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Three Fall, Two Hold: India's mega electoral verdict redraws the political map

New Delhi: The curtain has come down on one of India's most high-voltage and closely watched electoral marathons, delivering a verdict that is as emphatic as it is transformative: sweeping regime change in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, even as Assam and Puducherry have firmly resisted the tide, opting instead for continuity and consolidation.

After weeks of relentless campaigning, sharp political exchanges and fluctuating narratives, counting day unfolded like a gripping political finale, where early uncertainty quickly gave way to decisive outcomes that now appear irreversible. In West Bengal, the day's most dramatic chapter has been written in bold, disruptive strokes. The Bharatiya Janata Party has surged past the halfway mark in the 294-member Assembly, winning 4 seats and leading in 194, according to the Election Commission trends, effectively breaching what was long considered the formidable stronghold of the All India Trinamool Congress led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Results will be declared today for 293 of the 294 seats in the state, while voting in the Falta constituency is scheduled for May 21, with counting of votes set for May 24.

The Trinamool Congress, which dominated the state's political landscape for over a decade, was reduced to just 1 win and leads in 88 seats at the time of reporting. The scale and

symbolism of this shift are immense: Bengal, which had historically resisted the BJP's expansion, has now emerged as the epicentre of a major ideological and political realignment in eastern India. The election carried added weight amid controversy over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which saw nearly 89 lakh voters—about 11.6 per cent of the electorate—removed, a figure exceeding the Trinamool's winning margin in 2021 and a flashpoint in the campaign narrative.

Further south, Tamil Nadu has delivered a verdict that is no less seismic, though driven by a different force. Actor-turned-politician Vijay has dramatically altered the state's political equations

with his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, emerging as a powerful disruptor to the entrenched Dravidian duopoly. In the 234-seat Assembly, TVK had won 2 seats and was leading in 105, placing it firmly ahead of the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which had secured 3 wins and was leading in 53 seats. The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam-led alliance trailed with 47 seats, while the Pattali Makkal Katchi was ahead in 4. What has unfolded is not merely an electoral upset but a rewriting of Tamil Nadu's political grammar, where personality-driven appeal, youth mobilisation and a palpable appetite for change have upended decades of bipolar dominance.

Kerala, by contrast, has followed its familiar yet strikingly consistent political rhythm. The state's deeply embedded pattern of alternating power has once again asserted itself, with the Congress-led United Democratic Front decisively

unseating the incumbent Left Democratic Front. In the 140-member Assembly, the UDF had won 50 seats and was leading in 42, comfortably crossing the majority mark of 71, while the Left Front lagged with 24 wins and leads in 10 seats. The National Democratic Alliance remained marginal, ahead in just two constituencies. The verdict reflects strong anti-incumbency against the Left, which has governed since 2016, with voter fatigue, governance concerns and allegations of political overreach feeding into a familiar cycle where the electorate resets power with almost institutional regularity.

Amid this sweeping churn, Assam has stood apart as a story of resilience and reinforcement. The BJP-led alliance, under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has secured a commanding mandate, paving the way for a third consecutive term. At the time of reporting, the BJP had won

13 seats and was leading in 69, while the Congress trailed with leads in 20 seats. Regional players like the Bodoland People's Front, Asom Gana Parishad and All India United Democratic Front registered scattered gains. The result underscores a consolidation of political capital, where governance delivery, organisational strength and sustained voter engagement have neutralised anti-incumbency and reinforced public confidence.

Puducherry has echoed a similar sentiment of continuity, with the NDA alliance retaining power comfortably. The All India N.R. Congress led the tally with 9 wins and 2 leads, while its ally, the BJP, added to the coalition's strength with 2 wins and a lead. The Congress and Independents secured a smaller share of the seats. In this union territory, where localised political dynamics often outweigh sweeping national narratives, stability has once again prevailed over disruption.

The magnitude of this democratic exercise amplifies the significance of its outcome. With over 160 million voters deciding the fate of 824 seats across five regions, the elections have not only reshaped state governments but also recalibrated the broader national political mood. The ripple effects are likely to influence alliance-building, campaign strategies and leadership narratives in the run-up to future electoral contests.

Beyond the numbers lies a more layered story of a discerning electorate. In three states, voters have delivered a decisive verdict for change, dismantling entrenched regimes and embracing new political formations or alternatives. In two, they have reaffirmed faith in incumbents, rewarding continuity and governance. The emergence of new players, the persistence of regional identities and the electorate's willingness to sharply differentiate between states

together signal a complex, nuanced mandate rather than a monolithic wave.

Supplementing the broader results, bypoll outcomes have largely favoured the BJP across multiple states, including victories in Koridang in Nagaland, Dharmanagar in Tripura and Umreth in Gujarat, while the Congress secured a win in Bagalkot in Karnataka and led in Davangere South. In Maharashtra, the BJP was ahead in Rahuri, while the NCP led in Baramati, indicating that localised contests continue to produce varied outcomes even within a broader national trend.

As the final tallies settle and celebrations gather pace, the message from the electorate resonates with unmistakable clarity: India has delivered a verdict that is decisive yet differentiated. Three regimes have fallen, two have held firm, and in the process, the country's political balance has been dramatically—and perhaps enduringly—reset.

Celebrations with dhol beats, jhalmuri, rasogulla and mishti doi at BJP HQ, as party heads for big win in Bengal



New Delhi: Enthusiastic celebrations were held at the BJP headquarters in the national capital on Monday evening, as the party was headed for a massive win in the West Bengal assembly polls.

Party leaders, workers and supporters were seen distributing Jhalmuri, Bengali sweets and were dancing to Dhol beats.

At around 5 pm, the BJP was leading at 197 seats in West Bengal, in accordance with the trends and results for the polls, while Trinamool Congress was at second spot, leading in 90 seats.

Senior party leader Tarun Chugh, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, along with party workers took out a symbolic procession starting

from the national BJP office to the Vistar Karyalya and then back to the headquarters.

The party workers celebrated dancing and applying colors on each other, especially the saffron.

A party supporter who said he has his roots in Bengal said that BJP heading for a big win is a change that people of the state were looking forward to.

BJP workers began arriving at the headquarters from different parts of the city and the NCR as the counting trends started coming out in favor of the party in West Bengal, and preparations began for decorations and mega celebrations, with the arrival of senior party leaders.

To form government the number of seats required is

148. The TMC is staring at defeat after three terms of remaining in power.

In Delhi, the Ministers celebrated by eating Rasogulla and Jhalmuri, while Minister Parvesh Verma was seen distributing Jalebis to party workers.

The minister stated that the joy of winning was shared with party workers with Jhalmuri and Jalebi, which is not just a celebration, but the triumph of that ideology whose foundation was laid by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.

He added that the change has come to Bengal "after years of misgovernance, fear and politics of appeasement", and the people have taken a historic decision.

BJP workers take out 'Bengal victory march' near national office, next is Punjab: Tarun Chugh

New Delhi: Led by BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, the state unit chief of the party Virendra Sachdeva, along with Delhi BJP workers took out a "Bengal Victory March" on Deendayal Upadhyay Marg near the party headquarters, accompanied by Dhol beats and celebratory playing with the saffron colors on Monday, with the trends indicating a clear big win for the party.

Chugh, himself played the Daphli (tambourine), while

Sachdeva and hundreds of party workers outside the BJP national office celebrated amid music and exchanged sweets, and raised slogans praising the nation, party and the state.

The victory march proceeded from there to the National Office extension and, after circling Deendayal Upadhyay Udyan, returned to the party headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, Chugh said that the party's victory in West Bengal is historic, and now, under the

leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it is



Punjab's turn.

He further said that every worker in Bengal deserves to be congratulated, as they have

strongly faced the alleged hooliganism of the Trinamool Congress, whether in this election or the previous four elections. He said that TMC's defeat in Bengal and Stalin's in Tamil Nadu is also a defeat for Arvind Kejriwal, because he had held the final press conferences in both states and claimed their governments would return to power.

Chugh emphasized that now, Kejriwal must get ready to face his own defeat in Punjab during the upcoming assembly

polls in the state. Meanwhile, Delhi BJP chief has said that with the victory, PM Modi's dream of making the lotus bloom from Gangotri to Ganga Sagar will be realized, which had been made possible by the election strategy of Home Minister Amit Shah and the tireless efforts of lakhs of party workers. "People of Bengal have paid rich tribute to Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee in his 125th birth anniversary year," the Delhi BJP chief added.

Congress moves fast to cement Opposition ties as Rahul Gandhi reaches out after poll verdict

New Delhi: In the immediate aftermath of a fiercely contested round of Assembly elections across multiple states, the Congress leadership moved swiftly to engage with key regional players, signaling both political recalibration and an attempt to consolidate opposition unity in a shifting electoral landscape.

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh revealed on Monday evening that Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, had personally reached out to several prominent regional leaders following the declaration of results.

According to Ramesh, Gandhi spoke with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, both of whom remain pivotal figures in the broader opposition bloc. The conversations

come at a time when the electoral outcomes have once again underscored the growing importance of strong regional parties in India's federal political structure.

"He also spoke to and congratulated the President of the TVK, Thiru Vijay, on the party's performance," Ramesh said in a post on social media platform X, referring to actor-turned-politician Vijay, whose party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), has emerged as a notable new entrant in Tamil Nadu's political arena. Vijay's debut performance, while not dislodging established Dravidian majors, is being closely watched for its potential to reshape future electoral equations in the state. The outreach by Gandhi reflects a broader strategic intent by the Congress to maintain cohesion within the

opposition camp following mixed electoral results. While the party has seen pockets of resurgence in some regions, setbacks in others have reinforced the need for coordinated political engagement with allies and like-minded parties. Analysts note that such gestures of communication and acknowledgment are critical in sustaining the fragile architecture of opposition alliances, particularly ahead of future national contests.

In West Bengal, Banerjee continues to dominate the political landscape, while in Tamil Nadu, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) under Stalin has retained its centrality. The emergence of Vijay's TVK, though still in its early stages, adds a new variable to Tamil Nadu politics, where cinema and politics have historically intersected in

influential ways.

The Congress, which has often played a balancing role within opposition formations, appears keen to position itself as a facilitator of unity rather than a dominant force, especially in states where regional parties hold decisive sway. Gandhi's outreach, coming within hours of the results, is being interpreted as an acknowledgment of this evolving political reality.

With electoral verdicts continuing to produce fragmented mandates and region-specific outcomes, the importance of post-result diplomacy has grown significantly. The Congress leadership's quick engagement with key figures across states suggests that beyond the numbers, the battle for narrative and alliances is already underway.

CPI(M) flags 'serious setbacks' in Kerala, Bengal as BJP gains ground; vows introspection and course correction

New Delhi: Reacting to the sweeping and politically consequential Assembly election results announced on May 4, 2026, the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) acknowledged major reverses for its camp while raising concerns over what it described as the growing influence of right-wing forces across key states.

In a detailed press statement, the party underlined that "the two major features of the assembly election results are the serious setback to the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala and the

victory of the BJP in West Bengal," pointing to a dramatically altered political landscape in regions that have historically held distinct ideological moorings. It also noted that the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam-led alliance had suffered a setback in Tamil Nadu, where actor-turned-politician Vijay and his party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam emerged as a major political force, reshaping the state's electoral dynamics.

The statement comes in the backdrop of a high-stakes electoral exercise that spanned multiple states and union territories, culminating

in regime change in Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, while the Bharatiya Janata Party retained power in Assam and, in alliance with the All India N.R. Congress, secured another term in Puducherry.

Reflecting on its loss in Kerala, where the Left Democratic Front was voted out after a decade in power, the CPI(M) defended its governance record, stating that the LDF "had done its best for the welfare of the people and to meet their aspirations, given the financial constraints imposed by the BJP-led union government." The party,

however, conceded the verdict and signalled an internal review, saying it



"respects the people's verdict and will introspect on the reasons that led to the defeat."

Turning to West Bengal, the CPI(M) offered a sharply critical assessment of the BJP's victory, alleging that it was aided by "strong anti-

incumbency against the corrupt" All India Trinamool Congress government led by

Mamata Banerjee, as well as what it termed a "communal, divisive and vitriolic hate campaign." The party further alleged that "huge amounts of money" and the "misuse of Central agencies including the Election Commission of India (ECI), the SIR

exercise" contributed to the outcome. Despite the adverse environment, the CPI(M) claimed that the Left had "marginally improved its performance" in the state.

Expressing broader ideological concern, the party said the results in West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry reflected the "ascendancy of right-wing communal forces led by the BJP," describing this trend as "a matter of deep concern for all the secular, progressive and democratic forces." The remarks signal the party's attempt to frame the electoral outcome within a wider national political context,

where it sees a consolidation of right-wing influence.

At the same time, the CPI(M) extended gratitude to its support base, stating that it "thanks the people and cadres who have reposed their faith in the Party and its allies and voted for it," while reiterating its commitment to continue political struggles on issues of public welfare, secularism and democratic rights.

Looking ahead, the party indicated that its top decision-making bodies would undertake a comprehensive review of the results and chart a future course. "The upcoming

meetings of the Politburo and the Central Committee will undertake a comprehensive analysis and formulate a plan of action to meet the challenges posed by the new political situation," the statement said.

The response from the CPI(M) captures both the scale of the electoral setback for the Left, particularly in Kerala, and its attempt to regroup ideologically and organisationally in the face of a rapidly shifting political terrain shaped by new entrants, changing voter preferences and the expanding footprint of the BJP across regions.



State BJP urges restraint, congratulates people of Bengal for toppling Mamata-led govt

Kolkata: With the BJP set for landslide victory in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections on Monday, state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Samik Bhattacharya issued a cautious yet confident note, appealing to party workers to maintain peace and restraint.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP's state headquarters in Salt Lake, Bhattacharya emphasised that victory celebrations, if warranted, must remain disciplined and not inconvenience the public or disrupt law and order. "No one should get carried away in the event of a favourable outcome. The joy of victory must not come at the cost of public peace," he said.

Earlier in the day, projecting confidence ahead of the counting, the BJP leader claimed that his party would surpass all projections and secure a clear majority in the 294-member Assembly. According to him, results available from internal assessments had indicated that the BJP is already ahead in a majority of seats, signalling a possible end to the Trinamool Congress's 15-year "misrule" in the state.

Bhattacharya described the polling process as "largely peaceful and participatory," noting that voters



turned out in large numbers across districts. He termed the high turnout a "victory of democracy" and said it reflected a growing political awareness among the people of West Bengal.

At the same time, he issued a stern warning against any form of post-poll violence, recalling the incidents that followed the 2021 Assembly elections. "We have seen what happened earlier. Within 27 days, 56 BJP workers were killed and several women came forward alleging grave

crimes. Such a situation must not be repeated," he said, while urging his party cadre not to retaliate under any circumstances.

