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BJP leaders met ECI, demand strict action against Kharge for calling PM 'terrorist'



New Delhi : A delegation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) met the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Wednesday, demanding action against Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge over his remarks calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi "a terrorist."

While talking to the reporters after the meeting, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Kiren Rijiju, said that calling the Prime Minister a terrorist is a crime and demanded EC to take "strict action," seeking an apology from the Congress President.

Describing the incidence as a "national issue," Rijiju said, "This is not a BJP issue but an issue for the entire nation."

He further added that no political party has ever touched that level of disrespect as Congress, and used such abusive

language against the Prime Minister.

"We have requested the Commission that if any political party in the country uses such language, it is not our party's or the government's business, but a despicable act against democracy and weakens it in many ways. We demanded that strict action must be taken and that Mallikarjun Kharge, the Congress Party, apologise to the people of the country," Rijiju added.

BJP leader said that EC had taken cognisance of the matter after listening to us, and has assured that appropriate action will be taken.

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister also affirmed that under the PM's leadership, all terrorists shall be eliminated, while the Congress will be punished by the people.

"The investigation that EC has to do is different. But the terrorists who fight against our country will be finished under the leadership of the same PM Modi, who has been called a terrorist. The public will punish the Congress, as PM Modi will punish the terrorists," said Rijiju.

Earlier on Tuesday, the BJP filed a complaint against the Congress President, alleging complaint against Congress President Shri @kharge ji for his shocking and disgraceful remark calling Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi ji a "terrorist." This is not just derogatory, it is a dangerous & unprecedented attack on democratic institutions. A blatant violation of the Model Code of Conduct. Immediate action is non-negotiable," Rijiju posted on X.

The party stated that the remarks were widely circulated across digital and print media platforms, and have a "substantial potential to vitiate the electoral atmosphere, undermining the standards of civil discourse."

The war of words stemmed from Kharge's speech during the last day of the election campaign in Tamil Nadu.

Drawing attention to the oppositions' unity during the defeat of the Delimitation Bill,

which had been linked to the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill, the Congress President criticised the AIADMK for aligning with the BJP and referred to Modi as a "terrorist who does not believe in equality", sparking political backlash.

"I also thank the Tamil Nadu people who have given MPs to us, that's why we were able to fight and defeat the bill. This is the land of scientific thinking and ideals of Periyar, Dr. Ambedkar, Annadurai, great Kamaraj, and Karunanidhi. These people stood for this woman's reservation, justice, equality, and fraternity. Modi is not for these principles and one more thing I want to tell how this AIADMK people who themselves put the photo of Annadurai, how can they join with Modi who is a terrorist and who won't believe in equality,

his party won't believe in equality and justice and these people are joining with them, it means that they are weakening democracy, they are weakening the philosophy of Annadurai, Kamaraj, Periyar and Karunanidhi and Babasaheb Ambedkar. The Congress-DMK alliance will continue to deliver welfare, inclusive growth, quality education, and accessible healthcare," Kharge had said while addressing the gathering.

The senior Congress leader quickly clarified his position when asked about the choice of words, claiming that he meant that the PM was terrorising his political opponents.

"He (PM Modi) is terrorising people and political parties. I never said he is a terrorist...What I mean, I want to clarify, is that Modi always threatens. The institutions like ED, IT, and CBI are in his hands," Kharge said.



PM leads nation in remembering Pahalgam victims, reaffirms resolve against terror



New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday paid tribute to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack on its anniversary, remembering those who lost their lives and reiterating the nation's unwavering resolve to combat terrorism.

In a message posted on X, the Prime Minister said, "Remembering the innocent lives lost in the gruesome Pahalgam terror attack on this day last year. They will never be forgotten. My thoughts are also with the bereaved families as they cope with this loss."

He expressed the collective sentiment of the nation in the face of tragedy, adding, "As a nation, we stand united in grief and resolve. India will never bow to any form of terror. The heinous designs of terrorists will never succeed."

The Pahalgam terror attack, which shook the country last year, claimed several innocent lives and drew widespread condemnation from across

the political spectrum.

The incident, which targeted civilians in the popular tourist destination in Jammu and Kashmir, had sparked renewed concerns over security in the region and prompted intensified counter-terror operations by security forces.

Since then, the government has maintained a strong stance on national security, emphasising a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism. Officials have highlighted ongoing efforts to dismantle terror networks and enhance security measures, particularly in sensitive areas such as Jammu and Kashmir.

The anniversary of the attack has been marked by tributes from leaders and citizens alike, with many remembering the victims and expressing solidarity with their families.

The Prime Minister's message echoed this shared remembrance while underlining India's determination to stand firm against the threat of terrorism.

Traffic Block on Mumbai-Pune Expressway for maintenance Work; Diversions Announced

Mumbai : The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) has undertaken work to remove structural support shuttering and carry out painting on a bridge located at km 58/500 (Dongargaon Kusgaon) on the Yashwantrao Chavan Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

As a result, traffic on the expressway will be completely halted for a specific duration.

A traffic block will be enforced for two days—Thursday, April 23, and Friday, April 24—on the Yashwantrao

Chavan Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

MSRDC has taken this decision to carry out essential technical work. During these days, traffic on the expressway will be completely suspended for three hours in the afternoon. Motorists traveling during this period are advised to use alternative routes.

MSRDC stated that the block is necessary to ensure the safe and smooth execution of the work, and travelers should plan their journeys accordingly.

According to MSRDC, traffic

heading towards Mumbai will be completely closed on April 23, 2026, from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. All vehicles will be diverted via Kivle Dehuroad-Talegaon route onto National Highway 48 and rejoin at Kusgaon Toll Plaza. Similarly, traffic heading towards Pune will be completely closed on April 24, from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Vehicles will be diverted from Kusgaon Toll Plaza via National Highway 48 through Dehuroad-Kiwale towards Pune.

Motorists are urged to plan their travel in advance and use



the designated alternative routes during the specified period. Meanwhile, in case of any inconvenience on the expressway during this time, motorists can contact the control room or the Highway Police for assistance, MSRDC said.

Shiv Sena Leaders Lobby for Legislative Council Ticket Amid Uncertainty Over Uddhav Thackeray's Candidacy

Mumbai : Several leaders from the Shiv Sena (Thackeray faction) have reportedly begun lobbying at Matoshree for a Legislative Council ticket, in case party chief Uddhav Thackeray decides not to contest the upcoming election.

Among the prominent aspirants are party spokesperson Sushma Andhare, leader Vaibhav Naik, and former Leader of Opposition Ambadas Danve.

There is still uncertainty over whether Uddhav Thackeray will contest the Legislative Council election again. If he enters the fray, the election is likely to be uncontested. However, if he opts out, there is a possibility that the ruling Mahayuti alliance may field an

additional candidate, making the contest more competitive.

With Thackeray yet to clarify his stance, Andhare, Naik, and Danve have stepped up their efforts to secure the nomination. Sushma Andhare is said to have approached Rashmi Thackeray, while Naik and Danve have reportedly pushed their names through Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut. The election schedule has already been announced, with voting set to take place on May 12 and results to be declared the same day. Based on the current strength in the Legislative Assembly, the BJP is expected to secure six seats, Shiv Sena two, NCP one, and one seat is projected to go to the Maha Vikas Aghadi.



MSRTC Goes Glam: Riteish and Genelia Deshmukh Appointed as Brand Ambassadors for 'Lalpari'

Mumbai : In a bid to modernize the image of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) and make public transport more appealing to the younger generation, the state government has appointed the popular celebrity couple Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia Deshmukh as the official brand ambassadors for the "Lalpari" (ST buses).

The primary objective of this collaboration is to revamp the traditional image of the state transport service and position it as a modern, reliable, and people-oriented mode of transport.

The star couple has signed a five-year agreement with the corporation. During this period, they will lead various promotional campaigns, advertisements,



and social initiatives. By leveraging the widespread popularity of Riteish and Genelia, MSRTC aims to attract the youth and urban commuters who may have shifted away from public bus services. The campaign will focus on reaching passengers from remote rural areas to developing urban centers, emphasizing the safety and accessibility of the ST network.

MSRTC Chairman and Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik said that building a strong, relatable brand image is just as crucial as upgrading infrastructure. Following in the footsteps of past ambassadors like Makarand Anaspure and the late Vikram Gokhale, the Deshmukhs are expected to bring a fresh "energy" to the corporation's identity.

This move comes at a time when MSRTC is transitioning toward a greener future, with plans to convert its entire fleet of 22,000 buses to electric vehicles (EVs) in a phased manner. The celebrity-led campaign is expected to create a positive narrative around these modernizations and encourage more citizens to choose public transport over private vehicles.

Iran accuses Pakistan of 'double game' targets Asim Munir over pro-US tilt

New Delhi : The cracks in Pakistan's peace broker image are now impossible to ignore. Iranian state media this week launched a sharp, public attack on Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir, accusing Islamabad of playing a "double game" in the US-Iran nuclear talks, tilting toward Washington while maintaining private access to Iranian leadership.

The broadside, aired during a televised debate on the Student News Network, has exposed a serious breakdown in trust between the two neighbors at the worst possible time for Pakistan, which has staked considerable diplomatic capital on positioning itself as the indispensable middleman in one of the world's most dangerous standoffs.

The criticism marks a significant and public breakdown in diplomatic trust between the two Muslim-majority neighbours. Pakistan's carefully cultivated

image as an indispensable peace broker between Washington and Tehran appears to be fading, as Iran accuses it of being partisan and playing a "double game," alleging that Islamabad is leaning toward the US side.

Iran's core grievance is straightforward: it says its proposals are being ignored. Tehran claims General Munir visited Iran, collected a formal 10-point negotiation framework

to deliver to the Americans, and then nothing. No response, no acknowledgment, no commitment. Making matters worse, Iranian analysts allege that Pakistan has deliberately abandoned Iran's 10-point framework proposal and is now putting pressure on Tehran by pushing 15 to 16 new demands on behalf of Washington.

An SNN analyst put it bluntly: "According to the plan we had, Asim Munir came to Tehran,

received our message, and this message was supposed to be delivered to the American side, which he must have done. But as far as I know, and as we have discussed at high levels, we have not yet received a response as to whether this message was accepted or not. I would even say that even if we do receive a response, he will return to Islamabad and the other party will say, 'Well, I don't accept this at all.'"

Tehran stated that General Munir visited Iran, collected a 10-point proposal intended for the American side, and delivered it — but Iran has received no response whatsoever.

Iranian analysts further alleged that Pakistan has since buried Tehran's framework entirely and is now pushing 15 to 16 new demands on Washington's behalf, a posture they say reveals where Islamabad's loyalties truly lie.

The accusations land at a

particularly awkward moment for Pakistan. Just as the previous ceasefire deadline was about to expire, Trump announced an extension on Truth Social, explicitly citing a "request" from both General Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The reversal was stark; hours earlier, Trump had earlier asserted that bombing was imminent if no deal was reached.

Sharif moved quickly to take credit, thanking Trump for granting more time for "ongoing diplomatic efforts" and confirming that a second round of talks is scheduled to be held in Pakistan, though he stopped short of providing any date.

Iranian media were unmoved, dismissing the announcement as a Pakistani public relations exercise, a manufactured appearance of progress designed to satisfy Washington and Riyadh while the actual process remains firmly stalled.

Fadnavis outlines governance initiatives in public video update

Mumbai : Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday presented a detailed account of his recent engagements, combining outreach with a broader message on sustainable development. In a video post shared, he highlighted a range of initiatives undertaken the previous day, reflecting the state government's focus on inclusive and participatory administration.

The update outlined key decisions and programmes spanning youth interaction, voter awareness efforts, and steps linked to women's reservation, signalling a multi-dimensional governance approach. The communication emphasised strengthening democratic participation while simultaneously advancing social and administrative reforms across Maharashtra.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister marked World



Earth Day with a message in Marathi, urging citizens to maintain a balance between development and environmental protection. The message, accompanied by a photograph, called for a model of progress that safeguards ecological well-being while sustaining economic growth.

The twin messaging - combining administrative updates with an appeal for environmental responsibility - highlights the state leadership's attempt to align governance priorities with long-term sustainability goals. The outreach is expected to reinforce awareness among citizens and officials as Maharashtra continues to pursue development alongside ecological balance.



Nitish Kumar reorganises JD-U national team, appoints new office bearers

Patna: In a significant organisational overhaul, former Bihar Chief Minister and Rajya Sabha MP Nitish Kumar, who also serves as the national president of Janata Dal (United), on Wednesday reconstituted the party's national office bearers. The move is being seen as part of a broader strategy to strengthen the party structure ahead of upcoming political challenges.

The reorganisation reflects an effort by the JD(U) leadership to streamline internal functioning while preparing the party for a dynamic political environment. With elections and shifting alliances shaping the national landscape, the reshuffle is aimed at reinforcing the party's organisational base.

As per the new arrangement, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha has been appointed as the Working President of the party. His elevation signals a key shift in leadership responsibilities within the organisation.

Former MP Chandreshwar Prasad Chandravanshi has been assigned the role of Vice President. His inclusion adds experience to the party's top leadership tier.

In another important appointment, MP Alok Kumar Suman has been named Treasurer, a role crucial



for overseeing the party's financial management and organisational resources.

The party has also appointed 12 leaders as General Secretaries, reflecting an expansion aimed at improving coordination and outreach. Among the prominent names are Manish Kumar Verma, Shyam Rajak, and Ashok Chaudhary.

These appointments highlight a mix of seasoned leaders and active political figures, indicating a conscious attempt to blend experience

with renewed organisational energy.

In addition to the General Secretaries, the party has appointed eight Secretaries to further streamline its functioning. This move is expected to improve internal communication and ensure smoother execution of party strategies.

