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15 Lakh Homeless Families to Get House Keys Next Year

CM Devendra Fadnavis Promises Permanent Homes for Every Homeless Family in Maharashtra Within Five Years

Satara: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that the state government will hand over houses to 15 lakh homeless families next year and promised that every homeless person in Maharashtra will get a permanent house within the next five years. He said the state has received a record target of 30 lakh houses in a single year under the Prime Minister's housing mission, which is the highest ever in the country.

The Chief Minister was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of five lakh houses built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin and during the state-level Maha Awas campaign award distribution event held at the Sainik School ground in Satara.

Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Guardian Minister Shambhuraj Desai, Public Works Minister Chhatrapati Shivendrasinhraje Bhosale, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Jaykumar Gore and several senior officials, MPs, MLAs and local representatives attended the event.

Devendra Fadnavis said Maharashtra has already received Rs 9,000 crore for housing projects and the government is working at high speed to complete the target of 30 lakh homes. He said five lakh beneficiaries have already received house keys and the government plans to hand over keys to 15 lakh more people next year. He added that Prime Minister

Narendra Modi dreams of providing permanent houses to all citizens and Maharashtra is working day and night to fulfil that vision. According to him, 13 lakh houses were built in Maharashtra during the last ten years, but the state received a huge target of 30 lakh houses in just one year from the Central Government. He said this will provide permanent shelter to nearly 1.25 crore people.

Fadnavis also said every beneficiary under the housing scheme will receive solar energy support to ensure free electricity permanently. Beneficiaries who do not own land will get Rs 1 lakh from the government to purchase land for house construction. He further said reservations on several government lands were cancelled so homeless families could get plots for housing.

The Chief Minister stated that the Maharashtra Government has added an extra Rs 50,000 to the financial assistance already being provided by the Centre. He also announced that the housing portal has been reopened to include homeless people whose names were left out earlier.

Speaking on farmers' issues, Devendra Fadnavis said loan waivers for farmers will be completed before June 30. Farmers who regularly repay loans will also receive incentive subsidies. He added that onion farmers were facing difficulties, so after discussions with Union Agriculture Minister officials have started onion

procurement at Rs 12.35 per kilogram from today itself.

He also said a meeting will soon be held in Delhi with Union Home Minister officials regarding problems faced by sugar factories and sugarcane farmers. The state will also follow up with the Centre for a positive decision on minimum sugar selling prices.

The Chief Minister said Maharashtra has already created 50 lakh "Lakhpati Sisters" in the last two years and the government now aims to make one crore women financially strong. He said this will strengthen the economy and help India achieve a five trillion dollar economy target. Fadnavis also informed that the Central Government has approved Rs 123 crore for rural roads. Referring to the current global crisis, he appealed to citizens to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to save foreign exchange by reducing gold purchases, avoiding unnecessary foreign travel and cutting fuel consumption.

Maharashtra Got Record 30 Lakh Houses Because of Devendra Fadnavis: Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan praised Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for securing the country's biggest housing target. He said no other state has received a target of 30 lakh houses in one year. Chouhan said Prime Minister

Narendra Modi is committed to ensuring that no poor family in India lives in a temporary house. He congratulated Devendra Fadnavis for completing five lakh houses in record time and for launching revolutionary measures like solar-powered homes and Rs 1 lakh land assistance for landless beneficiaries.

He added that the remaining houses will also be completed soon. Chouhan said India already has three crore "Lakhpati Didis" and the target is now to create six crore financially independent women. Maharashtra itself has set a target of creating one

crore "Lakhpati Didis".

The Union Minister also announced that the "Viksit Bharat Gramji Yojana" will begin from July 1 to transform rural India. He said villages themselves will prepare development plans and rural growth will speed up significantly.

Chouhan also appealed to citizens to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "One Nation, One Election" idea so Lok Sabha and Assembly elections can be held together to save time and public money. He further appealed to people to stay united during difficult times and support the Prime Minister's national initiatives.



Maharashtra Built 5 Lakh Rural Homes in Record Time: Jaykumar Gore

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Jaykumar Gore said the Rural Development Department approved 28 lakh houses within just 45 days and completed construction of 5.08 lakh houses in one year, creating a national record.

He said the department is working to complete 15 lakh houses this year. Out of 2.10 lakh landless beneficiaries, land has already been provided to 1.81 lakh people through the Deendayal Upadhyay scheme and village land

allocations. Efforts are underway to provide land to the remaining beneficiaries as well. Jaykumar Gore also said all houses under the scheme are being connected to solar power. The government has provided sand worth Rs 20,000 for construction support.

He informed that "Umed Malls" are being developed in every district to help women's self-help groups sell their products. Approval has already been granted for such malls in 13 districts. He added that crores of rupees

worth of products were sold through the Mahalaxmi Saras exhibition. During the event, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated five lakh houses and symbolically handed over house keys to beneficiaries. He also presented an order of Rs 8,368 crore financial assistance to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Special publications including "Maha Awas Abhiyan Gaurav Gatha" and "Maha Awas Quarterly" were also released at the event.

Raju Shetti criticizes CM Fadnavis over farmers' issues; Detained during protest

Mumbai: Swabhimani Shetkari Saghtana (SSS) chief Raju Shetti launched a scathing attack on Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis over the government's formation, alleging that if power is seized by "breaking parties and splitting lawmakers" without a legal basis, the government has no right to question the farmers' democratic right to protest.

Despite a meeting held at the Ministry (Mantralaya), Shetti claimed no concrete decisions were made. He accused the government of "stalling tactics" and failing to take the farmers' plight seriously for the last two and a half months. Shetti highlighted that rigid conditions from insurance companies are preventing farmers from receiving compensation. He further alleged that the state has not even sent a proposal for assistance to the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).

Former MP Vinayak Raut warned that the situation in Konkan is critical, with farmers being driven to extreme steps like suicide due to government neglect.

MLA Bhai Jagtap pointed out that mango growers are in deep trouble due to climate change and unseasonal rains. He criticized the administration for a lack of resources, noting that damage assessments (panchnamas) in many areas remain incomplete.

Police officials maintained that no permission had been granted for the march, leading to the preemptive detention of several farmers and political leaders.

The protest received backing from the Uddhav

Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Congress party.

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Monsoon expected early again, Kerala onset around May 26: IMD

New Delhi: Amid apprehensions of economic slowdown exacerbated by multiple factors such as crude oil price shock and currency depreciation triggered by the US-Iran conflict and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, there seems to be some positive news regarding the southwest monsoon—the most awaited weather phenomenon in the country every year. The monsoon, this year, is again expected to arrive early over Kerala with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting its onset around May 26, with a model error margin of ±4 days.

The monsoon, which typically strikes the southernmost tip of India around June 1, may mark its third consecutive early arrival if the forecast holds true. It reached Kerala on May 27, 2025, and May 31, 2024.

According to the IMD, conditions are currently favourable for the advance of the southwest monsoon over parts of the south Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands within the next 24 hours. Usually, the monsoon first sets in over the South Andaman Sea around May 22 before progressing towards the Indian mainland.

While the early onset brings cautious optimism, weather forecasts for the rest of the country remain mixed. The IMD warned that severe heatwave conditions are likely to continue over northwest and central India during the ongoing week. Meanwhile, isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected over the northeast this week, and over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe, and South Interior Karnataka over the next 3-4 days.

For India, the June-September seasonal rains are

Modi Begins Five-Nation Tour, Reaffirms Support for UAE After Attacks

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday reaffirmed India's strong support for the United Arab Emirates and condemned the recent attacks on the Gulf nation as he began a multi-nation diplomatic tour aimed at deepening India's strategic and economic engagement with key partners in West Asia and Europe.

In a post on social media platform X after holding talks in Abu Dhabi, Modi said he had "excellent discussions" with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and reiterated India's solidarity with the Emirati leadership.

"Had excellent discussions with my brother, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Reiterated our strongest condemnation of the attacks on the UAE," Modi said in the post. He also praised the UAE President's "leadership, courage and wisdom" during the difficult period and expressed gratitude for his "care and concern for the Indian community in the UAE."

Earlier in the day, shortly after arriving in Abu Dhabi, the Prime Minister thanked Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for personally receiving him at the airport, describing it as a "special

SC shifts to virtual hearings twice a week after PM's fuel-saving appeal

New Delhi: After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to the public to save fuel, the Supreme Court Friday decided to conduct hearings only via video conference on Mondays and Fridays.

From Tuesday to Thursday every week, the apex court will adopt a hybrid mode.

As per the new arrangement, all hearings on Mondays and Fridays will take place only online. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, lawyers and litigants will have the option of appearing either physically or virtually.

The SC further stated that to ensure optimum fuel utilisation, judges had "unanimously resolved" to encourage car-pooling amongst themselves.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation is a timely and responsible call towards environmental sustainability and national resource management," said BJP's national spokesperson-cum-lawyer Aviral Malik.

"I welcome the Supreme Court's proactive decision to conduct virtual hearings on Mondays and Fridays, with a hybrid option on other working days. This move not only aligns with the spirit of 'Green Justice' but also demonstrates the Court's sensitivity towards public interest and technological advancement in justice delivery," he added.

In each Registry branch or section, the apex court allowed up to 50 per cent of staff to work from home (WFH) for up to two days per week. However, it is subject to the preparation of weekly rosters and ensuring the uninterrupted functioning of the court.

gesture."

"I look forward to our discussions towards furthering India-UAE ties across key sectors like energy, investment, supply chains, and more," Modi said in a separate post on X.

The Prime Minister's visit to the UAE marks the first leg of his six-day tour that will also take him to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Italy, with New Delhi aiming to strengthen strategic ties, bolster energy security, and expand cooperation in advanced technologies against the backdrop of global geopolitical tensions and trade disruptions.

The multi-nation tour comes as India seeks to deepen engagement with Europe and key Gulf partners following the conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement earlier this year and amid continuing uncertainty in West Asia affecting energy markets and shipping routes. New Delhi is also looking to consolidate ties with European nations following the conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement earlier this year, while maintaining close engagement with Gulf partners that remain crucial to India's energy imports and the welfare of millions of Indian expatriates.

Centre Mulling Law to Disqualify Jailed Leaders From Holding Office: Ujjwal Nikam

Mumbai: Rajya Sabha MP and former special public prosecutor in terrorism cases, Adv. Ujjwal Nikam has revealed that the Central Government is working on a major legal reform under which any political leader who remains in jail for 30 days or more, may be barred from continuing in public office.

Talking to mediapersons here on Friday, Nikam said the proposed law would apply uniformly to all constitutional and political

positions, including those of Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and Ministers. He said a final decision on the matter is expected soon.

Calling the move "historic and revolutionary," Nikam stated that the Centre has already begun the process of drafting the legislation. To ensure that the law is implemented effectively and without loopholes, a joint parliamentary committee of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members has reportedly been formed.

He further informed that discussions are being held with secretaries and officials from various states to examine how the law can be made stronger and implemented efficiently across the country.

Petrol, diesel prices hiked by Rs 3 per litre across major cities

New Delhi: Fuel prices across the country have gone up sharply after oil marketing companies increased petrol and diesel rates by up to Rs 3 per litre, adding to the burden on consumers and transport operators.

Following the revision, petrol prices in Delhi rose from around Rs 94.77 per litre to Rs 97.77 per litre, while diesel prices climbed from Rs 87.67 per litre to Rs 90.67 per litre.

Similar hikes were reported in several metro cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The latest increase comes amid volatility in global crude oil markets and rising international energy costs, which have put pressure on domestic fuel retailers.

Industry observers said the revision reflects higher input costs faced by oil companies after a prolonged period of relatively

stable retail fuel prices.

In Mumbai, petrol prices crossed the Rs 106 per litre mark, while diesel rates moved above Rs 94 per litre. Chennai and Kolkata also witnessed a steep rise in retail fuel rates after the revision.

The increase is expected to impact transportation costs, logistics expenses and daily household budgets, with sectors dependent on fuel consumption likely to face additional pressure in

the coming weeks.

Commercial vehicle operators and delivery businesses are likely to feel the immediate impact of the increase, while consumers may see higher prices in goods and services due to elevated freight expenses.

The fuel price revision comes at a time when global crude prices remain uncertain amid geopolitical tensions and supply-related concerns in the international energy market.



Siddaramaiah demands rollback of fuel hike

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday launched a sharp attack on the union Government over the ₹3 per litre increase in petrol and diesel prices, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of burdening ordinary citizens to cover up economic failures and policy mismanagement.

In a statement, Siddaramaiah said the fuel price hike was "another direct attack on the daily life of ordinary Indians" and alleged that the Centre was forcing people to pay the price for its "failed foreign policy, poor economic management, and reckless handling of inflation."

The Chief Minister said petrol prices in Bengaluru had crossed ₹106 per litre, while diesel was nearing ₹94 per litre, warning that the increase would trigger a rise in transportation costs and prices of essential commodities.

"This hike will not stop at fuel pumps. It will increase transport costs, vegetable prices, grocery bills,



milk prices, construction costs, school van fees, taxi and auto fares, farm input costs, and the price of almost every essential commodity," he said.

Siddaramaiah claimed that farmers, workers, small traders, home-

makers, and the middle class would bear the brunt of the hike.

He accused the Modi Government of collecting massive taxes when global crude oil prices were low without passing on full benefits to consumers, and then transferring

the burden to citizens whenever prices rise.

"This is not governance; this is exploitation," the Chief Minister said.

Alleging that the Centre had failed to control inflation, protect the rupee, and manage the economy, Siddaramaiah said the union Government was not standing with the common people during difficult times.

"We wish Prime Minister Narendra Modi had shown the same urgency and commitment to protect ordinary people as he shows in protecting his capitalist friends," he said.

The Chief Minister strongly condemned the fuel price increase and demanded an immediate rollback of the ₹3 per litre hike on petrol and diesel.

Holding the Prime Minister directly responsible for "mismanaging the economy" and "pushing ordinary families into deeper hardship," Siddaramaiah said Modi "must take responsibility and resign."

