many bodies were charred beyond recognition, authorities are depending almost entirely on DNA testing for accurate identification.

"This isn't something we can afford to rush. Every case must be verified with clinical precision," said Dr Rajnish Patel, surgery professor at B J Medical College.

Gujarat Revenue Secretary Alok Pandey said many of the victims hailed from 18 of the state's 33 districts. He said 230 teams have been formed to coordinate with families of the victims. "A grief counsellor has been assigned to every fam-

ily to deal with mental trauma," Pandey added.

Gandhinagar Forensic Science Lab (FSL) Director H P Sanghvi said, "We've begun profile matching. Tests are ongoing in batches, each taking 36-48 hours. A team of 36 experts is working round-the-clock with the National Forensic Lab to expedite the process."

In a related development, the Centre constituted a multi-disciplinary panel headed by the Union home secretary to probe the cause of the air crash.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge urged the government to fix accountability. "Let the black box reveal the truth. The government must then fix accountability," he said after visiting the crash site. P8,10

Op Sindoor showcased IAF: CAS

CHITHALURI REVANTH @ Hyderabad

CHIEF of the Air Staff (CAS) Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Saturday said that the Indian Air Force amply demonstrated its prowess during the recent Operation Sindoor through swift, precise and decisive action against the enemy.

"The success of Operation Sindoor is evidence of the operational capabilities of the IAF," the CAS told the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal on Saturday.

A total of 254 Flight Cadets graduated during the parade. In addition to the IAF cadets, nine officers from the Indian Navy, seven from the Indian Coast Guard and one trainee from a friendly foreign country were awarded 'Wings' upon the successful completion of their flying training. REPORT: P2

UNPAID RENTS

Promises aside, schools struggle to keep doors open

MEGHNA NATH @ Hyderabad

WHILE the academic year kicked off with promises of quality education and world-class infrastructure for government schools, in Hyderabad, some schools are struggling with a more basic problem—keeping their doors open.

For over three years now, rent worth approximately ₹6 crore has reportedly remained unpaid to owners of private buildings housing government primary and secondary schools.

A total of 105 such schools, 87 primary and 18 high schools, operate from rented premises



Students attend classes in a government school functioning from a rented building at Shaheenagar in the Old City on Saturday

across the city, mostly in areas like Bahadurpura, Charminar, Asifnagar, Tolichowki and

Golkonda in the Old City. While the Education department did sanction ₹50 lakh in

March, this money remains stuck somewhere in the labyrinth of the Finance department's approval process. Repeated appeals from building owners have so far only generated fresh paperwork, not payments.

Simmering tensions came to the fore recently when the owner of the Telangana Minority Residential School building at Bagh Lingampally locked the premises temporarily, a cautionary signal that unpaid dues can have very real consequences. While that school was reopened, teachers and parents are now wondering which school gate might be bolted next. CONTINUED ON P3



We are tired of visiting the Education department and the collectorate, requesting the release of pending rent. Some owners haven't been paid for three to four years. Many of us depend on this rent for survival

—Jahangir, building owner

Five students from TG make it to top 100 in NEET UG

ENS @ Hyderabad

MAHESH Kumar from Rajasthan secured All India Rank (AIR) 1 while Avika Aggarwal achieved AIR 5 and emerged as the female topper in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) UG-2025, the results of which were released by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday.

From Telangana, Kakarla

Jeevan Sai Kumar secured the 18th rank, becoming the state topper.

A total of 22,76,609 candidates registered for the medical entrance examination, of whom 22,09,318 appeared and 12,36,531 qualified. In Telangana, 72,094 candidates registered, 70,259 appeared, and



Kakarla Jeevan Sai Kumar (AIR) 18

qualified.

Compared to the previous year, Telangana candidates performed better, with five—four boys and one girl—securing places in the top 100 this year.

Among the top 100 rankers from Telangana were Shanmukha Nishanth Akshintala (AIR 37),

Mangari Varun (46), Yandrapati Shanmukh (48) and Bidisha Majee (95). In fact, Bidisha Majee was among the top 20 performers among girls across India.

Speaking about his preparation strategy that helped him bag AIR 18, Sai Kumar said, "I maintained consistent focus over the last four years, which helped me secure a place in the top 20. It feels great to see my

long-standing dream come true. I have aimed to crack NEET since Class 9."

Nishanth Akshintala, who achieved AIR 37, said, "Having clarity in basic concepts and fundamental ideas about the subjects is crucial for success in competitive exams. I studied for around 10 to 12 hours a day. Like many medical aspirants, I dream of securing a seat in AIIMS Delhi."



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Participants of the special summer music course at a training session in Hanamkonda

RAGAS & RESOLVE

HOMEMAKERS HIT THE RIGHT NOTE WITH SUMMER MUSIC COURSE

U MAHESH @ Hanamkonda

AMID the summer heat, a different kind of intensity gripped the classrooms of Hanamkonda. Homemakers, balancing the weight of deferred dreams and the demands of childcare, stepped into a 42-day crucible: the special Teacher Training Certificate Course (TTCC) in music. From May 1 to June 12, they compressed a year's worth of learning into a relentless sprint, trading familiar routines for the disciplined rigour of Carnatic vocal training. Driven by the hope of securing government teaching posts, these women, many accompanied by their children, poured themselves into each raga and rhythm, determined to reshape their futures, one note at a time. The

certificate they pursued wasn't just paper; it was a promise of economic security, professional recognition and long-overdue empowerment.

Twelve women and three men attended the course. Speaking to *TNIE*, G Vani, a participant from Hyderabad district, shares: "It's not easy to master a year's worth of curriculum in just 42 days. But our mentor, Vaddiraju Nivedita, made it possible. With her 30 years of experience in government music education, she trained us brilliantly."

Gampa Soujanya from Warangal echoes the sentiment. "This course gave us a golden opportunity. Instead of spending holidays on routine chores, we invested our time learning Hindustani music. We've gained as much as regular students. I'm proud of our

mentor, who taught everything from the basics to raga alapana using practical examples."

Soujanya adds that although many of the women have already studied at music colleges, the TTCC certificate gives them an edge in qualifying for teaching posts at government gurukul schools. Meanwhile, a male student, K Bharath, says he was grateful for the "marvellous teaching" by Guru Nivedita.

Speaking to *TNIE*, Nivedita shares, "This course has been a gamechanger for many. Earlier TTCC batches saw students secure placements in Gurukul schools, while others found their calling in music as a profession."

Course coordinators Sandhyarani and Nayeem Pasha ensured the smooth conduct of the 42-day programme and monitored student progress.

Biscuits, pads & breakthroughs in Bhadrachalam

B SATYANARAYANA REDDY @ Khammam

WHAT started with eight women and a bag of millets in Bhadrachalam is rippling through the tribal community. Trained by the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), these former daily wagers now run a dual enterprise: crafting nutrient-packed biscuits sold near the temple and manufacturing vital sanitary napkins supplied to schools. Their success isn't just income; it's a beacon inspiring countless others.

Eight tribal women received training at Rajendranagar, Hyderabad, and began producing a range of biscuits made of millets, including foxtail, little millet, kodo millet, finger millet and

jowar. They have also ventured into sanitary napkin production, manufacturing around 40,000 napkins in three months. These are being supplied to Gurukul schools in the region, with each pack priced affordably at ₹28.

To market their millet products, the women set up stalls near the Bhadrachalam temple and other public spaces, selling millet biscuits priced between ₹60 and ₹120 per kg. Recognising their efforts, ITDA Project Officer B Rahul sanctioned ₹1 lakh for a biscuit-making machine to help scale their operations.

"We were once daily wage labourers. With ITDA's training and support, we now make millet biscuits and napkins," says Uke Venkata Lakshmi, one of the women. Alongside Tati Lalitha, J Samakka and



Soya Mangya, she highlighted the health benefits of millets, especially for children and the elderly. "The community response has been very encouraging. We hope to expand and create more employment for

tribal women." Rahul tells *TNIE*, "We are identifying unique skills among tribal women who were earlier confined to fieldwork and are encouraging them towards entrepreneurship."

CBE to launch civil services prog today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

THE Centre for Brahmin Excellence (CBE) will launch its Civil Services Advocacy Initiative at 9 am on Sunday, 2025, at the Sri Ramananda Tirtha Memorial Committee in Begumpet.

The day-long screening interviews will be conducted by a panel of serving and retired senior civil servants, as well as professionals from management and entrepreneurial sectors. The panel will be led by former Andhra Pradesh chief secretary LV Subrahmanyam. MLC Surabhi Vani Devi will deliver the formal address.

The initiative aims to support Brahmin youth aspiring for civil services through structured mentoring, academic coaching and interview preparation. It received 400 from the Telugu states. Of these, 54 were short-listed. A total of 31 candidates, 21 from Telangana and 10 from AP, are expected to participate.

FASTER FIX FOR FESTERING INJURIES WITH FIRST-AID NOW IN HAMLETS

S RAJA REDDY @ Adilabad

UNTIL recently, a neglected thorn prick or minor cut in the remote hamlets across the district could fester, forcing farmers to embark on arduous journeys to distant health centres or rely on the traditional 'Natu Vaidyam' (herbal medicine). However, a simple solution in the form of first-aid kits — filled with bandages, cotton and iodine — to ryots, paired with practical lessons on their use, is now offering relief where injuries happen, right in the field.

Typically, for minor injuries sustained during fieldwork or under the MGNREGS, tribals have relied on herbal treatments. However, with awareness campaigns being carried out in tribal areas, many are now opting for modern first aid methods. Kits are being distributed to tribal farmers along with demonstrations on how to use them effectively.

While continuing to uphold

their traditions and culture, tribal communities are gradually changing their approach to treatment.

Thodasam Jalimshah and Sedemaki Lakku, tribal farmers from Umaphatikunta village in Utnoor mandal, say the kits have been particularly useful for minor injuries. "We no longer need to go to the primary health centre for every small cut or bruise. We open the kit, apply the bandage or ointment and get relief," they add.

Farmers are being taught how to properly use the kits, and many say they now feel confident in treating themselves. "We are happy to use these kits instead of depending on local treatments," one farmer adds. "Even small injuries, if neglected, can turn serious. So we now prefer using proper

medical supplies."

Speaking to *TNIE*, G Ravi Kumar, programme in-charge with the Rama Prasad Goenka Foundation, says the initiative began three months ago in Umaphatikunta and Gondguda villages in Utnoor mandal. "We are focusing on creating awareness among tribal farmers about the importance of using first aid kits for minor injuries, to gradually move them away from local herbal remedies," he adds.

So far, awareness programmes have been conducted in around 30 villages in the mandal. Small medical kits — each containing nine items including bandages, iodine and cotton — are being distributed to tribal families. The main objective is to encourage modern medical care over traditional methods, especially in cases where timely intervention can prevent complications.



FOR THE POOR NGO launches ₹1L monthly aid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Karimnagar

VASAVI Trust, an NGO known for its charitable work, has now launched a new initiative to provide financial aid to the underprivileged.

The trust will offer ₹1 lakh monthly assistance to support education, healthcare and wedding expenses for the poor. In the first phase, financial aid was distributed to 15 beneficiaries.

Speaking on the occasion, trust chairman Chittumalla Srinivas said nearly 200 members have come forward to contribute ₹500 each per month, and more donors are showing interest. "As the number of contributors increases, the aid will also grow, especially for students," he said.

Applicants can apply each month, and funds will be distributed based on need and availability.



EXPRESS READ

OU to offer free civil services coaching

Hyderabad: The Civil Services Academy (CSA) of Osmania University (OU) on Saturday announced that applications are open for free coaching for the UPSC Civil Services (Prelims), Group I, Group II and other competitive examinations. Officials said the initiative is being carried out under the direction of OU Vice Chancellor Prof D Ravinder Kumar. Interested OU students can apply through the official OU website by June 30. There is no application fee. For more information, students may contact the Civil Services Academy during office hours.



(From left) Flight cadets march during the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) at the Air Force Academy, Dundigal; using colours of the Indian national flag, planes make a pattern in the skies; the graduates celebrate after the convocation ceremony in Hyderabad on Saturday | VINAY MADAPU



Be ready to repay faith of citizens: CAS to graduates

CHITHALURI REVANTH @ Hyderabad

CHIEF of the Air Staff (CAS) Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Saturday extolled the might of the Indian Air Force (IAF), saying that it amply demonstrated its prowess during the recent Operation Sindoor through swift, precise and decisive action against the enemy. "The success of Operation Sindoor is evidence of the operational capabilities of the IAF," the CAS told the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal on Saturday.

A total of 254 Flight Cadets graduated during the parade. Addressing the new officers, the CAS reminded them that the Air Force had always been, and would continue to be, the nation's first responder in times of need. "It is our collective responsibility to live up to the trust placed in the Indian Air Force by every citizen of India, and we must be ready and prepared for it," he said.

Honour and rewards

Congratulating the graduating officers, the CAS said: "When you choose to serve the nation, you opted for a career that is not only demanding but also among the most rewarding and honourable. As we look to the future, two things are certain: the fast-evolving character of warfare and the increasing relevance of aerospace power."

On the theme of collective re-



Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Chief Marshal AP Singh reviews the CGP at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal | VINAY MADAPU

FAMILIES SHARE THE JOY

CRPF sub-inspector MS Tomar from Prayagraj expressed his pride at his son's decision to join the armed forces. With 35 years of service experience across the country, Tomar told *TNIE*, "My two sons are in the Forces. My elder son joined a few years ago and this year my younger son also joined the forces. At this moment, I am very proud that both my sons are serving the nation." He added that his experience in physical training during his CRPF service allowed him to give valuable inputs to his son during his preparation. Similarly, the parents of Ritwik Sogala (21) from Mancherial district, both of whom are government school teachers, shared their happiness. Speaking after the parade, S Rangaiah, a government teacher, said he was pleased that his son had fulfilled his dream of joining the Armed Forces. "He studied at a Sainik School from Class 9, and since then he was passionate about joining the forces. It was his own interest to serve the nation, and we supported him throughout," Rangaiah said. He added that his elder son graduated from IIT Tirupati, while the younger son joined the Armed Forces. He revealed that he encouraged his son to join Sainik School to instil discipline, physical fitness and other essential qualities. "I pushed my son to join the Sainik School because such institutions build discipline along with physical fitness and other activities," Rangaiah added.

responsibility, the CAS said that the ceremony marked the culmination of years of rigorous training and perseverance, but this was only the beginning of the officers' professional journey. He urged them to expand

their horizons and develop new capabilities.

"The battlespace of the future will be increasingly complex. With the IAF transforming into a true aerospace force, many of you will be at the

forefront of India's ventures into space. These challenges will demand total commitment, relentless passion, innovation, and a deep passion for your calling. The uniform you wear is a symbol of national

Karimnagar girl set for trip of a lifetime to Japan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Karimnagar

A student of Paramita Heritage CBSE School, Karimnagar, S Shubhashree, has been selected to participate in the prestigious Sakura Science Exchange Programme, organised by the Japan Science and Technology Agency. The programme will be held in Japan from June 15 to 21.

Her selection comes under the Inspire Manak Award for her innovative, eco-friendly, multifunctional agro-machine designed to aid farmers. Developed under the guidance of her teacher, Lalith Mohan Sahu, the solar-powered machine performs four key agricultural tasks — threshing and grain separation, grass cutting, winnowing, and bag stitching — while the byproduct can also be used as fodder.

Shubhashree's model, which significantly cuts down on electricity use and cost, gained recognition at the district level before being selected for the Japan Sakura Project. According to school principal Gopikrishna, Shubhashree first developed the prototype while in Class 9. She is currently in Class 12 (CBSE).

District Educational Officer S Mondaiah, District Science Officer Jaipal Reddy and Paramita Group of Schools chairman E Prasad Rao, on Saturday, congratulated her on the achievement.



District Educational Officer (DEO) S Mondaiah felicitates Shubhashree in Karimnagar on Saturday.



Police reunite missing baby with his mother; (right) Police arrest man who attempted to rape his mother-in-law

DIAL-112 HELPS COPS THWART 3 CRIMES IN 1 DAY

Police also traced a missing boy and reunited him with his mother in Narsingi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

POLICE, with the help of the Dial-112 emergency helpline, prevented three major crimes — a rape attempt, a murder and a molestation — and also reunited a missing boy with his mother on Friday.

The missing boy was safely traced and reunited with his mother, Sunitha Dev, in Kokapet of Narsingi.

In another case, a man who allegedly recorded unauthorised videos of a woman was arrested and handed over to the Amberpet police for further inquiry.

Police also apprehended a man who tried to murder his father during an altercation. He was handed over to the Kethapally police in Nalgonda.

In the fourth case, police foiled an attempted rape by a man on his mother-in-law. He was handed over to the Sangareddy police.

The emergency response system is managed from the Telangana Integrated Command and Control Centre (TGICCC) in Banjara Hills. It integrates all major emergency numbers under one umbrella — Dial 112 — including Police (100), Fire (101), Ambulance (108), Women Safety (181), Child Protection (1098), and Disaster Management (1077).

The prompt response by Dial-112 personnel and swift field action have been widely appreciated. These incidents highlight the critical role of the Emergency Response Support System in preventing serious crimes and ensuring public safety.

Owners fed up with 'apathy' of officials

FROM PAGE 1

Jahangir, president of the Government Rented Building Owners Association, sounded weary but unsurprised. "We are tired of visiting the Education department and the collectorate, requesting the release of pending rent."

Some owners haven't been paid for three to four years. Many of us depend entirely on this rent for survival," he said. This weariness stands out in stark contrast to the government's ambitious plans for education upliftment.

Jahangir added that the association plans yet another round of appeals to officials later this month. Should these fail, school gates may be locked in protest.

Ahmed Khan, who owns a government school building in



Bahadurpura, said dues amounting to ₹5 lakh have been pending for four years. "We are frustrated with repeated visits to officials, but there has been no outcome," he said. His statement neatly sums up the experience of many who are waiting for rent, rather than rhetoric.

A government school staff member in the Old City, requesting anonymity, said, "Owners sometimes cut water or power supply because of

non-payment of rent, which troubles both students and teachers. If the government does not clear these dues, normal functioning will be disrupted." Clearly, 'quality education' remains a slogan more easily announced than delivered.

M Ravinder, General Secretary of the Telangana Progressive Teachers Federation (TPTF), said that for years the government has not approved funds for rent in the city. "The Education Department has written to the state government, but nothing concrete has emerged so far," he said, the statement now a familiar refrain.

Attempts by *TNIE* to reach the District Education Officer (DEO), Hyderabad, for comment on unresolved issues piling up alongside the unpaid rent, proved unsuccessful.

1 more case against actor Kalpika

ENS @ Hyderabad

POLICE have filed one more case against actor Kalpika Ganesh for allegedly defaming the sister of the Prism Pub owner Praneeth Parepally. A case was registered under Sections 79 (insulting a woman's modesty) and 356 (defamation) of the BNS and Section 67 (publishing obscene material in electronic form) of the IT Act.

A few days ago, Gachibowli police registered a case against the actress for allegedly creating a nuisance at the pub. According to the complainant, Kalpika has been sending vulgar voice messages to her.

"We have presented screenshots and recordings as evidence. It would be great, if we got an apology from her," the complainant said.



WORKSHOP TOIL

As the farming season has arrived, a worker is seen welding a part of the ploughing machine at his workshop in Karimnagar | EXPRESS

Monsoon emergency ops to be handled by HYDRAA

S BACHAN JEET SINGH @ Hyderabad

HYDRAA has taken charge of monsoon emergency operations, urban flooding and disaster management in Greater Hyderabad. The civic body has decided to form new monsoon emergency teams equipped with vehicles and labourers for all 30 circles across the six GHMC zones by the end of June.

The move comes after BRS MLC K Kavitha urged Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to cancel earlier tenders for monsoon emergency and instant repair teams under GHMC, alleging serious irregularities favouring select companies.

Sources said HYDRAA wants the selected agencies to keep emergency teams ready in the field around the clock for 15 days. Unskilled workers must be available in three shifts daily to carry out emergency tasks such as dewatering inundated areas, clearing fallen trees, and assisting in rescue and other urgent operations.

The agencies must also take responsibility for the repair and upkeep of vehicles and machinery. They are required to deploy machinery promptly upon receiving an intimation letter from HYDRAA.