Senior leader Rajeev Ranjan Prasad will continue to serve as General Secretary. He has also been entrusted with the additional responsibility of national spokesper-

son, consolidating the party's communication apparatus.

The dual role assigned to Prasad underscores the party's focus on strengthening its public messaging and ensuring a consistent narrative across platforms.

Party insiders view the reshuffle as a strategic step by Nitish Kumar to reinforce internal cohesion and reduce organisational gaps. It is also aimed at improving coordination between different levels of leadership.

The reconstitution is expected to help the party respond more effectively to emerging political developments, particularly in key states where JD(U) has a significant presence. Observers note that such organisational changes are often crucial in maintaining a party's relevance, especially in a competitive political landscape marked by shifting alliances and voter expectations. By reshaping its leadership structure, JD(U) appears to be positioning itself for greater agility and responsiveness in the coming months. Overall, the overhaul signals a renewed push by Nitish Kumar to consolidate the party's strength, enhance efficiency, and ensure that it remains a key player in India's evolving political scenario.

Former TMC MP Nusrat Jahan appears before ED

Kolkata: Bengali film actress and former Trinamool Congress MP Nusrat Jahan appeared before officials of the Enforcement Directorate in connection with an ongoing probe.

Nusrat arrived at the central agency's office located in the CGO Complex at Salt Lake in Kolkata after being summoned for questioning. The appearance marks a key development in the investigation into an alleged housing fraud case.

The probe is linked to a real estate project in Rajarhat, on the outskirts of Kolkata. The project, which promised residential flats, has come under scrutiny following complaints from buyers.

According to officials, Nusrat Jahan had served as a director in a real estate company associated with the Rajarhat housing project. The agency is examining the company's operations and financial dealings.

An Enforcement Directorate official stated that the company allegedly collected



funds from a large number of prospective homebuyers but failed to deliver the promised residential units.

Investigators revealed that around 429 buyers had reportedly paid approximately ₹5.5 lakh each for flats in the project. This brings the total amount involved in the case to over ₹25 crore.

Despite receiving payments, the flats were allegedly never handed over to the buyers, leading to grievances and legal complaints from those affected. Many of the buyers have since sought legal recourse.

The ED is probing potential financial irregularities, including the diversion or misuse of funds collected from investors. The agency is also looking into the roles

and responsibilities of individuals associated with the company.

However, Nusrat Jahan has consistently distanced herself from the firm and the allegations. She has maintained that she resigned from her position as director in 2017.

According to her earlier statements, her resignation came well before any investigation was initiated, and she had no involvement in the day-to-day operations of the company.

She has also asserted that she cannot be held accountable for any alleged irregularities that may have occurred after her departure from the firm.

On Wednesday, Nusrat chose not to respond to questions from mediapersons gathered outside the ED office, maintaining silence as she entered and exited the premises.

Sources indicated that her statement would be recorded as part of the ongoing investigation, which aims to establish accountability in the case.

Bihar CM urges collective action for clean, green future on Earth Day

Patna: Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Tuesday extended his greetings to the people on the occasion of Earth Day, urging citizens to work collectively towards protecting the environment and ensuring a sustainable future.

In a message shared on social media, the Chief Minister highlighted the significance of environmental conservation and called for a united effort to preserve the planet. His message resonated with the global theme of promoting awareness and action for environmental protection.

"Heartfelt wishes on World Earth Day. Let us all together resolve to make our Earth clean, green, and safe," Choudhary said, encouraging people to take responsibility for safeguarding natural resources. He emphasised

that protecting the environment is not just the responsibility of governments but requires active participation from every individual. Collective action, he noted, is essential to address environmental challenges effectively. Amid growing concerns over climate change, deforestation, and pollution, the Chief Minister stressed the need for increased awareness among citizens. He pointed out that environmental degradation poses serious risks to future generations.

Using the hashtag "SaveEarth," Choudhary underscored the urgency of adopting sustainable practices in daily life. He called on people to be mindful of their actions and contribute positively to environmental conservation. The Chief Minister also highlighted the importance of reducing

waste and conserving natural resources. He encouraged citizens to minimise plastic usage and promote recycling as part of their daily routines.

Through the "GoGreen" message, he urged people to plant more trees and support initiatives that enhance green cover. Increasing greenery, he said, is vital for maintaining ecological balance and improving air quality.

Choudhary further stressed that small individual efforts, when combined, can lead to significant positive changes. Simple steps like saving water and electricity can collectively make a big difference. He also reiterated the importance of educating younger generations about environmental responsibility. Instilling eco-friendly habits early in life can help build a more sustainable future.

A wave of change is clearly visible in West Bengal : Yogi during campaign in Kolkata

Kolkata: Amidst the election atmosphere in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Trinamool Congress and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee while addressing his first public meeting in Jorasanko, Kolkata.

He claimed that the BJP's "saf-fion flag" will fly high in the state when the election results are announced on May 4.

A large number of supporters arrived at the meeting carrying posters that said, "Yogi ji, bring the bulldozer, we are with you." The UP Chief Minister said that the BJP is poised to win nearly 80 per cent of the seats in the first phase of voting on April 23, and that a wave of change is clearly visible in the state.

He said, "No one can tamper with the identity of Bengal" and appealed to the people to use their votes wisely.

CM Adityanath alleged that the TMC is tampering with the Bengali identity. He said, "Bengal's identity is



not with the Kaaba, but with Mother Kalibari." He also indirectly targeted Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee, calling them "aunt and nephew" and saying they were weakening the state's existence.

Referring to Rabindranath Tagore's Thakurbari in Jorasanko, the Chief Minister said that the area symbolizes Bengal's cultural identity. He alleged that TMC workers forcibly

installed a picture of Mamata Banerjee where pictures of Gurudev and Bharat Mata should have been placed, which is an insult to Bengal's identity.

Yogi also questioned the state's economic situation. He said that people from across the country once came to Bengal for employment, but now the situation has changed. According to him, thousands of indus-

tries and MSME units have closed down over the past years, leaving millions of youth unemployed.

In his address, Yogi Adityanath also mentioned Uttar Pradesh's "law and order model." He said that before 2017, there was anarchy in Uttar Pradesh, but now the state is in a state of "no curfew, no riot," and religious and cultural events are being held peacefully. He said that strict action has been taken against the mafia, and housing has been built on their properties for the poor.

At the end of the meeting, the Chief Minister appealed to the people to vote for Vijay Ojha from Jorasanko, Tapas Roy from Manikata, Santosh Pathak from Chowringhee, Purnima Chakraborty from Shyampukur, Partha Chaudhary from Belegghata, and Priyanka Tibrewal from Entally. He said that only a "double-engine government" can preserve both development and heritage, and that the time has come to make Bengal "Sonar Bangla" again.

Telangana HC stays Kaleshwaram report, relief for KCR and Harish Rao

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Wednesday stayed the report of the Justice P C Ghosh Commission, which had been set up to investigate alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. The ruling provided significant relief to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and former minister T. Harish Rao.

In its order, the High Court directed that no action be taken on the basis of the commission's report, citing procedural lapses in the manner in which it was prepared and submitted. The decision effectively pauses any immediate consequences arising from the report's findings.

At the same time, the court upheld the validity of G.O. Ms. No. 6, which was issued in March 2024 for the constitution of the commission. This means



that while the report itself has been stayed, the legal basis for forming the commission remains intact.

The verdict was delivered by a Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G. M. Mohiuddin after detailed hearings in the matter. The case stemmed from petitions filed by K. Chandrashekar Rao, T. Har-

ish Rao, and senior IAS officers Smita Sabharwal and S. K. Joshi. The petitioners had challenged both the constitution of the commission and the findings presented in its report. During the hearings, the petitioners raised concerns over the process followed by the commission, arguing that it did not adhere to proper legal and procedural norms. They also questioned the manner in which the report was handled before being made public. The High Court, while examining these arguments, observed that the report had been made public before it was formally placed before the Legislative Assembly. This, the court indicated, amounted to a procedural irregularity. Taking note of this lapse, the bench ruled that no punitive or coercive action should be initiated against the petitioners based on the contents of the report.

Kashmir leaders pay tribute to Pahalgam attack victims on first anniversary

Srinagar: Political leaders across Kashmir on Wednesday paid heartfelt tributes to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack on its first anniversary, expressing collective grief and renewing their resolve to end violence and ensure lasting peace in the region.

The attack, which took place on April 22, 2025, had targeted the picturesque Baisaran meadows near the well-known tourist destination of Pahalgam. The serene landscape, often referred to as a mini meadow paradise, was turned into a site of tragedy.

In one of the deadliest attacks on civilians in recent years, 25 tourists along with a local ponywallah lost their lives. The incident not only shocked the region but also sent waves of grief across the entire country.

The attack also triggered heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, bringing the two nuclear-armed neighbours close to a serious confrontation and raising concerns at the international level.

On the first anniversary of the tragedy, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reiterated that the people of the Union Territory remain united against terror and violence.

In a message shared on social media, Abdullah stated, "One year on, we remain united against terror and against violence. We remain resolute in our desire to rid J&K of suffering and innocent deaths. We remain committed to doing everything to ensure it never happens again."

He also extended solidarity to the families of the victims, emphasising that their loss continues to be



deeply felt and that the region stands together in grief, remembrance, and support for those affected.

Hurriyat Conference chairman and Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq remembered the victims with deep sorrow and reflected on the long history of violence that has scarred the region.

Referring to past incidents such as Gaw Kadal, Zakoor, Hawal, Sopore, Wandhama, and Chittisinghpura, he noted that such anniversaries reopen old wounds and remind people of the immense human cost of prolonged conflict.

Despite recalling painful memories, Mirwaiz emphasised that the aspiration of the people for peace through dialogue and non-violence remains unwavering. He expressed hope that such tragic incidents would never be repeated.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Karra also paid tribute to those who lost their lives, highlighting the bravery of the young ponywallah who sacrificed himself while trying to save others.

Karra said the memory of the victims stands as a powerful testament to humanity and courage in the

face of terror, while also pointing to the ongoing sense of insecurity among the people.

He raised concerns about governance and stressed the need for introspection and course correction, urging authorities to adopt a more proactive approach and engage meaningfully with citizens across Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari described the incident as a deep and enduring wound, offering prayers for the departed souls and strength to their families who continue to cope with the loss. He emphasised that the tragedy should serve as a reminder for society to stand united against hatred and to remain firmly committed to peace, harmony, and humanity, particularly in a region that has witnessed decades of conflict.

Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference chairman and MLA Sajad Lone remarked that the scars of the attack will always remain, underlining the lasting emotional and psychological impact such incidents leave behind.

He noted that while time may pass, the pain of losing innocent lives in acts of terror continues to linger

in public memory, shaping the collective consciousness of the region. Calling for a united effort, Lone urged people to strive for a peaceful and secure Jammu and Kashmir, expressing hope that the scourge of terrorism would one day be eradicated completely.

He also highlighted the importance of sustained efforts by both the government and civil society to rebuild trust and foster an environment where peace can take root and flourish.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party marked the anniversary as a "black day," organising a rally in Anantnag to remember the victims and underline the gravity of the attack.

Party leaders and workers gathered to pay homage, reflecting on the loss of innocent lives and reiterating their commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms. Similar tributes were paid in Srinagar, where leaders honoured the victims and called for strengthened security measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Odisha targets March 2027 deadline to complete mega piped water projects

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government has set an ambitious target to complete all mega piped drinking water projects in the state by March 2027, aiming to provide safe drinking water to 32,233 villages.

The target was finalised during a high-level review meeting of rural drinking water supply projects conducted by the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department on Wednesday. Commissioner-cum-Secretary S.N. Girish reviewed the progress and status of ongoing projects across the state.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the implementation and functioning of mega piped water supply projects in rural areas, along with other drinking water schemes. The government reiterated its commitment to ensuring

piped drinking water connectivity to every rural household. According to official data presented at the meeting, work is currently underway through a combination of mega water projects, single village schemes, and solar-powered piped water systems. Out of 207 mega drinking water projects, 30 have been completed so far, while 55 projects have crossed 90 percent completion. All such projects are slated for completion by March 2027.

Significant progress has also been recorded in other categories. Of the 19,017 single village drinking water projects, 18,411 have already been completed. Similarly, 6,146 out of 8,599 solar-powered piped water supply projects have been completed, with the remaining projects targeted for completion by June

2026. Officials informed that most of the ongoing works are in their final stages and are expected to become operational soon after resolving minor issues. In addition, 28,750 tube wells have been installed across the state over the past two years to strengthen water access. The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the Government of India's Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 (Har Ghar Jal), with a focus on ensuring water supply at the level of blocks, panchayats, villages, and households. Emphasis was laid on expediting work in line with agreements with the Centre and the newly approved state maintenance policy. Special attention was given to maintaining piped water supply systems, solar units, and tube wells to tackle the summer demand. Officials and engi-

neers were directed to ensure that no area faces drinking water shortages during the peak summer months. At present, drinking water is being supplied through 445 tankers, while 6,042 water supply points have been set up across the state. Control rooms at subdivision levels are actively addressing public complaints related to water supply. To ensure timely execution, officials were instructed to maintain close monitoring and coordination. The meeting also stressed inter-departmental coordination among departments such as Rural Development, Water Resources, Works, Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Energy, and the National Highways Authority to resolve bottlenecks and accelerate project completion.

Mumbai Metro Earns Big From Advertisement Shoot

Mumbai: The Mumbai Metro Line 2B has earned ₹20.35 lakh from its very first commercial advertisement shoot. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) allowed a production team to film at the Mandale Metro Station and inside a train that was running. This is part of a new plan to make money from the metro system in ways other than just selling tickets.