Karnataka Cong targets Centre over fuel hike

Bengaluru: Karnataka's ruling Congress on Friday mounted a coordinated political offensive against the Centre over the latest fuel price hike, with senior ministers accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government of failing both economically and diplomatically while burdening common citizens with rising living costs. Leading the attack, Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge declared that "Modinomics has failed", alleging that the Centre had concealed difficult economic realities during the election period only for the impact to emerge later through rising fuel prices and inflationary pressures. "Modinomics has failed, foreign policy has failed, PM's globe-trotting with no benefit to the nation. During elections, announcements were withheld, and once over, the truth emerged," Kharge said while

addressing reporters in Bengaluru. Framing the fuel price issue as part of a larger economic crisis, Kharge questioned what he called contradictions in the Centre's messaging on energy security and public austerity. "Is this the 'acche din' promised? He urges saving petrol and fuel, while ministers insist India is energy surplus. These contradictions raise questions," he said, demanding that the Prime Minister address Parliament and the nation on the "real crisis" confronting the country. The remarks were backed by Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara, who accused the Centre of ignoring the hardships faced by ordinary citizens already struggling with soaring prices of essential commodities. "At a time when the prices of many essential items are already rising, the Central Govern-

ment's policy of increasing diesel and petrol prices has exposed them. They have shown today that they are not pro-people," Parameshwara said. He argued that instead of raising fuel prices, the Centre should have explored subsidy measures to cushion the impact on consumers and transportation costs. Adding to the criticism, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar questioned calls for reducing fuel consumption, saying such appeals were disconnected from the realities of daily life. "How can I consume less oil? How can I stop using my vehicle?" Shivakumar asked, while also taking a swipe at the Prime Minister's handling of international relations. The coordinated statements from Karnataka Congress leaders indicate the party's attempt to sharpen its economic narrative against the BJP-led Centre by linking fuel prices.

Major IAS Reshuffle in Bihar, several top bureaucrats reassigned

Patna: Bihar government on Friday transferred several senior IAS officers and reassigned responsibilities across departments to streamline governance. According to the official notification, K. Senthil Kumar (1996 batch) has been transferred from the Sugarcane Industry Department and appointed as Additional Chief Secretary of the Labour Resources and Migrant Workers Welfare Department. He will also hold additional charge of the Backward and Extremely Backward Classes Welfare Department. H.R. Srinivas (1996 batch), who was holding additional charge of the same department, has been relieved of that responsibility. Rajesh

Kumar (2001 batch), earlier Commissioner of Kosi Division, Saharsa, has been appointed as Principal Secretary of the Public Health Engineering Department. Pankaj Kumar Pal (2002 batch) has been made Secretary of the Road Construction Department.

Abhay Kumar Singh (2006 batch) has been transferred as Secretary of the Information Technology Department and will continue to hold additional charge as Managing Director of Bihar State Electronics Development Corporation Limited (BELTRON). Dharmendra Singh (2006 batch), Secretary of the Cooperative Department, will hold additional charge of the Sugarcane

Industry Department.

Deepak Anand (2007 batch) has been appointed Secretary of the Food and Consumer Protection Department. Vinod Singh Gunjijal (2007 batch), Secretary of the Election Department and Chief Electoral Officer, has been given additional charge of the Education and Sports Departments. B. Rajender (1995 batch), Additional Chief Secretary of the General Administration Department, has been relieved of additional charge of the Education and Sports Departments. At the divisional level, Prem Singh Meena (2000 batch), Commissioner of Munger Division, will hold additional charge of Bhagalpur Division, while

Himanshu Kumar Rai (2010 batch), Commissioner of Darbhanga Division, has been given additional charge of Kosi Division. Avnish Kumar Singh (2010 batch) has been appointed Secretary-cum-Mines Commissioner of the Mines and Geology Department and will also hold additional charge as Managing Director of the state mining corporation. Divesh Sehra (2005 batch) has been relieved of his additional charges related to the Mines Department. Himanshu Sharma (2011 batch) has been posted as In-charge Secretary of the Science, Technology and Technical Education Department while retaining his existing additional responsibilities.

Kavitha says TRS formed to bring "qualitative change" in state politics

Hyderabad: Telangana Rakshana Samiti (TRS) President Kalvakuntal Kavitha on Friday said she had undergone a "profound transformation" after facing difficult experiences in life and launched the TRS to bring qualitative change in Telangana politics.

Addressing the Way2 News Conclave in Hyderabad, Kavitha said she had no grievances against former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao as the leader of the Telangana movement, but admitted that she had differences with him in his role as Chief Minister and BRS chief.

She stated that opinions expressed by her internally within the party were alleg-



edly leaked outside, which compelled her to publicly voice her views.

Kavitha said the new organisation aimed to focus on social justice, women's empowerment, youth entrepre-

neurship, agriculture reforms, and Telangana's water rights.

She alleged that both the previous and present governments had failed to adequately address farmers' is-

suues and criticised delays in irrigation projects, including the Palamuru project.

She also accused the BJP of attempting to weaken regional parties and alleged that the Congress government had failed to fulfil promises made to the people.

Referring to allegations involving BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Kavitha demanded a fair investigation and said the government had lost public trust on the issue.

Kavitha further stated that the Telangana Rakshana Samithi would contest all Assembly constituencies in the next elections and expressed confidence that the people of Telangana would support the party.

Centre strengthening Govt healthcare infrastructure in Hyderabad: Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad: Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Friday said the Central Government was making concerted efforts to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in Hyderabad to ensure quality medical services for poor and middle-class families dependent on government hospitals.

Addressing the media after distributing medical equipment at Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHCs) in Harrajpenta, Golnaka, and Kachiguda, Kishan Reddy said that despite the presence of numerous private and corporate hospitals in Hyderabad, there was still a pressing need for high-quality government hospitals accessible to economically weaker sections.

He said poor families living in bastis were unable to afford expensive treat-

ment in private hospitals and therefore relied heavily on government healthcare facilities. Keeping this in mind, the Narendra Modi government was focusing on improving infrastructure and medical facilities in government hospitals across the city.

The union minister stated that the Centre had established a state-of-the-art ESI Medical College, Super Speciality Hospital and Nursing College in Hyderabad.

He claimed that the ESI Hospital was currently witnessing a higher outpatient footfall than even Osmania General Hospital and Gandhi Hospital.

Kishan Reddy further said that an AIIMS Bibinagar hospital was being constructed for Rs 1,300 crore to provide advanced treatment at nominal charges.



es. He expressed hope that the Prime Minister would inaugurate the facility early next year.

The minister added that although construction work was still underway, the AIIMS Medical College and Nursing College had already started functioning, and inpatient services and

surgeries were being conducted.

The union minister said the Central Government had also installed oxygen plants and liquid oxygen facilities in major hospitals, including Osmania, Gandhi, NIMS, and Railway Hospitals in Secunderabad.

Under the National Health Mission, infrastruc-

ture development works were being taken up in government hospitals across Hyderabad, he added.

As a Member of Parliament, Kishan Reddy said he was providing modern medical equipment, including ECG, eye-testing and blood-testing devices, to Primary Health Centres in his constituency.

He stated that medical equipment worth around Rs 9 lakh was distributed on Friday to the UPHC centre in Bagh Amberpet.

He also said shelters for patients and attendants had been constructed at government hospitals in the constituency and that Basti Dawakhana had been upgraded under the Centre's Wellness Centres initiative.

Dialysis centres had also been established in district headquarters, AIIMS and ESI hospitals, he added.

Krishnaiah urges Telangana CM to fulfil promise of filling two lakh jobs

Hyderabad: R Krishnaiah has urged A Revanth Reddy to fulfil the Congress party's major election promise of providing two lakh government jobs in Telangana, stating that lakhs of unemployed youth in the state were still waiting for recruitment notifications and appointment opportunities. In a detailed letter addressed to the Chief Minister, Krishnaiah stressed that the issue of unemployment had played a decisive role in the outcome of the Assembly elections and remained one of the most important concerns for the youth of Telangana.

Krishnaiah stated that the Congress party had received overwhelming support from unemployed youth, job aspirants, students, and educated families during the elections because of its repeated assurances regarding large-scale recruitment in government depart-

ments. According to him, the promise of filling two lakh vacancies had generated hope among lakhs of candidates who had been preparing for competitive examinations for several years.

The Rajya Sabha member alleged that the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government had lost public confidence mainly because it failed to address the growing concerns of unemployed youth.

He claimed that the earlier administration had neglected recruitment processes and delayed filling vacancies in several key departments, leading to frustration among educated youth across the state.

Krishnaiah recalled that senior Congress leaders, including Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, had strongly campaigned on employ-

ment-related assurances during election rallies and public meetings. He said the promises made during the campaign created expectations among job aspirants who now expected the government to act swiftly and transparently.

The BC welfare leader claimed that although the Congress government had announced recruitment measures after coming to power, only around 69,000 jobs had reportedly been filled so far. He said this number was far below the promised target and pointed out that a large number of sanctioned posts continued to remain vacant in several departments and institutions.

Highlighting the situation in the Police Department, Krishnaiah said nearly 18,000 vacancies were still pending and required immediate attention from the government.

Bengal CM Adhikari orders CID probe after cellphones recovered from Presidency Correctional Home

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Friday displayed 23 cellphones that had been seized from inmates lodged inside the Presidency Correctional Home.

Calling it a "deep nexus between custodians of the correctional home, criminals, and a section of politicians," Adhikari suspended the Superintendent of Presidency Correctional Home, N Kujur, and Chief Controller Dipta Gharai.

"Criminals across the state are continuing to run criminal networks from inside jail. This practice has been going on for years. Corruption has spread from the bottom to the top levels.

We will not let criminals run their network from jails in Bengal. We also want to send out a message to jail authorities that action will be taken in case of any negli-

gence. This nexus runs deep, and it will take some time to weed it out, but we will not allow the likes of Sheikh Shahjahan to run their networks from inside the correctional homes," Adhikari said.

Sheikh Shahjahan, a Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader from Sandeshkhali in Sunderbans, was arrested after being on the run for 55 days following an assault on a team of Enforcement Directorate officials who had gone to raid his home in connection with the public distribution scam in West Bengal.

He was named as the prime accused in land-grabbing, several counts of assault, and sexual exploitation of women cases.

Ten police teams conducted coordinated raids inside the Presidency Jail late Thursday night following

complaints that inmates were using smartphones to maintain contact with outside criminal networks. The operation was carried out jointly by Kolkata Police and correctional authorities in the presence of senior officials and a senior police officer.

The Chief Minister also claimed that similar activities were taking place in several correctional homes across West Bengal, including prisons in Dum Dum and Berhampore.

Adhikari has ordered the case to be transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

"The agency will investigate who supplied the mobile phones to inmates, in whose names the SIM cards were registered, and whether prison officials were directly involved in facilitating the network," he said.

Grandmothers-maternal and paternal-and even fathers giving 'Kangaroo Mother Care' to newborns in UP

Lucknow: The Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) method, being implemented in government hospitals for the specialized care of premature and low-birth-weight infants, is delivering remarkable results across Uttar Pradesh. In many cases, not only mothers but also grandmothers and fathers are stepping forward to provide this life-saving care, becoming true nurturers for vulnerable newborns. Healthcare experts say the initiative is helping reduce infant mortality by promoting continuous skin-to-skin contact between the caregiver and the baby, ensuring warmth, bonding, and improved nutrition.

According to reports, 27-year-old Meenu Kumari from Lohamandi in Agra gave birth to a baby requiring Kangaroo Mother Care. Doctors advised that the infant receive KMC for at least

eight hours daily. However, due to her physical weakness after delivery, Meenu was unable to provide the recommended duration of care.

At this critical moment, the baby's paternal grandmother, Meera (60), and maternal grandmother, Neelam (50), stepped forward. After receiving training from nursing staff, the two women shared the responsibility—each providing KMC for three hours daily, while Meenu managed two hours herself. The results were encouraging. Within four days, the baby's weight increased by 230 grams. Born weighing two kilograms, the infant now weighs 2.230 kilograms, has become active, and has started breastfeeding successfully.

Dr K K Mishra, Nodal Officer of the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU) at Lady Lyall Women's Hospital, Agra, said that since the

mother was physically weak and unable to provide prolonged KMC, her mother and mother-in-law came forward to ensure the newborn received uninterrupted care.

In the Bahraich district, a father set an inspiring example by personally providing Kangaroo Mother Care to his newborn son for 25 consecutive days. Rajesh, a mason from Mathura village in Balha block, said his son weighed two kilograms at birth, but within four days the infant's weight fell to 1.9 kilograms. During a home visit, an ASHA worker advised the family to begin KMC immediately. As the baby's mother was suffering from severe ear pain and fever, Rajesh took responsibility himself. He held the baby against his chest for 8-10 hours daily over 25 days. The effort transformed the infant's health. The baby's weight increased from 1,900

grams to 2,900 grams. Dr Asad Ali, in-charge of the SNCU, said that nearly 43 out of every 1,000 newborns in the state do not survive, with premature birth and low birth weight—below 2,500 grams—being major contributing factors. Dr Shalini Tripathi, Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at King George's Medical University, emphasized that Kangaroo Mother Care is a simple, cost-free, and highly effective technique requiring only dedication and time. She explained that many newborns cannot remain in hospitals for prolonged treatment every year. In such situations, KMC has emerged as an accessible and powerful solution, improving the condition of nearly 90 per cent of infants, while also encouraging breastfeeding and healthy weight gain.

According to Dr. Milind Vardhan, General Manager

of the National Health Mission, the Kangaroo Mother Care initiative gained momentum in Uttar Pradesh in May 2016. Although the state was among the early adopters of the programme in India, the government later expanded it significantly by establishing dedicated KMC lounges in government hospitals to combat newborn mortality. At present, 314 KMC lounges are operational across the state. Official data shows that in the past year alone, 93,158 infants benefited from the KMC method. Mothers and family members are also trained to continue KMC practices at home after discharge. Kangaroo Mother Care is a method in which a newborn—wearing only a cap, socks, and diaper—is held upright against the chest of the mother or another caregiver, allowing direct skin-to-skin contact.

Diesel Price Rise May Push MSRTC Bus Fares Higher

Mumbai : Passengers travelling on buses operated by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation may soon face a fare hike due to rising diesel prices.

Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik said the recent increase in fuel rates has added heavy financial pressure on the state-run transport corporation. He stated that the government is reviewing the impact of higher diesel prices and hinted that maintaining the current fare structure may become difficult if fuel costs continue to rise. After the Centre increased fuel prices by nearly Rs 3 per litre, diesel rates in Mumbai rose to Rs 93.14 per litre, while petrol prices reached Rs 106.68 per litre. Officials said fuel remains one of the biggest operational expenses for MSRTC, making fare revision a possible option in the coming days. The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation is currently navigating a period of intense financial scrutiny as the volatility of global energy markets begins to trickle down to the local commuter. For decades, the MSRTC has served as the lifeline of rural and semi-urban connectivity across the state, yet this mission is being increasingly challenged by the rising cost of diesel. The state-run transport body,



which operates the iconic red buses known as "Lal Pari," finds itself at a crossroads where the necessity of providing affordable transport clashes with the cold reality of soaring operational overheads that threaten its fiscal sustainability. Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik has formally acknowledged the growing concern, signaling that the state government is closely monitoring the economic ripples caused by the recent fuel price hikes. The Minister's statements indicate that the financial pressure on the corporation has reached a critical threshold, leaving the administration with very few options to balance the books. While the government has traditionally been

hesitant to increase fares due to the socio-economic impact on the common man, the current trajectory of diesel prices is making the status quo increasingly untenable for the department. The primary catalyst for this potential shift in policy is the recent decision at the central level to increase fuel prices by nearly ₹3 per litre.