HYDRAA FLOATS BIDS FOR ALL GHMC CIRCLES	
Location	Amount (₹)
Saroornagar	68.82 lakh
Santosh Nagar	82.58 lakh
Kapra	82.58 lakh
Falaknuma	82.58 lakh
Karwan	82.58 lakh
Goshamahal	82.58 lakh
Musheerabad	82.58 lakh
Amberpet	82.58 lakh
Malkajgiri	82.58 lakh
Kukatpally	82.58 lakh
Uppal	55.05 lakh
Hayathnagar	55.05 lakh
L B Nagar	55.05 lakh
Khairthabad	55.05 lakh
Jubilee Hills	55.05 lakh
Begumpet	55.05 lakh
Chandanagar	55.05 lakh
Quthbullapur	55.05 lakh
Gajularamaram	55.05 lakh
Charminar	68.82 lakh
Rajendranagar	68.82 lakh
Secunderabad	68.82 lakh
Yousufguda	68.82 lakh
Moosapet	68.82 lakh
Chandrayangutta	96.35 lakh
Mehidipatnam	96.35 lakh
Serilingampally	41.29 lakh
RC Puram and Patancheru	41.29 lakh
Atwal	41.29 lakh



EXPRESS READ

Film depicts PESA Act's role in panchayats

Adilabad: The Union Ministry of Rural Development has produced a documentary on the implementation and impact of the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in the erstwhile Adilabad district. The documentary focused on Jamdha gram panchayat in Narnoor mandal. A central team comprising Rambabu Gupta, Sami Asar, and Mishra visited the region on June 13 and 14. The documentary highlights how ten Fifth Schedule states are utilising the PESA framework.

Student loses ₹50L to online betting scam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A 27-year-old student from the city, currently studying in Italy, has lodged a complaint with the Cyberabad cybercrime police alleging the existence of an organised racket involving private persons and illegal online betting websites. Based on his statement, a case has been registered under Sections 316(5), 318(4), 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 3(1)(i) of the Telangana State Gaming Act (TSGA) and 66-D of the IT Act.

The student claimed he lost ₹50 lakh, while his friend Kulwanth Singh, a resident of Bhopal, lost ₹60 lakh and died by suicide in December 2024. The complaint was filed earlier this month. The complaint names several betting platforms, including stakeid.com, lotusplay247.com, royalbook365.com and govinda365.io. A case has also been registered against several others allegedly linked to the scam.

According to the complainant, on



December 6, 2023, while browsing Instagram reels with a friend, the complainant came across an ad offering "guaranteed toss-fix" predictions. It led to a Telegram channel named "THE MARS TOSS", reportedly operated by a man identifying himself as Pottavathini Deepak from Korutla in Jagtial district. Deepak allegedly lured users by

sharing manipulated screenshots of supposed winnings and promising fixed match outcomes. The student said he initially received two correct predictions, likely staged to gain trust, after which he and his friend began transferring money to place bets through offshore sites. However, within 10 days, subsequent predictions failed. Both were misled into joining other private groups running similar scams. The student alleged that these groups operated with a common strategy: promoting false claims of fixed matches, encouraging monetary transfers and profiting through deception.

He told the police that the operators masked their identities using private, invite-only groups and continued to promote illegal betting, despite repeated flags and takedowns of their channels. Their persistent activity, he said, indicated deliberate intent, coordinated conspiracy and full awareness of the illegality of their operations.

Poor MMTS link to Charlapalli hurts Lingampalli passengers

MEGHNA NATH @ Hyderabad

DAILY rail passengers are experiencing significant difficulties due to the severely limited MMTS (Multi-Modal Transport System) service connecting Lingampalli and Charlapalli. With only one MMTS train on the route, many passengers are having to seek alternatives to reach the newly revamped Charlapalli terminal station.

The strain has further intensified following the South Central Railway's (SCR) diversion of several long-distance trains to Charlapalli terminal station due to ongoing works at Secunderabad Railway Station. The critical lack of reliable transportation, particularly suburban MMTS trains, leaves passengers struggling to reach the new terminal, sources said.

Currently, only one MMTS train operates on the Lingampalli-Charlapalli-Lingampalli route, and its timings are highly irregular — typically running only once very early in the morning and again late in the evening. Passengers report severe hardship accessing the terminal, citing the absence of adequate bus services



compounding the problem.

Ramesh Yadav, a Lingampalli resident, said: "There's only a single suburban train plying, and its frequency is extremely low. Additionally, the connecting road to Charlapalli station is in an extremely poor condition. It would greatly benefit passengers if the state government prioritises relaying this road." Travel associations and daily commuters have repeatedly urged railway authorities to expand MMTS services to Charlapalli terminal from across the city.

They specifically request scheduled suburban trains, especially during peak hours, to facilitate access for passengers boarding diverted long-distance trains to destinations like Srikakulam, Tirupati and Kakinada. However, the current irregularity of the sole MMTS service makes it largely unusable for this purpose.

Madhavi erects temple in Malakpet apartment complex

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

BJP leader Madhavi Latha on Saturday visited Elite Hills Apartments at Asmangadh in Malakpet and erected a makeshift temple at the building's entrance. She placed an idol on a wall and put up a shed using bricks, reportedly in response to an ongoing civil dispute between flat owners and the builder.

Tension erupted on Thursday when a scuffle broke out between residents and the builder, who belongs to another community, over proposed construction in the still area, which was originally meant for parking. A few people were injured in the clash, and unrest was reported in the Malakpet area.

Madhavi Latha, who contested the Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat against AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi, met residents who alleged the builder had illegally begun construction in the common area. She demanded strict action against "anti-social elements" who allegedly attacked residents trying to stop the work.

Condemning the incident, she warned that if the culprits were not punished, the BJP would launch a movement. She assured residents not to panic, adding that the party stood with them in the face of any threat.

Following the incident, police rushed to the spot and enhanced security.



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Irrigation minister writes letter to Union Jal Shakti minister opposing the AP project

REJECT PFR OF BANAKACHARLA: UTTAM TO CENTRE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

STRONGLY objecting to the Andhra Pradesh government's proposed Banakacharla project, Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy has urged the Central government to reject the Pre-Feasibility Report (PFR) of the project that is presently under review by Central Water Commission (CWC).

In a letter on Saturday, he asked Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil to initiate necessary action to prevent AP from submitting the DPR of the project to CWC.

Uttam Kumar Reddy stated that during a meeting held on June 2, chaired by Sajjan Yadav, additional secretary in the Ministry of Finance, state government officials sought an update on the approval status of the PFR by the CWC. In response, the senior joint commissioner in the Ministry of Jal Shakti informed them that the report was under active consideration of the CWC. Sajjan Yadav also instructed the AP government to submit the DPR by the end of the month.

"Usually, only after the CWC approves the PFR, the DPR of a project is submitted by any state government. Does the Central government asking AP to submit the DPR mean that the PFR of Banakacharla is deemed to have been approved by the Commission? We strongly object to the Union government's attitude," said the irrigation minister.

Stating that Banakacharla violates the Godavari Tribunal Award-1980 and also the AP Reorganisation Act, Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the project does not have any assured water allocations. Typically, in all such cases where there are no assured water allocations, the CWC usually rejects such PFRs submitted by a state government and never asks for submission of DPR. He further stated: "So, it is a matter of grave concern to us that the AP government is asking by additional secretary of ministry of finance in the presence of Jal Shakti officials to submit the DPR of Godavari-Banakacharla link project, which technically implies that the PFR of this scheme is deemed to have been approved."

He made it clear that the proposed project not only contravenes the provisions of the AP Reorganisation Act and Godavari River Disputes Tribunal, but also adversely affects the water rights of Telangana.

Allowing such a project would undermine the equitable and judicious management of interstate river waters and will set a precedent contrary to the statutory framework and natural justice, he explained.



Usually, only after the CWC approves PFR, the DPR of a project is submitted by any state government. Does the Central government asking AP to submit the DPR mean that the PFR of Banakacharla is deemed to have been approved by CWC?

-Uttam Kumar Reddy, Irrigation minister

HARISH SLAMS GOVT'S 'SILENCE' ON AP MOVES

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

FORMER minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao has accused the Congress government of remaining silent despite the interests of the state being at stake, as the Andhra Pradesh government was going ahead with the diversion of Godavari waters to the proposed Banakacharla project.

He demanded that the Polavaram-Banakacharla project be stopped immediately before irreversible damage is done. "If the state government is serious, the BRS is ready to support a resolution in the Assembly. If it fails, we will launch a people's movement and pursue legal action," he said.

On Saturday, he gave a detailed presentation on why Telangana should oppose the Banakacharla project. He alleged that after the injustice faced in Krishna water sharing, Andhra Pradesh is now eyeing Godavari waters through the Polavaram-Banakacharla link. "While Andhra is pushing ahead with tenders for the project, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy have chosen to remain silent," he said.

Accusing the Congress government of focusing more on political vendetta than public welfare, Harish said, "They are busy foisting cases against K T Rama Rao and other BRS leaders. There is irritation towards the Opposition, but no attention to irrigation. Sadly, the state's interests are being mortgaged."

He questioned the government's inaction even as Andhra Pradesh is openly exceeding the limits set under the temporary Krishna agreement. "Why this silence when AP is moving ahead with a project that could divert over 200 tmcft of water from Godavari? When Telangana's share is at stake, why is the Congress government remaining mute?" he asked. He said that Telangana has eight BJP MPs, eight Congress MPs, and two Union ministers, yet no one is raising their voice. "Is their loyalty to Delhi more important than their responsibility towards Telangana?" he questioned.

Meanwhile, reacting to the letter written by Uttam Kumar Reddy to Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil, Harish Rao said: "Today, I gave a PowerPoint presentation on Banakacharla. The same day, Uttam released a letter with yesterday's date. I thank him for responding at least after our presentation."

He said that writing letters is not enough. "If the minister is serious, he should ask the chief minister to demand an Apex Council meeting on Banakacharla. That is what the people of Telangana are expecting."



Why this silence when the Andhra Pradesh government is moving ahead with a project that could divert over 200 tmcft of water from Godavari? When Telangana's share is at stake, why is the Congress government remaining mute?

-T Harish Rao, BRS MLA



TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud, BJP MP Eatala Rajender and other leaders during the unveiling of 'OBC Porubata', written by IAS officer Narahari Parikipandla and advocate Pruthviraj Singh, at Suravaram Pratapa Reddy Telugu University in Hyderabad on Saturday

Mahesh calls for unity among BCs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president B Mahesh Kumar Goud on Saturday said the time has come for the Backward Classes (BCs) to unite and assert their collective strength.

He underscored the need for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to rise above party considerations.

The PCC president, who is also an MLC, participated, along with BJP MP Eatala Rajender and others, in a function organised to mark the release of the book "OBC Porubata", written by IAS officer Narahari Parikipandla and advocate Pruthviraj Singh, at Suravaram Pratapa Reddy Telugu University here.

Mahesh Kumar Goud stated that the Centre's decision to conduct a caste census stands

as a major achievement for the Congress, adding that Telangana has emerged as a model for the country through its implementation of the caste-based survey. He praised Rahul Gandhi for championing the concept of the caste census to ensure social justice.

Historically, he said, OBCs were seen merely as instruments for vote-bank politics, but today, they have progressed to the stage where they are demanding their rightful share in the political space.

"We have to get our share, as it belongs to us," Goud asserted. He pointed out that the Congress government in Telangana, under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, conducted the caste survey transparently, adhering to the principle that every community deserves its due.

He recalled that even the

BJP-led Central government, which once opposed the caste survey, has now announced its intention to conduct a caste census alongside the general census.

He also stressed that for the first time in Telangana's history, the expansion and PCC restructuring have ensured 68% representation for BCs, SCs, STs, and minorities.

Mahesh Kumar Goud said there is an urgent need for all OBC communities to unite and push for the introduction of the BC Bill in Parliament to ensure its inclusion in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

"All BCs are one," he declared, adding that there should be no divisions along caste lines — whether Gouds (like himself) or Mudirajs (like Eatala Rajender).

"BCs must achieve unity first before aspiring to become chief minister of the state," he said.

Suspected Maoist links, so tapped politicians' phones: Prabhakar

CHITHALURI REVANTH @ Hyderabad

FORMER Special Intelligence Branch (SIB) chief T Prabhakar Rao has asked the police to question former Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and former DGP Mahender Reddy on why they recommended him for the post after his retirement.

"The decision was taken by senior officials in the government," Prabhakar Rao told the SIT official when they questioned him as to how he landed

the job in contravention of cadre rules.

It may be mentioned here that after Prabhakar Rao had retired from service on June 30, 2020, he was appointed as SIB chief the same day by the then government for a period of three years.

The accused in the phone-tapping case allegedly snooped on at least 30 persons associated with

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy's construction and real estate business, including his manager and car driver. Besides Ponguleti, the phones of sitting Palakurthy MLA Yashaswini Reddy and her associates were

tapped during the 2023 elections. When the police asked Prabhakar Rao why the phones of these poli-

ticians and their associates were tapped, he replied: "We tapped their phones as we suspected that they had links to Maoists and were trying to influence voters." Prabhakar Rao told the SIT officials.

Phone of cop too tapped?

The phones of prominent leaders from the Congress, BJP, TDP and those who switched loyalties to other parties from BRS before the 2023 elections were tapped, a source added.

Interestingly, the accused had also snooped on one of the

SHOs of Hyderabad city police before the elections. He is now in the Task Force. When the SIT asked him regarding tapping of a police officer's phone, Prabhakar Rao replied that he suspected that the cop had Maoist links.

Police sources said the former SIB chief never submitted a report to senior officials in the Hyderabad police regarding the Maoist links of the cop. The SIT officials asked him to appear before them again on June 19 as he refused to answer many of their questions.

No political vendetta behind probes into BRS' 'wrongdoings': Chamala

ENS @ Hyderabad

BHONGIR MP and senior Congress leader Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Saturday asserted that ongoing investigation into irregularities alleged to have been committed in the execution of projects during the previous Bharat Rashtira Samiti (BRS) regime are not driven by a desire for political vendetta.

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan, the MP took aim at BRS working presi-

dent KT Rama Rao, questioning his objections to probes by agencies into alleged corruption and misuse of public funds under the BRS government.

The Bhongir MP said: "Despite his fluency in English, KTR has failed to grasp the subject of accountability." He questioned the BRS leader's frustration with the Congress government, which came to power 18 months ago, asking, "Why this level of agitation over legitimate investigations?"

Bank manager faces HC heat in contempt case

JUSTICE CV Bhaskar Reddy of the Telangana High Court declined to dispense with the personal appearance of Rajanish, Chief Manager of Canara Bank, Ameerpet-2 Branch, in a contempt of court case linked to a gold loan dispute.

The case stems from a petition filed by M Krishna Rao, a resident of Budvel, Ranga Reddy district, alleging that the bank failed to return his pledged gold ornaments despite the high court's clear directive to do so once the loan was fully repaid.

According to the petitioner, the court had earlier disposed of the writ petition with specific directions that the bank should return the gold ornaments upon full repayment of the loan, within the time stipulated by it. Complying with the order, Krishna Rao claims to have cleared the entire loan and submitted a representation on November 8, 2024, requesting the release of the ornaments.

However, the bank responded on November 25, 2024, stating that its legal and recovery section had recommended fil-

ing an appeal against the high court's order. The petitioner's counsel argued during earlier hearings that no such appeal had been filed to date, and therefore the order had attained finality.

The counsel further accused the bank of acting with "willful and deliberate intention" to undermine the authority of the court, despite clear terms in the loan agreement and the absence of a stay or appellate order.

The court observed that records prima facie indicated non-compliance with its order. Despite full loan repayment, the bank neither returned the gold ornaments nor filed an appeal. Justice Bhaskar Reddy remarked that such conduct amounts to degrading the court authority.

In a previous hearing, the court had directed Rajanish to appear in person. On Friday, he complied but sought exemption from future personal appearances, citing his recent transfer to Haridwar. The court, however, was not inclined to grant such relief and adjourned the matter to July 4, 2025.

MULTI-CRORE BHOODAN LAND CASE: ED FILES COUNTER

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) has submitted a detailed counter affidavit in the Telangana High Court concerning an alleged multi-crore land scam involving Bhoodan and government lands in Nagaram.

The affidavit, filed by ED assistant director Gajraj Singh Thakur, outlines a conspiracy involving the use of forged documents, illegal land transfers and the sale of government-notified properties. Proceeds from these transactions were allegedly diverted to private individuals.

The case stems from a complaint lodged by Dastagir Sharif in March 2023, leading to an FIR at Maheshwaram police station under the Rachakonda Commissionerate. The FIR names Khaderunnisa, her son Munawar Khan, Bobbili Damodar Reddy, Bobbili Vishwanath Reddy, N Santosh and Kondapalli Sridhar Reddy. They are accused of creating forged documents and executing fraudulent sale deeds for approximately 103 acres located in Survey Nos. 181/1-6 and 182 in Nagaram.

According to the ED, these lands were notified as government property in 2006, a year after Dastagir Sharif and Muzaffar Hussain reportedly purchased the land in 2005. Dastagir obtained a stay order from the high court, but the matter remains pending. In 2012, the Mandal Revenue Officer clas-

sified 50 acres as Bhoodan land and 45 acres as government Gairan land, placing the property on the prohibited list.

Despite these restrictions, Khaderunnisa and her son allegedly produced false documents claiming her father had orally gifted (Hiba) her 51 acres in 2004. Based on these claims, patta passbooks were secured from the tahsildar in 2014, but these were later cancelled following an inquiry initiated by a court petition.

By that time, 10 to 12 acres

booked under Section 420 of the IPC (cheating) and Section 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) for laundering the proceeds of crime. The ED's investigation suggests that land worth several crores was unlawfully sold, with proceeds moved into private accounts. Financial trail examination is ongoing.

Records indicate that the lands in Survey Nos. 181, 182, 194 and 195 originally belonged to Nawab Haji Ali Khan, who gifted parts of the property to his sons Akbar Ali Khan and

already listed Haji Ali Khan's two sons, contradicting Khaderunnisa's claim.

The ED further alleges that officials from the Rangareddy Collectorate, the tahsildar's office and the sub-registrar's office colluded with the accused to illegally de-notify Bhoodan and Gairan lands using forged letters under Section 22-A of the Registration Act. The CCLA still records the land as Bhoodan, but forged papers were used to override the classification.

The ongoing probe under PMLA Section 50 has included statements from several individuals, and further scrutiny of departmental records is being conducted to establish official involvement.

A separate angle under investigation relates to land dealings in Survey No. 194 by relatives of Abdul Shukoor, who claimed to have purchased the land from Nawab Haji Ali Khan in 1992. However, records suggest that Haji Ali Khan had disposed of most of his land holdings by 1958, casting doubt on the authenticity of the 1992 documents. Shukoor is already facing two cases linked to land encroachments involving forged papers.



JUSTICE LEAGUE By TG Naidu

had already been sold. Although these transactions were later cancelled, the accused proceeded to sell another 40 acres in 2021 to Vishwanath Reddy and Santosh Kumar, the affidavit alleges. The ED claims that sub-registrar Jyothi colluded with the accused despite being aware that the land was classified as government property. The accused have been

Hold elections to local bodies: Former MP

ENS @ Hyderabad

BJP leader and former MP Boora Narsaiah Goud accused the Congress government of neglecting local bodies by not holding elections even 18 months after the party came to power.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state office here on Saturday, the former MP said that the tenure of 5,717 MPTC and 538 ZPTC members ended in May 2024 and those of 12,769 sarpanches in January 2024. He questioned the delay though the responsibility for conducting local body elections lies with the state government.

The former MP expressed concern over the Centre withholding ₹1,514 crore funds to local bodies because of the delay in conducting elections. According to him, the 14th Finance Commission also held back ₹800 crore funds for the same reason.

He demanded that the state government take immediate measures to hold elections to local bodies.



GADDAR AWARDS

Recognising cinematic excellence

Recognition a new chapter in TG's cultural landscape, replacing the erstwhile Nandi Awards

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy presented the inaugural Gaddar Film Awards, honouring cinematic excellence at a glittering ceremony held at the HITEX Exhibition Centre.

Named in honour of revolutionary poet Gaddar, the event celebrated achievements of film personalities from June 2014 to December 2024, marking a revival of state-sponsored film awards, replacing the former Nandi awards.

Held before a star-studded audience that included prominent Tollywood personalities, the ceremony celebrated achievements in acting, direction, technical crafts and featured top honours such as Best Feature Film, Best Actor and Best Actress.

Addressing the gathering, the chief minister highlighted the Congress long-standing respect for cinema, recalling that it was the Congress government in 1964 that first introduced the prestigious Nandi Awards. "That legacy continued during the era of united Andhra Pradesh. Now, a decade after the formation of Telangana, we are proud to institute film awards in the name of Gaddar," he said.