The MMRDA wants to use the metro's modern buildings and clean trains as locations for movies and ads. This helps the agency earn extra money so it doesn't have to rely only on the fare paid by passengers. Last year, the metro earned about ₹81 crore from these types of commercial activities.

By opening the metro to filmmakers and creative agencies, the government is showing that the metro is more than just a way to travel. It is also a great place for digital content and advertising because it looks modern and is kept very clean.

The Maha Mumbai Metro is now inviting more production houses and filmmakers to use their stations for shoots. They have made a simple set of rules and an easy approval process to make sure that filming can happen without bothering the people who use the metro to get to work every day.

The Mumbai Metro Line 2B has officially marked a successful entry into the commercial media sector by generating ₹20.35 lakh from its inaugural advertisement shoot. This significant revenue was generated through a partnership with a production house that utilized the Mandale Metro Station and a moving train for a



high-profile filming project. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) orchestrated the deal, signaling a robust start for Line 2B's ability to monetize its infrastructure even as the line continues its phase-wise development and integration into the city's vast transit network.

This financial milestone is a centerpiece of a broader, more sophisticated strategy aimed at diversifying the income streams of the Mumbai Metro system. By expanding revenue sources beyond standard ticket sales, the MMRDA is working to build a more resilient financial model that can support the high operational costs of world-class urban transit. Non-fare revenue, such as commercial filming and branded content, allows the agency to maintain high service standards while reducing the pressure to implement frequent or drastic fare hikes for the daily commuting public.

The MMRDA is actively marketing the metro's state-of-the-art architecture and meticulously maintained train interiors as premium locations for the entertainment and advertising industries. With their sleek, futuristic aesthetics and high-tech ambiance, the stations provide a visually compelling backdrop for everything from cinematic sequences to digital brand campaigns. This initiative transforms the metro from a simple transportation utility into a versatile "canvas" for creative agencies, showcasing the city's modern infrastructure to a national and global audience through various media platforms.

Evidence of the success of this commercial pivot can be seen in the performance of the metro system over the previous fiscal year, where non-fare activities generated approximately ₹81 crore. This substantial figure underscores the massive potential of

underutilized transit spaces, such as platforms, concourses, and train cabins. By professionalizing the way these spaces are rented out, the government is ensuring that every square foot of the metro project contributes to its own financial sustainability and long-term maintenance.

The strategy also serves as a powerful branding tool for the Maha Mumbai Metro, positioning it as a modern icon of the city's growth. When citizens see their transit system featured in popular movies or glossy advertisements, it reinforces a sense of civic pride and highlights the cleanliness and efficiency of the service. This "modern" image is vital for attracting a diverse demographic of riders and for establishing the metro as a preferred mode of transport in a city where branding and public perception play a significant role in consumer behavior. To further encourage this

trend, the MMRDA has officially invited more production houses, independent filmmakers, and creative agencies to explore the metro as a filming destination. The agency recognizes that to attract high-tier clients, it must offer more than just a good location; it must also provide a seamless and professional administrative experience.

By simplifying the application and approval process, the metro authorities are making it easier for creators to secure permits and schedule shoots without the bureaucratic hurdles that often plague urban filming. A critical aspect of this filming policy is the strict emphasis on passenger convenience, ensuring that commercial activities never compromise the efficiency of the transit service.

MMRDA has established a clear set of guidelines to ensure that production crews operate in a way that is non-intrusive to the thousands of commuters who rely on the metro for their daily work and travel. Shoots are often scheduled during off-peak hours or in specific cordoned-off zones, striking a perfect balance between making money and maintaining public utility.

The clean, climate-controlled environments of the stations are particularly attractive to filmmakers who are looking for consistent lighting and professional settings in a city that can often be chaotic and unpredictable. The metro provides a controlled "studio-like" environment with the added benefit of authentic, moving trains, which is a rare and valuable asset for action sequences and travel-themed narratives. As Line 2B expands, more stations like Man-

dale are expected to become industry, often referred to as "hotspots" for the Mumbai film Bollywood.

Mumbai Woman Praised For Confronting Politician Over Traffic

Mumbai: A woman in Mumbai is being cheered online after she stood up to a politician during a protest that blocked city traffic. On Monday, a viral video showed her complaining to BJP MLA Girish Mahajan because a political march had caused a massive traffic jam. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi supported the woman, saying she "showed the mirror" to those in power.

The woman was stuck in traffic during a protest about the Women's Reservation Bill. The march was so big that many important roads were completely blocked, leaving people stranded for hours. The woman eventually got out of her car and told the politician that they should use an open ground for their protest instead of making regular people suffer on busy roads.

Priyanka Chaturvedi wrote on social media that the woman's anger shows how frustrated Mumbaiers are with daily traffic problems. She questioned why the

protest was allowed to happen on main roads during the busiest time of the day.

The video has resonated with many citizens who are tired of being late for work or home because of political events. People are praising the woman for being brave enough to speak up and demand that public roads be kept clear for everyone.

In a city where the daily commute is often a battle against the clock, a Mumbai woman has become an overnight sensation for her courageous stance against political disruption. The incident occurred on Monday during a massive protest that brought a significant portion of the city's traffic to a standstill, leaving thousands of commuters stranded for hours. A video of the confrontation quickly went viral, showing the woman stepping out of her vehicle to directly address BJP MLA Girish Mahajan, a prominent political figure, about the immense hardship caused by the blockaded

roads. The protest, which was organized to discuss the Women's Reservation Bill, involved such a large volume of participants that several critical arterial roads were rendered completely impassable. As the gridlock worsened, the woman's frustration reached a breaking point, prompting her to challenge the organizers on the logic of their location. She argued that while political expression is a right, it should not come at the expense of ordinary citizens, suggesting that such large-scale gatherings should be held in open grounds rather than on the city's vital transportation lifelines.

The woman's bold move caught the attention of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi, who took to social media to amplify the commuter's voice. Chaturvedi praised the woman for "showing the mirror" to the ruling administration and those in power, highlighting the disconnect between political posturing and the lived reality of Mumbaiers. Her

support helped turn a local traffic grievance into a broader conversation about the accountability of politicians toward the public they serve, especially regarding the management of public spaces.

In her online posts, Chaturvedi pointed out that the woman's visible anger is a direct reflection of the mounting frustration felt by millions of residents who navigate Mumbai's infrastructure every day. She raised pointed questions about the administrative permissions granted for the march, asking why a demonstration of that magnitude was permitted on main roads during peak hours. This critique resonated with a public that often feels the weight of "VIP culture" and political maneuvering during their most time-sensitive parts of the day. The viral video has become a rallying point for citizens who are weary of being late for work, missing appointments, or being stuck away from their families due to frequent political events.

FORM INC-26
BEFORE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NAVI MUMBAI,
WESTERN REGION DIRECTORATE II
MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS, MUMBAI
In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of
Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5)
of Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation)
Rules, 2014
AND
In the matter of
SAWADRA INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE
LIMITED (CIN: U45207MH2019PTC329024)
having its Registered Office at Flat 1205 Uma Shiv
Corner Plot No 22 & 22A, Sector 19 Kamoth, Raigarh,
Maharashtra-410209

.....Petitioner
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that
the Company proposes to make a petition to the
Central Government under Section 13 of the
Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of
alteration of the Memorandum of Association of
the Company in terms of the Special Resolution
passed at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting
held on 24th March, 2026 to enable the Company
to change its Registered Office from the "State of
Maharashtra" (i.e., from the jurisdiction of
Registrar of Companies, Mumbai II) to the "State
of Uttar Pradesh" (i.e., under the jurisdiction of
Registrar of Companies, Kanpur).
Any person whose interest is likely to be affected
by the proposed change of the Registered Office of
the Company may deliver either on the MCA-21
portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor
complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by
registered post of his/her objections supported by
an Affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest
and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director,
Navi Mumbai, Western Region Directorate II,
Everest, 5th Floor, 100 Marine Drive, Mumbai -
400002 within fourteen days of the date of
publication of this notice with a copy to the
Petitioner Company at its Registered Office at the
address mentioned above.

for and on behalf of
Sawadra Infrastructure Private Limited
Sd/-
Navneet Singh
Director
Date: 23.04.2026
Place: Maharashtra DIN: 07057030

Court Clears Rohit Pawar In Bank Fraud Case

Mumbai: A special court in Mumbai has officially cleared NCP leader Rohit Pawar and several others in a case involving the Maharashtra State Co-operative (MSC) Bank. Because of this court decision, the investigation into money laundering by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has now been closed. The judge made this move after accepting a report from the police which stated that no evidence of a crime was found.

This legal win for Rohit Pawar, who is the grand-nephew of Sharad Pawar, comes after the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) filed a closure report. Since the main investigation into the original crime was shut down, the court ruled that the money laundering case could not continue either. The ED had originally started its probe based on claims of financial mistakes at the bank between 2007 and 2017.

Back in 2019, the police began looking into how loans were given out and how sugar factories were sold. While many directors of the bank were looked at, the investigators eventually found that they could not prove any laws were broken. Although some activists had asked for a deeper look into the matter, the police



again concluded that there was no proof of a crime.

With the special court accepting these findings in March, the legal trouble for the politicians and the bank directors has come to an end. The ED had previously named several leaders in their complaints, but without the original police case, those charges no longer stand.

A special court in Mumbai has delivered a landmark ruling by officially clearing Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Rohit Pawar of all charges related to the long-standing Maharashtra State Co-opera-

tive (MSC) Bank case. This judicial decision has led to the immediate closure of the money laundering investigation previously conducted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), marking a major turning point in the legal battles surrounding the young politician. The presiding judge issued the order after carefully reviewing and accepting a comprehensive report from the local police, which explicitly stated that no concrete evidence of criminal activity could be found after years of scrutiny.

This significant legal victory for Rohit Pawar, who is

the grand-nephew of veteran statesman Sharad Pawar, follows a formal closure report submitted by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW). Under current legal precedents, a money laundering probe by a central agency cannot be sustained if the primary investigation into the original "predicate" crime is shut down by the local authorities. Consequently, the court ruled that the ED's case had no legal foundation to proceed, effectively neutralizing the financial allegations that had been a point of political contention for several months.

Editorial

Hollow Sympathy!

A serious question is currently being raised on the canvas of Indian democracy: has the term 'Nari Shakti' (Women's Power) been reduced merely to a tool for electoral politics? The ongoing war of words between the ruling party and the opposition in Parliament—centered on the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Bill' (the 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill)—appears to be driven more by a quest for political one-upmanship than by a genuine commitment to the upliftment of women. On one hand, the Central Government claims to be the true savior of women; yet, on the other, the fact that this very bill was rejected in the Lok Sabha on technical grounds stands as a major tragedy for democracy. In reality, a closer look at the root causes of this conflict exposes the hypocrisy of both the ruling and opposition camps. Particularly against the backdrop of the assembly elections in five states, the reluctance shown by all political parties in fielding female candidates serves as irrefutable proof of the hollowness of their claims regarding women's empowerment. It is an unfortunate reality of Indian politics that while grand pronouncements are made regarding a 33 percent reservation for women in politics, these very principles are completely cast aside when it actually comes time to distribute election tickets.

A recently published report by the renowned organization, 'Association for Democratic Reforms' (ADR), sheds precise light on the double standards adopted by political parties. An analysis of the elections held in five states—West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry—reveals extremely dismal statistics regarding female candidates. West Bengal and Kerala are widely regarded as socially and educationally advanced states. Along with Maharashtra, Bengal laid the foundation for social reforms, while Kerala is recognized as the most literate state in the country. Yet, even in these progressive states, the fact that women constitute a mere 11 to 14 percent of the total candidates is hardly a matter of pride. In Assam, this figure stands at a mere 8 percent. In West Bengal—a state currently led by a female Chief Minister—while the Trinamool Congress has fielded 52 women candidates, the BJP has put forward only 33. On the other hand, the Left-leaning parties and the Congress—by fielding 34 and 35 women candidates respectively—have demonstrated that they, too, are no exception when it comes to sidelining women. Given that women constitute nearly 50 percent of the country's total population, the fact that their representation in the legislature fails to rise above 15 percent is not merely regrettable; it is deeply concerning for the health of democracy. From a historical perspective, the struggle for women's reservation has been a protracted one. In September 2023, during a special session of Parliament, the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' (Women's Reservation Bill) was passed with an overwhelming majority. This legislation provides for the reservation of 33 percent of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. However, the government has clarified that the implementation of this reservation is contingent upon the completion of a new census, followed by the subsequent delimitation (redrawing) of constituencies. Consequently, this reservation was not applicable in the 2024 general elections, and it is likely that women will have to wait until the 2029 elections—or even later—to see it come into effect. The opposition has seized upon this very issue, alleging that linking the reservation to constituency delimitation is merely a ploy to delay the implementation of the quota or a strategic maneuver to increase the number of seats in North India at the expense of diminishing the political weight of South India. Amidst this contentious debate—regarding whether the linkage between constituency delimitation and reservation is a technical necessity or a political stratagem—the cause of women's representation remains in limbo. When political parties select candidates, the primary criterion put forward is "winability"—that is, the capacity to get elected. It is precisely on the basis of this criterion that women are deliberately sidelined. While political manifestos often make grand pronouncements regarding women's empowerment, a patriarchal mindset becomes glaringly evident at the time of ticket distribution. The fact that, in many constituencies, not a single major political party has fielded a female candidate is a reality that provokes deep indignation. Another crucial point in this context is that, among the select few women who are given an opportunity, the vast majority hail from established political dynasties. Their lineage—their status as members of a "political family"—becomes their sole qualification; consequently, capable female leaders emerging from ordinary, grassroots families remain excluded from the political mainstream. All political parties have, for their own convenience, embraced this model of "dynastic politics," and no party appears to possess the genuine political will to accord a place within the political process to the ordinary woman—the beloved sister of the masses. Women's empowerment is not achieved merely by conferring honorary titles upon them or by implementing welfare schemes for their benefit.