While a few rupees might seem marginal to a private vehicle owner, for a massive fleet like the MSRTC, which consumes millions of litres of fuel annually to cover the vast geography of Maharashtra, such an increase translates into a multi-crore daily deficit. This spike has pushed the price of diesel in Mumbai to ₹93.14 per litre, a figure

that sits uncomfortably close to historical highs and strains the state's budget.

Officials within the transport department have pointed out that the corporation is already grappling with the aftermath of the pandemic and the subsequent fluctuations in passenger numbers. Adding a steep fuel bill to these existing challenges creates a perfect storm for the MSRTC's accounts department. The corporation operates thousands of routes, many of which are socially essential but economically unviable; these routes are the first to feel the impact when fuel costs rise, as the revenue generated from tickets fails to cover even the basic cost of the diesel required for the trip.

Knife Attack Near Vasai Fort Leaves Woman Seriously Injured

Vasai : A 21-year-old woman was seriously injured after a brutal knife attack near the historic Vasai Fort area on Wednesday evening. The incident took place around 5.15 pm near Datta Mandir Road, creating panic among local residents.

The victim, identified as Answita Donald Patil, was allegedly attacked following a personal dispute related to her friendship with another youth. She suffered serious injuries in the assault and was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. Police from Vasai Police have registered a case of attempted murder against the accused. Investigation teams are currently scanning CCTV footage from nearby areas and conducting searches to trace the suspect involved in the attack. Authorities said further investigation is underway to determine the exact sequence of events and motive behind the assault.

The tranquility near the historic Vasai Fort was shattered on Wednesday evening when a 21-year-old woman became the victim of a violent assault. The incident, which occurred around 5:15 PM on Datta Mandir Road, has sent shockwaves through the local community. Eyewitnesses described a scene of sudden chaos as the victim, identified as Answita Donald Patil, was targeted in what appeared

to be a premeditated act

of violence. The brutality of the attack, occurring in a public space known for its cultural and historical significance, has raised immediate concerns regarding safety in the area. Preliminary investigations by the local authorities suggest that the motivation behind this harrowing attack may be rooted in a personal grievance. Sources indicate that a dispute involving a friendship between the victim and another youth could be the primary trigger for the suspect's actions. This personal angle has led investigators to focus their efforts on the victim's immediate social circle to identify potential leads. The nature of the injuries inflicted suggests a high degree of intent, prompting the police to act with significant urgency in their search for the perpetrator.

Following the assault, Answita was found with life-threatening injuries and required immediate medical intervention. Passersby and local residents acted quickly to ensure she was transported to a nearby medical facility, where she is currently undergoing intensive treatment. Medical bulletins suggest her condition is serious, and the next few days will be critical for her recovery. The community has rallied around the family, expressing hope for her resilience while simul-

taneously demanding justice

for the senseless act that has

left a young woman fighting

for her life.

Panvel Launches Major Pre-Monsoon Cleanliness Campaign

Panvel : The Panvel Municipal Corporation has launched a large-scale pre-monsoon cleanliness drive in Ward 19 under its "Mayor in Your Ward for Cleanliness" initiative. The campaign focused mainly on drain cleaning and sanitation work to avoid waterlogging and health risks during the upcoming monsoon season. Civic teams carried out drain desilting, garbage



removal, fogging and anti-mosquito spraying operations across sev-

eral parts of the ward.

The drive was launched in the presence of Mayor Nitin Patil along with local corporators and senior civic officials. During the campaign, the mayor instructed officials to pay special attention to neglected areas and ensure proper sanitation so residents do not face flooding or mosquito-related problems during heavy rains.

CBI Launches AI System To Verify Fake Notices And Stop Cyber Fraud

Mumbai : The Central Bureau of Investigation has introduced a new AI-powered platform called "ABHAY" to help citizens identify fake notices and protect themselves from cyber fraud and digital arrest scams.

The system, officially named AI-Based Helpbot for Authentication of CBI Notices, allows users to verify whether a notice claiming to be from the CBI is genuine or fake.

Officials said cyber criminals are increasingly using advanced technology, including artificial intelligence and deepfake tools, to create fake legal notices and scare people into believing they are involved in criminal activities.

The CBI said the new platform aims to reduce such fraud cases by giv-

ing citizens a quick and reliable way to check the authenticity of suspicious notices received online or through messaging platforms.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has taken a groundbreaking step toward fortifying India's digital defenses by launching a sophisticated artificial intelligence platform designed to neutralize the growing threat of cyber-impersonation.

This new initiative, unveiled in Mumbai, is a direct response to a surge in high-tech financial crimes where scammers pose as federal investigators to extort money from unsuspecting individuals.

By integrating AI into its public outreach strategy, the CBI is attempting to stay one step ahead of organized criminal net-

works that have increasingly turned to digital platforms to find their victims.

At the heart of this technological shield is a system officially named the AI-Based Helpbot for Authentication of CBI Notices, or more commonly referred to by its acronym, "ABHAY."

The name is fittingly derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "fearless," reflecting the agency's goal of empowering citizens to face suspicious digital communications without the paralyzing fear that scammers rely on.

The platform serves as a centralized, user-friendly portal where anyone who receives a legal notice claiming to be from the CBI can immediately verify its legitimacy

through an automated authentication process.

The necessity for such a tool has become painfully clear as cybercriminals have transitioned from crude phishing emails to highly polished, "official-looking" documents.

Using advanced design software and deepfake technology, these fraudsters create notices that feature accurate logos, forged signatures of real high-ranking officials, and intimidating legal jargon.

These documents are often sent via messaging apps like WhatsApp or Telegram, followed by "digital arrest" scams where victims are coerced into staying on video calls for hours while being threatened with immediate imprisonment unless a "settlement fee" is paid.

Bhiwandi Civic Body Targets Roadside Exhaust Fans Over Safety Concerns

Bhiwandi : The Bhiwandi Nizampur City Municipal Corporation has started a special enforcement drive against Chinese stalls, hotels, roadside eateries and food handcarts that have installed exhaust fans facing directly towards roads.

According to civic officials, thick smoke, spicy fumes and chemical vapours released from these exhaust systems were causing serious inconvenience to motorists and pedestrians. Authorities said many commuters, especially two-wheeler riders, complained of eye irritation, burning sensation and temporary loss of visibility while passing through busy roads.

Officials warned that the smoke released onto roads was increasing the possibility of accidents, particularly during peak

traffic hours. Following repeated complaints from citizens, the civic body decided to intensify action against establishments violating safety norms.

The administration said inspections and action against such roadside exhaust systems will continue across different parts of the city.

The Bhiwandi Nizampur City Municipal Corporation (BNCMC) has officially launched a specialized enforcement campaign aimed at mitigating the public health and safety risks posed by roadside commercial exhaust systems.

This initiative specifically targets a wide array of local businesses, including Chinese food stalls, hotels, established roadside eateries, and mobile food handcarts. The crackdown centers on establishments that

have installed industrial or high-powered exhaust fans positioned to vent directly onto public thoroughfares, creating a hazardous environment for those navigating the city's streets.

Civic officials have noted that the primary driver for this intervention is the composition of the emissions released by these vents. The exhaust systems typically discharge thick smoke, concentrated spicy fumes, and various chemical vapors associated with commercial cooking and cleaning.

These emissions do not dissipate quickly in dense urban corridors, instead forming low-lying clouds of irritants that hang over the roads. For pedestrians and motorists alike, this creates an environment that is not just unpleasant, but physically distressing to navigate.

Editorial

Youth Losing the Race for Marks

India's youth is considered the nation's greatest strength. However, due to rising competition, parental expectations, the influence of social media, and the immense pressure to score high marks, many students are spiraling into a vortex of mental stress. The rising number of student suicides is not merely a statistic; it serves as a grave warning to society. Today, education has become trapped in a relentless race for marks rather than a pursuit of knowledge, and a lack of meaningful dialogue is leaving students feeling increasingly isolated.

India shines today as a resplendent star on the global map, and the primary reason for this is our 'young demographic.' A nation where 65 percent of the population is under the age of 35—and where the average age hovers around just 29—is a nation that no one can stop from reaching the pinnacle of progress. Indian youth have left their indelible mark in every field, including science, technology, research, the arts, and sports. However, this glittering success has a dark, tarnished flip side. Our 'Young India' is currently embroiled in an internal struggle, and the rising rate of student suicides across the country has emerged as a matter of grave national concern. The 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India 2024' report, recently released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), raises serious questions regarding the efficacy of our education system and the resilience of our social fabric.

The statistics presented in this report are deeply disturbing. An analysis of trends since 2020 reveals a consistent and alarming rise in the number of student suicides. While 12,556 students ended their lives in 2020, this figure had climbed to 14,488 by 2024. Students now account for approximately 8.5 percent of all suicides committed across the country. This situation is particularly alarming for the state of Maharashtra, which has recorded the highest number of student suicides (1,909 incidents) in the entire nation. Following Maharashtra, the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu rank next on the list. One cannot deny the grim reality that approximately 43 percent of all student suicides in the country occur within these four states alone. The season for 10th and 12th-grade results recently concluded; amidst the celebrations of success, news of some 'withered flowers' young lives cut short also reached our ears. In the Akola district, a student committed suicide despite securing 67 percent marks, simply because he failed to achieve the specific level of success he had anticipated. This incident serves as a stark reminder that we have begun to define success solely through the narrow lens of marks and percentages.

Today's education system has ceased to be a true center for the acquisition of knowledge; instead, it has transformed into an 'arena of competition.' Driven by the escalating ambitions of parents and the academic burden imposed upon children from a very young age, students are gradually losing their childhoods. The relentless cycle commencing right from nursery school involving regular schooling, private tuition, specialized courses, and competitive examinations, causes students to lose touch with their own interests and passions. Children find themselves trapped within this cycle, unable to escape, and thus begins a cutthroat race for marks. A flawed narrative has taken root in society that the only way to give meaning to one's life is to become a doctor or an engineer. In reality, immense career opportunities exist in subjects such as History, Geography, Economics, Art, and Literature, and the contributions of experts in these fields are invaluable to the nation's development. However, because these fields are often undervalued, students constantly live under a singular, unrelenting pressure. To make matters worse, the virtual world of social media has only added fuel to the fire. Witnessing the 'perfect' lives, luxurious lifestyles, and high-paying jobs of others displayed on platforms like Instagram and Facebook often breeds an inferiority complex in students. The haunting fear "Am I falling behind everyone else?" ultimately pushes them into the abyss of depression.

In today's times, we are connected through technology, yet we are drifting apart emotionally. 'Healthy dialogue' the very backbone of the Indian family system is becoming increasingly rare today. In the past, the stress weighing on children would be alleviated through conversations with the elders and grandparents in the household. Now, however with parents engrossed in work and children absorbed in their mobile phones no one truly understands the internal turmoil brewing within the minds of students. According to experts, a person contemplating suicide is waging a massive psychological battle within themselves. At such a critical juncture, if they receive a few words of affection and support from someone, they can be steered away from such thoughts. Therefore, it is imperative to re-establish an atmosphere of open and heartfelt communication within the family. Instead of evaluating children solely based on their academic scores, we must learn to appreciate and acknowledge the unique skills they possess. Instilling in students the belief that failure is not the end of life, but rather the first stepping stone toward success, is a responsibility that rests not only with parents but with society as a whole. Educational institutions must now shift their focus from merely completing the curriculum to prioritizing the mental well-being of their students. Counseling centers within schools and colleges should not exist merely in name; they must function effectively and actively. Imparting lessons on stress management, resilience in the face of failure, and essential life skills to students is the need of the hour. Only through the collective efforts of the government, teachers, parents, and society at large can we truly save these future pillars of our nation. Every student must understand that a slightly lower percentage in an examination or even failure in a single subject does not amount to the complete ruin of one's entire life. When we lose a student, the nation loses a valuable human resource. This is an irreparable loss. If we wish to channel the immense energy inherent in the younger generation into constructive endeavors, it is imperative that we empower them with mental resilience. We must instill in our students the realization that the value of human life far transcends the marks inscribed on a mere piece of paper. Only if we rebuild bridges of communication and redefine the parameters of success will the alarming statistics highlighted in the NCRB report eventually drop to zero. Rather than molding our youth into mere 'machines' racing in a competitive rat race, shaping them into sensitive and resilient human beings is the true hallmark of a civilized society. The time has come for every segment of society to engage in introspection and take decisive action to put an end to student suicides; otherwise, we risk pushing our nation's future into darkness with our own hands. If timely corrective measures are not implemented, this crisis will go down in history as a monumental tragedy. Safeguarding the mental well-being of our students is, in today's context, the greatest act of patriotism in the pursuit of building a prosperous and strong India. Protecting the mental health of students is the need of the hour. Society must instill in students the realization that life is not merely academic scores is what truly matters. The younger generation can be saved from depression only if parents, teachers, and society rebuild the bridges of communication. If we aspire to build a strong India, it is imperative to empower our youth mentally.

Piyush Goyal Felicitates LEAPS 2025 Winners Across 13 Categories Celebrating Excellence in Logistics and Innovation

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal felicitated the winners of LEAPS Awards 2025 across 13 categories spanning Core Logistics, MSMEs, Startups, Institutions and Special Categories at the LEAPS Awards 2025 and release of the LEADS Report 2025 today in New Delhi.

Shri Goyal today also released the LEADS 2025 report at the LEAPS Awards 2025 ceremony. The event witnessed participation from senior government officials, industry associations, logistics stakeholders, startups, MSMEs, academic institutions, members of evaluation committees and representatives from the logistics ecosystem.

Shri Piyush Goyal while addressing the LEAPS Awards 2025 and release of the LEADS Report 2025, said India has covered 38 developed and prosperous economies through nine Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) over the last three and a half years, with four already operational and five more expected to come into force in the next 12 months. Minister said along with the FTAs concluded earlier with Japan, Korea and ASEAN countries, these agreements now cover more than two-thirds of global trade and economies.

Shri Goyal said India is also actively negotiating trade agreements with several countries and regions including Chile and Maldives, with both agreements expected to be concluded before the end of the year. He added that negotiations are also underway with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which will cover all six Gulf nations including Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, in addition to Oman and the UAE. The Minister further said India is in active discussions with Canada, Eurasia, Mexico, SACU and Mercosur to expand trade engagement and market access opportunities.

