

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

English Daily

Rangareddy Vol No. 1 Issue 56

Date:Monday, 6-7-2026

Price:2/-

Pages: 8

PM Modi highlights tribal women's role as CG semi begins chip production



Poonam Kumari from Giridih district of Jharkhand, Priyanka Dhanwar from West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand and Shivani Uiquey from Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh.

All three are employed as machine operators at the CG Semi plant.

Poonam Kumari, who lives with her mother after the death of her father, said joining the semiconductor industry had given her opportunities she had never imagined.

"I had never even travelled outside Jharkhand. We were sent to Malaysia for training. If we do not understand anything during the training, it is explained to us in Hindi as well, and everything is also demonstrated practically," she added.

Priyanka Dhanwar said her employment had become a source of pride for her family, adding that she was the first person from her household to travel abroad.

Shivani Uiquey said her parents were overwhelmed by her achievement.

"Seeing our success, tears of happiness came to our parents' eyes. Together with CG Semi, we are going to create history," she added.

The women underwent training in Malaysia before joining production operations at the Sanand facility, where they are now involved in semiconductor chip manufacturing as part of India's expanding domestic semiconductor programme.

Ahmedabad: The start of commercial semiconductor chip production at CG Semi's Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Gujarat's Sanand has brought into focus the role of young women from tribal regions of Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi citing their contribution as an example of India's emerging skilled manufacturing workforce.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the commercial production of chips at the facility on Saturday and noted that the women employed at the plant had travelled from tribal belts in states, including Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, to work in India's semiconductor industry after completing their education at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

Speaking at the event, PM Modi said the women had guided him through the factory with confidence and explained each stage of the manufacturing process in detail.

"The sisters and daughters working here have come from the tribal belts of states such as Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. When these daughters showed me around the factory, they explained every process with great enthusiasm and confidence. These girls, who come from ordinary families, studied in ordinary schools and received their education from ITIs, are today doing extraordinary work," he added.

The Prime Minister said that perceptions about vocational education had changed over time, adding that many of the women had achieved milestones that would once have seemed beyond their reach.

"There was a time when if someone studied in an ITI, parents would even feel hesitant to mention it. But times have changed. Their education may have been from an ITI, but their dreams are extraordinary. Many of these daughters come from families where no one had ever even applied for or seen a passport. Forget travelling abroad, many of them had never even seen Delhi or Mumbai. But today, these very daughters went to Malaysia for training, learnt the world's most advanced semiconductor technology, and are now making an important contribution to the production of 'Made in India' semiconductor chips," he emphasised.

Among those referred to by the Prime Minister are

CM Revanth Urges Faster Metro Approvals



Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has written to Union ministers Manohar Lal Khattar and G. Kishan Reddy, urging them to help the state government secure swift approvals for the Hyderabad Metro Rail (HMR) Phase-II expansion and the process of taking over Phase-I operations.

In separate letters addressed to Union ministers on July 4, the Chief Minister noted that the prolonged process for taking over the HMR Phase-I was creating operational uncertainty and day-to-day challenges for the project. The delay also affected the sanction of the Phase-II detained project reports (DPRs) and the tying up of suitable funding arrangements, and postponing the project implementation was likely to increase the cost of Phase-II due to avoidable time overrun and escalation.

Referring to key decisions taken during high-level meetings held on June 23 and 24, Revanth Reddy stressed the need to appoint SBI CAPS (Capital Markets Limited) as the nodal agency to handle valuation of Phase-I assets, refinancing of high-interest loans, and preparation of a comprehensive financial plan for Phase-II.

"During the meeting, it was agreed that SBI CAPS, an agency empanelled by the government of India for such assignments, would be entrusted with the valuation and financial examination of the Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-I for facilitating its takeover by the government of Telangana," he pointed out in a formal letter addressed to Union minister for housing and urban affairs Manohar Lal Khattar.

The Chief Minister noted that it was further agreed that the assignment to SBI CAPS would be entrusted immediately, so that the integrated exercise relating to the

Phase-I takeover and Phase-II expansion could commence without delay. Early appointment of the agency is essential, as the valuation of Phase-I, the refinancing of its debt and the financial structuring of Phase-II are closely interlinked and need to be examined together.

"However, it is brought to my notice that, despite the considerable time that has elapsed since the meeting, SBI CAPS has not yet been entrusted with the assignment, and the Terms of Reference have not been finalised and communicated to the Government of Telangana," he added.

Revanth Reddy also urged Kishan Reddy for his intervention, while reminding him about the recent meetings with Union railways minister and also Union urban affairs minister. "As you are aware, Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-II is of immense importance to the future growth and mobility needs of Hyderabad," Revanth Reddy stated.

KTR Urges Immediate Activation of Kannepalli Pumps, Warns Telangana Faces Severe Drought Without Swift Action



"Kannepalli, Manthani: K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Saturday called on the Congress government to immediately resume operations at the Kannepalli Pump House and lift water from the Godavari River, warning that Telangana could face a severe drought if urgent measures are not taken." "After inspecting the Kannepalli Pump House, KTR said that 26 of Telangana's 33 districts are already experiencing drought-like conditions. He expressed concern that large volumes of Godavari

water continue to flow into the sea while the existing Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation infrastructure remains underutilized." "Blaming the Congress government for failing to prepare for the anticipated impact of El Niño and below-normal rainfall, KTR accused it of ignoring repeated warnings from weather experts. He said the government's inaction was putting farmers at risk and allowing valuable water resources to go to waste." "KTR urged the government to immediately restart the Kannepalli pumps and fill reservoirs to ensure adequate irrigation and drinking water across the State. He further alleged that the government was deliberately delaying water lifting to avoid the financial burden of procuring larger crop yields, supplying fertilizers, and paying bonuses to farmers." "Defending the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, KTR rejected allegations of corruption and maintained that the project remains fully capable of delivering water once necessary repairs are completed. He credited the project, initiated under the leadership of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, with significantly improving irrigation, groundwater levels, agricultural productivity, and drinking water availability across Telangana." "KTR also criticized the police for allegedly obstructing the BRS delegation's journey from Hyderabad to Kannepalli. He claimed that what should have been a four-hour trip took nearly seven hours due to barricades and restrictions imposed at multiple locations." "Highlighting Telangana's long struggle for water security, KTR warned that even Hyderabad could face drinking water shortages if the government fails to act immediately. He urged the administration to stop politicizing irrigation issues and prioritize the operation of the Kannepalli Pump House." "Issuing a strong warning, KTR announced that the BRS would intensify its agitation if the government continued to ignore the issue. He said the party would mobilize between 50,000 and 60,000 supporters to lay siege to the Kannepalli Pump House unless the government immediately begins lifting Godavari water." "Switch on the Bahubali pumps and provide water to farmers. If the government fails to act, we will march to Kannepalli, lay siege to the Pump House, and ensure that the pumps are switched on," KTR declared.

Minister Nara Lokesh Embarks on South Korea Visit to Boost Investment Opportunities for Andhra Pradesh

"Amaravati: Nara Lokesh began an official visit to South Korea on Monday, with the tour scheduled to continue until July 11. The visit is aimed at attracting global investments and strengthening economic and industrial cooperation between Andhra Pradesh and South Korea." "During his visit, Minister Lokesh will hold a series of high-level meetings with representatives of vari-



ous South Korean ministries and government agencies to showcase Andhra Pradesh as a preferred destination for international investments. The discussions are expected to focus on expanding collaboration in sectors such as information technology, electronics, manufacturing, infrastructure, and innovation." "As part of his itinerary in Seoul, Lokesh will also address a gathering of the Indian diaspora, where he is expected to outline the Andhra Pradesh government's vision for economic growth, industrial development, and investment-driven opportunities." "The Minister is also scheduled to interact with members of the Indian and Telugu communities in Seoul, highlighting the government's efforts to strengthen ties with overseas Indians and encourage their participation in the State's development initiatives." [1:07 AM, 7/6/2026] New English Paper Hemanth Reddy: Jana Sena Sets New Benchmark in Internal Democracy; Massive Response to Organizational Posts "Pawan Kalyan to Personally Scrutinize Applications as Party Completes Transparent Recruitment Drive" "Amaravati: Claiming to have introduced a new political culture in organizational building, the Jana Sena Party has received an overwhelming response to its statewide application process for party positions, with a particularly strong participation from the youth and various affiliated wings." "Addressing the media at the party's central office, Jana Sena Information Collection Committees Central Office Coordinator and Party General Secretary Tammireddy Siva Sankar said the initiative, launched under the leadership of Jana Sena President and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, reflects the party's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and merit-based organizational development." "Siva Sankar

President and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, reflects the party's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and merit-based organizational development." "Siva Sankar stated that the application process for posts ranging from the village level to the state level concluded on Sunday, attracting a large number of aspirants across all departments and affiliated organizations. He noted that the exercise was designed to provide equal opportunities to dedicated party workers and individuals committed to strengthening the party." "He said 28-member Information Collection Committees and observers, constituted for each parliamentary constituency, will begin forwarding the applications to the party headquarters from Monday. The applications will then be personally reviewed by Pawan Kalyan, who will hold consultations before finalizing appointments to various party positions." "Describing the exercise as unprecedented in Indian politics, Siva Sankar said Jana Sena has demonstrated a transparent and structured approach to organizational appointments, setting a model that other political parties could emulate." "He emphasized that the initiative aligns with Pawan Kalyan's vision of bringing generational change and strengthening the party through democratic participation. "If change is to be expected in politics, it must begin with us," he said, adding that the scrutiny process, consultations, and organizational meetings will commence immediately." "The media conference was also attended by coordination committee members Dr. Pedapudi Vijay Kumar, Dr. Sandeep Panchakarla, Penugonda Subbarayudu, and Dr. Divyaraj.

Jana Sena Sets New Benchmark in Internal Democracy; Massive Response to Organizational Posts

Pawan Kalyan to Personally Scrutinize Applications as Party Completes Transparent Recruitment Drive

"Amaravati: Claiming to have introduced a new political culture in organizational building, the Jana Sena Party has received an overwhelming response to its statewide application process for party positions, with a particularly strong participation from the youth and various affiliated wings." "Addressing the media at the party's central office, Jana Sena Information Collection Committees Central Office Coordinator and Party General Secretary Tammireddy Siva Sankar said the initiative, launched under the leadership of Jana Sena President and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, reflects the party's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and merit-based organizational development." "Siva Sankar

stated that the application process for posts ranging from the village level to the state level concluded on Sunday, attracting a large number of aspirants across all departments and affiliated organizations. He noted that the exercise was designed to provide equal opportunities to dedicated party workers and individuals committed to strengthening the party." "He said 28-member Information Collection Committees and observers, constituted for each parliamentary constituency, will begin forwarding the applications to the party headquarters from Monday. The applications will then be personally reviewed by Pawan Kalyan, who will hold consultations before finalizing appointments to various party

positions." "Describing the exercise as unprecedented in Indian politics, Siva Sankar said Jana Sena has demonstrated a transparent and structured approach to organizational appointments, setting a model that other political parties could emulate." "He emphasized that the initiative aligns with Pawan Kalyan's vision of bringing generational change and strengthening the party through democratic participation. "If change is to be expected in politics, it must begin with us," he said, adding that the scrutiny process, consultations, and organizational meetings will commence immediately." "The media conference was also attended by coordination committee members Dr. Pedapudi Vijay Kumar, Dr. Sandeep Panchakarla, Penugonda Subbarayudu, and Dr. Divyaraj.

From a handcart to TasteAtlas, the story behind Dadar's Ashok Vada Pav



Dadar's Ashok Vada Pav — better known as Kirti College Vada Pav for its proximity to the institute — was added to TasteAtlas, the global experiential travel guide, late last month. The listing placed vada pav at number 30 in TasteAtlas' 100 best sandwiches in the world and recommended Ashok Vada Pav as the number one place to try it. Walk down Kashinath Dhuru Marg on any given morning, though, and the queue snaking outside this nearly 50 years old spot will tell you this is old news to everyone in the neighbourhood. Vada pav itself is a surprisingly recent invention. The apocryphal story credits a man named Ashok Vaidya selling batata vada outside Dadar station in the late 1960s — the problem being that hot vadas didn't travel well and cold ones weren't worth eating. The solution, on what food historian Kurush Dalal once described as "an absolute epiphany," was to stuff the vada into a pav grabbed from a neighbouring omelette vendor. Carbs inside carbs, illogical and irresistible. The pav itself had arrived earlier — carried to Goa by the Portuguese, then to Bombay by Goan migrants who set up bakeries here; Muslim and Irani bakers followed, and ladi pav became a working-class staple. Put the two together and you have a snack that, by Ashok Thakur's own reckoning, was already a fixture on Dadar's streets when he set up his handcart in 1978.