Highlighting Hyderabad's importance as a hub of the Indian film industry, Revanth stated, "When we say Indian cinema, we must first acknowledge Telugu cinema. And Hyderabad is the stage for Telugu cinema."

He reassured the industry of the state government's support, saying, "Even if the government seems tough at times, it is only for your growth. Tell me what you need, the government will stand with you."

Asserting his long-term com-



CM Revanth Reddy felicitates Telugu film personalities on the occasion of Gaddar film awards function on Saturday

LIST OF AWARDS	
First Best Feature Film	Kalki 2898 Ad
Second Best Feature Film	Pottel
Third Best Feature Film	Lucky Bhasker
Best Feature Film On National Integration	Committee Kurullu
Best Director	Nag Ashwin Singi Reddy (Kalki 2898 Ad)
Best Leading Actor	Allu Arjun (Pushpa - 2)
Best Leading Actress	Nivetha Thomas (35-Chinna Katha Kadu)
Best Supporting Actor	S J Surya (Saripoda Sanivaram)
Best Supporting Actress	Saranya Pradeep (Ambajipeta Marriage Band)
Best Music Director	Bheems Ceciroleo (Razakar)
Best Art Director	Adnithin Zihani Choudary (Kalki 2898)
Best Action Choreographer	K Chandra Shekar Rathod (Gangster)
Best Makeup Artist	Nalla Sreenu (Razakar)
Best Costume Designer	Archana Rao And Ajay Kumar (Kalki 2898 Ad)

mitment to public service, the chief minister said, "I will remain active in politics for the next 22 years. No matter what

position I hold, I will continue to support the development of the film industry." Revanth also emphasised the

role of cinema in Telangana's economic future. "Just like we promote the IT sector, we will also promote the film industry. Our Vision 2047 document will include a dedicated chapter on the growth of cinema. By 2047, we aim to take Telangana's economy to \$3 trillion," he announced.

Paying tribute to revolutionary balladeer Gaddar, he said, "Gaddar was not just a name—he was a revolution, a blazing star. He was our inspiration. It is with his spirit that we fought for Telangana. That same spirit will continue to guide Telangana's progress."

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Telangana Film Development Corporation Chairman Dil Raju, and several senior film personalities such as Bala Krishna, M M Keeravani and others also graced the occasion.

Axiom-4 launch on June 19: ISRO

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

A day after ISRO and NASA said that the Axiom-4 launch was postponed indefinitely, ISRO on Saturday said that the takeoff would take place on June 19.

Sources in ISRO said based on the discussions which were held after multiple concerns were raised, work has progressed and a new launch date has been set.

Teams from ISRO, NASA and Axiom Space have been working closely to launch the 14-day-long manned mission to the In-

ternational Space Station (ISS).

Four astronauts, including ISRO's Gaganyatri Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, are part of the mission. Shukla will be the first Indian to pilot a space craft and will dock the satellite into the International Space Station.

In 1984, Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian in space. He flew aboard Soyuz T-11 as part of the Soviet Interkosmos programme.

The launch was initially set for May 29, but was deferred to June 8, because of the observa-

tions in the electrical harness in the Crew Dragon Module. The launch was then postponed to June 9 because of the delay in the preparedness of the Falcon-9 vehicle. The mission was then postponed to June 10 due to poor weather at NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

During inspections and hot fire tests that were conducted on June 8, the team had observed oxygen leak in the engine bay. Anomalies in one of the engine's actuator were also observed. The launch was then rescheduled to June 11, anticipating the issues were addressed.

Elephant 'tramples' tribal to death; husband now a suspect

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Idukki

MYSTERY shrouds the death of a 42-year-old tribal woman, who was reportedly killed by a wild elephant in Meenmutty under the Muthirapuzha forest section in Peermade. The forensic surgeon, who conducted the post-mortem examination on Saturday indicated that preliminary findings pointed to a murder.

However, the police are yet to confirm the murder, and the suspect Binu, 48, husband of the deceased Seetha, 42, of Thottapura in Peermade, has not yet been taken into custody.

Sources with the police said that they haven't yet received the post-mortem report from the surgeon confirming it as a murder.

It is also learnt that a team comprising the forest, police and forensic officials will inspect the location to confirm whether she was killed by a wild elephant.

Seetha, a tribal woman belonging to the Malampand-

am tribal community at Thottapura, was killed when she along with her husband and children had gone to the reserve forest to collect forest produce on Friday.

As per the statement given by Binu to the forest officials, the family comprising Seetha, Binu and their two sons had gone to the forest on Friday morning to collect mace. While they were heading to the forest, a rogue jumbo which was standing on their route attacked Seetha. She was thrown away and trampled by the wild elephant. Although Binu tried to rescue her, he was thrown away by the pachyderm.

Seetha was dragged away from the wild elephant by her son, who rushed to the spot hearing Binu's screams. Later he called his brothers over phone and they informed the Muthirapuzha forest officials. Seetha was taken to the Peermade Taluk Hospital in a forest vehicle later. The post-mortem revealed that her body bore multiple injuries.

EXPRESS READ

Narayana students shine in NEET UG 2025

Hyderabad: Narayana Educational Institutions have once again showcased their academic excellence in NEET-UG 2025, with students securing top All India Ranks including AIR 4, 7, 12, 14, 18, 20, and 35 in the open category. In total, Narayanites claimed 21 spots in the top 100 and 84 in the top 1000 ranks.

CRPF ASI killed in bomb explosion in Sundargarh

Rourkela: An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of CRPF was killed in an IED blast during a joint combing operation against Maoists along the Odisha-Jharkhand border in Sundargarh district early on Saturday.

Guv award to St. Martin's Engineering College

Hyderabad: St. Martin's Engineering College Chairman M Laxman Reddy, Executive Director G Chandrasekar Yadav and Professor and Group Director P Santosh Kumar Patra were felicitated by Governor Jishnu Dev Varma on Saturday for their active participation in social service activities.

Two jailed for 151 days for MDMA; tests reveal it to be sucrose

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kozhikode

A police investigation report has revealed that the two youths, who were recently released after spending 151 days in jail in connection with an MDMA case, were victims of a drug mafia scam based in Bengaluru. A report submitted to the Director General of Police (DGP) by Assistant Commissioner of the Kozhikode Narcotic Cell, Bose K A, stated that there were no lapses in the police's handling of the case.

Manikandan, 46, of Kannur, and Biju Mathew, 49, of Kasaragod, were given sucrose - a type of crystal sugar - by the drug mafia, disguised as MDMA. According to the report, neither of the accused informed the police during questioning or the magistrate during the court proceedings, that the substance in their possession was not MDMA.

The duo was arrested by the Nadakkavu police on November 26 on charges of possessing 58g of MDMA. They were released on April 24 after forensic examination confirmed that the seized substance was, in fact, sucrose.

"The delay in forensic results led to their prolonged stay in jail. Even after three bail applications were filed, at no point did the accused claim the substance wasn't MDMA. No evidence proves the youths were in contact with the drug dealers. They only realised they had been duped after receiving the test results. They were released immediately after the test results came in. Therefore, there was no negligence on the part of the police in handling this case," said ACP Bose.

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Name of work: "Construction of Civil works of barrage, intake, adits, HRT, surge shaft, power house building including appurtenant works along with supply, erection, testing, commissioning of Hydro-Mechanical works like barrage spillway gate, intake gate, surge shaft gate, draft tube gate etc and Electro-Mechanical works like draft tube, spiral casing, stator, rotor, generator, transformer, control room, switchyard etc of Tiuni-Ptasu HEP (72 MW) on River Tons in District Dehradun of Uttarakhand"

Estimated cost : Rs. 537.56 Cr. at P.L. July, 2021 (GST extra as applicable)
Date of availability of bid document on website : 18-06-2025 after 11:00 Hrs.
Last date for submission of bids on website : 14-07-2025 Upto 17:00 Hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>.
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Sl.No	Tender Id	Items
1	2025_KMML_767977_1	AMC for 2 Nos 1010 KVA DG sets of TP Unit of KMML
2	2025_KMML_769010_1	For Supply of 8" Ball Valve SS316 with Actuator
3	2025_KMML_768956_1	For Fabrication & Supply of FRP panels for Filtrate Thickener
4	2025_KMML_769220_1	For the supply of Quick Opening Door for Rotary Digester-4 Nos
5	2025_KMML_769043_1	For the supply of FRP Stack

Chavara 13.06.2025 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

Bharat Coking Coal Limited
'A Mini Ratna Company'
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE
All the tenders* issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of BCCL www.bcclweb.in, Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in> In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>. *This is applicable to all Open (Domestic / Global) Tenders issued through e-procurement portal of CIL.

This information is also available on BCCL website www.bcclweb.in

MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)
SRM e-Tender No. T-2529/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001363)
MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.
*Establishment of 220/132 kV Narsi Si/S along with construction of 220 KV DC Krishnoor Narsi Line (Line length:- 18.83 km) and construction of 132 kV L/L/O on Waghalha -Dhuppa line from 220 kV Narsi Si/S (Line Length-1 km) under Ch. Sambhajinagar zone." Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. <https://srmetender.mahatransco.in>
The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 09.06.2025.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences
Saifai, Etawah - 206130 (U.P.)
Website: www.upums.ac.in

Admission Notice for M. Pharmacy-2025-26
संख्या: 956/यूपीएमएस/Pharm-PG-2025 (1827-CD)/2025-26 दिनांक: 14 जून, 2025
Applications are invited for admission in P.G. Programs in Faculty of Pharmacy for the session 2025-26 in the following specializations:
1. Master of Pharmacy- Pharmaceutical Chemistry-06 Seats
2. Master of Pharmacy-Pharmaceutics -06 Seats
3. Master of Pharmacy- Pharmacognosy -06 Seats
4. Master of Pharmacy- Pharmacology-06 Seats
Admission to the above programs will be based on valid GPAT score. Apply offline by downloading the Application form and brochure from the university website www.upums.ac.in. Send the complete application form including Demand Draft and relevant documents via speed post to: Office of COREE, Room No 330, Second floor, Administrative Block, UPUMS, Saifai, Etawah, Uttar Pradesh -206130.
Last Date to apply: 10th July, 2025.
Note:- Check the University website regularly for Pharm-PG-Admission-2025 updates.

Registrar

CLASSIFIEDS

OTHERS

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SALE OF USED ALUMINIUM CTP PLATES, EMPTY INK BARRELS AND EMPTY INK / CHEMICAL PLASTIC CONTAINERS
SEALED tenders are invited in the prescribed form for the purchase of USED ALUMINIUM CTP PLATES, EMPTY INK BARRELS AND EMPTY INK / CHEMICAL PLASTIC CONTAINERS as detailed in the tender form for the period from 01.07.2025 to 30.09.2025.
The tender forms (non-transferable) can be obtained from the Centre Manager of the Branch at:- H.No. 6-3-1113/1, B.S. Makta Lane, Somajiguda, Near Grand Kakatiya Hotel, Punjagutta, Hyderabad - 500 016 on payment of Rs.25/- payable through Demand Draft favoring EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS (MADURAI) PRIVATE LTD or by Cash to be paid at Cash Counter at Branch Offices.
Last date for receipt of sealed tender in our office is 30th June 2025 till 6.00 p.m. The tenders received after the due date and time will not be entertained.
Deputy General Manager (Production),
Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited,
Express Gardens, 29, II Main Road, Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600058.
Phone : 23457601 Extn. 310, 23457521 (Direct)
Chennai Date: 15.06.2025.

MATRIMONIALS

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SEALED tenders are invited in the prescribed form for the purchase of various categories of newspaper wastes viz., Res End Waste, Cut Waste, Empty Core, White Waste, Print Waste, Jelly and Side Disc Wrapper as detailed in the tender form for the quarter Jul/2025 to Sep/2025.
The tender forms (non-transferable) can be obtained from the Manager of the Branch at: H.No. 6-3-1113/1, B.S. Makta Lane, Somajiguda, Near Grand Kakatiya Hotel, Punjagutta, Hyderabad - 500 016 on payment of Rs.25/- payable through Demand Draft favoring EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS (MADURAI) PRIVATE LTD. or by Cash to be paid at Cash Counter at Branch Offices.
Last date for receipt of sealed tender in our office is 30.06.25 till 6.00 p.m. The tenders received after the due date and time will not be entertained.
Operations, Commercial
Express Publications (Madurai) Private Ltd.,
Express Gardens, 29 Second Main Road, Industrial Estate, Ambattur, Chennai-600058.
Phone: 23457601, Fax: 23457619/20
Date : 15.06.2025

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Advertisement No. MAHA-Metro/PHR/03/2025 Date: 29/05/2025

To cope up with the requirement of experienced personnel for Nagpur / Pune / Thane Metro Rail Project and Navi Mumbai Metro Line 1 from Metro Rail / Railway / Railway PSUs / Govt. Organizations / PSUs / Metro Related Infrastructure Industries / Infrastructure Industries for various posts in different departments on CONTRACT/DEPUTATION basis for a period of five years in Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MAHA-Metro), the above advertisement has been uploaded on the official website of MAHA-Metro.
Refer website: www.mahametro.org for details of posts, vacancies, educational qualification, age limit, minimum experience required, how to apply, etc.
Last date for submission of applications is 15th JULY 2025.

General Manager (HR)
MAHA-Metro, Pune

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
CORRIGENDUM TO AUCTION PROGRAMME JUNE' 2025
NOTICE No. 06/2025

e-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches & Locomotives, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way scrap material.

e-auction conducted by	Additional Auction date included in June'25 auction schedule and which is on	Material for auction
SA Division	26.06.2025	The details of items to be sold in e-auction will be available in catalogue www.ireps.gov.in website.

Note : All other auctions scheduled for JUNE' 24 remains unaltered
For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site <https://www.ireps.gov.in>->E-Auction->Sale->Live Auctions.
Principal Chief Materials Manager

MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
EOI No.- MSETCL/ACI&P/OPGW/2025-26/01
MSETCL invites EOI from the eligible parties for the following scope as detailed below.
"EOI for Expansion and Monetization of MSETCL's OPGW communication network by approximately 6150 km to include all balance 220 kV and Generation attached 132 kV substations through JV (Joint Venture)."

EOI No	MSETCL/ACI&P/OPGW/2025-26/01
Start date of applying for EOI	16.06.2025
Final submission date of applying for EOI	15.07.2025 @ 23:59 Hrs.
Pre-EOI meeting date	01.07.2025 @ 14:00 Hrs.

Interested parties can download EOI document from MSETCL's website. <https://www.mahatransco.in>
Any further amendments will be published on the above referred website only, so parties are requested to check the website.
---Sd-----
Chief Engineer (ACI&P) C.O. MSETCL



WORLD OF WARS AND BONFIRE OF G7 VANITIES

A week is indeed a long time in geopolitics. On Tuesday, the world markets celebrated headlines about a trade deal between China and the US. On Friday, world markets plummeted following Israeli strikes on Iran. Real wars tend to make trade wars look insignificant.

This week, the G7, the group of advanced economies, is observing the 50th anniversary of its origin in picturesque Kananaskis in Alberta, at the foothills of the Canadian Rockies. The theme, as always, is lofty: international peace and security, global economic stability and growth, digital transition and global challenges.

The ground realities mock at the ballyhooed heft of advanced economies to sustain predictability and stability. Global trade is upended, thanks to Donald J Trump's America First tariff policies. Sure, there is a ceasefire on tariffs, a détente with China and talks about talks with other countries. Peace is in pieces. Trump's promise of peace in 24 hours is consigned to the bunker by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The ceasefire-for-hostages deal in Gaza is comatose. Newly 'liberated' Syria is haunted by sectarian killings despite a relief on sanctions—US Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned the country is weeks away from an epic civil war. On Wednesday, after US declared the "end of bombing", the Houthis warned of attacks.

This week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu upped the ante as he authorised Israeli forces to attack Iran. With it, Trump's agenda in West Asia—and a possible Nobel honour—was washed off. In a sequence of complex manoeuvres, Israeli forces targeted the leadership of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, nuclear scientists, military units and nuclear facilities. The sequence is instructive. The audacious attacks were executed just before officials from Iran and the US were to meet in Oman over a new nuclear deal. The US president authorised the talks for the new deal and gave a deadline of 60 days; the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six countries including the US took 20 months.



THE THIRD EYE
SHANKKAR AIYAR
Author of *The Gated Republic*, *Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution*, and *Accidental India* (shankkar.aiyar@gmail.com)

There is much lather about the changing stance of the US, which reneged on the 2015 deal in 2018, only to re-initiate talks in 2025. History shows Iran's nuclear programme was born in the US in 1957. America provided Iran with its first reactor and fuels in 1967 during the Shah regime. Following the 1979 revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini opposed the programme and suggested the unfinished plants be used as silos to store wheat. The programme, which was revived after the war with Iraq, has been a target for Netanyahu since 1996.

Be that as it may, the timing of the latest attack merits attention. It followed the expiry of the Trump deadline and a IAEA Thursday report on Iran's non-compliance of safeguards and non-cooperation. There is a political aspect too—opinion polls showed the coalition led by Netanyahu losing its majority in the 120-seat Knesset. The imminence of the attack was known. Trump warned Israel not to "blow it" by attacking Iran. Right after the attack, the US distanced itself, stating it was "not involved in strikes" and warned Iran to "not target US interests in the region". But Trump later admitted "we knew everything" and even said it improved the chances of a deal. While that is debatable, the impact of escalation could be catastrophic. At the UN Security Council, Iran said the US was complicit.

The conflict overshadows all else. The magnitude of challenges, the spectre of a polycrisis facing the G7, is daunting. The timing of the G7 meet in Canada, as its people re-assert their Canadian identity in the face of Trumpism, affords an opportunity for Prime Minister Mark Carney to shepherd the agenda towards resolutions. He could leverage his stature as a central banker. He has shown sagacity by distancing himself from the past and inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The inclusion of leaders from Australia, Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, South Africa and Ukraine could enable a coalition of common sense. It remains to be seen if Carney can emerge as a modern-day Lester Bowles Pearson, who won a Nobel for his role in resolving the Suez crisis.

The trouble, though, is the character of G7, which has in the recent past been dominated by the US—effectively, as G1+6. Trump's uncanny knack to occupy attention makes it more so. The bloc was born out of a necessity to confront the global oil crisis, just as the G20 was formalised in 2009 after the global financial crisis. On both occasions, it was the need of the US which clarified the course of action. It is noteworthy that neither forum has delivered since. Sustaining cooperation calls for recognition of interdependence and participative processes. Can G7 coalesce to succeed?

The past is often the prologue of the future, and is validated by communiqués. The leaders' communiqué issued in June 2022 from Elmau in Germany, four months into the war in Ukraine, mentioned 'trade' 17 times and 'peace' nine times. In May 2023, the one issued from Hiroshima in Japan mentioned 'trade' 18 times and 'peace' 12 times. Last year, the communiqué issued in June from Apulia in Italy mentioned 'trade' 20 times and 'peace' 24 times, covering the conflicts in Ukraine, Palestine, Iran and Yemen and the Indo-Pacific. Yet, in 2025, the spectre of crises has only expanded.

Ironies fuel cynicism and thrive on hypocrisy. There is no quarrelling with piety, but pious intentions are never enough. If the G7 wants to douse the bonfire of vanities, it must propel solutions.

BOLLYWOOD FLOPS AS THE SOUTH SHINES



POWER & POLITICS
PRABHU CHAWLA
prabhuchawla@newindianexpress.com
Follow him on X @PrabhuChawla

THE theory goes that there are only seven stories in the world, and every story ever told is their permutation. In the same vein, there are seven clichés in Bollywood—Akshay Kumar, the Khans, Deepika Padukone, the Kapoors, and Karan Johar—who tell the same story over and over again.

This dictum was recently proved in a cavernous PVR auditorium that stood eerily silent during an opening day show of *Housefull 5*, its plush seats untouched despite the top booking app flashing a deceptive 60 percent sold status. Akshay Kumar's latest comedy caper, backed by a staggering ensemble of 19 stars including Abhishek Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt and Nana Patekar, limped to a ₹24-crore opening on June 6—a pale shadow of the franchise's earlier debuts—and failed to cross ₹100 crore in its opening week.