The Minister added India achieved an all-time high export figure of USD 863 billion in the financial year ending March 31, 2026, despite global challenges including high tariffs, the continuing Ukraine conflict and the West Asia crisis. He noted that while global growth has slowed, India's exports

continued to grow, with services exports recording growth of around 8.5-9 per cent and overall exports growing by nearly 5 per cent over the previous year. He said the Government has now set an aspirational export target of USD 1 trillion for the current year, supported by the operationalisation

pressed confidence that India can further reduce logistics costs through continued investments, innovation, startup-led solutions and improved efficiencies. He also highlighted that initiatives such as GST, decriminalisation of laws, reduction of compliance burdens and simplification of business

and reduced around 42,000 compliance burdens. He added that further work is underway to simplify procedures, integrate databases and move more processes online.

The Minister also underlined the importance of balancing physical engagements with digital

ment. The initiative aligns with the vision of PM GatiShakti and the National Logistics Policy by promoting multimodality, efficiency enhancement, technology adoption and sustainable logistics practices.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, DPIIT Shri Amardeep Singh Bhatia

pert Committee. The short-listed applicants were further evaluated by the Award Committee.

The applicants were assessed on parameters including technological innovation, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices, multimodality, alignment with the National Logistics Policy, operational efficiency, safety, research and development, gender diversity and contribution towards employment generation and skill development.

Shri Piyush Goyal also released the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2025 report today. LEADS is DPIIT's flagship assessment of logistics performance across States and Union Territories and serves as a key benchmarking and reform tool for improving logistics efficiency across the country.

LEADS 2025 reflects the Government's continued focus on integrated and data-driven logistics reforms under the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan and National Logistics Policy. The framework supports cooperative and competitive federalism by enabling States and UTs to benchmark performance, identify gaps and prioritise targeted logistics interventions.

The seventh edition of LEADS- LEADS 2025 marks a significant evolution in the assessment of India's logistics landscape, featuring a more rigorous and refined evaluation methodology compared to previous years. LEADS 2025 also places greater emphasis on measurable and evidence-based indicators, with nearly 59% weightage assigned to objective indicators to strengthen assessment robustness and implementation tracking.

To better reflect the maturity and diverse progress of logistics ecosystems across the country, the LEADS 2025 framework has transitioned from its previous three-tier classification to a more comprehensive four-tier performance framework. The revised framework enables more nuanced assessment of logistics performance and supports targeted improvement pathways across different stages of logistics ecosystem development.



of multiple FTAs and enhanced market access opportunities.

The Minister said the West Asia crisis, slowing global growth and other international disruptions should be viewed by India as opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce logistics costs, strengthen competitiveness and expand export markets. He stressed that continuous improvements in logistics, technology adoption and business processes would help India further enhance its export competitiveness and foreign exchange earnings.

Shri Piyush Goyal said Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has taken up reduction of logistics costs as an urgent national mission to make India globally competitive. He said investments in infrastructure, seamless logistics systems, faster transportation and improved delivery mechanisms are helping improve efficiencies, productivity and competitiveness. The Minister noted that both State Governments and private companies have contributed significantly towards strengthening the logistics ecosystem and ex-

processes are helping create a more seamless logistics and business environment in the country.

The Minister said India's strengths include its democratic framework, large domestic demand, young population, diverse product and service offerings, strong digital infrastructure and skilled workforce. He highlighted that India produces 1.4 million STEM graduates annually and has emerged as a major destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs), with nearly 1,700-1,800 GCCs already operational and another 500 in the pipeline.

He said the world is increasingly looking towards India for innovation, research and development and competitive manufacturing and services. He added that multinational companies are leveraging India's talent pool, lower operational costs and robust digital ecosystem for expanding their global operations.

Referring to ongoing efforts to improve ease of doing business, Shri Goyal said the Government has undertaken decriminalisation of nearly 1,000 offences through the Jan Vishwas Bill

technologies in official interactions and negotiations. He said India is increasingly leveraging videoconferencing and digital platforms in trade negotiations and governance processes to improve efficiency.

The Minister urged all stakeholders to work collectively towards nation building and further strengthening India's global competitiveness. He said every effort to improve efficiency, reduce costs and enhance productivity contributes towards making India a stronger economic power.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, organised the award ceremony of LEAPS 2025 (Logistics Excellence, Advancement and Performance Shield), the flagship national initiative recognising excellence, innovation and best practices across the logistics ecosystem. LEAPS 2025, the fourth edition of the initiative, has been designed to acknowledge organisations that have demonstrated leadership, operational excellence, innovation and sustainability in logistics and supply chain manage-

highlighted the importance of an efficient and resilient logistics ecosystem in improving India's global competitiveness and reducing logistics costs. He noted that LEAPS provides an important platform for recognising organisations that are driving transformation in the logistics sector through innovation, digitisation, sustainability and operational excellence.

The evaluation process for LEAPS 2025 was conducted through a structured and transparent mechanism. Online applications were invited through the Award portal of MHA (<https://awards.gov.in/>), from 13th October to 26th December 2025.

The Expert Committee meeting for LEAPS 2025 was held under the chairmanship of Joint Secretary, Logistics, DPIIT on 11th and 12th February 2026. Subsequently, the Award Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of Secretary, DPIIT on 17th March 2026. Applications were received across 13 categories, comprising Core Logistics, MSMEs, Institutions, Startups and Special Categories were evaluated and presented before the Ex-

Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Shri Satish Chandra Dubey Visits Eastern Coalfields Limited

Union Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Shri Satish Chandra Dubey, visited Eastern Coalfields Limited on 13th May 2026. The visit was focused on reviewing the company's operational achievements, ongoing initiatives, and strategic roadmap for future growth. Discussions were held on key aspects relating to production, dispatch, mine safety, operational efficiency, and sustainable development initiatives undertaken by ECL.

As part of the programme, the Minister visited the Kunustoria Area of ECL, where he was welcomed by Shri Satish Jha, CMD, ECL in the presence of Md. Anzar Alam, Director (Finance), Shri Gunjan Kumar Sinha, Director (HR), Shri Girish Gopinathan Nair, Director (Technical), senior executives, General Managers, and Heads of Departments. A ceremonial Guard of Honour was presented to the Minister during the visit.

During the review meeting, Shri Dubey emphasized the need for balancing coal production with environmental responsibility and encouraged the adoption of modern, sustainable, and eco-conscious mining practices. He highlighted the importance of technological advancement, efficient resource utilization, and continuous improvement in safety standards to strengthen ECL's operational capabilities. Shri Satish Chandra Dubey appreciated the efforts of Eastern Coalfields Limited and congratulated Team ECL for its commendable performance during the financial year 2025-26 despite several operational challenges.

The Minister particularly appreciated ECL's forward-looking and sustainable initiatives aimed at promoting environmentally responsible mining practices and



long-term community development. He noted that such innovative approaches would play an important role in enhancing energy efficiency while reducing the environmental footprint of mining operations.

He also commended the scientific mine closure activities being undertaken by ECL for the systematic reclamation and repurposing of mined-out land. These initiatives, he observed, contribute significantly towards ecological restoration, sustainable land use, environmental conservation, and the socio-economic development of local communities residing in and around mining areas. The Minister emphasized that responsible mine closure practices are essential for ensuring long-term sustainability and creating opportunities for future community-oriented infrastructure and green development projects.

Further appreciating ECL's efforts toward cleaner and more efficient coal transportation systems, Shri Dubey highlighted the implementation and expansion of First Mile Connectivity (FMC) projects across various operational areas.

He stated that these projects are in-



strumental in minimizing air pollution, reducing dependence on road

transportation, improving logistical efficiency, and enabling faster, safer, and more environment-friendly evacuation of coal.

The Minister also acknowledged the company's initiatives for expanding solar energy installations and promoting renewable energy integration within mining operations. He remarked that such efforts reflect ECL's commitment towards transition to sustainable energy practices while simultaneously optimizing operational efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

He further advised that systematic and periodic stock verification measures need to be adopted for ensuring accuracy of declared coal

ments in West Asia and emerging energy challenges worldwide, the Minister emphasized the crucial role of ECL in strengthening the nation's energy security and maintaining operational resilience while maintaining optimum utilization of resources. He expressed confidence that ECL would achieve even greater milestones across all operational and developmental parameters.

Shri Dubey also shared valuable policy guidance and strategic inputs aimed at enhancing productivity and supporting the long-term growth of the company. Reiterating the Government's commitment towards strengthening India's energy security, he expressed appreciation

stock. Referring to the prevailing global scenario due to develop-

for the dedication and collective efforts of Team ECL.

Mumbai man arrested for murder of wife's alleged lover

Mumbai: A 48-year-old man was arrested for allegedly murdering his wife's alleged lover after inviting him to his residence in the Aarey Colony area of Goregaon in north Mumbai, police officials said on Friday. The incident, which reportedly took place following a confrontation over an alleged extramarital relationship, has shocked residents of the locality and triggered a detailed police investigation. According to officials from Aarey Police Station, the accused has been identified as Bhimraj Omprakash Sharma, who allegedly sus-

pected that his wife was involved in a relationship with the deceased, identified as Vikas Ashok Bhusare. Police said tensions had reportedly been building between the individuals for some time over the alleged affair.

Investigators said Sharma allegedly invited Bhusare to his residence in the Aarey Colony area under the pretext of discussing the issue and resolving the dispute. During the meeting, the accused, his wife and Bhusare reportedly consumed alcohol together inside the house before the situation turned violent. Police

officials stated that during the drinking session, Sharma allegedly warned Bhusare to stop meeting and communicating with his wife. According to preliminary findings, a heated argument later broke out between the two men regarding the alleged relationship, escalating tensions inside the residence. During the confrontation, Sharma allegedly attacked Bhusare with a knife and slit his throat in the presence of his wife. The victim sustained severe injuries in the assault and collapsed at the scene. Police said the attack appeared to have been car-

ried out in a fit of rage following the argument. After allegedly committing the murder, Sharma reportedly fled from the house and escaped into the nearby forested area surrounding Aarey Colony. The area, known for its dense greenery and forest patches, led to a brief manhunt operation by police teams attempting to trace the accused. Officials said police launched an immediate search operation after receiving information about the murder. Multiple teams were deployed to comb the surrounding forest area and nearby locations in an effort

to apprehend the accused before he could escape further. According to police, Sharma was eventually traced and arrested approximately three hours after the incident following a chase operation conducted by officers from the Aarey police station. He was subsequently taken into custody for questioning regarding the murder. Investigators revealed that Bhusare had previously been accused of harassing Sharma's wife and had allegedly continued to maintain contact with her despite repeated objections and warnings from the accused.

MNS Leader Dilip Babu Dhotre Seriously Injured in Mumbai-Pune Expressway Accident

Pune: Senior Raj Thackeray aide and prominent Maharashtra Navnirman Sena leader Dilip Babu Dhotre was seriously injured in a major road accident on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway on Friday.

He is under treatment at a private hospital in Pune.

According to preliminary information, Dhotre was travelling from Mumbai to Pune when a speeding vehicle coming from the opposite direction rammed into his car on the expressway.

Initial reports suggest the accident may have occurred after the driver lost control of the vehicle. Dhotre reportedly sustained serious chest and leg injuries. He was rushed to a pri-



private hospital in Pune, where a team of doctors is monitoring his condition. Sources said his condition remains critical.

The incident has sparked

concern among MNS workers and supporters, especially in temple town Pandharpur, where Dhotre is considered one of the party's influential leaders.

Suspect Arrested in Hadapsar Hospital Bomb Scare Case; No Terror Angle Found

Pune: In a major breakthrough, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested the suspect accused of planting an Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-like object at a hospital in the Hadapsar area recently, creating panic across Pune city. The accused was detained by an ATS team at the Nagpur Railway Station on Friday while attempting to flee by train.

According to police, the arrested suspect has been identified as Shivaji Rathod. He was travelling on the Azad Hind Express and was taken into custody as soon as he got down from the train at Platform No. 6 of Nagpur Railway Station. He is currently being interrogated at the ATS office in Nagpur and will soon be brought to Pune for further investigation.

Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar addressed a press conference and said that the accused had escaped towards Nagpur by train. Police had earlier alerted Akola Police and attempted to intercept him at Murtizapur, but he managed to evade capture before eventually being arrested in Nagpur by the ATS team.

The Police Commissioner clarified that, as per the preliminary investigation, no terror angle has emerged in the case so far. He stated that the accused appeared to have acted alone and had no previous criminal record. Forensic examination and further investigation are currently underway.

Police said the suspect had visited the hospital on May 10 for personal medical treatment but allegedly could not afford the expens-

es. Investigators suspect that he planned to threaten the hospital for extortion money to fund his treatment.

During the investigation, police recovered a digital clock from the accused's residence, which raised suspicion about its possible connection to the bomb scare. Authorities also revealed that the accused had allegedly learned how to make a bomb-like device by watching videos online, including tutorials on YouTube.

According to police, the object planted at the hospital resembled a bomb but contained no explosive material. The device was reportedly assembled using inexpensive materials including a digital clock, four pipes, adhesive tape, and red and black wires, costing nearly ₹400.

Officials further stated that the accused is originally from Solapur and currently runs clothing and footwear shops in the Manjari area of Pune, where he also resides. Police have conducted searches at multiple locations linked to him and are questioning around 15 to 17 people in connection with the case.

Investigators also recovered nearly two kilograms of suspected cannabis from the accused's house, and a separate probe is being conducted into that matter.

Police suspect the accused intended to travel further from Nagpur towards Nepal via Howrah, where his sister reportedly lives. Authorities said he had informed family members that he planned to visit Nepal due to the summer heat in India.

Women's Empowerment and Safety Will Remain Top Priority: MLC Neelam Gorhe

Mumbai: Senior Neelam Gorhe on Friday said that her responsibility towards the people had increased further after taking oath as a Member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council for the fifth consecutive term. Reaffirming her commitment to public service, she stated that she would continue to strongly advocate issues related to women's empowerment, women's safety and broader social concerns within the legislature. The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected members of the Maharashtra Legislative Council was held at the Central Hall of Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai in the presence of senior political leaders, legislators and officials. The event marked the formal induction of several newly elected members into the Upper House of the state legislature. Along with Dr. Neelam Gorhe, nine newly elected members and one member elected through a bypoll took oath during the ceremony. The occasion was conducted in accordance with legislative procedures and parliamentary traditions and witnessed participation from members across political parties.