"We do not want others to go through the suffering that our workers and their families endured," Bhattacharya added, underscoring the party's stated commitment to ensuring a peaceful post-result environment. He reiterated that BJP workers must refrain from any act that could escalate tensions, even if provoked.

Referring to the broader political climate, Bhattacharya remarked that the people of the state are seeking a departure from what he described as a "jungle raj," and are aspiring for a governance model rooted in accountability and democratic norms. He maintained that the mandate would reflect this aspiration.

Welcoming the decision to conduct a re-poll in Falta, he alleged irregularities in the constituency, including instances of alleged EVM tampering, and said corrective measures were necessary to uphold electoral integrity. Bhattacharya also announced that when the party comes to power, the BJP would release a "White Paper" within 15 days of forming the government, detailing what he termed as "anti-people decisions" and "unwarranted expenditure" by the outgoing administration. Concluding his address, he reiterated that the electoral process in the state marks a significant moment in democratic practice. "Despite challenges, people have come out spontaneously. This election is a victory of parliamentary democracy," he said, urging all stakeholders to ensure that the outcome is received in a spirit of peace and constitutional propriety.

KTR inspects procurement centre in Sangareddy, slams Govt over 'farmer distress'

Sangareddy (Telangana): K T Rama Rao, Working President of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), on Monday visited Sangareddy district and inspected a grain procurement centre at Sadasivapet, raising concerns over the difficulties being faced by farmers.

During his visit, KTR interacted with farmers and party workers, alleging that the current state administration has failed to ensure smooth procurement operations. He claimed that several farmers are experiencing delays and uncertainty while trying to sell their produce.

Addressing a gathering, he accused the Congress government led by A Revanth Reddy of not effectively managing crop procurement and delaying key agricultural support measures.

KTR further alleged that farmers are not receiving timely payments under the Rythu Bandhu scheme, which provides financial assistance to cultivators. According to him, these delays are adding to the financial



stress faced by the farming community. He also claimed that farmers are being denied the stipulated Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops such as paddy, jowar, and gram, which are crucial for ensuring remunerative returns. Drawing a comparison with the previous BRS government, KTR said that under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, procurement processes were carried out without restrictions and farmers received payments on time. He argued that the earlier administration had created a more farmer-friendly system, ensuring that produce was procured efficiently and without unnecessary conditions. Calling for action, KTR directed party cadres to intensify their agitation across the state. He urged them to actively monitor procurement centres over the coming week. He also asked party workers to stage protests and submit memorandums to local authorities, including Tahsildars and Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs), highlighting farmers' grievances. KTR emphasized that every grain brought by farmers should be procured without conditions, stressing that procurement delays can lead to significant losses for cultivators.

Tejaswi slams NDA over bridge collapse incidents

Patna: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) working president Tejaswi Yadav on Monday launched a sharp attack on the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Bihar, alleging large-scale corruption in infrastructure projects following recent bridge-related incidents in the state. Referring to the Vikramshila Bridge collapse incident, Yadav claimed that Bihar has witnessed an alarming rise in bridge and culvert failures during the NDA's tenure.

"In the 21 year rule of the NDA government in Bihar, a record has been set for bridge collapses which reflects the depth of corruption in the system," he alleged.

The RJD leader further said that his party had raised concerns earlier about the condition of the Vikramshila Bridge, warning that it could face structural issues. Instead of taking preventive action, the government ignored the warnings and continued to defend its corrupt practices,

he said. Yadav also claimed that in the past two years, more than 100 bridges and culverts have collapsed in the state, holding the government responsible for what he described as "complete failure of monitoring and accountability." He alleged that substandard construction and lack of oversight have put public safety at risk.

Referring to the Vikramshila bridge collapse incident, he said it was a matter of relief that no casualties were reported.

"At the time of the incident, several vehicles were on the bridge. Fortunately, they were not on the portion that gave way, otherwise a major tragedy could have occurred," he added. The RJD leader demanded a high-level probe into all recent bridge-related incidents and strict action against those found guilty of negligence or corruption. He also called for a comprehensive audit of infrastructure projects across the state to prevent such occurrences in the future.

Mamata's 'Didigiri' in Bengal has ended, says BJP

Mumbai: The Maharashtra unit spokesperson of the BJP issued an official statement here on Monday that the BJP lotus has blossomed in the muck created by Mamata Banerjee for the last 15 years and her 'Didigiri' has finally come to an

end in West Bengal.

"The BJP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) received a clear majority in three out of five states, and the false propaganda of the opposition has been exposed.

In West Bengal, the lotus

of the BJP has now blossomed in the muck created by Mamata Banerjee for the last fifteen years and her 'Didigiri' in the state has come to an end," BJP Maharashtra state chief spokesperson Navnath Ban stated at a press conference held here on

Monday.

"Voters and BJP workers in West Bengal have done the work of eroding her power. The BJP worked to strengthen its workers there after winning 77 seats in the last elections in West Bengal.

Light to moderate rainfall lashes across Kashmir

Srinagar: Light to moderate rainfall was recorded across several parts of the Kashmir Valley on Monday, while few upper reaches received light snow bringing a dip in day temperatures, officials said.

According to the Meteorological Department, the summer capital Srinagar received 11.2 mm of rainfall between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm, while tourist resorts of Pahalgam and Gulmarg recorded 10.4 mm and 10.2 mm respectively during the same period. Kupwara in north Kashmir saw 4.4 mm of precipitation, while Kokernag and Qazigund in south Kashmir recorded 2.2 mm each.

The rainfall led to below-normal maximum temperatures across the Valley.

Srinagar recorded a maximum of 20.5°C, which is 2.2°C below normal.

Similarly, Qazigund and Kupwara reported maximum temperatures of 19.6°C and 20.8°C, around 2°C to 3°C below seasonal averages.

Pahalgam recorded maximum temperature of 16.8°C, while Gulmarg registered a much cooler maximum of 11.0°C on the day. The temperature at both the tourist resorts witnessed departures of nearly 3°C below normal.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department has predicted intermittent

light rain and thundershowers across Jammu and Kashmir over the coming days, with generally dry conditions dominating much of the week.

According to the forecast, a brief spell of light rain or thundershowers is expected at scattered places on May 5, mainly during the afternoon hours. From May 6 to 9, weather conditions are likely to remain largely dry, although brief showers at isolated locations during afternoon hours cannot be ruled out. Between May 10 and 12, the department expects generally dry weather to continue, with occasional light rain or thundershowers at scattered places.

BJP did not expect Bagalkot defeat: Vijayendra

Bengaluru: Vijayendra Yediyurappa, Karnataka BJP President, on Monday acknowledged that the party had not anticipated defeat in the high-profile Bagalkot by-poll, even as he highlighted the BJP's electoral successes in other parts of the country.

Addressing a press conference at Jagannath Bhavan, the party's state headquarters, Vijayendra described the BJP's victories in West Bengal, Assam, and Puducherry as a "big political message" reinforcing the party's national standing.

He said the results had strengthened the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, adding that they reflected growing public confidence in the BJP's governance and policies.

Vijayendra also noted that these were the first elections conducted under the party's national president Nitin Nabin, and said the outcomes sent a strong signal about the BJP's organisational strength.

Crediting Union Home Minister Amit Shah for the victories, he praised his electoral strategies and referred to him as the "Chanakya of elec-



tions," highlighting his role in shaping the party's campaigns.

He also commended BJP workers in West Bengal, stating that they had endured years of political challenges and had now achieved a significant breakthrough through sustained effort and perseverance.

Turning to Karnataka, Vijayendra admitted that the BJP was taken by surprise by the Bagalkot by-poll result.

Where the Congress retained the seat despite an aggressive campaign by the party.

"We did not expect defeat in Bagalkot. Though Congress had won there earlier, we were confident that voters would support the BJP this time," he said, acknowledging the set-

back. He pointed out that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had camped in Bagalkot for nearly 15 days along with several cabinet ministers, indicating the intensity of the Congress campaign.

Despite this, Vijayendra said the BJP remained optimistic during the campaign, making the eventual outcome particularly unexpected for the party.

At the same time, he stressed that the result should not be interpreted as a broader political shift in favour of the Congress in Karnataka.

"Just because Congress has won the bypoll, it cannot be concluded that there is a wave in its favour," he asserted, seeking to limit the political impact of the defeat.

He added that the BJP leadership would soon hold detailed discussions with local leaders to analyse the reasons behind the setback and frame corrective organisational strategies.

Projecting unity within the party, Vijayendra said BJP leaders and workers in both Bagalkot and Davanagere South had campaigned in full coordination without any factionalism.

"All leaders and workers campaigned together day and night, setting aside local differences and working unitedly for the party candidates," he said.

He also expressed confidence about the Davanagere South bypoll, describing it as a close contest and maintaining that the BJP remained hopeful of securing a victory.

Several senior leaders were present at the press conference, including Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, former Deputy Chief Minister CN Ashwath Narayan, MLCs CT Ravi and Pratap Simha Nayak, and MLA Harish Poonja.

Briefs :

Bomb threat email triggers evacuation in Delhi school

New Delhi: Panic gripped a Delhi school on Monday morning after it received a bomb threat email, prompting an immediate evacuation of students and staff. According to the school administration, all students were safely evacuated as a precautionary measure soon after the threat was reported. Police were immediately notified and arrived at the premises to conduct a thorough security inspection. Officials said that classes will remain suspended until the school is declared safe by the concerned authorities following a complete security check. Security agencies have initiated an investigation to trace the email's origin and verify the threat's credibility. Further details are awaited as the investigation continues.

Delhi CM, announces 7 new corridors of Metro in Phase V (B)

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, during her address at the Delhi Metro's 32nd Foundation Day here said that the system has become national capital's lifeline, and is a benchmark of efficiency and discipline. CM also announced a major expansion of the Delhi Metro network, saying that work under Phase IV and Phase V is progressing rapidly, and preparations are underway to begin construction on seven new corridors under Phase V (B), which will further strengthen connectivity across the city. Describing metro as city's lifeline, she credited the employees, officers and support staff for their commitment, saying their professionalism has made the system a globally recognised model of urban transit. Ms Gupta said that despite initial challenges, the Metro earned public confidence through efficient operations and strict adherence to timelines and standards, while also establishing credibility within the administrative system. Running over 4,500 trips daily, the metro is serving more than 6.5 million passengers, she stated. The successful execution of complex engineering works, including nearly 100 km of underground tunnels, reflects its strong technical capabilities.

Gurugram man poisons wife, 4 children before trying to kill self

New Delhi: A man allegedly poisoned his wife and their four children before trying to take his own life at Zirapur village of Gurugram. Nazim, hailing from Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh, is in a critical condition at a hospital. The tragedy came to light on Saturday around 9 pm when Nazim's brother, Zeeshan, arrived at the first-floor rented apartment to visit the family. Zeeshan saw that his sister-in-law, Najma, 35, and the children were lying motionless on the floor and foam was coming out of the children's mouths. Nearby, Nazim was found in a semi-conscious state writhing in pain with his wrists slit. A blood-stained knife was found from the spot. The deceased children have been identified as 12-year-old Iqra, eight-year-old Shifa, eight-year-old Aaram and six-year-old Khatija. Forensic experts believe the accused administered poison to the children and then to the wife. While the nature of the poisonous substance is yet to be confirmed, police have sent the bodies for post-mortem. Preliminary investigation suggests that Nazim, who operated a salon at Garhi Harsaru, frequently had heated arguments with his wife.

Delhi CM urges citizens to report incidents of illegal tree felling

New Delhi: Rekha Gupta has urged residents of Delhi to actively participate in protecting the city's green cover by reporting any incidents of illegal tree felling to the concerned authorities.

In a video message shared on her X handle, the Chief Minister emphasized that increasing green cover across the national capital is a priority for her government. She noted that multiple initiatives are already underway and called upon citizens to extend their support in safeguarding the environment.

Rekha Gupta highlighted the importance of collective responsibility, stating that preserving trees cannot be achieved by the government alone. She encouraged people to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity involving tree cutting.

She also announced an ambitious plantation drive planned for the upcoming monsoon season. According to her, the government aims to plant an unprecedented number of trees, surpassing



previous efforts in the city.

The Chief Minister claimed that the scale of the proposed plantation initiative would be unlike anything undertaken before, reflecting the administration's commitment to environmental sustainability.

At the same time, she reiterated that protecting existing trees is equally important. She stressed that efforts to increase green cover must go hand in hand with preventing unnecessary or illegal felling. In recent developments, the Delhi government has tightened regulations around tree cutting to curb misuse and ensure stricter oversight.

A new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), notified in April, mandates special permission for felling more than 50 trees as part of any project. This move is aimed at increasing accountability in infrastructure and development activities.

Under the revised rules, projects involving large-scale tree cutting must now receive final approval from the Central Empowered Committee, rather than relying solely on clearance from a tree officer. Additionally, the government is putting in place a 24x7 monitoring system to track and regulate tree felling activities across the city.

Officials believe that these measures will help strike a balance between urban development and environmental conservation.

The government is also undertaking scientific analysis to identify plant species and trees best suited to Delhi's climate conditions.

This approach aims to ensure higher survival rates of saplings planted during afforestation drives, making the efforts more effective and sustainable in the long term.

Experts note that choosing climate-appropriate species is critical, especially in a city like Delhi that faces extreme weather variations.

The Chief Minister's appeal comes at a time when concerns over air quality and urban heat are rising, making the preservation and expansion of green cover increasingly vital.

With stricter rules, large-scale plantation plans, and citizen participation, the government hopes to significantly improve Delhi's environmental health in the coming years.

Delhi Crime Branch busts NEET Admission fraud racket; 18 students rescued, 4 arrested

New Delhi: In a major crackdown, the Crime Branch of Delhi Police has busted an organised racket that allegedly targeted NEET aspirants and their families by promising fake MBBS admissions in exchange for large sums of money and sensitive academic documents.

The operation led to the safe rescue of 18 students, including several minors, who were reportedly being exploited under the pretext of securing medical college seats.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said the gang had been systematically deceiving families by posing as facilitators capable of arranging MBBS admissions through illegal channels.

He noted that the accused exploited the aspirations of students preparing for highly competitive exams, using false assurances to gain trust and extract money.

According to police, swift technical surveillance and coordinated action by the Crime Branch helped uncover the network and

further strengthening the case against the accused.

Four individuals have been arrested in connection with the case—Santosh Kumar Jaiswal, Akhlaq Alam, Sant Pratap Singh, and Vinod Bhai Bhikha Bhai Patel.

Investigations revealed that the accused were part of a coordinated racket that lured students with fake guarantees of admission into medical colleges.

They allegedly collected large payments from families, along with original academic documents and even blank signed cheques, under the guise of facilitating admissions.

Police also found that the gang attempted to isolate students from their families, claiming it was necessary for "exam-related guidance" and access to confidential materials.

