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Nearly 14 people die after consuming suspected toxic liquor in Pune

Pune, May 29 : Panic and outrage spread across Pune and neighbouring Pimpri-Chinchwad after nearly 14 people died allegedly due to consumption of toxic liquor mixed with methanol. Police have arrested the main accused, Yogesh Wankhede, along with eight others, including liquor den owner Colonel Singh Virk.



Preliminary investigations suggest that the country liquor was allegedly manufactured at Fugewadi in neighbouring Pimpri-Chinchwad using chemically contaminated spirit and later distributed in Hadapsar and nearby areas. Officials said the victims complained of severe stomach pain and vomiting after consuming the liquor. They were admitted to

hospitals but died during treatment. Some of the deceased have been identified as Rahul Sharad Kshirsagar (45), Vijay Bhu Kurlal Sharma (45), Arun Dadar and Ashok Ramesh Chavan. Police said one more victim was among those who died, while complete identification details were being verified. Police have sent the

bodies for post-mortem examination. Further investigation is under way.

Authorities are also investigating whether more people consumed the suspected contaminated liquor and whether a wider illegal liquor supply network was involved.

Following the incident, the State Excise Department has launched raids at various locations to curb the illicit liquor trade.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis today condemned those responsible for the deaths of nearly 14 people after they allegedly consumed poisonous liquor in Pune.

"I have spoken to the

Pimpri-Chinchwad Police Commissioner. The police have already found out where this liquor was manufactured. The accused in this case have been arrested. There may be some more people. The police is trying to find them. Efforts are being made to save those who are in the hospital," Fadnavis said while speaking to media persons in Mumbai here.

"The incident is very serious. Eight people have been arrested and some more may be arrested. The entire chain of events will be traced and strict action will be taken. This is a kind of murder. Very strict provisions of the law have been imposed against the accused," Fadnavis added.

Fadnavis calls liquor deaths 'murder' as Rohit Pawar slams BJP, vandalises shop

MUMBAI, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis today condemned those responsible for the deaths of 13 people after they allegedly consumed poisonous liquor in Pune.

A total of 13 people, including 8 people from Phugewadi in Pimpri-Chinchwad city and 5 others from Kalepadal area in Hadapsar area, died after consuming poisonous liquor, believed to be laced with spirit. Some of the other victims are undergoing treatment.

"I have spoken to the Pimpri-Chinchwad Police Commissioner. The police have already found out where this liquor was manufactured. The accused in this case have been arrested. There may be some more people. The police is trying to find them. Efforts are being made to save those who are in the



hospital," Fadnavis said while speaking to media persons here. "The incident is very serious. Eight people have been arrested and some more may be arrested. The entire chain of events will be traced and strict action will be taken. This is a kind of murder. Very strict provisions of the law have been imposed against the accused," Fadnavis said.

Meanwhile, a certain Yogesh Wankhede has been arrested allegedly supplying liquor containing spirit, while another accused called Karnal Singh Virkha, is likely to be arrested soon. However, earlier today, Sharad Pawar-led NCP MLA Rohit Pawar met the survivors of the incident. Later, Rohit Pawar

reached the shop where the poisonous liquor was sold and allegedly personally vandalised its counter, while his party workers practically destroyed the rest of the liquor shop. After this, he strongly criticized the BJP. "Under BJP rule, bulldozers are used on the basis of religion. So why have bulldozers not been used in such a liquor shop? When the system does not work, and when the police and the administration is weak, we want to give a message to the people. Sometimes, we are compelled to take some things into our own hands. Minor girls are being subjected to atrocities and women are being subjected to atrocities. Even in the case of Ajit Dada Pawar's air crash, the system never helped," Rohit Pawar said. "Poor people die after drinking poisonous alcohol, but the system does nothing.

Congress slams Maha govt over Pune toxic liquor tragedy

PUNE, The Maharashtra unit of Congress today strongly criticised the BJP-led state government over the toxic liquor tragedy in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, calling it a "major failure of the Home Department headed by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis".



At least 14 people reportedly died after consuming chemically-contaminated country liquor in Fugewadi area of Pimpri-Chinchwad and Hadapsar in Pune.

State Congress spokesperson Gopaldada Tiwari visited the families of the deceased and expressed his condolences. He alleged that the state

government has become insensitive and inactive, resulting in criminals operating without fear. According to him, various forms of crimes have increased significantly across the state, while the state government continues to ignore the worsening law and order situation in the state. He said poor and

common citizens are becoming victims of this growing criminal activity.

Tiwari demanded a thorough investigation into the toxic liquor death case and urged the police to trace the entire network behind illegal liquor trade. He also called for stern punishment to those responsible for the deaths.

Warning of public protests, Tiwari said the Congress party would be forced to take to the streets if strong action is not taken to ensure public safety.

He further demanded the government to strengthen law enforcement and create fear of law among criminals across the state.

Maha Legislative Council poll seat-sharing formula discussed in Delhi

MUMBAI, An all-night marathon meeting was held in Delhi on Wednesday by top leaders of the ruling Mahayuti parties including Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy CM Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar to arrive at a seat-sharing formula to contest the forthcoming Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad) election in Maharashtra, sources informed on Thursday.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP National President Nitin Nabin held consecutive meetings of the leaders of the Mahayuti.

BJP state president Ravindra Chavan handed over a list of 48 possible names to party president Nitin Nabin.

After that, a very important personal meeting was held between Chief Minister Fadnavis and Nitin Nabin late at night.

According to sources, although the seat-sharing formula has more or less been finalised after the

all-night marathon meeting on Wednesday, sources informed that a dispute about two seats still remains unresolved.

Sources have confirmed that a "11-4-2" formula has almost been finalized by the ruling Mahayuti parties after the Delhi meeting.

According to this "11-4-2" formula, there is a strong possibility that BJP will contest 11 seats and the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena will contest four seats, while the Sunetra Ajit Pawar-led NCP will contest two seats.

According to sources, the Mahayuti leaders have also finalised the names of candidates who will contest the forthcoming Legislative Council election.

The BJP has strongly insisted on contesting from both Nashik and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar seats and BJP leaders based in Maharashtra have exerted a lot of political pressure at the senior level to ensure this.

Meanwhile, the Raigad and Pune seats are likely to go to the Sunetra Ajit Pawar-led NCP, even as it is more or less clear that the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena will contest from the Parbhani seat.

After completing the meetings, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met Prime Minister Modi and will remain in Delhi, since he is expected to discuss relief measures for onion farmers with union Minister Amit Shah, sources said.

However, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde spoke to media persons before he left for Nanded on Thursday afternoon.

Shortly after meeting union Home Minister Amit Shah and union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil

on Thursday afternoon, Deputy CM Eknath Shinde told media persons, "The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will contest 17 seats for the Legislative Council election, but I don't think it will win even a single seat. The Mahayuti will contest 17 seats and we will win all the seats".

When asked about differences when it comes to seat sharing within the ruling Mahayuti alliance, Shinde said, "There are no differences in the Mahayuti. Seat sharing to contest the Legislative Council election will be done with dignity".

When asked about talks with the central government, Shinde said, "I did not come to Delhi for a political meeting. I came for the development work of the state. We have been in Delhi for two days. It is our duty to present our position to the Centre regarding important schemes for the state, as well as issues related to onion and sugarcane growers in Maharashtra or the pending projects of the Jal Jeevan Mission.

BJP corporator along with six others arrested for online IPL betting

KOLHAPUR, - In another major action in the online betting case in Ichalkaranji, the police have arrested seven persons including the 'Mastermind', Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) corporator of Ichalkaranji Municipal Corporation (IMC) Nitesh alias Gotya Pawar, for the online IPL cricket betting.



The police have expressed suspicion that Pawar, who is a corporator of ward number 12, is an important 'mastermind' in this betting racket.

Nitesh Pawar is considered a close aide of MLA Rahul Awade, and his arrest has created a stir in the city's political circles.

Police investigations are revealing the names of some other political figures involved in the betting racket, and the Special Investigation Team is

also keeping an eye on them.

Meanwhile, Shivaji Nagar police of the Ichalkaranji city, have conducted a thorough investigation into Nitesh Pawar's financial transactions, including mobile data, bank account information, and his role in the betting network.

Six people were arrested in a crackdown on online betting on the ongoing 'IPL' cricket match at a footwear warehouse in the Industrial Estate area of Ichalkaranji city. In this operation, a total of Rs

58,90,230 worth of valuables were seized, which includes expensive mobile phones, laptops, cash, and three luxurious four-wheelers, informed Additional Superintendent of Police Annasaheb Jadhav.

Police identified others as Amey Vilas Badve (32), the owner of the 'betting' racket, his brother Abhijit (30, both of Priyadarshini Colony), Ganesh Prakash Patil (27, resident of Liker Talkies, Murlunde Mala Street No. 3), Uttam Singh Pratap Singh Bagga 38, resident of Ganeshnagar Street No. 4), Yakub Abdul Mujawar (47, resident of Magdum Dargah, Gavbhag), Rishabh Umesh Patil (26, resident of Mirchi Katta, Jawaharnagar).

Arrested persons were produced in the court and the court sentenced them to four days' police custody.

Rise in fuel price and shortage of petrol and diesel are the sins of the Modi govt : Mah Congress Chief

MUMBAI - The fuel crisis has arisen because Prime Minister Narendra Modi criminally neglected the economy while misleading people with the promise of Atmanirbharta, alleged Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee President Harshvardhan Sapkal here on Thursday.

Due to the absence of any concrete policy, the prices of petrol, diesel, CNG, and LPG gas have increased sharply. Even when it was evident that a fuel shortage was imminent, Narendra Modi remained busy campaigning for elections in five states, and the people of the country are now paying a heavy price for it, he remarked speaking to the media at Tilak Bhavan.

Sapkal further said that ever since coming to power in 2014, the Modi government has continuously increased fuel prices. Government-



owned oil companies, as well as private oil companies like Reliance and Nayara, have earned enormous profits through these hikes. "Had the Modi government created a reserve fund for oil procurement, this situation could have been avoided, but instead it prioritised corporate interests, which amounts to major corruption," he contended.

On the onion issue, nearly half of Maharashtra's cabinet met union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah in Delhi, but Maharashtra received

nothing substantial from the meeting. The government is talking about procuring onions at rupees 1,500 per quintal, but farmers are demanding a price of rupees 3,000 per quintal, along with procurement through NAFED, and that the entire onion stock of farmers should be purchased.

Sapkal recalled that Narendra Modi had visited Nashik in 2014 and promised farmers that he had "eaten onions" and would never betray them, assuring them of rupees 2,400 per quintal if voted to power. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had echoed similar promises at the time, but now they are only talking about rupees 1,500 per quintal, which amounts to cheating farmers. Harshvardhan Sapkal warned that if the government does not accept the farmers' demands, Congress will launch fresh protests.

1Point1 Solutions posts Rs 10.27 cr profit in Q4

MUMBAI, 1Point1 Solutions, a provider of AI-driven business process management (BPM) and customer experience solutions, posted a rise in net profit at Rs 10.27 crore during the March quarter.

The company had posted a profit of Rs 8.74 crore in the year-ago period, 1Point1 Solutions Ltd said in a statement.

The company reported strong momentum during the quarter, with revenue rising to Rs 99.7 crore, "reflecting a 35.5 per cent year-on-year increase.

The company also launched ResoIX, its AI-first resolution brand designed to transform enterprise customer experience through Resolution as a Service (RaaS), it said. During the quarter, 1Point1 completed the USD 33.37-million acquisition of Netcom Business Contact Centre S.A., establishing a direct operational footprint in Central and Latin America.

Akshay Chhabra, Chairman and Managing Director, 1Point1 Solutions, said, "We are closing the year with another strong quarter, reflecting the discipline of our execution and the clarity of our long-term strategic vision... ResoIX has already been successfully deployed for one of Netcom's banking clients in Latin America, marking a strategic milestone in both 1Point1's expansion into the LATAM region." Founded in 2008, 1Point1 Solutions Limited is an India-headquartered customer experience and business process management company.

Maharashtra Reports 17 Heatstroke Deaths And Over 300 Cases Between March And May

PUNE, 29 - Maharashtra has reported several heatstroke-related illnesses and deaths this summer as intense heat conditions continue to affect different parts of the state. According to health department data, a total of 17 deaths linked to heat-related complications have been recorded so far. Out of these, five deaths have been officially confirmed as caused by heatstroke, while 12 others are still under investigation.

The highest number of heat-related cases was reported from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. Other badly affected districts include Nandurbar with 26 cases, Nashik with 20, Gadchiroli with 19, and Wardha and Buldhana with 18 cases each. Among the suspected



deaths, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Akola, Latur, and Jalgaon reported two cases each, while Yavatmal, Solapur, Nagpur, and Gadchiroli recorded one suspected death each. Confirmed heatstroke deaths were reported from Akola, Latur, Gadchiroli, and Jalgaon.