Among those who took oath were Omprakash Kadu, Ambadas Danve, Pragna Satav, Pramod Jathar, Zeeshan Siddique, Madhavi Naik, Sunil Karjatkar, Vivek Kolhe and Sanjay Bhende. After taking oath, Dr. Gorhe expressed gratitude to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde for reposing faith in her leadership and giving her another opportunity to serve in the Legislative Council. She also thanked Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for extending support and encouragement. Reflecting on her long political journey, Dr. Gorhe said that between 2002 and 2014, when the Shiv Sena functioned in the opposition, she consistently raised issues concerning ordinary citizens and public welfare in the legislature. She stated that her political work during that period was guided by the ideals and leadership of Balasaheb Thackeray. She added that after the party came to power in 2014, the Shiv Sena continued to carry forward the same ideology and people-oriented approach under the leadership of Eknath Shinde. According to her, the party remained

committed to addressing public grievances and strengthening welfare initiatives for common citizens. Referring to the working style of late Shiv Sena leader Anand Dighe, Dr. Gorhe said the organisation continued to follow a people-centric model focused on helping individuals in distress and responding quickly to public problems. She remarked that the party's grassroots approach remained one of its strongest characteristics. Expressing concern over the increasing number of crimes against women, Dr. Gorhe stressed the need for stricter legal measures and stronger implementation mechanisms to ensure justice for victims.

She said those accused in crimes against women must face stringent punishment to create deterrence and strengthen public confidence in the justice system. She also highlighted the importance of rehabilitation and long-term support for women affected by violence and abuse. According to her, rehabilitation measures should include legal assistance, psychological counselling, social support and economic.

Amboli-Velunje Flow Diversion Scheme gets cabinet nod

Nashik: The Maharashtra Cabinet on Friday approved a budgetary provision of ₹49.26 crore for the Amboli-Velunje Flow Diversion Scheme in Nashik district, a project aimed at improving irrigation facilities and diverting water from the west-flowing river system towards the Godavari basin.

The decision was taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Devendra Fadnavis. According to officials, the Amboli-Velunje Flow Diversion Scheme is expected to provide irrigation benefits to nearly 165 hectares of agricultural land in the region. The project has been planned to improve water availability for farming activities and support long-term agricultural development in parts of Nashik district. The scheme has been proposed on a stream connected

to the Val River within the Daman Ganga basin. Government officials stated that the project would enable the diversion of water that currently flows westward towards the Arabian Sea and redirect it eastward into the Godavari river basin through a scientifically designed flow diversion system. The Cabinet noted that the project would help optimise the utilisation of available water resources by transferring surplus water from one basin to another. Officials said such inter-basin diversion projects were increasingly being considered to address regional water imbalances and support irrigation requirements in drought-prone and water-stressed areas. As per the approved plan, the Amboli-Velunje scheme is expected to make around 32.04 million cubic feet (MCFT) of water available.

Out of this total quantity, approximately 4.83 MCFT has been reserved for local consumption and domestic use in nearby villages and surrounding areas. The remaining 27.21 MCFT of water is proposed to be diverted into the Godavari basin through a flow-based diversion mechanism. Officials said the transferred water would contribute towards strengthening irrigation infrastructure.

And improving water availability in the downstream regions connected to the Godavari basin. The total approved budget for the project stands at ₹49.26 crore. Out of this amount, ₹46 crore has been sanctioned for the execution of actual construction-related activities, while an additional ₹3.26 crore has been allocated for ancillary and supporting works associated with the project.

Raj Thackeray supports Thalpathy Vijay's demand to cancel NEET exam

Mumbai: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) founder president Raj Thackeray backed Tamil Nadu Chief Minister "Thalpathy" Vijay's demand on Thursday to cancel the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), which is a national-level medical entrance exam, conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to undergraduate medical courses.

He called for the immediate resignation of union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET UG paper leak.

"I am surprised that no action has been taken against Dharmendra Pradhan despite many controversies and confusions related to NEET during his tenure. Pradhan, who is playing with the future of 22 lakh students should resign immediately. I

had discussed the issues related to NEET directly with the Prime Minister earlier as well, but the government has failed to provide any permanent solution," Raj Thackeray said.

"What is the use of the Maharashtra government if only Marathi students do not get opportunities in medical colleges in Maharashtra? Ministers from Maharashtra must take a firm stand in the interest of the state instead of supporting every decision of the central government.

"Instead of doing photo sessions on petrol-diesel saving, they should raise their voice on the issue of student education, and Maharashtra should take a clear stand against NEET like the South Indian states," Raj Thackeray said.

"Leaders from South India opposed the NEET

exam like me. The new Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Thalpathy Vijay, has also insisted on cancelling NEET. There are more than 350 medical colleges in the five South Indian states and Maharashtra together, but there are only 180 medical colleges in the big states of North India.

"Therefore, there is an effort to get students from North India into South Indian medical colleges and this has been going on since 2016," Raj Thackeray said.

He also raised serious questions about a financially strong network of coaching classes in North Indian states. "There is a large coaching industry in North India, which has the financial strength and ability to bend the system. While Maharashtra and South Indian states have a large number

of medical colleges, an exam like NEET was imposed only to ensure that students from North India got admission in these states. It is due to this reason that South Indian states including Tamil Nadu have always opposed NEET," Raj Thackeray said.

Raj Thackeray said that he had been opposed to NEET right since its inception. He stated that the introduction of a single medical entrance exam like NEET across the country in 2016 was purely due to the insistence and pressure of the central government.

"Right from the beginning, when NEET was incepted itself, I had expressed my fears that it would benefit only economically well off students who could afford expensive coaching classes and that it would harm the prospects of rural and mid-

dle class students. My fears have now been confirmed by the type of paper leak which has come to light. It has been revealed that the NEET exam paper was sold for lakhs of rupees and it was traced back to people operating from Maharashtra," Raj Thackeray said. Raj Thackeray mentioned previous confusions in the NEET exam. He alleged that some students got 720 out of 720 marks, the way grace marks were given and the incidents of paper leakage had eroded the credibility of the exam. He indirectly criticized the central government by saying that only those who have the power to bend the system benefit from this system. "My question is whether society should trust doctors who graduate from such a shoddy system," Raj Thackeray said.

FPJ-CareEdge Annual Report Awards Honour Excellence in Corporate Reporting, Governance and ESG Vision

Mumbai: The fourth edition of the Free Press Journal and CareEdge Annual Report Awards brought together leading corporate executives, policymakers, investors and governance experts in Mumbai to recognise excellence in annual reporting, transparency, governance standards and stakeholder accountability across India Inc.

The event highlighted the evolving role of annual reports, with speakers emphasising that such reports are no longer viewed merely as statutory financial disclosures, but increasingly as comprehensive reflections of an organisation's governance practices, strategic direction, sustainability approach and long-term vision.

Addressing the gathering, FPJ President Abhishek Karnani said strong and transparent annual reporting helps reinforce higher standards of corporate governance and encourages better business practices across industries. He also outlined the



broader vision of the Free Press Journal to develop the awards platform into a credible corporate think tank focused on governance, accountability, transparency and best practices within India's corporate ecosystem.

During his address, Karnani highlighted transparency as a core element of FPJ's own institutional growth journey and stated that the publication has emerged as Mumbai's second-largest English daily newspaper and

the only one with circulation certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulation.

CareEdge, which participated as the knowledge partner for the awards, also stressed the changing nature of corporate reporting standards in India. According to Swati Agarwal, CEO, Advisory, Care, Analytics and Advisory Pvt. Ltd., annual reports are increasingly extending beyond traditional financial disclosures and are now incorporating En-

vironmental, Social and Governance (ESG) parameters, climate-risk mitigation frameworks, governance standards and long-term value creation strategies. A major highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Hall of Fame Award to Bhaskar Bhat, former Managing Director of Titan Company and current Chairperson of Kansai Nerolac Paints. The citation acknowledged Bhaskar Bhat's contribution towards transforming Ti-

tan into one of India's most trusted consumer brands while building a leadership legacy associated with integrity, trust and long-term value creation. Several companies across diverse sectors were honoured during the awards ceremony for excellence in annual reporting and disclosure practices. Among the award recipients were Apollo Hospitals Enterprise in the healthcare category, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone in the logistics and supply chain category, and Bharat Electronics in the defence and aerospace category.

Other winners included Havells India in the electrical equipment category, HCL Technologies in the IT and ITES category, and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders in the heavy manufacturing category. Awards were also presented to Motilal Oswal Financial Services in the capital markets category, Info Edge India in the platforms category, and NTPC Limited in the utilities category.

Sunetra Pawar demands equal ward funds for NCP on par with BJP corporators

Mumbai: Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar has written a letter to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis demanding that corporators of the Ajit Pawar-founded NCP must get an equal amount of development funds for their wards, as much as BJP corporators receive.

According to sources, she wrote to Chief Minister Fadnavis demanding equal development funds after it came to light that each ruling BJP corporator in the Pune Municipal Corporation received Rs 7 crores to develop their municipal wards while corporators from her party received only Rs 5 crores each from the municipal budget.

In her letter to Chief Minister Fadnavis, she appealed that development funds must be disbursed based on PM Modi's principle of "Sab Ka Saat, Sabka Vikas", without any political biases, preferential treatment or discrimination.

Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar also demanded in her letter to Fadnavis that all wards in Pune city should



get equal development funds without giving preferential treatment to any one part of the city.

She emphasised in her letter to the Chief Minister that if any ward gets a skewed amount of funds, citizens of those areas may get deprived of basic amenities.

"In accordance with the principle of 'Sabka Saat, Sabka Vikas', it is requested that appropriate instructions be given to the concerned parties so that all corporators, former corporators and public representatives of the BJP as well as the NCP are allocated equal funds for

their wards," Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar stated in her letter to Fadnavis.

The issue was raised by corporators from Sunetra Pawar's party while representations were made for funds from local office bearers for the improvement of civic amenities in Pune city.

"Today, we are working together as a 'Mahayuti' at the state level as the central government level. To achieve the overall development of the city, it is necessary to allocate funds by taking all public representatives of the ruling party and allied parties into confidence.

‘Laalo’ resonates at Cannes; Gujarati cinema creates history

Mumbai: Gujarati cinema achieved a landmark moment as ‘Laalo - Shri Krishna Sada Sahayate’ made its presence felt at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, taking regional Indian storytelling to an international audience.

This achievement is a celebration of Indian cinema, true stories rooted in the soil and the recognition being received by stories from different parts of the country across the world. The film’s team expressed gratitude to the audience for their continued love and support, which made this special journey possible.

Director Ankit Sakhiya said, “It is a proud and extremely emotional moment for us to represent ‘Laalo - Shri Krishna Sada Sa-hayate’ at the Cannes Film Festival. We believe that our language, our culture and this film have brought us this far. We



may not be big enough to present such a rich culture to the world in its entirety, but it is a matter of pride for us to present a small glimpse of Gujarat and its spirituality to the world through ‘Laalo’. We hope that this

film will touch people’s hearts beyond language and borders.”

The film’s producers Ajay Balwant Padariya, Jay Vyas and Jigar Dalsania said, “As producers of ‘Laalo - Shri Krishna Sada Sa-ha-

yate’, our biggest endeavor has always been to ensure that this story reaches as many people as possible. Cinema becomes special when it touches people’s hearts, sparks conversation, and resonates with audiences beyond the screen. Reaching the Cannes Film Festival is a big step towards that dream of taking our culture, emotions, and story to audiences across the world through Laalo.”

Produced by Manifest Films, Jai Vyas Productions, Jigar Dalsania, Parthiv Jodhani and Ajay Balwant Padariya, the film stars Riva Rachh, Shruhad Goswami and Karan Joshi in lead roles. Shubham Gajjar serves as the director of photography (DOP) and creative producer.

‘Laalo - Shri Krishna Sada Sahayate’ will air on Sunday, May 17, at 1 pm only on Sony Max.

Trailer of ‘The Great Grand Superhero’ out

Mumbai: The makers of ‘The Great Grand Superhero’ have unveiled the film’s trailer, showcasing a colourful mix of adventure, humour and childhood imagination led by Jackie Shroff in a unique central role.

The film tackles this intriguing question in a highly entertaining way. Produced by Zee Studios and Ahmedabad Films, the movie takes the audience into a world where childhood fantasies collide with alien invasion. It reinvents Indian superhero culture and could prove to be a long-awaited major Indian film for children.

At the center of the film is Shroff, who brings a unique blend of humor, mystery, warmth, and charm to his



character. Is he really a superhero, or is it just the imagination of a child who believes his grandfather is the world’s greatest hero? The trailer maintains this suspense until the very end.

Shroff said, “The most special thing about this film is exploring the world of children’s imagination. As chil-

dren, we all believed our heroes could do anything. This trailer captures that innocence, madness, and excitement. It’s full of adventure, aliens, entertainment, and a social message.”

National Award-winning director Manish Saini said, “Children see the world in the most fun way.

Pulkit Samrat did a lot of preparation for ‘Glory’

Mumbai: For Bollywood actor Pulkit Samrat, stepping into the world of ‘Glory’ was not just about playing another character but about completely immersing oneself in the emotional and physical world of a boxer from Haryana.

To understand Haryana’s boxing culture, the language, the tone of conversation and the emotional darkness within the character, Samrat underwent intense preparation, which included discipline, sensitivity and complete dedication. Performance collaborators Raghav and Sanjay, who worked closely with Pulkit on his performance and emotional preparation for the series, spoke candidly about the creative process behind ‘Glory’, Samrat’s unique effort to understand the Haryana accent, and his constant curiosity to learn.

They said, “Pulkit first focused on understanding the emotional and social world of the character. We still remember our initial conversations focused on understanding the world these characters come from, what honour, prestige, and family honour mean in that environment, what is at stake for them, and what success looks like in the boxing culture of Haryana, where there is a boxing academy on almost every street.

“We wanted to understand how difficult it really is for someone to stand out in such a world. Our preparation wasn’t limited to boxing. We wanted to under-



stand the food, the language, and the rhythm of conversation,” they said.

“It was incredibly helpful that the 42-year-old actor spent time in Haryana with the Rekki team and experienced these things up close.

I To be honest, we weren’t officially a dialogue or dialect coach on this project, but we’d like to share an incident that truly demonstrated his hard work,” they said.

Raghav once casually suggested that he try rapping in Haryana, as it made it easier to understand the rhythm,

energy, and flow of the language. However, Raghav simply forgot about it. But a week later, Pulkit surprised everyone.

“He then performed a full Haryana rap with complete confidence, attitude, and rhythm. It was truly impressive. Honestly, that moment showed us the true level of Samrat’s commitment. What impressed them was not just that he did it, but that he dedicated himself so completely to the idea in such a short time. He wanted to understand the language and the world in a profound way, not superficially,” they said.

Raghav and Sanjay said, “There were many scenes in the series that required Pulkit to delve deeply emotionally, especially those where characters try to remain calm on the outside, but a lot is going on inside.