Acting on intelligence inputs, police conducted raids at multiple locations linked to the accused, leading to the recovery of fake study material and other incriminating evidence. Items seized included forged documents and blank cheques,

further strengthening the case against the accused. All rescued students have since been counselled and allowed to appear for their examinations, ensuring minimal disruption to their academic futures.

Officials said efforts are underway to identify additional members of the network and determine the full extent of the racket.

The case highlights the growing threat of fraudulent admission schemes that prey on the pressure and uncertainty surrounding competitive exams like NEET.

Authorities have issued an advisory urging students and parents to remain cautious and verify the authenticity of any admission-related claims.

Police stressed that legitimate admissions are conducted strictly through official processes and warned against falling for promises of guaranteed seats through unofficial channels. Further investigation into the case is ongoing, with more arrests and disclosures likely as authorities continue to probe the wider network.

Massive fire breaks out at tile warehouse in Gurugram; no casualties reported

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out at a tile warehouse near the Kali Mata Temple in the New Colony area on Monday, triggering panic among residents as thick black smoke billowed into the sky.

According to fire brigade officials, the blaze was intense and spread rapidly due to the presence of highly flammable materials stored inside the warehouse.

The fire reportedly started around 10:20 am and quickly engulfed large portions of the premises, prompting an immediate emergency response.

Initial reports suggest that the fire originated from packing materials and cardboard stored in the warehouse, which accelerated the spread of flames.

Fire brigade teams rushed to the spot soon after receiving the alert, deploying two fire tenders to control the situation.

However, firefighters initially faced difficulties reaching the site due to narrow lanes in the locality, which slowed down access to the warehouse.

Despite these challenges, the fire personnel managed to bring the blaze under control after nearly two hours of continuous effort.

Their timely response ensured that the fire did not spread to nearby residential buildings, preventing a potentially larger disaster.

Local police also arrived at the scene and sealed off roads surrounding the area as a precautionary measure to ensure public safety.

Fortunately, no casualties were reported in the incident, as no workers or staff were present inside the warehouse at the time of the fire.

However, significant property damage was reported, with tiles and other materials worth lakhs of rupees being destroyed in the blaze.

Preliminary findings indicate that a short circuit may have triggered the fire, though officials have stated that the exact cause is still under investigation.

Suspected members of 'Kaccha-baniyan' gang held after encounter with police in Delhi

New Delhi: Three suspected members of the infamous 'kaccha-baniyan' gang involved in a recent robbery at a house in Sarvodaya Enclave in south Delhi were arrested early Monday after a brief exchange of fire with police here, an official said.

The robbery in Sarvodaya Enclave took place in the intervening hours of Thursday and Friday last.

Police said the accused had allegedly entered the house by climbing onto a balcony using a tree located near the boundary wall adjoining Vijay Mandal Park.

"They cut open the door lock using a cutter and gained entry into the house.

When the residents woke up, they were held hostage and locked inside a room," a senior police officer said.

The accused then ransacked the house for nearly



an hour and decamped with cash, jewellery and other valuables. CCTV footage from inside the premises

showed three masked men moving around the house with ease. They were seen wearing gloves and socks and carrying tools typically associated with the 'kaccha-



baniyan' gang. Investigators said the gang is known for committing thefts and robberies in minimal clothing,

often armed with tools, and does not hesitate to turn violent if resisted.

"Had the victims tried to resist, the situation could have turned fatal," the officer added.

Following the incident, a case was registered at Malviya Nagar police station and multiple teams were formed to track down the accused.

Acting on specific inputs, police laid a trap near Ambedkar Nagar, where the suspects were intercepted, leading to the encounter.

Further investigation is under way to ascertain their involvement in other similar cases across the city, police said.

Supreme Court asks Centre to consider enhancing punishment

New Delhi: Taking note of an "alarming increase" in "barbaric" acid attack cases, the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to consider enhancing the punishment for such offences and shifting the onus on the accused to prove that he's not guilty. Generally, it's for the prosecution to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt and benefit of doubt, if any, goes to the accused.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joydip Bagchi directed that pending a suitable amendment, persons forced to consume acid leading to internal injuries without any other disfigurement would fall within the ambit of acid attack victims under the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

"It will be appreciated if the ministry concerned formally notifies the deemed amendment," the Bench said. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that the nodal ministry has already proposed to amend the schedule appended to the 2016 Act. "Pending suitable amendment... it is directed that for all intents and purposes, especially to give effect to the 2016 Act, acid attack victims shall also include the victims to whom acid has been administered and shall include those who have suffered internal injuries even if there is no other disfigurement," the Bench said, posting the matter for hearing after two weeks. The order came on a

PIL filed by acid attack survivor Shaheen Malik who demanded that such victims be categorised as persons with disabilities to ensure they get access to welfare schemes.

On behalf of the petitioner, senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi recalled that 10-15 years ago, the top court had taken up the issue of sale of acid and said that instead of buying a gun, someone can easily buy a bottle of acid for Rs. 50 and ruin someone's life. "They (victims) are completely disfigured for life. Unable to carry on..." Rohatgi said. Highlighting that the punishment prescribed for acid attacks was not proving to be a deterrent, the top court asked the government to consider enhancing the punishment for such

offences, besides shifting the onus on the accused to prove that he's not guilty. "The number of cases has increased. Barbaric and brutal acid attacks have been made... Don't you think that the punishment should have been harsher?" the Bench asked as it said there has been an "alarming increase" in the number of acid attacks since 2013 which itself was a serious issue. The assets of those convicted of such heinous cases should be attached to compensate the victims of acid attacks, it said. Flagging the need to have control over illegal sale of acid in the open market, the Bench said those selling acid illegally should be held accountable and made vicariously liable in acid attack cases.

Delhi Police busts fake trading app scam

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has busted an investment fraud racket and arrested three people, including a bank official, for allegedly duping a retired government officer of over ₹45 lakh through a fake trading application, an official said on Sunday. With the latest arrests, the total number of accused held in the case has risen to five, he said.

The accused have been identified as Kapil Bain and Manoj Sharma, both residents of Udhham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhanda, and Kamal Pandey, a resident of Gadarpur in the same district, who was working as an assistant manager in a

The case surfaced after a retired government official reported that he had been cheated of ₹45.33 lakh on the pretext of investing in the share market through

a mobile application posing as a legitimate trading platform.

"The fraudsters impersonated representatives of reputed investment firms and lured the victim into investing in IPOs by promising high and assured returns. They used a professionally designed fake application and website to gain his trust," a senior police officer said.

Investigations revealed that the defrauded amount was routed through multiple mule bank accounts, which were opened using economically vulnerable individuals, and quickly withdrawn after deposits.

Kapil Bain and Manoj Sharma allegedly operated these mule accounts, where the cheated money was deposited.

And withdrawn through cheques on the same day,

the police said.

The role of Kamal Pandey emerged during the probe.

He allegedly facilitated the fraud by helping open mule accounts, sharing sensitive transaction details and expediting withdrawals within bank premises, the officials said.

The arrests were made during a coordinated operation in Udhham Singh Nagar following sustained technical surveillance.

Bain and Sharma were traced first, while Pandey was later apprehended based on their inputs, they said.

The police said further investigation is underway to identify other syndicate members, trace the money trail and locate additional victims targeted through similar fraudulent platforms.

IRS officer, wife booked for Rs 4.6-crore disproportionate assets

New Delhi: Nearly a year after a senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer at the centre of a soured La Pino's Pizza franchise dispute was arrested in a Rs 25-lakh bribery trap, the CBI has now booked him and his wife, herself a senior tax official, for accumulating assets disproportionate to their known sources of income to the tune of Rs 4,57,39,557, a staggering 139.15 per cent in excess of their legitimate earnings. A regular case has been registered at Mumbai against Amit Kumar Singhal (2007-batch IRS), the then additional director general, Directorate General of Tax Services, Central Board of Indirect Customs (CBIC), New Delhi, and his wife Anupama Singla, the then commissioner of income tax, Central Board of Direct

Taxes (CBDT), New Delhi, on a complaint filed by Inspector Manesh Kumar of CBI Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Chandigarh, and has been entrusted for investigation to Sudhir Dhandha, DSP, CBI ACB, Mumbai.

The fresh disproportionate assets case has been registered under Section 13(2) read with Section 13(1)(e), Section 12, and Section 109 of the IPC against the couple. The corresponding provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended in 2018, have also been invoked.

The main offence in the FIR, a copy of which is with The Tribune, reads: "Public servant intentionally enriching himself illicitly during the period of his office and the other accused abetted the said offence."

The period of the offence ranges from April 1, 2018 to May 31, 2025, covering the better part of seven years, with the places of occurrence listed as Maharashtra and New Delhi. The fresh disproportionate assets case flows from a bribery arrest that made headlines last June, when Chandigarh CBI ACB nabbed Singhal and his close associate Harsh Kotak, from Delhi and Mohali, separately, in a meticulously laid trap.

The bribery allegation traced back to a business relationship turned bitter. Sanam Kapoor, a Zirakpur-based businessman and partner-director of M/s Copenhagen Hospitality Pvt Ltd, the company that owns La Pino's Pizza, a chain with around 750 outlets across India, had in 2019 entered into a master franchisee ar-

angement with Singhal, who was then posted as Joint Commissioner, Customs Department, Mumbai.

Singhal operated through his partnership firm M/s Parker Impex, in the name of his mother Ranjana Singhal and one Amit Rattan. Kotak, described as Singha's close friend, later replaced Rattan as partner. Additional franchisee agreements were also signed with Kotak's entities, M/s Flevaco and M/s Mohini Hospitality. However, citing unprofessional conduct and material violations of agreed terms, Kapoor terminated all agreements with these entities in December 2024, bought back three outlets, and made full and final payments. A security cheque, he alleged, was never returned by Kotak despite repeated assurances.

With business ties severed, Kapoor alleged in his complaint to CBI that Singhal used his official position to issue a notice under Section 131(1)(a) of the Income Tax Act against him in February. When Kapoor's chartered accountant visited the IT office, he was warned of heavy penalties.

Kapoor then met Singhal in Delhi, where the latter allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 45 lakh to "settle the matter", threatening punitive action if it was not paid.

Kapoor, unwilling to pay, approached the CBI. After verification by Inspector Sonal Mishra, a trap was laid, and Kotak was caught red-handed accepting Rs 25 lakh on Singhal's behalf at his Mohali residence. Singhal was simultaneously arrested from his Vasant Kunj home in New Delhi.

Iron grill, locked gates hampered rescue ops

New Delhi: A fire incident at a residential building in Vivek Vihar exposed serious safety concerns, as structural obstacles significantly hampered rescue operations, officials said.

The affected property, House No. B-13, is a four-storey building located on the outer side of the locality and is visible from the flyover leading to Dilshad Garden Metro Station. Each floor consists of four 4BHK flats, with two units at the front and two at the rear.

According to officials, the fire broke out on the second floor and rapidly spread to the third and fourth floors, intensifying the situation and putting multiple residents at risk.

Rescue efforts were severely hindered due to the presence of an iron grill covering the rear side of the building, along with locked gates, including access to the terrace. These barriers de-

layed entry for emergency responders.

Fire personnel had to cut through the iron grill using specialized tools to gain access to the affected areas, which added to the time required to reach trapped occupants.

The situation was further complicated when the electricity supply was disrupted during the fire. As a result, digital locks installed in the building jammed, preventing residents from opening doors easily.

The lift also became non-functional due to the power outage, forcing residents and rescuers to rely solely on the staircase for movement.

Officials noted that the building had only a single central staircase, which served as both entry and exit. The absence of a dedicated emergency exit route significantly restricted evacuation options.


Editorial

A New Direction for ange

The assembly elections across five states have given a new turn to Indian politics. The results from West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry are not merely statistics; they are a concrete reflection of the public's changing mindset. The Indian electorate has now become more aware, more decisive, and ready to embrace new alternatives. From the moment vote counting began on Monday morning, the results started taking unexpected turns. The most significant feature of these elections was the immense sensitivity demonstrated by voters in the 'border states'—those sharing borders with other nations. Since these states share their boundaries with foreign countries, issues such as national security, infiltration, and regional identity took center stage. These results have made it clear that the Indian voter no longer looks solely at party loyalty; instead, they are in search of new alternatives that challenge the established order. In particular, the rise of the BJP in West Bengal, the charisma of actor Vijay in Tamil Nadu, and the resurgence of the Congress in Kerala are indicators of the changing nature of Indian democracy. The most seismic shift in these results occurred in West Bengal. Defeating Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress—which had been in power for the last 15 years—the Bharatiya Janata Party has made a historic surge in Bengal. In an assembly of 294 seats, where 148 seats are required for a majority, the BJP secured victory in 194 seats, thereby conquering Bengal's 'impregnable fortress.' For the BJP—which has been striving for decades to gain a foothold in Eastern India—this result has proven to be a 'historic victory for the Lotus.' On the other hand, the decline of the Trinamool Congress has been shocking, as they were forced to settle for a mere 88 seats. Although a major dispute had erupted between the ruling party and the opposition during this election regarding the special revision of voter lists and the use of 'SIR' (Summary Revision), the people of Bengal ultimately gave their mandate in favor of change. However, the BJP now faces a formidable challenge—not merely securing victory, but also restoring the administrative machinery that has become disjointed following fifteen years of autocratic rule, and putting an end to the political violence plaguing Bengal. It will be intriguing to observe how long this victory—achieved solely on the strength of central leadership and Prime Minister Modi's image, despite the party lacking a prominent local face in the state—actually endures. In the realm of South Indian politics, Tamil Nadu has taken the entire nation by surprise. In a state that has remained under the exclusive influence of just two Dravidian parties—the DMK and the AIADMK—for several decades, the 'Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam' (TVK) party, led by renowned actor Vijay, has created a political sensation. By taking the lead in 105 constituencies, Vijay's party has effectively ousted the ruling DMK from power. Notably, the DMK's stalwart leader and Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, suffered a shocking defeat at the hands of the TVK's V.S. Babu. The voters of Tamil Nadu have rejected the politics of the old guard in favor of embracing a new and youthful leadership. However, a fragmentation of the opposition vote also played a contributory role in this outcome. The tradition of a change of government every five years in Tamil Nadu—a recurring feature of the state's politics—worked to the advantage of a new party this time around, largely due to internal rifts among the established political parties. On the other hand, in Kerala, voters have once again underscored the tradition of alternating the ruling power every five years. The Left Front, led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, has suffered a defeat, while the Congress-led 'United Democratic Front' (UDF) has staged a 'comeback,' securing 92 seats. Driven by public discontent against the Left government and concerns regarding developmental issues, the electorate of Kerala has chosen to give the Congress party another opportunity to govern. In the northeastern state of Assam, however, the BJP has successfully maintained its dominance. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the BJP has set a new record by securing power for the third consecutive term. By winning 82 seats, the BJP dealt a crushing blow to the Congress party. In Puducherry as well, the NDA alliance has retained its hold on power, paving the way for the formation of a government comprising the All India N.R. Congress and the BJP. However, despite this victory, the influence of the BJP's new National President, Nitin Nabin, was not particularly evident in these results. The election strategy, candidate selection, and campaign tactics were entirely under the sway of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Although it appears that a second and third tier of leadership is currently emerging within the BJP, the dominance of the central leadership remains undiminished. For the opposition, however, these results serve as a wake-up call. If they wish to preserve their political existence, it is imperative that they consolidate their dwindling numbers in Parliament and unify their fragmented leadership. The message—"If you stay united, you stay safe"—now applies more aptly to the opposition than ever before. Against the backdrop of these results, a distinct picture of Indian democracy emerges. A voter turnout exceeding 90 percent in these elections is a clear indication of the electorate's exceptional political awareness. However, the increased deployment of central agencies and the relentless pursuit by investigative bodies have created an atmosphere of fear among opposition parties. The anomaly observed in West Bengal—where the total number of voters declined by 5.1 million, yet the actual votes cast increased by 3 million—remains a perplexing puzzle for political analysts. Had these results from May 4th gone against the ruling dispensation, the opposition would have been jubilant; however, they are now compelled to buckle down and start from scratch once again. The question remains: does this mandate, delivered by 160 million voters, serve the purification or the polarization of Indian politics? With the economic situation worsening and the issue of unemployment becoming increasingly acute, even the ruling party appears somewhat uneasy internally. In politics, one can never predict which move might prove to be a fatal blow; however, for the time being, the BJP has succeeded in expanding its sphere of influence.