Ashok Thakur with his wife Aparna (R) and brother Manohar (centre). Express photo by Akash Patil Ashok Thakur with his wife Aparna (R) and brother Manohar (centre). Express photo by Akash PatilThakur, 68, was the fourth of five brothers, two of them handicapped, and grew up in a household where one meal a day was sometimes all there was. "When you are a growing up boy, it is not enough," he said with a sad smile. He started selling newspapers door to door, then came the handcart, and finally, in 1986, the stall — a small BMC-allotted premise given to his brothers Manohar and the late Mahendra under the handicapped quota. He now runs it alongside Manohar, 74, and his son Prasad, 34.

On a Thursday morning, Manohar, who is speech impaired, was quietly working the potato mix while a team deep-fried vadas and made chura at the back. Up front, two young men moved with practiced speed: splitting a ladi pav, stuffing it with vada and chura, drizzling green coriander chutney and a sweet brown one, then finishing with a dry chutney made from ghati masala. It sounds elaborate; it takes seconds. Even then, there's always a queue. The chura, now the stall's signature, arrived by

accident.

Thakur tells us the story: "There were a lot of college students in the neighbourhood and they couldn't always afford a full vada pav. They began buying the leftover deep-fry crumbs alongside pav at a lower price, stuffing it inside and eating it. They liked it enough to suggest it be sold that way." Chura pav was born in 1980, and eventually folded into what is now their only item: vada pav with chura inside. What was once a byproduct is today made deliberately — kilograms of besan filtered through a spatula and deep-fried specifically for the purpose. It adds a crunch that's become non-negotiable to regulars. Vada pav recently ranked 30th in TasteAtlas' list of the world's best sandwiches, and Dadar's Ashok Vada Pav is the stall they've flagged as the number one place to go. Express photo by Akash Patil Vada pav recently ranked 30th in TasteAtlas' list of the world's best sandwiches, and Dadar's Ashok Vada Pav is the stall they've flagged as the number one place to go. Express photo by Akash PatilThakur is particular about his recipe: no baking powder in the vada, only groundnut refined oil. Behind the stall is another story. His wife Aparna Ashok Thakur hailed from a well-to-do family and was a banker by profession. She fell in love with Thakur and left home against her family's wishes to marry him. "I came to a small 100 sq ft kholi; we would sleep under the bed," she said, switching easily between English and Marathi, producing old photos and videos of her husband's interviews over the years with quiet pride. In the early days, they sold around 50 vada pavs a day at 30 paise each. Today they're priced at Rs 35. "She has been my strongest support," said Thakur, and then laughed recounting the time when the business was booming and he was so occupied at the stall that he couldn't spare her a single word. "It was in the initial years of our marriage. When I reached home that evening, she was crying." Thakur won't say exactly how many vadas he sells. He will only confirm that he uses upwards of 100 kg of potatoes a day. The stall has had its celebrated visitors too: Jackie Shroff came by and later invited the family to a party where Shabana Azmi was also present. Manohar Thakur, who is speech impaired, quietly working the potato vada. Express photo by Akash Patil Manohar Thakur, who is speech impaired, quietly working the potato vada. Express photo by Akash PatilBut Thakur keeps the conversation grounded. "People see this and think I am minting money. But it takes a lot of patience — to come here, to run this for so many years, to address every unhappy customer."

The earnings have put his brothers through crises, covered hospital bills, educated his son and fed his large family. He thinks about opening a permanent shop someday. "Running a BMC stall isn't easy. But the business is good, and this is what has kept the whole family going. Taking care of all my brothers, feeding my family, hospital bills, educating my son, everything is financially demanding. But yes, I am thinking about it and hopefully we will have a shop of ours someday." On the TasteAtlas listing, he's characteristically measured. "Acha lagta hai (It feels good). The win is not mine alone, it is a family business, done with honesty."

'Forced to clean sewage tank; no safety gear': family members after three die in Delhi

For Rs 600, Arun left home on Friday morning. The daily wage came only when work came. For the family, it meant groceries for a few days, school expenses for the children, and a little more time before financial worry returned. By 10 am, Arun was still at home in Sultanpuri in Outer Delhi, where he lived with his wife, Aarti, and their three young sons in a two-room ground-floor house inside a cramped lane filled with hovering flies and a putrid stench. A septic tank and sewage cleaner, Arun had not yet been called by his contractor, Naresh. And then came the call.

"He came to me and said, 'Neeraj bhai ne bulaya hai'. 'Tanki saaf krni hai, (Neeraj sir has called me. A tank has to be cleaned)'" says Aarti. Arun left. A few hours later, another call came. This one was to tell Aarti that her husband had fainted inside the septic tank. "When I reached there, they said he is no more. I had seen him two hours ago. Why did he go inside? It was not his job," says Aarti, recalling that Arun was usually outside the tanks, operating what she calls the "tractor" — an informal term used among tank cleaners to denote the machine that extracts sewage out of a tank using a pipe while other workers are inside the tank, pushing the waste towards the pipe. As Aarti holds on to the couple's three boys — all between the ages of 6 and 8 — Arun's elder brother, Narendra, says that he had been working with Neeraj for more than five years.

"They didn't give him any safety gear. He went there with his neighbours, Sandeep and Chand. They were asked on the phone to just remove the water from the tank. No one was supposed to go in," says Narendra. Arun was not the first one to go inside. When the tractors couldn't clear the tank mechanically, the contractor forced one of



them to go in and clean it manually. "Something got stuck inside. So, to clean it, the contractor forced Chand to go inside and clean it. He had been working with the contractor for a long time. He couldn't say no," says Shivani, nephew of Chand. "We have still not told his wife and his two kids about the incident. They think he is admitted," adds Shivani, standing outside the mortuary of Sanjay Gandhi Hospital. When Chand didn't come out after 10-odd minutes, Arun followed him inside. Sandeep was waiting outside anxiously. Having recently lost his job, Sandeep also couldn't afford to say no and had to jump in to save his neighbours, who had got him the contract through their reference. About two lanes behind Arun's house, Sandeep's wife, Nisha, stands in front of the family's rented lodgings. "I was leaving home for some work and Sandeep was still at home. I told him I would be back soon after dropping our daughter to school. By the time I came back, he wasn't there. My mother-in-law said that he had got some work," she says.

Amid shortage of rabies vaccine in Delhi, 1.27L vials undelivered, government agency told

Amid a shortage of rabies vaccine across the government hospitals in the Capital, a consignment of over 1.27 lakh vials of anti-rabies vaccine meant for the city's public healthcare facilities has remained undelivered because the designated government warehouse lacks adequate cold storage capacity, according to a letter sent by the Serum Institute of India to the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) in the letter written on June 22, the Pune-based vaccine manufacturer said it had kept the entire consignment of 1,27,223 vials ready for dispatch for "a long time" under a supply order issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on March 27 this year. Sources in the state health department said there is a dire shortage of rabies vaccines across Delhi government hospitals currently. "A couple of hospitals have managed to stock up in small quantities through local purchases but the majority of the hospitals do not have it," said an official source. The Indian Express reached out to Serum Institute, officials at the DGHS and the CPA for a comment but a response was not received.

The firm — in the letter — said the supply order required the vaccines to be delivered to the Central Ware-

house at the Super Specialty Hospital (SSH) in West Delhi's Janakpuri. However, when its representatives approached the warehouse, they were informed by the store keeper that the consignment could not be accepted because there was no cold storage space available. The Central Warehouse at Janakpuri Super Speciality Hospital (JSSH) manages the procurement, storage, and distribution of medical supplies, diagnostics, and medicines and maintains the vaccines and medicines that require temperature-controlled storage, commonly known as the cold chain, to remain safe and effective. The anti-rabies vaccine requires strict temperature-controlled storage to maintain its efficacy. In the letter, the Serum Institute requested the CPA, the nodal agency responsible for procuring medicines and equipment for public healthcare facilities, to identify an alternative delivery location where the vaccines could be received. It also sought an extension of 20 days in the delivery timeline to enable completion of the supply after receiving confirmation of the revised delivery point. The delay raises concerns over the availability of anti-rabies vaccines in Delhi's government healthcare system, particularly as the vaccine is administered as post-exposure prophylaxis following dog and animal bites.

Maharashtra bets on AI to solve Konkan's oldest mystery



The Maharashtra government is making technology meet archaeology by using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to scientifically analyse, classify and interpret the origin and cultural etymology of thousands of prehistoric petroglyphs scattered across the Konkan region, a move that could significantly strengthen India's bid to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for these ancient sites. The state government has allocated Rs 15 crore for this project, which is estimated to take four years. Petroglyphs are stone carvings of animal figures or humanoids, found in the lateral plateau regions across Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts of coastal Maharashtra. The carvings mainly comprise figurines, including turtles, elephants, peacock and rhinoceros. These were discovered throughout a series of expeditions and excavations carried out between 2017 and 2023.

According to archaeologists and experts, the origin of these carvings ranges between 20,000 BC and 10,000 BC and is older than the Harappan civilization whose earliest phase dates back to 7,000 BC-5,000 BC. The carvings have an average size of 50 square metres by 20 square metres. Tejas Garge, director at Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra, said that these carvings cover a total area of 150 square kilometres spread across 107 villages in the Konkan region. In 2025, these structures were added to the temporary list of UNESCO world heritage sites in India. However, permanent status is yet to be granted. The state government has now appointed IIT Pravatark — the technology innovation hub of IIT Madras — for carrying out a digital assessment and documentation of these petroglyphs. "These petroglyphs are the earliest evidence of art in the Indian context on such a large canvas. The figurines clearly depict the cognitive ability of human beings to visualise nature and replicate them in the form of these carvings," Garge told Garge said that among the carvings discovered, there was none depicting horse or bull. It appeared uncanny to the experts initially, since bulls and horses are common in the pre-historic drawings and art forms in the Indian sub-continent where horses arrived between 1,500 and 1,000 BC, while agriculture was introduced during the 9,000 BC, he said. petroglyph The petroglyphs were discovered in 2007 by a group of people from Ratnagiri led by local resident Sudhir Risbud (52).

The absence of horse figurines indicated that the carvings were created during the pre-historic era and the absence of bulls established that they were created during the pre-agricultural era. Therefore, it became clear to us that the origin of these carvings dates back to the Mesolithic era or the middle stone age period," Garge added. The petroglyphs were discovered in 2007 by a group of people from Ratnagiri led by local resident Sudhir Risbud (52). In 2021, Risbud, through a non-profit body

The forgotten tradition of Telangana's Soma drink

The story of Apala in the Rigveda (VIII.91) suggests that Soma plants grew near river-stream confluences, that Soma juice could be extracted through Soma yaga implements or by chewing the stalks, and that Soma was believed to cure chronic ailments, including baldness and skin diseases, while also enhancing the fertility of the land. Other Vedic sources associate Soma with heavenly joy and even immortality. Its importance is reflected in the dedicated (Ninth) Mandala of the Rigveda. Because of its significance, many scholars have attempted to identify the Soma plant. Rahul Sankrityayan proposed that Soma was cannabis. A decade ago, Baba Ramdev claimed to have identified the sanjeevani plant. More recently, researcher Rekha Rao argued that Soma creepers were depicted on Indus Civilisation pottery and that Soma juice was prepared in such vessels. Her findings have generated considerable discussion among scholars of Harappan archaeology on Facebook. Traditions associated with Sage Agastya provide one possible answer. After crossing the Vindhya Mountains and entering southern India, Agastya is believed to have halted near Chennur on the Godavari River, where the Agastyeswara temple commemorates his presence. Local tradition holds that knowledge of Soma accompanied him into the Godavari valley of Telangana. Among the Gond tribes, memories of Soma-related knowledge survive in oral tradition. A Naikpod elder informed me in 2016 that Kumram Bheem claimed in the late 1930s to possess knowledge of Soma that could protect tribal youth from police bullets during their struggle against the Nizam's administration for podu land rights. Another Gond elder stated that Soma creepers grow in the hill valleys near Mahadaguda, close to Utnoor. Near the Gundala waterfall in Adilabad district, a Gond elder described, 15 years ago, a medicinal Khando plant whose sap could heal fractures, cure stubborn diseases, and prolong life. Similarly, tribal communities along the Godavari reportedly consumed Ippa liquor mixed with wood from the Somidi (Soma) tree and were believed to enjoy remarkable longevity. Comparable traditions are found among the Chenchus of the Nallamala forests. Chenchu elder Thokala Guruvayya spoke, a decade ago, of rare medicinal plants whose locations were carefully guarded to prevent exploitation. Agastya is also associated with Somasila, the confluence region of seven rivers near Alampur, where another Agastyeswara temple stands. The very name 'Somasila' is cited as evidence of a long-standing Soma tradition in the region. Archaeological remains indicate continuous occupation of the Somasila area from the Neolithic and

Nisarga Yatri, secured funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for documenting these figurines. More than 150 villages were surveyed in the Konkan belt where petroglyphs were found in 107 villages. The initial survey involved photographing the structure and recording the locations and their size. "We started identifying these carvings from 2012 by using our own funds and till date have been able to find out 3,000 such figurines. They are huge in size therefore manual documentation is not possible. High-end drone cameras are needed to carry out proper documentation of these carvings," Risbud told The Indian Express. Now the state has appointed the IITM Pravatark for a scientific assessment of each of these figurines. Speaking with The Indian Express, Shankar Raman, CEO of IITM Pravatark, said that one of the key objectives of the assessment will be to find out the cultural etymology of these carvings. Usually, the age of materials are determined by carbon dating but Raman stated that this methodology is not feasible for coastal sites.