Health officials have advised citizens to remain cautious during extreme weather

conditions. Dr Sandeep Sangale, Joint Director of Health Services, Maharashtra, said people suffering from heatstroke should immediately be moved to a cool and airy place. He recommended reducing body temperature with water and fans, while warning against the use of ice packs or immersing infants in cold water, as it may cause hypothermia.

Doctors explained that prolonged exposure to extreme heat can lead to dehydration, dizziness, fatigue, headaches, and in severe cases, life-threatening heatstroke. Senior citizens, children, and outdoor workers are considered the most vulnerable.

Medical experts also noted that recent rainfall and falling temperatures have brought some relief from heat-related illnesses. However, sudden weather changes have now triggered a rise in seasonal infections.

Health experts have urged citizens to take proper precautions during the changing weather conditions and remain alert to both heat-related illnesses and seasonal infections.

Kolhapur circuit bench of Bombay HC gives conditional permission for 'qurbani' at Vishalgad Fort

KOLHAPUR, - The Kolhapur circuit bench of Bombay High Court has consistently permitted Qurbani (animal sacrifice) during Bakri-Eid and Urs celebrations at the Hajrat Peer Malik Rehan Mira Saheb Dargah at the historic Vishalgad Fort in Shahuwadi tehsil of Kolhapur district from May 28 to June 2. The court struck down administrative bans on the practice, but imposed strict conditions.

On a petition of Durga Trust, the court directed that the sacrifice of animals or birds is restricted to enclosed, private premises.

The activity is mandated to take place at Gate No. 19 which is privately owned, to prevent slaughtering in open or public spaces. The ruling extends to the Dargah Trust as well as to devotees participating in the observances.

The Archaeology Department and district administration previously attempted to prohibit animal slaughter on the grounds that Vishalgad is a "protected monument".

The Dargah Trust petitioned the Circuit Bench and High Court, which ruled that a complete ban would disrupt the daily lives of families residing on the fort premises. The court has historically directed authorities to ensure traditional observances can continue safely while maintaining law and order in the region. Different Hindutva vadi organizations had demanded a ban on 'Qurbani' in the historic Vishalgad Fort during the Bakari Id and Urs.

EDITORIAL

How Looting Became Embedded in Israeli Military Operations

Looting has accompanied wars and violent conflicts throughout human history and was therefore explicitly prohibited under Articles 28 and 47 of the 1907 Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, and under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949).

While looting shares common characteristics across conflicts, every place in which it occurs has its own particular circumstances. Understanding those circumstances is essential if the phenomenon is to be reduced, even if it can never be entirely eradicated.

In the Israeli context, one could argue that looting is rooted in the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948, the apartheid regime and the settlement project established in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Yet while the phenomenon has always existed within the Israeli military, its scale has fluctuated over the years.

In The Lions' Gate, former Israeli Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur's account of the 1967 battle for Jerusalem through the experiences of paratroopers, looting by both soldiers and Israeli civilians is discussed openly. The book describes how Israeli civilians followed behind the advancing paratroopers, looting whatever they could carry from the Palestinian neighbourhoods that had been captured. The looters reportedly risked their lives, transporting stolen property through minefields separating East and West Jerusalem. One conclusion raised in the book is that the looting of 1967 was a direct consequence of the failure to address similar acts in 1948.

Many Palestinian families in the West Bank live in a cash-based economy. It is not uncommon for soldiers conducting searches of Palestinian homes or vehicles at checkpoints to steal cash. If a Palestinian chooses to file a complaint with the Israeli authorities, it is exceedingly difficult to prove the theft unless a soldier confesses.

In one such case, a civil lawsuit I filed on behalf of a Palestinian driver was dismissed. The driver alleged that he saw a commanding officer in an Israeli military unit steal 10,000 shekels from the glove compartment of his car during a search. During questioning, the officer acknowledged that the driver had immediately accused him of theft upon returning to the vehicle, but insisted the accusation was false. Although comprehensive studies have yet to be published – and it will likely be impossible to determine the full extent of looting carried out by Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank since the outbreak of the war on Oct. 7, 2023, particularly because many homes have been completely destroyed and many of their owners killed – the images soldiers themselves have circulated on social media, together with the steady stream of testimonies reaching journalists, organisations and human rights lawyers, suggest a massive wave of looting unprecedented in recent decades.

Why did this happen? Two central explanations stand out. The Israeli military has no official order authorising looting, but senior commanders have long been aware of the phenomenon. As early as December 2023, then-chief of staff Herzl Halevi circulated a letter to soldiers following the spread of social media footage documenting looting. "We must preserve our humanity," he wrote.

Under Modi, India's Democracy IS A WORK OF FICTION

Truth is immutable. Fictional script can be altered at will. An economic boom can be transformed into an economic nightmare overnight. The prime minister, who painted rosy pictures in election campaigns, all of a sudden screamed exceptional crisis. A sinister delimitation bill is packaged in the lofty ideal of women's empowerment. A trade deal insidious to Indian interest is portrayed as a boom for the nation. Consequences of flawed economic and foreign policies are presented as an unavoidable impact of war. A sinister sectarian agenda is couched in a noble narrative of sabka-saath-sabka-vikas – 'with all, progress for all'. It will not be fallacious to presume that Narendra Modi is fictionalising Indian democracy.

The plot turns on situational logic, with the power of propaganda constructing a convincing pivot for the convenience of hawking the fiction.

While the desperation to control the narrative is the primary force behind this deceptive ploy, Modi also exploits this trick for refurbishing his own fading image. He chairs a routine meeting of the Council of Ministers and twists the messaging to link it to the larger goal of Viksit Bharat. His post on X gives some insight into how he conducted the meeting. The photograph he shared with the public separates him from the rest of the ministerial crowd and elevates him to a position distinct from the other members of the cabinet. It serves as a reminder that he does not hold the position of "first among equals," a term used to describe the role of a prime minister in a parliamentary democracy. He also asks his colleagues to search for sources of alternative energy. Does the optics not undermine the constitutional arrangement of collective responsibility? Do they not transform the cabinet into merely a group of advisers? Is this not a declaration that he alone makes decisions? Institutions continue to exist but without their constitutionally assigned roles.

The much-hyped "Melodi" drama in Rome also presents another dimension of the fictionalisation



of democracy, where common diplomatic gestures are made to appear as unique events intended not only to redeem his image but to divert attention from the true purpose of his visit. The gesture was loud and frivolous. The drama indeed brought a brief pause to the austerity shows in which ministers were travelling by bus and the chief minister was flying economy class.

The manner in which austerity measures were announced also points towards fictionalisation of the real discourse. Amidst striking extravagance as manifested in his craze for self-publicity and ostentatious foreign trips, a purely economic necessity was given a touch of patriotism. Buying costlier petrol, eating less oil and avoiding gold purchase become a response to call of nationalism. That's fiction bearing down facts. His appeal must have touched the core of the Indian ethos, aparigraha or non-possessiveness. The opposition's demand for answers was bound to go in vain. Democracy gets hurt, but without any noise.

The first step towards the fictionalisation of democracy was the mystification of the Israel-US war on Iran. The prime minister likens the crisis to the COVID pandemic, and the war takes on the character of a natural calamity. The mystification effectively

absolves Modi of charges of pursuing a flawed foreign policy, for no human being can be held responsible for a natural calamity. The narrative presents him as an innocent bystander who is ignorant of developments in West Asia and visits Israel without any awareness of escalating tensions. It renders irrelevant debates over Modi succumbing to US pressure and stopping the purchase of oil from Iran and Russia. The mystification also prevents questions from being raised about Modi's recent visit to the pro-Israel UAE when foreign ministers from BRICS countries were in Delhi to discuss the crisis. In an opaque democracy with little or almost no access to information on security, finance, or deteriorating living conditions, there is no avenue for people to know about the manipulations occurring behind the scenes. This makes the task easier for the rulers. However, in this case, some pointed to the corporate connections behind Modi's foreign policy. Speculation appeared suggesting that his tours of the Nordic countries and Italy might have been aligned with the interests of a major Indian corporate group.

We also find elements of fiction in Modi's choice of a public rally to announce austerity measures. He does this to make his communication with the public appear infor-

mal. The tactic forms an essential part of his governance. His Mann ki Baat is the best example of informal yet unilateral communication. In announcing austerity measures, he discards all available channels, including Parliament, state-run television channels, and even party platforms, in order to make the communication appear even more informal than before. He does not discuss the matter in the cabinet either. At a time when institutions are divorced from their constitutional roles, even the small gesture of consulting others might instil some confidence in democratic institutions. However, he deliberately chooses to eliminate such a possibility. He repeats the tactic in The Hague for the same purpose and announces the possible rise in poverty at a community gathering of immigrant Indians. How can the prime minister of a democracy reveal such vital information to an informal gathering outside the country? People may wonder why Modi fictionalises democracy at a time when he is in full command of every major institution and has achieved an unexpected victory in West Bengal. The conquest of West Bengal has demonstrated that little can prevent him from winning elections. The victory has decisively altered the nature of elections by introducing new ele-

ments into the electoral system – the SIR, a category of "logical discrepancies", tribunals to scrutinise voters' eligibility, a large deployment of central forces, counting personnel from the Union government, and so on. However, absolute control hardly guarantees immunity from instability. The narrative of ghuspaithiyas (infiltrators) cannot legitimise control over West Bengal. Discontent arising from disenfranchisement and the suppression of minorities and the opposition may lead to destabilisation. Modi may therefore be looking towards the fictionalisation of democracy as a diversionary tool. However, the project of fictionalisation primarily depends on communal narratives, the time-tested tool of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the BJP. Analysts failed to pay attention to a recent event at Somnath. Within a week of the conquest of West Bengal, Modi organised an Amrut Mahotsava (75th anniversary) to commemorate the inauguration of the new temple at Somnath. One rarely hears of celebrations marking the inauguration day of a place of worship. Moreover, neither the RSS nor the BJP was associated with the construction of the new temple at Somnath. Sardar Patel conceived the idea, while Congress leaders K. M. Munshi and N. V. Gadgil executed it. Rajendra Prasad, another Congress stalwart, inaugurated it. Prime Minister Nehru wanted the Indian state to maintain distance from the affair, and Prasad did the same by inaugurating the temple in his private capacity. He had reiterated his government's commitment to the ideals of secularism. "It is very necessary that each one of us should realise that the best course is to act with a sense of respect and equality towards every community and creed. In it lies the welfare of our nation and country and of every one of us. This faith and conviction has impelled India to adopt the policy of secularism and to give an assurance that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of religion. Everyone would be provided equal opportunities," he had said.

How Civil Society Reads India-Pakistan Signals Amid the West Asia War

What do civil society peace activists, especially the cross border 'people to people' dialogue enthusiasts say about the growing buzz around a senior political ideologue, and a former army chief signalling the possibility of India's reset in the confrontational face-off in the India-Pakistan bilateral relations? The media discourse has been heavy with mixed reactions of the political class and even some encouragement from realist strategists, but what about the cross border civil society networks – the track two, and particularly the people-to-people track – that supposedly are meant to break the deadlock in the zero-sum paradigm of the two nuclear armed neighbours?

Movements such as the three decades old Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPPFD) have not simply been idle, or waiting for government approvals or the commendation of fundamentalists. On April 18-19, PIPFPD shook off the constraining burden of anti-nationalist labelling, surveillance and militarised nationalist propaganda, and re-energised the Pakistan-India people-to-people commitment to reject the logic of war, politics of hatred and silencing.

After eight years, the urgency of the political moment – of deepening militarisation, authoritarian megalomania and shrinking democratic spaces – drove the convening of the National Convention of PIPFPD, India chapter in Delhi. The thematic call of Isha, Siyasat, Awam: Why Peace Matters, returned the enthusiastic inter-genera-



tional assembly once again to a shared historical responsibility as we invoked the memory and spirit of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Sahir Ludhianvi and Avtar Singh Pash – poets who refused the violence of borders, who spoke against hollow nationalism, and who placed love, dissent, and people at the centre of politics. It was a continuation of the tradition of celebrating voices such as Fahmida Riaz and Amrita Pritam who insisted that the subcontinent's history cannot be reduced to division, nor its future to hostility. For the hundreds who came – voicing the diverse struggles of farmers, fisherfolk, forest dwellers, workers, artists, academics and lawyers, across fault lines in Manipur, securitised and militarised regions of Chhattisgarh and Kashmir, displaced communities and students – peace was not a slogan. It was a political demand rooted in democracy, human rights and justice. Pakistani colleagues disabled from join-

ing by hostile visa regimes, were present in supportive video cameos, excited at the prospect of the return of the multitudinous PIPFPD joint conventions which, since the 1960s, had enabled ordinary Indians and Pakistanis to travel to each other's countries and pull down the walls of otherness that divided them. These multifarious contacts were ruptured by the sterile policy of "terror and talks don't go together" which broke off road, rail and air links, trade and medical tourism, divided families, and stripped diplomatic contacts to bare bones. Toxic propaganda and militarised nationalism triggered escalating military action culminating in Operation Sindoor and the May 2025 India-Pakistan military confrontation, presently 'paused'.