Social media buzzed with disdain, branding it a "cringe disaster" and "waahiyat", with its trailer scraping just 8 million YouTube views in 21 hours—one of Akshay's lowest. This flop, coupled with whispers of producers inflating ticket sales to mask empty theatres, paints a grim picture for Bollywood's biggest names. Their star power is dimming, which threatens India's ₹12,000-crore entertainment industry, its 9,500 screens, and the hundreds of millions of film watchers who fuel it. The ironic twist is that as Hindi cinema stumbles, South Indian films surge. It exposes Bollywood's creative famine.

Akshay, the indefatigable 'Khiladi', once ruled B-town with hits like *Hera Pheri* and *Welcome*. But his recent offerings like *Sky Force*, *Kesari 2*, and now *Housefull 5* have floundered, failing to cross ₹100 crore. The Big B lent his gravitas to *Housefull 5* via Instagram

endorsements for son Abhishek, but couldn't improve the film's ₹54 crore two-day haul. His recent roles, like in *Kalki 2898 AD* (₹550 crore in Hindi), leaned on South Indian production muscle, underscoring Bollywood's reliance on external firepower.

Salman Khan's *Sikandar* gathered a disappointing ₹26 crore, despite its ₹200-crore budget. Kangana Ranaut's *Emergency*, where she played Indira Gandhi, crumbled at ₹18.4 crore. Though Anupam Kher praised Kangana's directorial vision, audiences shunned the film, echoing their rejection of his patriotic cameos in flops like *The Vaccine War* (2023).

SRK rode high with *Pathaan's* ₹1,055 crore in 2023, but his sparse 2024 releases and a paan masala ad controversy have dented his image, with X posts decrying Bollywood's "corporate booking laundering" to fake success. Ranbir Kapoor's *Animal* (2023) hit ₹553 crore, but his 2024 ventures, including a ₹400-crore film with Madhuri Dixit, struggled to match that scale with *Shamsher* (2022) still stinging as a high-profile flop.

Deepika Padukone, once Bollywood's box-office queen, leaned on *Kalki 2898 AD's* South Indian success, but her solo projects like *Chhapaak* (2020) flopped. These icons now rely on southern directors; one X post said, "BW top heroes like SRK, SK, AK are begging films from South producers to get success."

This star-studded slump is strangling India's entertainment industry, which employs over 2 million people and relies on a shrinking number of big screens. In 2024, 1.2 billion tickets were sold, but the footfalls dropped 10 percent from 2023, with Hindi films capturing only ₹4,679 crore of the ₹11,833-crore total box office, a 13 percent decline. Only six original Hindi films crossed ₹100 crore in 2024—*Street 2*, *Bhoel Bhulaiyaa 3*, *Singham Again* among them—compared to 16 in 2023. At least 20-25 films

starring Akshay, Amitabh, Salman, Kangana, Anupam, Shah Rukh, Ranbir and Deepika failed to hit this mark, a stark fall from 2018's 13 films.

The sociological shift is brutal. OTT platforms, with 96 million subscriptions, offer diverse content at ₹100-200 monthly, trumping theatre costs. In 2023, 400 films skipped theatres for streaming, up 30 percent from 2022. Southern cinema's mass appeal, with stars like Prabhas and NTR Jr, filled the void, while Malayalam and Gujarati films grew 10 percent and 66 percent in market share.

South Indian cinema is thriving, with dubbed Hindi versions of *Pushpa 2* (₹889 crore), *Kalki 2898 AD* (₹550 crore), and *Devara* (₹300 crore) outpacing Bollywood's best. Telugu and Tamil films leverage spectacle and relatable narratives, resonating with rural Gen Z who drive 65 percent of video consumption, per an EY report.

Chhaava's ₹567 crore shows Bollywood can still deliver, but its Marathi pride narrative mirrors southern cinema's cultural rootedness. Javed Akhtar noted, southern films' "dusky" stars like Allu Arjun connect better with India's heartland than Bollywood's urban elite. As one social media user declared, "All 90s actors are done n dusted." Bollywood's focus on marketing fashion and glamour alienates rural viewers, who embrace South Indian films' collectivist ethos amid rising Hindutva sentiments.

Political messaging is another albatross. Kangana's *Emergency* and *The Kashmir Files* (2022) leaned into nationalist fervour, but alienated viewers with heavy-handed narratives, earning ₹18.4 crore and polarising reviews. SRK and Aamir faced boycotts for perceived "anti-Hindu" stances, with *Laal Singh Chaddha* (2022) crashing amid X-fueled outrage. Deepika's endorsement of Operation Sindoor with Kangana and Akshay didn't translate to box-office wins, as audiences reject ideology-driven films.



SOURAV ROY

SMELLING CASH IN THE SPACE RACE



SPEAKEASY
PRATIK KANJILAL
Senior Fellow, Henry J Leir Institute of Migration and Human Security, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

SPACE has an odour. Visitors to the Goddard Space Flight Centre in Maryland, US, can smell it by pressing a button to inhale a puff of air that smells of space. Space is airless by definition, but the workaround is essential because we can't inhale 'space' without fatal consequences. Despite this logical complication, the experience is evocative. Space smells of long-distance travel. It smells of Indian highways far from big cities. It smells like the world did long ago on the railways, when almost everyone travelled without air conditioning.

But hereafter, space could smell a little different. From the beginning of the space race, it has smelled of Cold War rivalry, military-industrial complexes and technology-based diplomacy. These metallic notes will remain; but from here on, space will also smell overwhelmingly of commerce, of paper mon-

ey. Gold is economically and chemically stable. It has no smell, unlike space.

The countdown of the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space station has been aborted twice but soon, astronauts from India, Poland and Hungary could be back in space after 40 years and more. In anticipation, their national media have already declared it to be a turning point for their domestic space programmes. But the composition of the Axiom-4 mission also indicates that the whole world has passed a turning point.

The crew, led by American Peggy Whitson, will be taken to orbit on Elon Musk's commercial Dragon launch vehicle, and the project is a collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency, ISRO and the Houston firm Axiom Space, whose most ambitious project is the first commercial space station. The purpose of the collaboration is to facilitate a range of commercial activities in space, from scientific research to tourism. Space is about to be opened up commercially, just like the world was opened like an oyster by the European Age of Exploration.

About 40 years ago, when India, Poland and Hungary last sent their citizens into space, it was a domain where national governments showed off their technological prowess to compete for geopolitical gains. These three countries made a place for themselves in space under the aegis of Interkosmos, a

Russian state programme launched in 1967 to help satellite nations of the USSR and other socialist nations like Afghanistan and Cuba reach space. Non-aligned nations Syria and India were also under its umbrella.

The India chapter began in December 1980, when Soviet head of state Leonid Brezhnev visited New Delhi and proposed a joint space mission under Interkosmos to Indira Gandhi. Four years later, in 1984, Rakesh Sharma got a

The private Axiom-4 mission, which promises to take astronauts from India, Poland and Hungary to space, shows we have entered a new space age—one where the sector is being opened up commercially

berth on the Soyuz T-11 mission bound for the Salyut 7 space station.

Sharma's mission beat the UK and Japan by over a decade. The journalist Toyohiro Akiyama was the first Japanese in space under Interkosmos. In 1990, he took the Soyuz TM-11 mission to the Mir Space Station and broadcast live to Japan. The next year, the chemist Helen Sharman became the first person from the UK to lift off and fly to Mir.

She had simply responded to a rare radio spot: "Astronaut wanted. No experience necessary."

Interkosmos was a political project with a global footprint, running from Cuba to Mongolia. The USSR beat the US in the first, rapid-fire round of the war of perceptions. Sputnik was the first satellite, visible to the naked eye from Earth and piercingly audible on home radio sets. Audio-visually, it told the world that Russia had arrived. Then, they launched into space the first animal, the dog Laika, the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, and the first woman spacefarer, Valentina Tereshkova.

The US took the advantage with William Anders' iconic pictures of earthrise, shot as Apollo 8 orbited the moon. And after the "giant leap for mankind" of Apollo 11, the race was over. The USSR was trailing, but it had a unique proposition for the socialist countries—it took them to space. The effect was such that most of them did not invest in space until much later. Unlike India, Poland and Hungary have fledgling space programmes which are still not widely known.

The Axiom-4 mission seems to transfer the mantle of patronage of less capable nations from Russia to the US. It's important for Washington at a time when its soft power is waning. But actually, the mantle has been transferred to private American enterprise, not the government of the United States.

QUOTE CORNER



A majority of Israelis, as public opinion polls indicate, support the slaughter and are even waiting for the population transfer that is to come in its wake. Therefore, the pressure and the punishment must be directed at Israel in its entirety... Diplomats and decision-makers, do you get this? In Israel, all of us are now Ben-Gvir and Smotrich.

Gideon Levy, writing in the oldest Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, about five Western countries sanctioning two Israeli ministers

The whole trouble with this generation [of lawyers] is that they don't want to go to the trial court to learn the practice.

Justice S V N Bhatti of the Supreme Court, while hearing a POCSO case

There were doubters as to the route that we took, supposedly playing weaker teams... Hopefully, this kind of squashes that.

Temba Bavuma, South Africa captain, on winning the Test Championship

MAILBAG WRITE TO

Safety first
Ref: *How not to fly on a wing and a prayer* (Jun 14). The author's views are significant as the safety of passengers and the crew is paramount. Even if the pilots are qualified, a technical snag is enough to put the lives of those aboard at risk. There should be no laxity in the intensive, mandatory checking of all parameters of an aircraft before each take-off.
V K Kumar, Thiruvananthapuram

Punish guilty
Ref: *When spectacle crowds out governance* (Jun 13). Kudos to the author. When the Karnataka team won several Ranji trophies with legends like EAS Prasanna, Anil Kumble, Rahul Dravid playing, there was no celebration. Private franchise RCB is hardly related to Karnataka except in its name. Let us not let the opportunity pass without accountability. The guilty must be punished.
Raghuram Rao Akkinipally, Mohali

Neighbourly nuisance
Ref: *Erase hyphen between India and Pakistan* (Jun 14). First, it's prudent to never underestimate your enemy. Second, Pakistan has great nuisance value. Pakistan is by no means our equal, but they have been bleeding us by a thousand small cuts. What was India's response in 2008 when Mumbai was attacked? The Congress government tried to coin a new term, 'Hindu terror'. It is better to be safe than sad.
Shreeram Paranjpe, Bengaluru

Taking responsibility
Ref: *Committed to transparent communication: Tata* (Jun 14). The Tata Group's commitment to transparency and responsible action in the wake of the recent Air India crash is appreciated. In such difficult times, leadership that prioritises openness and accountability is commendable. The focus remains on understanding the root cause of this tragedy and implementing necessary reforms to enhance safety.
V K S Krishnan, Kumbakonam

Fishers' fortunes
Ref: *Fish caught from Kerala coast safe* (Jun 14). It is good news for fishermen all over Kerala and in Kanyakumari district that the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology has certified the fish caught off the Kerala coast as free of contamination. The news comes when there is a steep fall in the demand for fish after the shipping accident. There should be more research done down the line to reassure consumers since the threat still looms.
P G Moorthy, Thiruvananthapuram

Schooling boost
Ref: *Taliki Vandanam scheme: ₹2,000 per student to be deducted for school infrastructure* (Jun 13). The scheme launched by the Andhra government is a blend of educational reform and social empowerment. By offering ₹15,000 per school-going child—₹13,000 directly to mothers and the rest for school development—it transcends mere financial aid. By investing in both the learner and the learning environment, it incentivises schooling.
Asad Kabir, Nagari

Managing waste
Ref: *Citizens to get reward for reporting waste dumping in Kerala* (Jun 14). While the decision to penalise littering is welcome, the government must prioritise establishing facilities for scientific waste disposal. Most areas in Kerala lack effective waste management systems. Collecting evidence against violators is easy, but providing viable solutions is far more challenging. The Haritha Karma Sena collects only plastic and resalable scrap, leaving other waste unaddressed.
Girish R Edathitta, Pathanamthitta

Test glory
South Africa's victory in the World Test Championship final at Lord's will be etched in cricket lore as one of the best matches ever. Markram's century in the second innings is a fine tutorial for budding batsmen. And the oft-repeated criticism of the South Africans as perennial chokers has been laid to rest. In all, this match was an excellent advertisement for Test cricket.
M V Sundararaman, Chennai



Ashok Gehlot @ashokgehlot51
In this scorching heat, self-protection is the best cure. In the last four days, more than 1900 heat-wave patients have come in SMS alone.



Yogi Adityanath @myogiadityanath
Heartiest greetings to the people of the state and all the blood donors inspired by the spirit of service on 'World Blood Donor Day'!



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra @priyankagandhi
It is shameful and disappointing that our government has chosen to abstain on the UN motion for the protection of civilians and upholding legal obligations in Gaza.

MEA says channels of talks, diplomacy should be utilised for de-escalation • Kharage says foreign policy in shambles

India abstains from SCO Israel strike statement

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA has distanced itself from a recent Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) statement that sharply condemned Israel's military actions against Iran, reaffirming its neutral stance and preference for diplomatic resolution.

External Affairs Ministry said on Friday that India's position had already been outlined on June 13 and remains unchanged: "We urge that channels of dialogue and diplomacy be utilised to work towards de-escalation, and it is essential that the international community undertake endeavours in that direction."

The MEA added that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had spoken with his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi the same day, conveying international concerns and calling for restraint: "He also urged the avoidance



of any escalatory steps and an early return to diplomacy. The overall position of India as stated above was communicated to other SCO members. Keeping that in mind, India did not participate in the discussions" on the SCO statement.

The 10-member SCO bloc — which includes China, Russia, Iran, and Pakistan — issued a strongly worded statement criticising Israel's military operations. It said: "Such aggressive actions against civilian targets, including energy and transport infrastructure, which have resulted in civilian

casualties, are a gross violation of international law and the United Nations Charter." The statement called the strikes an attack on Iran's sovereignty and a threat to regional and global stability.

The SCO also reiterated its support for resolving issues around Iran's nuclear programme through peaceful means, extending condolences to Iran and reaffirming its opposition to unlawful actions against member states. It is rare that India abstains from an SCO statement except when it is on issues related to projects related to Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on the grounds of sovereignty concerns.

Meanwhile, India, renewed its call for calm "India urges both sides to avoid any escalatory steps. Existing channels of dialogue and diplomacy should be utilised to work towards a de-escalation of the situation and resolving underlying issues."

Cong criticises govt for abstaining from voting during UNGA resolution

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

HITTING out at the government for abstaining from voting during the UNGA resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, the Congress on Saturday said that India's foreign policy "is in a shambles". The party demanded that the government clarify whether India has abandoned its long-standing principled position "against war, against genocide, and for justice."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "It is now increasingly evident that our foreign policy is in a shambles. Perhaps, PM Modi must now take a call on his EAM's repeated blunders."

Kharge said 149 countries voted for a UNGA resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, while India was only one of the 19 countries that abstained. "We virtually stand isolated by this step," he noted.

Kharge said the Congress had condemned the attacks by

Hamas on the people of Israel on October 8, 2023. "We have consistently condemned the indiscriminate actions that included a siege of the Gaza Strip and bombings in it. 60,000 people have died and there is a widespread and horrific humanitarian crisis," he said.

Noting that on October 19, 2023, the Congress called for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza, he said, "India cannot stand silent and passive, while the region faces horrific violence, humanitarian catastrophe, and increasing instability."

Posting an MEA statement on his 'X' handle, AICC general secretary in charge of communication Jairam Ramesh said, "What does this MEA statement really mean? It seems to suggest that Israel can attack Iran but that Iran should exercise restraint and not climb the escalatory ladder. Have we been reduced to being an abject apologist for Israel?"

MURDER MOST FOUL 'VILE AND DECEITFUL, CRUEL AND MEAN'

ANURAAG SINGH

It was meant to be a honeymoon, new beginning and a celebration. But by the time it ended, a young man was dead, his body lying in a gorge near the remote waterfalls of Meghalaya. And what appeared to be a romantic getaway had revealed itself as one of the most chillingly premeditated murders in recent memory.

On May 11, Raja Raghuvanshi, a 29-year-old transporter from Indore, married Sonam Raghuvanshi in a traditional community ceremony. Eleven days later, on May 23, he was ambushed and killed during what could have been the most joyful phase of his new life. His murder wasn't the result of a sudden argument or a moment of passion. Rather it had been carefully planned weeks in advance and executed with chilling calm.

The plan was simple in structure but cold in detail: lure Raja on a honeymoon far from home, isolate him in an unfamiliar terrain, and kill him in a location so remote that the police would struggle to find the truth.

The honeymoon idea came from Sonam herself, who had proposed the seven-day trip to Assam and Meghalaya as a wedding gift. Raja had agreed, unaware that the woman who now shared his new life had already set his death in motion.

Three men — Akash, Vishal, and Anand — had travelled ahead of the couple. They weren't professional killers, but were trusted friends of Raj Kushwah, Sonam's secret lover. The ₹50,000 they were paid was reportedly funneled through hawala channels, arranged to fund a murder disguised as a robbery or an accident.

Sonam stayed in constant touch with them, sending live coordinates over phone while her husband remained blissfully unaware.

Then the first attempts to kill Raja failed. From May 20-22, the trio made multiple efforts to intercept him, but each time, something didn't go as planned. Still, they kept at it. Sonam reassured them. She hadn't booked return tickets. There was no way back.

On May 23, everything aligned. In the remote forest near Wei Sawdong Falls in Sohra (Cherrapunji), Raja was led into an ambush. The attack was swift. Within minutes, he was dead. His body was dumped into a deep gorge, hidden from view, left to be lost among the rocks and mist. There was no struggle, no chance for rescue.



Sonam, composed and controlled, returned from the scene on a hired scooter along with the three killers. She left behind the scooter Raja had booked, abandoning it in another location to throw off investigators.

But she left behind her wedding ring and mangalsutra, either by intention or by accident — the evidence linking her to the man she helped kill. Then, she vanished. Clad in a burqa, Sonam began a carefully planned escape route across Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. She switched vehicles, routes, and cities with rehearsed ease.

Back in Indore, confusion confounded. Her family and Raja's believed the newlyweds had fallen to some gruesome crime in a faraway land. Prayers were held. Hope, indeed, lingered. But Sonam was waiting in the wings to reappear with a story: masked men, a robbery gone wrong, and her miraculous escape. The plan, however, had already begun to fall apart before perhaps she knew it.

On June 2, Raja's body was recovered from a gorge near Meghalaya's Wei Sawdong Falls. The investigation progressed in no time. Phone records, CCTV footage, and the wedding ring and mangalsutra, all pointed to premeditated murder. A joint operation across Meghalaya, MP, and UP soon tracked down the culprits. On June 8, Raj and his three friends were arrested from Indore. Hours later, Sonam resurfaced in Ghazipur, telling her fabricated tale. By then, no one was willing to believe her. She was arrested the next day and brought back to Meghalaya. Within days, she confessed.

The murder shocked the nation — not just for its brutality, but also for its chilling calculation. A honeymoon turned into a trap. Raja had no enemies. He wasn't a man who courted danger. He was caught in a scheme — vile and deceitful, cruel and mean — but fell victim to one of the "ugliest thing that you ever have seen".

NIA conducts searches at MP, Raj locations for terror conspiracy probe

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted extensive searches at multiple locations in Madhya Pradesh' Bhopal and Rajasthan's Jhalawar in a terror conspiracy case linked to the banned organisation, Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT), officials said.

A NIA spokesperson said, "Three locations were extensively searched in Bhopal and two in Jhalawar as part of the agency's continuing probe into the activities of HuT and its members in the terror conspiracy case." The officials said digital devices have been seized which are being sent for forensic analysis.

The case is part of the NIA's efforts to destroy various terrorist and radical networks and outfits trying to spread mayhem across the country. The present case against HuT is related to the alleged conspiracy of radicalising and recruiting vulnerable Muslim youth.

"The youth were being motivated to spread violence in a bid to overthrow India's democratically elected government and establish an Islamic State governed by Shariah law," the spokesperson alleged.

Last year, India designated

Accused in drug racket deported from UAE

The CBI has said that it has coordinated the deportation of Taher Salim Dola, a key accused in a synthetic drug case worth ₹252 crore, from the UAE. Dola, wanted by Mumbai police for allegedly operating an illegal Mephedrone manufacturing unit in Sangli, arrived at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport from Dubai. Officials said that Dola was arrested by Abu Dhabi police in January after INTERPOL issued a Red Corner Notice against him in November, 2024.

HuT and all its fronts as "terrorist organisations" under Section 35 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The government, while banning the outfit, had claimed that HuT aimed to establish Islamic state and Caliphate globally, including in India, by overthrowing democratically elected governments through jihad and terrorist activities.