The decisive moment is fast approaching, and the upcoming elections will serve as a true trial by fire—an 'agnipariksha'—for both the BJP and the opposition forces attempting to unite.

These results have served as a lesson for the incumbent rulers, while simultaneously offering an opportunity to the new generation of leaders. Now, the challenge facing all these victorious candidates transcends the mere game of power; it lies in fulfilling the aspirations of the people. The political battles fought across these five states have once again underscored the fundamental democratic principle that the people—the 'Janata Janardan'—reign supreme, and their verdict is final. Against the backdrop of the upcoming elections, these results will serve as instructive lessons for both the ruling party and the opposition. For the incumbents, this serves as a warning to fulfill the public's expectations; for the opposition, it highlights the imperative need for organization and unity. However, it is equally true that this shift could also lead to increased global instability and price volatility.

In this new landscape of oil politics, the rules of the game have changed, and the world must now redefine its own role accordingly.

Odisha Gets a New Development Push



In a major boost to rural infrastructure and inclusive development in Odisha, the launch ceremony of PMGSY-IV held in Rayagada on Friday emerged as a landmark occasion in the state's rural development journey. Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan, along with Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, unveiled and announced a series of transformative initiatives aimed at strengthening rural connectivity, housing, irrigation, livelihoods, drinking water facilities, women empowerment and farmers' prosperity across the state. During the programme, the Union Minister formally handed over the approval letter for PMGSY-IV to the Chief Minister on the dais.

Several development projects were inaugurated and foundation stones laid, while assistance and benefits were distributed to beneficiaries under various schemes.

Addressing the people at Barijhola in Rayagada, Shri Chouhan lauded Odisha, es-

rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and hardworking people. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the double-engine government is working with full commitment for the holistic devel-



pecially Rayagada for its opment of Odisha. The

Union Minister stated that he had not come empty-handed, but had brought concrete development initiatives that would directly benefit villages, the poor, farmers, labourers, women and youth across the state. Emphasising the importance of rural connectivity, he said roads are not merely means of transportation, but lifelines for employment, education, healthcare and overall socio-economic progress.

Under the first phase of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-IV (PMGSY-IV), Odisha has been sanctioned 827 new roads spanning 1,701.84 kilometres at a total cost of Rs. 1,698.04 crore. In addition, supplementary financial support is being provided for completion of previously sanctioned but unfinished road projects to ensure that even the remotest regions are connected to the mainstream of development. Highlighting the government's commitment towards housing and livelihoods, Shri Chouhan said that no poor family in Odisha would be left living in a kutcha house and every eligible beneficiary would be provided a pucca house. He informed that Rs. 630.61 crore has been approved for completion of pending houses under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin.

On the occasion of Labour Day, the Union Minister also announced the release of Rs. 868.71 crore as the first instalment under MGNREGA for the financial year 2026-27. Additionally, approval worth Rs. 30.07 crore was granted under WDC-PMKSY 2.0. Shri Chouhan reiterated that women, farmers and youth remain at the centre of the government's development

agenda. He said empowering women through dignity, self-reliance and economic opportunities is a key commitment of the government. He highlighted initiatives such as the Lakhpati Didi campaign, strengthening of Self-Help Groups, rural livelihood promotion, self-employment training, scientific farming methods, integrated agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, goat rearing, beekeeping and plantation-based income generation activities. He further noted that initiatives such as progressive farming practices, improved seeds, seed villages, enhanced storage capacity and warehouse creation under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund would significantly contribute to increasing farmers' incomes in Odisha.



Welcoming the Union Minister, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said the scale of development initiatives announced for Odisha reflects the Central Government's special commitment and affection towards the state.

He recalled that the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was envisioned by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

are now carrying forward that vision by transforming the rural landscape of India. Describing PMGSY-IV as a transformative initiative, the Chief Minister said the scheme would play a crucial role in connecting difficult, hilly, remote and previously unconnected habitations across Odisha. Shri Majhi stated that the Odisha Government is working in mission mode with the resolve of 'Samruddha Odisha, Viksit Odisha', focusing on roads, bridges, drinking water, electricity, rural infrastructure, enhancement of farmers' income, women empowerment and youth employment. He added that infrastructure projects being undertaken in districts including Rayagada would bring transformative changes to rural life across the



state. During the program, Union Minister and Chief Minister also honoured the beneficiaries under various schemes. Odisha Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Rabi Narayan Naik also addressed the program.

The event witnessed the presence of public representatives, dignitaries and a large number of local residents, including women beneficiaries.

APEDA Signs 70-Year Lease Agreement for Basmati and Organic Training Centre in Pilibhit

In a significant step towards strengthening the Basmati rice ecosystem in India, the transfer of land for the establishment of a Basmati & Organic Training Centre-Demo Farm at Tanda Bijaisi, Pilibhit, has been formalised through the signing of a 70-year lease agreement between the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the Department of Agriculture, and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The proposed Basmati & Organic Training Centre-Demo Farm will be developed over an area of approximately seven acres. The centre will be equipped with facilities including an auditorium, museum and gallery on Basmati and organic farming, conference room, laboratory and storage space

for organic farming inputs. The facility is expected to support training and capacity building for Basmati and organic farmers, and also serve as a resource centre for agricultural experts and students.

Once established, the facility will be the country's first Basmati organic training and demonstration farm covering both conventional and organic Basmati cultivation. Owing to its location, the centre is expected to benefit farmers and stakeholders in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Addressing the gathering, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasada, appreciated the initiative and highlighted the potential of Pilibhit as a major Basmati-producing region. He empha-

sised the importance of expanding organic cultivation and called for greater farmer engagement. Shri Prasada suggested incorporating an AI-based interactive museum at the centre to provide information and experiential learning for visitors and students, along with establishing a dedicated outlet for quality Basmati seeds and organic inputs for farmers.

On the occasion, Shri Jitin Prasada also unveiled India's first AI-based Basmati Paddy Survey project (2026-2028), to be implemented by APEDA in collaboration with the All-India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA). The project will cover nearly 4 million hectares, collect data from over 150,000 ground-truth points and engage with more than 500,000 farmers. It aims to support precise

crop assessment, varietal identification, scientific advisory services and improved export planning.

It was also announced that the upcoming centre has been designated as an All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) centre for national-level Basmati trials, as recognised at the 61st Annual Rice Research Group Meeting. With this, Pilibhit will become the third AICRP centre in Uttar Pradesh's Basmati GI zone after Nagina (Bijnor) and BEDF Modipuram, following the operationalisation of the facility. This will facilitate systematic testing and evaluation of new Basmati varieties suited to the region's agro-climatic conditions.

Basmati rice, a Geographical Indication (GI) product of India, recorded exports valued at USD 5.67 billion in 2025-26, with ex-

port volumes reaching around 6.5 million metric tonnes. The sector continues to contribute significantly to India's agricultural exports, with a strong presence in markets across the Middle East, Europe and North America.

APEDA is promoting organic farming through training, certification support and market linkage initiatives to facilitate adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. These efforts are aligned with global demand for environmentally responsible produce. The event was attended by Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasada, senior public representatives of the district, officials of APEDA, the Government of Uttar Pradesh and other stakeholders.

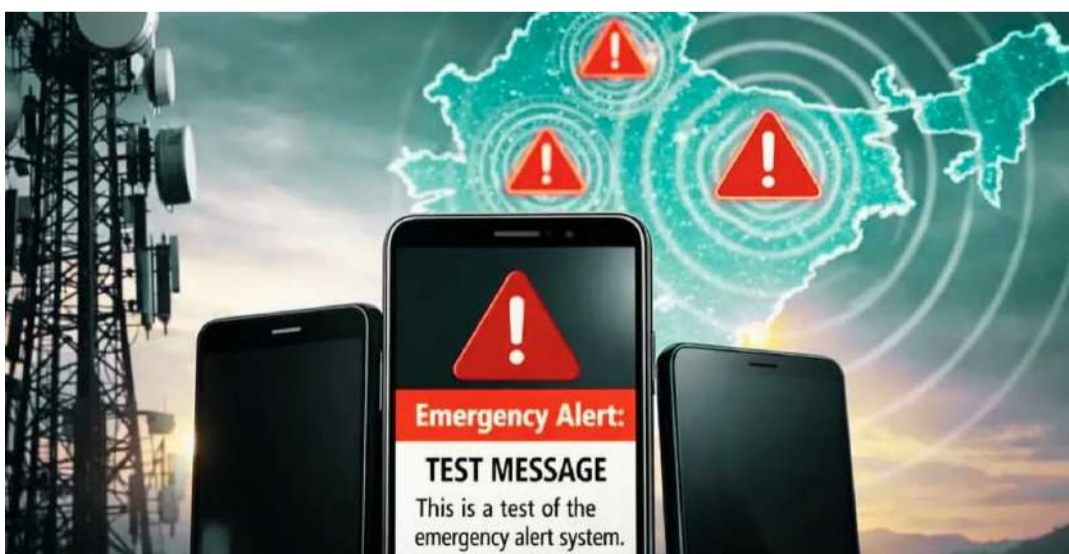
Nationwide Mobile-Based Disaster Communication Systems

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is set to launch a major advancement in India's disaster management capabilities on May 2, 2026, marking a significant step toward strengthening public safety infrastructure. The launch will take place in the august presence of Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia, highlighting the government's commitment to leveraging technology for citizen welfare.

The initiative focuses on a mobile-based disaster communication system designed to ensure the rapid and reliable dissemination of emergency alerts to citizens across the country. This system aims to minimize response time during critical situations and improve preparedness at both individual and community levels.

The system has been developed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), which functions under the Ministry of Communications. It has been created in close collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the apex body responsible for disaster management policies and coordination in India.

A key component of this initia-



tive is the Integrated Alert System known as SACHET. This system has been successfully operationalized by NDMA and serves as a centralized platform for issuing timely alerts to the public during emergencies.

The SACHET platform has been developed by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), which is the premier research and development center un-

der the Department of Telecommunications. The development reflects India's growing emphasis on indigenous technological capabilities in critical sectors.

Technically, the system is based on the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), a globally recognized standard recommended by the International Telecommunica-

tion Union. This ensures that India's alert systems align with international best practices for disaster communication. Currently, the SACHET system is operational across all 36 States and Union Territories in India. It has been integrated with telecom networks to enable seamless communication with millions of mobile users, ensuring that alerts can be delivered even in remote or vulnerable regions.

The system primarily uses

SMS technology to deliver disaster alerts directly to mobile phones within geo-targeted areas. This allows authorities to send location-specific warnings, ensuring that only those at risk receive the relevant alerts.

Since its implementation, the platform has been extensively used by disaster management authorities across the country. It has enabled the dissemination of over 134 billion SMS alerts, demonstrating its scale and effectiveness in reaching a vast population.

These alerts have been issued in more than 19 Indian languages, making the system inclusive and accessible to diverse linguistic groups. The multilingual capability ensures that critical information is understood by citizens regardless of their regional background. The system has proven particularly useful during natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and severe weather conditions. It has also been instrumental in issuing timely weather warnings, helping reduce loss of life and property. To further enhance its capabilities, the government has introduced Cell Broadcast (CB) technology alongside traditional SMS alerts.



Briefs :

Villagers Protest Over 7-Year Delay in Bridge Construction

Panipat: People in Manana village are very angry because a bridge over the railway tracks is still not finished after seven years. The project started in 2019 and was supposed to be done by 2021.

Because the bridge is incomplete, people from 10 different villages have to travel very long distances to get to work or school.

Hundreds of villagers held a protest and blocked traffic to show how upset they are with the slow progress. They say only a small part of the work is done.

Although leaders have told the builders to hurry up, the work is still moving very slowly. Students are having the hardest time because they have to travel extra miles every day, which makes it difficult for them to focus on their studies.

The residents of Manana village and its surrounding areas are currently embroiled in a deep sense of frustration and resentment following a staggering seven-year delay in the completion of a vital railway overbridge.

What was initially promised as a transformative piece of infrastructure has instead become a symbol of administrative stagnation and broken promises, leaving thousands of commuters in a state of perpetual limbo.

The local sentiment has reached a boiling point as the community grapples with the daily reality of a project that seems to have no clear end in sight despite numerous official assurances.

Three Men Narrowly Escape Death in Road Accident

Jhajjar: Three men had a lucky escape when a large truck filled with gravel tipped over and crushed their vehicle. The truck lost its balance while turning and trapped the men under a huge pile of stones. It took rescuers about half an hour and two large machines to pull the men out of the wreckage.

The injured men, who were traveling to buy farm animals, are now in the hospital and doing okay. People living nearby say the truck was carrying too much weight, which made it flip over. This area has seen many dangerous accidents caused by overloaded trucks recently, and residents want the police to be stricter with truck drivers to keep the roads safe. The harrowing scene unfolded in Jhajjar when three men narrowly cheated death in a catastrophic road accident that has once again highlighted the perils of overloaded heavy vehicles.

The trio was traveling in a smaller vehicle when a massive truck, laden with a heavy cargo of gravel, suddenly lost its stability and tipped over directly onto them. This sudden shift in weight transformed a routine drive into a life-threatening ordeal, as the men were instantly buried beneath a mountain of stones and the mangled remains of their own car.