Their direct participation in the decision-making processes of power is the need of the hour. Although the bill regarding reservation for women remains entangled within legal frameworks, nothing prevents political parties from voluntarily fielding a large number of female candidates. Had political parties voluntarily allotted 33 to 50 percent of their tickets to women—without waiting for the 33 percent reservation to become legally mandatory—the entire discourse surrounding this issue of reservation would have taken a completely different trajectory today. However, it is precisely this reluctance to relinquish their share of power that has caused this issue to languish unresolved for years on end. Given the ongoing chaos surrounding the 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill, one must not lose sight of the fact that women are observing this entire political charade with keen awareness. It is no longer possible to exploit them hypocritically. In the era of the Right to Information and the digital age, voters have begun to see the true faces of all political parties. Ultimately, women's empowerment must not remain confined merely to slogans; it must be translated into concrete action. If women are to be accorded justice in the true sense, political parties must undertake a radical transformation of their operational methods. Rather than waiting for constituency delimitation or the next census, the most sincere demonstration of intent would be to prioritize women—thereby initiating 'practical' reservation—in every upcoming election.

This struggle for women's reservation is not merely about the equations of power; it is a battle for gender equality and social justice. Instead of merely lining up their 'beloved sisters' in queues for welfare benefits, the courage shown by political parties to elevate them to the very seat of power would constitute a true 'tribute to *Nari Shakti* (Women's Power)'. As we envision a progressive India, the exclusion of half the population from the decision-making process stands as the greatest obstacle on our path to becoming a global superpower; overcoming this requires not just legislation, but political morality. All political parties must remain conscious of the fact that, for the creation of a 'New India,' women's political participation is not merely an option, but an absolute imperative. Otherwise, this vigilant segment of the electorate will undoubtedly settle scores in the times to come. Thus, only when political will converges with social commitment will women's reservation truly serve as a transformative instrument for enriching our democracy.

18th Civil Services Day at New Delhi

The popularity of Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence has risen sharply across over 750 districts, and the competitive participation has shown a corresponding rise with applications increasing from 1,216 in 2023 to 1,588 in 2024 and 2,035 in 2025. The iGOTKarmayogi platform has onboarded more than 88 lakh officials who have accessed over 2,000 courses. Grievance redressal through CPGRAMS has expanded from around 2 lakh complaints annually in 2014 to 25–30 lakh at present, with over 95% of cases disposed of and average resolution time reduced from 60 days to about 12 days. In pension reforms, over 40 lakh pensioners used face recognition-based digital life certificates in 2024 alone, while cumulative usage across systems has reached significant scale.

These interesting figures were cited by Union Minister of State for Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh while addressing the 18th Civil Services Day here, as he highlighted a shift towards "citizen-centric, institutionalised governance", underlined reforms in service delivery and announced continued expansion of capacity-building initiatives such as Mission Karmayogi and its newer components, alongside a reoriented framework for evaluating ad-



ministrative performance through competitive, programme-based benchmarks rather than individual profiling.

The Minister emphasised structural shifts in governance, including a move "from individual delivery to institutionalised delivery" and from "rule-based" to "role-based" administration. He pointed to the removal of nearly 2,000 obsolete rules, abolition of interviews for certain recruitment processes, and the redesign of Civil Services Day into a more knowl-

edge-driven platform. The evaluating framework for excellence awards has been restructured to focus on flagship programme outcomes rather than individual officer profiles. Institutional innovations such as the Assistant Secretary programme, digital governance systems covering nearly 90% of government operations, and international collaborations, including hosting global administrative forums, were also highlighted.

Looking ahead, Dr. Jitendra

Singh indicated expansion of training and governance reforms through initiatives like Mission Karmayogi and "Karmayogi Prarambh," with a focus on preparing civil servants for emerging governance challenges. He also pointed to increasing global interest in Indian administrative models, with countries such as Maldives, Mauritius, Bangladesh and South Africa studying systems like CPGRAMS. The broader push, he said, aligns with the theme of "Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and

Development at the Last Mile," aimed at equipping the next generation of civil servants for India's centenary of independence in 2047.

"The shift is from administration-centric governance to citizen-centric governance," Dr. Jitendra Singh said, adding that reforms are intended to ensure "maximum transparency, maximum accountability and timeline discipline." He also noted that increased grievance filings reflect improved trust in redressal systems rather than rising dissatisfaction.

The developments underscore an ongoing transition in India's administrative framework towards data-driven evaluation, digital governance, and large-scale capacity building as central pillars of public service reform.

Vice President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan presided over the function as the Chief Guest. The function was attended by senior members of the government's top administrative leadership. Also present on the dais were Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr. P. K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Shri Shaktikanta Das, Cabinet Secretary Dr. T. V. Somanathan, and Secretary, DARG Ms. Nivedita Shukla Verma reflecting the high-level institutional presence at the annual civil services gathering.

MSDE drives skill-led transformation across India's border villages under the Vibrant Villages Programme

Advancing the Government of India's vision of transforming border villages into engines of growth and opportunity, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) convened a high-level Capacity Building and Review Workshop under the Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP). The workshop, themed "Viksit Gaon for Viksit Bharat," was held at Kaushal Bhawan in New Delhi and brought together a wide range of stakeholders.

The event witnessed participation from key ministries, including the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), along with the Ministries of Textiles, Tourism, and Rural Development. Representatives from district administrations, State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs), and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) also took part, reflecting a collaborative approach to regional development.

The Vibrant Villages Programme, a flagship initiative led by the MHA, aims to develop 662 villages across strategically significant border states and regions such as Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Ladakh. The programme envisions transforming these remote settlements into self-reliant and well-connected "first villages" of India.

In alignment with this vision, MSDE has been actively facilitating demand-driven and locally relevant skill development initiatives. These efforts are designed to enhance livelihood opportunities for communities living in border areas, where access to em-

ployment and infrastructure has

74 skill development proposals

tion of beneficiaries, and gaps in



traditionally been limited.

The role of MSDE in the programme is both comprehensive and critical. It involves receiving and evaluating proposals forwarded by the MHA, mapping them to appropriate government schemes, sanctioning projects, and ensuring effective implementation and monitoring.

Additionally, MSDE supports the assessment and certification process through platforms like the Skill India Digital Hub, ensuring that trainees receive recognised credentials that improve their employability across sectors.

So far, MSDE has sanctioned

under the Vibrant Villages Programme. This marks a significant step in operationalising skill-based interventions across border districts and reflects steady progress in achieving programme objectives.

During the workshop, extensive deliberations were held to review the status of approved and ongoing skill projects. Stakeholders assessed the progress made on the ground and discussed ways to accelerate implementation.

Several challenges were identified during these discussions, including the availability of qualified trainers, mobiliza-

infrastructure. Addressing these issues was highlighted as essential to ensuring the success of the programme.

Sector Skill Councils and State Skill Development Missions played an important role by offering insights into programme design, trainer empanelment, and strengthening market linkages. Their inputs are expected to help improve training quality and employment outcomes.

Looking ahead, MSDE outlined a focused and action-oriented roadmap to strengthen implementation at the grassroots level. District administrations will be guided to prepare detailed project

pipelines with clearly defined timelines, training locations, trainers, and target beneficiaries.

A key emphasis will be placed on rapidly operationalising in-situ training programmes. This will involve leveraging existing government infrastructure such as schools, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), and community centres to ensure faster rollout of skill initiatives.

To address implementation challenges, enhanced handholding support will be provided through SSDMs and SSCs. This support will focus on proposal development, trainer onboarding, and ensuring compliance with scheme guidelines through well-defined standard operating procedures.

A structured coordination framework will also be institutionalised among district administrations, SSDMs, SSCs, and MSDE. This mechanism will ensure continuous monitoring, effective issue resolution, and timely course correction wherever required.

The workshop also served as a platform for peer learning among districts, showcasing innovative practices and scalable solutions. These shared experiences are expected to help replicate successful models across different regions.

Discussions further underscored the importance of strong institutional coordination, real-time monitoring, and responsive governance mechanisms. These elements are seen as crucial for translating skilling initiatives into sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat



The Ministry of Defence has taken a significant step towards strengthening India's military capabilities by signing major procurement contracts worth approximately Rs 975 crore. These agreements have been finalised with (BEML) and Electro Pneumatics and Hydraulics (India) Private Limited for the acquisition of advanced TRAWL Assemblies

designed for T-72 and T-90 tanks. The contracts were formally signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi on April 21, 2026. The event marked another milestone in India's ongoing push to modernise its armed forces through indigenous innovation and manufacturing. The TRAWL Assembly is a specialised piece of

equipment developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It is designed to significantly enhance the Indian Army's capability to breach minefields, particularly in hostile and high-risk operational environments. This system plays a crucial role in enabling armoured vehicles to safely navigate through mine-infested ter-

rain. By clearing pathways, it ensures that tanks and other military vehicles can advance without the threat of triggering anti-tank mines. One of the most important features of the TRAWL Assembly is its ability to counter advanced anti-tank mines equipped with proximity magnetic fuses. These mines are designed to detect the presence of heavy vehicles and detonate without direct contact, making them especially dangerous. The deployment of this system will allow the creation of what are known as "Vehicle Safe Lanes" through minefields. These cleared paths will enable the rapid and secure movement of troops and equipment during combat operations.

With the integration of such advanced systems, the operational effectiveness of the Indian Army is expected to improve substantially. It will not only enhance mobility but also reduce risks to personnel and equipment during critical missions. The procurement falls under the

"Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)" category. This classification underscores the government's emphasis on promoting domestic defence production and reducing reliance on foreign imports.

The initiative aligns closely with the broader vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat,

are intended to position India as a global hub for military technology and innovation. In addition to strengthening defence preparedness, the project is expected to have a positive economic impact. It is likely to generate both direct and indirect employment opportunities across various sectors. A significant portion of this employment



which aims to make India self-reliant across key sectors, including defence manufacturing. Projects like this

generation will come from the involvement of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

MAHARASHTRA

Aryan Age | 05

Maha cabinet clears 4 key decisions on biogas, land, IT park, teachers' pay

Mumbai : In a significant cabinet meeting held on Wednesday under the leadership of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, four major decisions were approved to boost infrastructure, clean energy, and administrative ease in the state.

The state has officially declared its new policy for Compressed Biogas to promote eco-friendly waste management.

A coordination committee will be established in every district to oversee implementation. Projects will be executed through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Hybrid Annuity models. An allocation of ₹500 crore has been approved for the current year. This move aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure sustainable management of solid waste.

The government has restructured the premium rates for converting land from Occupancy Class-2 (restricted) to Occupancy Class-1



(freehold). Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule announced that the mandatory requirement for Non-Agricultural (NA) permission

online payment is processed via the MahaIT software, the land status will update automatically without the need for physical documents.

To boost the technology sector in Western Maharashtra, the cabinet approved land allocation for an IT Park. 42.55 hectares of land in Nagewadi, Satara district, will be transferred to the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). To create employment and business opportunities for the youth in Satara and the surrounding regions.

Major relief was provided to teachers working in the state's seven "Model Colleges."

Teachers will now receive their basic pay as per the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines. These teachers will also be awarded additional marks in future recruitment drives conducted by the Higher and Technical Education Department.

World Earth Day :Pawar stresses protection of natural wealth and ecological balance

Mumbai: Sharad Pawar, president of the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar faction), marked Earth Day with a reflective message highlighting the importance of protecting nature and maintaining ecological balance.

In a post shared on X, Pawar stressed that preserving the Earth's natural wealth and ensuring its long-term prosperity is a collective responsibility that requires active participation from all sections of society.

Accompanied by a photograph, his message underscored the shared duty of individuals, communities, and institutions in safeguarding natural resources and promoting sustainability.

The veteran leader's statement aligned with the broader global observance of Earth Day, which is dedicated to raising awareness

about environmental challenges and encouraging meaningful action to address them.

This year's focus on collective action for the planet resonated strongly in Pawar's remarks, as he called for unified efforts to protect ecosystems amid rising environmental concerns.

He emphasized that environmental preservation is not limited to governments alone, but depends equally on responsible behavior at the individual and community levels. Pawar's message comes at a time when environmental consciousness is steadily gaining traction across India and around the world.

Issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion have increasingly become part of public discourse, prompting leaders to use their platforms

to advocate sustainable practices.

By highlighting ecological balance, Pawar drew attention to the need for harmony between development and environmental protection. His outreach on social media reflects a growing trend among political leaders to engage directly with citizens on global issues through digital platforms.

Such messages are seen as instrumental in spreading awareness and encouraging public participation in environmental initiatives.

Observers note that statements from senior leaders can play a key role in shaping public attitudes and mobilizing collective action.

As global campaigns around Earth Day continue to gain momentum, calls for people-driven progress and sustainable living are becoming more prominent.

NIA court denies bail to PFI accused, cites digital evidence

Mumbai : A Special NIA court here has rejected the bail application of Iqbal Ibrahim Khan, an accused in the Popular Front of India (PFI) conspiracy case, citing digital evidence placed on record by the National Investigation Agency.

The court observed that there were reasonable grounds to believe the accusations against the accused were prima facie true and that the allegations were serious in nature. It further noted that "apart from the statements of witnesses, there are materials which prima facie suggest that the petitioner had an active role in the commission of the offence."

"All the suspects are connected with each other.

There are various audio clips that reveal conversations among the suspects. The applicant, being an active member of the PFI, was engaged in activities to further its anti-national and terrorist objectives across India by provoking members of the Muslim community," the court observed while refusing bail.