The HuT was involved in radicalisation and motivation of gullible youth to join terrorist organisations, such as ISIS and raising funds for terror activities, the Ministry of Home Affairs had said.

PM to leave for 3-nation tour of Cyprus, Canada & Croatia

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a three-nation tour starting June 15, with key stops in Cyprus, Canada, and Croatia, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Saturday. The high-profile visit includes participation in the G7 Summit and marks a diplomatic first in Indo-Croatian relations.

Modi will begin his tour in Cyprus on June 15 and 16, at the invitation of President Nikos Christodoulides. This will be the first visit by an Indian PM to the Mediterranean nation in over two decades. While in capital Nicosia, Modi will hold formal talks with President Christodoulides and address business leaders in Limassol.

The External Affairs Ministry said that the visit will "reaffirm the shared commitment" of India and Cyprus to deepen bilateral ties and enhance New Delhi's engagement with the Mediterranean region and the European Union.

The second leg of the tour will take Modi to Kananaskis, Canada, on June 16 and 17, to attend the G7 Summit at the invitation of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. This will mark Modi's sixth consecutive appearance at the G7 as an invited leader. Discussions will span critical global issues, including energy security, AI-



Russia-Ukraine war, China role on G7 agenda

The 51st G7 Summit, marking the 50th anniversary of the first G7 meeting, is underway under Canada's presidency—its seventh time leading the forum. Key agenda items include the Iran-Israel conflict, the Russia-Ukraine war, and China's growing global role. Canada will also host a series of G7 ministerial meetings with outreach partners including Brazil, India, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, and Ukraine. Institutions like NATO, the United Nations, and the World Bank will also participate. Discussions will centre on the future of energy security, focusing on diversification, technology, infrastructure, and investment to ensure reliable, affordable access in a rapidly changing world.

driven innovation, and quantum technologies.

"We believe the forthcoming meeting between the two leaders will offer an important opportunity to exchange views on bilateral and global issues and explore pathways to reset the relationship," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said last week.

Tensions between India and Canada escalated sharply in 2023 after then-Prime Minister

Justin Trudeau alleged Indian involvement in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. India rejected the accusations as "absurd", and the ties soured further after Canada expelled Indian diplomats.

Modi's final stop will be Croatia on June 18, where he will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and meet President Zoran Milanovic.

Down memory lane: Lankan Army chief recounts days at alma mater

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

IT was an emotional homecoming for Lieutenant (Lt) General (Gen) BKG M Lasantha Rodrigo when he reviewed the passing out parade at the hallowed portals of the Indian Military Academy. Now, the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army, he returned as the Reviewing Officer for the passing out parade (PoP), witnessing the commissioning of a new generation of officers, including foreign cadets from Sri Lanka.

It was in December 1990 that General Rodrigo was commissioned as part of the 87th IMA Course and rose to command one of the most battle-hardened armies in the sub-continent.

While addressing the passing out course the Reviewing Officer said, "I am deeply honoured and moved to the point of tears to stand before you as the first IMA alumnus to return as the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army and review this parade."

"Looking at your faces, I see my younger self. This place doesn't just train officers; it



forges bonds that last a lifetime. He thanked General Upendra Dwidvedi and the Indian Army for the kind invitation.

The Indian Army in a statement said that General Rodrigo reflected on how his journey, like that of the officer cadets present, had begun with a simple haircut in the barber chair of the Indian Military Academy.

He reminded the officer cadets that today, they were not just wearing a rank but they were embracing a way of life.

Quoting the IMA Credo, the General Officer highlighted the three unshakable responsibilities that every officer must up-

hold. First, to the Nation - second, to their soldiers and third, to the families of our brave hearts, the Army added.

The General Officer reminded the officer cadets that they now belong to an unbroken chain of patriots and warriors, urging them to wear the uniform not just with pride, but with purpose.

The Chief of Sri Lanka Army said the Academy has not only shaped soldiers but future guardians of the nation. As their real journey begins, he urges them to lead with wisdom, fight for what's right, and carry the hopes of a billion with pride.

Gen Rodrigo was on four-day official visit to India, from June 11 to 14, reinforcing the long-standing and robust military ties between the two armies.

While for Gen Rodrigo it was the last day of his visit to India, the IMA PoP on Saturday had another symbolic story with two Sri Lankan officer cadets, including RMNL Rathnayake, son of Brigadier RSNP Rathnayake, passing out as commissioned officers.

700 new officers join the Army, Air Force

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

AT passing-out parades (POPs) at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) in Dehradun and the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Hyderabad, around 700 officers were on Saturday commissioned to the two services.

At the IMA, a total of 451 officer cadets of 156 Regular Course, 45 Technical Entry Scheme and 139 Technical Graduate Course, Special Commissioned Officers (SCO-54), including 32 officer cadets from nine friendly foreign countries, successfully passed out from the portals of Indian Military Academy. The Commissioned Officers of the Indian Army will be joining at the rank of Lieutenant.

The PoP at the IMA was special as Lieutenant General BKG M Lasantha Rodrigo, who came as the Reviewing Officer, was the former IMA cadet.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Saturday commissioned 254 new Flying Officers into the service, marking a significant milestone in the careers of these young men and women and reinforcing the strength of the force.

Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Chief of the Air Staff (CAS),



Operation Sindoor stands as a shining testament to the unparalleled professionalism of the Indian Air Force. We have demonstrated our ability to deliver decisive blows to the enemy — AP Singh, Air Chief Marshal

who was the Reviewing Officer (RO) of the parade, conferred the President's Commission to the graduating Flight Cadets.

In his address to the officers, Air Chief Marshal Singh highlighted the IAF's operational prowess. "Operation Sindoor stands as a shining testament to the unparalleled professionalism of the Indian Air Force. We have demonstrated our ability to deliver precise and decisive blows to the enemy," he said.

Singh said the Operation Sindoor has showcased exceptional coordination, synergy and integration within the armed forces. He called upon the newly commissioned officers to keep furthering the spirit of jointness as they grow in service.

The Combined Graduation Parade (CGP), held at the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Dundigal, Hyderabad, marked the culmination of pre-commissioning training for ca-

dets from both the Flying and Ground Duty branches. "A total of 254 Flight Cadets graduated today, which included men and women. On this occasion, 9 officers from the Indian Navy, 7 officers from the Indian Coast Guard, and one trainee from a friendly foreign country were also awarded 'Wings' on successful completion of flying training," the IAF said in a statement.

Observing that the battlefield is going to be more and more complex, Air Chief Singh said the young officers would need to continuously "train and re-train" to succeed in future conflicts. With the Indian Air Force fast evolving into an aerospace force, many young officers will lead the nation's foray into space, he said. These challenges will require them to be totally committed, focused, innovative, and passionate about their job, he said.

Singh also exhorted the graduating officers to focus on physical and mental fitness and personality development through a healthy lifestyle. The event commemorated the successful completion of the pre-commissioning training of flight cadets across various branches of the IAF.

INDIA	Max	Min	Mumbai	Max	Min
Ahmedabad	31	27	28	25	
Bhopal	32	24	29	27	
Jaipur	38	27	37	30	
Amritsar	42	31	38	30	
Chennai	33	28	29	26	
Kolkata	32	27	29	23	
Srinagar	27	17	39	29	

● 9 killed, 32 injured as Air India flight to Gatwick slams into BJ hospital ● High-level probe panel to give report within 3 months

2 days on, med college tries to pick up pieces

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

A tragedy of unimaginable scale struck the heart of the medical fraternity when an Air India flight crashed into the mess building of BJ Medical College on Thursday, killing five doctors and four of their family members. More than 60 doctors and mess staff were inside when the aircraft tore through the structure, turning a normal lunch hour into a nightmare.



For the survivors, the emotional toll is staggering. The next day, many doctors returned to salvage what little was left — items charred or buried under the debris.

The MBBS students who died in the crash have been identified as Rakesh Deora, a second-year medical student, along with first-year students Jayaprakash Chaudhary, Aryan Rajput, and Manav Bhadu. Dr Bhavesh Seta was also among the dead. A representative of the Junior Doctors' Medical Association told the media, "Four medical students lost their lives in the plane crash while around 50 to 60 boys were having lunch in the mess. The missing individuals are being identified through DNA sampling."

Among those who lost their lives was the pregnant wife of Dr Pradeep Solanki, a neurosurgeon. She had been resting in their hostel room when the debris fell. Dr Neelkanth, an onco-surgery student, lost mother, maternal uncle, and maternal aunt who had come to visit him.

But even amid loss, came another blow—evacuation. As the Air Accidents Investigation Bureau launched its probe, hostel buildings were marked unsafe and residents were asked to vacate. A video that soon went viral showed a doctor breaking down. "My daughter is admitted. Please show some humanity," he said, begging for just two or three more days.

Medical College Dean Dr Meenakshi Parekh clarified the evacuation was necessary for safety. "Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has vacated all the hostels of Atulyam for investigation. The accommodation of the postgraduate students living in those hostels has been arranged..."

Kharge says it is 'no time to claim credit'...

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

CONGRESS national president Mallikarjun Kharge, AICC media head Pawan Khara and Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar on Saturday visited the site of the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad.

Addressing the media on the occasion, Kharge emphasised, "Now that the black box has been recovered, we must wait for more details to emerge. Those found responsible must be held accountable. But let's not rush to blame anyone for the mishap. Also, this is not the time to take credit by visiting the site or meeting the injured." He further stressed the need for adequate compensation to the kin of the victims.

Taking a sharp swipe at the ruling party, Kharge said, "Such accidents must not be dismissed as just being normal. In times like these, the entire nation must come together. I urge my party workers and leaders to continue helping those in need." Kharge said he and his party colleagues had met the medical students injured in the accident and the lone survivor, Vishwaskumar Ramesh.

Meanwhile, AAP leader Atishi also visited the crash site and Ahmedabad Civil Hospital.

... meanwhile, minister says decoding black box data

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

UNION Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Saturday said an extended surveillance of all Boeing 787s aircraft in the Indian aviation market was being carried out. Eight out of 34 such Boeing aircraft have already been inspected.

Briefing newsmen on the measures taken in the aftermath of the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad on June 12, Naidu said, "From the DGCA, we have given orders on our behalf for extended surveillance. It will be done with immediate urgency."

A high-level multi-disciplinary panel, chaired by the home secretary, has been set up to investigate the causes of the

Ahmedabad plane crash. It will hold a meeting on Monday, and the committee is expected to submit its report in three months, Naidu said.

The black box of Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner plane that crashed was recovered from the site on Friday evening. "Decoding the black box is going to give in-depth insight into what happened moments before the plane crash," he said.

"Any theory going around the plane crash will be analysed," he added.

Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha said, "The investigation is going on smoothly. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is probing the crash."



SRINAGAR DIARY

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Govt to revive Tulbul project as IWT suspended

After putting the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan in abeyance following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, the Central government is going to revive the Tulbul navigation project on the Wular Lake in J&K, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced in Srinagar. "Earlier, whenever work on new power projects had to be taken up, India had to consult Pakistan due to IWT. Without their consent, we could not have carried out the work," he said. The Tulbul project, conceived in 1981, could not materialise because Pakistan objected to its construction. The minister added, "Since the IWT has been put in abeyance, we don't need Pak's consent anymore."



STATE OF AI AFFAIRS: 'GOD SAVED ME'



Even during the landing, there was a rattling sound. It wasn't normal.

Hinaben Kalaria, passenger

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

IN a major revelation, a passenger who disembarked from the same aircraft just hours before the crash, has come forward with a harrowing account of multiple technical faults experienced during her journey.

Hinaben Kalaria, a Surat resident, had arrived in Ahmedabad on Air India flight AI172

from London, which landed at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport at around 12 noon—a little over an hour before the aircraft was scheduled for its onward journey to London, when it crashed near the Meghaninagar area shortly after takeoff, claiming hundreds of lives on June 12.

Recounting a series of unsettling technical issues she experienced aboard, Hinaben said,

"As soon as the flight took off from London, the AC system was shut off." She also said that all display screens inside the aircraft were non-functional.

"Even during landing in Ahmedabad, there was a strange rattling sound inside the plane. It wasn't normal. There was a vibration and noise as if something wasn't right with the plane's structure or wheels," Hinaben said.

4 bodies recovered after major encounter between cops & Maoists in MP dist

ANURAAG SINGH @ Bhopal

FOUR Naxalites, including three women, were killed in two back-to-back encounters with security forces in the dense forests of Madhya Pradesh's Balaghat district on Saturday, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said. Their bodies have been recovered, but they are yet to be identified.

A grenade launcher, a self-loading rifle, two .315 bore rifles, other weapons and material were reportedly also found on the site.

The encounter took place during a joint operation of the state police's Hawk Force, the CRPF and Balaghat & Mandla district cops in the Pachama Dadar forests near Laugur village under the limits of the Baihar police station.

After the three women Maoist cadres were killed in the exchange of fire amid heavy rains, the security forces moved further into the forests, where they came upon the hideout of armed Maoist Naxalites. Seeing the security forces, the Left-wing extremists started firing at them. A male outlaw was gunned down as the forces re-



taliated. Others escaped from the spot, leaving behind arms, ammunition and other belongings.

"There were more than 20 armed outlaws present in the jungles when the back-to-back encounters took place," MP Police Special DG (Anti-Naxal) Pankaj Srivastava said.

Notably, this is the third major anti-Maoist encounter in the jungles of Balaghat or Mandla districts in the last 115 days. As many as 10 Maoist cadres, nine of them women, have been killed in these encounters. On February 19, four female Naxalites were shot dead in Balaghat. Later, on April 2, two wanted women cadres, were gunned down in Mandla.

ASSAM

38 arrested in Dhubri cow head in temple case

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

THE Assam Police has arrested 38 people for attempting to create communal disturbance in Dhubri by placing two heads of cows near a Hanuman temple after Bakrid.

Taking to X, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma posted, "38 arrested overnight in the Dhubri beef head incident."

The arrests were made during his visit to the lower Assam district bordering Bangladesh and his direction for issuance of a shoot-at-sight order. On Friday, he told media in Dhubri that the elements trying to foment unrest would be dealt with sternly.

"Somebody had kept a cow head at a Hanuman temple a day after Bakrid. People from both the communities discussed the matter peacefully. However, another cow head was found at the temple the next day," he said.

Sarma said Nabin Bangla, a group that wants Dhubri's inclusion in Bangladesh, put up three posters in the town on the eve of Eid. The posters indicate involvement of a force from Bangladesh, he said.

151 SLRs among 328 guns found in Manipur arms haul

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

IN a massive arms haul, Manipur Police and security forces recovered over 300 guns along with a huge quantity of ammunition during simultaneous operations carried out in the five districts of the Imphal Valley on the intervening night of June 13 and 14.

Altogether 328 weapons were recovered — SLR 151, IN-SAS 65, rifles of other kinds 73, carbines 5, MP5 2, LMG 12, AK series rifles 6, Amogh rifles 2, mortar 1, pistols 6, barrels 2, AR15 gun one and flare guns 2.

Additional Director General of Police Lhari Dorjee Lhatoo said acting on intelligence about the presence of a large cache of arms and ammunition stashed in different areas of the Imphal Valley districts, simultaneous search operations were launched at different locations by joint teams of Manipur Police, Central Armed Police Forces, Army and Assam Rifles leading to the recovery of the weapons.

"These intelligence-based operations mark a major achievement for the Manipur Police and the security forces



These intelligence-based operations mark a major achievement for the Manipur Police and the security forces in their continued efforts to restore normalcy, maintain public order and ensure the safety and security of citizens and their property. —Manipur Police headquarters

in their continued efforts to restore normalcy, maintain public order and ensure the safety and security of citizens and their property," said a statement issued by the Manipur Police headquarters.

Reiterating its commitment to a peaceful and secure Manipur, the police urged the public to cooperate with them and with security forces, and to report any suspicious activities or information related to illegal weapons to the nearest police station or the Central Control Room.

"Senior police officials are in close coordination with all security stakeholders to ensure that such operations continue in a sustained and focused manner to restore normalcy, maintain public order, and ensure the safety and security of citizens and their properties," the statement further read.

The miscreants had looted over 4,000 guns from police armouries and other establishments of the police during the ethnic conflict in the state. It was not clear if the guns recovered are looted guns.

'How long will J&K remain without AG?'

As differences between J&K L-G Manoj Sinha and CM Omar Abdullah persist, the post of Accountant General (AG) in the union territory remains vacant. While hearing a case recently, J&K High Court Justice Rahul Bharti took a serious view of the issue. "An important question of law is also incidentally confronted in this writ petition — for how long can J&K and Ladakh go without an Advocate General in office?" the judge observed, adding that there is a scope for the court to intervene by asking the UT government to apprise it about the matter. The post of Advocate General in J&K has been lying vacant since October last year.

Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat train a big hit

The Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express, recently flagged off by PM Narendra Modi, is a hit among tourists. Within six days of the launch, over 30,000 people have used the train service. According to officials, all seats of the Srinagar-bound trains are sold out for the next 15 days. And why not? It offers passengers a ride through some of India's most iconic gems of rail infrastructure, including the world's tallest railway bridge — the Chenab. Though there is currently no direct rail link between Srinagar and Delhi, passengers can travel to Katra and board long-distance trains connecting to major cities across the country.

8 tourist spots closed after Pahalgam to reopen

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

IN a boost for tourism revival, Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has decided to reopen eight out of 48 tourist destinations closed in Kashmir for security audit after April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

"Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, IGP Kashmir and Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and IGP had sought reports from all districts and now we have decided to open some closed tourist destinations," Sinha told reporters.

He announced the reopening of Betab Valley, parks in Pahalgam market, Verinag garden, Kokernag garden, and Achabal garden in south Kashmir. "In Srinagar three tourist destinations Badamwari Park, Duck Park (Nageen) and Taqdeer Park (Hazratbal) will be reopened for tourists."

Sinha announced that eight tourist destinations would also be reopened in Jammu. They are Sarthal and Dhaggar



Centre to hold meetings of House delegations, panels

To attract tourists to Kashmir, the Centre will hold meetings of parliamentary delegations, committees & officials in Srinagar. This, the L-G said, will restore the confidence among the travellers. The tourism stakeholders have welcomed reopening of closed tourist destinations.

in Kathua district, Devipindi, Siyad Baba and Sula Park in Reasi, Guldanda and Jai valley in Doda and Pancheri in Udhampur. The LG said in the next phase, some other destinations will be reopened after seeking reports from district administrations. "There is a new enthusiasm in people af-

ter the start of Vande Bharat Express. All the tickets of the train have been booked for the next 10-12 days. The number of tourists is slowly increasing," said Sinha.

In order to attract tourists to Kashmir, the LG said, the Centre will hold meetings of parliamentary delegations, commit-

tees and officials in Srinagar. This, he said, will restore the confidence among the travellers. The tourism stakeholders have welcomed reopening of closed tourist destinations.

"Reopening of some closed tourist destinations will send a positive message and instill confidence among tourists to return to the picturesque Valley," said Zahoor Ahmed Qari, ex TAAI Kashmir chapter.

He urged the government to reopen other tourist destinations including the border area of Gurez in north Kashmir, Yousmarg, Tosamaidan, Doodpathri, Aharbal, and Bangus.

"We are hopeful that more closed tourist destinations will be thrown open in the coming days after completion of security audit," he said.

Shameem Shah, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) J&K chapter president, said their motive is to convey the message that "Kashmir is as safe as any other place in the world."

Alarm bells ring: Uttarakhand's glacier lakes swell, signalling future disasters

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

THE Himalayan region of Uttarakhand is witnessing an alarming proliferation of glacial lakes, a trend that experts warn could signal major future disasters in this ecologically fragile zone.

A recent study by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) has brought this worrying development to the fore. The study reveals a significant increase in the number of glaciers across the state, currently recorded at 1,290, up from 1,266 a decade ago. Concurrently, the area covered by glacial lakes has expanded by a substantial 8.1 per cent. This growth underscores the severe impacts of climate change on the delicate Himalayan ecosystem.

Dr Rakesh Bhambri, a glaciologist at WIHG, elaborated on the findings, stating, "Our research indicates that new lakes



are forming on glaciers in the Uttarakhand Himalayas, and existing lakes are growing in size. There has been a notable increase in their numbers since our 2015 study."