"The petroglyphs are spread across coastal Maharashtra that is also known for receiving very heavy rainfall. Therefore, there are portions of stone carvings that are already eroded. The rocks also have geomagnetic properties, which pose a problem in carbon dating," Raman said. He said that as part of the documentation project, high resolution aerial photographs will be taken using drones and the images will be scanned using an AI-powered system where the patterns will be identified, while filling missing lines and eroded portions. The experts will then assess the figurines minutely to depict similarity with other petroglyphs found across the globe, like those from the Mesopotamian civilisation or any other civilisation that existed during that period. The tools used for making these carvings will also be identified along with the reasoning behind each figure that was drawn. petroglyph More than 150 villages were surveyed in the Konkan belt where petroglyphs were found in 107 villages. (Photo: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Maharashtra)

"The drawings will be compared with the traditions, folklore and food habits of local tribal belts. The area that these petroglyphs cover is very vast and our volunteer members are already on the ground speaking with local tribes and community leaders to understand their folklore," Raman stated. He added that the project may also bring into light the subcontinent's status of flora and fauna during that era. Road to UNESCO tag For a site in India to obtain UNESCO World Heritage status, the process generally follows a sequence involving the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Government of India, the state governments and UNESCO. ASI or a state government identifies a site with potential Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). Detailed studies are conducted on its history, archaeology, culture, ecology, authenticity, and integrity. A site must first be placed on India's Tentative List, which is maintained by the Government of India and submitted to UNESCO — which requires the site to be on the Tentative List before it can be formally nominated. In this case, the petroglyphs are already present in the tentative list. Following this, a detailed dossier is to be prepared with historical and archaeological significance, comparative analysis with similar sites worldwide, conservation status, legal protection measures, management and tourism plans, maps, boundaries, and buffer zones. Garge said that a key objective behind appointing IIT Madras for this study is to find out and record all these relevant factors in the dossier for the final submission.

Megalithic periods. It is believed that sages and siddhas cultivated Soma plants near the deep channels of the Krishna River. Greek ambassador Megasthenes mentioned in the 4th century BCE, naked ascetics roaming near the Krishna-Tungabhadra confluence. Further evidence comes from inscribed bricks bearing the words 'Siddhantam' and 'Andhira Lokam,' suggesting the antiquity of ascetic and intellectual traditions in the region. These findings indicate that knowledge of Soma may have existed there for nearly three millennia. Because Soma was also associated with immortality, the region became known as Amaragiri, the 'Hill of the Immortals.' Caves in the area, some identified by the Archaeology Department and others documented by this author, contain paintings interpreted as depicting sages, immortals, and unusual aerial objects. Historical records by Colonel Mackenzie and Syed Ghouse mention Chenchu beliefs that celestial maidens visit(ed) the area during full-moon nights, sing, dance and disappear into the sky. Chenchus also reportedly mixed Soma wood extract with Ippa (mahua) liquor during social gatherings, believed to contribute to their longevity. The Vishnukundin rulers, who emerged from this region during the 4th century CE, called themselves the 'Lords of Amarapuri.' Later, Telugu poet Tikkanā performed a Soma sacrifice and earned the title 'Somayaji'. In the 14th century, Nityanatha Siddha discussed Soma in Rasaratnakaram. These references indicate the continued prestige of Soma traditions in the Telugu-speaking region. Closely related to these traditions is Rasa Vidya (alchemy). Acharya Nagarjuna and his disciples are said to have conducted alchemical experiments in the Nallamala forests, seeking to cure diseases, prolong life, and create wealth. Inscriptions mentioning siddhas and the word 'Soma' at Saleswaram suggest continuity between Soma traditions and later alchemical practices. Indeed, Rasa Vidya may be viewed as a continuation of the older Soma tradition. Evidence from oral traditions suggests that knowledge of Soma survived among tribal communities even after the 14th century. Similar beliefs were known among people living in nearby plains regions as well. In my native village of Cheggam on the Godavari, elders spoke of a creeper like Dussaveru, resembling the Soma plant, whose root was believed to bring wealth, remove difficulties, and ensure health and longevity. Such beliefs were common in local conversations until a few decades ago, after which they gradually disappeared. Taken together, Vedic literature, oral traditions, archaeological remains, place names, inscriptions

Malviya Nagar hotel popular among foreigners on medical visas

The deadly blaze at a hotel-cum-restaurant in Malviya Nagar was a much sought-after place to stay for foreigners from African countries who came to Delhi on medical visas, said sources. It is located near three major medical establishments: AIIMS, Max Hospital in Saket, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Hospital. The death toll currently stands at 21, with police saying several of those killed were foreigners. Eyewitnesses The Indian Express spoke to said they saw people jumping from windows in a desperate attempt to escape the blaze. Mansoor, a local resident who runs a construction business in the area, said the fire appeared to have started on the first floor. "People started jumping from the first

floor. Then they began jumping from the second, third and fourth floors. We brought mattresses and placed them below so they could land on them," he said. Mansoor added that he threw a rope from his house toward the building in an attempt to help those trapped inside. "A woman tried to catch it, but she couldn't hold on and fell to the ground," he said. Police sources said the death toll is expected to rise as many tourists were asleep when the fire broke out. Visuals from the spot showed smoke and flames billowing from the premises. The victims have been admitted to Max Hospital in Saket, AIIMS Trauma Centre, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Hospital. Officials said 13 victims are at AIIMS.

Ritwik Ghatak films restored in 4K; BFI to host retrospective in London marking his birth centenary

The National Film Development Corporation-National Film Archive of India (NFDC-NFAI) has completed the 4K restoration of Ritwik Ghatak's feature films under the National Film Heritage Mission, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's flagship programme for film preservation and restoration. NFDC-NFAI has partnered with the British Film Institute (BFI) to organise a retrospective at BFI Southbank in London marking Ghatak's birth centenary. Beginning in June 2026, the programme will screen restored versions of Ghatak's films along with several documentaries, short films, and unfinished works associated with the filmmaker. According to NFDC-NFAI, the restoration work used original film elements preserved by the archive over several decades, along with material sourced from the West Bengal State Film Archive. The colour grading process was supervised by national award-winning cinematographer Avik Mukhopadhyay. The retrospective will feature restored versions of films, including Meghe Dhaka Tara, Subarnarekha, Komal Gandhar, Gajatrik, Nagarik, Bari Thekey Paliye, Jukti Takko Aar Gappo and Titas Ekti Nadir Naam. The programme will also include screenings of

documentaries and short works such as Bihar Ke Darshaniya Sthan, My Lenin, Purular Chhau and Ramkinkar Baij. Mukhopadhyay said working on the project allowed him to closely observe Ghatak's cinematic style and visual language. He described the restoration effort as an important exercise in preserving film heritage for future generations of audiences and researchers.

NFDC Managing Director Prakash Magdum said the collaboration with the BFI would provide international audiences with an opportunity to revisit Ghatak's work while also highlighting India's archival restoration efforts under the National Film Heritage Mission. Ghatak, regarded as one of the most influential filmmakers in Indian cinema, is known for films that explored themes of Partition, displacement, and social change. Though his body of work was comparatively small, his films have had a lasting influence on Indian and international cinema. The restoration of Ghatak's films is part of wider efforts under the mission to preserve and digitise classics of Indian cinema. Over the last few years, several films from different Indian languages and regions have undergone restoration through the programme as part of archival conservation initiatives.

'They were inseparable': In Ghaziabad, a tale of two promising athletes that ended in tragedy

Both families had struggled to support their sons' dreams. Every time a medal or trophy was added to the growing collection, celebrations would follow at their homes in Muradnagar, Ghaziabad. The houses belonged to young para-athletes Chirag Tyagi, 24, and Yash Khatik, 22, who had shared a common dream for the past seven years: to win medals for India and put their district on the global sporting map.

On Sunday, those dreams and hopes came crashing. Chirag was killed in Ghaziabad's Sai Kunj area; police said he had died from a gunshot wound. The person who pulled the trigger? It was Yash, claimed police. The same night, he was apprehended based on CCTV footage and formally arrested, along with another accused, on Monday. The news left the village in shock. Residents said Chirag and Yash were inseparable, often seen riding bikes together and training side by side. What caused the friendship to unravel? According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (City) and Trans-Hindon Dhawal Jaiswal, Yash claimed he harboured resentment towards Chirag after his disqualification in an event last year. "He claimed Chirag had submitted a complaint to the sports association regarding his qualification, following which his nomination was cancelled and he was disqualified. To take revenge, he killed Chirag," Jaiswal said. At Chirag's home, trophies stood neatly arranged and medals hung from a green wall in his room. Just days earlier, his family had been preparing to celebrate his qualification for the 2026 Asian Para Games, scheduled to be held in Japan in October.

He had won gold and silver medals in the 400 m and 1,500 m races in the Men's T12 (Visually impaired athletes) category in the 8th Indian Open Para Athletics International Championship held at Sri Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru between May 26 and May 28. She recalled how Chirag convinced his parents he wanted to pursue a career in sports even while they insisted he study engineering. "He would wake up at 3 am in the biting January cold to practise, promising his parents that he would prove himself. Villagers lovingly called him 'Chirag Toofan'," she said. Chirag began competing in local events before progressing to relay races and eventually representing the state and the country. "He competed at the state level and twice at the national level. He

had also travelled to South Africa and Switzerland for competitions," Himani said. She said all his parents wanted was to see him soar high. "They never compromised on his food... they invested everything in his career...," she said. His father was in a private job but had been unwell for the past four years. Around two years ago, Chirag shifted to Delhi to practice at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. Whenever he visited home, children would gather around. "Usne poore gaon ke bachchon ko hausla diya tha (He gave hope to all the children in the village)," said his neighbour, Payal Tyagi. "Anytime he stepped out, people would run and greet him shouting 'bhaiya-bhaiya'... He'd gather the children who usually sat glued to their phones and take them out to practice in the fields. He was their Sachin Tendulkar," she added. Yash's Home Medals and trophies at the accused Yash Khatik's home in Ghaziabad.

Yash was among those who looked up to Chirag, said his mother, Tara (40). She said he started running since school and eventually switched to distance learning to focus on athletics. His father was a mason. Yash and Chirag were closer than brothers, she claimed. "When Yash shifted to Delhi, he shared a room with Chirag. He did not trust anyone else, he never shared anything with anyone in the family... it was only with Chirag," she claimed. In December, Yash returned home after his disqualification in an event. Tara said he grew quiet after that. "He applied five times, submitting all the required medical certificates, but in the end, he was disqualified... In the middle of all this, he went to Odisha and won gold medals in 100-m and 400-m events but those were stripped from him," she claimed. "He started stocking up on new medicines every day," she recalled. "Whenever I asked what he was taking, he'd just say it was to build strength. He was happy one day and sad the next. Even so, he kept confiding in Chirag, believing he was the only one who could help him get back on track," claimed Tara. A friend who did not wish to be named said Yash considered Chirag a mentor. "But things took a turn after rumours circulated that Chirag could be the reason for Yash's disqualification," the friend claimed. According to a senior police officer, Yash and Chirag had participated in the same category, for runners who could not see beyond 6 m.

Police probe alleged marriage motive behind Ketan Agarwal murder

Pune: Fresh details have surfaced in the investigation into the death of Pune-based realtor Ketan Agarwal, with police claiming that the alleged murder was driven by the accused, Siya Goyal's reluctance to marry her fiancé. According to investigators, Goyal admitted during questioning that she found it easier to eliminate Agarwal than to call off their arranged marriage, as she did not want to disappoint her family. The alleged confession comes as police widen their probe into the roles of Goyal and co-accused Chetan Chaudhary, say sources. The probe team is questioning family members and examining digital evidence to establish the suspected conspiracy.

A significant development has emerged in the Ketan Agarwal murder case in Pune, as police continue to examine multiple aspects of the lives of accused Siya Goyal and her alleged lover, Chetan Chaudhary. Police claim that Agarwal, a realtor, died after falling from a cliff at Lohagad Fort on June 18. Investigators allege that Goyal and Chaudhary conspired to kill him because Goyal did not want to go ahead with her scheduled marriage to Agarwal in November.

According to Pune Rural Police sources, Goyal allegedly told investigators during questioning that she believed killing her fiancé was "easier" than confronting her family and calling off the wedding. Sources further claimed that she said she wanted to avoid hurting her family's sentiments by refusing the marriage. As part of the ongoing investigation, Pune and Lonavala Police have formed six teams to probe the case. According to



police, Goyal's parents are currently being questioned at the Lonavala City Police Station, while her brother, Sahil Goyal, has also been called in for a second round of questioning. Police said that during nearly 10 hours of questioning, Sahil Goyal stated that he knew Chetan Chaudhary and that his sister first met him at one of his cricket matches. According to investigators, the two became close after reconnecting at a common friend's Diwali party last year.