The impact of the overturning truck was so severe that the smaller vehicle was nearly flattened, trapping the occupants within a claustrophobic cage of twisted metal and heavy debris.

Haryana Chief Minister Visits Punjab to Gain Support

Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini spoke at a large event in Ludhiana and asked the people of Punjab to vote for the BJP in the next elections. He promised that if the BJP wins in Punjab, he will bring all the helpful programs from Haryana to their state.

The Chief Minister said his office in Haryana is always open to help people from Punjab with any problems. He also praised the local community for being brave and hardworking. He explained that his government's main goal is to make sure everyone, especially those who need the most help, gets the support and development they deserve.

In a significant political maneuver aimed at reshaping the regional landscape, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini crossed the state border into Ludhiana to address a massive gathering and rally support for the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The visit marked a strategic effort to bridge the political divide between the two neighboring states, with Saini positioning himself as a messenger of progress and collaborative governance. Addressing a sea of supporters, he made a direct and impassioned plea to the electorate of Punjab, urging them to consider a new direction by placing their trust in the BJP for the upcoming elections.



At the heart of his address was a bold promise to export the administrative successes of Haryana into the territory of Punjab to ensure uniform growth across the region. Saini articulated a vision where the various welfare schemes and development programs that have been implemented in his home state would be seamlessly introduced to the people of Punjab.

This pledge of policy replication was intended to highlight the tangible benefits of a "double-engine" government, suggesting that the prosperity currently seen in Haryana could easily become the new standard for their neighbors.

Expanding on his commitment to the people, the Chief Minister made the un-

precedented offer of opening his own office in Haryana to the residents of Punjab, should they find themselves in need of administrative assistance or problem-solving. This gesture was designed to portray him not just as a leader of a specific state, but as a regional advocate dedicated to the well-being of all citizens regardless of geographical boundaries. By positioning the Haryana CMO as an accessible resource for Punjabis, he sought to demonstrate a level of proactive leadership that transcends traditional partisan or state-level friction.

During his speech, Saini took a moment to reflect on the cultural and social fabric of Punjab, offering high praise for the local community's storied history of brav-

ery and their reputation for relentless hard work. He framed these qualities as the backbone of the nation, suggesting that a population with such intrinsic strength deserves a government that matches their ambition and work ethic.

This rhetorical strategy was aimed at creating a sense of mutual respect and shared identity, softening the ground for a political shift by appealing to the pride of the local electorate.

The Chief Minister also took the opportunity to outline the core philosophical pillars of his administration, emphasizing a governance model that prioritizes the upliftment of the most vulnerable sections of society. He explained that his government's primary objective is

to ensure that development is not just a high-level economic statistic, but a lived reality for those who need support the most. This focus on "Antyodaya," or the rise of the last person, was presented as the fundamental guiding principle that he hopes to bring to the governance of Punjab.

Saini's visit to Ludhiana comes at a time when political tensions are high and the quest for regional dominance is intensifying among various political factions. By stepping directly into the industrial heart of Punjab, he signaled that the BJP is prepared to engage in a vigorous campaign focused on performance-based politics rather than traditional identity-driven narratives.

The response from the crowd suggested a curiosity about the "Haryana Model," which Saini was more than happy to promote as a blueprint for Punjab's future rejuvenation.

The promise of integrated development was a recurring theme throughout the event, as Saini argued that the shared challenges of the two states require shared solutions and a unified political vision. He spoke about the potential for synchronized growth in sectors like agriculture, industry, and infrastructure, which he believes can only be fully realized under the banner of a single party's leadership.

Organ Donations Save 19 People in Haryana

Rohtak: Three families in Haryana made a brave choice to donate the organs of their loved ones who had passed away. These selfless acts have saved the lives of 19 different patients. For the first time in the state, organs were even moved quickly using helicopters and airplanes to reach patients in other cities like Delhi and Chandigarh. Even though Haryana is currently 14th in the country for organ donations, these recent stories are inspiring more people to sign up. Thousands of people in the state have now pledged to donate their organs to help others. Doctors say that more people joining the program will help save many more lives in the future, and new landing pads for helicopters are being planned to move organs even faster.

The medical landscape in Haryana has been profoundly transformed by the extraordinary courage of their recently departed loved ones, a gesture of radical empathy that has directly resulted in the salvation of nineteen separate individuals. The ripple effect of this kindness has turned a period of mourning into a narrative of hope, proving that even in

death, there is a profound capacity for human connection and renewal.

This surge in successful transplants was made possible not only by the generosity of the donors but also by a groundbreaking shift in the state's medical logistics. In a historic first for Haryana, the healthcare system successfully integrated high-speed aerial transport into the organ recovery process, utilizing both helicopters and airplanes to facilitate the movement of vital organs. This technological leap ensured that the biological "race against the clock" was won, allowing life-saving tissues to reach surgical theaters in distant cities like Delhi and Chandigarh with unprecedented speed.

The implementation of these "green corridors" in the sky represents a sophisticated level of coordination between local hospitals, aviation authorities, and transplant teams. By bypassing the unpredictable congestion of regional highways, medical professionals were able to preserve the viability of the organs, which begin to deteriorate the moment they are removed from the donor. This newfound capability marks a turning point for the state's medical infrastructure, signaling that Haryana is becoming a formidable player in the national network of organ exchange and transplant surgery.

Hisar Airport Plans to Fly to More Cities Soon

Hisar: The Maharaja Agrasen Airport in Hisar is getting ready to start new flights to Jammu and Ahmedabad this May. It has been one year since the airport started its first commercial flights. Since then, more than 1,000 flights have traveled to places like Ayodhya, Delhi, Jaipur, and Chandigarh.

The airport has also improved its technology so planes can land safely at night or when it is very foggy. A large new building for passengers is being built and should be finished by April 2027. Experts believe the airport will become very important for the region because it is located between Delhi and Chandigarh and will soon be able to fix and maintain planes too.

The Maharaja Agrasen Airport in Hisar is currently standing at the threshold of a major operational expansion that promises to significantly enhance the aerial connectivity of the region.

As the facility prepares to broaden its horizons, plans are being finalized to inaugurate new flight routes to key destinations including Jammu and Ahmedabad, with these services expected to take flight as early as this May.

This strategic expansion is a testament to the growing demand for air travel in

Haryana and reflects the airport's successful trajectory since it first entered the commercial aviation sector.

It has been exactly one year since the airport celebrated the commencement of its first commercial flights, a milestone that marked the beginning of a new era for local travelers.

Since that inaugural day, the airport has maintained an impressive pace of activity, facilitating more than 1,000 flights that have connected Hisar to a variety of prominent cities across the country. These routes have included culturally and economically significant locations such as Ayodhya, Delhi, Jaipur, and Chandigarh, establishing Hisar as an emerging hub within the domestic flight network.

The rapid growth in flight frequency and passenger interest has necessitated a parallel upgrade in the airport's technical infrastructure to ensure the highest standards of safety and reliability.

Significant investments have been made in advanced navigation and landing technologies, which now allow aircraft to touch down safely even during challenging conditions.

These upgrades are particularly crucial for maintaining a consistent schedule

during periods of heavy fog or during late-night operations, effectively eliminating many of the weather-related delays that previously hindered regional air travel.

To accommodate the anticipated surge in travelers, a massive new passenger terminal is currently under construction, designed to offer modern amenities and a streamlined experience. This ambitious infrastructure project is slated for completion by April 2027 and is expected to transform the airport into a world-class facility capable of handling a much higher volume of footfall. The new building will not only enhance the comfort of passengers but also provide the necessary space for expanded check-in counters, retail outlets, and more efficient security screening processes.

Aviation experts and regional planners believe that the Maharaja Agrasen Airport is uniquely positioned to become a critical linchpin for the entire region's transportation strategy.

Its geographic location is one of its greatest assets, as it sits strategically between the major urban centers of Delhi and Chandigarh, offering a convenient alternative for those seeking to avoid the congestion of larger metropolitan airports.

BJP to Question Leader Over Social Media Comments

Ambala: The Haryana BJP leader, Mohan Lal Badoli, said the party will send a formal notice to former MP Kuldeep Bishnoi. This is because Bishnoi posted messages online criticizing his own party. Bishnoi was upset about comments made by another leader, Rekha Sharma, regarding his father, who was once the Chief Minister. Badoli explained that while Bishnoi's father was a respected leader, Bishnoi should not have complained about the party in public. He mentioned that the party is confident about winning upcoming local elections and forming a "triple-engine" government. Badoli also said that the public supports the BJP because of the development work being done under the current Chief Minister.

The Haryana wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party is currently navigating internal friction as state party president Mohan Lal Badoli announced the decision to issue a formal notice to former Member of Parliament Kuldeep Bishnoi. This disciplinary move follows a series of public social media posts where Bishnoi openly criticized the party, a move that leadership views as a breach of internal protocol. The tension highlights the delicate balance political parties



must maintain between honoring the legacies of veteran leaders and enforcing strict party discipline among their current ranks.

The root of the disagreement lies in comments recently made by Rekha Sharma, which Bishnoi found offensive toward his father, the late former Chief Minister Bhajan Lal. As a son and a political successor, Bishnoi felt the need to defend his father's reputation, leading

Bhajan Lal in high regard as a respected elder statesman, the method of Bishnoi's protest was inappropriate. Badoli suggested that there are established internal channels for such grievances and that bypasses these procedures in favor of social media creates an image of disunity. The formal notice is intended to seek a clarification from Bishnoi regarding his conduct and to remind him of the party's expectations for its senior members.

Despite this internal stir, Badoli shifted the focus toward the party's broader political strategy, expressing immense confidence in their prospects for the upcoming local elections. He spoke about the ambition to establish what he termed a "triple-engine" government, referring to the alignment of leadership at the local, state, and central levels. This narrative of a unified administrative force is a cornerstone of the BJP's current campaign, suggesting that such a structure is the most efficient way to deliver progress to the doorstep of every citizen.

The party president further asserted that the public's support for the BJP remains unwavering, largely due to the visible development work carried out under the leadership of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

Medical School Staff Warned: Follow Rules for Job Transfers

Rohtak: Authorities at the University of Health Sciences, Rohtak, have given a final warning to their workers. They told staff to stop asking powerful people outside the university to help them with job transfers or other work problems. The university said these actions break the rules and are unfair to others. A new notice says that all work requests must go through the correct university offices. If anyone keeps trying to use outside pressure, they will face serious punishment. This warning comes after the university also told staff not to talk to the news without permission to protect the school's reputation. The hospital at this university is very busy and helps about 8,000 patients every day. The administration at the



University of Health Sciences (UHS) in Rohtak has issued a stern and final directive to its faculty and staff, signaling a zero-tolerance policy toward the bypass of official administrative protocols. This warning specifically addresses a growing trend where employees have reportedly been seeking the

intervention of influential external figures—including politicians and high-ranking bureaucrats—to secure favorable job transfers or resolve internal workplace grievances. The university leadership has characterized these actions as a direct violation of the established code of conduct, asserting that

such back-channel maneuvers undermine the integrity of the institution. According to the university's governing body, relying on outside pressure to influence internal personnel decisions creates an environment of unfairness and erodes the merit-based system that the institution strives to maintain. By soliciting help from "powerful people" outside the university hierarchy, staff members are seen as attempting to circumvent the standardized procedures that apply to all employees equally. The administration emphasized that such behavior not only disrupts the organizational structure but also demoralizes colleagues who follow the prescribed rules and wait their turn for administrative considerations.

Sad Incident as Man and Two Children Jump Into Canal

Faridabad: A father and his two young children are missing after jumping into the Agra Canal late at night. Police found the man's motorcycle parked near the water. Rescue teams and divers have been searching the canal to find them. The police believe the man was very stressed because of arguments with his wife. This is the second such sad event in the same area in just one day. Earlier, a dentist also died by suicide in the same canal after a fight with his spouse. Police are still looking for the father and children and are talking to the family to learn more. The community of Faridabad has been cast into a state of profound sorrow following a devastating incident late at night where a father and his two young children reportedly jumped into the Agra Canal. This heartbreaking event

has left local residents in shock, as the quiet of the night was shattered by a tragedy that has now mobilized an extensive emergency response across the district. The physical evidence of the act was discovered shortly after the event occurred, as a lone motorcycle belonging to the father was found abandoned near the edge of the water, serving as a silent witness to the family's presence at the site. The search for the missing trio has become a race against time and the elements, with specialized rescue teams and professional divers arriving on the scene to comb the murky depths of the canal. Despite their exhaustive efforts through the night and into the following day, the swift current and low visibility of the water have made the recovery mission exceptionally difficult for the personnel

involved. The entire area surrounding the canal has been cordoned off as teams work tirelessly, fueled by a grim determination to bring closure to the grieving relatives who remain gathered at the banks. Preliminary investigations by the local police suggest that the father was under immense psychological strain, purportedly driven to a state of deep distress following a series of intense arguments with his wife. This domestic turmoil appears to have reached a tragic breaking point, leading to a decision that has now impacted the lives of multiple families and the collective psyche of the city. Officers are currently sifting through the family's history and recent interactions to better understand the factors that could lead to such a desperate and irreversible action involving innocent children.

Famous Coach Joins Dispute Over Wrestling Tournament Location

Hisar: A new argument has started regarding the location of an upcoming wrestling tournament. Veteran coach Mahavir Singh Phogat is supporting his niece, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, who feels the event should not be held in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh. They claim the venue is controlled by a former federation chief who faces serious allegations of harassment. The wrestling community in Haryana has been thrust into a new wave of controversy as the debate intensifies over the selection of Gonda, Uttar Pradesh, as the venue for a significant upcoming tournament. This latest dispute has gained considerable weight with the involvement of veteran coach Mahavir Singh Phogat, who has publicly stepped forward to support his niece, Vinesh Phogat, in her opposition to the chosen location. The family's stance has reignited a conversation about the governance of the sport and the safety of its athletes, creating a divide that resonates far beyond the wrestling mat.



agreement is the assertion by both Mahavir and Vinesh that the venue in Gonda is under the direct or indirect control of the former wrestling federation chief. This individual has been at the center of serious and widely publicized allegations of harassment, leading to a deep-seated lack of trust among several prominent athletes. The Phogats argue that holding a national-level event in a location so closely tied to a person facing such grave ac-

cusations sends a discouraging message to the wrestling community and compromises the integrity of the sport.

Mahavir Singh Phogat, a figure synonymous with the rise of women's wrestling in India, has voiced his concerns regarding the fairness of the competition. He contends that the current administrative leadership remains heavily influenced by the shadow of the previous head, suggesting that the change in management was more sym-

bolistic than substantive. In his view, a tournament conducted under such circumstances cannot guarantee a neutral environment for the wrestlers, particularly those who have been vocal in their demands for institutional reform.