The PIPFPD National Convention preceded this recent signalling of support for India-Pakistan people-to-people contacts. According to

M. Vijayan, general secretary of PIPFPD, "PIPPFD is a people to people membership based Forum and does not look at relations from the statist positions of governments, but rather from the prism of people – of fishers who are jailed; of divided peoples of undivided Jammu & Kashmir who have borne the brunt of the violent conflict and wars, of the traders and common people who would stand to gain by opening of borders for travel and trade". Within weeks of the PIPFPD assembly's affirmation of a vision for the future of South Asia that rests on ordinary and diverse people standing at the centre of peace and democracy, there came a surprising convergent call. In an interview to PTI, Dattaraj Hosbale, the RSS General Secretary exhorted the resumption of people to people contacts, trade and commerce, and issuance of visas and thereby the renewal of diplomatic relations.

Despite Growing Revolt In Trinamool, No Sign of Introspection by Mamata Banerjee

The election results were declared on May 4. Today is May 28. That means nearly twenty-four days have already passed since the results came out, almost a full month. Yet during this entire period, one after another, Trinamool Congress leaders have publicly revolted against the party leadership. Many have resigned from party posts openly. Interestingly, most of them do not even directly say that they want to join the BJP. Their rebellion is not necessarily ideological migration; it is more a reflection of anger, frustration, and alienation within the party structure itself. The situation has become so serious that even the BJP's state leadership has publicly stated that, for the next three months, they are not interested in inducting defectors immediately. The BJP leadership has reportedly said that only after things settle down and the distinction between "good Trinamool" and "bad Trinamool" members becomes clearer, will decisions be taken regarding inductions. At the same time, several councillors of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, former MLAs, and even elected representatives have started openly criticising the Trinamool Congress leadership. The central complaints being raised are becoming increasingly repetitive and consistent. Many leaders allege that the party has become excessively corporatised. Others claim that access to the leadership has become restricted. There are also accusations that Abhishek Banerjee remained



politically unavailable during crucial periods. Alongside this, criticism surrounding the growing influence of I-PAC and professional political management structures has intensified. But beyond all these allegations, the bigger question is this: where is the introspection within the party leadership? In politics, no party wins forever, and no party remains undefeated permanently. Every major political force, after suffering setbacks, usually goes through a phase of internal reflection. History offers many examples. When the CPI(M) transitioned from the Jyoti Basu era to Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's leadership, serious internal discussions began within the Communist Party as well. Veteran Communist leader Abdullah Rasul, who stayed at the Park Circus party commune, had openly warned the party leadership at the time. He argued that the party leadership was increasingly slipping

into the hands of urban middle-class elites who had gradually become disconnected from workers and peasants, the very social base that once formed the backbone of the Communist movement. Abdullah Rasul was not alone. Similar concerns started emerging from senior Communist leaders across districts. Eventually, the party was compelled to undertake a phase of introspection. Senior CPI(M) leader Shyamal Chakraborty even initiated a programme called Atmashuddhi, meaning self-purification or self-correction. The BJP too has experienced moments of introspection. There was a time when almost everyone believed Atal Bihari Vajpayee would return to power for a second consecutive term. The BJP campaign projected the slogan that Vajpayee represented "magic, not arithmetic". Much of the Indian media also assumed that the NDA would comfort-

ably return to power. But when Manmohan Singh unexpectedly became Prime Minister, the BJP too began questioning itself internally. It started examining where the disconnect had emerged. Over time, BJP leaders themselves acknowledged that while the party was growing quantitatively, questions remained about qualitative growth. The Communist movement had debated something similar long ago. During organisational discussions, debates often emerged around "quantity versus quality". A party could expand numerically while simultaneously becoming hollow internally. The conflict between quantity and quality has emerged from the age of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Within Left circles, there used to be a phrase for such a phenomenon: "anaemic growth". A body may appear swollen externally, but internally it suffers from a lack of blood and strength. Many political observers now feel a similar situation may be developing inside the Trinamool Congress. Yet what is striking is that the party leadership still appears unwilling to publicly acknowledge any mistakes. Neither Mamata Banerjee nor Abhishek Banerjee has openly admitted that strategic or organisational errors may have contributed to the electoral setback. Recently, Arup Chakraborty, a Trinamool spokesperson, resigned from a committee chairmanship and openly stated that these internal issues were among the reasons behind the party's poor performance.

Pune Census Survey Worker Allegedly Abused, Son Assaulted; PMC Employees' Union Warns of Boycott

PUNE, A female employee from Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) who was conducting the census survey work was allegedly subjected to verbal abuse by local residents in Pune's Mukundnagar area.

The PMC Employees' Union has also claimed that the employee's son was also assaulted after he questioned the resident's behaviour.

This incident occurred in Meenatai Thackeray Vasahat under the jurisdiction of the Bibwevadi ward office. The residents allegedly misbehaved with her and used abusive language while employee was carrying out her census-related duties.

The union claims that the son was subsequently assaulted by local individuals when he sought an explanation from them.

Expressing serious



concern over the incident, the PMC Employees' Union stated that civic employees are increasingly facing hostility while performing government duties. The union warned that it may withdraw from census-related work if strict action is not taken against the accused.

Union president Bajrang Pokharkar demanded immediate registration of a police case and swift legal action. He said that failure to act could force the union

to launch an agitation and boycott census operations.

The union has further urged the administration to ensure adequate protection for field staff, stressing that government employees should be able to perform their responsibilities without fear of harassment or violence. The incident has once again raised concerns about the safety and security of frontline civic workers involved in public service and data collection exercises across the city.

Maharashtra To Replace 7/12 Extracts In Municipal Areas With Property Cards For Urban Land Records

PUNE 29 - The Maharashtra government has taken an important decision to introduce property cards in urban areas where city surveys have not yet been completed. As part of this move, the traditional 7/12 extracts used in many newly added city areas will soon be discontinued.

The decision applies to villages recently merged into municipal corporation and municipal council limits, as well as urban areas where city survey work is still pending.

According to the government, many cities in Maharashtra have expanded over the years, with several nearby villages becoming part of municipal limits. However, land records in these areas are still maintained using survey or gat numbers under the old 7/12 system, creating problems during property transactions, loan applications and ownership verification.



To solve these issues, the state has approved detailed city surveys and the issuance of property cards that clearly mention ownership rights.

The decision has been taken under the Maharashtra Land Revenue Act, 1966. The government has instructed municipal corporations and municipalities to submit proposals for city survey work to the District Superintendent of

Land Records.

Funds required for the survey and measurement work will be provided through district annual funds or urban development schemes. The local bodies will deposit the required amount with the land records department to speed up the process.

The government has also clarified rules regarding government-owned land during the new survey process. In cases where government land has been encroached upon, district collectors will first take action as per existing rules before property cards are issued. For government lands without encroachment, the property cards will directly carry the name of the Maharashtra government. The government resolution regarding the decision has been issued by Revenue Department Joint Secretary Sanjay Bankar.

School Bus Fees May Rise By 15-20% From June 1; Parents Could Pay ₹300-₹500 More Per Month

PUNE: Parents in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad are set to face higher school transportation costs from June 1, as school bus operators have announced a fee hike of 15 to 20 per cent.

The decision was taken during a meeting of the school transport wing of the Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Bus Association held on Thursday in Pune.

According to the association, the increase in

petrol and diesel prices over the past year has made it difficult for transport operators to manage expenses. They also pointed out that the costs of tyres, batteries, spare parts and AdBlue used in Euro-6 buses have gone up significantly.

Bus operators said the revised charges are expected to increase monthly fees by around ₹300 to ₹500 per student.

"We are not increasing fares to earn extra

profit. The hike is necessary to manage the rising operational costs. Diesel prices alone have increased by nearly ₹10 per litre," said Rajan Junawane, president of the Pune Bus and Car Owners Association.

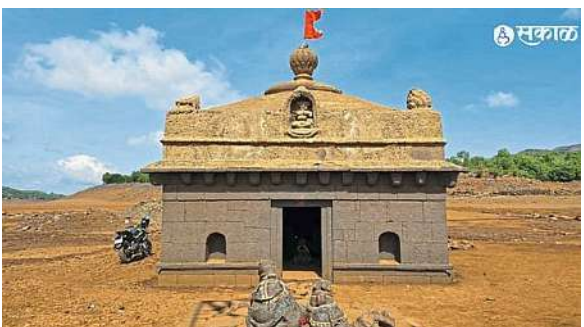
The fee hike comes just before the start of the new academic year. State board schools are scheduled to reopen from June 15, while several private and other board schools will begin earlier.

Historic Kambareswar Temple Visible Again After Drop In Bhatghar Dam Water Level

PUNE, An ancient temple believed to be linked to the Mahabharat era has once again emerged from the waters of Bhatghar Dam in Pune district after the dam's water level dropped to just 6 per cent.

The historic Kambareswar Temple, known for its old stone structure and underwater Shivaling, attracts hundreds of visitors, devotees, and history lovers every year during this short period.

For almost 10 months every year, the temple remains completely underwater. It becomes visible only during the last days of May when the



water level in the dam goes down before the monsoon begins.

Inside the temple, the sanctum area always remains filled with knee-deep water. The temple has a self-manifested Shivaling, an idol of Goddess Parvati,

and Nandi Maharaj seated in front. Devotees touch the water and seek blessings from Lord Shiva.

The temple's strong ancient architecture continues to amaze visitors. Its upper structure is made using limestone, sand, and

baked bricks, while the walls are built from huge carved stones. Ancient Veergals and old stone carvings can also be seen near the temple.

Even after staying underwater for decades, most parts of the temple remain strong. Though some damage has happened due to water pressure, the main structure and foundation are still intact.

Locals say this rare sight can only be seen for a few days before the arrival of monsoon. Once the rains begin and the Bhatghar Dam fills up again, the Kambareswar Temple will disappear underwater for the next several months.

Daund-Manmad Railway Route Doubling Completed; Travel Time To Reduce By 12-15 Minutes After CRS Approval

PUNE, The Pune Railway Division has completed the doubling work on the Daund-Manmad railway route. This project is significant for both passenger and freight train operations, which is approximately 236 kilometres and is expected to reduce travel time by 12 to 15 minutes for more than 30 passenger trains running on the route every day. It will also eliminate crossings for around 8 to 10 trains, thereby improving operational efficiency and increasing the route's carrying capacity.

The Visapur-Ranjangaon-Sarola section of the route has now been fully doubled. However, the line has not yet been opened for regular rail traffic. On May 30, the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) will conduct a detailed inspection of the newly completed section.



Following speed trials and safety assessments, the CRS is expected to approve operations. Once the certification is issued, passenger and freight trains will begin running on the upgraded track.

The Daund-Manmad route is considered one of the most important railway corridors in Maharashtra, as it serves trains travelling from Pune towards northern and central India. The doubling project has been underway

for several years and has now reached completion.

Major Benefits for Passengers -

Until now, the route operated largely as a single line in several stretches, forcing trains to halt at stations or loop lines to allow crossings. With the completion of the doubling work, trains will no longer need to wait for crossings, resulting in smoother operations and reduced delays.

Railway officials estimate

that the removal of crossing-related bottlenecks will help passenger trains save approximately 12 to 15 minutes on their journeys. The improved infrastructure will also enable better scheduling and increased train frequency in the future.

The final inspection of the newly constructed section will be carried out by the Commissioner of Railway Safety on Saturday, May 30. The route will be officially opened for rail traffic only after safety clearance is granted. Once approved, both passenger and freight services will be able to use the doubled line. Railway authorities believe the project will not only improve punctuality but also enhance the overall capacity of the corridor, supporting the growing demand for rail transportation in the region.

PMC Announces Water Cut In Yerawada, Sangamwadi On June 2

PUNE, - The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has announced a scheduled water supply shutdown in several parts of the city on Tuesday, June 2, due to maintenance work related to the Lashkar Water Supply Centre.

According to an official notice issued by the PMC Water Supply Department, water supply from the Thackersey tank under the Lashkar water distribution system will remain suspended for an entire day in multiple localities. Citizens have been requested to cooperate with the administration and make necessary arrangements in advance.

The affected areas include the entire Yerawada region, Sangamwadi,



Gandhinagar, Kalyaninagar, parts of Bungalow No. 5 area, government residential quarters near Tadiwala Road, Jai Jawan Nagar, Ruby Hall area in Sangamwadi, Ramnagar, and parts of Laxminagar.

PMC officials stated that due to the shutdown, residents in these areas may face inconvenience throughout Tuesday. The civic body has appealed

to citizens to use water carefully and avoid wastage during the disruption period.