Investigators also claim that call detail records indicate Goyal and Chaudhary spoke more than 2,000 times since January, with their conversations totalling around 238 hours. However, according to police, Goyal's parents have denied ever meeting or speaking to Chaudhary.

Fifth IT firm shuts down in Pune in 8 months; owner arrested on cheating charge

A fifth information technology firm in Pune has shut down in the last eight months, allegedly leaving a workforce of 700-1,000 people jobless. Sources said a 4,000-5,000-strong IT workforce has been rendered jobless in the city during this period. The latest firm to join the list is ThinkTech India, which shut down last week. The police have arrested its owner on a cheating charge. "We have arrested the owner, Harshal Thakre, for cheating the employees in the name of providing jobs," Hinjewadi senior police inspector Balaji Pandhare told on Wednesday.

The IT firm has allegedly failed to pay salaries to its freshers and interns for the past five months. Rs 15,000 was collected as a security deposit from freshers and interns for providing them with laptops. We approached the Hinjewadi police to file an FIR against the firm's owners. The owner has been arrested for cheating the IT workforce by taking money from them," said Pavanjeet Mane, who heads FITE, or Forum for IT Employees. "The company started in August last year. Initially, it paid the salaries, but no one has received a salary since January. The owners kept giving new dates every time the employees approached them for salaries. But they never kept their word," he said. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, an intern from western Maharashtra said, "As per my information, there were three batches of trainee

Punjab woman's fight against domestic abuse leads to landmark Canadian court ruling

In a landmark judgment that could significantly expand legal remedies for survivors of domestic abuse, the Supreme Court of Canada has recognised a new tort of intimate partner violence, holding that patterns of coercive control and abuse within relationships can constitute a distinct civil wrong. The ruling, delivered on May 15 in the case of Kuldeep Kaur Ahluwalia versus Amritpal Singh Ahluwalia, stems from a decade-long legal battle by a Punjab-born woman who said she endured years of abuse, isolation and coercive control after moving to Canada.

In a 6-3 decision in Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia (2026 SCC 16), the court held that intimate partner violence encompasses more than physical assaults and includes sustained patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour that undermine a person's dignity, autonomy and equality within a relationship. The judgment paves the way for victims to seek monetary damages for harms caused by such conduct. Kuldeep Kaur Ahluwalia married Amritpal Singh Ahluwalia in India in 1999 before the couple immigrated to Canada in the early 2000s. They later had two children. According to court findings, the abuse began shortly after their marriage in Punjab and escalated following their move to Canada. Isolation, the court noted, became a significant factor. Speaking to New Canadian Media after the ruling, Brampton-based Kuldeep recalled how immigration intensified her vulnerability. "In India, at least I had some family nearby. In Canada, I was completely alone. I didn't know anyone. I didn't know the system. That isolation made everything worse," she said. She described being subjected to prolonged silent treatment, financial control, humiliation, intimidation, restrictions on education and employment opportunities, and pressure for sex. The couple separated after Amritpal filed for divorce in 2016. Following an 11-day trial in 2022, during which Kuldeep represented herself, Ontario Superior Court Justice Renu Mandhane recognised what was then

described as a novel tort of family violence and awarded her damages of Canadian \$150,000, including compensatory, aggravated and punitive damages. The Ontario Court of Appeal later upheld findings that she had suffered abuse but struck down the new tort and removed the punitive damages award, reducing compensation to Canadian \$100,000.

Kuldeep then appealed to the Supreme Court, which recognised a narrower but distinct tort of intimate partner violence and restored the legal basis for compensation while maintaining the Canadian \$100,000 award. Writing for the majority, Justice Nicholas Kasirer observed that existing legal remedies such as assault, battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress often fail to capture the cumulative nature of abuse. "The tendency to frame intimate partner violence as episodic or incident-based sometimes fails to speak to the cumulative pattern of conduct that is greater than the sum of its parts," the judgment said. The court recognised that intimate partner violence can include isolation, financial control, surveillance, sexual coercion and emotional abuse, and noted that immigrant, racialised and Indigenous women often face heightened vulnerability because of language barriers, financial dependence, social isolation and cultural pressures. The case has drawn particular attention within Canada's South Asian community. Kuldeep said many women are conditioned to tolerate abusive behaviour. "Women in our culture are taught to obey. 'Banda hai, gussa aa hi jaata hai' (He is a man, he gets angry)," she told Aadya Arora of New Canadian Media, adding that fears of social stigma, family dishonour and concerns about children often discourage women from leaving abusive marriages. Advocacy groups working with South Asian women welcomed the ruling. Kaur Collective Foundation described the judgment as an important recognition of forms of abuse that frequently go unnoticed because they leave no physical injuries.

'Stall is our only source of income': Fear of eviction triggers panic in Kolkata's famed College Street book market

A cloud of deep uncertainty has gripped College Street, the heart of Kolkata's book trade, as widespread rumors of an impending eviction drive targeting roadside book stalls spread through the area. Coming on the heels of a broader urban cleanup initiative by the new BJP government, the sudden panic has left hundreds of pavement booksellers fearing loss of their livelihoods.

A cloud of deep uncertainty has gripped College Street, the heart of Kolkata's book trade, as widespread rumors of an impending eviction drive targeting roadside book stalls spread through the area. Coming on the heels of a broader urban cleanup initiative by the new BJP government, the sudden panic has left hundreds of pavement booksellers fearing loss of their livelihoods. Even as Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) authorities deny issuing any official eviction orders, the anxiety on the ground remained palpable. Tension escalated following reports of verbal warnings to vendors directing them to clear the footpaths on Bankim Chatterjee Street. Though no formal written notices ordering eviction have been issued, many vendors have already begun downsizing their displays out of fear. For the pavement booksellers who form the backbone of Boi Para (book-mart), the threat of eviction comes at an already precarious time. A sharp decline in footfall has left many struggling to get by, making the current climate of fear particularly devastating. "I am just a small roadside bookseller. Watching stall owners being evicted is upsetting. This stall is our main and only source of income," said Samir Halder, who has sold books in the area for forty years. The anxiety is shared across generations of traders who have known no other life outside selling books on boi para. Indrani Dey, whose family bookstore has been around in College Street for nearly thirty years, highlighted that sales have dropped since vendors were told to downsize their displays. "An entire family relies on this," she said. Beyond the immediate fear of eviction, booksellers also point to a deeper structural crisis that has been eroding their business for years. The traditional market is shrinking, driven by a cultural shift from Bengali-medium state schools to private English-medium institutions. The growing trend of private schools selling textbooks directly to students has also largely cut out traditional roadside vendors. The reaction to the rumored drive has also exposed a rift between pavement hawkers and brick-and-mortar establishments. Owners of government-approved permanent shops remain largely unconcerned, with some viewing the potential cleanup as a necessary measure to reclaim pedestrian footpaths rather than a direct assault on the book trade. For the students and patrons who frequent

the area, however, the pavement stalls are inseparable from the identity of the place. "Many who sit on the footpath of stalls nearby use the space to display more books. If they are removed, College Street will lose what makes it special," said Udit Biswas, a zoology student. Rohit Debnath, a final-semester M Com student, suggested relocating vendors rather than evicting them. "Books have been part of College Street for generations. A dedicated area for vendors would be a better solution," he said. As the situation remains tense, authorities have moved quickly to de-escalate the situation by urging vendors not to fall prey to unverified rumors or fraudulent documents. Speaking to the press, KMC Commissioner Smita Pandey denied that any eviction orders had been issued to remove booksellers from the pavement. "There has been no such order from the KMC, nor do we plan for it to happen. If the booksellers receive a notice, it might be AI generated & should be verified with the police for authenticity," Commissioner Pandey stated earlier.

Florida accuses OpenAI of hiding ChatGPT safety risks; sues Sam Altman

Miami: The State of Florida filed a lawsuit against OpenAI and CEO Sam Altman on Monday, claiming the company knowingly released and aggressively marketed ChatGPT to the public while concealing serious risks. Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier said during a news conference that the company suppressed internal safety warnings and deceived users about the true nature and dangers of the product. "Today, we announced the first-in-the-nation state-led lawsuit against OpenAI and its CEO, Sam Altman," Uthmeier said. "OpenAI and Altman ignored internal and external safety warnings, put children at great risk, and allowed a dangerous product to reach millions of Floridians."

The civil complaint filed in Florida circuit court references two separate shootings where the alleged gunmen were reported to have asked ChatGPT questions while planning their crimes. OpenAI said in a statement that its models repeatedly encouraged the individuals to seek real-world support, including from mental health professionals.

The company also said it has cooperated with law enforcement in both cases. "ChatGPT is a general-purpose tool used by hundreds of millions of people every day for legitimate purposes," an OpenAI statement said.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

Relief for Indian immigrants

The United States Supreme Court's landmark ruling upholding birthright citizenship comes as a major relief for millions of immigrant families, particularly Indians who constitute a major chunk of the skilled professionals in the country. The top court has struck down President Donald Trump administration's January 2025 executive order attempting to restrict automatic citizenship for children born on US soil to various categories of immigrants. The ruling has upheld the constitutional guarantee that children born in the United States will continue to be recognised as American citizens regardless of whether their parents are on temporary work visas, student visas, undocumented, or awaiting permanent residency. The judgment is particularly important for the Indian diaspora, as hundreds of thousands of H-1B and other visa holders work in America, many of whom have children born in the country and wait for decades for permanent residency. Trump's order, if followed through, would have left those children stateless or dependent on India's own citizenship laws, even though they were born and raised in America. More than one million Indians remain stuck in decades-long employment-based green card backlogs because of country-wise caps on permanent residency. For these families, uncertainty over immigration rules has long been a major source of concern. The court's verdict comes as a profound affirmation of who belongs in America, a country enriched by the contributions of immigrants from all over the world. In fact, America's biggest modern success story is tied to immigration, particularly highly skilled professionals working in technology. Among them, Indians stand out for their stellar contributions. Currently, nearly three out of every four H-1B visas approved by the US go to Indian nationals, making them the backbone of America's technology workforce and some of Silicon Valley's biggest companies. There are an estimated 5.2 million Indians in the US, including more than 1.2 million skilled professionals. Many Indian professionals spend years working in the US before becoming eligible for permanent residency because of the lengthy green card backlog. During that period, they continue renewing temporary visas despite building their lives in America. Birthright citizenship has long been central to the immigrant experience and provides certainty for millions of families planning their future in America. By grounding its judgment in the Constitution, the Supreme Court made it extremely difficult for any future administration to reverse birthright citizenship. The concept of birthright citizenship stems from the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, ratified in 1868. For many economists and industry leaders, America's ability to attract global talent has remained one of its greatest competitive advantages. Indian professionals have become central to that story, underscoring how skilled immigration continues to shape the country's innovation ecosystem 250 years after its founding. Indian-origin personalities have become a consequential force in the country.

Poor families targeted to sell their children, racket busted in Ghaziabad



Even before she was born, her parents were already allegedly considering selling her — the buyers were based out of Andhra Pradesh. On seeing the newborn in May, however, the hearts of the parents — who work as labourers in Ghaziabad — melted. They said no to the people pursuing them, police told The Indian Express. Eleven days later, a woman named Pooja, who was among the people pursuing the parents, allegedly kidnapped the infant from her house on May 26 and handed the baby over to another accused, identified as Manoj.

Earlier this month, the Tronica City Police rescued the infant, and arrested Pooja and Manoj, apart from 11 others, as they busted a human trafficking racket with the help of tip-off, local intelligence and CCTV footage, said officers. The accused abducted the baby girl from Pooja

Colony and were about to hand her over to three others. The gang planned to take the child to Andhra Pradesh and sell her to a couple, identified as Raju and Deepthi. On Friday, the police arrested three more accused from the Tronica City of Ghaziabad, identified as Tarannum (29), Anil Lakda (33), and Karun (49). The alleged syndicate, said officers, operated across Delhi-NCR and through their network, identified parents from weak financial backgrounds who were expecting a child. While the accused allegedly sold the newborns across the country, their buyers were mostly concentrated in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, according to officers. Accused Anil and Karun said that they had joined the gang through Tarannum and another syndicate member Pradeep. They allegedly told the police that they would contact such families, lure them with money, and share information with other gang members through WhatsApp, their regular channel of communication. "Once a task was completed, they deleted the WhatsApp messages," said police. Apart from running a racket, they also used fake currency while dealing and making payments to the parents. "After the birth of a child, they mixed fake notes with a few genuine currency notes and handed the money to the parents of the abducted infant. By the time, the parents would find that the notes were counterfeit, the gang would have already fled with the baby," an officer said, adding that since the parents had themselves accepted money in exchange for the child, they were afraid to lodge complaints against the gang. Fake currency notes worth Rs 2,500 and four mobile phones have been recovered from the possession of the accused.