The veteran coach has also raised practical questions about the logistical choice of Gonda, questioning the rationale behind bypassing world-class facilities located in and around the

national capital. He pointed out that Delhi and its neighboring areas boast superior infrastructure and better accessibility for athletes traveling from across the country. By choosing a more remote location with controversial ties, Mahavir argues that the federation is prioritizing political convenience or personal loyalties over the actual needs and comfort of the competing wrestlers.

Vinesh Phogat, who has recently transitioned into the political sphere while remaining a prominent voice for athlete rights, has expressed specific fears regarding the technical aspects of the matches, officiating, and scoring could be manipulated by individuals who remain loyal to the former federation chief. For an athlete, the fear that their hard work could be undone by biased officiating is a significant deterrent, and Vinesh's comments reflect a profound breakdown in the relationship between the athletes and the governing body.

Haryana Power Official Fired Over Massive Bank Scam

Chandigarh: The Haryana government has removed Amit Dewan, a former senior finance director, from his job. He is accused of working with scammers to open illegal bank accounts and taking a 50 lakh rupee bribe. This major fraud involves several government departments and totals 590 crore rupees.

Dewan is the fourth official to lose his job in this case. Other officials were recently fired for similar frauds involving tens of crores and taking bribes like luxury cars and vacation tickets.

All four were dismissed immediately without a formal inquiry to prevent them from interfering with the ongoing CBI investigation. Records show Dewan was in constant contact with the main scammers while moving government funds into unauthorized bank accounts.

In a decisive move to maintain the integrity of public office, the Haryana government has terminated the services of Amit Dewan, a former senior finance director, following his alleged involvement in a staggering financial scandal. Dewan is

accused of being a key player in a sophisticated network that facilitated the opening of unauthorized bank accounts to siphon off state funds. The gravity of the situation is underscored by the claim that Dewan personally accepted a bribe of 50 lakh rupees to facilitate these illegal transactions, marking a significant breach of public trust.

The scope of this investigation is immense, with authorities revealing that the total amount involved in the fraud across various government departments has reached a monumental 590 crore rupees.

This "mega scam" has prompted a wide-reaching crackdown by the state administration, as they attempt to untangle a complex web of financial mismanagement and corruption.

The removal of Dewan is not an isolated incident but rather part of a broader systemic purge aimed at rooting out those who have exploited their positions for personal gain.

Amit Dewan is the fourth high-ranking official to be dismissed in connection with this specific case, signaling a

zero-tolerance policy toward administrative corruption in Haryana. Previous dismissals involved officials who were allegedly caught in similar fraudulent schemes, with some reportedly receiving kickbacks in the form of luxury vehicles and high-end international vacation packages. By removing these individuals, the government is sending a clear message that no official, regardless of their rank or seniority, is above the law when it comes to the handling of public money.

The dismissal was executed under a specific administrative provision that allows for the immediate removal of employees without a lengthy formal inquiry. This drastic step was taken to ensure that the accused individuals could not use their remaining influence to tamper with evidence or intimidate witnesses while the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) continues its probe. The government prioritized the security of the ongoing investigation, recognizing that keeping such officials in their posts posed a significant risk to the pursuit of justice.

Gurugram to Build Modern Road Designed to Stop Flooding

Gurugram: City officials have approved a 9 crore rupee project to create a "model road" between Sectors 51 and 52. Instead of just fixing potholes, this project will completely redesign the road to prevent waterlogging, which is a major problem during the rainy season. The work is expected to start soon and finish within six months.

The new road will include better underground drains, paths for people to walk on, and bright LED street lights. Builders will use high-quality materials so the road stays in good shape even with many cars driving on it. This upgrade is expected to make daily travel much easier and safer for thousands of local residents.

The municipal administration in Gurugram has greenlit an ambitious 9 crore rupee infrastructure project aimed at transforming the commute between Sectors 51 and 52 into a premier travel experience. This initiative marks a significant shift in the city's urban planning strategy, moving away from

temporary patchwork and toward a permanent, holistic redesign of the local transport network. The project is specifically engineered to address the perennial issue of waterlogging that has historically plagued this corridor, causing significant distress to commuters and residents alike during the monsoon season.

By designating this stretch as a "model road," officials intend to set a new standard for urban construction within the city. Unlike traditional roadwork that focuses solely on the surface layer, this comprehensive overhaul will prioritize structural integrity and long-term functionality. The timeline for the project is aggressive yet deliberate, with construction activities expected to commence in the immediate future and reach full completion within a six-month window. This swift execution plan is designed to ensure that the infrastructure is robust and ready before the next cycle of heavy rainfall begins.

The core of the "model

road" philosophy lies in its advanced drainage capabilities, featuring a completely redesigned underground sewage and runoff system.

These high-capacity drains are engineered to channel massive volumes of water away from the road surface instantly, effectively neutralizing the threat of flooding that often brings traffic to a standstill. By addressing the root cause of surface deterioration—standing water—the project ensures that the massive investment of taxpayers' money is protected from the rapid erosion common in tropical climates. Safety and accessibility are also central themes of the Sector 51-52 project, with dedicated pedestrian pathways being integrated into the design from the ground up. These walkways will provide a secure environment for residents to travel on foot, separated from the flow of heavy vehicular traffic. Furthermore, the installation of energy-efficient LED street lighting will dramatically improve nighttime visibility, reducing the risk

of accidents and enhancing the overall security of the neighborhood for those returning home after dark.

To ensure the longevity of the project, contractors have been mandated to use premium, industrial-grade materials capable of withstanding the daily wear and tear of thousands of vehicles. This focus on quality control is intended to prevent the frequent appearance of potholes that typically follow heavy usage or seasonal changes. By building a road that is as durable as it is modern, the Gurugram authorities hope to reduce future maintenance costs and provide a consistent, smooth driving experience for the public. For the thousands of residents who live and work in the surrounding sectors, the upgrade represents a significant improvement in their daily quality of life. The elimination of waterlogging means that school buses, office commuters, and emergency vehicles will no longer be trapped in the gridlock that accompanies even minor storms.

Politician Receives 5 Crore Rupee Threat Call

Sonepat: Sachin Kundu, a leader from the Congress party, reported receiving a scary phone call demanding 5 crore rupees. The caller claimed to be part of a famous criminal gang and threatened to hurt Kundu and his family if the money wasn't paid. Police have started an investigation and filed a case against the caller.

This is not the only case of its kind; several other local businessmen and politicians in the area have received similar threat calls recently. In all these cases, callers used international numbers and claimed to be part of notorious gangs to demand large sums of money. The police are now working to track down these callers and protect the people being targeted. The political and social climate in Sonepat has been gripped by a sense of profound unease following a high-profile extortion attempt targeting Sachin Kundu, a prominent leader from the Congress party. The incident began when Kundu received a chilling phone call from an



unidentified individual who issued a direct demand for a staggering 5 crore rupees. This brazen attempt at extortion has sent shockwaves through the local political establishment, as the caller explicitly threatened the safety of both the leader and his immediate family members should the astronomical sum fail to be delivered. The caller reportedly sought to amplify the fear factor by claiming an affiliation with a notorious

criminal gang known for its history of violence and high-stakes illegal activities.

By invoking the name of a famous organized crime syndicate, the perpetrator intended to create a sense of inevitable danger, forcing the target into a state of panic and compliance.

However, rather than succumbing to the pressure, Kundu promptly brought the matter to the attention of the law enforcement authorities,

leading to the immediate registration of a formal criminal case.

This disturbing episode is far from an isolated incident, as it reflects a growing and dangerous trend of "digital extortion" that has recently plagued the Sonepat region. Several other influential figures, including local businessmen and fellow politicians, have reported receiving remarkably similar threats over the past few months.

BJP Members Celebrate Election Wins in Karnal

Karnal: BJP supporters gathered at their local office on Monday to celebrate the party's success in recent state elections. Leaders and workers danced to drums, set off fireworks, and shared sweets. They credited the victory to the hard work of party members and the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Local leaders said the election results show that people prefer development over corruption. One official mentioned that women voters played a big role in the results. The atmosphere was very joyful as workers praised the party's focus on public welfare policies.

The local headquarters of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnal was transformed into a scene of vibrant jubilation this Monday as supporters and party workers converged to celebrate a resounding success in the recent state elections. The air was thick with the scent of marigold garlands and gunpowder as the rank and file of the party expressed their collective relief and pride through a series of traditional festivities. For many in attendance, the victory was not just a political milestone but a validation of the tireless door-to-door campaigning that had defined their efforts over the preceding months.



dhul drums echoed through the streets of Karnal, providing a rhythmic backdrop to the spontaneous dancing of jubilant party workers who had gathered from across the district. Brightly colored flags waved in the air as the sky was intermittently illuminated by bursts of fire-

works, signaling the party's triumph to the entire city. Amidst the noise and color, the sharing of traditional sweets became a central ritual, symbolizing the "sweet taste of victory" that many felt had been earned through grit and strategic planning. During the height of the cel-

ebrations, local leaders took to the microphones to attribute the electoral success to the foundational leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the unwavering commitment of the grassroots cadre. They argued that the "Modi factor" continues to be a potent force in region-

al politics, providing a central vision that resonates with voters at every level of society. The narrative of the day was one of deep gratitude toward the central leadership for providing the policy framework that allowed local candidates to thrive in a competitive political environment. Senior officials present at the Karnal office emphasized that the election results served as a clear mandate from the public, who they believe have decisively chosen a path of development over the shadow of past corruption. This "pro-incumbency" sentiment was framed as a historic shift in voter behavior, suggesting that the electorate is now more focused on tangible outcomes and administrative transparency than on traditional identity politics.

A somber atmosphere has descended upon the Haryana Civil Secretariat in Chandigarh following a tragic incident on Monday that resulted in the untimely death of a government employee. The victim, identified as Balwant Singh, was a dedicated staff member of the Haryana Electricity Department and a resident of nearby Panchkula. The incident occurred when Singh reportedly fell from the eighth floor of the high-security administrative building, an event that has left his colleagues and the local community in a state of profound shock and disbelief.

The sequence of events began earlier in the day when Balwant Singh arrived at the Secretariat, a facility known for its rigorous entry protocols and significant security

Government Worker Dies After Falling from Secretariat Building

Chandigarh: A man working for the Haryana Electricity Department died on Monday after falling from the eighth floor of the Haryana Civil Secretariat. The man, identified as Balwant Singh, lived in Panchkula. He had entered the high-security building using a visitor's pass, claiming he had official work to finish.

People nearby called for emergency medical help immediately, but unfortunately, he died at the scene. Police are now investigating the incident to understand what happened. His body was taken to a local hospital for a standard medical examination.

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The sequence of events began earlier in the day when Balwant Singh arrived at the Secretariat, a facility known for its rigorous entry protocols and significant security

presence. Records indicate that he gained access to the building by obtaining a standard visitor's pass, citing the need to complete official paperwork and attend to pending departmental tasks. As a familiar face within the government circuit, his presence in the building was not initially seen as unusual, making the subsequent tragedy all the more unexpected for those who crossed paths with him that morning.

The high-altitude fall occurred in a central area of the complex, and the impact was immediate, drawing the attention of security personnel and other government employees working in the vicinity. Witnesses at the scene moved quickly to summon emergency medical services, hoping against hope that life-saving intervention might still be possible. However, the severity of the fall from the eighth floor proved insurmountable; despite the rapid arrival of medical professionals, Singh was tragically pronounced dead at the scene, turning a busy workday into a site of mourning.

In the immediate aftermath of the fall, local police cordoned off the specific area within the Secretariat to preserve the scene for a detailed forensic investigation. Authorities are currently working to reconstruct the final moments leading up to the incident, looking for any clues that might explain how such a fall could occur in a building designed with mod-

ern safety standards. Investigators are meticulously reviewing CCTV footage from the eighth-floor corridors and interviewing anyone who may have spoken to Singh shortly before the event took place.

The body of the deceased has been transported to a local hospital, where a standard medical examination and post-mortem will be conducted to provide more clarity on the physical circumstances of his death. This procedure is a mandatory part of the investigation into any unnatural death occurring within a high-profile government installation. The results of this examination are expected to be shared with the family and the investigating officers to assist in the finalization of the official report, ensuring that no detail is overlooked in this sensitive case.

The news of Balwant Singh's passing has caused a wave of grief within the Haryana Electricity Department, where he was known as a reliable and hardworking colleague. Many of his peers expressed their sorrow, noting that the loss of a veteran worker under such sudden and distressing circumstances is a heavy blow to the entire department. Support services are reportedly being considered for staff members who may be struggling with the emotional impact of witnessing or hearing about the tragedy at their place of work.



DC, CSK face must-win clash as playoff race tightens

New Delhi: Delhi Capitals will be looking for consistency when they face five-time champions Chennai Super Kings in their Indian Premier League (IPL) match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Tuesday, after a season where their performances have swung sharply between impressive wins and disappointing defeats.

Both teams are in a similar position, sitting on eight points from nine matches. With only five games left in the league stage, neither side can afford many more mistakes if they want to stay in the race for the playoffs.

Delhi, placed seventh in the IPL points table, head into Tuesday's game after Friday's much-needed win in Jaipur, where their batting finally clicked after three straight losses. However, the damage from the earlier defeats still lingers. Two of them came at home, including

a record chase of 265 by Punjab Kings and a heavy loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, who exposed Delhi's fragile batting against quality pace bowling. There was also a painful one-run defeat to Gujarat Titans at the Feroz Shah Kotla, a match Delhi had in their control but failed to close out.

Despite these setbacks, there have been some positives for Delhi. Opener Pathum Nissanka has started to find form and is building a solid partnership with the reliable KL Rahul at the top.



Mitchell Starc has added pace and aggression to the bowling attack, giving the team an edge with the new ball.

Kuldeep Yadav, however, will be under pressure to improve after an expensive outing in Jaipur, where he conceded three sixes in his final over. His overall performance this season has also been below expectations, with an economy rate above 10 and only seven wickets in nine matches. T Natarajan, who is expected to control the middle and death overs, has also struggled to make an impact, picking up just five wickets so far.

Even with the ups and downs, captain Axar Patel has maintained a composed approach.

"You have to come every day and keep doing the same things. You can always turn things around. So very

happy with the way the boys played. The way they batted and bowled, I think both departments were excellent and I'm very happy," he said after the win over Rajasthan Royals.

Chennai Super Kings find themselves in a similar situation. Placed one rung above their opponents, they too are under pressure and cannot afford another slip-up, especially after finishing at the bottom last season.

CSK's batting has also been inconsistent. For a large part of the season, Sanju Samson carried the burden in a relatively young lineup, while skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad struggled for runs. However, the skipper has recently found form, coming into this match after scoring back-to-back half-centuries.