The administration further informed that water supply on Wednesday, June 3, may resume with low pressure and at a slower pace in some localities. Residents have therefore been advised to store adequate drinking water and plan their daily needs accordingly.

The notice has been issued by the Assistant Chief Engineer of the Lashkar Water Supply Department, Pune Municipal Corporation, as part of the civic body's ongoing maintenance and infrastructure works aimed at improving the city's water distribution system.

Pune Food Vans, Khau Gallis Asked To Close By 10 PM

PUNE, Pune's famous khau gallis and roadside food stalls may soon stop serving customers late into the night, as city police have directed eateries, food vans, hawkers, and outdoor dining setups to shut operations after 10 PM.

The decision has been taken by Pune Police citing growing traffic congestion, crowd management problems, and law-and-order concerns in several busy food hubs across the city. According to officials, late-night gatherings at popular eating spots often lead to traffic jams and create challenges for police personnel in maintaining public order.

Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar has reportedly instructed authorities to strictly implement the new timing restrictions. Officials reviewed the city's situation over the past few days before deciding to regulate late-night commercial activities more strictly. Food stalls, hawkers, outdoor dining establishments, and food vans operating beyond 10 PM could now face action from authorities.



The move has raised concerns among Pune's large student community. As one of India's major educational centres, Pune is home to thousands of students who depend on affordable street food for late-night meals. Many students attending coaching classes or preparing for competitive exams till late hours rely on roadside stalls for quick and budget-friendly food options.

Students fear that the early shutdown may leave them with limited affordable dining choices at night. Many say eating regularly at restaurants is expensive, making street food stalls an

important part of their daily routine.

Small food business owners are also worried about the impact of the decision. Vendors claim that a major portion of their daily earnings comes after 10 PM, when students, office-goers, and travellers usually visit popular food hubs and khau gallis across the city.

Several stall owners have said the restriction could significantly affect their income and make it difficult to sustain their businesses. Vendors also pointed out that they are already dealing with rising operational costs,

including increasing prices of vegetables, cooking oil, LPG cylinders, fuel, and other essentials.

The decision is also being linked to heightened security measures ahead of upcoming festivals and events. Authorities have reportedly increased monitoring in public places and imposed restrictions on certain gatherings, rallies, and processions as a precautionary step.

While police officials maintain that the move is necessary for smoother traffic flow and better law-and-order management, the decision has sparked debate among students, residents, food lovers, and business owners. Many believe the restrictions could impact Pune's well-known late-night food culture, which has long been a part of the city's identity.

As the new rule comes into effect, attention will now be on how strictly it is enforced and whether authorities consider any relaxation in response to public concerns.

बेगडी मुलामा नको,
फसवी रंगरंगोटी नको
प्रकट होऊ दे तुमची स्वच्छ प्रतिमा
प्रकट होऊ दे तुमचे पारदर्शी व्यक्तिमत्व

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कोणत्याही दुष्परिणामांशिवाय!

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स्वर्णमि भारत

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संपर्क : 7774970267

One Arrested, Illegal Firearm Recovered After Viral Video in Samastipur

Samastipur : Under the guidance of the Superintendent of Police, Samastipur, continuous action is being taken against criminals in Samastipur district. On May 27, 2026, at around 6:00 pm, an objectionable video of some unidentified boys eating and drinking with weapons in their hands went viral on social media. In light of this, Warisnagar Police Station Case No. 141/2026, dated May 28, 2026, under Sections 191 (2) / 191 (3) / 308 (2) / 351 (2) of the Indian Penal Code and 25 (9) of the Arms Act, based on verification of the viral video and further evidence, FIR No. 1 was registered. Om Prakash Mahato, son of Vaidyanath Mahato, resident of Purnahi, Police Station Warisnagar, District



Samastipur, was arrested. On his information, the loaded country-made pistol used in the viral video was recovered from the barn of a house in village Purnahi. During the raid in the barn, two other criminals, Aman Kumar and Chhotu Kumar, were also present but could not be caught. In this regard, Warisnagar Police Station Case No. 142/2026, dated 28.05.2026, Section-25 (1-B) A/26/35 Arms Act, has been registered against 01.

Highlights

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Om Prakash Mahato, son of Vaidyanath Mahato, resident of Purnahi; 02. Aman Kumar alias Bhola, son of late Bhushan Rai, resident of Mogalanichak; 3. Chhotu Kumar alias Amit Kumar, son of late Dev Kumar Singh, all four residents of Police Station Warisnagar, District Samastipur; and further action is being taken. The arrested accused Om Prakash Mahato has confessed to the crime.

One-Day Hunger Strike Held in Samastipur Demanding Railway Infrastructure Projects

Samastipur: Under the banner of the Samastipur Rail Vikas Evam Vistar Manch, a one-day fast began in front of the Samastipur DRM office on Friday, demanding approval for the construction of an overbridge at Ateran Chowk, commencing construction at the previously laid-out Muktapur railway crossing, and commencing construction of the new Karpurigram-Tajpur-Patepur-Mahua-Bhagwanpur railway line. Despite heavy rains soaking tents and carpets, a large number of social and political activists, people involved in rail struggles, and local citizens participated in the protest. The protesters demanded the construction of an overbridge at Ateran Chowk



railway crossing, the early start of construction of the overbridge at Muktapur railway crossing, the immediate approval of the new Karpurigram-Tajpur-Patepur-Mahua-Bhagwanpur rail line, the new Cable Sthan-Karpurigram, Dalsinghsarai to Patori, and Muktapur to Thaneshwasthan rail line projects, the completion of

POP work at the railway factory, the construction of a washing pit at the junction, and the operation of long-distance trains from Samastipur, as well as the resolution of other public issues related to the railway sector. The meeting was chaired by Shankar Prasad Sah and conducted by Jibach Paswan. Addressing the gathering, forum convener Shatrughan Rai Panji

said that the public has been struggling for these demands for years, but the lack of concrete initiatives by the railway administration has caused widespread anger. He stated that if positive action is not taken on the demands soon, the agitation will be intensified. The fast movement started at 10 pm with the participation of Surendra Prasad Singh, Upendra Rai,

Vishwanath Gupta of CPI (ML), former councillor Arjan Kumar Rai, Ramlal Rai, Rakesh Thakur, Ram Vinod Paswan, Jaglal Rai, Shahid Hussain of RJD, Satyanarayan Singh of CPI (M), Doman Rai, Vishwanath Singh Hazari, Parmanand Mishra of Congress, social worker Santosh Kumar, Ashok Kumar Rai, Rakesh Kumar Raj, Ramguleb Rai, Rajendra Rai, Shambhu Rai, Krishna Kumar of BJP, in which representatives of various social and political organizations also expressed their support. In the end, after handing over a 10-point memorandum to DRM Jyoti Prakash Mishra, the meeting was declared over with a warning to fulfill the demands immediately or else intensify the movement.

Menstrual Hygiene Day Observed at Chhatauna High School Under "Together for a Period Friendly Bihar" Campaign

Samastipur: Under the "Together for a Period Friendly Bihar" campaign, Menstrual Hygiene Day 2026 was observed on Wednesday, 27 May 2026, at Chhatauna High School. The objective of the program was to spread awareness among girls about menstruation and to remove myths and hesitation related to it. During the program, students were informed that



menstruation (periods) is a normal and natural process in a woman's life, and there is no need to feel afraid or

ashamed of it. Teachers advised the girls to maintain proper hygiene by changing sanitary pads

regularly every 4 to 6 hours. The importance of nutritious food, drinking sufficient water, avoiding stress, and taking proper rest was also explained in detail. Students were further informed that stomach pain, tiredness, mood swings, and bloating during periods are common problems. Principal Megha Giri, senior teacher Rakhee Thakur, and nodal teacher Tanya Bharti guided the

students and emphasized the need to remove social myths related to menstruation. They said that awareness and correct information are essential for improving the health of adolescent girls. The program, organized in the school premises, witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students. Teachers encouraged them to maintain hygiene and remain conscious about their health.

MERI COLLEGE WELCOMES PADMA SHRI AWARDEE PROF. VEMPATY KUTUMBA SASTRY



New Delhi : Renowned Sanskrit scholar and Padma Shri awardee Prof. Vempaty Kutumba Sastry visited the Management Education and Research Institute (MERI College), Vice-Chancellor of Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi, Prof. Shrinivasa Varakhedi, also accompanied him during the visit. The occasion was a proud and memorable moment for the MERI campus. Dean of MERI College Prof. Deepshikha Kalra, Maj General Manjeet Singh Mokha (Retd.), Air Cmde Himanshu Gopal (Retd.) (both from the Department of Space Studies) along with faculty members, warmly welcomed Prof. Kutumba Sastry and congratulated him on being conferred with the Padma Shri. The event was organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. During his interaction with faculty members and staff,

Highlights

Renowned Sanskrit scholar and Padma Shri awardee Prof. Vempaty Kutumba Sastry visited the Management Education and Research Institute (MERI College), Vice-Chancellor of Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi, Prof. Shrinivasa Varakhedi, also accompanied him during the visit.

the conversation, he shared insights from his life journey and spoke about his work and contributions in the field of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy. It is noteworthy that Prof. Vempaty Kutumba Sastry was recently honored with the Padma Shri for his significant contribution to the fields of Literature and Education. He is regarded as one of India's leading Sanskrit scholars and an internationally respected expert in Advaita Vedanta, Darshanas, and Sanskrit poetics. Prof. Kutumba Sastry is the Chancellor of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Viswa Mahavidyalaya (SCSVMV), Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu. Earlier, he served as the first Vice-Chancellor of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan. He has also worked as Vice-Chancellor of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi, and Sri Somnath Sanskrit University, Veraval, Gujarat.

Good Governance Festival Brings Relief to Disabled Children in Dantewada Through Prompt Action

Raipur: Under the public welfare vision of the state government and a sensitive administrative approach, the "Sushasan Tihar 2026" initiative is emerging as a strong platform of relief and trust for rural communities. In grievance redressal camps, citizens' issues are being resolved swiftly, bringing visible satisfaction and happiness among the public. In this context, during a Sushasan Tihar camp held at Gram Hitameta in Dantewada district, an application was submitted by the family members of two disabled children from Gram Korkoti seeking assistance. Acting promptly on the request, the administration provided one wheelchair each to physically disabled girl Julgo Muchaki, daughter of Butlu Muchaki, and physically disabled boy Narsu Poyam,



son of Ayatu Ram Poyam. The distribution of wheelchairs has brought significant relief to both children and their families. It will now make daily activities, school attendance, and other essential tasks much easier for them. The families shared that due to weak financial conditions, they were unable to arrange wheelchairs for a long time, but their problem was resolved quickly through the Sushasan Tihar initiative.

Congress Leaders Submit Memorandum to MLA for Construction of Dilapidated Roads in Rajmahal Assembly Constituency

Rajmahal: Leaders of the Indian National Congress from the Rajmahal Block Congress Committee submitted a memorandum to Rajmahal MLA Mohammad Tajuddin demanding the construction and repair of severely damaged roads in the Rajmahal Assembly constituency. Rajmahal Block Congress President Devendra Prasad Thakur and Vice-President Mohammad Sifran Akhtar jointly submitted the application, highlighting the poor condition of the road connecting Bairbanna to Amanat in Purvi Jamnagar Panchayat and the road from Khas Tola to Karbala in Paschim Narayanpur Panchayat. The memorandum stated that large potholes on these roads



have been causing serious inconvenience to local residents, school students, and commuters. Congress leaders said the situation worsens further during the monsoon season, increasing the risk of accidents. They urged the MLA to ensure immediate repair and reconstruction of both roads so that people

in the area can have safe and smooth transportation facilities. Several Congress workers, including Panchayat President Deendayal, Purvi Jamnagar Panchayat President Ajarul Sheikh, and Udhwa Block Mandal President Abdul Hannan, were also present on the occasion.

RLM's Newly Elected Samastipur District President Calls for Strengthening Party Organisation

Samastipur: Nishant Kumar Kushwaha, the newly elected district president of the Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) in Samastipur district, congratulated and congratulated the party presidents elected in various blocks of the district and called for further strengthening the organization. He said that under the leadership of the party's national president, Upendra Kushwaha, organizational elections were successfully conducted with the aim of strengthening and activating the organization throughout the state. District president Kushwaha stated that the party's top leadership had appointed election officers and election observers to ensure the organizational



elections were conducted in a fair and transparent manner. In this context, elections were conducted in various blocks in Samastipur district under the supervision of District Election Officer Nandkumar Kushwaha and other observers. Giving information, he said that Mukesh Kumar from Samastipur block, Kamlesh Kushwaha from Ujarpur

block, Dhaneshwar Mahato from Dalsinghsarai block, Bhola Prasad Singh from Tajpur block, Tuntun Sahni from Patori block, Santosh Kumar Pappu from Mohiuddin Nagar block, Sudhanshu Kumar Rai from Mohanpur block, Krishnadev Prasad Mahato from Rosera block, Rajkumar Pankaj from Shivajinagar block, Priyanshu Kumar Singh from Singha block, Ram Narayan Yadav from Bithan block, Krishna Kumar from Hasanpur block, Mantosh Paswan from Kalyanpur block and Dr. Rajkumar Singh from Pusa block have been elected as block presidents. District President Nishant Kumar Kushwaha expressed hope that all the newly elected block presi-

dents will work to spread the party's policies and principles to the people and will play an important role in strengthening the organization up to the booth level. Meanwhile, RLMO state leader Prashant Pankaj stated that all the block presidents were elected under the supervision of officials authorized by the party's top leadership. He stated that in the coming times, the Rashtriya Lok Morcha will emerge even stronger in Samastipur district, and that workers will be ensured respect and participation. Appealing to all newly elected officials to work in coordination and with team spirit, he said that organizational strength is the party's greatest strength.