The court concluded that the evidence suggested Khan was actively furthering the agenda of the banned organisation, posing a threat to national security through communal provocation across the country.

According to NIA submissions, digital evidence recovered during the investigation forms a key part of the

material against the accused. The agency has previously relied on data retrieved from seized mobile phones and electronic devices, including voice clips and documents, in the broader PFI probe.

The NIA registered the case in 2022 under provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the Indian Penal Code.

The agency has so far filed a charge sheet against 65 people and arrested 56 individuals in connection with the case. Of those arrested, 50 have been granted bail.

The court noted that the charge sheet has already been filed and the case is fit for trial before dismissing the bail plea.

108 Ambulance Service Saves Over 546,000 Accident Victims Across Maharashtra Strong Reach in Tribal Regions

Mumbai: The 108 emergency ambulance service, a key pillar of Maharashtra's healthcare system, has achieved a significant milestone by providing timely medical assistance to 5,46,010 accident victims across the state. The service also extended support to the armed forces during Operation Sindoor in Kashmir.

According to an official release, the service has played a crucial role in reaching accident sites swiftly, administering immediate medical care, and ensuring safe transportation of patients to hospitals.

The 108 ambulance network is operated by Bharat Vikas Group (BVG) in collaboration with the state health department, focus-

ing on delivering rapid and quality emergency response services.

Over the years, the initiative has strengthened emergency medical infrastructure, especially in regions where access to healthcare facilities is limited.

The service has made a notable impact in tribal-dominated districts, where healthcare accessibility has traditionally been a challenge. A total of 1,21,685 accident victims have been assisted in districts such as Nandurbar, Gadchiroli, Dhule, Palghar, Nashik, Amravati, Yavatmal, Chandrapur, Gondia, and Thane.

The effectiveness of the service is also evident along the Hindu Hrudaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maha-

ashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg, commonly known as the Samruddhi Expressway.

Here, 21 emergency response teams operate 24x7, ensuring quick intervention in case of accidents. So far, 589 victims on this highway have received immediate medical assistance through the service.

BVG has built a strong nationwide presence in facility management, with its workforce playing a key role in the success of such large-scale public service operations.

The 108 ambulance service is not limited to Maharashtra alone; it is also operational in Jammu and Kashmir, extending its reach to challenging terrains and

sensitive regions.

BVG Chairman and Managing Director Hanmantrao Gaikwad said the organisation is committed to fulfilling the responsibility entrusted by the state health department.

"We are successfully fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to us by the Maharashtra health department. Our goal is to provide prompt and quality emergency services to every citizen," he stated.

He also highlighted the role of 108 ambulance personnel during Operation Sindoor, noting that they worked in close coordination with the armed forces and delivered commendable service under demanding conditions.

Plans are underway to recognise and honour these personnel, described as "brave warriors," for their dedication and service.

The initiative underscores the importance of well-coordinated emergency response systems in saving lives, particularly in accident-prone and remote areas.

With its wide reach across urban, rural, and tribal regions, the 108 ambulance service has become an essential component of Maharashtra's public healthcare framework.

Overall, the service continues to demonstrate its life-saving impact, reinforcing its position as a robust backbone of emergency medical response in the state.

Bombay High Court discharges four accused in 2006 Malegaon blasts case

Mumbai: In a significant development in the long-pending 2006 Malegaon blasts case, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday discharged four accused, citing insufficient evidence against them.

The decision was delivered by a Division Bench led by Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar, along with Justice Shyam Chandak, bringing a crucial turn in a case that has remained under judicial scrutiny for nearly two decades.

The four accused — Rajendra Chaudhary, Manohar Ram Singh Narwaria, Dhan Singh and Lokesh Sharma — were granted relief after the court found that the evidence presented by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) did not meet the required legal threshold. During the proceedings, the NIA argued that several witnesses had testified against the accused. However, the court observed that such testimonies were inadequate and lacked substantive value.

The case traces back to September 8, 2006, when serial blasts in Malegaon

claimed 31 lives and left 312 people injured. Following the incident, an offence was registered under provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Unlawful Activ-



ities (Prevention) Act and other relevant laws against unidentified individuals.

Initially investigated by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), 12 individuals were arrested and a charge sheet was filed in December 2006. The probe was later transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in February 2007, before eventually being handed over to the NIA, which conducted further investigations and filed a

supplementary charge sheet naming additional accused, including the four discharged individuals.

Earlier, after nine Muslim accused were given a

clean chit, the NIA had arrested these four individuals. The accused had first sought discharge before a lower court, where their plea was opposed by both the NIA and blast victims through the Jamiat Ulema Maharashtra (Arshad Madani) legal aid committee. The trial court had rejected their discharge plea and ordered the commencement of trial proceedings, even issuing a summons to prosecution witnesses.

Challenging this order, the accused approached the High Court. In January 2026, the court condoned a delay of 49 days in filing the appeal, recognising it as a statutory appeal under the NIA Act. It had also stayed the trial court proceedings, observing that a prima facie case for intervention existed.

During the High Court hearing, the bench specifically asked the NIA to identify any eyewitnesses who had directly implicated the accused. The agency conceded that no eyewitness testimony was available but maintained that the accused were part of a larger criminal conspiracy. The court, however, found this argument insufficient to sustain charges. With this ruling, all accused — across communities — linked to the case have now been discharged or acquitted by various courts. The verdict has once again raised critical questions about accountability and the unresolved nature of the investigation, as victims continue to await definitive answers even after nearly 20 years.

Sanjay Raut hails woman who confronted BJP workers as a symbol of 'Nari Shakti'

Mumbai: Sanjay Raut, a senior leader of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Rajya Sabha MP, on Wednesday praised a woman who confronted workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Maharashtra, calling the incident a powerful reflection of "women's strength."

Sharing a photograph of the confrontation on social media earlier in the day, Raut captioned it with "He Ram! Nari Shakti Vandana!", portraying the moment as one of courage and defiance.

In his post, Raut also referred to remarks made by Narendra Modi, particularly the statement "Mahilaye maaf nahi karegi," suggesting that women will not forgive perceived wrongdoing. By invoking the Prime Minister's words, he sought to frame the episode within a broader political narrative of accountability.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader used the image to underline what he described as a symbolic act of resistance, presenting the woman's stance as an ex-



ample of public pushback against political conduct he criticised.

The post quickly gained traction online, drawing significant engagement in the form of likes, comments, and reposts within a short span of time.

The photograph, which circulated widely across platforms, appears to show the woman standing her ground against a group of individuals, a scene Raut interpreted as exposing what he alleged to be the BJP's "naatak," or performative street politics.

Supporters of Raut and

his party viewed the post as a strong endorsement of citizen resistance, particularly highlighting the role of women in confronting political actors.

Political observers noted that the remarks come at a time of heightened tensions in Maharashtra's political landscape, where confrontations between rival parties have become increasingly visible.

The statement is also being seen in the context of the ongoing rivalry between the ruling Mahayuti alliance and the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi.

By invoking the Prime Minister's earlier statement, Raut appeared to sharpen the opposition's critique and turn it into a pointed political message directed at the BJP.

The development has further intensified political rhetoric in the state, with both sides increasingly using symbolic incidents to reinforce their narratives.

Women-centric themes and imagery have also become a recurring element in political messaging, reflecting attempts by parties to connect with broader sections of the electorate.

As the visuals of the incident continue to circulate widely, reactions from leaders across party lines are expected in the coming days. The episode is likely to add to the ongoing debate around gender, power, and accountability in public life, especially within the charged political environment of Maharashtra.

With social media amplifying such moments rapidly, even isolated incidents are now shaping wider political discourse and influencing public perception.

Allegations of Religious Discrimination at Hinjawadi IT Firm; Minister Seeks Probe

Pune: Madhuri Misal, Maharashtra's Minister of State for Urban Development, Transport, Social Justice and Minority Affairs, has levelled serious allegations against a multinational company located in Hinjawadi IT Park, claiming that a men's restroom within the premises is allegedly being used for religious rituals, restricting access for other employees. In a formal letter addressed to the Pune Police Commissionerate, Misal has sought a thorough investigation into the matter and demanded strict legal action against those found responsible.

The minister expressed concern over complaints that a rest area in a reputed

company in Pune is being used for religious activities, which has reportedly led to limited or denied access for other staff members. She emphasised that any form of discrimination, coercion, or violation of workplace norms would not be tolerated under any circumstances, stressing the importance of maintaining neutrality and inclusivity in professional environments. Misal has directed the police authorities to conduct a detailed probe into the allegations and ensure immediate action if any wrongdoing is established. Highlighting employee rights, she stated that every individual must be guaranteed equal access to workplace facilities, along

with safety, dignity, and a non-discriminatory environment. The minister also referred to a recent case in Nashik involving alleged religious conversion in a corporate setting, urging authorities to remain vigilant and prevent similar incidents in Pune's IT sector. She called for proactive monitoring and timely intervention to ensure that workplaces remain free from any practices that could create division or discomfort among employees. Misal further noted that she had recently taken initiative against the presence of illegally residing Bangladeshi nationals in Pune and nearby areas, indicating a broader push for law enforcement vigilance in the region.

Turning crisis into opportunity is the key to success – Narendra Goyal

Pune: "It is during times of crisis that a person's true capability is tested. Converting challenges into opportunities is the real key to success," said Narendra Goyal, Director of Shyam Global Technology, a prominent player in the generator manufacturing sector in India.

He was addressing a gathering at a special programme to mark the company's eighth foundation day, according to an official statement released on Wednesday.

The event witnessed the presence of several distinguished guests, including

Amit Desai, General Manager (Product Management) at Mahindra, along with Senior General Manager Ankur Srivastava and Mahesh Sarvankar.

Also present on the occasion were Operations Head Gulshan Khajuria and Company Director Ruchi Goyal, among other notable dignitaries from the industry.

Leading distributors associated with Mahindra gensets from across the state attended the celebration, alongside company officials, employees, and their family members, making it a well-attended and vibrant event.

Reflecting on the company's journey, Narendra



Goyal highlighted that the past eight years have been a mix of challenges and achievements, shaping the organization into a resilient and forward-looking enterprise. He noted that Shyam Global Technology is now

counted among the top five generator manufacturing companies in the country, a significant milestone achieved through consistent effort and innovation.

Goyal further emphasized that the company is not limiting itself to generator manufacturing and is actively diversifying into new sectors to ensure sustained growth. Addressing urban infrastructure challenges, he revealed that the company is currently working on developing a 17-storey automated parking system, aimed at addressing space constraints in cities such as Pune.

The project is being de-

signed using advanced technology and is expected to provide a smart and efficient solution to growing parking issues in densely populated urban areas.

In addition to infrastructure solutions, the company is also expanding its global footprint by manufacturing robotic systems for a U.S.-based firm, PA Robotics, which are being exported internationally. Tracing the company's humble beginnings, Goyal shared that Shyam Global started with just seven employees and has now grown into an organization employing over 300 people.

Nitanshi Goel wraps shoot for Ektaa Kapoor-backed horror comedy; actress steps into a new genre

Mumbai : Actor Nitanshi Goel has completed the shoot for her next feature film, a horror-comedy backed by producer Ektaa R Kapoor. While the makers are yet to officially announce the title, cast, or release timeline, the project has already generated considerable buzz within the industry.

According to sources associated with the production, Nitanshi will be seen in a character that blends innocence with an unusual supernatural dimension. The role is said to offer multiple layers, allowing her to explore both light-hearted and emotionally intense moments within the same narrative.

If confirmed, this project will mark Nitanshi's first major venture into the horror-comedy genre, a space that has proven to be commercially successful and creatively dynamic in recent years. The horror-comedy genre has gained strong traction in Hindi cinema, with films like *Stree*, *Roohi*, *Bhediya*, and *Munjya* drawing audiences with their unique



mix of humour, folklore, and supernatural storytelling.

Nitanshi's entry into this genre could be seen as a strategic move, positioning her within a space that offers both mass appeal and opportunities for performance-driven roles. The young actor has steadily built her presence across platforms and earned appreciation for her screen performances at an early stage in her career. She gained wider recognition with her role in *Laapataa Ladies*, which helped establish

her as one of the promising new faces in the industry.

Since then, industry interest in her career trajectory has grown, with audiences and filmmakers closely watching her upcoming choices and performances.

For Ektaa Kapoor, the horror and supernatural genre is a familiar domain. Over the years, she has backed several projects across television and cinema that explore paranormal themes and suspense-driven narratives.

Her previous ventures include cult television shows centered around supernatural elements as well as films like *Krishna Cottage* and *Ragini MMS*, both of which tapped into audience fascination with horror storytelling.

With this new project, Kapoor appears to be continuing her engagement with the genre, while also experimenting with a horror-comedy format featuring a younger lead actor.

Sources suggest that the upcoming film aims to bal-

ance mainstream entertainment with a character-driven storyline, though details about the central plot remain tightly under wraps.

The secrecy surrounding the project has only heightened curiosity about its narrative, supporting cast, and overall treatment.

Industry insiders believe that combining a fresh face like Nitanshi with an established producer like Ektaa Kapoor could create an interesting dynamic for the film.

The project is expected to appeal particularly to younger audiences who have shown increasing interest in genre-blending cinema.

An official announcement regarding the film's title, cast, and release schedule is likely in the coming weeks, which may provide more clarity on the scale and direction of the project.

Until then, Nitanshi Goel's completion of the shoot has already become a talking point, with many eager to see her step into a completely new avatar in the horror-comedy space.