Attributing this surge primarily to climate change and global warming, he further explained, "The occurrence of rain instead of snow at altitudes of four to five thousand metres is a significant contrib-

uting factor, leading to glacier melt and the formation of these lakes." While acknowledging the overall increase, Dr Bhambri clarified that not all lakes are expanding.

The destructive potential of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) is not new to the region. The devastating Kedarnath tragedy of 2013 was triggered by the bursting of the Chorabari glacial lake, and the 2021 Raini-Tapovan floods were also a result of a similar event. Sikkim experienced a comparable disaster in 2013.

In light of these past catastrophes, the Indian government has identified 13 such high-risk glacial lakes in Uttarakhand that could pose a significant threat in the future. Prominent among these are Vasundhara Lake in Chamoli, Kedarnath in Uttarakashi, Nagkund in Bageshwar, six lakes in Pithoragarh, and one in Tehri.



86 dead in South Africa's Eastern Cape floods as more bodies found



GLOBAL WEATHER

Belling	26	11	LC	Los Angeles	17	10	SNY
Colombo	32	25	TDS	Melbourne	18	13	LC
Dhaka	34	27	LC	Moscow	5	0	LC
Dubai	42	31	SNY	New York	14	6	LR
Houston	30	22	LC	Singapore	31	25	TDS
Istanbul	17	12	LR	Toronto	8	1	LC
London	17	8	SNY	Washington	23	8	TDS

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow
TDS: Thunderstorm • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Anger, worry mix in Iran's capital after retaliatory strikes on Israel

Tehran imposes emergency measures, braces for fallout after deadly exchange with Israel

TEHRAN

ANGER mixed with worry as Iranians in the capital of Tehran woke up Saturday to images of their country's retaliatory attacks on Israel.

Reactions came after Israel warned of more attacks on Iran on Saturday after Iran's deadly retaliatory strikes on Israel overnight and into the morning. Three people were killed and dozens were wounded in Israel, after a series of blistering Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear program and its armed forces the previous day.

Israel launched the attacks on Iran amid simmering tensions over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme. For years, Israel had threatened such a strike and successive American administrations had sought to prevent it, fearing it would ignite a wider conflict across the Middle East and possibly be ineffective at destroying Iran's dispersed and hardened nuclear program.

As Iranian projectiles and Israeli interceptor rockets left trails of smoke and flame across the night sky on Friday, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed not to let Israel "escape safely from this great crime."

Iranian state television, long controlled by hard-line supporters of the country's theocracy, repeatedly aired footage of missile strikes on Tel Aviv throughout the morning. The broadcaster also showed people cheering in front of a large screen set up in Tehran to follow the strikes as if they were watching a soccer match.

Israel's defense minister warned Saturday that "Tehran will burn" if Iran continues firing missiles, as the countries traded blows a day after Israel launched a blistering surprise attack on Iranian nuclear and military sites, killing several top generals.

The attacks have left Iran's



A residential building that was struck by a missile fired from Iran is seen at Tel Aviv in Israel | AP



Vehicles drive past a billboard displaying images of top Iranian commanders and scientists killed in Israeli strikes early Friday at Tehran in Iran | AP

surviving leadership with the difficult decision of plunging deeper into conflict with Israel's more powerful forces or seeking a diplomatic route.

Traffic was lighter than normal on the capital's streets. The change was due in part to a religious holiday; even before the attacks began, many Iranians had traveled outside the city to enjoy days off in places along the nearby Caspian Sea.

The holiday mood made news of Israel's assault that much

more shocking, particularly when the strikes on Friday killed many ranking members of Iran's military and paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, something unseen since Iran's war with Iraq in the 1980s.

"Israel killed our commanders and what do they expect in return? A kiss?" said Mahmoud Dorri, a 29-year-old taxi driver. "We will go after them to punish them: an eye for an eye."

In downtown Tehran, 31-year-old teacher and mother of two

Iran calls nuclear talks with US meaningless after Israeli strikes

Dubai: Israel's strikes also put further talks between the United States and Iran over a nuclear accord into doubt. The US and Iran were scheduled to meet in Oman, on Sunday. Iran's top diplomat said on Saturday that talks with the United States were 'unjustifiable' after Israeli strikes on his country, likely signalling no negotiations this weekend with Washington. However he stopped short of saying the talks were cancelled.

Pari Pourghazi expressed her joy over Iran's attack, linking it to Israel's devastating war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Others expressed concerns, verbally or through their actions. At one Tehran gas station, some 300 vehicles waited to fill up, with drivers growing frustrated.

Across the country, people faced the continued strain of the conflict as Iran's airspace remained closed.

US Army all set to mark 250 yrs with parade on Don's birthday

WASHINGTON

THE massive military parade commemorating the 250th birthday of the US Army, which coincides with President Donald Trump's 79th birthday is being staged on Saturday in Washington, DC. The event is expected to include about 6,600 soldiers, 50 helicopters and 60-ton M1 Abrams battle tanks, as well as possibly 200,000 attendees and heightened security to match.

Opponents of the president's agenda are simultaneously rallying in hundreds of cities nationwide at "No Kings" protests following days of nationwide demonstrations against federal immigration raids, including in Los Angeles, where Trump deployed the National Guard and US Marines against the wishes of California Gov Gavin Newsom.

The parade, honouring the Army's long-planned 250th anniversary celebration and coinciding with Trump's 79th birthday, is set to step off from the Lincoln Memorial under the threat of stormy weather in Washington and the potential for protests around the country tied to a turbulent week of immigration enforcement that has involved military deployment



Soldiers prepare ahead of wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, honouring the Army's 250th anniversary and coinciding with President Donald Trump's 79th birthday | AP

in Los Angeles.

Trump has brushed off the possibility of both disruptions, with a social media post Saturday morning that said the "great military parade" would be on "rain or shine." The protests, he said earlier, "will be met with very big force."

Added just a few weeks ago to the Army's birthday celebration, the parade has triggered criticism for its price tag of up to \$45 million and the possibility that the lumbering tanks could tear up city streets.

The Army has taken a variety of steps to protect the streets, including laying metal plates

down along the route.

About 6 in 10 Americans say Saturday's parade is "not a good use" of government money, including the vast majority of people, 78%, who neither approve nor disapprove of the parade overall, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Demonstrators began gathering in cities and towns across the US on Saturday to rally against President Donald Trump as officials urged calm and mobilised National Guard troops ahead of the military parade.

Lawmaker shootings halt 'No Kings' stir in Minnesota

BROOKLYN PARK

A man posing as a police officer shot and killed a Minnesota lawmaker and her husband in a brazen attack at their home early Saturday, and a second lawmaker and his wife were wounded in a separate shooting in what Gov. Tim Walz described as "targeted political violence."

Police were searching for the gunman responsible for the attacks on the Democratic legislators. Writings found inside a fake police car recovered at one of the shooting scenes mentioned the names of multiple lawmakers and other officials, Brooklyn Park Police Chief Mark Bruley said.

Melissa Hortman, a former Minnesota House Speaker, and her spouse were shot and killed early Saturday in their Brooklyn Park home. A second state lawmaker, Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, were shot multiple times in Champlin. Officials say both Hortman and Hoffman were mentioned in the suspect's writings. "When we did a search of the vehicle, there was a manifesto that identified many lawmakers and other officials. We immediately made alerts to the state.



This combo from photos provided by Minnesota Legislature shows from left, Senator John A. Hoffman and Rep Melissa Hortman | AP

We took action on alerting them and providing security where necessary," said Bruley.

State Patrol Col. Christina Bogojevic asked people "out of an abundance of caution" not to attend any of the "No Kings" protests that were scheduled for across the state on Saturday.

Bogojevic said authorities didn't have any direct evidence that the protests would be targeted, but said the suspect had some "No Kings" flyers in their car. Organizers announced that all of the protests across the state were canceled. Autopsies will be done to determine extent of injuries, but Hortman and her spouse died from gunshot wounds, Evans said.

BIG-POWER-DEALS

Russia to build Kazakhstan's first nuclear power plant

ALMATY

RUSSIAN nuclear energy giant Rosatom will lead the construction of the first atomic power plant in Kazakhstan, the world's top uranium producer; the Central Asian country's authorities said on Saturday.

"Rosatom has been named as the leader of the international consortium for the construction of the first nuclear power plant in Kazakhstan," the former Soviet republic's nuclear power agency said in a statement. Kazakhstan, a vast resource-rich country in Central Asia, is currently the world's top uranium producer, providing 43 percent of supplies.

It does not produce enough electricity to meet domestic consumption needs. The new power plant, whose construction was approved in a referendum in late 2024, will be built near the half-abandoned village of Ulken near Balkhash Lake.

The lake, located in the southeast, is the country's second largest. China's National Nuclear Corporation, France's EDF, and South Korea's Hydro and Nuclear Power had bid to build the plant. Kazakhstan said all three would join a Rosatom-led consortium but gave no details. Observers say the idea of the consortium is a way for authorities to maintain good relations with all the countries involved.

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 27 as tensions escalate

DEIR AL-BALAH

AT least 16 Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip overnight and into Saturday, according to local health officials. The 20-month war with Hamas has raged on even as Israel has opened a new front with heavy strikes on Iran that sparked retaliatory drone and missile attacks.

Another 11 Palestinians were killed overnight near food distribution points run by an Israeli and US-supported humanitarian group in the latest of almost daily shootings near the sites since they opened last month. Palestinian witnesses say Israeli forces have fired on the crowds, while the military says it has only fired warning shots near people it describes as suspects who approached its forces.

The military did not immediately respond to a request for

WAR WATCH

ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 618

TOLL SO FAR

55,234

Two Palestinians ride a small boat at the seafront where remains of buildings can be next to a tent camp in the Gaza City port | AP

comment on the latest shootings. The sites are located in military zones that are off limits to independent media.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a private contrac-

tor that operates the sites, said they were closed Saturday. But witnesses said thousands had gathered near the sites anyway, desperate for food as Israel's blockade and military campaign

have driven the territory to the brink of famine. The al-Awda Hospital said it received eight bodies and at least 125 wounded people from a shooting near a GHF site in central Gaza.

G7 summit leaders seek to project strength as Trump joins

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has long bet that he can scare allies into submission — a gamble that is increasingly being tested ahead of the Group of Seven summit beginning Monday in Canada.

He's threatened stiff tariffs in the belief that other nations would crumple. He's mused about taking over Canada and Greenland. He's suggested he will not honor NATO's obligations to defend partners under attack. And he's used Oval Office meetings to try to intimidate the leaders of Ukraine and South Africa.

But many world leaders see fewer reasons to be cowed by Trump, even as they recognize the risks if he followed through on his threats. They believe he will ultimately back down — since many of his plans could inflict harm on the US — or

that he can simply be charmed and flattered into cooperating.

"Many leaders still seem intimidated by Trump, but increasingly they are catching on to his pattern of bullying," said Jeremy Shapiro, research director at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "In places as diverse as Canada, Iran, China and the EU, we are seeing increasing signs that leaders now recognize that Trump is afraid of anything resembling a fair fight. And so they are increasingly willing to stand up to him."

In the 22 instances in which Trump has publicly threatened military action since his first term, the US only used force twice, according to a May analysis by Shapiro.

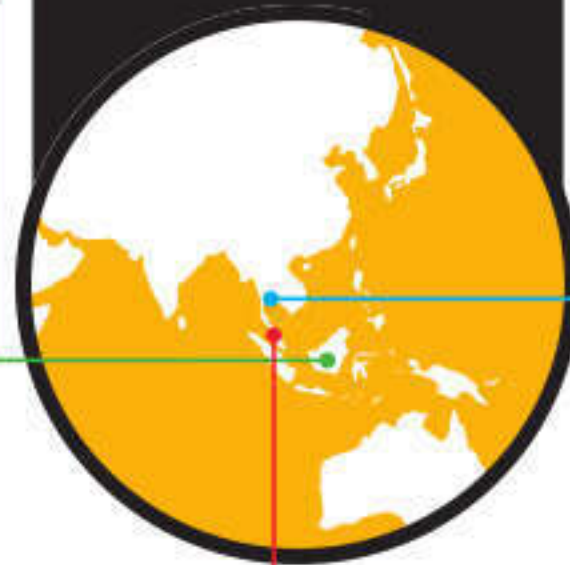
Ahead of the G7 summit, there are already signs of subtle pushback against Trump from fellow leaders in the group.

INDONESIA

OZ TOURIST SHOT DEAD IN BALI VILLA

Indonesian police are searching for two Australian gunmen after a deadly shooting at a Bali villa killed Zivan Radmanovic, 32, from Melbourne, and injured another Australian man. The attack occurred just after midnight Friday at Villa Casa Santisya near Munggu Beach. Police found 17 bullet casings and two bullets in a bathroom where Radmanovic was shot. Witnesses saw two masked men on a scooter flee the scene. The victims' wives and another tourist were also present. The motive is unclear, and an autopsy is pending family permission.

ASIA MATTERS



MALAYSIA

MEDIA COUNCIL ACT TAKES EFFECT

Malaysia's Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil announced that the Malaysian Media Council Act takes effect from June 14, 2025, coinciding with National Journalists' Day (HAWANA). Signed into law to support media reform, the Act's enforcement was marked at the event, attended by media practitioners and officiated by PM.

THAILAND

BORDER TALKS MAKE PROGRESS AMID TENSIONS

Thailand said talks with Cambodia on Saturday "made progress" in resolving a border dispute that sparked deadly clashes on May 28 in the Emerald Triangle region. One Cambodian soldier was killed when troops exchanged fire. Talks in Phnom Penh aimed to ease tensions, with more discussions expected Sunday. Cambodia, which plans to take four disputed areas to the International Court of Justice, said those zones were not part of Saturday's talks. Thailand has tightened border controls; Cambodia remains on high alert.

Zelenskyy warns oil surge may aid Russia's war effort

KYIV

A sharp rise in global oil prices following Israeli strikes on Iran will benefit Russia and bolster its military capabilities in the war in Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday in comments that were under embargo until Saturday afternoon.

Speaking to journalists in Kyiv, Zelenskyy said the surge in oil prices threatens



Ukraine's position on the battlefield, especially because Western allies have not enforced effective price caps on Russian oil exports.

"The strikes led to a sharp increase in the price of oil, which is negative for us," Zelenskyy said. "The Russians are getting stronger due to greater income from oil exports." Global oil

prices rose as much as 7% after Israel and Iran exchanged attacks over the past 48 hours, raising concerns that further escalation in the region could disrupt oil exports from the Middle East. Zelenskyy said he planned to raise the issue in an upcoming conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump.

"In the near future, I will be in contact with the American side, I think with the president, and we will raise this issue," he said.

Zelenskyy also expressed concern that U.S. military aid could be diverted away from Ukraine toward Israel during renewed tensions in the Middle East.

Ukraine's military needs have been sidelined by the United States in favor of supporting Israel, Zelenskyy said.

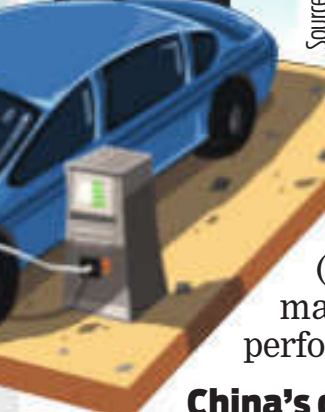


EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Indian automotive sector, particularly electric vehicle (EV) segment, is grappling with a supply-chain disruption due to China's export restrictions on rare earth magnets. These functionally critical components are indispensable for modern vehicles, and their scarcity threatens to impact production, new model launches, and the industry's ambitious growth trajectory.

RARE EARTH MAGNET CRISIS: A DENT IN INDIAN AUTO SECTOR

China's export control leads to backlog in global supply chains



Rare earth magnets, and why are they critical?

Magnets are made from alloys of rare earth elements. They are integral to Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motors (PMSMs), used in EVs for their high torque, energy efficiency, and compact size. Hybrid vehicles rely on them for efficient propulsion. In internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, their use is limited to electric power steering and other motorised systems. Elements like dysprosium (Dy), terbium (Tb), neodymium (Nd), and praseodymium (Pr) are crucial for these magnets, mainly in high-performance applications.

China's dominance and new rare earth export restrictions

China is the world's largest exporter of rare earth magnets, controlling 70% of global rare earth element (REE) output and 90% of refining capacity. In April 2025, Beijing imposed export controls on seven rare earth elements and finished magnets. This revised framework demands detailed end-use disclosures and client declarations, including confirmation that products will not be used in defence or re-exported to the US. This scrutiny has prolonged clearance process to 45 days, leading to growing backlog in global supply chains.

Impact on Indian automotive sector

India, which sourced over 80% of its 540 tonne of magnet imports from China last fiscal, has begun to feel the pinch. By the end of May 2025, despite 30 import requests from Indian companies being en-

dorsed by the Indian government, none had received approval from Chinese authorities, and no shipments had arrived.

EV motors use rare earth elements like dysprosium and terbium to maintain efficiency at high operating temperatures. E-2Ws have shorter lead time for design changes (2-3 months), but PVs and buses, where powertrain performance and space constraints are more stringent, would require a longer gestation period of 6-12 months for a complete motor redesign.

Industry executives say current inventories may last only a few weeks to a month. As per Anuj Sethi, senior director, Crisil Ratings, "The supply squeeze comes as the sector is preparing for aggressive EV rollouts... delays could start affecting production, with EV models facing deferrals or rescheduling from July 2025." A broader impact on PVs and 2W could follow if the bottlenecks persist. Maruti, for instance, planned to cut production of its debut EV, e-Vitara, due to these challenges. Bajaj Auto's executive director Rakesh Sharma warned that July production could be "impaired" without relief.

Vulnerability and strategic response

Unlike semiconductors, which have a diversified global supply base, over 90% of rare earth magnet processing is concentrated in China, leaving limited short-term alternatives. Poonam Upadhyay, director, Crisil Ratings, says while these magnets contribute less than 5% to a vehicle's cost, they are "indispensable." Automakers like Mahindra & Mahindra are de-risking their supply chains by exploring alternative suppliers in countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, and the US, and optimising existing inventories.

Both the Indian government and automotive industry are addressing the crisis on two fronts. Short-term efforts focus on building strategic inventories, tapping alternative suppliers, and accelerating domestic assembly under Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes. Long-term strategies involve fast-tracking rare earth exploration in India, building local production capacity, and investing in recycling infrastructure to cut import dependency.

The situation remains dynamic, with Indian auto industry participants engaging with the Ministry of External Affairs and relevant Chinese ministries to secure interim relief and fast-track approvals. The pace of China's export approvals for these critical magnets remains the immediate monitorable for the Indian automotive sector.

NEWSCOPE

STAND UP TO TRUMP ON FARM PRODUCE, MSMEs

GURBIR SINGH

AS India's trade team races against time to reach an interim deal with the US on tariffs, the big challenge before Indian negotiators will be to protect the country's farmers and the lakhs of micro and small enterprises (MSMEs).

Trade representatives from the two sides have held several rounds of talks, including one round last Tuesday. The big hurdle to an early settlement appears to be resistance from both sides on the question of opening up India to US farm produce.

While a comprehensive India-US trade agreement seems next to impossible before Donald Trump's across-the-board 26 percent tariffs kick in on 9 July, an interim deal for the near-term may stave off the US imposts for some time.

The US side is in an aggressive mood. The United States is India's largest trading partner, and the balance of trade with India is heavily tilted in the latter's favour. Of the \$129 billion in Indo-US trade in 2024, US exports to India stood at \$41.8 billion, while India's exports to the US were more than double at \$87.4 billion.

Agriculture is vulnerable

One can see the US' hard line in the negotiations. It has pushed back on India's demand that the current 10 percent tariffs not be applied to products from labour intensive industries such as leather, electronics and gems and jewelry. Reuters has quoted US officials who point out that, if the deal with Britain has not exempted US' global, baseline 10 percent tariff, it is unlikely India will get that benefit.

India's trade team has rightly said the core of India's agriculture — rice, wheat and other staple and dairy produce, is non-negotiable. Farmers as it is face unremunerative prices in the home market, and the government has to prop them up returns by offering minimum support price (MSP). If this is abandoned, and cheap US grain allowed to flood the Indian markets, it will spell ruin for the vast body of farmers. Moreover, recent years have seen farmers agitating for better support prices. Caving in to US

demands will mean suicide for the Indian political class.

Indian negotiators seem to have come up with a three-tier formula: first, a red 'no compromise' line on dairy and staple produce like wheat and rice; second, marginal concessions on fruit products such as apple and pears which have a more restricted market, and whose producers in Himachal and elsewhere have better bargaining clout. Finally, the third category of exotic products like

MSMEs, are currently facing pressure from US customers to absorb the increased costs from tariffs. With low margins, many of these units may go belly up if the 26 percent tariffs come in.