Government Regularises Services of Nearly 65,000 Former Ordnance Factory Employees, Reinforces Commitment to Employee Welfare

New Delhi, July 5: The Central Government has secured the future of nearly 65,000 former Ordnance Factory employees by redeploying them into regular Government service, a move hailed as a major employee welfare initiative following the corporatisation of the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board. "The announcement was highlighted during a meeting between Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, and Minister of State for the Prime Minister's Office, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh, and a 19-member delegation led by the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) in New Delhi on Saturday." "The delegation, representing organisations including the Bharatiya Pratiraksha Mazdoor Sangh (BPMMS), Government Employees National Confederation (GENC), Public Sector Employees National Confederation, SHAR Employees Trade Union and Space Employees Association, praised the Government's employee-centric reforms and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ensuring long-term service security for thousands of employees affected by the restructuring of the Ordnance Factory Board." "According to the delegation, the decision to absorb the employees into regular Government service has resolved one of the most significant concerns arising from the corporatisation process. The representatives also acknowledged the Government's earlier decision to extend the deemed deputation of former Ordnance Factory employees until their retirement, describing it as an important step that paved the way for the latest decision." "During the meeting, the delegation submitted several demands related to Government employees and pensioners. These included extending the benefits of the Old Pension Scheme to employees appointed on compassionate grounds, improving career progression, addressing cadre-related issues and ensuring broader stakeholder consultations before implementing major personnel policy reforms." "The employee representatives also urged the Government to continue simplifying administrative procedures to reduce litigation and ensure quicker resolution of service-related matters. They welcomed the Government's ongoing engagement with recognised employee organisations in shaping personnel policies and administrative reforms." "Responding to the delegation, Dr. Jitendra Singh reiterated that the Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, remains committed to a consultative, transparent and employee-friendly approach to governance. He said every genuine representation submitted by Government employees and pensioners receives due consideration through the appropriate ministries and departments." "The Minister emphasised that administrative reforms aimed at improving governance, simplifying procedures and enhancing efficiency remain a key priority. He noted that continuous dialogue with employee organisations enables the Government to identify practical challenges and formulate policies that serve both employees and the broader public interest." "The delegation expressed confidence that the Government would continue introducing employee-friendly reforms while maintaining regular consultations with representative organisations on matters concerning service conditions, pension administration and personnel management." "The meeting concluded with the delegation thanking Dr. Jitendra Singh for providing a platform to present their concerns and appreciating the Government's continued focus on employee welfare, administrative reforms and participatory governance."

Raj Thackeray to IPS officer: 'Quit if you want to praise RSS publicly'

MNS chief Raj Thackeray, Nagpur police commissioner Vishwas Nangare Patil (MNS chief Raj Thackeray (left) told Nagpur police commissioner Vishwas Nangare Patil (right), "If you have an affinity for the Sangh, keep it to yourself". Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Saturday slammed newly appointed Nagpur Police Commissioner Vishwas Nangare Patil over his speech praising the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), saying that his loyalty should lie solely with the police force. "If you have an affinity for the Sangh, keep it to yourself; or if you wish to speak publicly, resign from service and join the Sangh or the BJP," the MNS chief said in a social media post.

The development comes close on the heels of the Congress seeking a probe into the IPS officer's controversial speech. Patil courted controversy after an undated video clip showing him addressing a Sakal Hindu Samaj event, a right-wing outfit facing multiple FIRs across Maharashtra for alleged hate speech, went viral on Thursday. The speech was apparently made after he was appointed Nagpur police commissioner.

"It seems IPS officer Shri Vishwas Nangare Patil is suddenly feeling a desire to display dual loyalties. Being a police officer, his loyalty should lie solely and exclusively with the duties of the police force. However, here, Nangare Patil feels compelled to demonstrate his loyalty to the RSS," the MNS chief said. Thackeray said that Hindu conventions are being held across the state, and even though these conventions are portrayed as non-political, they are, in fact, political. "If one were to research or even contemplate who is organising these events and what their true motives are, the hands behind them would become apparent," the MNS chief said. The issue, he said, is whether a person in a government job, especially a police officer, should attend such events. "At such places, Nangare Patil is going and heaping praise on the RSS. Have you lost sight of the fact that you are a police officer and that impartiality is expected of an officer? In any case, a "rehabilitation guarantee scheme" for favoured officers has been running for many years now; you, too, will be rehabilitated," he remarked. "Khaki colour belongs to police or RSS? Taking a dig at the police officer, he further



said, "We were all under the impression that the khaki colour of Nangare Patil's uniform belonged to the police force; we have only now realised that the colour belongs to the Sangh's former khaki".

Questioning whether dual loyalty was acceptable to the Chief Minister, Raj Thackeray said, "Let's leave Nangare Patil aside; he may have lost his way. But is such dual loyalty acceptable to the chief minister and the home minister?" He reminded CM Devendra Fadnis that he should not criticise when an officer attends a programme by some other organisation in future. "When any ruling power forgets the realisation of what wrong precedents they are setting by supporting (or even remaining silent, which is also a form of support) the actions of an officer, they also forget what they are leaving behind for future generations," he said. Thackeray also recalled a 2012 protest march by the MNS, when a constable had come up and congratulated him for standing behind the police. "At that time, the then-government sent him on forced leave for abandoning impartiality. Will the current government take the same stance regarding Nangare Patil?" "Nangare Patil, you are a capable officer—at the very least, do not mortgage your conscience to political parties and organizations," he advised. Meanwhile, the Congress in Maharashtra has sought a probe into Patil's speech. The party raised questions about the officer's neutrality and compliance with service rules.

Amid shortage of rabies vaccine in Delhi, 1.27L vials undelivered, government agency told

Amid a shortage of rabies vaccine across the government hospitals in the Capital, a consignment of over 1.27 lakh vials of anti-rabies vaccine meant for the city's public healthcare facilities has remained undelivered because the designated government warehouse lacks adequate cold storage capacity, according to a letter sent by the Serum Institute of India to the Central Procurement Agency (CPA), The Indian Express has learnt. In the letter written on June 22, the Pune-based vaccine manufacturer said it had kept the entire consignment of 1,27,223 vials ready for dispatch for "a long time" under a supply order issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on March 27 this year.

Sources in the state health department said there is a dire shortage of rabies vaccines across Delhi government hospitals currently. "A couple of hospitals have managed to stock up in small quantities through local purchases but the majority of the hospitals do not have it," said an official source. The Indian Express reached out to Serum Institute, officials at the DGHS and the CPA for a comment but a response was not received. The firm — in the letter — said the supply order required the vaccines to be delivered to the Central Warehouse at the Super Specialty Hospital (SSH) in West Delhi's Janakpuri. However, when its representatives approached the warehouse, they were informed by the store keeper that the consignment could not be accepted because there was no cold storage space available.

The Central Warehouse at Janakpuri Super Specialty Hospital (JSSH) manages the procurement, storage, and distribution of medical supplies, diagnostics, and medicines and maintains the vaccines and medicines that require temperature-controlled storage, commonly known as the cold chain, to remain safe and effective. The anti-rabies vaccine requires strict temperature-controlled storage to maintain its efficacy.

In the letter, the Serum Institute requested the CPA, the nodal agency responsible for procuring medicines and equipment for public healthcare facilities, to identify an alternative delivery location where the vaccines could be received. It also sought an extension of 20 days in the delivery timeline to enable completion of the supply after receiving confirmation of the revised delivery point.

IDFC First Bank scam: Haryana suspends IAS officer Pankaj Agarwal after CBI arrest



Pankaj Agarwal Haryana IAS officer Pankaj Agarwal had previously held several important positions in the Haryana administration. He served as the state's chief electoral officer and oversaw the 2024 Haryana Assembly elections. The Haryana government on Friday suspended senior IAS officer Pankaj Agarwal after he was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with an alleged Rs 657 crore IDFC First Bank fraud. The suspension follows service rules that mandate action against an officer held in custody for more than 48 hours. Agarwal, a 2000-batch officer, was arrested on June 22 and is currently lodged in Ambala jail. Agarwal is the third IAS officer to be suspended as the investigation into the multi-crore scam continues. Earlier, on April 8, the Haryana government suspended Pradeep Kumar (2011 batch) and Singh (2012 batch). This week, Singh was arrested by the CBI. The CBI is investigating at least seven IAS officers of the Haryana cadre. An order issued by Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi stated that Agarwal's suspension takes effect under Rule 3(2) of the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969, which provides for the deemed suspension of an officer detained in official custody beyond 48 hours. The order also clarified that he will receive a subsistence allowance as prescribed under the service rules until further orders. Before his suspension, Agarwal was serving as principal secretary of the architecture department.

According to the CBI, Agarwal is accused of allegedly misappropriating more than Rs 50 crore from the Haryana School Shiksha Pariyojana Parishad during his tenure as principal secretary, school education department. Investigators have also alleged that he was involved in the embezzlement of nearly Rs 10 crore from the

Haryana State Agriculture Marketing Board while serving as principal secretary of the agriculture and farmers' welfare department. The CBI took over the investigation into the alleged Rs 657 crore IDFC First Bank fraud on April 8. On the same day, Agarwal was shifted to the architecture department, while several other IAS officers named in the case were assigned less significant roles. Accused of favouring BJP during Rajya Sabha polls, Agarwal had previously held several influential positions in the Haryana administration and was regarded as being close to the ruling BJP government. He served as the state's chief electoral officer and oversaw the 2024 Haryana Assembly elections. His role as returning officer during the March 16 Rajya Sabha elections attracted controversy, with the Congress accusing him of improperly rejecting votes cast by its MLAs while allowing allegedly invalid votes in favour of the BJP-backed Independent candidate Satish Nandal. Three days after the Rajya Sabha elections,

Who is Hashim Baba ally Shabir Chaudhary pursued by cops for over a year?

Delhi Police have arrested alleged gangster Shabir Chaudhary, a key associate of Hashim Baba, after a year-long pursuit, linking him to organised crime cases, extortion rackets and the murder of businessman Nadir Shah. Delhi Police have arrested alleged gangster Shabir Chaudhary, a key associate of Hashim Baba, after a year-long pursuit, linking him to organised crime cases, extortion rackets and the murder of businessman Nadir Shah.

Months after Nadir Shah, an Afghan-origin businessman, was shot dead outside his gym in South Delhi's Greater Kailash-1 on September 12, 2024, police were still connecting the dots to crack the murder case. Investigators suspected gangster Hashim Baba's involvement and they were hot on the trail of his allies — Shabir Chaudhary and Anwar Chacha. In April 2025, they finally caught hold of a man, who later became a witness in the case, for allegedly arranging an escape for the shooters.

US clears limited access to Anthropic's Mythos 5 AI model

New Delhi: US-based AI company Anthropic has won US approval to restore limited access to its powerful Mythos 5 artificial intelligence (AI) model to "certain trusted partners" after resolving the government's national security concerns. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick wrote to Anthropic's chief compute officer that the company's efforts with the US government to address risks associated with the models "have yielded significant progress", multiple reports said. The clearance follows a government order issued two weeks earlier that abruptly barred Anthropic from giving foreign nationals access to Mythos 5 and a related model, Fable 5, over fears that security guardrails could be circumvented.

The company responded by disabling global access and undertook intensive talks to reach a resolution. "In just two weeks, we have worked diligently to ensure America remains the global leader in AI while safeguarding our security," Benno Kass, Commerce Department spokesman, was quoted as saying. However, the recent letter does not mention any change to the government's

ANTHROPIC

restrictions on the use of the Fable 5 model. "We received notice from the US government that Mythos 5, our strongest cybersecurity model, can be redeployed to a small group of cyber defenders and infrastructure providers," Anthropic said in a statement. The company said it is working to provide access to the approved set of providers and restore their access to Mythos 5 as quickly as possible. The company expressed optimism about the progress and said it will work with the government to expand access to Mythos 5 and make Fable 5 available for general use again. Fable 5 is prevented from responding to some queries, such as cybersecurity- and biology-related questions.

Hilton, Becerra lead primary race for California governor



Republican television commentator Steve Hilton and Democratic former cabinet secretary Xavier Becerra took the early lead in the open primary race for California governor Tuesday, seeming to emerge as favorites to advance to the November 3 general election.

California's next governor, who will succeed Democrat Gavin Newsom who is limited to two terms, will take charge of a \$4 trillion economy—among the world's largest—while confronting deep challenges on water, affordability and homelessness.

"While I take nothing for granted - there are lots of ballots left to be counted - it appears that we are on track

to advance to November," he said to cheers. "One step closer to the son of those hardworking immigrants, Maria and Manuel Becerra, becoming the next governor of the great state of California."

Sounding triumphant in an appearance before his supporters, he suggested he could follow Schwarzenegger as yet another immigrant to become governor. "California, what an incredible honor. The first time I've run for office, over a million people rising, voting for me this time with a funny accent," Hilton said.