The doll scenes were particularly important in this regard. “The basement scene in Episode 5 was also significant, and the Mohammed Ali scene was also emotionally significant. Pulkit’s ability to absorb emotions quickly and truthfully is also commendable. If you give him an image, a thought, or an emotional state, he captures it quickly and honestly. He is completely open to the process, and that’s why we were able to reach emotional depths so quickly,” they said.

According to them, they explored this character in many different ways.

Ranveer Singh creates history, becomes first post-COVID Indian superstar to enter Rs 3700 crore club

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has reportedly achieved a major global box office milestone, with claims suggesting that he has become the first Indian male actor to cross ₹3,700 crore in worldwide earnings as a lead performer. According to the report, this achievement places him among the highest-grossing stars in Indian cinema, particularly in the post-COVID era.

The report credits this milestone largely to the success of the so-called “Dhurandhar” franchise, which is said to have played a key role in elevating Singh’s box office stature. It claims that the franchise not only revived his commercial dominance but also strengthened his position as one of the leading superstars of contemporary Hindi cinema.

As per the figures mentioned, Singh’s post-COVID theatrical journey began with the sports drama 83, which reportedly grossed ₹184.36 crore worldwide. The film, based on India’s 1983 Cricket World Cup victory, was noted for its emotional storytelling and Ranveer Singh’s performance in the role of



Kapil Dev. Following that, he appeared in Jayeshbhai Jordaar, which is stated to have earned around ₹24.1 crore globally. The film attempted a social comedy narrative but reportedly underperformed at the box office despite its unique theme and subject treatment. The report further mentions Circus, which is said to have collected approximately ₹39.6 crore worldwide. Despite its ensemble cast and commercial positioning, the film reportedly did not perform strongly at the box office. However, Singh’s fortunes are de-

scribed as having improved significantly with Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani, which reportedly grossed ₹348.89 crore worldwide. The film is said to have re-established his commercial appeal, with praise for his performance, screen presence and emotional range. According to the same report, the major turning point in his career came with the “Dhurandhar” franchise, which is described as a historic blockbuster success. The first instalment of the franchise is claimed to have earned ₹1354.84 crore globally, marking a record-break-

ing performance in Hindi cinema.

The sequel, Dhurandhar 2, is also stated to have continued this strong performance, reportedly collecting ₹1833.56 crore worldwide within just 55 days of release. The report suggests that the film continues to run successfully in theatres, contributing significantly to overall earnings. On the basis of these figures, Singh’s total global box office collection is said to have reached ₹3,785.35 crore, which is approximately equivalent to \$1.7 billion. This figure is being presented as a landmark achievement in his career. The report further claims that with this milestone, Singh has become the first Indian male superstar to cross the ₹3,700 crore global earnings mark in the post-COVID era as a lead actor. It positions him among the most commercially successful actors in Indian cinema. It is also stated that he has surpassed several major contemporary stars in cumulative post-COVID earnings, including Shah Rukh Khan, whose reported total is ₹2,704.07 crore according to the same comparison.

‘Aakhri Sawaal’ will bring a big change in the era of action thrillers: Nikhil Nanda

Mumbai: Producer Nikhil Nanda has stated that the upcoming film “Aakhri Sawaal” is poised to bring a significant shift in the landscape of contemporary action thrillers.

The film’s teaser and recently released trailer have already drawn strong attention, with viewers appreciating its intense tone and gripping storytelling. Fronted by Sanjay Dutt, the film is set to hit theatres on May 15.

Meanwhile, Nanda recently spoke about releasing such a serious film in an era of action thrillers. He said that now audiences want something new and different, and the cinema will provide that.

He explained that the film is inspired by true events and based on strong facts, which will provide an opportunity for people to express their opinions and discuss them.

The movie is not just an entertainment film, but a thought-provoking one.

Nanda said, “I think today’s audience is very intelligent. Everyone wants to see a different kind of film. If a thought-provoking film comes out amidst the thrillers, it will bring a change to people, and I would say it will be a much-needed change. Through our film, we will show people the truth and the facts that have been circulating in various forms on social media for years. We have combined all of these facts and presented them in this film. When you watch this film, you will learn the real facts and then you will be able to form your own opinion.” Directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Abhijit Mohan Warang, the film is presented by Nanda and co-produced alongside Dutt.

The story, screenplay and dialogues are crafted by Utkarsh Nathani. The cast includes Amit Sadh, Sameera Reddy, Tridha Choudhury, Neetu Chandra and Namashi Chakraborty in important roles.

The scene is described as capturing the essence of classic Bollywood entertainment. His appearance in the film reportedly reflects a nostalgic throwback to his earlier comic roles, particularly from the original “Welcome” series. Dressed in a stylish outfit and tinted sunglasses, he is seen standing in a jungle setting that adds a humorous and adventurous tone to the visual.

Akshay Kumar’s iconic comic style look from ‘Welcome to the Jungle’ revealed

Mumbai: The makers of the upcoming film Welcome to the Jungle have officially unveiled a fresh look of actor Akshay Kumar, reigniting excitement around his return to the signature comedic style that made the original “Welcome” franchise a massive success among audiences.

The new look shows Akshay Kumar stepping back into a vibrant, larger-than-life comic world, where humour, chaos, and grand visual storytelling come together. The makers suggest that his character once again carries the same energy that made him one of the most popular comedy stars in Hindi cinema.

According to the presentation of the first look, Akshay Kumar’s entry in the film is designed to be dramatic and impactful, with the surrounding atmosphere transforming instantly to match his screen presence.



The scene is described as capturing the essence of classic Bollywood entertainment.

His appearance in the film reportedly reflects a nostalgic throwback to his earlier comic roles, particularly from the original “Welcome” series. Dressed in a stylish outfit and tinted sunglasses, he is seen standing in a jungle setting that adds a humorous and adventurous tone to the visual.

The makers have highlighted that the character design is intended to blend nos-

algia with a larger cinematic scale. The image aims to bring back the familiar charm of the franchise while upgrading it with more elaborate production values and modern storytelling techniques.

The reaction to the first look has been strongly influenced by nostalgia, as fans recall the popularity of earlier films in the series. Akshay Kumar’s comic timing, energetic expressions, and effortless humour are being emphasised as key highlights of the upcoming project.

Bharti Singh shares her journey on celebrity chat show Double Date

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Cabinet on Friday approved a budgetary provision of ₹49.26 crore for the Amboli-Velunje Flow Diversion Scheme in Nashik district, a project aimed at improving irrigation facilities and diverting water from the west-flowing river system towards the Godavari basin. The decision was taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Devendra Fadnis. According to officials, the Amboli-Velunje Flow Diversion Scheme is expected to provide irrigation benefits to nearly 165 hectares of agricultural land in the region. The project has been planned to improve water availability for farming activities and support long-term agricultural development in parts of Nashik district. The scheme has been proposed on a stream connected to the Val River within the Daman Ganga basin. Government officials stated that the project would enable the diversion of water that currently flows westward towards the Arabian Sea and redirect it eastward into the Godavari river basin through a scientifically designed flow diversion system. The Cabinet noted that the project would help optimise the utilisation of available water resources by transferring surplus water from one basin to another. Officials said such inter-basin diversion projects were increasingly being considered to address regional water imbalances and support irrigation requirements in drought-prone and water-stressed areas. As per the approved plan, the Amboli-Velunje scheme is expected to make around 32.04 million cubic feet (MCFT) of water available. Out of this total quantity, approximately 4.83 MCFT has been reserved for local consumption and domestic use in nearby villages and surrounding areas. The remaining 27.21 MCFT of water is proposed to be diverted into the Godavari basin through a flow-based diversion mechanism. Officials said the transferred water would contribute towards strength-

ening irrigation infrastructure and improving water availability in the downstream regions connected to the Godavari basin. The total approved budget for the project stands at ₹49.26 crore. Out of this amount, ₹46 crore has been sanctioned for the execution of actual construction-related activities, while an additional ₹3.26 crore has been allocated for ancillary and supporting works associated with the project. Government officials stated that the construction component would include development of diversion structures, water transfer systems, canal-related infrastructure and supporting engineering works necessary for the successful execution of the scheme. The Godavari Marathwada Irrigation Development Corporation has been entrusted with the responsibility of assigning a unique infrastructure identification number to the project and overseeing procedural and administrative formalities connected to its implementation. According to the detailed budget allocation approved by the Cabinet, ₹13.46 crore has been earmarked for land acquisition related to the project. Officials stated that acquisition of required land parcels would be undertaken in accordance with government regulations and compensation norms. An amount of ₹24.33 crore has been specifically allocated for the main construction works under the irrigation scheme. This includes the development of water diversion structures, civil works and associated engineering activities necessary for execution of the project. The Cabinet has also sanctioned ₹3.90 crore for the construction of bridges connected to the project area. In addition, ₹32 lakh has been approved for construction of buildings and other required structural facilities linked to the project operations and maintenance. To ensure smooth accessibility and connectivity, ₹3.70 crore has been earmarked for roads and ap-

proach connectivity infrastructure. Officials noted that improved road connectivity would facilitate transportation of construction material and improve long-term access to irrigation facilities in the region. The approved budget further includes ₹15 lakh for tree plantation and environmental measures around the project area. Authorities said plantation activities would help minimise environmental impact and support ecological balance during and after project implementation. From this, ₹12 lakh has been allocated for maintenance expenditure, while ₹1.70 lakh has been kept aside for miscellaneous expenses associated with administrative and operational requirements of the project. Officials stated that the Amboli-Velunje Flow Diversion Scheme is expected to strengthen irrigation capacity in the region and improve agricultural productivity by ensuring more reliable water supply to farmers. The project is also ex-

pected to contribute towards better water resource management and balanced regional development in parts of Maharashtra dependent on irrigation-based agriculture. A Comedian Bharti Singh recently opened up about her personal experiences with body shaming during an appearance on the show Double Date, hosted by Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi. In a candid and emotional conversation, she reflected on how such remarks were treated as normal in the environment she grew up in, and how her understanding of them has changed over time. Bharti Singh said that in her hometown, casual body shaming was common and often not seen as offensive.

She recalled that people would openly refer to overweight individuals as “fat” and make comments about skin colour without realising the emotional impact such words could have on others.



Struggling KKR face must-win battle against rampaging Gujarat Titans

Kolkata: With their playoff hopes hanging by a thread, three-time title holders Kolkata Knight Riders return to Eden Gardens for a crucial clash against an in-form Gujarat Titans side here on Saturday, knowing there is little room left for error in their IPL 2026 campaign.

KKR are back home after spending nearly a month on the road, but the comfort of familiar conditions alone may not be enough to rescue a season that has never really found momentum. The Ajinkya Rahane-led outfit has struggled for consistency throughout the tournament and now face the daunting task of winning their remaining matches while also depending on other results to keep their playoff dreams alive.

For KKR, the season has been marked by uncertainty from the very beginning. The decision to hand the captaincy to veteran Rahane was met with mixed reactions after the team's disappointing eighth-place finish last year, and the campaign has done little to silence the doubts.

The Kolkata side looked unsettled through the opening half of the season. They had to wait until their seventh game to register their first win and repeatedly struggled to put together complete performances. Changes in the batting order, inconsistent team combinations and the inability to close out key moments prevented them from building any sustained rhythm.

There was a brief turnaround when KKR strung together four consecutive victories, beginning with their win over Rajasthan Royals at Eden Gardens on April 19. During that stretch, the side finally began to resemble the balanced unit that had made them such a dangerous team in previous seasons.

However, the momentum did not last long.



Their defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru once again exposed several familiar issues. Poor fielding cost them heavily and Virat Kohli capitalised with a commanding innings that left KKR chasing the game for most of the night.

That loss has left Kolkata in a difficult position. They have only three league matches remaining and can now finish with a maximum of 15 points if they win all of them. Even then, qualification is far from guaranteed because net run rate and other results could still decide the final playoff spots. Another defeat would almost certainly end their campaign and also raise bigger questions about the direction of the team moving forward.

One of the biggest reasons behind KKR's short revival was the return to form of their spin attack. Veteran all-rounder Sunil Narine and mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy once again became central figures in the bowling unit, controlling the middle overs and creating pressure consistently.

But KKR felt the absence of Chakravarthy badly in the defeat against RCB after the spinner missed the match with a fractured

left leg. Without him, the bowling attack lacked its usual control and penetration during the middle overs. There is some positive

news for the home side though, with head coach Abhishek Nayar indicating that Chakravarthy is expected to return for the clash against Gujarat Titans.

KKR's batting unit, however, continues to remain a concern. Despite a few individual performances, the batting lineup has not clicked consistently as a group. Young batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi has emerged as one of the brighter stories in an otherwise frustrating campaign. The youngster has scored 340 runs at a strike rate of 139.44 and already has four half-centuries to his name this season.

Vice-captain Rinku Singh also produced important contributions with the bat, often stabilising the innings in difficult situations. The left-hander has so far contributed 286 runs at a strike rate close to 149. Both players will once again be crucial for KKR as they prepare for decisive home fixtures against Gujarat Titans, Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals.

While KKR are battling to stay alive, Gujarat Titans arrive in Kolkata with very different objectives. Shubman Gill's side has developed into one of the most complete sides this season. Their five-match winning streak has taken them level on points with table-toppers RCB and firmly strength-

ened their push for a top-two finish. The Titans' success has come from the balance they have managed to build across departments.

Their bowling attack has delivered consistently in recent matches. Kagiso Rabada has produced match-winning spells and claimed two Player-of-the-Match awards during the winning run, while Jason Holder has also played a major role with impactful performances. Perhaps the most significant boost for GT has been the improved form of star spinner Rashid Khan, who appears to have rediscovered his rhythm at the business end of the tournament.

That strong bowling attack has complemented a powerful batting unit led by Gill and opener Sai Sudharsan. After winning the Orange Cap last year with 759 runs, the stylish left-hander has already scored 501 runs this season and remains firmly in contention for the award once again. He has registered five fifties in his last six innings, including a century, underlining the consistency he has brought at the top. Gill has looked equally assured and continues to anchor the innings with confidence, while Washington Sundar has quietly provided stability in the middle order. GT will also hope England wicketkeeper-batter Jos Buttler can produce a strong finish to the

league stage after a season that has been relatively quiet by his standards.

With league matches against KKR and Chennai Super Kings still to come, Gujarat Titans know that a top-two finish would give them an important advantage heading into the playoffs.

The conditions at Eden Gardens could add another interesting dimension to the contest. Although traditionally known as a batting-friendly venue, the surface in Kolkata has offered assistance to bowlers this season as well. There has been enough help for spinners and bowlers using slower variations, especially during the middle overs.