Akshay Kumar: "It's a hundred percent sure film to go and watch with your son"

Mumbai : Akshay Kumar recently revisited his 2005 film *Waqt: The Race Against Time*, praising filmmaker Vipul Amrutlal Shah for crafting a story centred on the emotional bond between a father and son. The film continues to be remembered as a poignant family drama that resonated strongly with audiences.

Speaking in a recent interview, Akshay highlighted the film's universal appeal and its relevance even today. Reflecting on the project, he emphasised how its core message about relationships within families remains timeless.

Recalling his experience, Akshay said, "Vipul ne ek aur film bohat achi banayi thi.. Mujhe lagta hai woh film har bete ko apne baap ke saath aur har baap ko apne bete ke saath dekhni chahiye." He further added that it is "a hundred percent sure film" to watch together as a family.

Directed and produced by Vipul Shah, the film featured a strong ensemble cast, including Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Pri-



yanka Chopra, Shefali Shah, Rajpal Yadav, and Boman Irani.

The film successfully blended humour, drama, and emotional depth, allowing it to connect with a wide section of viewers during its theatrical run. Its storytelling struck a balance between entertainment and meaningful life lessons.

At the heart of the narrative was the relationship between Ishwar Chandra Thakur, played by Amitabh Bachchan, and his son Aditya Thakur, portrayed by Akshay Kumar. The dynamic between the two characters formed the emotional backbone of the film.

Ishwar, a disciplined and successful businessman, takes a tough-love approach to parenting, believing that hardship is essential for shaping his son into a responsible individual. This sets the stage for conflict and growth within the story.

Over time, the film explores themes of generational differences, responsibility, love, and understanding, making it relatable for audiences across age groups.

"*Waqt: The Race Against Time*" remains a significant collaboration between Akshay Kumar and Vipul Shah, and is often cited among the notable films in their professional partnership.

Mukesh Chhabra on Ranveer Singh in Dhurandhar franchise, "Not seen a better performance than this in recent times"

Mumbai : With the mega success of *Dhurandhar* and *Dhurandhar The Revenge*, Ranveer Singh has risen as a major force in the Indian entertainment industry. While the film is breaking all records at the box office, the superstar is garnering tremendous love and praise for his performance. He has received plenty of accolades for essaying the characters of Hamza and Jaskirat Singh

Rangi in both the films, and director Aditya Dhar had always considered him the perfect choice for the role, as shared by casting director Mukesh Chhabra. In an interview with *Times Now*, Mukesh Chhabra spoke about the casting process for Aditya Dhar's *Dhurandhar* franchise. He revealed that the decision to cast Ranveer Singh in the lead had already been finalised before he came

on board, adding that it was a choice he completely agreed with. He said, "I think Aditya (Dhar) thought ki wo perfect hoga film ke liye (Aditya thought that he would be perfect for the role). Look at how great he was in the film. How well he acted, how dedicatedly he killed it in performance! I've never seen a better performance than (this) in recent times," he said, hailing the actor's commitment.

With *Dhurandhar The Revenge*, Ranveer Singh has created mass hysteria across the nation. The film has collected over Rs. 1000 crores nett in Hindi alone, making him the first actor to deliver such a massive blockbuster.

With the success of *Dhurandhar* franchise, Ranveer has risen to the top. Now, everyone is eager to watch him return to the big screen with something massier.

Pooja Hegde Opens Up on Career Ups and Downs

Mumbai : Pooja Hegde, one of the most recognisable faces in South Indian cinema, has reflected on her career journey, highlighting the delicate balance between luck and talent in the film industry. The actress, who has spent over a decade as a leading lady, believes that while opportunities may come through luck, it is ultimately talent and consistency that sustain longevity.

Pooja rose to pan-India fame with blockbuster Telugu films such as *Ala Vaikuntapuramuloo* alongside Allu Arjun and Mahesh Babu. Both films achieved massive commercial success and firmly established her as a top-tier star in the industry.

These successes marked a high point in her career, positioning her among the most sought-after actresses in Telugu cinema and opening doors to projects across multiple languages.

However, the momentum did not continue uninterrupted. A series of high-budget films failed to perform at the box office, which impacted her career trajectory and raised questions about her next phase.

Her Tamil debut *Beast*, starring Vijay, also did not meet expectations commercially, adding to the challenges she faced during that period.

At a crucial juncture, Pooja turned to Bollywood, where she secured opportunities in Hindi cinema. While these projects helped maintain her visibility, they did not

translate into major box office success.

Despite these setbacks, Pooja has remained resilient, continuing to explore diverse roles and industries while maintaining a steady presence in the entertainment space.

More recently, she appears to be regaining momentum with the success of *Retro*, co-starring Suriya. The film's performance has reignited optimism about her career resurgence.

She also generated buzz with a glamorous special appearance in *Coolie*, which further kept her in the public eye and reinforced her star appeal.

Looking ahead, Pooja has reunited with Vijay for *Jana Nayagan*, although the project is currently facing censor-related hurdles, delaying its progress.

In a recent interview, Pooja emphasised that highs and lows are an inherent part of the film industry. She noted that success and failure should be treated with equal perspective, as both are temporary phases in an actor's journey.

She also made it clear that she prefers to stay focused on her work rather than engage with speculation about her career, choosing instead to remain committed to her craft.

Currently, Pooja Hegde is working on proj-

ects in both Telugu and Hindi cinema, reflecting her continued demand across industries.

Additionally, industry buzz suggests that she may collaborate with Dhanush for an upcoming Tamil project, signalling a potentially exciting phase ahead.

With multiple projects in the pipeline and a renewed focus,

Pooja appears poised to navigate the next chapter of her career with a blend of experience, resilience, and optimism.



Avinash Tiwary credits Imtiaz Ali for changing his perspective on beauty and performance

Mumbai : Avinash Tiwary has opened up about his experience of working with filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, crediting him for reshaping his understanding of performance, particularly in terms of physicality and emotional depth.

The actor is set to collaborate once again with Ali in *O Saathi Re*, a project that explores modern relationships and the emotional complexities of love. Their renewed partnership has already generated interest among audiences familiar with their earlier work.

Reflecting on their creative journey in a recent interview, Tiwary said that his perspective began to shift during *Laila Majnu*, where Ali first influenced his approach to acting.

"He made me go beyond the idea of the physical self with *Laila Majnu*. After that, in my head, the importance of physical beauty became almost redundant," Tiwary said, explaining how the experience changed his outlook on performance.

He believes this philosophy continues to shape his work in *O Saathi Re*. According to him, letting go of external appearances allows an actor to connect more deeply with the emotional core of a character.

"It continues here as well. When you let



go of the physical, you start understanding what's really going on inside, and that's what he manages to bring out," he added.

The upcoming series also features Aditi Rao Hydari and Arjun Rampal, and is expected to delve into layered portrayals of love, relationships, and human vulnerability.

Tiwary noted that Imtiaz Ali's direction stands out for its ability to uncover hidden emotional layers within actors—often bringing out aspects

of performance they may not even be aware of.

"He brings out things that are buried deep inside you, things you don't even know about yourself," Tiwary said, describing the process as both challenging and transformative.

At the same time, he acknowledged that working on the project was not without its difficulties. The emotional demands of the role made it challenging for him to stay consistently immersed in the character.

"Every time 'action' was called, there was a part of me that wanted to run away. Holding on to the character was difficult," he admitted, highlighting the intensity of the experience.

However, he credited the collaborative environment on set for helping him stay grounded and focused. Working with experienced creators, he said, allowed him to trust the process more fully.

"I don't have to overthink, I just have to give my 100 per cent," he added, underscoring his approach to navigating complex roles.

Tiwary also reflected on his recent film *O Romeo*, directed by Vishal Bhardwaj. While he described it as a significant milestone, he admitted that he had hoped for a stronger audience response.

Alfia Jafry chooses OTT debut, calls it a space for creative freedom and risk-taking

Mumbai : Alfia Jafry is set to make her acting debut with the upcoming OTT project *The Pyramid Scheme*, choosing the digital space as her entry point into the entertainment industry. Her decision reflects a growing trend among newcomers who are opting for streaming platforms to explore more nuanced and character-driven storytelling.

Speaking about her choice, Alfia emphasised that OTT platforms provide greater creative freedom compared to traditional formats. She noted that the medium allows actors to experiment with layered narratives and delve

deeper into their roles without being restricted by conventional expectations. "OTT gives actors the freedom to experiment with nuanced storytelling, and that's something I truly value as a performer. You get to explore characters in depth, take creative risks, and be part of stories that are not restricted by conventional formats," she said. She further explained that this flexibility played a crucial role in shaping her debut decision. According to her, starting with a project that allows room for growth and exploration was more important than following a traditional launch route.

"I wanted my debut to be something where I could really push myself and not be confined to a certain image or expectation. OTT allows that space, it encourages you to be real, to be subtle, and to truly immerse yourself in the character," Alfia added. With *The Pyramid*

Scheme, the actor steps into a narrative that demands emotional depth and authenticity. The series is expected to revolve around complex themes, offering her the opportunity to deliver a grounded and detailed performance.

Industry insiders suggest that the project aims to balance engaging storytelling with strong character arcs, making it a suitable platform for a newcomer looking to establish credibility through performance. Alfia's debut also reflects a broader shift in the entertainment industry, where streaming platforms have become a preferred launchpad for emerging talent. The rise of OTT has opened doors for stories that might not fit into mainstream cinematic formats. Actors today are increasingly drawn to the medium because of its emphasis on content over star power, allowing fresh faces to gain recognition based on their craft.

Ali Fazal on balancing action and romance in a genre-spanning 2026 lineup

Mumbai : Ali Fazal is set to explore a wide range of roles in 2026, taking on contrasting genres across an ambitious slate of upcoming projects. From gritty crime dramas to romance and period storytelling, the actor's lineup reflects a conscious effort to diversify his screen presence.

Among the most anticipated projects is *Mirzapur The Film*, which marks his return to one of the most defining franchises of his career. The film adaptation of the popular series is expected to retain its intense and raw narrative tone.

Ali's association with the *Mirzapur* universe has been a significant milestone in his journey, helping him establish a strong identity in the digital space with a character that resonated widely with audiences.

In contrast to this gritty world, he is also set to feature in *Lust Stories 3*, where he will reportedly take on a more romantic and restrained role. The anthology format is known for exploring intimate



and layered human relationships.

This shift from high-intensity storytelling to subtle emotional narratives highlights Ali's willingness to experiment with varied performance styles. Adding to his lineup is *Raakh*, which is expected to showcase him in an action-driven avatar. The project is likely to demand a physically intense performance, further broadening his range. Another notable film in his upcoming slate is *Batwara 1947*, a period drama set around the time of In-

dia's independence. The film is expected to delve into the complexities of history and human emotions during a transformative era.

Together, these projects underline a deliberate move by the actor to avoid being typecast and instead embrace roles that challenge him across genres and narratives.

Speaking about this phase, Ali described 2026 as one of the most creatively fulfilling years of his career. He emphasised his belief in stepping out of comfort zones to grow as a performer.



Boxing: Preeti, Arundhati, Priya & Sachin elevated to TOPS Core Group

New Delhi: Four Indian boxers — Preeti Pawar, Priya, Arundhati Chaudhary and Sachin — have been promoted to the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Core group following their standout performances at the Asian Boxing Elite Championships 2026.

The decision was taken during the 172nd meeting of the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), which reviews athlete performances and recommends inclusion under the TOPS framework based on merit and potential.

Preeti Pawar (54kg), Priya (60kg), and Arundhati Chaudhary (70kg) clinched gold medals at the continental championships held in Ulaanbaatar earlier this month, underlining India's growing dominance in women's boxing. Meanwhile, Sachin (60kg) secured a silver medal, further strengthening his credentials and earning his place among the elite group of boxers receiving top-tier support.

The Mission Olympic Cell based its decision on a comprehensive evaluation of recent performances, world rankings, and the athletes' progression trajectory, ensuring that only the most promising contenders are elevated to the Core group.

Preeti Pawar is now set to compete in major upcoming events, including the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow and the Asian Games 2026 sched-



uled later this year.

She will be joined by fellow boxers such as Jaismine (57kg), Priya, Arundhati, and Sachin, forming a strong Indian contingent for these prestigious tournaments.

Notably, Preeti, Priya, and Sachin have secured direct qualification for both the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, in accordance with the selection policy laid down by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI). Boxing continues to be one of India's strongest medal prospects at the Commonwealth Games, especially in a sporting line-up that excludes disciplines such as shooting and wrestling, where India has traditionally excelled.

In addition to the Core group promotions, the MOC also inducted three promising boxers — Aditya (65kg), Deepak (70kg), and Harsh (90kg) — into the TOPS Development group. The Development group acts as a pipeline for future elite athletes, offering structured

training, financial assistance, and international exposure to help them transition to the highest level of competition.

Another boxer, Narendra (90kg), has been included in the Target Asian Games Group (TAGG), a specialised support system aimed at preparing athletes specifically for the Asian Games cycle. At the Asian Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Harsh and Narendra secured bronze medals, while Aditya and Deepak reached the quarterfinal stage, showcasing depth in India's boxing talent pool. India delivered an impressive overall performance at the championships, winning a total of 16 medals, including five gold, three silver, and eight bronze, reflecting consistent excellence across weight categories.

With these latest inclusions, the TOPS Core group now features seven boxers, while the Development group includes 25 athletes, and the TAGG scheme currently supports one boxer.

Abhishek reveals mindset behind mayhem against DC

Hyderabad: Sunrisers Hyderabad opener Abhishek Sharma credited careful planning, patience and smart shot selection for his explosive unbeaten 135 against Delhi Capitals, explaining how his innings was built around reading conditions and targeting the right matchups.

The whirlwind knock from Abhishek, India's No. 1 T20I batter, powered SRH to a massive 242/2, setting up a comprehensive performance that was backed up by a disciplined bowling effort. The win marked SRH's third in a row and helped them climb to third place on the points table.