US Supreme Court clears way for Alabama to use pro-Republican voting map



WASHINGTON, The U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way on Tuesday for Alabama to use a pro-Republican congressional map that eliminates one of its two districts where Black voters make up a majority or near-majority, giving a boost to President Donald Trump as his party defends its control of Congress in November's mid-term elections.

In its ruling, the conservative majority said Alabama was likely to ultimately defeat a legal challenge to its preferred map that was brought by several sets of plaintiffs including a group of Black voters.

The court's action came amid a new and frenzied round of congressional redistricting that has unfolded across the South, as Republican-led states have scrambled to take advantage of an April Supreme Court decision that severely weakened the Voting Rights Act.

had halted the Republican-backed map's use in the 2026 elections. The lower court said the pro-Republican map intentionally discriminated against Black voters in violation of the equal protection principle and likely still violated the Voting Rights Act, even under the significantly heightened legal standard announced in the April ruling.

"The court's shameful decision to reinstate an intentionally discriminatory map defies any thoughtful or consistent application of the law," he said, adding that his group would continue to fight for Alabama voters "to have the fair representation that they deserve."

"The United States Supreme Court confirmed what we always knew: that Alabama's Congressional maps are constitutional and lawful under the Voting Rights Act," he said. "The court's decision to stay the district court's injunction affirms that Alabama's elected representatives, not federal judges, have the primary authority to draw the maps under which Alabamians choose their own leaders."

Bennett wins Democratic nod in New Jersey primary to face US House Republican Kean

WASHINGTON, Democrat Rebecca Bennett emerged from a highly competitive primary on Tuesday to take on Republican U.S. Representative Thomas Kean in the November general election in New Jersey's seventh congressional district, U.S. media projected.

Kean and Bennett will now square off in November for a seat that has changed party hands twice within the past eight years and now ranks as a key target for Democrats hoping to capture the House of Representatives.

Kean, 57, is the scion of a storied New Jersey political family. His father, Thomas, was governor for nearly two decades. His great grandfather was a longtime congressman.



prominent for missing more than 100 House votes due to an undisclosed medical condition. Hours before polls closed, Kean released a statement promising to be transparent about his health but pushing his return to work further into the future, after saying on May 21 that he would be back in "a couple of weeks."

Ukrainian drones strike oil terminal in St Petersburg as Putin's 'Davos' gets under way

ST PETERSBURG, Russia, Ukraine struck an oil export terminal in St Petersburg hours before President Vladimir Putin's annual economic forum got under way in an attempt to embarrass the Kremlin chief and show how vulnerable Russia's big cities are.

The attack on St Petersburg, Putin's home city, and the location of his own 'Davos' - a showcase economic forum designed to attract foreign investment and show Russia at its best, comes as both sides dial up strikes on each other in the more than four-year-old war with no imminent end in sight.



they had also targeted a military facility near what is Russia's second city. Alexander Beglov, the governor of St Petersburg, said that unspecified "infrastructure objects" had been hit in three different districts of the city.

US university risks losing 2,000 international students amid DHS approval delay

Washington: A New Hampshire university could lose as many as 2,000 international graduate students unless the Department of Homeland Security quickly approves a pending application tied to a new doctoral programme, prompting lawmakers to press the Trump administration for urgent action.

The issue surfaced during a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the Department of Homeland Security's fiscal year 2027 budget request, where Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire raised concerns about delays affecting New England College and its ability to enrol foreign students in a new Doctorate in Business Administration programme.

"As I explained on the phone, there is real urgency about this because, without approval by July 1st, they're going to potentially lose 2,000 students, graduate students," Shaheen said. The senator said the institution prepares students for careers in artificial intelligence, national security, healthcare management and other high-demand sectors.

Seeking an update on the application, Shaheen asked whether DHS could provide clarity on the status of the school's request to enrol F-1 international students in the new programme.



reviewing the case. "We've got the point of contact. We'd asked for the point of contact for the college; I believe we did receive that, and we give it to USCIS," Mullin said. The Secretary said the issue had been discussed only days earlier and promised to seek an update from US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Iran agrees to new nuclear talks after US strikes: Rubio

Washington: U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday that Iran has agreed to discuss parts of its nuclear programme that it had previously refused to negotiate, raising the prospect of new talks after recent U.S. military action against Tehran.

going to be effectuated behind a conventional shield," Rubio said. He said "Operation Epic Fury" had achieved its objectives by damaging Iran's missile production capabilities and military infrastructure.

Allahabad HC declines PIL on 'Cockroach Janta Party'

Lucknow: The Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court on Tuesday declined to entertain a Public Interest Litigation seeking a probe into alleged "anti-national activities" of Cockroach Janta Party and its use of social media platforms to incite youth.

against Abhijeet Dipke, a Pune native currently residing in the United States, claiming that he had founded an unregistered organisation called "Cockroach Janta Party" that was allegedly involved in anti-national activities through foreign funding.

Among global capitals, Delhi ranks second in bird diversity



Ferruginous Duck, Painted Stork, Black-headed Ibis and Oriental Darter.

Unlike other bird lists, the atlas used a grid-based method. Delhi was divided into grids of 6.6 km by 6.6 km, further subdivided into smaller quadrants and subcells. A total of 145 subcells were randomly selected for sampling to reduce bias and ensure representation across habitats. Each subcell required four 15-minute checklists, with birds recorded on foot and uploaded to eBird. The atlas says this "systematic approach" of collecting "equal-effort lists from randomly placed grids across the city" helps reduce sampling bias and ensures that results reflect the "true distribution and abundance of species".

Experts associated with the atlas attribute Delhi's bird diversity to the city's position at an ecological intersection: the Ridge brings the Aravalli landscape into the Capital, while the Yamuna floodplains and associated wetlands provide refuge for waterbirds and migrants. The city's proximity to the western Himalayas, meanwhile, facilitates seasonal movement. The atlas notes that Delhi "lies almost at the heart of the Central Asian Flyway", making it "a seasonal haven for species arriving from as far as Central Asia and the Arctic". The exercise, according to the atlas, provides "a robust scientific baseline" against which future atlases, to be conducted five years from now and beyond, can measure ecological change. Repeated surveys will help track shifts in bird populations, habitat preferences and environmental stress over time, officials said.

Meanwhile, the atlas also describes Delhi as "a meeting point of history, geography, and biodiversity", noting that such diversity persists despite the pressures of one of the world's most populous urban regions. It also underlines the importance of protecting "the green and blue spaces that sustain it", pointing repeatedly to forests, wetlands, riverine systems, grasslands, urban greens and floodplains as habitats that continue to support wildlife. The Yamuna floodplains, in particular, are identified as a key ecosystem for conservation and habitat restoration.

The Delhi Bird Atlas was prepared by Dr Lynette Gomes, nodal officer, Delhi Forest Department; Pankaj Gupta, state coordinator, Bird Count India; and Arnab Gupta. However, efforts to document and record Delhi's birdlife isn't a new phenomenon. The atlas itself includes an extract from renowned birdwatcher Sudhir Vyas's study of avian inhabitants in Delhi-NCR, noting that the first checklist of birds in the Capital was prepared by S Basil Edwards in 1924-25, when New Delhi was being built. That early effort listed around 202 species. By 1950, the Delhi Bird-Watching Society, an NGO, had brought out a checklist of 356 species, and later work continued to document Delhi's bird species.

Tension in Jadavpur over midnight drive; Left supporters clash with police

The hawkers-eviction drive in the Jadavpur station area in Kolkata on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday turned violent with protesters clashing with the police. Local hawker unions, backed by left-wing trade organisations, political activists, and a large contingent of Jadavpur University students, took to the streets to physically block the demolitions. Protesters staged sit-ins directly in front of the advancing bulldozers and stood on top of the machinery in defiance. The police resorted to a baton charge (lathi-charge) to disperse the crowd, resulting in alleged severe injuries to several student leaders, activists, and hawkers.

"Six people, including CPI(M) leader Srijan Bhattacharya, have been arrested. CPI(M) Central Committee member and former Jadavpur MLA Sujan Chakraborty has also been arrested. One person, Ritabrata Ghosh from Ramgarh, is in a critical condition," said a protester. In total, nearly 15 people are injured. Sources said CT scans have been conducted on actor-activist Joyraj Bhattacharya and Chakraborty at the nearby KPC Medical College and Hospital to check for internal injuries. All shops adjacent to Jadavpur railway station have been demolished. For the remaining ones a little distance away, the Indian Railways has issued a 15-day notice. The eviction drive in Jadavpur comes in the backdrop of several such demolitions in other railway stations and prominent places in Kolkata since the change of guard in the state last month.

Students started a protest in front of Gate No. 4 of Jadavpur University at 3 am on Monday, demanding the immediate release of all detainees. Condemning the eviction of hawkers and police 'atrocities' in Jadavpur,



Chandidas Bhattacharya, State Secretary, SUCI (Communist), in a statement said: "The 'bulldozer politics' initiated across the state after the BJP came to power claimed its latest victims on the night of June 7 — the hawkers outside the Jadavpur station premises. Under the cover of darkness, this attack targeted Shanti Ghosh, a member of our party's Kolkata District Committee and Secretary of the Sara Bangla Hawker Union, along with members of various hawker unions, left-wing political activists, cultural movement workers, and students. Despite fierce resistance from Jadavpur University students and local residents, the police launched a brutal assault and demolished the shops using bulldozers." "Evicting hawkers from outside the station premises is completely illegal, as it flagrantly violates the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, which is applicable across the entire country..."

In Mumbai's crumbling buildings, thousands of lives risked in a "miracle"

Mayur Mistry, 43, looked up at the crumbling building in front of him. Many years ago, his parents brought him home from the hospital to Hathi Baug in Mazgaon. Like his father before him, he grew up in the building, and the 120 square feet room shaped the landscape of his childhood and adulthood. But now, with a child of his own, the building no longer feels like a safe place. In the run-up to the 2026 monsoon, Hathi Baug received a notice informing residents of what they already knew. Their building was dilapidated, highly dangerous and beyond repair.

The notice, however, came with a rider. The 48 families living in the building would have to vacate within 15 days or risk having their electricity and water connections disconnected, or worse, risk their lives through the rainy season. Like residents of 81 other buildings classified as highly dangerous during MHADA's pre-monsoon survey, they chose to stay. It is residents like Mistry who prompted a Bombay High Court-appointed committee to describe it as a "miracle" that lakhs of Mumbai residents continue to live in structurally unsafe buildings. In a report submitted in March, the committee warned of a deepening crisis in the city's ageing cessed buildings, estimating that nearly four lakh tenants remain trapped in 12,552 such structures, many declared dangerous and awaiting redevelopment. Every monsoon, same gamble: Why thousands stay in Mumbai's crumbling buildings despite the risk of collapse? Trapped by stalled redevelopment projects, legal disputes, absentee landlords and fears of losing long-held tenancy rights, residents face an impossible choice: remain in homes deemed unsafe or step into an uncertain future with no guarantee of re-

turn. (Express Photo by Akash Patil) Yet every monsoon, even as notices are pasted on cracked walls warning residents to evacuate, thousands choose to remain where they are. "We will not give up our homes," said Mistry, pointing to cracks in the roof, leaks in every home and bamboo supports holding up parts of the structure. "Evacuating the building would mean giving up our claim to our homes and losing our tenancy rights. That we cannot risk." His dilemma is repeated across Mumbai's cessed buildings — pre-1969 residential structures whose landlords pay a cess, or levy, to MHADA in exchange for the authority maintaining and eventually redeveloping them. Of the 82 such structures classified as highly dangerous this year, 43 had already been declared unsafe before the 2025 monsoon, yet residents continue to occupy them. In the last three years, 935 cessed buildings, largely in the island city, have been served notices warning of their precarious condition. Every monsoon, same gamble: Why thousands stay in Mumbai's crumbling buildings despite the risk of collapse? Caught in a web of stalled redevelopment projects, legal disputes, absentee landlords and uncertainty over rehabilitation, thousands of residents continue to languish in ageing buildings that authorities say could collapse around them. To leave is safer. To stay may be fatal. But for many tenants, leaving can also mean surrendering the only claim they have to a home they have occupied for generations. "Tenants were given the hope of a way out through Section 79A of the MHADA Act, 1976, which permitted tenants to come up with a redevelopment proposal if the landlord failed to act within the stipulated period," said Mukesh Pende of the Pagdi Ekta Sangh, which advocates for the rights of pagdi tenants. "

Pregnant woman's death, High Court intervention and a government promise: Gujarat tribal village waits for a road nearly 2 years later



Just about two kilometres after turning in from the main road towards the rugged hillside where the village lies, the narrow dirt track shrinks into a winding trail of loose mud and jagged stone curling around barren mountainsides. The deeper one goes into the hills, the vehicles are fewer and even motorcycles cannot ride this path. The final stretch to 32-year-old Kishan Bhal's home can be reached only on foot.