If India decides to respond with retaliatory tariffs, it could create more challenges for Indian MSMEs who are dependent on importing raw material, machinery, or components from the US. This sector is in a precarious state, and needs to rework its business plans with the domestic market as its foundation.

There is a growing perception the US is not keen to dilute its stand. In fact, in the latest round of talks, it has demanded that India open up its market to genetically-modified crops too. It is not that US negotiators don't understand the politically sensitive nature of opening up protected farm produce. "The US understands the political influence of farmers and ranchers. There are the kind of people who have lots of political voices and we understand that," said US commerce secretary Howard Lutnick.

But now, having let the genie out of the bottle, Lutnick and his colleagues have to also answer at home to the loud US trade associations bent on prizing open the Indian market. The US Wheat Associates, the Illinois Corn Growers Association, the American Soybean Association, the North American Blueberry Council and the Almond Alliance have all united behind the US government to get India to reduce local tariffs, and allow entry to US farm produce. There will be no prizes for guessing which side Trump is going to pitch for.

In fact there is a growing perception that India is being slowly cornered to giving in much more, and getting very little in return. Jayant Dasgupta, India's former ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO), has been quoted advocating India take a harder line and not to rush a deal detrimental to the country.

While nobody minds reducing tariffs on whiskey, automobiles and pistachios, India needs to stand firm on not diluting the protection for the farm sector and MSMEs. Together, they perhaps account for 80 percent of India's GDP.



MANDAR PARDIKAR

almonds, walnuts, pistachios and blueberries, consumed by the rich, that can be opened up by reducing import tariffs.

Protecting micro units

Indian negotiators will also have to fight hard for the micro and small enterprises (MSMEs) who are dependent on exports and who import components, especially in the electronic sector. Being labour intensive, and with small margins, high tariffs will put lakhs of jobs at stake.

It is estimated vulnerable MSMEs and mid-corporates are already at risk of defaults of Rs 21,800 crore worth of loans. These units have low Return on Equity (ROE), lower profitability, and less buffer to absorb increased costs such as tariffs. On the other hand, Indian exporters, particularly

AI announces additional ₹25 lakh compensation to families of victims

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AIR INDIA said on Saturday that it will provide an interim payment of ₹25 lakh to the families of the deceased and survivors of the Ahmedabad plane crash. This interim payment is in addition to the ₹1 crore compensation already announced by the parent company, Tata Sons.

"To provide immediate financial support, Air India will be making an interim payment of 25 lakh rupees, or approximately 21,000 GBP to each of the families of the deceased and also to the survivor.

This is in addition to the 1 crore rupees, or nearly 85,000 GBP already committed by Tata Sons," said Air India Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Campbell Wilson.

The crash of Air India flight, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner bound for London Gatwick, shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad on Thursday afternoon is set to place a huge fi-

nanial burden on Air India.

Under the international Montreal Convention, the airline is liable to pay a compensation amounting to 151,880 Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) per deceased passenger. This translates to approximately Rs. 1.8 crore at current exchange rates to the next of kin.

Wilson stated that the process of reuniting next of kin with their loved ones and personal effects has begun.

He added that

Air India is also in the process of completing precautionary safety checks on Boeing 787 aircraft, as directed by our regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

"We will complete all checks within the timelines prescribed by the regulator. As has been confirmed by the authorities, the aircraft's data recorder has been recovered, which will form part of the official investigation, and Air India continues to fully cooperate with these investigations," he said.

IRDAI: EASE CLAIM SETTLEMENT PROCESS

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

IN the aftermath of the tragic crash of Air India Flight 171, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued a directive to insurers and reinsurers, mandating expedited claims processing for the families of victims.

The regulator has asked insurers to use the available passenger list and verify details against their databases of overseas medical insurance, personal accident, and life insurance policies. The insurers have been asked to initiate fast-track claim settlements without insisting on formalities like FIRs or post-mortem reports where official confirmation of death is available.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), has joined its peers slashing the lending rates by 50 bps (both for existing repo-linked loans and new borrowers) and the pricing on the special deposit scheme by 25 bps, effective June 15.

The move follows the unconventional 50 bps cut in repo rate by the RBI last week. Most of the peers of SBI such as the second-largest state-run lender Bank of Baroda, third-largest Punjab National Bank, Bank of India, Indian Bank, Union Bank,

and Uco Bank, among others, had slashed the loan rates for existing borrowers and for new borrowers as they are protecting their margins. Because for those loans linked to repo rate or known as external benchmark linked loans and are on floating rates, the repo reduction has to be passed on to existing borrowers if not on the day of the rate cut by the RBI by the first day of the next month.

This leaves only the two largest private sector players — HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank — in not lowering rates yet. All new rates will be effective from



June 15, SBI said. The bank, which controls a fifth of the banking system's assets and li-

Rates effective June 15

All new rates will be effective from June 15, SBI said. The bank said its external benchmark lending and home loan rates stand reduced by 50 bps, keeping with RBI's half percentage point reduction in the policy repo rate

abilities, said its external benchmark lending rate (EBLR) and home loan rate stand reduced by 50 bps, keeping with RBI's half percentage point cut in policy rate. The revised EBLR would be 8.15% as against old rate of 8.65%, it added.

As per revised data on the bank's website, home loan rates linked to EBLR will be now 7.5-8.45% range based on credit score of borrower and the size of loan wherein under ₹50 lakh loans are priced marginally lower than those above this amount. To cushion the impact on margins as cost of its funds is very close to its lending rates, which stated differently means thinner margins, the lender has also reduced the interest rate on the special deposit scheme (444 days) called Amrit Vrishi by 25 bps to 6.60% with effect from June 15.

GRSE signs contract with GSI for 2 Coastal Research Vessels

Kolkata: In yet another major achievement, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd, signed a contract for construction of two coastal research vessels (CRVs) for Geological Survey of India (GSI), on June 11, 2025. The contract for two CRVs was signed by Cdr Shantanu Bose, director (shipbuilding), GRSE and N M Shareef, deputy director general & HoD, marine & coastal survey division, GSI, in presence of Asit Saha, director general, GSI, and other senior officials from GRSE & GSI. The signing of this contract highlights GRSE's expertise in the field of research platforms. The shipyard is building an ocean research vessel for the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR).



National Green Tribunal observes World Environment Day with plantation drive

New Delhi: In observance of World Environment Day 2025, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) organized a plantation drives at its premises in New Delhi. The initiative was spearheaded by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Prakash Srivastava, Chairperson, NGT, in the august presence of other esteemed members of the Tribunal. This year's World Environment Day, under the theme "Ending Plastic Pollution", calls for collective global action to tackle one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time — plastic waste. The NGT's plantation drive reaffirms its commitment to environmental protection and sustainable practices. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Srivastava in his address emphasized the critical role of judicial and institutional leadership in promoting ecological responsibility.

Business & Beyond

CISF signs MoU with SBI to manage salary accounts of force personnel

CISF signs MoU, various enhanced benefits will be provide to CISF personnel at no cost. The MoU was formalised at a ceremony held at CISF headquarters, New Delhi, where the agreement was signed by Rekha Nambiar, deputy inspector general/administration on behalf of CISF and Ranjana Sinha, general manager (NRI & SP), SBI Corporate Centre, Mumbai, effective for a period of three years from 23.05.2025 to 22.05.2028. Key features include an increase in personnel accident insurance cover for serving personnel from ₹50 lakh to ₹1 crore and for pensioners from ₹30 lakh to ₹50 lakh. Air insurance has been raised up to ₹1.5 crore (with condition). Additional benefits include terms insurance, disability covers, zero no balance account, free debit cards with no annual maintenance, unlimited free SBI ATMs transactions, and 10 free transactions at other bank ATMs per month under Central Armed Police Salary Package (CAPSP).

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port celebrates Environment Day

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, observed World Environment Day on June 5, 2025 with celebrations held across both its dock systems — Kolkata and Haldia. At the Kolkata Dock System, the event was marked with the planting of native tree species at the Civil Engineering Office. The plantation drive was inaugurated by Rathendra Raman, Chairman, SMP Kolkata, and saw enthusiastic participation from senior officers, employees, and CISF personnel from the KDS unit. Simultaneously, the Haldia Dock Complex also celebrated the occasion with a tree plantation programme around the Haldia township. Samrat Rahi, Deputy Chairman, HDC, led the initiative, joined by senior officers and employees who actively contributed to the greening effort. On this meaningful occasion, Raman, Chairman also reiterated SMP Kolkata's commitment to green port initiatives.

Bank of Baroda implements broad based MCLR cut

Mumbai: Bank of Baroda (Bank), one of India's leading public sector banks, has announced a reduction in its Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate (MCLR), effective June 12, 2025. The revised rates will apply to new as well as existing loans linked to the MCLR benchmark. The bank has reduced MCLR by 5 basis points across tenors from One Month to One Year. The new rates are as follows:

Tenor	Existing	Revised
Overnight	8.15%	8.15%
1 month	8.35%	8.3%
3 months	8.55%	8.50%
6 months	8.8%	8.7%
1 year	8.95%	8.9%



Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta clinched his fourth Delhi GM Open title, scoring 8.5 points out of 10 at the Asia's prestigious event. Gupta, 36, remained unbeaten across 10 rounds. Gupta drew with IM Aranyak Ghosh in the final round to secure the title outright. Nikitenko (2520, Belarus) finished second, edging Indian GM Diptayan Ghosh on tiebreaks.

This time for Africa: After 27 years, Bavuma & Co reach promised land

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN

SOME of cricket's most emotionally-charged wins have come on the back of boundaries. MS Dhoni against Sri Lanka in 2011. Ben Stokes off Pat Cummins in 2019. Arjuna Ranatunga off Glenn McGrath in 1996. Carlos Brathwaite off Stokes in 2016.

On Saturday afternoon, an everyday drive on the off side for a single echoed throughout the cricketing world in a manner it has seldom done in the almost 150-year history of the sport's oldest form.

At 12.45 PM on a sun-baked Lord's, Kyle Verreyne drove a loose ball in front of square before running the single most im-

portant run in South Africa's cricketing psyche. Even before Verreyne had completed five of the 22 yards, he had both his arms aloft. The batter at the other end, David Bedingham, was smiling even before completing it.

Up on the balcony, high fives and hugs were being exchanged like they were going out of fashion. Temba Bavuma sat there amid the ecstasy, clapping before breaking into a smile. The nearly men — the nearly team — of world cricket had finally erased decades of hurt. 33 years after readmission and 27 since their first ICC title, South Africa finally crossed the line. Hit with tag of chokers, continued 'jokes' about the quota system,

institutional racism against some of their own and having no choice but to prioritise franchise T20 at the expense of Tests because of the sport's twisted relationship with commerce... this team and this band have been through a lot.

When Saturday dawned after heavy thunderstorms in and around Lord's, the Proteas knew they were sniffing distance of a narrative-shattering, history-defying victory. When Temba Bavuma departed early on Day Four, finger nails became edible items and bums were clenched. Here they go again? Not really. Tristan Stubbs and the imperious Aiden Markram, whose century would go down as one of the finest ever in a global



South African players celebrate their World Test Championship victory at Lords | AP

knockout game across formats, steadied the ship. Both those batters did get out but glory was already assured by then.

Apart from Markram and Bavuma, the other man who played

a decisive role to turn the Test was Kagiso Rabada, both on the first morning as well as the second afternoon. If his fier-damaged Australia's designs on a somewhat challenging surface

on Wednesday, his four-wicket haul on Thursday halted the 2023 champions from building on the lead. "People were saying we weren't playing good enough opposition, but I think that's rubbish," he told in a pitch-side interview after the match. "We came here and we played the best team. Australia have been magnificent all season, and we had to be on our A-game to beat them."

Bavuma, who is already a gigantic figure in South Africa's cricketing history, also addressed the myopic view that they got lucky because of their path to the final. "There were doubters on the route we took," the skipper said. "This win squashes that." The 35-year-old

also hoped that the win would 'unite' the nation.

It also reflects how much this win has the potential to change the course of recent history. The relationship between cricket and the country's cricket-watching public had fractured after a number of issues had made itself visible.

"Cricket had gone through a tough time," Graeme Smith had told this daily in an interaction in February. "Domestic cricket support had gone down, the national team wasn't performing as well in the past and there were administration issues so people had lost confidence. Also, rugby started to be really successful."

Full story: newindianexpress.com

AHEAD OF THE FIRST TEST AGAINST ENGLAND IN LEEDS ON FRIDAY, GOMESH S VISITS GILL'S VILLAGE, CHAK KHERE WALA, NEAR INDO-PAK BORDER TO TRACE THE JOURNEY OF THE NEW INDIA TEST CAPTAIN

It was just after 7AM on June 1. As Mohali and the rest of India were waking up on a lazy Sunday morning, the park behind the IS Bindra Stadium was buzzing. As one walked past what is now the old Punjab Cricket Association Stadium, the park, developed and maintained by the District Cricket Association Mohali, was swarming with people.

On one side of the park, which is essentially a vast ground with nets along the walls of the Bindra stadium, a tennis ball cricket game was on. Along the pavement parents were waiting, chit chatting, as their children stood as a group near the nets with a couple of coaches. This is not an unusual sight at this ground. In fact, it is at this ground, and one of these nets along the walls of the IS Bindra Stadium, Shubman Gill — India's Test captain — was first spotted as a talent when he was not even a teenager.



Gill's house in Chak Khere Wala



Jaimal Wala Academy, Chak Khere Wala



Sardar Didar Singh at his home

big smile on his face.

The front yard where Shubman spent years batting is still there, but barring the room where he and Gurmail stay, everything else is being rebuilt. Owing to their old age and health, they do not move out as often, but it is impossible to not notice how proud they are of their grandson.

Shubman's effect is seen in the village playing fields as well. The interest in taking up the sport has grown manifold in the village. The Fazilka District Cricket Association is building a new cricket stadium in his honour in Bahmani Wala, a village closer to Chak Khere Wala. There, they had a screening of the Champions Trophy semifinal and final with the young kids who train there watching and cheering for one of their loved one. Shubman hasn't forgotten his roots either.

Back in Chak Khere Wala, Jaimal Wala Academy has been running for more than a year with around 20 young aspiring kids taking up the sport. Lakhwinder and Shubman have donated ₹3.5 lakhs to the academy. They, and every single person you talk to in Punjab, are immensely proud of the fact that he will be the first male cricketer from united Punjab to lead India in Test cricket. This could be the first time in Indian cricketing history that both men and women's team captains are from Punjab. Harmanpreet Kaur — India women captain — hails from a small Punjab village called Moga, about 125 kms from Shubman village. They could not be more contrasting when it comes to on-field personality, but they represent the hinterlands of the country. Shubman has massive shoes to fill, especially in the absence of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli — both their predecessors. While it seems likely that Shubman will take over Kohli's No. 4 spot in the batting line-up, the bigger question would be what kind of captain he eventually becomes.

Back in the District Cricket Association Mohali ground behind the IS Bindra Stadium, the huddle has dispersed. The young aspiring cricketers split into two groups, starting with fielding drills before spending the next hour or so of their Sunday morning doing exactly what Shubman did at the same ground all those years ago.

When Shubman walks out onto the Leeds Cricket Ground on June 20, donning the India blazer as the Test captain, expect all those kids from the ground, Gurkeerat, Ghavri, the Gills in Chak Khere Wala village, and everyone to be glued to their television screens. For this is a new beginning. And it is their Shubman Gill who is given the job to take Indian cricket forward.

CHAK KHERE TO LEEDS VIA MOHALI

Around 15 years ago, former India cricketer Karsan Ghavri was in Mohali for a fast bowling camp organised by the BCCI. During the camp, one day the training was cancelled due to rain. Ghavri and his assistant coach, Yoginder Puri, took a stroll around the stadium and ended up at the ground behind.

That is where Ghavri saw a lanky boy, who was around 12, batting in the nets. Impressed by his sound technique and solid defence, Ghavri talked to someone sitting there. "I asked him, 'Who is that boy?', and he said, 'That is my son.'" Ghavri recalls his first conversation with Lakhwinder Singh, Shubman's father. Ghavri asked Lakhwinder to bring Shubman to the camp the next day. "It was a U16 fast bowling camp, and he was facing the bowlers like 16 or 17. He was just 11 or 12 then. He used to come and train with our boys, bat for long periods. He stood out," says Ghavri.

Soon, the former India cricketer asked Sushil Kapoor, who was with the PCA at the time, to include Shubman in the U14 Punjab team. And that marked the beginning of the folklore about a teen prodigy plundering runs across age-groups before rising through the ranks.

About 280km away from Mohali is Chak Khere Wala village near Jalalabad. This is where Shubman started his journey. The village, close to India-Pakistan border, is about 30km from Fazilka with sprawling farmlands on either side of the narrow roads. It did not take long to find the house where Shubman used to live with Lakhwinder, mom Keart, elder sister Shahneel and grandparents — Sardar Didar Singh and Gurmail. Shubman was not

even four when Didar Singh carved out a tree trunk and made a bat for his grandson. Lakhwinder used to give him throwdowns and the scarred kitchen walls stand as testimony of the time he spent batting in the front-yard. By the time he was seven, Lakhwinder, in the hopes of realising his dream, moved to Mohali. Shubman started training under Sukhwinder Tinku. His dad had made it his mission to make Shubman a cricketer.

"His father had the most important role in shaping Shubman's career and game," says former India cricketer Gurkeerat Singh Mann. "It's not easy to leave everything behind for your son, day in and day out, and spend time in practice every day. He made Shubman practise the whole week and then go to his village and work in the farmlands," he adds.

It is where Shubman developed his appetite for batting, and soon it became an obsession. He had to be dragged out of the nets while training with the Punjab team. "You

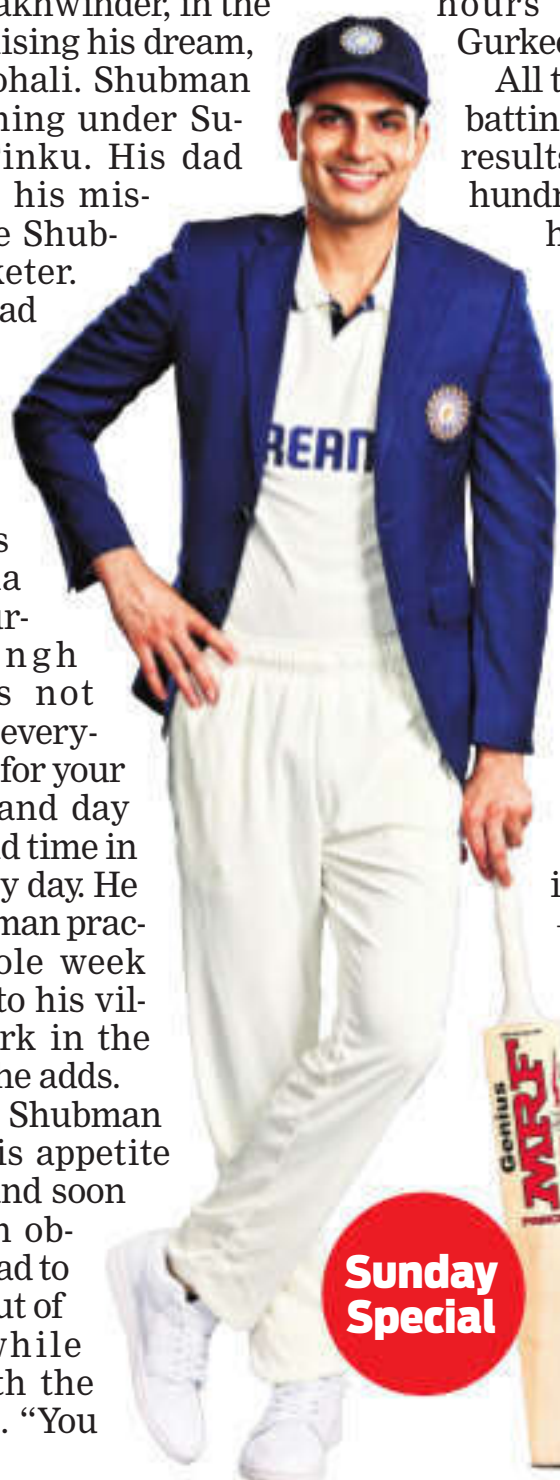
have to tell him, 'dekh bhai, bas kar yaar. Agle ke baari hai (Look, brother, enough. Next one's turn now). In the nets, there is a timing; each batter gets 15-20 minutes. But it was never enough for him. Every day, he used to spend at least 4-5 hours batting," says Gurkeerat.