There have also been some changes in the batting order. Urvil Patel has been

promoted to number three ahead of Sarfaraz Khan following Aayush Mhatre's injury. His quick 14 off 12

balls in the win over Mumbai Indians could boost his confidence. Kartik Sharma is another positive, having scored his maiden IPL fifty recently.

Two of CSK's four wins have come against a struggling Mumbai Indians side, while another victory was against

Delhi earlier this season at Chepauk. That result will give Gaikwad and his team some confidence heading into this return fixture.

Dhoni hasn't travelled with the team to Delhi: SimmonsCSK bowling consultant Eric Simmons has confirmed that former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is recovering steadily from a calf injury but he has not travelled with the squad to the national capital.

"An update on MS Dhoni is way above my pay grade. He is not with us but steadily improving. He will be ready when he is ready and he knows when he is ready to play. No, he hasn't travelled with the team," Simmons said in the pre-match press conference.

The legendary wicket-keeper-batter is yet to feature in any match this season, with his last IPL appearance coming against Gujarat Titans on May 25 in the 2025 edition.

Squads: Delhi Capitals: Abhishek Porel, KL Rahul, Nitish Rana, Sameer Rizvi, Tristan Stubbs, Axar Patel, Ashutosh Sharma, Dushantha Chameera, Kuldeep Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, David Miller, Auqib Nabi Dar, Pathum Nissanka, Lungi Ngidi, Sahil Parakh, Prithvi Shaw, Kyle Jamieson, Tripurana Vijay, Madhav Tiwari, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Karun Nair, T Natarajan.

Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Dewald Brevis, MS Dhoni, Urvil Patel, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ramakrishna Ghosh, Ayush Mhatre, Shreyas Gopal, Jamie Overton, Khaleel Ahmed, Anshul Kamboj, Gurjapneet Singh, Mukesh Choudhary, Noor Ahmad, Akeal Hosein, Prashant Veer, Matthew Short, Sarfaraz Khan, Matt Henry, Rahul Chahar, Zakary Foulkes, Spencer Johnson, Kartik Sharma, Aman Khan.

AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup: Young Tigresses brace for stern test against Japan

Suzhou, (China): India's journey in the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup 2026 now moves into a far sterner phase, as the Young Tigresses prepare to face Japan in their second match of Group B on Tuesday.

The match will be played on 17:00 IST at the Suzhou Taihu Football Sports Centre Pitch 4. The match will be streamed live on the AFC Asian Cup YouTube Channel.

After a 0-2 defeat to Australia in their opening Group B fixture, India find themselves in a situation where every goal carries weight. Goal difference is crucial, and a couple of double-digit scorelines popped up on the first matchday, including Japan's 13-0 win over Lebanon. In Group C, DPR Korea defeated Chinese Taipei 10-0.

Earlier on Tuesday, Australia will face Lebanon in the other Group B game.

Standing in India's way next is one of the most technically refined sides in world football at this level. In the nine U17 Women's Asian Cups contested so far, Japan have made the final seven times and won it on four occasions. The Little Nadeshiko were also FIFA U17 Women's World Cup champions in 2014. Japan may arrive as clear favourites, but Young Tigresses head coach Pamela Conti stated that her girls will approach the contest with clarity in their mindset. Speaking to the aiff.com after the official training session on Monday morning, she said, "We've just finished training, and we are quite excited because we are going to play against one of the strongest teams in the

world.

"Me, as a coach, and the players as well, believe that we need to play a perfect match if we want to win. But beyond that, just being there, experiencing it, and enjoying the game is also important. I will definitely enjoy it." India's preparation for the tournament has been extensive, with over three months of continuous training, including trips to Myanmar and Russia. The physical challenge posed by teams like Russia and Australia has already offered valuable reference points, and the focus now shifts to dealing with Japan's speed and technical precision.

"The message to the players has been clear throughout training. We cannot just defend. If we let them have the ball without pressure, it will be very easy for them to find spaces and create one-on-one situations," Conti explained.

"We need to stay strong. We know their strengths. They will try to push us back as much as possible. But we need to stay higher up the pitch so that we can show that we are there, and not make it easy for them."

For the Young Tigresses, the emphasis is also on building a long-term competitive mentality, regardless of the opposition. "Our mentality should never change. Whether you play against the best team or the lowest-ranked team, it's always about three points. It's important to build a winning mentality, and you develop that by playing these kinds of demanding matches," said Conti. "It's also important for the players to be able to say in the future, 'I played

against Japan back then.' That experience matters," the Italian added.

Right-back Divyani Linda explained how there's a shared sense of anticipation within the squad, while also stressing the need for sharper execution after the Australia game.

"The feeling is good. We are excited because it's our first time playing against a team like Japan. They are a tough side, but we believe we can do well too," said the 17-year-old who has four goals and four assists in her youth international career for India.

India's defensive structure held for large parts against Australia, but individual errors proved costly. That's an area the team is keen to address immediately.

"We need to improve from the last game and avoid the mistakes we made. Our team is good, everyone has quality. Maybe we are not as physically strong, but we play well with our minds and our understanding of the game."

"In the last few games (against Australia and Russia), we've conceded goals from our errors, so we need to avoid those and perform better," said Divyani. Japan's style, built on quick combinations and fluid movement, demands sustained concentration and technical discipline, something India are preparing specifically for. "Mentally, against a team like Japan, we have to stay focused. They play very quick, short-passing football and create chances that way. So we also need to play more on the ground, keep our passes short, and stay composed," Linda added.

PSL success fuels Babar Azam's push for all-format consistency

Islamabad: Former Pakistan captain Babar Azam has made it clear that he has no intention of stepping away from any format of the game, insisting that it is not a player's role to decide what to skip but to be ready to play whenever required.

Babar, who has been a key figure for Pakistan across formats for years, has faced a lean patch recently, struggling to score consistently. His form also dipped during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup earlier this year, where he failed to make a significant impact with the bat.

However, the 31-year-old found form again in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), leading Peshawar Zalmi to the title. He finished as the tournament's top scorer, amassing a record-equaling 588

runs in 11 matches, including two centuries.

Speaking after the PSL triumph, Babar reiterated his commitment to all formats of the game. "My focus is on all three formats. It's not for the player to decide (which format to skip); a player's job is to play. In my opinion, every player should play every form of cricket. You shouldn't focus only on the white ball or T20s. Red-ball cricket gives you immense experience. It teaches you how to build an innings and gives you patience," he said. "When you play four-day cricket or any domestic circuit, you gain the experience of scoring 'long' runs. You should play all three formats because each one helps the other. Red ball helps you in T20s and ODIs. When you play Test matches, the patience and mindset you develop, the art of playing a long innings—benefit you significantly in white-ball

cricket," he added.

Babar is expected to continue his run in the upcoming two-match Test series against Bangladesh, starting Friday. His recent record in Test cricket has been underwhelming, with his last century in the format coming in December 2022. His struggles in white-ball cricket before the PSL were also evident, with just one half-century this year, which came in a T20I against Australia in early February ahead of the T20 World Cup. Reflecting on his dip in form, Babar acknowledged that such phases are part of a batter's journey and stressed the importance of self-assessment and support systems. "I was not up to my own expectations, but it is normal for a batter to struggle with his execution. You have to take a few steps back and assess where you are going wrong and correct it.

A lot of positives for us to take from this game: Suryansh Shedge on PBKS' defeat to Gujarat Titans

Ahmedabad: Punjab Kings (PBKS) remain at the top of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 standings with 13 points from nine matches, despite a four-wicket defeat to Gujarat Titans (GT) at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Chasing 163, the hosts crossed the line with a ball to spare in what was a closely fought contest on a difficult surface that kept bowlers in the game throughout.

The mood in the Punjab camp was measured and forward-looking despite the result, with Suryansh Shedge leading the conversation in the post-match press conference after a standout performance with the bat.

Shedge was exceptional on a wicket that offered variable bounce and tested every batter who walked out to the middle. He scored 57 off 29

deliveries at a strike rate of 196.55, striking 3 fours and 5 sixes, and gave Punjab Kings the best possible chance of posting a competitive total.

His knock was a lesson in reading conditions and trusting the process.

"I wouldn't say I was waiting, I was preparing," said Shedge, reflecting on his journey to the playing XI. "The time on the sidelines benefited me and it gave me the opportunity to prepare physically and mentally. Ricky Ponting and Shreyas Iyer have consistently told me the same thing too: when the opportunity arrives, you must be ready to take it with both hands. That is what I tried to do today."

On a surface where scoring runs was far from straightforward, Shedge's approach stood apart. "My only intention was to spend



as much time at the crease as possible, and I think that made things easier as I progressed through the innings," he explained. "On such wickets, a batter has to take time to settle before playing expansive shots. Targeting 240 or 250 on this track was never realistic, the double-paced surface simply did not allow it."

Punjab Kings posted 163, and while the total proved just short, Shedge was clear-eyed about the effort the team put in. "Perhaps we could have scored 20 to 25 more runs, but I still believe 163 was a fighting total. We gave everything we had, and there are many positives to take from this game." With the ball, Arsh-

deep Singh was outstanding, conceding just 24 runs in 4 overs at an impressive economy rate of 6.00 and picking up 2 wickets to keep Punjab Kings in the contest deep into the chase. Vijaykumar Vyshak was equally impressive, taking the crucial wickets of Jos Buttler and Sai Sudarshan while conceding just 31 runs in 4 overs at an economy rate of just 7.75. Shedge credited deliberate planning for Vyshak's effectiveness. "Just before the powerplay ended, our bowling coach sent a message to Vyshak to bowl at that hard length, and you could see how well he bowled after receiving that message." Punjab Kings will next travel to face Sunrisers Hyderabad away from home on May 6, looking to return to winning ways and build on their lead at the top of the table.

This one stays with me: Prannoy reflects on Thomas Cup bronze

Horsens (Denmark): India international shuttler HS Prannoy has said that the national team's bronze medal finish at the Thomas Cup 2026 will remain special for him.

India, who had created history by winning their first-ever Thomas Cup gold in 2022, had to settle for bronze this time after losing 0-3 to France in the semifinal match on Saturday.

France, on the other hand, reached their first-ever final with the win.

Reflecting on the campaign, Prannoy shared an emotional message about the experience.

"This one stays with me. For a long long time. Not just the medal, but everything around it. The build up, the energy in the group, the belief we kept feeding each other. Those last few days... hard to put into words. Just pure emotion. Grateful for this. Truly," Prannoy, who was part of India's 2022 title-winning team, wrote on X. India's campaign

ended at Forum Horsens, where the team struggled against a strong and well-prepared French side. The absence of Lakshya Sen, who missed the semifinal due to an elbow injury, proved to be a major setback.

Youngster Ayush Shetty, playing as the first singles, lost to world No. 4 Christo Popov 11-21, 9-21, giving France an early lead. Next, Kidambi Srikanth fought hard against world No. 10 Alex Lanier but went down 16-21, 18-21, putting India under

pressure. Prannoy then took the court in the third singles match, hoping to keep India's chances alive. He faced world No. 17 Toma Junior Popov and put up a strong fight, but eventually lost 19-21, 16-21 as France sealed the tie 3-0. Despite the defeat, reaching the semifinals ensured India a podium finish. It marked only the second time India have reached the last four of the Thomas Cup, the first being their historic title-winning run in 2022.

Disappointed but ready to fight back, says India U17 midfielder Thandamoni Baskey

Suzhou, China: India's return to the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup after 21 years began with a 0-2 defeat against Australia on Saturday, but the immediate post-match assessment from within the camp remained grounded in realism, with a clear focus on areas that need improvement ahead of the next challenge against Japan on Tuesday.

Head coach Pamela Conti acknowledged the difficulty of the contest against a physically dominant opponent while pointing out that the decisive moments came from within.

"It was a difficult match. We knew Australia had a lot of quality, and it was going to be hard to play with the ball," she told the aiff.com.

"I think the team did very well defensively. It was important not to concede many goals, and in the end, the two goals they scored came from our own mistakes. That is where we need to improve a lot," the Italian said.

Australia's opener in the first half and a second-half own goal proved decisive, but India's structure largely held firm across long phases of the game. Conti emphasised that her tactical ap-

proach was not built around passive defending.

"In the second half, things changed because we attacked more. We already knew that when you open up against teams like this, they will score. I told them to stay as compact as possible, to play with a mid or high block, and to press. I didn't want the team to just sit back and defend all the time. It's unfortunate that we scored an own goal."

Despite the result, she highlighted specific defensive positives, particularly in limiting Australia's clear chances.

"I think there are many positives. First, Australia didn't have many shots on target. We defended very well. All the players showed great desire and commitment. Now our focus shifts to Japan."

shape qualification scenarios.

India utilised their full bench during the match, with the five substitutions contributing to a more proactive second-half display. Conti remained measured in her evaluation.

"Yes, I'm very proud of my team. I think we played a great match. But we also have to be realistic. We are talking about

Australia, a very strong team. We played well, but now we face Japan, which will probably be even more difficult. We also have to manage the players physically because it won't be easy."

Four hours before India's game, Conti had made the short walk to Pitch 4 to watch Japan's first half against Lebanon, which ended 7-0. By the time she made her way back to the hotel and finished her pre-game team meeting, the full-time score read 13-0 to the East Asians. "I went to watch the first half of Japan's match against Lebanon. They are an incredible team. I don't think I've ever seen a team at this age play like that. We have to be very careful because it will be a long and demanding match."

Indian Women Hockey Goalkeepers hail special Goalkeeping camp

Bengaluru: The Indian Women's Hockey Team's goalkeepers praised the special 11-day Goalkeeping camp that was organised from April 22- May 2 at the SAI, Bengaluru.

The camp was conducted by David Williamson under the supervision of Chief Coach of Indian women's hockey team Sjoerd Marjine, and was supported by Anandana, the Coca-Cola India Foundation.

Senior goalkeepers Savita, Bichu Devi Kharibam, Bansari Solanki, and Madhuri Kindo attended the sessions, allowing them to focus extensively on technical basics, decision-making, defensive organisation, and tactical awareness in match situations as the team pre-



pares for major tournaments in the upcoming international calendar. Speaking on the benefits of these kinds of focused camps for goalkeepers, Savita said, "Being a goalkeeper, I've always experienced that these kinds of camps help you learn a lot,

while polishing and improving your skills. We recreate match-like situations in training and have plenty of discussions. That level of attention to detail in the camp helps us feel more comfortable when we face similar situations during matches.

So, these specialised camps are always important and we'd like to thank Anandana, The Coca-Cola India Foundation, for their support." Sharing her experience as the senior player in the camp, Savita also shed light on how she embraces

that role while mentoring the younger goalkeepers. "Being a senior player, I have to ensure that I don't only focus on my own performance but also pay attention to and motivate the younger keepers."