It was along this very mountain path, before dawn on October 1, 2024, that villagers had carried Kishan's pregnant wife, Kavita, on a makeshift cloth stretcher tied to bamboo poles after she developed labour pains. The nearest point where a 108 ambulance could reach was almost five kilometres away. Kavita died before that, but not before bringing to the world a baby girl. A year later, on September 16, 2025, a 36-year-old pregnant woman, Vansi Nayak, was similarly carried on a cloth stretcher for five kilometres till the ambulance, which took her to the local hospital and then the Vadodara SSG hospital where she died.

On one side of the mountain track, crumbling gravel slopes cling to the edge of the hill. On the other hand, there is a steep valley, dotted with mud homes and isolated tribal hamlets. There are no railings, no retaining walls, no drainage channels, no signages; only the tyre marks on the dusty road trace the fragile connection between Turkhedha's interior faliyas (housing cluster) and the outside world. In summer, the trail is harsh and rocky. But villagers say the real fear arrives with the monsoon. Within weeks from now, rainwater will turn the pathway into a slippery stream of mud where even two-wheelers are abandoned midway. The six-km journey to the nearest motorable main road — and onward to Kavant town — becomes uncertain, especially at night or during medical emergencies. Kavita's death triggered outrage across Gujarat and prompted the Gujarat High Court to take suo motu cognisance of The Indian Express report. (Express Photo) Kavita's death triggered outrage across Gujarat and prompted the Gujarat High Court to take suo motu cognisance of The Indian Express report. (Express Photo)

Unkept promise Kavita's tragic death triggered outrage across Gujarat and prompted the Gujarat High Court to take suo motu cognisance of The Indian Express report detailing her death. Soon after, the state government announced "immediate" construction of an eight-kilometre tar road connecting Turkhedha's scattered hamlets at an estimated cost of Rs 13.5 crore. The Roads and Buildings Department approved the project, promising paved roads and protection walls through the mountainous terrain, however, it awaits clearance from the state forest department. Inside Kishan's bamboo-and-mud home today, their baby girl — Priya — toddles near the doorway, reaching toward her older siblings — Veeral (7), Avinash (4) and Ria (2.5). Hanging on the wall above them is a garlanded photograph of Kavita, with the date of her death printed beneath her young face. The children have little memory of their mother. "I have somehow managed these two years with the help of my parents and sister," Kishan says. "But the reality of our lives is that ambulances still cannot enter the interior faliyas." Recalling that night, his voice trembles.

"Kavita experienced labour pain at night. Had it been the daytime, we would have managed. Unfortunately, that night, Ramesh and his pick up tempo were unavailable too. It was impossible to take her on the motorcycle on that path... The neighbours gathered like they always do during emergencies. We tied cloth to bamboo poles and carried her towards the ambulance point across the uneven hills. We never imagined she would die on the way. Barely a kilometre into the walk, she delivered a baby girl and died. It left me numb." Ramesh Bhal is the only Turkhedha resident who owns a tempo and he takes people to the town when he goes to work. But during monsoon, even that ride is a risky affair. Nearly two years later, the

Man dies as concrete plaster falls from 19th floor of high-rise

A day after a 46-year-old resident of a multi-storey society in Greater Noida West was killed after a portion of cement plaster fell on him from a 19th-floor balcony, it has been alleged that the builder, despite being repeatedly informed about the alleged lack of maintenance since 2022, refused to carry out any repair work.

The victim, identified as Vikas Chawla, was a resident of Arihant Ambar society and was riding his motorcycle at the time of the incident, police said, adding that a maintenance manager has been arrested in connection with the case. The sole earning member of his family, Chawla is survived by his parents, wife, and two children — a class 12 student and a 5-year-old son. Amrisha Kumar (40), secretary of Apartment Owners' Association (AOA), Arihant Ambar society, told The Indian Express that the incident occurred around 4 pm on Saturday, when Chawla was exiting the society on his motorcycle to purchase things for his house. "Soon, a piece of plaster fell on him from the 19th floor balcony, causing his motorcycle to lose balance. Subsequently, his head struck the

road remains unbuilt and for the villagers another monsoon without the road feels like another countdown to tragedy. The fears have been deepened following the death of Vansi Nayak. Jayanti Bhal, whose wife Vasanti is the Sarpanch of the village, tells The Indian Express that despite multiple memoranda given to the Chhota Udepur District Collector, the project has not been prioritised. "We have been told that the forest department has not granted permission for the project... But even the forest department needs the road... Until the road is constructed, many women stare at a similar fate as that of Kavita and Vansi..."

Jayanti says there is no school in Turkhedha's faliyas. "The nearest primary school is nearly 10 kilometres away across the hills, forcing families to either send children away to residential hostel schools in Kavant or abandon their education altogether... The road project needs to be expedited. We are surprised that it has not been done even after the Gujarat High Court took suo motu cognisance of the case... We have seen two women die in two consecutive years..." Among villagers, the legal proceedings that followed Kavita's death have also become part of village memory, even if most residents do not fully understand them. Villagers refer to the Gujarat HC taking "suo motu" action — that had briefly raised hopes that the long-awaited road would finally become reality. An old villager says, "We know that the case proceeded because the Court had expressed shock and directed the road to be built as soon as possible... But the administration has brought us to the doorstep of another monsoon without any execution of the court directive..." Kishan, who is planning to enrol Veeral in a residential school in Kavant this year, agrees, "Having lost my wife, I can only hope no other family and children have to go through this. Sometimes I think if my children were older they would have felt more pain than they do now... because they have no memory of their mother to feel the pain that I feel. I am concentrating on ensuring they are sent to school as the time comes..." Officials of the District R&B department, who spoke to this newspaper on conditions of anonymity, said that a clubbed proposal to build seven rural roads connecting different remote tribal hamlets in Kavant is currently awaiting final forest and revenue clearance. According to officials associated with the project, the proposed roads will be constructed from the available grants under the Mukhya Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana's Tribal grants head. An official told this newspaper, "All seven road alignments pass through forest land, requiring a multi-stage approval process involving both the Forest and Revenue Departments. Together, the projects require more than 15 hectares of land. Under the process, the Revenue Department of the state government must first identify and allot equivalent land for the forest department... The R&B department has already submitted its request, and the proposal is currently pending final approval at the state government level..."

Officials added that the forest department has also made simultaneous applications through the Centre's Parivesh portal (Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub) — the online system used for forest and environmental approvals. "Because the total land requirement exceeds 15 hectares, the proposal has been escalated beyond the state level for approval by higher forest authorities... The Forest Department has completed its part and forwarded the proposal for approval. Once we receive in-principle approval, the required charges will be paid and permission to begin work will be granted," an official said. The process also involves payment to the Revenue Department based on jantri rates — the government valuation of land — apart from separate compensatory charges payable to the Forest Department. The official added that about two kilometres out of the 8 kilometre stretch of Turkhedha's faliyas were constructed earlier last year. This stretch is the entry point of Handlabari faliya while the remaining 6.8 kilometre stretch from Baskariya faliya — the farthest — as well as Girmatiya Amba faliya is yet to be constructed. "The dusty trail was widened when the work began to construct the Handlabari faliya road... However, the 4m-wide dusty trail will be a challenge in the monsoon... When constructed, the road will be 3.75 meters wide," the official said.

The other inaccessible villages, which are also awaiting approval to proceed with constructing roads to connect to the main road, include a 4.5-km stretch from Kotbi Savda faliya of Turkhedha — where the primary school lies and a 4.9-km road from Hafeshwar Mahudbari faliya as well as two roads in Amba Dungan area — from Manukla faliya and Mathamahuda faliya. Two other roads in Kharsra-Jally faliya as well as Kelbari faliya are of 2.4km and 1.5 km, respectively. The official added that the hilly terrain of the region has meant that the cost escalation has been factored in, especially since the capacity of the vehicles deployed for material transportation can only carry half the quantity of the raw materials due to the tough terrain. "During the small patches that we constructed, we realised that a vehicle that has a capacity to carry 28 tonnes of raw material was only able to carry 14 tonnes..." the official said. In reply to an unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel stated that Gujarat stood at the fifth position in the country for progress made in declining Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR).

exhaust area of a nearby wall. He was rushed to a hospital here he was declared dead," Kumar said. Raising concern over the structural integrity of the buildings, Kumar said, "Since Noida Extension was developed in 2013, apartments were built in the area at a rapid pace. A 3BHK flat in this society now costs around 1.4 crores. By October 2022 plaster had started falling from balconies and other parts of the buildings in the society," he added. According to Kumar, possession of the flats took place in 2019, and currently 625 out of 628 flats are occupied. "The flats were handed over to the owners on time, and the builder eventually started repair work. However, the work was later stopped," he said. He claimed that in April 2023, the builder had given a written assurance in an agreement that repair and painting work would be carried out. "Later, the builder left and the society was transferred to the AOA, but before that he had promised to complete the repair works. But when he failed, we approached the Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (REFA) and the case went through several hearings," he said.

A Delhi neighbourhood called Hauz Rani: What changes when a city grows



There is something about the way Mohammad observes the action unfolding beyond the police tape that reminds you of Peepili Live, the 2010 satire on the media circus that typically follows big news events. In front of charred buildings are multiple TV reporters talking into cameras, with OB vans just out of sight. They are shrill in their demands for accountability, for the arrest and prosecution of Lavkesh Bajaj, the proprietor of Flourish, the bread and breakfast facility in Delhi's Hauz Rani neighbourhood where at least 21 people died on June 3 in one of the worst fire incidents in the national Capital.

"Dekhbe dada (Brother, you will see), in a day or two, things will go back to normal... the government will make a noise for a bit, but there are just too many people who need a place to stay. Where will they all go?" says Mohammad, who doesn't want his full name revealed. In his mid-30s, he is both a local and an outsider to Hauz Rani. From West Bengal, he has lived and worked in the neighbourhood as an odd-job man for over two decades. As he takes a deep sip of his chai, you can sense an almost sardonic sense of resignation in him. He speaks of both the fire and the fact that he has had to change homes multiple times because of rising rents and the political conversations around Bengali Muslims with the same detachment, even humour. The tragedy is on everyone's lips in the few square kilometres where the layers of Delhi — in all their beauty, complexity and sadness — sit together.

Hauz Rani is one of Delhi's several urban villages, 'Lal Dora' colonies that sit uncomfortably between the realities of a burgeoning demand for land and space, and municipal laws and rules. In the days after the yellow tape at the end of the lane is removed, the neighbourhood, with all its fault lines and sharp edges, will be back. The broken sewage lines, the buildings that jostle for space, the tangled electricity wires that pretend to be the sky — all of which come up when the city, or a part of it, grows and no one has time to plan for it. Hauz Rani could be any urban neighbourhood in India: in the headlines for the fire, and then forgotten as residents return to living with the conditions that made it possible.

'They all need a place to stay' Hauz Rani's origins are almost mythical: About 800 years ago, it was a haveli or bath house for a queen forgotten to history, and a village emerged around it. Over years, post-Independence, the agricultural land was acquired by the government, while the residential areas were not.

A DDA sports complex is a street away, and upper-middle-class colonies such as Press Enclave, Ekta Apartments and Golf View Apartments are across the road, in Saket. In recent years, the massive Saket malls and the Max Super Speciality Hospital have made the difference between the two sides of the street all the more stark. The hotel that burnt down was once a Khadi Bhandar, where people bought clothes and other trinkets. The basement, where the fire broke out, was a photocopy shop that serviced the neighbourhood. "It's with the expansion of Max Hospital that construction exploded in Hauz Rani," says Rinku Awasthi, owner of Rinku Beauty Parlour, about 30 metres from the site of the fire. For much of the three decades that she has run her establishment, "there was a connection between the Saket colonies and our lane. Many of my clients came from there." But as Hauz Rani became more diverse, it also became more closed off. "As more and more Nigerians, Somalis and people from Central Asia came to get treatment at Max, people here began opening guest houses and building extra floors. But then, it got crowded and my older clients from Saket don't come any more. There were more barricades, less municipal attention as well. Buildings grew, but sewer lines didn't. The point is, the hospital expanded, but no one planned for the extra people that would bring... they all need a place to stay, don't they?" says Awasthi.

The demands for accountability, for heads to roll, are well taken by those in Hauz Rani, who are shaken by the fire and the deaths many of them witnessed first-hand. But there is also an undercurrent of fear. Sharib, a carpenter's apprentice, puts it bluntly: "Delhi's home minister has said shut all hotels that don't have permission... Next, they will come after us, some of us more than others. Who are the people who work here, or even the people who died? Workers, people who have come from far away for medical treatment and can't afford fancy hotels? If there hadn't been the fire, no one would care about these hotels... Do you think the government didn't know about this before?" Sharib's questions do not have easy answers. After those responsible for this fire are held accountable, what will it take to ensure that the un-

derlying problems are fixed?

The neighbourhood, its twin "There is a symbiotic relationship between the planned and unplanned in our cities," says Amita Baviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology & Anthropology at Ashoka University. "For every Saket, there is a Hauz Rani; for Delhi University, there's Mukherjee Nagar; for JNU and the middle-class colonies around it, Katwaria Sarai, etc... The 'legal' part of the city has an 'illegal' evil twin where the service class stays. Often, the older areas of Delhi, the villages, are repurposed to meet this need."