High-Level Probe Sought Over Alleged Misuse of University Resources by RPCAU Vice-Chancellor

A demand for a high-level investigation has been raised against Dr. P. S. Pandey, Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, over allegations of misuse of government employees and university resources during a private family function. According to information received, a detailed complaint has been submitted to the President of India and the University Administrator alleging that the wedding ceremony of the Vice-Chancellor's eldest son, held on December 3, 2024, at the NASC Complex in New Delhi, involved the use of the university's official vehicle



bearing registration number BR06DQ0497 along with government employees for personal purposes. The complaint further states that on December 4, 2024, immediately after the wedding ceremony, a "Consultation Workshop on the Campaigns of the Sixth Deans Committee

Report" was organised jointly by RPCAU and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research at the same venue. The complainant has alleged that the workshop was arranged to formalise the presence of university officials and staff who had attended the wedding function. It has also

been claimed that several deans and senior academic officials of the university were absent from the workshop, while some officials marked as participants reportedly had no direct connection with the programme. Serious concerns have also been raised regarding the alleged use of CRA project funds for travel, accommodation, food, and other arrangements related to the event. The complaint has demanded a special audit of expenditures incurred from university and CRA project funds, along with an inquiry into the role of concerned officials and scrutiny of all travel and payment records linked to December 3 and 4, 2024.

Children of Labour Families to Get Admission in Private Schools Under Atal Utkrisht Shiksha Yojana

Raipur: Labour Department Secretary-cum-Labour Commissioner Himshikhar Gupta reviewed the functioning of the Labour Department at Mahanadi Bhawan and directed officials to ensure that the benefits of various welfare schemes reach eligible beneficiaries on time. He said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and the guidance of Labour Minister Lakhman Dewangan, several welfare schemes are being implemented for labourers and their families across the state. The review meeting was attended by Additional Labour Commissioners S.L. Jangde and Savita Mishra, Secretary of the Chhattisgarh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board Girish Ramteke, Deputy Secretary Vipul Gupta, and labour department officials from various districts. During the meeting, Himshikhar Gupta instructed officials to speed up the admission process for children of eligible labour families under the Atal Utkrisht Shiksha Yojana. He informed that on the initiative of the Chief Minister, the number of seats under the scheme has been increased



from 100 to 200 from the upcoming academic session. Under the scheme, children of construction workers will receive free education from Classes 6 to 12 in private residential schools across the state, with all expenses to be borne by the Labour Department. The Labour Commissioner warned that if any ineligible person is found receiving benefits under the scheme or if complaints arise, the concerned district labour officers will be held responsible

and disciplinary action will be taken against them as per rules. Special emphasis was also laid on labour registration and awareness campaigns regarding welfare schemes. Officials were directed to complete the registration, renewal, and implementation of schemes within the stipulated time frame. They were also instructed to ensure that contractors employ only the number of workers for whom licences have been issued. The meeting

reviewed online random inspections, prosecution and disposal actions, registration under the Chhattisgarh Shops and Establishments Act, Mini Mata Mahtari Janan Yojana, Chief Minister Nainihal Scholarship Scheme, Chief Minister Noni-Babu Meritorious Education Assistance Scheme, Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Labour Food Scheme, Chief Minister Construction Worker Death and Disability Assistance Scheme, and the Unorganised Workers Mahtari Janan Scheme. The status of disposal of applications received during the Sushasan Tihar campaign was also reviewed district-wise. Officials were instructed to ensure effective implementation of schemes related to social and health security of workers. It is noteworthy that various welfare schemes for organised and unorganised workers are being implemented through the Chhattisgarh Labour Welfare Board, Chhattisgarh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board, and the Chhattisgarh Unorganised Workers State Social Security Board to ensure social security and welfare of labourers and their families.

PREPARATIONS FOR KHARIF 2026 INTENSIFY, FARMERS RECEIVING FERTILIZERS AND SEEDS ON TIME

Raipur: The state government has intensified preparations for the Kharif 2026 season to ensure the timely availability of fertilizers and seeds to farmers. Adequate stock of agricultural inputs has been maintained in cooperative societies across the state, and distribution is being carried out continuously according to farmers' demand. The administration is closely monitoring the supply system to ensure that farming activities are not affected. In Balrampur district, the administration is also taking serious measures to ensure uninterrupted supply of fertilizers and seeds to farmers. As per the instructions of Collector Chandan Sanjay Tripathi, continuous supply is being maintained in cooperative societies, while officials have been directed to regularly monitor the distribution process.



Farmers are visiting societies daily to collect fertilizers and seeds as per their requirements. According to information received from the Agriculture Department, a total of 9,254 metric tonnes of fertilizers have been stocked in Balrampur district so far, out of which 1,311 metric tonnes have already been distributed among farmers. Similarly, against the target of distributing 2,000 quintals of seeds for Kharif 2026, around

1,734 quintals of seeds have been stocked and are being supplied to farmers through cooperative societies. The state government aims to make farming easier and improve agricultural production by ensuring timely availability of agricultural inputs. Farmers have also expressed satisfaction over the availability of fertilizers and seeds in cooperative societies and appreciated the efforts of the government and administration.

Major Action by Agriculture Department Foils Attempt to Cheat Farmers in the Name of DAP Fertilizer

Raipur: In a major crackdown to protect farmers' interests and ensure the quality of agricultural inputs, the Jashpur district administration has intensified monitoring activities. As part of this drive, a joint team from the Agriculture Department of Pathalgaon and Farsabhar carried out a raid in Kharibahar Gram Panchayat under Farsabhar block and exposed illegal fertilizer storage. During the inspection, the team discovered a large quantity of fertilizer illegally stocked inside a house. Officials seized 342 bags,



approximately 17.1 tonnes of "Bhumi Shakti" organic granular fertilizer. Preliminary investigation revealed that the fertilizer was allegedly being sold to farmers in the name of DAP fertilizer, raising concerns of

fraud and possible financial losses to farmers. Considering the seriousness of the matter, Sub-Divisional Officer Rakesh Painkra reached the spot and ordered the entire stock to be sealed immediately.

PM-Kisan Scheme Becomes Major Support for Farmers, Says Mungeli Farmer Ramavtar Patel

Raipur: The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme, launched with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to economically empower farmers, is emerging as a strong support system for cultivators across the district. Thousands of farmers in Mungeli district are benefiting from the scheme, leading to positive changes in the agricultural sector. Farmer Ramavtar Patel, a resident of Surda village in Mungeli block, praised the PM-Kisan scheme and said that the



annual financial assistance of Rs 6,000 provided under the initiative has proved highly beneficial for farming activities. He stated that the amount helps farmers meet expenses related to seeds, fertilizers, and other

agricultural needs, thereby reducing their financial burden. Ramavtar Patel said he has so far received benefits from 22 installments under the scheme. According to him, the timely financial assistance has made it easier to prepare for cultivation and has boosted farmers' confidence in carrying out agricultural activities. Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vishnu Deo Sai, he said that farmer-friendly government schemes are strengthening the rural economy and helping farmers become self-reliant.

Three Arrested in Samastipur for Allegedly Selling Narcotic Capsules Under Guise of Tea Shops



Samastipur: In response to information received on the evening of 28.05.2026 in the Mohanpur police station area of Samastipur district, the Station House Officer, Mohanpur, along with the armed forces and the Block Development Officer, Mohammad Nagar, raided the tea shop of Suresh Rai, son of the late Chulha Rai, resident of Chapra Dumri, Ward No. 12, Mohanpur police station, located in village Jaunapur (Chainpur). Suresh Rai was apprehended during interrogation. During interrogation, he confessed to selling Kota under the guise of tea. The Block Development Officer then conducted a proper search. During the search, a total of 21 capsule-like boxes (containing quota (narcotic substance)) were recovered from Suresh Rai, which were seized after preparing a formal seizure list. Based on the information provided by the apprehended individual, a raid was conducted at the tea shop of Vinod Rai, son of Yugeshwar Rai,

located at Patharghat. Two individuals, namely, Vinod Rai, son of the late Yugeshwar Rai, and Bablu Kumar, son of Vinod Rai, residents of Mohanpur Ward No. 2, Police Station Mohanpur, District Samastipur, were apprehended. After necessary questioning, the Block Development Officer, Mohammad Nagar, conducted a formal search of the two individuals. A total of 72 capsule-like boxes (quotas), a mobile phone, and ₹25,000 in cash were recovered from Vinod Rai, and a total of 8 capsule-like boxes (quotas) and a mobile phone were recovered from Bablu Kumar. The Block Development Officer confiscated the seized items after preparing a formal seizure list. The total weight of the seized items is 40.4 grams was found. In connection with the above incident, Mohanpur Police Station Case No. 93/26, dated May 28, 2026, under Sections 21 (b)/22 (b) of the NDPS Act, has been registered and further investigation is underway.

Good Governance Festival Brings Relief to Farmer Kalesh Kashyap Through Quick Grievance Redressal



Raipur: Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's initiative "Sushasan Tihar 2026" is emerging as an effective platform for the speedy and transparent resolution of public grievances across the state. Through grievance redressal camps being organized in rural and urban areas, citizens' issues are being addressed with sensitivity and efficiency. In one such case, Kalesh Kashyap, a resident of Jarve (C) village under Baloda Janpad Panchayat in Janjgir-Champa district, received immediate relief during a public grievance camp. Due to the absence of a farmer's record book, he had been facing difficulties in availing benefits such as agricultural loans, seeds, fertilizers, and various farmer welfare schemes. Seeking a solution, he submitted an application during the camp organized under the Sushasan Tihar initiative. Soon after receiving the application, concerned departmental officials verified the required documents and took prompt action by issuing the farmer's record

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's initiative "Sushasan Tihar 2026" is emerging as an effective platform for the speedy and transparent resolution of public grievances across the state.

book to him on the spot. After receiving the document, Kalesh Kashyap expressed happiness and satisfaction, as it will now enable him to easily access crop loans, agricultural subsidies, seed and fertilizer distribution, and other government welfare schemes. The assistance is expected to strengthen his farming activities and improve his financial condition. Expressing gratitude to Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and the district administration, Kalesh Kashyap said that Sushasan Tihar has become a truly effective platform for quick resolution of public problems. He added that government schemes are now reaching the last person in society and grievances are being resolved in a time-bound manner.

Development Works Worth 1.80 Crore Launched and Inaugurated Across Multiple Wards in Korba

Raipur: In Korba Municipal Corporation, development works worth ₹1.80 crore were today inaugurated and launched across nine wards. The event was held under the chief guestship of State Minister for Industries, Labour, Public Undertakings and Excise Lakhman Lal Dewangan and presided over by Mayor Sanjudevi Rajput. Under the initiative, multiple infrastructure projects including road construction, pavement works, community buildings, toilets, school facilities, beautification works, and stage constructions were either inaugurated or their foundation stones were laid in various wards of Korba city. The works include pavement construction from Gayatri School to Aloo Godown in Ward 07,



stage construction in Sindhi Mohalla, construction of girls' toilets in Primary School Sitamani, road asphalt in Motisagarpara, additional classroom construction in Balak Middle School Korba, community building in Indira Nagar, toilet and additional facilities in Amraiypara health centre, dome and community hall near Mission Road Kalchuri Bhawan, beautification of overbridge area,

and other civic development works across different wards. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Lakhman Lal Dewangan said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the state is witnessing rapid development. He said that around ₹1,000 crore worth of development works have been sanctioned for Korba during the current tenure, and

there is no shortage of funds for development projects. He further stated that all promises made during elections have been fulfilled under the "Modi guarantee" framework, and welfare schemes are benefiting all sections of society. Mayor Sanjudevi Rajput said that the state government is fulfilling all its promises and women across the state are receiving financial assistance under various schemes. She added that Korba, which had lagged in development for nearly a decade, is now witnessing accelerated growth. Other public representatives present also highlighted that development works are being carried out across all 67 wards without discrimination and citizens' issues are being resolved effectively.