Reflecting on his innings, Abhishek said the plan was clear from the start and had been worked on over time.

"We've been preparing for this for a long time. So, obviously, there was a little wicket today. I had to go to the last in one of the top three. So, that was the plan. And I think it was good. The total was good. I was talking to our batting coach, Frankie, for a long time. I talked to him. And I told him, Frankie, it's been a while that I haven't reached the second strategic timeout. So, I want to try that someday," he said in a video shared by the IPL.

He also spoke about how discussions in training translated into execution during the match.

"We were talking about it in practice yesterday. So, then we had a plan that we'll talk about the situation in the first strategic timeout. And when he came in, the plan was to keep playing as it was.



And I personally felt that it was difficult to hit every ball here. So, you have to be waiting for your matchups. That's what I was doing. And that's what I was waiting for. And it actually went well. So, that was the plan," he added.

Abhishek further explained how he approaches batting against spin, especially during the powerplay overs.

"If the spinners come, obviously, we've been practicing for so long. Even if the ball is stopping or moving, it's a very obvious plan for me that I have to plan and play according to the feel. So, for spinners and powerplay, the way they are on the field,

and I can dominate them, just to make them in some pressure. That's the plan," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of partnerships and maintaining pressure on the opposition. "And whoever is batting with me, especially Hadi or Ishaan, I know how they hit. So, it's just a simple plan. Whoever is on strike, if there's a boundary on the first two or three balls, then we try to make it a boundary. If it's a long over in power play, then obviously, the ball comes under pressure," he said.

Mental strength and a clear approach key to SRH's success: Ishan Elated after recording their third

win in a row, skipper Kishan said mindset and clarity of thought have played a big role in his team's strong run in IPL 2026.

"At this level, skill sets are quite similar. The real difference comes from mindset. For me, it was about improving how I reset between games, whether after a good performance or a bad one. Staying focused, hungry, and mentally present is key. You can't carry the fear of failure, if that thought comes in, you have to overcome it and stay positive. Over time, that awareness grows, and you start understanding your game better. It's about learning from your experiences but making sure you don't repeat the same mistakes," he told Jio-Star.

Kishan's remarks came after a well-rounded performance from SRH, where their batters controlled the game from the start before the bowlers held their nerve, even as Delhi Capitals tried to fight back.

He also spoke about how he manages his bowlers, especially younger players, in a format like T20 cricket where things can quickly go wrong.

"My relationship with the bowlers is about keeping things simple and positive. With someone like Sakib Hussain, there's a natural understanding, and I've told him to stay relaxed. This is T20 cricket, everyone gets hit. What matters is how you come back. Even if an over doesn't go well, it's important to reset, stay calm, and focus on the next opportunity. If you can pull things back later in the game," he said.

Wasim Khan to step down as ICC general manager

Dubai: Wasim Khan is set to step down as the ICC's General Manager, Cricket, bringing an end to his four-year stint in the role. He took over the position in May 2022, replacing Geoff Allardice after the latter moved into the CEO role at the ICC.

Before joining the global body, Wasim had spent nearly three years as the CEO of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), where he played a key role in the board's administration.

Wasim's journey in cricket began as a player. He was the first British-born Muslim to feature in county cricket, representing Warwickshire in the mid-to-late 1990s. A left-handed batter, he played 58 first-class



matches and 30 List A games across stints with Warwickshire, Sussex and Derbyshire.

One of the highlights of his playing career was being part of Warwickshire's

County Championship-winning side in 1995, where he averaged close to 50 during the season. After his playing days, Wasim built a strong reputation in cricket administration. He served as CEO

of Leicestershire County Cricket Club and also held a leadership role at the Cricket Foundation.

During his time there, he was instrumental in developing 'Chance to Shine' into one of the leading cricket charities in the United Kingdom, helping to grow the game at the grassroots level.

During his tenure at the ICC, one of the key challenges Wasim had to navigate was the increasingly congested global cricket calendar.

The rise of franchise-based T20 and T10 leagues has put pressure on the international schedule, making it more difficult to balance bilateral series with league commitments.

Leicester City relegated to League One after draw with Hull City in Premier League

London: Leicester City have been condemned to League One just 10 years on from their Premier League title win, with back-to-back relegations for the Foxes confirmed after they drew with promotion-chasing Hull City on a gloomy night at King Power Stadium.

Dropping into the third tier for just the second time in their 142-year history completes an unwanted full-circle for the East Midlands club, as their 5,000-1 success of 2016 came just seven years after they ended a one-year stay in League One, according to BBC Sport.

Leicester needed to beat Hull to give themselves any chance of survival but, rather than rattle the Tigers in the first half, they gifted the visitors the opener - with a misplaced pass from goalkeeper Asmir Begovic finding Liam Millar - who kept his cool to finish on Tuesday night.

A second-half Jordan James penalty, after Abdul Fatawu was brought down by Lewis Koumas, restored a sense of belief for the Foxes before



Luke Thomas' close-range volley had the previously dispirited crowd in raptures.

Those feelings of hope were dealt an ultimately shattering blow when Oli McBurnie slammed home the Tigers' leveller, although Leicester pressed on in search of late salvation with Patson

Daka hitting the woodwork, Aaron Ramsey squandering chances and Thomas having a stoppage-time effort blocked by Semi Ajayi.

Hull pushed for a winner themselves but had to settle for a draw that means they drop out of the play-off places on goal difference. When the Foxes

Rwanda overcome USA as Italy win in thriller in ICC Women's Challenge Trophy

Kigali: Rwanda secured their second win in the ICC Women's Challenge Trophy after edging the United States by just one run in a nail-biting contest at Gahanga Cricket Stadium here.

The hosts were pushed to the limit, but captain Diane Bimenyimana delivered in the decisive moment, holding her nerve on the final ball to seal a dramatic win and push Rwanda to the top of the table.

Rwanda won the toss and elected to bat posting a competitive total of 127/8 in 20 overs. Gisele Ishimwe led the scoring with 42 runs, while youngster Fanny Utashimaninde added 32, as

the pair anchored the innings with a crucial 77-run opening stand.

In reply, the United States suffered an early setback with the dismissals of Chetna Pagdyala and Pooja Ganesh.

Rwanda appeared in control for much of the chase before Gargi Bhogle's unbeaten 35 and Ritu Singh's quickfire 26 off 28 balls — featuring two fours and two sixes — revived the American hopes and set up a tense finish. With just three runs needed off the final delivery, Bimenyimana stepped up to deliver a match-winning moment, restricting the USA and sealing a narrow one-run

victory for Rwanda.

Gisele Ishimwe was named player of the match for her 42 runs off just 34 balls. In other match, Italy came from the brink of defeat to secure a four-wicket victory over Vanuatu at Gahanga Main Oval, thanks to a match-winning half-century from Ilenia Sims.

Italy won the toss and opted to field first. Vanuatu initially struggled to find rhythm against a disciplined Italian bowling attack but managed to post a competitive 114/6 in their 20 overs.

Nasimana Navaika led the scoring with 36 off 39 balls, while Rachel Andrew added 14.

India among 12 countries selected for FIFA Women's Development Programme

New Delhi: India, on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, became one of the 12 countries selected by FIFA for the FIFA Women's Development Programme (Commercial Strategy 2026). The other countries include Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Scotland, Canada, Mexico, Finland, Ghana, Jordan, Lithuania, and Panama.

India's inclusion in the programme was confirmed by FIFA after an initial application by AIFF, which was followed by a detailed presentation of the commercial strategy and future plans. The programme will be held

online from May to October, 2026. The course itself will be tailored by FIFA for the various stakeholders in women's football across the country. With AIFF now backed by a commercial partner, this programme will equip clubs with the tools and knowledge needed to build sustainable models, while also preparing them for the upcoming women's club licensing system that AFC (Asian Football Confederation) plans to introduce. AIFF Deputy Secretary General Mr M Satyanarayan said, "I think this is the perfect time for us to grow the commercial aspect of women's

football in India as a whole. The qualification of three of our women's teams (senior, U20, and U17) for the AFC Asian Cups in their respective age categories shows our potential, and the ASMITA U13 Women's Football League has helped us create the base at the youth level." "Now that the clubs will receive this kind of capacity building on developing commercial strategies, securing sponsorships, engaging fans, and much more, the whole ecosystem will benefit," he said. "I think the initiative by FIFA is excellent, and we are glad to have been selected for it.

Binu shoots week's best card of 9-under in Congo

Lubumbashi (Congo): Shaurya Binu, a rare player who has combined his academics with golf very well, has been having fine stretch on the African Swing with Top-10 finishes over the last two weeks.

He continued that run with a stunning 9-under 64 that carried him right to the top after two rounds in the AM Green IGPL Invitational Congo.

Binu, who turns 22 only in June, and is pursuing a BBA Degree in Kalinga University, carded 1-under 72 in the first round at the Par-73 Golf Club Lubumbashi.

He exploded in the second round with a 9-under card and is now 10-under for 36 holes.

He holds a two-shot lead over four players. The four-player pack behind him includes first round co-leaders Mannat Bhar (67-71) and Tushar Pannu (67-71), last week's winner, Udayan Mane (70-68) and Aryan Roopa Anand (71-67), who are all 8-under after two days.

Binu's first name 'Shaurya' means 'Brave', and it was chosen as his father is a decorated Army officer. He has displayed an aggressive brand of golf and shown great progress since turning pro in 2023.

He has already tasted

success as a pro win on the Indian Tour. This year Binu has been trending well with a seventh-place finish in Mauritius and T-4 in Joburg and was confident that he was in with a great chance to pull off his first AM Green IGPL win.

Last season his best was T-3 in Chandigarh. Teeing off from the first tee, Binu took time to get his first birdie on the Par-4 fourth but flowed smoothly from the sixth for three successive birdies and capped that run with an eagle on the ninth.

He was 6-under at the turn. Finding majority of the fairways and most of the greens, he followed

a series of five pars on the back nine with birdies on three of the last four holes. It has been a stretch that has been generous to the golfers this week and Binu did not miss that opportunity.

While Binu, who moved 15 places up from the first round, is in great form and has a two-shot advantage, the four players chasing him could making things tough. They all have a point to prove. Mane seeks back-to-back wins

Mane, who carried himself into the winner's circle for the first time in four years, moved up four places with a 5-under card. The big-hitting and

good-humoured Mane closed the day with three birdies in last four holes after having three birdies and one bogey in the first nine.

The 21-year-old Pannu, whose best finish in the past



three clubs has been T-19, added 2-under 71 despite an eagle on Par-5 sixth. He had three other birdies, but also gave away three bogeys and must have been disappointed with his finish.

On Day 1, he had surged ahead with an impressive four-under performance across the closing stretch from the 15th to the 18th holes, showcasing strong finishing ability under pressure. However, the second round told a slightly different story, as he slipped to one-over for the same stretch, indicating how quickly momentum can shift in competitive golf.

Two-time former All India Amateur champion Aryan Roopa Anand displayed

encouraging signs of regaining top form. After a promising T-8 finish in Mauritius, he secured a modest T-38 placing in Joburg, but his second-round performance stood out as a highlight.

Anand carded an impressive 6-under 67 on the second day, featuring five birdies and a spectacular eagle, offset by just a single bogey. The round reflected his ability to bounce back strongly and suggested that he is on the verge of another impactful performance.

Attention also remained on Mannat Bhar, who recently transitioned into the professional circuit following a stellar amateur career. She has been steadily building momentum and remains firmly in contention.

Mannat's goal is particularly notable, as she aims to become only the second Indian woman to win a mixed-gender professional event, following the success of Pranavi Urs last season. Such an achievement would mark a significant milestone in Indian golf.

After an excellent opening round of 67, Mannat followed it up with a steady 2-under 71, which included three birdies and one bogey. While less explosive, the round kept her well within striking distance heading into the final stages.

Meanwhile, Aman Raj, still searching for his first win of the season, delivered a solid performance with a 4-under 69. His consistent play has placed him in sole sixth position, keeping his hopes alive.

Indian-American golfer Varun Chopra recovered strongly from a modest opening round. He posted a 5-under 68 in the second round to climb up the leaderboard and secure a tied-seventh position.

He was joined at 5-under total by Harender Gupta and veteran Ranjit Singh, both of whom showed resilience and consistency across the two rounds to stay in contention.

The Top-10 leaderboard was completed by a group of four players at 4-under total, including rookies Danish Verma and Sukhman Singh, alongside Ridhima Dilawari and Manav Shah.

With Binu leading the field but being closely chased by four determined contenders seeking their maiden IGPL title, the final round at Lubumbashi promises to be a gripping contest.

In the team competition, Atri Mumbai emerged at the top after two rounds. With Pannu contributing one of the counting scores and Mane adding a strong 5-under effort, the team surged to 17-under overall.