Historically, though, Gujarat Titans have enjoyed the upper hand in this rivalry. The two teams have faced each other six times in the IPL so far, with GT winning four matches. KKR have managed just one victory, while one game ended without a result. Squads: Kolkata Knight Riders: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Manish Pandey, Rovman Powell, Rahul Tripathi, Finn Allen, Tejasvi Singh, Tim Seifert, Sunil Narine, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Cameron Green, Sarthak Ranjan, Daksh Kamra, Rachin Ravindra, Navdeep Saini, Vaibhav Arora, Umran Malik, Matheesha Pathirana, Kartik Tyagi, Akash Deep, Varun Chakravarthy, Prashant Solanki. Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), Anuj Rawat, Arshad Khan, Ashok Sharma, Jos Buttler, Connor Esterhuizen, Gurnoor Brar, Jason Holder, Kulwant Khejroliya, Kumar Kushagra, Mohammed Siraj, Glenn Phillips, Prasad Krishna, Kagiso Rabada, Rashid Khan, Sai Kishore, Sai Sudharsan, Shahrulkhan, Ishant Sharma, Nishant Sindhu, Manav Suthar, Rahul Tewatia, Washington Sundar, Luke Wood, Jayant Yadav.

Thailand Open: Sat-Chi advance, Sindhu crashes out

Bangkok: India's top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stormed into the semifinals of the Thailand Open with a commanding straight-game win in here on Friday, while two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu bowed out after a hard-fought quarterfinal defeat against old nemesis Akane Yamaguchi of Japan.

Later today, Lakshya Sen will be in action as he faces defending champion and home favourite Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the men's singles quarterfinals.

Top seeds Satwik and Chirag delivered a dominant performance against Japan's Takumi Nomura and Yuichi Shimogami, registering a comfortable 21-12, 21-13 victory in just 41 minutes.

The win marked the Indian duo's first semifinal appearance at a BWF World Tour event in 2026.

Facing the world No. 34 Japanese pair for the first time, Satwik and Chirag took complete control right from the beginning. The Indians raced to a stunning 10-0 lead in the opening game before their opponents finally managed to get on the scoreboard.

Although the sixth-seeded Japanese combination attempted a brief comeback after the mid-game interval and reduced the deficit to four points at 10-14, the Indian pair quickly regained momentum and comfortably closed out the first game.

The second game was more competitive in the early stages, with Nomura and

Shimogami staying within touching distance for much of the first half. However, Satwik and Chirag maintained their composure, gradually extended the lead and wrapped up the match in convincing fashion.

The world No. 4 Indian pair, chasing their first title since winning the Thailand Open in 2024, will next face either Malaysia's third-seeded duo Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin or Scotland's brothers Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley in the semifinals.

Earlier in the day, Sindhu's campaign came to an end after she suffered a 21-19, 18-21, 15-21 defeat against top seed and world No. 3 Yamaguchi in an intense women's singles quarterfinal clash.

Sangram set to become first Indian to fight for Asia Championship title

Kuala Lumpur: Commonwealth Heavyweight Champion Sangram Singh, will soon be seen in his fourth MMA fight, this time competing for the Asia Championship title.

In doing so, Singh will become the first Indian to fight for the Asia Championship title. The fight is scheduled to take place on July 19, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he will face experienced Pakistani fighter Abid Ali.

The organizers of the Malaysia Strike MMA Championship, led by Muhammad Lukman Hakim Bin Abdullah, have officially invited Sangram Singh and his coach Bhupesh Kumar for the event.

Sangram has accepted the invitation. In the official communication.

Sangram Singh, who is also the Brand Ambassador of the Ministry of Sports' Fit India Movement, is very excited about the upcoming clash.

Interestingly, he has also begun his MMA career against a Pakistani fighter, Ali Raza Nasir, in Tbilisi, Georgia. In that bout, under the Gamma International Fighting Championship, Sangram secured a dominant victory in the second round. Now, his fourth MMA fight will once again see him face a Pakistani opponent. Between these two contests, Sangram Singh defeated Tunisian fighter Hakim Trabelsi in the Netherlands without allowing the fight to reach the second round. More recently, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, he created history by defeating Florian Caudier in just 1 minute and 45 seconds. With that victory, Sangram became the first Indian to win an



MMA fight in Argentina.

At 42 years of age, Sangram Singh frequently competes against fighters who are significantly younger than him. Speaking about Abid Ali, Sangram said that he currently does not know his exact age, but acknowledged him as a highly experienced fighter with multiple MMA victories to his name.

Sangram Singh stated that he will compete this time in the 83 to 89 kg weight category. He admitted that facing a Pakistani fighter brings an added layer of pressure because sports fans from both nations never take defeat lightly against each other. However, he also described this bout as one of the biggest and most exciting challenges of his career. It is worth noting that Sangram Singh is a Fit India Icon and Brand Ambassador for the Government of India's Fit India Movement. He is also India's first Commonwealth Heavyweight Champion. Before entering MMA, Sangram represented India internationally in Greco-Roman wrestling and spent many years in the national camp.

Sports minister assesses India's preparations for CWG 2026

New Delhi: Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a high-level review meeting to assess India's preparations for the Commonwealth Games 2026 scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland.

The meeting focused on ensuring seamless coordination among all stakeholders and strengthening the support system for Indian athletes preparing for CWG 2026.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, representatives from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), including the Chef de Mission for CWG 2026, who shared updates on operational planning, athlete preparation and

coordination mechanisms for the Games, along with officials from the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The Sports Minister reviewed athlete preparation, training, logistics, welfare and coordination for India's CWG 2026 campaign.

Dr. Mandaviya emphasised that the government remains committed to providing every possible support to Indian athletes to help them perform at their highest level at the CWG.

He highlighted the importance of timely planning, coordination among agencies and athlete-centric preparation to ensure a successful campaign for the country.

The meeting further discussed preparations related

to the closing ceremony of the CWG 2026, during which India will officially be handed over the baton as the host of the Commonwealth Games 2030 to be held in Amdavad, Gujarat.

In view of this, Harsh Sanghavi, Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat and other senior representatives from the Government of Gujarat also discussed and participated in the review meeting.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of inter-ministerial coordination efforts being undertaken by the Secretary (Sports) with representatives of various Ministries and departments regarding the operational and logistical preparations for Glasgow 2026.

Discussions focused on inter-ministerial coordination, facilitation mechanisms and ensuring smooth execution of all arrangements related to the Indian contingent.

Officials from SAI and the Ministry briefed the gathering on the roadmap being prepared for the Games, including competition exposure, training schedules, support staff deployment and contingency planning. The review meeting reaffirmed the collective commitment of the Ministry, IOA, SAI, Gujarat Government and associated stakeholders towards ensuring comprehensive preparations for India's campaign at the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow.

Coach Marijne stresses on discipline and high intensity Hockey

New Delhi: Head coach of women's National Hockey team Sjoerd Marijne, sharing his vision for the team said that he prioritises discipline, team spirit and wants his wards to play high intensity hockey.

Speaking to media persons in an on-line interaction organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the Dutchman laid out his priorities as a Coach.

"For me the most important thing is behaviour, having a good culture, and structure leads to winning results. The focus is on building a strong team culture and a side where every player has clarity about her role. I also try to make sure that everyone enjoys the journey; that is very important."

Marijne, who was appointed as head coach in January this year, emphasized that the players need to execute everything at high speed for them to be successful against the top teams of the world.

"During the last two matches

against Argentina, they played exactly the way I wanted them to play. They ran hard and did everything while sprinting. That is what we need to continue in Australia and the Nation's Cup. We have to do that consistently every time."

Marijne's first assignment with the national team was a four match bilateral series in Argentina last month. The Indian women's hockey team drew the series 2-2 in Buenos Aires after a remarkable comeback. After losing the first two matches (4-2 and 2-1), the Navneet Kaur-led side rallied to win the third match (2-1) and the final match on penalties (0-0, 3-2 shootout), showcasing immense resilience against the World number 2 ranked team.

The 52-year-old pointed out some of the areas where he is currently focusing on for improvement.

"All round improvement is required but counter control and high press are two areas which were lacking during the Argentina tour. These things will take

time, and we need to perfect one area before going on to the next one."

The former Den Bosch player explained that women's hockey is very competitive and evolving all the time.

"The top seven-eight teams like the Netherlands, Argentina, Belgium -- they are dynamic, and improving all the time. If we look, till even a few years back, around 2020, not many teams played the high ball; now everyone is playing it."

Marijne, who also had a stint as Indian team coach from 2017-2021, applauded Hockey India for the support that he is getting. "This time around I have a bigger support staff. I have three strength and conditioning coaches, two masseurs and a video analyst. Right now I am in the Hockey India office. The last time around it was being constructed. Everything we ask for we are getting almost the very next day. The process between asking and getting is much faster than earlier."

Wish to carry on: Kohli on 2027 World Cup plans

New Delhi: Former India skipper Virat Kohli has said his desire to continue playing ODI cricket and potentially feature in the 2027 ICC World Cup comes from his love for the game, while making it clear that he does not want to be in a position where he constantly has to prove his worth to remain in the Indian team.

Speaking on the Royal Challengers Bengaluru podcast, Kohli spoke openly about his mindset regarding his future with the Indian ODI team. The talismanic right-hander said he still feels deeply connected to the game and remains ready to contribute as long as the team believes he can add value to the environment.

"My perspective is very clear. If I can add value to the environment that I'm a part of and the environment feels like I can add value, I'll be seen," Kohli said.

"If I'm made to feel like I need to prove my worth and my value, I'm not in that space. And because I'm being honest to my preparation, I'm being honest to how I approach the game.

"I put my head down, I work hard. I'm very thankful to God for giving me everything that I've been given in my cricketing career. And I feel very blessed and grateful for the opportunity. And I play the game in the right way. You want me to run boundary to boundary for 40 overs in an ODI game, I will do that without a complaint.

"Because I prepare accordingly. I prepare for the fact that I will field 50 overs every ball like it's the last ball I'm going to play in my career. And I will bat that way. And I will run between

the wickets that way. And I will do everything possible for the team. "After operating like

this, if I have to be in a place where I have to prove my worth and value, that place is not meant to be for me," Kohli added.

"And I am very clear in my head from that perspective. That's why when I went back to play, I was very clear in my head, I'm not going out there to prove anything to anyone. I'm going to play because I love playing the game," he further said.

Kohli has already stepped away from Test cricket and T20 internationals, which has naturally increased speculation around how long he plans to continue in the ODI format. Despite that uncertainty, his performances in one-day cricket over the last two years have remained exceptionally strong.

The veteran batter has scored three ODI centuries in 2025 and is averaging 65.10 in the format this year.

In his three ODI appearances this season, Kohli has averaged 80, continuing to show the consistency that has defined his career.

His commitment to stay-



ing prepared for international cricket also took him back to the domestic circuit earlier this year. Kohli made a rare appearance for Delhi in the 2025/26 Vijay Hazare Trophy and impressed immedi-

ately by scoring 131 and 77 in two matches.

Reflecting on that experience, Kohli said reconnecting with the simple joy of batting helped him rediscov-

er the excitement he felt as a young cricketer. "That's how I played Vijay Hazare as well. It was amazing," Kohli says. "There was not a person in the COE (Centre of Excellence).

"First, I thought, 'I've played for so long and will it be motivating enough?' But the moment my intention switched to 'I want to play because I love playing. I just love batting. And I just want to focus on that'.

"And I could not care. It's not like I didn't field. I fielded the whole game and I was diving around and I felt like a child again. I was like, this is not about anyone else. This is about me and the game and that's what it's going to be. And the moment I feel like people are trying to complicate it for me and be like, 'Oh, but this and that'... Either be clear, honest and upfront or be quiet and let me play.

"Look, if you go to your workplace, right? And if people say, we believe in your abilities.

"And then a week later, they start questioning the way you operate. It's like,

why? Either tell me on day one, I'm not good enough or I'm not needed. Or if you said I'm good enough and you say, we're not even thinking otherwise, then be quiet. If you start operating up and down because of results, you can never have a consistent stance. And I'm not someone who behaves like that," he added.

The former India captain admitted that playing the 2027 ODI World Cup would be special, but reiterated that it would only make sense if the trust and belief from both sides remained intact.

"As I said, when I come to play, I know what I can deliver in terms of effort. Performance: no one can guarantee performance in any space. But in terms of effort and commitment, I know what I can deliver because I literally live my life like that.

"It's not like I prepare for a series to suddenly start

working hard two or three weeks before. I'm like that through the year. So, if you call me to play and if you say there's a series coming up: I'm ready.

"I'm always ready because that's my daily life. I work out, we eat well at home. It's because I like living that way. It's not only to play cricket. So, that's where I am. I mean, this 27 (2027 World Cup) chat and all that, honestly, for me, it's like we're at like mid-2026.

"But I've been asked so many times, do you want to play 2027? Like, why would I leave my home, get my stuff over and be like, 'I don't know what I want'. Of course, if I'm playing, I want to play cricket. I want to carry on. Playing a World Cup for India is amazing.

"But as I said, the value has to be two-sided," the two-time World Cup winner said.

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
75,237.99	-0.21%	23,643.50	-0.19%	22,531.15	-0.36%	22,531.15	-0.36%	24,572.15	-0.33%	53,710.35	-0.77%	60,567.15	-0.45%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
75,398.72	75,497.10	23,689.60	23,731.40	22,613.10	22,664.40	22,613.10	22,664.40	24,654.40	24,654.40	54,128.95	54,207.75	60,839.70	61,033.85
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
75,870.36	75,139.41	23,839.30	23,610.30	22,710.85	22,502.60	22,710.85	22,502.60	24,775.10	24,540.40	54,325.45	53,628.30	61,047.15	60,473.05

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
TMPV	356.55	5.25
Dr Reddys Labs	1,336.70	2.54
Infosys	1,119.00	2.19
Tech Mahindra	1,370.50	2.02
Coal India	462.20	1.79

Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
Hindalco	1,067.50	-3.24
Nestle	1,430.50	-1.99
Tata Steel	216.84	-1.94
Eternal	241.18	-1.89
Reliance	1,336.40	-1.87

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Jun 05	159,077.00	-2,901.00 -1.79
Silver Jul 03	270,876.00	-20,226.00 -6.95
Crudeoil May 18	9,975.00	251.00 2.58
Naturalgas May 26	282.50	5.10 1.84

Stock markets end in red, rupee hits record low

Mumbai : Indian equity markets ended lower on Friday as weak global cues, heavy selling in select sectors, and continued pressure on the Indian rupee dampened investor sentiment throughout the trading session. The benchmark indices witnessed volatility during the day before settling in negative territory, reflecting cautious mood among investors amid concerns over currency weakness, rising crude oil prices, and uncertain global economic conditions.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 160.73 points, or 0.21 per cent, to close at 75,237.99. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty 50 fell by 46.10 points, or 0.19 per cent, to settle at 23,643.50. Market participants remained cautious amid persistent selling pressure in sectors linked to commodities, oil and gas, and banking.