All the time he spent batting reflected in the results, especially big hundreds. It is a habit he had built right through age-group cricket. When he was 14, Shubman (351) put on a world record opening stand of 587 along with Nirmal Singh (267) during an inter-district game against Amritsar. He continued the habit at the senior level as well — a double century against Tamil Nadu in his Ranji debut season, double centuries in the West Indies and New Zealand while representing the India A team meant

soon he was in the reckoning for the senior team. Shubman made his Test debut in the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the MCG in 2020.

From thereon, there has been no looking back. Four and a half years have passed and today, Shubman is the India Test captain. While a lot has changed on the cricketing front, nothing has changed for him as a person. For the 25-year-old, there is cricket on one side and friends and family on the other. "His schedule is such that he doesn't have time to do anything else. So, whenever Shubman wants to chill, he will call his friends. He will say, 'let's sit at home. Or, he will go out for coffee or dinner'. He has not changed one bit," says Gurkeerat while admitting that Shubman has evolved a lot.

The day Shubman was named Test captain, his village, Chak Khere Wala, was thronged with people including the media, and the senior Gills (grandparents) remained indoors for privacy. During the IPL playoffs, the frenzy had mellowed. Didar Singh has resumed the renovation work of the old house. They haven't moved to Mohali and even during the recent blackout during India-Pakistan cross-border tensions, they remained in the village. Even as the renovation works continue, 90-year-old Didar, who said he will not be giving an interview, shows around the house with a



Sunday Special

Arjun & Arya combine to bag mixed team gold

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

RIFLE shooters Arya Borse and Arjun Babuta combined to help India clinch a gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event of the ISSF World Cup in Munich on Saturday. The Indian duo was simply unstoppable in the gold medal match against the Chinese duo of Wang Zifei and Sheng Lihao.

Zifei has been the standout shooter this season so far with six medals so far (three individual gold, one gold and a bronze in the mixed event earlier in Buenos Aires and Lima, respectively, and the silver outcome on the day).

It was the Chinese duo who opened the points account in the title match. But the Indians re-



Rifle shooters Arya Borse and Arjun Babuta on Saturday | NRAI

sponded with aplomb and surged ahead in no time. Both Arjun and Arya shot some impressive scores to make it a fairly one-sided contest. Pistol ace Manu Bhaker will be returning home empty-handed after she, along with partner Aditya Malra, finished sixth in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.

Payas grateful to get valuable UTT lessons

CHANDRA PRABHU @ Ahmedabad

THE talented Payas Jain is making a name for himself. He may just be 20 but the paddler, mentored by A Sharath Kamal, representing Chennai Lions in the ongoing edition of Ultimate Table Tennis, is already showing glimpses of a promising future. Unlike a few other paddlers, he's also using sports tech to become the best version of himself.

Although his team endured a tough campaign in Season Six of the Ultimate Table Tennis, Payas has benefited a lot from playing for the first time in the league. "It's my first time (his second season in the UTT but he was on the bench then) for the Chennai Lions and I have got a few wins against India players. I got the chance to play against Aruna Quadri (Kolkata Thunderblades) who's a top 10 player and also against a few more international players," he told this daily. "I got feedback on my game and how to improve and what different things are they (senior pros) doing and how can I improve, so yeah, it's a great season for me and felt great," he added.



One of the figures Payas learnt a lot from is five-time Olympian paddler Sharath, who is Chennai Lions mentor. "I have known him for a long time and he's been helping me a lot. I have learnt how to handle pressure and how to apply pressure on the opponent by having a good

serve and also while receiving," he said. It was Sharath's advice that helped Payas find rhythm during tough matches.

Payas explained how he communicates with Chinese paddler Fan Siqu in the mixed-doubles matches. In the three matches they have played together, they defeated the mixed pair from Kolkata and lost to rivals from Jaipur Patriots and U Mumba. "In the beginning, we faced a lot of problems because she did not know English. But we trained together and we improved our communication through sign language," he said. Communicating mid-match is difficult for Payas, because Siqu's manager, who is also her translator, is not allowed inside the court. To counter that, the duo make plans during their practice sessions. One thing that helped Payas improve is sports technology. "I feel this is new to India but Europeans and all the top Asian players have it for mental training, be it on activating your neurons while playing and how you can master your breathing. After research with both my mental and physical trainers, I have some gadgets to use and it's giving me an edge for sure," he said. Full story: newindianexpress.com

Yashaswini stands tall as U Mumba reach final

ENS @ Ahmedabad

YASHASWINI Ghorpade's performance was one of the highlights as U Mumba posted a thrilling 8-7 victory against Dempo Goa Challengers in the ongoing season of the UTT here on Saturday.

U Mumba were 5-7 down when Yashaswini entered the playing field. Up against Krittwika Sinha Roy in the final match, the odds were heav-

ily stacked against U Mumba.

However, what followed was a splendid show by the 20-year-old. She pocketed the first two games by identical margins (11-9). After going 10-4 up in the deciding game, she was made to work for her win as

Krittwika put up a spirited fight to close the gap. However, Yashaswini did enough to seal the deal and guide Mumba to final.



Yashaswini celebrates her win | UTT

BCCI forms committee to formulate guidelines

NEW DELHI: The BCCI Apex Council on Saturday formed a three-member committee headed by its secretary Devajit Saikia, vice president Rajeev Shukla and treasurer Prabhat Singh Bhatia to formulate guidelines aimed at preventing incidents like the recent Bengaluru stampede during the victory celebrations of Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Women's hockey team loses to Australia

LONDON: The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly after conceding three goals against Australia but lost 2-3 in a FIH Pro League match here. Australia took a 3-0 lead through Courtney Schonell (16th minute), Lexie Pickering (26th) and Tatum Stewart (35th). Deepika and Neha scored for India later but it was not enough.

Erigaisi helps Team MGD1 capture title

LONDON: Grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi and Pranav registered crucial wins on the final day as Team MGD1 became the first Indian team to clinch the FIDE World Rapid Team Championship title. Seeded sixth, Team MGD1 posted 10 wins from 12 rounds over three days to emerge champions after a closely-fought battle with Team Hexamind on Friday.

Maria stuns Keys to reach Queen's final

LONDON: German qualifier Tatjana Maria reached the Queen's Club final with a stunning 6-3, 7-6 (3) win over Australian Open champ Madison Keys. Mother of two Maria has enjoyed a memorable run in the first women's meet at Queen's for 52 years. The 37-year-old was forced to qualify for Queen's after dropping to 86th in the WTA rankings.

BCCI introduces format change in Ranji Trophy

NEW DELHI: The 2025-26 Ranji Trophy will be held from October 15 to February 28 in two phases with a tweaked format which will see the promotion and relegation of one team from the plate group instead of the current two sides, the BCCI decided in its Apex Council meeting. The change in red-ball cricket will apply to all BCCI tournaments across age groups.



The latest Air India catastrophe was another devastating blow to the aerospace giant's credibility. Belated reforms in the company appear grossly insufficient to salvage its safety reputation

Boeing 787-8/9 fleet, starting Sunday.

Air India on Saturday said it has done one-time safety checks on nine of its Boeing 787 Dreamliners and is on track to complete the checks on the remaining 24 such planes. In all, Air India has 33 Dreamliners. The Tata Group airline shared that some of these checks could lead to higher turnaround time and potential delays on certain long-haul routes, especially those to airports with operating curfews.

Boeing President and CEO Kelly Ortberg said that a Boeing team stands ready to support the investigation led by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB). Boeing stated that they will defer to AAIB to provide information about Air India Flight 171, in adherence with the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organization protocol.

Spate of accidents

The latest Air India accident marks yet another sordid chapter in Boeing's troubled history of fatal and near-fatal aviation disasters. In December 2024, a Boeing 737-800 operated by South Korea's Jeju Air crashed into a concrete barrier and burst into flames as it tried to land, killing 179 people. The flight was approaching Muan (South Korea) from Suvarnabhumi Airport near Bangkok when a bird strike occurred. The pilots issued a mayday alert, performed a go-around and made a second attempt at landing. Since the landing gear did not deploy, the airplane belly-landed well beyond the normal touchdown zone.

In January 2024, an Alaska Airlines flight scheduled from Portland to Ontario suffered a major scare. Shortly after takeoff, a door plug on the Boeing 737 MAX 9 blew out, causing uncontrolled decompression of the aircraft. Fortunately, it returned to Portland for emergency landing. All 171 passengers and six crew survived the accident, with three receiving minor injuries. A preliminary probe report highlighted that four bolts, intended to secure the door plug, had been missing when the accident occurred.

Then in March 2024, a LATAM Airlines (Boeing 787-9) on a scheduled international passenger flight from Sydney, Australia to Santiago, Chile, with a stopover at Auckland,

BOEING'S TRYST WITH TROUBLES

New Zealand, experienced an in-flight upset around two hours into the first leg of the flight. Of the 272 people on board, 50 were injured, with 12 taken to hospital after landing in Auckland.

Boeing faced a major setback in March 2019 when aviation regulators around the world, including India, started grounding 737 MAX aircraft following its involvement in two fatal crashes that killed 346 people. The first crash took place in Indonesia in October 2018 (killing 189 passengers) while the second accident happened in March 2019, when Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 crashed, killing 157 people.

While most of the recent accidents involved Boeing's bestseller 737 aircraft, a whistleblower's allegations prompted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to investigate his claims about assembly defects in the company's 787 Dreamliner.

Whistleblowers' pitch

Boeing stands apart in corporate history for a series of whistleblower allegations on safety compromises. Among them is engineer Sam Salehpour, who alleged critical structural flaws in the Dreamliner's fuselage. His testimony painted a picture of a broken safety culture where truth-tellers face systematic retaliation - ignored, marginalised, and even threatened into silence.

Salehpour alleged that improper assembly and rushed manufacturing practices could

pose a catastrophic risk over time, especially as these jets age. In a complaint filed with the FAA in January 2024, Salehpour claimed that Boeing took production shortcuts that could pose long-term safety risks as the aircraft age. He estimated that the issues affect more than 400 Boeing 777s and over 1,000 Dreamliners. One of his important claims is that tiny gaps between fuselage sections are improperly filled and this could eventually lead to fatigue cracks. "These planes are being flown with a ticking time bomb," Salehpour warned.

The Air India crash also brings a renewed focus on John Barnett, a former quality manager and Boeing whistleblower who flagged safety lapses in the Dreamliner programme before his mysterious death last year. Joshua Dean, a Boeing whistleblower who warned of manufacturing defects in the planemaker's 737 Max, died after a short illness, the second Boeing whistleblower to die this year.

A long timer at Boeing, Barnett raised red flags about what he described was a steady decline in safety protocols. According to him, employees were being pressured to overlook defects and meet production quotas. Barnett also claimed that about one in four oxygen masks might not work in an emergency.

Richard Cuevas, a subcontractor mechanic who worked on Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, alleged last year that he was retaliated against after raising concerns about work he observed on the plane. He alleged "substandard

manufacturing and maintenance practices" on the 787's forward pressure bulkhead—a dome shaped piece located in the jet's nose that's critical to maintaining cabin pressure. Then there is Ed Pierson - the ex-high-level Boeing manager-turned-whistleblower, who testified before the US Congress in 2019 that he had flagged safety issues with the company's 737 Max variant.

These cases highlight persistent concerns over Boeing's safety culture, with whistleblowers paying a heavy price for speaking out. As investigations continue, the aviation industry faces urgent questions about accountability and passenger safety.

Declining market share

Boeing's mounting safety crises, supply chain disruptions, and historic 2024 worker protests have crippled production, with aircraft deliveries plunging by a third year-on-year. The company managed just 348 jetliner deliveries in 2024 compared to 528 the previous year. This is less than half of Airbus's 766 deliveries during the same period. This operational collapse translated into staggering financial losses of \$11.8 billion in 2024 alone, pushing total losses since 2019 past the \$35 billion mark. Despite losses and falling deliveries, Boeing remains the go-to choice for Indian carriers with Air India and Akasa Airlines placing record orders.

Boeing is also facing multiple legal cases, regulatory probes, lawsuits related to manufacturing defects, safety failures, and whistleblower retaliation. The company recently agreed to pay \$1.1bn to avoid prosecution over two plane crashes that killed 346 people, in a deal that a lawyer for 16 families of the victims described as morally repugnant.

Amidst mounting safety scandals and a leadership shakeup with Kelly Ortberg succeeding David Calhoun, Boeing has launched a multi-pronged damage control campaign. The company is scrambling to overhaul its safety protocols through workforce retraining, whistleblower protections, and factory-floor quality interventions. Yet, these belated reforms appear insufficient after the latest Air India catastrophe — another devastating blow to the aerospace giant's credibility.

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

Once a crown jewel of American innovation, Boeing's reputation nosedived after a series of safety failures in recent decades. Founded over a century ago as the gold standard in aviation, the company now faces unprecedented scrutiny as its aircraft, once synonymous with reliability, have suffered multiple catastrophic failures. These tragedies have not only shattered public trust but also triggered alarm among global regulators, raising existential questions about the company's commitment to safety.

In the most recent incident, Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed in Ahmedabad, killing 241 passengers. While its cause is yet to be ascertained and there is no reason to believe it was due to a manufacturing or design fault, the tragedy added to global concerns after multiple safety incidents involving Boeing aircraft. Boeing's most advanced widebody aircraft is under the lens at a time when the company is still addressing quality control issues across its product line.

India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), on Friday directed Air India to carry out additional maintenance check on the Dreamliners in the aftermath of the crash. In a letter to Air India, the regulator listed out the checks the airliner will have to carry out on all of its

SHEKHAR SINGH @ New Delhi

If your housing project is delayed by years, should you still be paying interest on the home loan? If the builder fails to deliver, should not that person bear the financial burden caused by the delay? And if the Supreme Court itself had to bring in the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) to complete stalled projects, does not that reflect a deeper structural failure, not just buyer impatience?

In a judgment that has rattled homebuyers across India, the Supreme Court has now said developers cannot be made to reimburse interest paid on home loans, even if they failed to hand over the property on time. Buyers are entitled only to a refund of the principal amount, along with contractual compensation, nothing more.

A bench of justices Sanjay Karol and Prashant Kumar observed that there cannot be multiple heads for awarding damages or interest beyond what is contractually agreed upon. The court further held: "A perusal of the judgment and orders of the commissions does not reveal any exceptional or strong reasons for the interest on the loan taken by the respondents to be paid by GMADA (Greater Mohali Area Development Authority). That apart, whether the buyers of the flat do so by utilising their savings, taking a loan for such purpose or securing the required finances by any other permissible means, is not a consideration that the developer of the project is required to keep in mind. For, so far as they are concerned, such a consideration is irrelevant."

The case was triggered by a complaint filed by Anupam Garg, who had booked a 2-BHK + Servant Room (Type II) flat under the 'Purab Premium Apartments' scheme launched by the GMADA in 2011. Garg paid ₹5.5 lakh as earnest money, which was 10% of the ₹55 lakh flat price.

Following a successful allotment through a draw of lots on March 19, 2012, GMADA issued a Letter of Intent (LOI) on May 21, 2012, outlining the flat's price, payment schedule, layout, ownership conditions, and possession date, which was May 2015. The LOI clearly stated that in case of delay, a refund with 8% interest would be given.

By 2016, with no sign of progress, Garg demanded a refund. When GMADA refused, he approached the Punjab State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission. In 2018, the Commission ruled in Garg's favour, ordering a refund with 8% interest, ₹60,000 for mental harassment, ₹30,000 as litigation costs, and reimbursement of the home loan interest he

WHY SC RULING ON BUILDER LIABILITY IS A SHOCKER FOR HOMEBUYERS

had paid. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) upheld the order in 2019.

When GMADA challenged it at the Supreme Court, the bench partially allowed the appeal, but struck down the award of EMI interest reimbursement. "The one who is buying a flat is a consumer, and the one who is building it is a service provider. That is the only relationship between the parties. If there is a deficiency or delay in service, the consumer is entitled to be compensated for the same. Repayment of the entire principal amount along with 8% interest thereon, as stipulated in the contract, alongside the clarification that there shall be no other liability on the authority, sufficiently meets this requirement," it said. The court directed that the amounts already deposited by GMADA before the Commission be released to the buyer, minus the loan interest reimbursement component.

But for thousands of homebuyers still caught in stalled housing projects across India, the judgment hits hard. From Amrapali to Supertech, Unitech to Jaypee — several developers have failed to deliver on promises, forcing the Supreme Court to assign the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) the responsibility to complete and hand over these projects. Yet the financial burden of delay continues to fall on the buyers.

According to advocate Vineet Jindal, the court's ruling is rooted in the specifics of the case and prioritises contractual obligations. "The court's conclusion is drawn from the specific facts before it, focusing mainly on the period lost due to delay," he said. He clarified that the developer's liabilities stem strictly

from their agreement with the buyer and not from the buyer's independent financing choices. "The legal obligations stem solely from the buyer-developer contract. What the buyer chooses to do for financing, whether taking a loan or paying upfront, is irrelevant to the developer's liability," he explained.

Jindal added that the Consumer Protection Act limits compensation strictly to tangible losses arising from deficient service. "The buyer's decision to take a home loan is a separate financial act. Developers can't be

held accountable for how the buyer structures their payment," he said.

Still, the ruling leaves a narrow window for exceptional cases. Advocate Sangram Singh Hooda explained, "In rare and extraordinary cases, where the developer's breach leads to extreme financial hardship, courts may consider directing the builder to cover interest costs." He noted that this would only apply when it is beyond doubt that normal compensation, even with interest on principal, is inadequate to address the buyer's financial suffering.

"If the buyer is pushed into serious financial stress because of the developer's failure, then returning only the principal and nominal interest may not do justice," he said. Furthermore, "deliberate delays or fraudulent conduct that leaves the buyer trapped financially can't be brushed aside."

Hooda noted that the scope could be widened further in instances of manipulation, deception or collusion between builders and financial institutions. "If it becomes clear that the buyer was manipulated into entering the transaction or misled about the nature of the property and this is backed by hard evidence, then courts may go beyond the standard refund formula," he said. In Noida and Greater Noida alone, NBCC is han-

dling the delivery of over 46,000 stalled flats from Amrapali. The agency was recently allowed by the Supreme Court to raise funds by launching and selling new inventory, a move expected to cover 16,000 flats. NBCC has also applied for similar permission to work on 27,000 homes in 17 Supertech projects.

Yet, the recent ruling reinforces a critical principle: unless fraud or malice is proven, developers cannot be made to bear the cost of EMIs buyers continue to pay. For lakhs of people, this is not merely a technical interpretation, it is a denial of lived financial trauma.

Renu (name changed), who bought a Noida flat in 2017 for her elderly parents, continues to pay an EMI of Rs 35,000 along with Rs 25,000 in rent for a Delhi house. The possession date passed long ago. "I have paid more in EMIs than my original booking cost and there is no OC, no lift, no water. With this verdict, builders keep the advantage. We keep the debt," she said.

RERA was expected to be the remedy the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, mandates developers to deposit 70% of collected funds in an escrow for construction and meet timelines. But even nine years after its rollout, the law suffers from patchy implementation across states. Over 4.8 lakh housing units are still running behind schedule by more than three years, as per industry estimates.

In May 2025, Haryana RERA offered a glimmer of hope for delayed homebuyers by directing a defaulting builder to pay over ₹65 lakh in interest to a buyer who had booked a home in 2013 for ₹62 lakh, with a promised possession by December 7, 2015. The buyer, choosing not to withdraw from the project, sought compensation under Section 18 of RERA which allows buyers to claim interest for delay without cancelling their booking.

After examining the facts, Haryana RERA invoked Rule 15 of its regulations, pegging interest compensation at SBI's highest MCLR plus 2%. On March 19, 2025, the authority ruled that the builder must pay 11.01% annual interest from 2015 until the actual handover of the property.

The Supreme Court may have clarified the limits of contractual liability but for lakhs of homebuyers paying EMIs for undelivered homes, the verdict feels more like a cold legal conclusion than a recognition of the emotional and financial crisis they endure month after month.

In July 2024 alone, more than 50,000 real estate cases were pending in consumer courts across the country. For many buyers, this battle is no longer just about walls and keys, it's about dignity, justice, and not being punished for trusting a broken system.