"I'm always looking at how they're doing and how I can guide them in little details, based on my experience. I'm always trying to keep a good environment because I believe that when you're training in the right kind of environment, you want to do well. So, it's about keeping everyone motivated and pushing them to do even better. Sometimes, we were really tired at the end of these sessions but overcoming that is part of the mindset as we try to make the most of these camps," she added.



MARKET

| 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 | |
| 77,269.40 | 0.46% | | 24,063.55 | 0.51% | | 22,830.75 | 0.65% | | 70,283.85 | 0.92% | | 25,041.10 | 0.58% | | 54,878.50 | 0.028% | | 60,159.75 | 0.63% | |
| Previous close | Open | | Previous close | Open | | Previous close | Open | | Previous close | Open | | Previous close | Open | | Previous close | Open | | Previous close | Open | |
| 76,913.50 | 77,257.27 | | 23,997.55 | 24,063.55 | | 22,683.55 | 22,783.80 | | 69,643.90 | 69,976.55 | | 24,896.00 | 24,973.70 | | 54,863.35 | 54,937.90 | | 59,784.85 | 60,235.50 | |
| High | Low | | High | Low | | High | Low | | High | Low | | High | Low | | High | Low | | High | Low | |
| 77,910.75 | 76,939.54 | | 24,290.20 | 24,004.75 | | 22,954.30 | 22,709.75 | | 70,834.05 | 69,958.20 | | 25,191.70 | 24,924.45 | | 55,602.30 | 54,723.50 | | 60,563.95 | 59,787.60 | |

Top Gainers

| Company | Current | % Gain |
|-----------------|----------|--------|
| Adani Ports | 1,742.60 | 5.15 |
| Adani Enterpris | 2,485.70 | 3.21 |
| Eicher Motors | 7,329.00 | 3.09 |
| HUL | 2,309.30 | 2.59 |
| Jio Financial | 252.74 | 2.59 |

Top Losers

| Company | Current | % Loss |
|----------------|----------|--------|
| Bharti Airtel | 1,827.10 | -3.16 |
| Kotak Mahindra | 371.65 | -3.04 |
| Dr Reddys Labs | 1,287.20 | -2.70 |
| ONGC | 292.90 | -2.22 |
| TCS | 2,431.30 | -1.72 |

Commodities

| Commodity | Price | Change (%) |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Gold Jun 05 | 150,113.00 | -1,239.00 -0.82 |
| Silver May 05 | 239,781.00 | -6,521.00 -2.65 |
| Crudeoil May 18 | 9,755.00 | 90.00 0.93 |
| Naturalgas May 26 | 272.50 | 8.00 3.02 |

UPI achieves 22.35bn transactions in April, fostering digital payments revolution

New Delhi: India's digital payments ecosystem continues to scale new heights, with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) recording an impressive 22.35 billion transactions in April 2026. The milestone reflects the growing adoption of seamless, real-time payment systems across the country.

The achievement was highlighted by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) on Monday, which credited citizens for actively driving the digital payments revolution. The surge in transaction volume underscores how deeply UPI has penetrated everyday financial activities. UPI, launched in 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India, has transformed the way Indians transfer money. By enabling multiple bank accounts to be linked within a single mobile application, it has simplified peer-to-peer and merchant payments. Over the years, UPI has become the backbone of India's digital economy, offering instant fund transfers with minimal friction. Its ease of use and interoperability have made it accessible to users across urban

and rural areas alike.

Sharing the milestone on social media platform X, DFS posted, "UPI achieves 22.35bn transaction count on April 26! Thank you, India, for embracing digital payments and driving this revolution forward." The message highlighted the collective role of users in this growth story. The department also encouraged continued adoption, adding, "Let's continue the journey of transforming the way we interact." This reflects the government's broader push toward a less-cash economy. The steady rise in UPI usage is not a recent phenomenon but part of a consistent upward trend. According to data shared by DFS, the platform has witnessed significant growth over the past few years. Between the second quarter of 2024 and the second quarter of 2025, UPI transactions grew by 33.01 percent in volume. During this period, the system recorded a staggering 59.11 billion transactions. This growth highlights increasing trust in digital payment systems among users, as well as improved infrastructure supporting high transaction volumes without disruption.

Stock market rebounds sharply as election results lift sentiment

Mumbai: Stock market staged a strong rebound on Monday recovering from Thursday's sharp sell-off amid the election results announcement in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala, and the union Territory of Puducherry.

At close, the Sensex was up 355.90 points or 0.46 per cent at 77,269.40, and the Nifty was up 121.75 points or 0.51 per cent at 24,119.30. Nifty Midcap and Smallcap indices rose about 0.5pc each.

Among the sectors, metal, realty, infrastructure, and pharma indices gained around 0.5-1pc, while IT, media, and PSU Bank indices ended lower.

On Nifty, the top gainers were Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Adani Enterprises, Eicher Motors, Reliance Industries, and Jio Financial while on the losing end were Bharti Airtel, Ko-

tak Mahindra Bank, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, and Tata Consultancy Services.



More than 180 stocks touched their 52-week high on the BSE. These included BHEL, Aster DM Health, CESC, Laurus Labs, Adani Green Energy, Aether Industries, HFCL, Schneider In-

fra, Bandhan Bank, Adani Ports, Adani Power, NLC India, Siemens, Kirloskar Oil, Bajaj Auto, Lloyds Metals, Aarti Industries, Vardh-

with the investors earned over Rs 4 lakh crore in a single session.

Bharat Heavy Electricals surged 7.5pc after the company reported a sharp jump in its Q4 earnings while Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone gained 5.5pc.

Indian Rupee fell 39 paise to close at an all-time low of 95.23 against the US dollar. Vedanta Ltd shares rebounded sharply rising over 6 per cent to Rs 288.75. Shares of Godrej Properties Ltd jumped as much as 6.3 per cent while the Avenue Supermarts Ltd (DMart) shares fell more than 3 per cent after the company reported a mixed results for Q4 FY26. Sun TV Network declined 5.5pc amid the ruling party DMK setback in Tamil Nadu. Adani Enterprises stock rose gaining as much as 3 per cent intraday after its recent Q4 FY26 results.

Grasim, UltraTech to present papers in 'Birla' trademark dispute case

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court has allowed Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement to present additional documents on record in their trademark dispute case with a company called Saboo Tor Pvt Ltd over the use of the word "Birla", recognising that they are relevant to decide the case, but they could not be produced earlier despite due diligence.

Earlier, the court had refused to restrain Saboo Tor from using the trademark like 'Birla TMT', during the pendency of the trademark dispute case.

While refusing interim relief, a single judge had found that Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement had not supported their claims with documents. The court had also observed

earlier, that "there is not a single document on record" to show prior use of the "Birla" trademark by the Birla group, its distinctiveness, or how the two companies derived rights to use it.

A division bench comprising Justice Bharati Dange and Justice Manjusha Deshpande passed the latest order while hearing an appeal against the refusal to grant an interim injunction.

Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement had sought permission to place additional documents on record, which include a scheme of arrangement between Indian Rayon and Industries Ltd and Grasim Industries Ltd, a Madhya Pradesh High Court order approving amalgamation, as well as trademark re-

ords relating to "Birla White" cement. Both the companies had argued that these documents are material which would address the deficiencies noted earlier, adding that these could not be produced at the time of filing the case, because they were not traceable.

Lawyers of the company called Saboo Tor had opposed the request made by Grasim Industries as well as UltraTech Cement, and argued that both the companies were seeking to fill gaps in their case after failing to secure interim relief. Their earlier statement that all relevant documents in their possession had already been presented, was cited by Saboo Tor's lawyers.

Later, the Bombay High Court examined the legal

position about introducing additional evidence at the appellate stage. The court said such documents could be allowed if they are relevant, but could not be produced earlier despite due diligence or if it is necessary to decide the case.

Eventually, a division bench of Justices Bharati Dange and Manjusha Deshpande concluded that the documents sought to be placed on record would have a bearing on whether Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement could establish a link to the "Birla" trademark. Therefore, the bench allowed the application by lawyers of Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement and permitted the documents to be taken on record. The dispute centres on competing claims to use

the trademark "Birla". Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement argued that the "Birla" trademark is associated exclusively with the Birla group alone, which has also been supported by several trademark registrations, including "Birla White" cement, with its use dating back to 1988.

However, Saboo Tor's lawyers had argued that the company has used "Birla TMT" for steel products since 2004, claiming that "Birla" is only a dictionary word which meant "rare" and hence cannot be exclusively trademarked. The appeal on the injunction issue will now be considered after taking into account the additional documents presented by Grasim Industries and UltraTech Cement, the division bench ruled.

Manufacturing activity grows in April, PMI spikes to 54.7

New Delhi: Swedish clean-tech innovator KonveGas has confirmed its participation in the upcoming Bioenergy Biofuels & Biomaterials Summit 2026, scheduled to be held at Yashbhoomi from May 7 to 9. The announcement marks a significant step in the company's entry into the Indian market. The move follows KonveGas' recent investment announcement at India Energy Week in Goa, where it signaled strong interest in India's rapidly evolving clean energy sector. Its participation in the summit reflects a transition from initial engagement to active expansion. The BBB Summit is expected to serve as a platform for KonveGas to connect with potential Indian partners. The company is actively exploring collaborations across manufacturing, distribution, and infrastructure to

localize its advanced storage technologies. This development comes at a time when India and the European Union are moving closer to finalizing the long-anticipated India EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The agreement is expected to significantly boost technology transfer and cross-border investments, especially in sustainability-focused sectors. KonveGas is positioning itself strategically within this emerging economic corridor. The company aims to leverage the anticipated FTA benefits to introduce its specialized solutions into India's growing clean energy ecosystem. At the core of KonveGas' offering is its advanced Type 4 glass fiber composite cylinder technology. These cylinders are designed to be up to 75 percent lighter than conventional steel alternatives, while also

being completely resistant to corrosion. Such innovations are particularly relevant for India's expanding Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) and green hydrogen infrastructure. The lightweight nature of these cylinders addresses a major logistical challenge—reducing the cost and complexity of transporting gas across long distances. By improving efficiency in storage and mobility, the technology has the potential to accelerate the adoption of cleaner fuels. This aligns closely with India's broader sustainability and net-zero targets. Speaking on the development, Alexander Enulescu, Founder and CEO of KonveGas, emphasized the importance of the Indian market. He described India not just as a business opportunity, but as a future global hub for green energy innovation.

Swedish Clean-Tech pioneer KonveGas to seek strategic partnerships at New Delhi's BBB Summit

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Indian banks well-positioned to transition to RBI's ECL norms

New Delhi: Indian banks are well-prepared to adopt the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) new Expected Credit Loss (ECL) provisioning framework, backed by strong capital buffers and improved asset quality, according to a report by CareEdge Ratings.

The RBI has notified the Commercial Banks – Asset Classification, Provisioning and Income Recognition Directions, 2026, which will come into effect from April 1, 2027. The new norms mandate a shift from the traditional in-

curréd loss model to a forward-looking ECL-based framework, aligning Indian banking practices with global standards and Basel III norms.

Under the revised system, banks will be required to assess and provision for potential credit losses based on future risks rather than past defaults. This involves classifying financial assets into three stages depending on credit risk and calculating provisions using parameters such as probability of default (PD), loss given default (LGD), and exposure

at default (EAD).

The transition will also require banks to conduct a one-time fair valuation of their entire loan portfolio. Any difference between fair value and current book value will be adjusted against retained earnings, a move expected to limit volatility in profit and loss statements. Despite the higher provisioning requirements under the ECL regime, the report noted that Indian banks are in a strong position to absorb the impact. As of September 2025, banks reported a capital ad-

equacy ratio (CAR) above 17 per cent and a common equity tier-1 (CET-1) ratio exceeding 14.5 per cent. The overall impact on capital adequacy is estimated at around 60-70 basis points, which is manageable over the four-year transition period.

However, the shift is expected to exert some pressure on profitability in the near term. Increased provisioning, particularly for Stage 2 assets—where credit risk has significantly risen—could weigh on return on total assets (ROTA)

during the implementation phase. Experts suggest that while public sector banks may face relatively higher pressure due to greater exposure to unsecured and MSME segments, private sector banks are likely to see a more muted impact owing to conservative provisioning practices.

The new framework is also expected to influence lending strategies. Higher provisioning requirements for riskier assets could discourage aggressive risk-taking and promote more sustainable credit growth.

Bitcoin tops USD 80,000 after 3 months as Asian stocks near record highs

New Delhi: The world's largest cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, surged past the USD 80,000 mark on Monday, crossing this level for the first time in over three months. The rally reflects a broader "risk-on" sentiment across global financial markets, with investors showing renewed appetite for higher-risk assets.

Bitcoin rose as much as 1.9 per cent to touch USD 80,393 in early trading, marking its highest level since January 31. The upward movement signals a steady recovery after a period of volatility and correction earlier this year. Other digital assets also joined the rally, including Ethereum,

which posted gains alongside Bitcoin. The synchronized rise across cryptocurrencies suggests improving sentiment in the digital asset space. The surge in crypto markets coincided with strength in global equities, particularly in Asia. MSCI Asia Pacific Index moved closer to its February peak, reflecting growing investor confidence in the region's markets. A key driver behind the equity rally has been stronger-than-expected earnings from major technology companies. These results have helped sustain momentum in stock markets despite ongoing geopolitical tensions in various parts of the world.

Bitcoin's current upswing is part of a broader recovery trend following its sharp correction earlier this year. The cryptocurrency had previously hit a record high of over USD 126,000 in October last year before entering a prolonged downturn. During that correction phase, Bitcoin fell to nearly USD 60,000 in February, raising concerns about market stability. However, it has since gradually regained lost ground, supported by improving macroeconomic conditions. One of the major factors contributing to this rebound is increasing institutional participation. Large investors are once again showing interest in digital

assets, lending stability and liquidity to the market.

In particular, US-listed Bitcoin exchange-traded funds (ETFs) have seen significant inflows. Reports indicate that these funds recorded net inflows of approximately USD 630 million on Friday alone.

Such inflows are often viewed as a strong indicator of institutional confidence, as ETFs provide regulated exposure to cryptocurrencies for traditional investors.

Analysts note that the combination of strong equity markets, positive investor sentiment, and sustained institutional demand is helping drive Bitcoin's recovery. At the same time, they caution

that volatility remains an inherent feature of cryptocurrency markets. Price swings can still be sharp, influenced by global economic cues and regulatory developments. Meanwhile, the positive global sentiment also reflected in Indian markets. The BSE Sensex opened higher, rising 616.01 points or 0.80 percent to reach 77,529. Similarly, the Nifty 50 gained 180.95 points or 0.75 percent, opening at 24,178.50, supported by election-related optimism and global cues. The parallel rise in equities and cryptocurrencies highlights a broader shift toward risk-taking among investors, as confidence improves across financial markets.