Broader markets also ended in the red, indicating weakness beyond headline indices. The BSE 150 Midcap index slipped 0.48 per cent, while the

BSE 250 Smallcap index declined 0.37 per cent. Analysts noted that investors continued to book profits in midcap and smallcap counters following recent gains, especially amid rising uncertainty in global markets.

Among the Nifty constituents, information technology stocks provided some support to the market. Shares of Infosys, Tech Mahindra and Power Grid Corporation of India emerged as the top gainers during the session. Buying interest in IT stocks was largely supported by expectations of stable global technology demand and defensive positioning by investors.

On the other hand, metal and energy stocks witnessed heavy selling pressure. Shares of Tata Steel, Reliance Industries and Eternal were among the biggest laggards on the Nifty index. Weakness in commodity-linked sectors and concerns over rising input costs weighed significantly on investor sentiment.

Sector-wise, most indices



ended the week in negative territory, highlighting broad-based weakness across the market. Out of the 16 major sectoral indices, 13 registered weekly losses. The Metal, Oil & Gas, PSU Bank, Realty, Energy, and Commodities sectors declined more than one per cent each during the week as investors reduced exposure to economically sensitive sectors.

However, the information technology sector emerged as a notable outperformer during the week, with IT stocks gain-

ing over one per cent. Market experts attributed the resilience in technology shares to expectations that Indian IT companies may benefit from a stable demand environment in overseas markets despite global economic concerns.

Currency market developments also played a major role in influencing investor sentiment. The Indian rupee depreciated sharply during the week and hit a record low against the US dollar. The domestic currency reportedly weakened by more than Rs 1.60 against the

greenback, triggering concerns over imported inflation and increasing costs for sectors dependent on foreign imports.

The sharp depreciation in the rupee raised concerns among investors regarding the broader macroeconomic outlook. A weaker rupee generally increases the cost of crude oil imports and can adversely impact companies dependent on imported raw materials. At the same time, export-oriented sectors such as information technology tend to benefit from currency weakness, which partly explains the relative strength in IT shares.

Among individual stocks, Adani Enterprises emerged as one of the top performers of the week, rising 8.4 per cent. Shares of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation also gained significantly, advancing 7.2 per cent during the week amid movements in global crude oil prices and energy-related developments.

Meanwhile, shares of oil marketing companies remained under pressure as in-

ternational crude oil prices surged sharply. Brent crude reportedly climbed over 3 per cent to USD 109.09 per barrel, increasing concerns over higher fuel import costs and pressure on refining margins for domestic oil retailers.

Shares of Indian Oil Corporation declined 4.12 per cent, while Hindustan Petroleum Corporation fell 2.95 per cent. Bharat Petroleum Corporation also slipped 3.58 per cent as rising crude prices negatively affected sentiment in the oil marketing segment.

The overall market performance for the week remained weak, with both benchmark indices ending their two-week winning streak. The Nifty 50 closed the week with losses of 2.22 per cent, while the Sensex registered a steeper decline of 2.65 per cent. Analysts said investors preferred a cautious approach amid rising geopolitical and economic uncertainties globally. Global market trends also remained negative and influenced domestic equities.

Vijay meets top industrial honchos to promote industrial growth, discusses expansion plans, promises full govt support

Chennai: Pitching Tamil Nadu as the most preferred EV, investment hubs, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Friday held meetings with top honchos of the industrial firms and a delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in promoting industrial development, investment promotion and expansion plans of various firms and promised full support from his government, including faster clearances and ease of doing businesses.

In this industry outreach, Vijay met leaders of leading auto firms like BMW, TAFE and India Yamaha Motor (IYM) Limited and other firms at the State Secretariat and discussed about their present operational facilities, exports and their future expansion plans in the state.

During the high-level consultations with leading

industrialists and automobile sector executives, the discussions focused on improving ease of doing business, accelerating Electric Vehicle (EV) manufacturing and attracting fresh investments into Tamil Nadu.

After hearing their expansion and future investment plans in the State, Vijay assured all of them the fullest support from the government for promoting industrial growth across the state and make TN the preferred destination in all emerging sectors.

The meetings assumed significance amid the State government's efforts to strengthen Tamil Nadu's position as a preferred destination for manufacturing and next-generation mobility projects.

During an interaction with TAFE Chairman and Managing Director Ms Mal-

ika Srinivasan and Vice-Chairman Lakshmi Venu, top executives of the BMW Group, IYM and CII members, the Chief Minister discussed industrial growth, export expansion and enhancement of manufacturing capabilities, besides issues relating to industrial expansion, policy facilitation, employment generation and infrastructure in detail.

Officials said the consultations largely revolved around simplifying procedures for industries, ensuring faster clearances, improving investor facilitation mechanisms and creating a more industry-friendly ecosystem to support long-term growth. The discussions also covered expansion of EV manufacturing capacities, establishment of new production facilities and measures to reinforce Tamil Na-

du's automobile and manufacturing ecosystem. Employment creation and opportunities for skilled youth were also among the key issues deliberated upon.

During his meeting with BMW Group India Managing Director Thomas Dose, the Chief Minister reviewed the company's existing operations in Tamil Nadu, its progress in electric mobility and prospects for expanding its presence in the State.

Vijay also met a CII delegation led by southern region chairman B Ravichandran and Tamil Nadu chairman C Devarajan. The industry body underlined the importance of policy stability, sustained government-industry collaboration and further reforms aimed at improving ease of doing business and sustaining Tamil Nadu's industrial growth momentum.

Wheels India FY26 Net profit up at Rs. 139 cr, Revenues cross Rs.5,000 cr milestone

Chennai: Wheels India has achieved a major financial milestone in FY26, with its annual revenues crossing the Rs 5,000 crore mark for the first time, driven by strong domestic demand across automobile segments and improved export performance. The company reported robust growth in both revenue and profitability during the financial year ended March 31, 2026, reflecting sustained momentum in the automotive and industrial sectors.

According to the company's financial results, Wheels India posted a revenue of Rs 5,124 crore in FY26, registering a growth of 16 per cent compared to Rs 4,425 crore recorded in the previous financial year ended March 31, 2025. The increase in revenues was supported by healthy demand from passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, tractors, and export-oriented segments.

The company also reported a significant rise in its annual net profit. Profit after tax for FY26 stood at Rs 139 crore, compared to Rs 106 crore recorded during the corresponding period of the previous year. The improvement in profitability was attributed to higher

sales volumes, better operational performance, and growth across multiple business verticals.

Wheels India delivered particularly strong performance during the fourth quarter of FY26. For the quarter ended March 31, 2026, the company reported a net profit of Rs 52 crore, marking a substantial increase from Rs 36 crore recorded during the same quarter of the previous financial year. The rise in quarterly profit reflected strong business momentum and improved market demand during the period. Revenue performance during the fourth quarter also remained impressive. The company's Q4 revenues rose by 23 per cent to Rs 1,471 crore compared to Rs 1,195 crore registered in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. The growth indicated strong demand conditions across domestic and export markets during the final quarter of the financial year. Speaking to reporters virtually on Friday, Srivats Ram described the fourth quarter as a record period for the company in terms of sales performance. He stated that strong domestic demand across car, truck, and tractor segments played a

crucial role in driving the company's growth momentum.

Srivats Ram attributed the rise in domestic demand partly to the implementation of GST 2.0 reforms, which he said had positively impacted the automobile industry and related sectors. According to him, improved business activity and stronger customer demand across vehicle categories contributed significantly to the company's revenue growth during the quarter. He further highlighted the performance of the company's air suspension division, which also registered strong growth during the quarter. The division benefited from increasing demand in commercial vehicle applications and continued expansion in the transportation and logistics sectors. On the export front, the company witnessed healthy growth led by rising demand for earthmover wheels in international markets. Srivats Ram stated that export demand for wheels used in construction and heavy equipment machinery emerged as a major driver of growth, helping strengthen the company's overseas business performance.

Sigma Advanced Systems bags Rs 107cr export order for artillery shell fuzes

Hyderabad: Sigma Advanced Systems on Friday announced that it has secured an export order worth USD 11.4 million (approximately Rs 107 crore) from a North American customer for the supply of 90,000 filled fuzes for 155 mm artillery shells.

In a statement, the company said the contract would be executed over a period of ten months, with deliveries scheduled to be completed within the stipulated timeframe.

The company stated that the order marks a significant milestone in its growth journey and further strengthens its presence in the global defence manufacturing ecosystem.

It added that the order would be executed

entirely through its in-house capabilities.

According to the company, the product has been developed using its long-standing Build-to-Spec expertise acquired through decades of experience in serving Indian defence customers.

The company further stated that manufacturing would be carried out in India in compliance with all applicable defence export regulations and norms.

The statement added that the order reflects growing global confidence in India's defence manufacturing capabilities and highlights the increasing role of Indian companies in international defence supply chains.

Fuel prices hike to add to inflation concerns, impact transportation costs

New Delhi: The central government on Friday increased the retail selling prices of petrol and diesel, effective from Friday. The move is coming first in four years for retail consumers. Further, the price of CNG has also been raised by Rs 2.

CNG price in Delhi has been raised from Rs 77.09 per kg to Rs 79.09 per kg. A day earlier, the CNG price was also raised in Mumbai by Rs 2 per kg.

Amid the Iran War crisis, the prices of premium petrol were raised in March,

with all three major oil companies, including Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), having raised the prices.

Economists believe that the hike in fuel prices is set to raise inflation concerns and impact transportation and consumption costs.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said, "The Rs 3 hike in

petrol and diesel prices reflects the pressure of elevated global crude oil prices and rising import costs on the government's fiscal position. While the increase may temporarily add to inflation concerns and impact transportation and consumption costs, it also indicates the government's focus on managing fuel subsidies and protecting forex reserves amid ongoing global uncertainty. In the longer term, such moves may further accelerate the push towards EV adoption

and reduced dependence on imported fuel."

Prashant Vasisht, Senior Vice President and Co-Group Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA Ltd said, "The modest hike in retail price of Rs 3 per litre for petrol and diesel provides limited relief to the oil marketing companies. ICRA estimates that at a crude price of USD 105-110 per barrel and considering the past 10-year average crack spreads of auto fuels, oil marketing companies incur a loss of about Rs 500 crore daily on the sale of

auto fuels and domestic LPG, even after factoring in the fuel price hike. Accordingly, the oil marketing companies would need to relook at the retail prices in case elevated crude oil prices persist."

Reacting to the price hike, the shares of state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) declined.

Shares of HPCL fell 2.65 per cent to hit an intraday low of Rs 367.10, BPCL declined 2 pc to Rs 289.05, while IOCL slipped 0.6 pc to its day's low of Rs 139.35.

Financial conditions likely to remain under pressure as West Asia conflict impacts economy: Crisil

New Delhi: Financial conditions are likely to remain tight in the coming months, as the West Asia conflict poses considerable pressure on the economy, said Crisil Macroeconomics First Cut, released here on Friday.

India's premier credit rating agency, Crisil, said that financial conditions remained under pressure in April, with the Crisil Financial Condition Index (FCI) standing at - (negative) 1.2.

April's performance is good compared to March, when the indicator was at - (negative) 1.4.

A negative FCI value refers to one that falls outside the comfort band of standard deviation. It shows that financial conditions are sig-

nificantly tighter than the long-period average.

On the other hand, a higher FCI value indicates easier conditions compared to the previous month.

Crisil noted that the West Asia crisis continued to adversely impact foreign portfolio investor (FPI) inflows, the rupee, and the ten-year government security (G-sec) yield in April.

"FPIs continued withdrawing from Indian markets, resulting in net outflows of USD 7.6 billion in April, driven by surging crude prices and apprehension stemming from the conflict. In addition, hardening US yields further dampened FPI sentiment for debt," Crisil said.

The report noted that the

rupee continued to depreciate, reaching an all-time low of 95 per dollar at the end of April.

West Asia conflict also posed fiscal concerns, leading to a sharp rise in ten-year G-sec yield, which rose 20 basis points (bps) on-month to an average of 6.96pc.

G-sec yield also faced pressure from rising FPI outflows in debt and surging crude oil prices.

The FCI exhibited a mild improvement, driven by a rise in banking liquidity surplus (which led to softening of some money market rates) and mild gains in equity markets.

"FPIs recorded net outflows of USD 7.6 billion during the month, which was lower than the USD 13.6 bil-

lion net outflow seen in March but significantly above the 12-month average net outflow of USD 1.4 billion."

Equity markets witnessed net outflows of USD



6.5 billion, which was USD 12.7 billion in March. Additionally, outflows from the debt market surged USD 1.2 billion, which was USD 0.9

billion in the last month.

The report noted depreciation in the rupee of April, with the average value falling to 93.6 per dollar, down from 92.8 in March.

"The yield on the 10-

year benchmark G-sec averaged 6.96pc in April, up from 6.75pc in March, driven by fiscal and inflation concerns stemming from the

West Asia conflict, rising FPI outflows in the debt market, and surging crude oil prices."

"Brent crude prices reached their highest monthly average in more than a decade, at USD 120.4 per barrel in April, registering a 16.1pc on-month increase," the report said on surging crude oil prices.

Bank credit growth remained robust at 16pc in April, mirroring the 16.1pc growth recorded in March.

"Systemic liquidity surplus reached a four-year high of Rs 5 lakh crore in mid-April, driven by a surge in government spending and the maturity of G-secs."

This increase in systemic liquidity is driven by a decline in money market rates.

The stock market remained volatile through April with highs and lows.

"Equity markets saw mild gains on average in April, as S&P BSE Sensex gains (on-month average, percentage) 1.7. Investor sentiment improved intermitently on expectations of de-escalation in geopolitical tensions and periodic softness in crude oil prices. "Even if the conflict ends, crude oil prices are expected to remain high for the rest of the year. "We expect crude oil to average USD 90-95/US dollar in the current fiscal year," it predicted. Crisil said that higher inflation domestically will shrink monetary space this fiscal. "We expect retail inflation to rise to 5.1pc this fiscal, compared with 2pc

last fiscal, due to expectations of a below-normal monsoon and higher commodity prices."

"We expect gross domestic product growth to weaken to 6.6pc from 7.6pc, weighed down by higher commodity prices, an unfavorable monsoon, softer global growth and higher inflation, creating a challenging growth-inflation mix."

Monetary space has also shrunk globally. S&P Global expects the European Central Bank to hike rates twice by 25 bps each between the second and third quarters of 2026. It expects the US Federal Reserve to hold rates steady for the remainder of 2026 compared with the earlier forecast of a rate cut, the report added.