STATEWIDE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE USE OF NANO DAP AND NANO UREA IN MODERN FARMING

Raipur: Under the leadership of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, the Chhattisgarh government is set to launch a statewide awareness campaign to promote the use of Nano DAP and Nano Urea among farmers. The campaign aims to educate farmers about the benefits of nano fertilisers, balanced nutrient management, and modern agricultural practices. The state government is focusing on increasing farm productivity at lower costs while encouraging sustainable and high-quality farming. As part of this initiative, scientific and modern agricultural technologies are being taken to villages across the state to motivate farmers towards balanced fertiliser use and environmentally

friendly farming methods. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai himself will participate in the campaign by visiting farms along with farmers, agricultural scientists, and experts. He will inspect crop conditions, interact directly with farmers, and share insights on the balanced use of fertilisers. The campaign will feature Farmer Chaupal programmes in four phases. It will begin with on-ground field inspections where the Chief Minister and agricultural scientists will assess crops and discuss farming challenges with cultivators. This will be followed by open interaction sessions in a Chaupal-style format, allowing farmers to ask questions directly to experts. One of the major attractions of the campaign



will be the "Drone Didi" live demonstrations, showcasing the spraying of Nano DAP through drone technology. Officials said the

demonstrations will highlight how drones can save time, labour, and operational costs while covering large agricultural areas efficiently. In the final phase of the programme, the Chief Minister will appeal to farmers to adopt modern technologies and transform agriculture into a people's movement. Agriculture Department officials stated that the awareness campaign will be organised in villages across the state with a strong focus on practical demonstrations and direct farmer interaction. The objective is not only to provide information but also to allow farmers to witness modern technologies in action. The government has also clarified that there is no shortage of fertilisers in the state. Officials

termed reports of fertiliser scarcity circulating through some channels as misleading and baseless. The government has made it clear that farmers are not being forced to purchase one bag each of DAP or urea per acre, nor are they being compelled to adopt nano fertilisers, which remain completely optional. According to official data, cooperative societies in Raipur district currently have sufficient fertiliser stocks. The availability of urea in societies stands at 9,102 metric tonnes, while a total of 10,732 metric tonnes has been stocked through Markfed collection centres. Similarly, 3,092 metric tonnes of DAP are currently available in societies against a total stock of 3,927 metric tonnes.

Netanyahu says he has directed IDF to increase control of Gaza to 70%



AGENCY
Tel Aviv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that he directed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to increase control of Gaza to 70%. Speaking at a conference on Thursday, he said: "We are currently squeezing Hamas; we now control 60% of the territory of the Strip - you know this. We were at 50, we moved to 60. My directive is to move to," he said

before pausing as someone in the crowd said, "100". "Let's go step by step. First of all, 70. Let's start with that. We're pressing them from all sides, we'll deal with the remnants." The expansion in control by Israel would contradict the terms of the Donald Trump-led ceasefire Israel and Hamas agreed to in October 2025. Netanyahu's statement comes as Israel continues strikes on Gaza despite the ceasefire, and as Israel and Hamas remain deadlocked in indirect, US-brokered talks to advance Trump's peace plan. At least

738 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire came into effect in October, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, whose figures the UN considers reliable. Netanyahu has

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that he directed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to increase control of Gaza to 70%. Speaking at a conference on Thursday, he said: "We are currently squeezing Hamas; we now control 60% of the territory of the Strip - you know this."

made several public remarks confirming that the IDF controls more than 60% of the Strip, up from the 53% agreed in October. Under the ceasefire agreement, the IDF withdrew to a demarcation line, known as the "yellow line". The next steps in the 20-point peace proposal would see

Hamas disarm and Israeli troops withdraw, but indirect talks between Israel and the Palestinian armed group have stalled. On Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz wrote on X that his country had "pledged to eliminate every-one who led the

October 7 massacre" in 2023. "We pledged that Hamas will not rule Gaza civilly or militarily," he said. He also said that what he called the "plan for voluntary emigration from Gaza" would be implemented "at the proper time and in the proper manner". Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and far-right Finance Minister Bezalel

Smotrich have previously publicly defended what they describe as the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from Gaza - which could amount to the forced displacement of civilians, a war crime - and resettling it with Jews. This week has also seen several strikes in Gaza. At least 10 people, including five children, were killed in an Israeli strike on a building in Gaza City late on Wednesday, according to local hospitals. The Israeli military has released a short statement saying it struck "two central Hamas terrorists in the northern Gaza Strip", without disclosing their identities. The target of the attack appeared to have been Hamas battalion commander Imad Asleem, who was killed alongside his teenage daughter Israa. The Gaza City attack came a day after the newly chosen head of the Hamas military wing, Mohammed Odeh, was killed along with his wife and two sons in an Israeli strike.

Italy restores lucky testicles on bull mosaic worn down by tourists



AGENCY
Italy: A famous bull mosaic in one of Italy's grand arcades is getting some much-needed care after being worn down by tourists honouring a tradition involving its delicate body parts. As the legend goes, tourists in Milan who grind their heels on the bull's testicles and spin in place three times are guaranteed good fortune and are destined to return. Visitors twirling clockwise for luck have left a small crater on the bull's "lucky spot". "Thousands of people every day have performed the famous

heel-spinning gesture," city councillors said. "The pink tiles that make up its testicles are being worn away." The beige and blue mosaic of a prancing bull surrounded by a coat of arms is located in the city's historic 19th-Century Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II arcade. It is representative of the city of Turin, which was the first capital of Italy. Restoration began this week, with a small construction site erected around the mosaic and a restorer working to return the artwork to its former glory, Milan's city council said in a statement.

US and Iran 'very close' to deal but 'not there yet', Vance says



AGENCY
Washington: The US and Iran still need to work out several sticking points before an agreement on the war can be reached, Vice-President JD Vance has said. Asked by the BBC if President Donald Trump was close to signing a deal, Vance said it was too early to say "when or if" the two sides would finalise an agreement. Earlier on Thursday, US officials told the two countries had agreed a framework of a deal - known as a memorandum of understanding - pending the approval of Trump and Iran's leadership. It would reportedly extend the ceasefire for 60 days and launch talks on the future of Iran's nuclear programme. Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported it had not been finalised or confirmed. According to reports, the framework could allow "unrestricted" passage through the Strait of Hormuz and give Iran 30 days to remove mines from the narrow shipping passageway. The US would also lift its blockade, and issue

sanction waivers to allow Iran to resume selling oil. Axios, which first reported a tentative agreement between the US and Iran on Thursday, said Trump had been briefed on the proposal but did not immediately sign off on it and would take a couple of days to consider it. One-fifth of the world's liquefied natural gas and oil normally pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and its closure has impacted global fuel trade. Speaking on Thursday evening, Vance said negotiators were "going back and forth on a couple of language points", which include the "question of enrichment". "We're not there yet, but we're very close and we're going to keep on working at it," he told reporters. The US has long demanded that Iran stop producing highly enriched uranium and dispose of its existing stockpile, which in theory could be used to create nuclear weapons. Iran insists its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful and denies it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

PORTUGAL BREAKS HOTTEST MAY DAY RECORD AS EUROPE SWELTERS IN HEATWAVE



AGENCY
Portugal has recorded a new highest temperature for May of 40.3C as countries in Western Europe grapple with sweltering-hot weather. The temperature recorded in the central town of Mora on Wednesday bests Portugal's previous record of 40C set in May 2001. Ministers in France are meeting to assess the country's preparedness for heat-

waves, while tennis number one Jannik Sinner bowed out of the French Open after suffering from the heat. Meanwhile, Italian authorities issued a red heatwave alert for the capital, Rome, where it topped out at 32C on Thursday. The heatwave is forecast to continue into the weekend, with Germany, Spain and Switzerland having also faced unusually hot conditions.

Nato criticises Russia's 'reckless behaviour' after drone hits Romanian apartments, injuring two

AGENCY
Moscow: Away from comments being made by Romania's president, Vladimir Putin is said to be "aware" of the drone incident in Romania, Russian state media reports the president's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov as saying. TASS also reports that Russia's foreign ministry will "respond soon" to Romania's decision to declare the Russian consul "persona non grata" in response to the crash. Romanian President Nicusor Dan says his administration will expel the Russian consul in the south-eastern city of Constanta and shut down the consulate, Reuters reports. According to news agency AFP, the Russian consul has been declared "persona non grata". Romanian President Nicusor Dan is currently making a



statement after meeting with the Supreme Defence Council and summoning Russia's ambassador. BBC Romanian are listening in and we will bring you the latest lines as soon as we can. One Gala?i resident tells the BBC that he continues to feel safe in the city, despite the drone crash. "We are part of Nato and there is, so to say, the necessary infrastructure in place to respond quickly [to such inci-

dent]. The President of Romania Nicusor Dan has summoned a meeting of the Supreme Defence Council, which is happening now. And the Russian ambassador has been summoned. He's been summoned before. He usually gets a slap on the wrist. I think there is some talk unofficially in Romania this time of needing a much stronger response, perhaps even the expulsion of the Russian ambassador from Bucharest. But I think that's a move that Romania would not take on its own - there have been obviously strong consultations this morning between Romania and Nato and EU allies." Horga stresses it was "great luck" the drone chiefly struck the elevator shaft of

Eight students arrested in Kenya after suspected deadly school arson attack

AGENCY
Kenya: Eight students alleged to have been involved in a suspected arson attack at a Kenyan girls' school that killed 16 pupils have been arrested, police say. The fire in the early hours of Thursday morning at the Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, about 120km (77 miles) north-west of capital city Nairobi, tore through the upper floor of a dormitory which had 135 bunk beds. After interviews with students and staff and a forensic review of CCTV footage, eight pupils at the school were identified as "persons of interest in connection with the planning and execution" of the fire, the National Police



Service said in a statement. Investigations are continuing into the exact cause of the blaze. Police said the students were detained for questioning after being traced to their homes and brought back to the school, while others who had remained in the area were also tracked down and

detained. The eight were among 30 students who were initially recalled to the school by detectives investigating the deadly fire. Regarding the aftermath of the fire, Education Minister Julius Ogamba said preliminary findings indicated that there had been multiple breaches of

safety measures at the school, including overcrowding in dormitories and a locked exit door. "In particular, there was congestion in the dormitory and one exit door was locked, contrary to the prescribed safety requirements," he said. He dissolved the school's board of management and ordered action against the headteacher. The minister said appropriate disciplinary and legal steps would be taken against anyone found to have failed in their duties. As investigators continue their work, sorrowful scenes unfolded at the school as parents and relatives broke down while waiting for updates about their loved ones.

Man jailed for 15 years over plot to attack Taylor Swift concert in Vienna



AGENCY
Cranbera: A 21-year-old Austrian man has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for planning a jihadist attack on a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna during the US singer's Eras tour in August 2024. The man, named only as Beran A in line with Austrian privacy laws, was also found guilty of a string of other terrorism-related offences. He was arrested after a tip-off from the CIA just before the first of three sold-out Taylor Swift concerts was due to take place in Vienna's Ernst Happel stadium. All three Austrian shows were immediately cancelled, to the dismay of almost 200,000 fans and the singer herself. Swift previously described how her record-breaking Eras Tour had narrowly "dodged a massacre situation". A tour documentary revealed the US singer had learned about the bomb plot while travelling to Austria. Prosecutors said Beran A had become radicalised and had sworn allegiance to the jihadist group Islamic State (IS). They said he tried but had not succeeded in buy-

ing weapons illegally, including a machine gun and a hand grenade. Court psychiatrist Peter Hoffmann said Beran A showed no signs of mental illness, adding that there was "no psychiatric explanation" for his radicalisation. He was on trial in Wiener Neustadt, a city south of Vienna, with another 21-year-old man named as Arda K from Slovakia, accused of being part of a cell with jihadist group Islamic State (IS). Arda K - who was not involved in the plot against the concert - was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Beran A told the court earlier on Thursday that he was sorry, before the jury retired for several hours to consider its verdicts. Shortly after the foiled attack, Taylor Swift said it had filled her with "a new sense of fear" - and that the cancellations left her with a "tremendous amount of guilt". But the US mega-star added on Instagram: "I was also so grateful to the authorities because thanks to them, we were grieving concerts and not lives."



Blue Origin's rocket exploded during a test in Florida

MOTHER-IN-LAW OF INDIAN BRIDE WHOSE DEATH SET OFF MEDIA FRENZY ARRESTED

AGENCY
New Delhi: India's top anti-crime agency has arrested the mother-in-law of an Indian woman whose death has sparked conflicting claims of murder and suicide. Twisha Sharma's parents and siblings have alleged that she was tortured by her lawyer husband, Samarth Singh, and his mother - retired judge Giribala Singh - over dowry demands and that she was murdered, allegations that she has denied. The 33-year-old model and actor had been married for just five months when she was found dead in her matrimonial home in Madhya Pradesh state's Bhopal city on 12 May. On Thursday, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested Giribala Singh after questioning her for several



hours. The Madhya Pradesh High Court had earlier cancelled her anticipatory bail, finding that a trial court had ignored key evidence and witness testimony. Following Twisha's death, the police had registered a case of dowry death against the Singhs. Earlier this week, the investigation was taken over by the CBI. Twisha's death has made national headlines and has once again brought the issue of dowry deaths into the spotlight.