BSE Sensex		Nifty 50		Nifty 500		Nifty Next 50		Nifty 100		Nifty Bank		Nifty Midcap 100	
Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change
78,516.49	-0.95%	24,378.10	-0.81%	22,991.50	-0.22%	71,346.20	0.74%	25,329.95	-0.53%	57,124.45	-0.43%	60,201.60	0.19%
Previous close 79,273.33	Open 79,019.34	Previous close 24,576.60	Open 24,470.85	Previous close 23,042.35	Open 22,975.85	Previous close 70,824.45	Open 70,756.05	Previous close 25,464.00	Open 25,369.90	Previous close 57,371.45	Open 57,163.35	Previous close 60,086.70	Open 59,989.60
High 79,031.03	Low 78,442.30	High 24,515.95	Low 24,352.90	High 23,054.50	Low 22,923.55	High 71,536.80	Low 70,591.30	High 25,425.85	Low 25,280.65	High 57,438.20	Low 57,002.15	High 60,380.75	Low 59,885.00

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
TATA Cons. Prod	1,178.60	3.20
HUL	2,368.80	2.51
NTPC	405.40	2.32
Hindalco	1,039.90	1.79
TMPV	361.85	1.67

Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
HCL Tech	1,285.30	-10.82
Infosys	1,268.60	-3.40
M&M	3,149.70	-3.01
TCS	2,538.50	-2.76
Tech Mahindra	1,462.60	-2.55

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Jun 05	153,230.00	1,559.00 1.03
Silver May 05	248,900.00	4,199.00 1.72
Crudeoil May 18	8,519.00	82.00 0.97
Naturalgas Apr 27	256.40	4.10 1.63

Stock market records sharp loss amid selloff in IT stocks

Mumbai : The Indian stock market on Wednesday extended early losses to close sharply lower amid pressure in IT stocks. At close, the Sensex was down 757 points, or 0.95 per cent, at 78,516, while the Nifty declined 198 points to 24,378.

Profit booking was seen in banks and IT heavyweights amid the ongoing Q4 earnings season.

Among the sectors, IT index was down 4.5pc, Private Bank index sheds 0.4pc, while FMCG, Media, Metal, Realty up 0.4-1pc.

On Nifty, the key gainers were Tata Consumer Products, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, NTPC, Jio Financial Services. While on the losing side were HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, TCS, M&M.

In the FMCG stocks, Emami, Tata Consumer Products, Hindustan Unilever, United



Spirits, Varun Beverages, and Dabur India all closed higher, gaining between 1.5pc and 4.2pc. The Indian rupee depreciated by 30 paise to settle at 93.79 against the US dollar on Wednesday, compared to its previous close of 93.49. Invest-

or sentiment remained cautious after US President Donald Trump announced an indefinite extension of the Iran ceasefire.

On the global market, the US markets signalled a cautious rebound. S&P futures rising 0.6pc and Nasdaq futures

gaining 0.7pc. In Europe, the STOXX index edged up 0.1pc in early trade, while Asia saw a more subdued trend, with MSCI's Asia-Pacific index (excluding Japan) slipping 0.5pc after hitting a seven-week high in the previous session.

Telangana offers world-class infra for medical devices: Duddilla Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad : Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Tuesday stated that Telangana offers world-class infrastructure for the manufacturing of advanced medical devices.

He noted that all necessary facilities are in place at the Medical Devices Park in Genome Valley, Hyderabad, to enable immediate commencement of production.

Sridhar Babu held discussions at the Secretariat with MedTech industrialists from the Netherlands and researchers from universities.

He explained that Telangana is highly conducive for medical research, the development of artificial intelligence, and the production of medical equipment.

He highlighted that the state ranks among the top in the country in pharmaceutical production, innovation, and vaccine manufacturing.

Recalling the COVID

pandemic, he noted that biotech companies from the state supplied vaccines to 120 countries.

The Minister stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government is extending full support to develop Telangana into a hub for advanced medical device manufacturing.

He added that there is ample availability of electricity, water, and land.

He also pointed out the strong potential for the use of artificial intelligence in the medical sector and said that areas such as imaging technology, clinical validation, and digital profiles are favourable for investment.

He emphasised that there is no shortage of skilled human resources, which is why some of the world's largest pharmaceutical and biotech companies have established their manufacturing bases in the state.

AP CM to lay foundation stone for Rs 5,400 cr solar manufacturing facility

Vijayawada: Vijayawada: In a major boost to India's clean energy push, ReNew is set to establish a mega solar manufacturing facility in Anakapalli district, near Visakhapatnam. The groundbreaking ceremony for the ambitious project will take place on April 23, marking a significant milestone in the country's renewable energy journey.

The initiative comes at a time when India is accelerating efforts to achieve its target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030. Alongside expanding renewable capacity, the country is also focusing on reducing its dependence on imports and strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities.

This project aligns

closely with the broader vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, which emphasizes self-reliance across key sectors, including energy. By investing in domestic production of critical solar components, India aims to build a robust and sustainable energy ecosystem.

At the heart of this transformation is Andhra Pradesh's Integrated Clean Energy Policy 2024. The policy has been designed to attract large-scale investments, promote backward integration, and establish the state as a global hub for clean energy manufacturing.

The policy framework has already begun delivering results, with large projects like ReNew's solar manufacturing unit setting new standards in scale and ambition.

It reflects the state government's proactive approach toward enabling industrial growth in the renewable energy sector.

The upcoming facility will be a 6 GW solar ingot and wafer manufacturing unit, representing an investment of approximately Rs 5,400 crore. It will focus on producing key upstream components that are essential for solar panel manufacturing.

By producing ingots and wafers domestically, the project is expected to significantly reduce India's reliance on imports, particularly from countries that currently dominate the global solar supply chain. This will strengthen the country's energy security in the long run.

The manufacturing unit

is also part of ReNew's larger investment commitment of Rs 82,000 crore in Andhra Pradesh. This substantial commitment highlights the confidence of global investors in the state's governance, infrastructure, and policy environment.

Once operational, the facility is expected to be commissioned within 24 months. It will not only enhance manufacturing capacity but also contribute to the development of a complete solar value chain within the country.

The project is expected to generate more than 2,100 direct and indirect employment opportunities. This will provide a major boost to local livelihoods and support economic development in the region.

Redwood Software opens global centre in Hyderabad, bets big on AI-led innovation

Hyderabad: Redwood Software on Wednesday launched its global centre in Hitech City, marking a major expansion of its India operations and strengthening Hyderabad's position as a leading global technology hub.

Speaking at the inauguration, Telangana Artificial Intelligence Innovation Hub CEO Phani Nagarajuna said the development reflects Hyderabad's emergence as the GCC (Global Capability Centre) capital of India, with a strong ecosystem of over four lakh professionals, world-class infrastructure and a proactive policy framework.

He noted that the state is actively promoting AI innovation through initiatives in talent development, startups, data infrastructure and global partnerships.



He emphasised that the new centre is not just another office, but a strategic investment by a global technology leader at a time when artificial intelligence is transforming industries.

Redwood Software CEO Kevin Greene described the Hyderabad centre as the company's largest global office and a key pillar of its long-term vision.

He said over 7,000 global enterprises rely on Redwood's automation platform, and the company is now focusing on building advanced AI-powered orchestration systems to manage complex enterprise workflows.

Greene highlighted that Hyderabad was chosen due to its exceptional talent pool, innovation-driven environment and strong government support.

He noted that the centre would serve as a foundational hub for developing next-generation AI capabilities, with local engineers playing a central role in shaping global products.

He further underlined that the company aims to build a "transformational" workplace in Hyderabad, focusing on innovation, collaboration and long-term career growth, while contributing to the broader technology ecosystem.

Rajkumar Paulraj, Vice President (Engineering) and Country Head of Redwood India, was also present at the event.

German software giant Nemetschek bets on India's infra growth, expands AI and BIM push

New Delhi: Backed by India's accelerating infrastructure build-out and rising urbanisation, German software major Nemetschek Group is scaling up its presence in the country, positioning itself as a key technology partner for the design, construction, and operations ecosystem.

The company sees strong momentum across sectors, including housing, railways, roads, and airports, as migration to urban centres fuels demand for large-scale infrastructure development.

"There is investment happening across the entire infrastructure value chain—from housing to transport networks like rail, road, and airports," said Alok Sharma, Managing Director and Vice President, Nemetschek India, in an exclusive interaction with UNI here.

Having operated in India for nearly two decades through partners, the group set up its own headquarters in Mumbai two years ago to deepen market engagement.

It has also established Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, employing around 300 professionals.

Unlike traditional offshore centres focused on cost arbitrage, these GCCs are positioned as innovation hubs, with India playing a leading role in research and development, including the creation of an AI hub for the group's global operations.

"We have set up centres

of excellence cutting across different parts of our organisation, and India is leading innovation globally for us, especially in AI," Sharma said.

Emphasising the transformative potential of



emerging technologies, Pete Nicholson, Senior Vice President, said that artificial intelligence is reshaping the architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) industry.

"Just as Computer-Aided Design (CAD) transformed design from manual drafting, AI is now improving efficiency, enhancing safety, reducing timelines, and enabling better outcomes across the project lifecycle," he noted.

The company is embedding AI across its product portfolio, while maintaining a strong focus on ethical deployment and data privacy, ensuring customer data is not used to train models.

Despite India's progress in adopting digital technologies, Sharma highlighted that construction remains one of the least digitised sectors, offering significant scope for improvement.

"AI adoption in India

has been more visible in sectors like finance, but construction still lags. There is a huge opportunity to use technology to deliver projects on time and within budget," he said.

On Building Information Modelling (BIM), the executives pointed out that adoption in India is still at a nascent stage compared to global benchmarks, primarily due to the shortage of skilled professionals and the complexity of implementation.

To address this gap, Nemetschek is collaborating with academic institutions and has signed memoranda of understanding with multiple universities to build a future-ready talent pool. Nicholson said education will be critical to driving wider BIM adoption, while Sharma underlined the need for policy support.

"Large infrastructure spending is driven by the public sector. If the government mandates BIM usage in projects, it can significantly accelerate adoption," Sharma said.

The company is also working closely with EPC firms and project owners to promote digital workflows across the industry.

With India emerging as a key market for both infrastructure growth and technology innovation, Nemetschek is betting on a combination of AI, talent development, and policy push to drive the next phase of digital transformation in the construction sector.

PNB MetLife Launches RISE Plan to Support Long-Term Income Planning and Life Protection

New Delhi : As Indian families plan for longer life expectancies, evolving responsibilities and rising financial needs, the demand for stable and predictable income solutions is growing.

The PNB MetLife RISE plan is an individual, non-linked, non-participating savings life insurance product designed to combine guaranteed* income with comprehensive life cover, helping customers build long-term financial preparedness for key life milestones with confidence and certainty.

The PNB MetLife RISE Plan offers customers the flexibility to choose between two plan options - Smart Income and Smart Income Pro- allowing them to decide when their

guaranteed income begins and how they wish to receive it, while remaining protected throughout the policy term.

Under the Smart Income option, guaranteed income^^ begins from a customer-chosen start year, between the 1st and 5th policy year, and continues until maturity, as per the selected payout mode and frequency. Under the Smart Income Pro option, customers receive an instant cashback***, where a portion of the first-year premium is returned within 30 days of first-year premium realization after policy issuance. Guaranteed income^^ under this option starts from the 2nd policy year and continues until maturity.

In both options, a lump-

sum maturity benefit (return of premiums) is payable, provided the policy remains in force and all due premiums are paid.

Commenting on the launch, Sameer Bansal, MD& CEO, PNB MetLife said, "We believe that long-term financial security is built on certainty, discipline, and protection. With the launch of the PNB MetLife RISE Plan, we are bringing together guaranteed income and life insurance protection to help customers plan for important life milestones with greater confidence. In an environment where families increasingly value steady cash flows and financial preparedness, PNB MetLife RISE reflects our

commitment to enabling customers to stay Always Ready for Life."

The PNB MetLife RISE Plan allows entry from 30 days of age^, with a maturity age^ ranging from 20 to 85 years. Annualized premiums start at Rs. 24,000, with no upper limit, subject to the Board-Approved Underwriting Policy (BAUP). The plan offers a maximum Guaranteed Income payout period of 40 years.

PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited (PNB MetLife) is one of the leading life insurance companies in India that combines the financial strength of MetLife, Inc. with the credibility of PNB, one of the India's oldest nationalized

banks. PNB MetLife's positioning, Always Ready for Life, is demonstrated through empowering every individual to lead their life with absolute confidence.

With a strong presence in 182 offices and access to customers in over 20,000 locations through bank partnerships, PNB MetLife offers a comprehensive insurance solutions portfolio covering Child Education, Family Protection, Long-Term Saving and Retirement. The Company has a wide range of protection and retirement plans available through its sales channel of over 36,000 financial advisors and multiple bank partners and caters to over 585 group relationships in India.

Tesla brings in 2nd model to India; to expand service, body shop network

New Delhi : American electric carmaker Tesla on Wednesday announced acceleration of its journey in India, driving in the three-row six-seater SUV Model YL priced at Rs 61.99 lakh, its second offering in the country.

American electric carmaker Tesla on Wednesday announced acceleration of its journey in India, driving in the three-row six-seater SUV Model YL priced at Rs 61.99 lakh, its second offering in the country. "What we are going to do in the coming quarter or in this quarter is to expand our service and body shop network and presence in cities of

Bengal, Hyderabad, Chennai and Ahmedabad," Tesla India General Manager Sharad Agarwal said at the launch.

Stating that the company will be closer to its customers, he said, "Service for us is more of peace of mind to our customers because you don't need to come to the Tesla service centre to fix your car." Charging is a very important part of the ecosystem that we are building here in India, he said and added the company had already enabled five supercharger stations in India and each of these locations was strategically selected.

Agarwal said the company is looking to "disrupt" the premium SUV segment with the newly launched Model YL.

"We want to build the charging around the lifestyle of our customers," he said.

India has a similar population like China where Tesla has 2,500 plus superchargers, he said.

"That is what when we are committed to the market, as the market demands, as per the lifestyle of our customers... we are going to build the charging infrastructure in this country," Agarwal said.

'And in the coming months, you will see that we will connect the major cities in this country with our supercharger and charging network. This will include Delhi, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bangalore, and Chennai. So you will see the supercharger infrastructure on these key highways," he said.

He said the company also planned to build destination charging infrastructure around these cities because this is where its customers are.

That is how we will build and expand the charging ecosystem for our customers, he added.