Indian-owned companies in UK surge in record investment year: Report

AGENCY

London: The number of Indian-owned companies in the United Kingdom surged by nearly 60 per cent year-on-year to rise to 1,912 with a combined turnover of 105.77 billion pounds (approximately Rs 13.48 crore), according to the 'India Meets Britain Tracker 2026'. The latest edition of the annual Grant Thornton-led analysis of Indian investment and economic impact in the UK was launched by Indian High Commissioner to the UK P Kumaran in London on Thursday, May 28. The 2026 Tracker reflects a significant increase from the 1,197 Indian-owned firms generating around 72.14 billion pounds (approximately Rs 7.67 crore) in 2025, as well as a jump in employee numbers from 126,720 last year to 203,549. "The India-UK relationship today is no longer defined by nostalgia; it is defined by opportunity," said Kumaran, in one of his first addresses as the new High Commissioner. "India brings scale, growth, talent, and ambition, and the United Kingdom brings innovation, expertise, finance, and global leadership across advanced sectors, and together we have the chance to build one of the



defining economic partnerships of the coming decades," he said. 11.7 per cent year-on-year increase in bilateral trade The 2026 Tracker notes that bilateral trade between India and the UK rose to 47.4 billion pounds (approximately Rs 6.03 crore) in 2025, an 11.7 per cent year-on-year increase during the year, which marked the signing of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). "With CETA now in place, the India-UK corridor is poised for unprecedented growth, creating value for both

economies and cementing a long-term partnership," said Anuj Chande, Grant Thornton Partner and Head of South Asia Business Group. "We are continuing to see that the India-UK corridor is not just a trade relationship; it is a strategic partnership leveraging innovation, resilience, and shared ambitions. "With nearly all Indian mid-market firms planning UK expansion and UK businesses eyeing India for growth, this collaboration is set to thrive in the coming years across technology, clean energy, and advanced

manufacturing," he said. The implementation of CETA is expected to inject further momentum into bilateral trade and investment ties once it takes effect in the coming months. "This year's Tracker comes at a landmark moment in the UK-India relationship. The signing of CETA in 2025 marked a historic reset and businesses in both countries are now looking ahead to the opportunities it will unlock," said Keshav Murugesu, CEO of WNS Group and chair of the UK-India Business Forum at the Confederation

of Indian Industry (CII), one of the collaborators on the report. "This partnership is about much more than just economics. It is rooted in shared values and strengthened by the 1.8 million-strong Indian diaspora in the UK, the living bridge that connects our two nations," he said. UK continues to grow as a key destination for Indian investment, says IGF director Will Carne, director of India Global Forum (IGF) - another co-collaborator on the Tracker, said the findings highlight the huge advantages of ever deeper UK engagement with an "outward-facing, globalising India", which must be used as a "launchpad for further growth as CETA comes into effect". "The UK continues to grow as a key destination for Indian investment, crucially, in strategic areas that will determine future growth on both sides of the corridor. As Indian companies shift their focus towards innovation-led investments, regulatory alignment must keep pace to provide further headroom for growth," he said. The 2026 Tracker found that 66 companies reported annual revenue growth of at least 10 per cent and an average growth rate of 61 per cent.

Vedanta Power Meenakshi Energy Ensures Safe Drinking Water Access for Over 1,000 Residents in Nellore, Revives Defunct RO Plants

AGENCY

Nellore, Andhra Pradesh | 29 May 2026: Strengthening its commitment to community well-being and rural infrastructure development, Vedanta Power Meenakshi Energy Limited, a 1000 MW thermal power plant in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district, has restored and renovated Reverse Osmosis (RO) drinking water plants, benefiting over 1,000 residents across the two villages of Lingavaram and Varagalli.

The restored facilities shall ensure access to safe and clean drinking water for nearly 100 households through each RO plant in both villages. The initiative, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), addresses a critical community need, as both facilities had remained non-operational for more than a year, significantly impacting residents' access to reliable drinking water.

Before Meenakshi Energy's intervention, villagers were compelled to depend on distant and inconsistent water sources for their daily needs, causing considerable inconvenience, particularly for women and elderly residents. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the company undertook extensive refurbishment of the plants to restore their functionality



and improve long-term operational reliability. As part of the renovation effort, Meenakshi Energy Limited carried out extensive refurbishment of the RO plants, including replacement of filters, membranes, and pumps, along with critical civil repairs and installation of automated systems to enhance operational efficiency, reliability, and water quality standards. Following the upgrades, the facilities were formally handed over to the respective Panchayat administrations for continued community use and maintenance.

Speaking on the initiative, Rajinder Singh Ahuja, CEO, Vedanta Power said, "Access

to safe drinking water is fundamental to community well-being. Through initiatives such as these, we aim to strengthen essential rural infrastructure and improve quality of life across our operational areas. We remain committed to driving meaningful and sustainable CSR interventions spanning water, health, education, and community development." Panchayat representatives from both villages appreciated the timely intervention by Meenakshi Energy Limited and noted that the restored facilities would significantly reduce the daily challenges faced by residents, particularly in accessing safe and reliable drinking water.

Hyderabad home registrations increase 16% YoY in April 2026: Knight Frank India

AGENCY

Hyderabad, May 2026: According to Knight Frank India's latest assessment, residential property registrations in Hyderabad increased by 16% year-on-year (YoY) and 7% month-on-month (MoM) in April 2026, reflecting continued strength in residential market activity. A total of 6,837 residential properties were registered during the month. In value terms, homes worth INR 4,673 crore (cr) were registered, marking a 13% YoY and 1% MoM increase, once again indicating sustained momentum in transaction values. From a market perspective, property registration trends in April suggest that while premium housing continues to anchor overall transaction values, demand is increasingly becoming more broad-based, with stronger participation across affordable, mid, and premium segments supporting greater market stability. The Hyderabad residential market spans four districts namely Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy, and

Sangareddy and includes transactions from both the primary and secondary real estate markets. Shishir Bajjal, International Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India said "April's registration trends suggest that Hyderabad's residential market is entering a more balanced phase of growth, with demand broadening beyond the premium segment. At the same time, the affordable segment (homes priced below INR 50 lakh) recorded a stronger 18% YoY increase in registrations, pointing to renewed activity at the lower end of the market after a prolonged period of relatively muted demand. Unlike previous months where growth was largely concentrated at the premium end, April witnessed stronger participation across multiple segments. Homes priced above INR 1 cr continued to dominate in value terms, accounting for 49% of the total transaction value during the month, although this moderated slightly from 51% a year ago. In terms of volume, the seg-

ment accounted for 19% of total registrations, marginally lower than the 20% share recorded in April 2025, indicating that growth in the market was more evenly distributed across categories. Meanwhile, the mid-segment (INR 50 lakh-INR 1 cr) also returned to growth, with registrations rising 15% YoY, while maintaining a stable 25% share of total registrations. In value terms, its contribution increased from 24% to 26%, reflecting improving traction in a segment that had previously witnessed demand pressure. The simultaneous growth across affordable, mid, and premium categories suggests a broader strengthening of buyer sentiment and points toward a more balanced demand environment in Hyderabad's residential market. Most registered properties in Hyderabad ranged between 1,000 and 2,000 sq ft, comprising 67% of total registrations. Units above 2,000 sq ft comprised of 16% of the transactions during April 2026.

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Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) Signs MoUs with Indian Army and Paramilitary Forces to Support Personnel and Their Families

AGENCY

Hyderabad, May 29, 2026: Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), India's leading test preparatory services provider, has signed multiple Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with key Indian Army and paramilitary forces including the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to enhance educational access and welfare support for personnel and their families across the country. These collaborations are designed to extend structured scholarships, academic mentoring, career guidance, and nationwide coaching access to serving personnel, veterans, gallantry awardees, disabled members of the forces, and families of martyrs. The purpose of these MoUs (memorandum of understanding) is to remove financial barriers and enhance the academic preparation of students interested in pursuing competitive career paths (such as engineering and medical entrance examinations) by providing academic resources at no cost to those pursuing such careers at a competitive level. According to Mr. Chandra Sekhar Garisa Reddy, Managing Director & CEO, Aakash Educational Services Limited, "Anyone who has committed



themselves to serving their country should have every available opportunity for their family to grow and develop in a way that they can succeed. Through these partnerships, we hope to expand access to quality academic resources and support our defence families in achieving educational success. This is another step in creating an opportunity for us to give back to our military community." Scholarship Support Across Forces Indian Army Personnel and Families Registration Fee only is payable, 100% waiver on all other fee components for the wards of personnel who died while in harness. 100% tuition fee waiver for the wards of personnel with more than 20% disability and gallantry awardees.

20% tuition fee waiver for the wards of serving and retired personnel, applicable after other scholarships are deducted.

BSF Personnel and Families

Only registration/admission fees payable (100% waiver on tuition and other academic charges) for wards of personnel who lost their lives in service 90% tuition fee waiver for wards of gallantry awardees or personnel with more than 20% disability, subject to required certification 50% waiver on tuition fee for personnel having less than 20% disability 20% tuition fee waiver for wards of serving and retired personnel, applicable on tuition fees after other eligible scholarships

Delhi HC holds Google liable for selling a brand's goodwill it didn't own

AGENCY

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has fined Google Rs 30 lakh for misusing the registered trademark "HINDWARE" as an auctionable advertising keyword, ruling that the tech giant was effectively selling the "commercial pulling power" of a brand it had no right to profit from. The dispute has its roots in 2013, when Hindware, a leading sanitaryware manufacturer, discovered that rival Cera Sanitaryware and its website developer Omkara Inforweb had been periodically purchasing the "HINDWARE" keyword through Google's AdWords programme. The following year, plumbing fixtures manufacturer Grohe was found to be doing the same. The result was that when customers searched for Hindware on Google, Cera and Grohe products appeared prominently at the top of the results. Hindware called this "unfair competition and



trademark dilution," a deliberate diversion of customers who were looking specifically for its brand. Both competitors eventually settled with Hindware out of court. Google, however, contested its own legal liability and proceedings against the company continued.

Does an invisible keyword count as trademark use?

At the heart of the case was a deceptively simple question. Does using a trademarked name as a backend advertising keyword, one that never appears visibly in an ad, constitute "use in advertising" under the

Trade Marks Act? Google argued it did not. Because the keyword trigger remains hidden from consumers, the company contended, it falls outside the statutory definition of trademark use. Justice Mini Pushkarna, ruling on May 22, disagreed. "It is not necessary that the registered trademark physically appears in an advertisement for the same to be used 'in advertising,'" she held. Keyword bidding, she ruled, clearly qualifies as using a mark "in advertising" under Section 29(6) of the Trade Marks Act and therefore constitutes infringement.

Airtel Payments Bank Strengthens Cyber Fraud Vigilance Through Awareness, Action, and Community Outreach in West Godavari

AGENCY

India, 2026: Airtel Payments Bank continues to strengthen its ongoing efforts to safeguard customers against the rising threat of cyber fraud, with a sharp focus on awareness, prevention, and last-mile engagement.

As India's digital banking revolution has expanded financial access to millions, it has also created new avenues for cybercriminals. With fraud tactics becoming increasingly sophisticated and often targeting first-time and rural banking users, the need for proactive awareness and responsible banking has become more critical than ever. Anchored in customer safety, the Bank continuously evolves its approach to stay ahead of emerging risks in an increasingly digital banking environment.

As part of its sustained efforts, Airtel Payments Bank has embedded safety and awareness into every customer touchpoint across digital interfaces to on-



ground engagements. The Bank runs active, multi-platform awareness campaigns across social media, helping users recognise the language of cyber fraud through simple, relatable content. Recognising that a significant share of its customer base communicates and consumes information in their mother tongue, the Bank has started delivering awareness messaging through regional-language

content ensuring that fraud prevention guidance reaches people in the language they understand best. Extending its efforts beyond digital channels, the Bank's financial literacy camps bring safety education directly into communities covering how to identify suspicious activity and the concrete steps people need to take to protect their personal and financial data. Designed as a sustained

grassroots initiative rather than one-off events, these camps aim to build lasting financial awareness at the local level.

G a n e s h Ananthanarayanan, Executive Director - Business Operations, Airtel Payments Bank, said "With digital payment volumes crossing 220 lakh crore monthly on UPI, the scale of our responsibility has grown enormously. As digi-

tal adoption accelerates across Bharat, so does our responsibility to ensure that growth is built on a foundation of trust, awareness, and accountability. We are investing continuously in education, agent capability, and system-level safeguards because we believe that educating customers begins long before a fraud occurs. We will continue to work in full coordination with authorities and take uncompromising action against any form of malpractice that threatens the integrity of the financial ecosystem."

Central to Airtel Payments Bank's last-mile safety framework is its network of over five lakh Business Correspondents (BCs). The Bank has established a robust onboarding process, supplemented by regular fraud prevention communications shared with BCs to keep them well-informed. This continuous engagement equips them to actively guide customers on secure banking practices.

Suspense Ends On Lionel Messi As Argentina Announce FIFA World Cup 2026 Squad

AGENCY

Argentina: Lionel Messi will captain Argentina at the World Cup, national coach Lionel Scaloni announced Thursday as he unveiled his 26-man squad. Messi, 38, had not previously confirmed he would play in what will be a record-breaking sixth tournament for the Argentine superstar. But it had been widely assumed the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner would again lead Argentina, four years after lifting the trophy in Qatar. As well as confirming Messi's presence, Thursday's announcement notably excluded Real Madrid's Franco Mastantuono from the Argentina squad. 18-year-old Mastantuono is considered one of the brightest prospects in Argentine football. The largest ever World Cup, co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, kicks off June 11. Argentina's first match will be five days later against

Algeria in Kansas City. Messi has been at the heart of an injury scare in recent days, with his club side Inter Miami this week saying medical tests diagnosed him with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring.

The Major League Soccer club had provided no clear timetable for Messi's return after his abrupt exit from Miami's 6-4 victory over Philadelphia in the 73rd minute on Sunday. But Scaloni had played down the seriousness of the injury this week.

Romero returns

Center-back Cristian Romero, who suffered a knee injury last month and has not played since, was also named in the squad. The Tottenham Hotspur captain was ruled out

for the remainder of the Premier League season after he was shooed into his own goalkeeper by Sunderland striker Brian Brobbey. Argentina's roster retains 17 of the 26 players who won the title in Qatar. Young players who received call-ups include 21-year-olds Nicolas Paz and Valentin Barco.

Palmeiras forward Jose Manuel Lopez, who only made his international debut last year, also features. Other notable absentees include Emiliano Buendia - currently in excellent form at Aston Villa - and Roma star Paulo Dybala. The South American giants will journey to the United States for pre-World Cup friendlies against Honduras on June 6 and

Iceland on June 9. Argentina's World Cup group also contains Austria and Jordan. Along with Messi, Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo and Mexican goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa are also expected to appear in their sixth World Cups this summer.



Lionel Messi will captain Argentina at the World Cup, national coach Lionel Scaloni announced Thursday as he unveiled his 26-man squad.



Rishabh Pant Resigns As Lucknow Super Giants Skipper After Disappointing IPL 2026 Show

AGENCY

New Delhi: Rishabh Pant stepped down as Lucknow Super Giants captain after the franchise finished last in IPL 2026. The IPL team confirmed on social media that Pant's request to give up the leadership role was accepted by the team management. LSG had a horrible run of form in IPL 2026 as they won just 4 matches and finished last with 8 points from 14 matches. Pant's performance as a batter was also not that impressive as he scored 312 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of 138.05. He was bought for a record Rs 27 crore in the IPL 2025 auction but since then, LSG have finished seventh and tenth in the last two seasons. "Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) wish to formally announce that Rishabh Pant has requested to be relieved of his captaincy duties with the franchise, and the franchisee has accepted his request with immediate effect," LSG said in a statement on Friday. LSG

Director of Cricket, Tom Moody, described Pant stepping down as 'never easy'. "Rishabh approached this request and we have respectfully accepted it. These decisions are never easy," Moody said in a statement released by LSG. "We are grateful for everything Rishabh has brought to this dressing room as captain. Our focus now is on the collective - rebuilding and restructuring to reach the best standards," he added. LSG did not make any announcement regarding who will become the next captain after Pant. "With an eye on making a positive comeback in the upcoming season, the new Lucknow

Super Giants captain will be announced in due course," the official statement from the franchise read.



Korean Golf Players Shine At LIV Golf Korea 2026; Bryson DeChambeau And Charles Howell III Top First Round

AGENCY

Korea: Korean golfers have been putting up a strong fight as their names have slowly begun to make headlines in Korea amidst the presence of global LIV Golf superstars Bryson DeChambeau, Charles Howell III, and Scott Vincent, who ended up tied atop the LIV Golf Korea leaderboard after the opening round. In fact, Korean Golf Club (OKGC) managed to put together one of its best performances of the season at Asiad Country Club in Korea. Korean Golfers Excel in LIV Golf Korea Amidst Bryson DeChambeau-led Leaderboard While the first round of the LIV Golf Korea tournament has showcased many of the best golfers out



there, Korean Golf Club managed to stand out on its own by making a strong play in the competition. Specifically, OKGC member Younghun Song scored a 4-under 68 while Doyeob Mun, playing in his debut match, earned a 4-under 68 as well, resulting in both ending up tied for 11th place overall. Korean fans found it refreshing that the good perform-

ance by their players gave hope amidst a highly stacked field. Among LIV Golf's top stars, who all had matching scores of 5-under 65 after day one to lead the tournament, were Bryson DeChambeau, Charles Howell III, and Scott Vincent, but homegrown golfers made sure there was not all the attention towards world stars. Bryson started brilliantly as he carded six

birdies before bogeying out during the last few holes. Charles Howell got his name on the leaderboard after making an eagle on 108 yards on the par-4 hole's 2nd tee, while Scott Vincent showed the best individual performance by recording a bogey-free round. Strong First Round By OKGC Puts Some Pressure On Crushers GC In Team Championship Race With Crushers GC still ahead of OKGC in the team rankings by five shots, the latter team could provide stiff competition as it played exceptionally well on day one. On the other hand, Crushers GC are still strong without their regular member, Paul Casey, who did not join the event due to an injury and was replaced by Travis Smyth.

Gujarat Titans vs Rajasthan Royals Weather Report: Will Rain Play Spoilsport In IPL 2026 Qualifier 2 Clash?

AGENCY

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals are set to take on Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 of IPL 2026 in Mullanpur on Friday. The winner of the game will face Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the summit clash, while the loser will be knocked out. RR have momentum on their side coming into this game. The Riyan Parag-led team has registered four consecutive victories, including its win against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Eliminator clash. During the game, the focus will be on Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, a 15-year-old wonderkid who has impressed one and all with his terrific batting. Breaking multiple records with his ultra-aggressive style of bat-



ting, Sooryavanshi currently holds the Orange Cap with 680 runs in 15 matches this season. On the other hand, Gujarat Titans will aim to put in an improved show after being outplayed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Qualifier 1. Batting first, RCB posted 254

matchday. Meanwhile, AccuWeather forecast indicates that rain will not play any role during the game. In case the GT vs RR IPL 2026 Qualifier 2 is washed out due to rain in Mullanpur, Shubman Gill and Co. will advance to the final by virtue of a better finish in the points table. Gujarat Titans finished at the second spot in the table with 18 points to their credit. On the other hand, Rajasthan Royals entered the playoffs with a fourth-place finish, having 16 points to their name. Both RR and GT have won one IPL title each. Rajasthan Royals bagged the glory in the inaugural edition in 2008, while Gujarat Titans won the trophy in 2022, their first season in the tournament.

Suffering was less than my passion for tennis, says Nadal



Rafael Nadal had one of the greatest tennis careers the game has ever seen. He also spent nearly all of it in pain. Between his first French Open win in 2005 and retirement in 2024, the Spaniard won 22 Grand Slam singles titles - the second-highest total of any man. He was part of the 'Big Three' era, where he, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic carved up the sport's biggest prizes and thrilled fans. But a chronic foot injury meant Nadal had to find different

ways just to get through matches, let alone win them. In a new Netflix series, the 39-year-old opens up about the risks he took with his health in order to achieve greatness. "I've had to make decisions about my health, where you are on the borderline between right or wrong," Nadal said. "But if I hadn't explored all that, I probably would have had 10 fewer Grand Slams. I'm not saying one or two, I'm saying 10 or 12. This is the reality."

Mangalore Set For Surfing Showdown As 7th NMPA Indian Open Of Surfing 2026 Begins

AGENCY

Mumbai: Indian surfing arrives at one of the most significant moments in its domestic history this week as the seventh edition of the NMPA Indian Open of Surfing 2026, a key stop on the national surfing circuit, prepares to bring together many of the country's leading surfers at the Blue Bay Tannirbhavi Eco Beach in Mangalore from May 29 to 31. Set against the backdrop of surfing's impending debut at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games later this year, the championship carries significance extending far beyond the pursuit of domestic titles. Featuring competitions in the Men's Open, Women's Open, Under-18 Boys, Under-18 Girls, Under-14 Boys, and Under-14 Girls categories, the event is expected to attract



over 80 athletes from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Goa in what could prove to be a defining week for several of India's top surfers. Organised by the Mantra Surf Club and Surfing Swami Foundation under the aegis of the Surfing

Federation of India (SFI), the Indian Open has evolved steadily into one of the flagship events on the national calendar. The Karnataka Government continues its support for the competition for

a seventh consecutive year, while New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA) returns as title sponsor for the third successive edition alongside Gold Sponsors Cycle Pure Agarbatti and Deconstruct Skincare. Asian Games Spotlight Raises Stakes in Mangalore This year's championship is expected to serve as the final major domestic assessment event before India finalises its squad for the Asian Games, placing unusual weight on performances across the three-day competition.



not looking great for

Axar Patel. With KL Rahul not willing to take a leadership role, Hardik Pandya can be the perfect choice for them to reignite the fire in the side. A potential trade could see Hardik and Axar switch places in a move that will benefit both sides massively.

What Happened To QTCinderella? Streamer Threatens DMCA Strikes Against X Clip Accounts For "Hate Farming"



AGENCY

London: Twitch streamer QTCinderella is once again at the center of online discussion after announcing that she plans to issue DMCA strikes against certain clip accounts on X. The streamer, whose real name is Blaire, called out pages that she believes are using her content in a misleading way to push hate and negativity online. The conversation picked up on May 28, 2026, after QTCinderella shared a long message explaining why she had reached her limit. According to her, some accounts were taking harmless clips and turning them into "hate farming" posts designed to create toxic discussions around her. She also revealed that she had been away from the internet recently while grieving the loss of her best friend of 15 years, making the situation even more emotional for her. QTCinderella says she's "done with the abuse" from X clip accounts in her statement, QTCinderella

explained that she no longer wants her content being used by accounts she believes are acting in bad faith. She accused certain pages of intentionally framing innocent moments in ways that encourage harassment and negative comment sections. The streamer said this is the first time she has seriously considered taking legal action through DMCA takedowns. She made it clear that she sees this as setting a personal boundary rather than trying to silence criticism online. QTCinderella also strongly defended herself in the post, saying she would not allow people to profit from content that spreads false narratives about her. She added that she was tired of the kind of online environment these accounts create and claimed many of them exist mainly to stir drama and outrage. The streamer also opened up about grieving a personal loss Part of QTCinderella's message focused on something much more personal.

New Captaincy Chance, A Blockbuster Trade Move - What Next For Hardik Pandya?

AGENCY

Mumbai: Mumbai Indians stunned everyone in 2023 as they completed a sensational trade move for Hardik Pandya from Gujarat Titans. While Cameron Green moved to Royal Challengers Bengaluru to make way, it was the perfect homecoming for the star India all-rounder. This was the same franchise where Hardik found superstardom and, after winning the title with Gujarat Titans as captain and finishing runners-up in the next season, it was probably apt that he was going to take over the reins of captaincy from Rohit

Sharma. However, what followed was a bitter episode where fans were not happy with the decisions taken by the team management, and the disappointing show on the field even led to a section of supporters booing Hardik at the Wankhede Stadium. The next two seasons did not improve the situation and, although MI did finish fourth in 2025, the fans were just never convinced. Add the injury problems and off-field chatter around Hardik to an already tense situation, and one had the perfect recipe for disaster. Following a ninth-place fin-

ish in 2026, Mumbai Indians are reportedly going to sack Hardik as captain, and several media outlets reported that the all-rounder will be looking to move to another team after a breakdown in relations with the team management. With the IPL potentially looking at yet another blockbuster trade deal, here's a look at the top destinations for Hardik Pandya in IPL 2027 - Lucknow Super Giants The Rishabh Pant move has not worked for LSG and, if some reports are to be believed, they will most likely have a captaincy vacuum after this

season. Despite commanding a record amount of Rs 27 crore in the auction, Pant has disappointed - both as a batter as well as a captain. In that case, Hardik becomes a lucrative option for the franchise as their new leader. If they decide to release Pant, LSG will have more than enough money in their bank to complete an all-cash move for the all-rounder and, if it comes down to a trade, a combination of Nicholas Pooran and an Indian fast bowler can be considered. Delhi Capitals Another franchise with a captaincy problem, with things