Onyinye, 23, is reluctant at first to talk about the conditions in Hauz Rani and neighbouring Khirki village, as are many of his compatriots from Nigeria who are sitting at a tea shop opposite Max Hospital's East Wing. He opens up, finally, when the phrase "medical tourist" comes up. He detests it. "I am not a tourist, nor an immigrant. We are here because my mother's disease could not be treated back home, and we cannot afford to go to the West." He has been staying in a hotel much like the one that went up in flames because "that's where our agent suggested". He shudders visibly at the thought that he could just as easily have been a guest at Flourish B&B, that he likely passed some of the dead in the hospital corridors or sat next to them at a restaurant. "We are paying for medical treatment and need to be close to the hospital. What choice do we have? It's not like they are giving us rooms for free."

Hotels are not the only cogs in this new economy. The only shop open in the otherwise shuttered lane where Flourish B&B stood is Priya Chemist. M Shopan, a customer, recalls how he was woken up by his son and had rushed out as the fire began to roar. He was staying at Lemon Green Hotel next door. In town from Dhaka to get treatment for a heart ailment at Max, he is stocking up on the medicines. His face wrinkles as he swipes his card for Rs 43,302. "It's still cheaper than going outside South Asia," he remarks. The hotel he stayed at was "decent enough" for Rs 3,500 a night, and only slightly above budget, and there were other Bangladeshis in the area for treatment. At 64, Shailendra Tilak has seen many customers pause at their medical bills in his 47 years behind the counter. He assures him of the quality of the medicines. "There's a lot that has changed over the last few years," Tilak says. "My old customers from Saket still come here, and I deliver medicines home for many of them. More and more, though, people are ordering regular medicines online, searching for the cheapest deal from apps. The overflow from Max has helped make up the shortfall."

The severed relationship with "across the road" is a refrain heard often from shopkeepers and workers across Hauz Rani. "There was a time when so much of our lives were there, in Hauz Rani," recalls Nikhil Deshpande, a 46-year-old filmmaker who grew up in Press Enclave and moved back just before the pandemic. "The small gate was open, and before getting on the school bus, we would grab a chocolate from the local store. Now, Press Enclave has only one gate that opens onto the main road; the rest were gradually closed." Menaka Neotia, Nikhil's wife, who works in conflict management, remembers the difference between when the couple lived in Hauz Rani for four years up to 2018, and now. "The hotel that caught fire is at the same distance from here as our old front door. But if I were there, I know I would have rushed down to see what happened, to check in with Mahadev and his son Rahul, whom I chatted with every day as I bought vegetables. Here in Saket, my privilege means I can be in a bubble."

That bubble, though, may well be an illusion. "The existence of places like Hauz Rani, or Saidulajab abutting Saket, where six people were killed in a building collapse on May 30, is a structural necessity in a city like Delhi," says Ekta Chauhan, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Art and Architecture and author of Sheher Mein Gaon.

"What we need, however, is a larger conversation about how these spaces are so essential to the city... The expanded homes, small eateries and hotels serve a growing working and service class population that makes the malls, hospitals and posh homes run." On the other hand, she says, "if we just continue construction as is happening right now, then you're putting safety at risk... that's the dilemma." The solution, if there can be one, must be radical, according to architect and urban planner Ashok Lall. "The imagination of Delhi, in Masterplan after Masterplan, has been of a middle-class city, with no thought to a growing population that does not belong to this section." "What has made matters worse in the last few years is a government and planning mindset that sees land as an asset through which the city can enrich itself. The value of the land is determined by how much you can build on it, and the taxes on the increased value make the city's income go up. But this has left half the population behind." What's needed, according to Lall, is to view land as a lever for development. "Developmental planning, like in Singapore or Amsterdam," could be the answer, "where the state plays a greater role in determining value and allocating space for affordable housing in a manner that people don't have to choose between location and safety and environment."

The entertainer who lost the script



From writing history to the world etching his legacy in stone, it has all happened quite quickly for Suryakumar Yadav. Less than three months after leading India to its second successive T20 World Cup triumph, he is poised to lose his captaincy and also place in the side he led to the ICC title. So how will Indian cricket remember only the fourth men's team captain in its history to lift an ICC trophy?

In the pantheon of India's World Cup-winning captains—Kapil Dev, MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma among them—Suryakumar easily is the least charismatic and lacks the gravitas that the legends around him exude. As a batsman though, he is one of a kind. A daring T20 innovator, he explored the areas on the cricket field that no other player in this land of world class batsmen ventured into. Is this the true synopsis of the Suryakumar story? Not really. There are a few firsts that thankfully no one can match. At the dramatically eventful Asia Cup last year, he refused to shake hands with the rival captain at the toss, avoided post-match pleasantries and turned the end of the tournament award ceremony into a farce by refusing to receive the trophy. Pakistan's captain Salman Agha, right, walks past India's captain Suryakumar Yadav after the coin toss ahead of the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025. (AP Photo) Pakistan's captain Salman Agha, right, walks past India's captain Suryakumar Yadav after the coin toss ahead of the Asia Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025. (AP Photo)

Suryakumar's actions in that game against Pakistan, makes him a path-breaker — a disruptor who unabashedly mixed sports and politics. India, under Suryakumar, lacked the nuance, grace and maturity that sports persons carry to the field when thrown in a difficult situation.

Asia Cup happened with tensions on the Indo-Pak border, Operation Sindoor still fresh in the minds of the two nations. This wasn't new, India and Pakistan cricketers in the past have taken the field in times of war. Over the years, players from both sides haven't allowed political acrimony to dictate their behaviour on field. Regardless of the outcome of the game or the importance of the moment, they have shook hands, hugged after games and even joked while bunched together at the award ceremony. Google the viral video of Virat Kohli and Yuvraj Singh laughing their guts out listening to a very animated Shoaib Malik after the Champions Trophy final in 2017. From those endearing frames it was impossible to fathom which team had won the game. It was not so at the Asia Cup, where Suryakumar would make a few disparaging comments about the losing side and also

RBI has held rate, tries to stem exodus of capital

The Monetary Policy Committee's second bi-monthly meeting for the year unfolded in line with our expectations, with a unanimous status quo on the policy rates and stance. The tone of the policy document was expectedly hawkish, amid uncertainty owing to the West Asia conflict, the potential El Niño development, and sub-par monsoons.

While the committee pared its real GDP growth projection for FY2027 by 30 bps to 6.6 per cent from 6.9 per cent in the April policy, the commentary around growth outcomes was fairly benign. This stems from expectations of a continued momentum in urban consumption, investment activity, and services exports, and the impact of the government's programmes to mitigate the effect of the sub-par monsoon on rural demand and agricultural activity. The quarterly growth trajectory for FY2027 has been lowered, although unevenly, with a 20-40 basis points cut in the projections for the first and second quarter, and a 40-50 basis points cut in those for the third and fourth quarters. The MPC expects GDP growth to lie in a narrow range between 6.3 and 6.8 per cent.

We are somewhat less sanguine, particularly for the first half of this year. Elevated energy prices and heightened uncertainty around the duration of the conflict could compress corporate profitability and investment demand. This, along with higher inflation, could also dampen consumer sentiments. Besides, the weak monsoon forecast for 2026 has dulled the agricultural outlook and rural demand prospects, although the distribution of rainfall remains key. Moreover, a modest fiscal slippage following the West Asia conflict could pare the government's discretionary spending, including that on capex. Assuming an average crude oil price of \$95 per barrel in FY2027, ICRA projects the GDP growth at 6.2 per cent. We expect the GDP growth to slump to sub-6 per cent in the first half, before recovering in the second half of the year, to around the levels projected by the MPC in the fourth quarter.

Simultaneously, the MPC has raised its CPI inflation projection for FY2027 by 50 bps to 5.1 per cent from 4.6 per cent earlier, amidst a sharp 70 bps hike in the forecasts for the second, third and fourth quarters. The core inflation forecast has been raised by a milder 30 bps to 4.7 per cent. It has stressed that inflation risks remain tilted to the upside owing to the sub-par monsoon and global supply-chain risks. The committee's CPI inflation projections are largely in line with our estimates. We concur with the upside risks and remain particularly concerned around the generalisation of food and fuel price pressures to the rest of the CPI basket. Interestingly, unlike the usual trend of balanced risks around its projections in the past, the MPC placed upside risks to inflation and downside risks to growth for the second consecutive policy review, with the outlook being mired by unpredictable nature of the conflict, the sustained global commodity price shock and supply disruptions as well as deficient rainfall in the southwest monsoon season. Unlike us, some market participants had argued for an early rate hike on account of two factors. First, the upward revision in the

take a stab at cricket's most storied rivalry. It had started with a modest query from a Pakistan journalist that had no mention of the rivalry. It was after India's second win over their arch rivals in the tournament.

Reporter: Do you think that Pakistan competed better this time?

Suryakumar: I want to say one thing: You should stop asking this question about rivalry. If two teams play 15 to 20 matches and it is 7-7 or 8-7 and they are playing good cricket then it is called a rivalry. If it is 10-1, or whatever it is ... it is no longer a rivalry. Those audacious last five words would have sunk the hearts of fans who relish cricket contests with a past and fight. Not to mention the TV broadcasters who in Suryakumar's words heard the last wailing quack of their golden goose. In sports, responsible captains don't make sweeping statements or indulge in one upmanship. That's what juvenile fans do.

Those audacious last five words from Suryakumar about the India-Pakistan rivalry would have sunk the hearts of fans who relish cricket contests with a past and fight. Not to mention the TV broadcasters who in Suryakumar's words heard the last wailing quack of their golden goose. (ANI Photo) Those audacious last five words from Suryakumar about the India-Pakistan rivalry would have sunk the hearts of fans who relish cricket contests with a past and fight. Not to mention the TV broadcasters who in Suryakumar's words heard the last wailing quack of their golden goose. (ANI Photo) Suryakumar never came across as someone known to say anything remotely hurtful or controversial. His teammates and reporters who have covered him since his junior days see him as an affable man. A die-hard fan of goofy Bollywood comedies, he has a movie dialogue for every occasion. He was into funny retorts, never ugly rebukes.

It was this Suryakumar that had taken the 2022 World T20 in Australia by storm. Cricket wasn't ready for a batsman who went down on one knee and swept a 145 kph ball for a six over square leg. He had the ramp stroke and also the reverse ramp. Suryakumar could also use his hands like the arm of a mechanized excavator — JCB to the world — to lob the ball behind his head, over the wicket-keeper and into the stands. He was a riot.

Growing up, Suryakumar was a classical batsman groomed on the Mumbai maidans under strict coaches. In the T20 era, he would dismantle his game to find new scoring zones. Surya, in his prime, was not an art film doing festival circuits, he was an all-out entertainer that ran to packed houses. The fans loved him for he reminded them of their street cricket days and the strokes they dreamt of playing but could never pull off. Runs put him in captaincy contention. He got lucky and got a lucky break. He was put in charge of a settled team that had found a winning formula. Captain Rohit Sharma had given the team a template that really suited them. The all-aggressive batting approach — falling wickets was no reason to slow down — worked wonders. The proven match winners — Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakaravathy — too were the trusted fire-fighters in the bowling department. Though Surya should get credit for marshalling and managing the champion side, it was this that helped him lift the World T20 Trophy despite his long run slump. On that magical March night in Ahmedabad, Suryakumar thought his long loss of form would be forgotten by those celebrating the historic win. At the post-win media conference, he had dared to dream. He spoke about the Olympic gold at Los Angeles 2028 and success at the World T20 after that.



CPI inflation trajectory has compressed the real policy rate, fanning arguments around the need for immediate rate hikes. However, the paring of growth projections justifies a lower real policy rate, at least in the immediate term, as inflation projections remain below the upper bound of the MPC's target range of 2-6 per cent. In our view, any premature policy tightening would have only exacerbated the weakness in growth outcomes.

Nevertheless, the next move on rates is likely to be a hike, although its timing will depend on how geopolitical and macro developments, including the severity of El Niño, transmit to a generalisation of inflationary pressures. We believe that the October and December 2026 policy meetings will be live for potential rate hike(s), after there is some clarity on the monsoon impact. In addition to the compression in the real policy rate, the weakness in the rupee was cited as a reason for bringing forward rate hikes. The surge in energy prices in the aftermath of the West Asia crisis will undoubtedly enlarge India's current account deficit (CAD) materially. We project it to more than double to around 2 per cent of GDP in FY2027 from the 0.9 per cent expected in FY2026. While this does not seem large, financing deficits of sub-1 per cent of GDP in the past two years posed a challenge, amid a drying up of capital flows, which has brought the USD/INR pair under pressure.

As anticipated, the MPC acted within its flexible inflation-targeting framework mandate, and appropriately kept the repo rate unchanged, despite the weakness in the rupee. But, alongside, the RBI governor made several announcements to attract capital flows, in line with our expectations that the RBI and not the MPC would address the issues surrounding the currency.

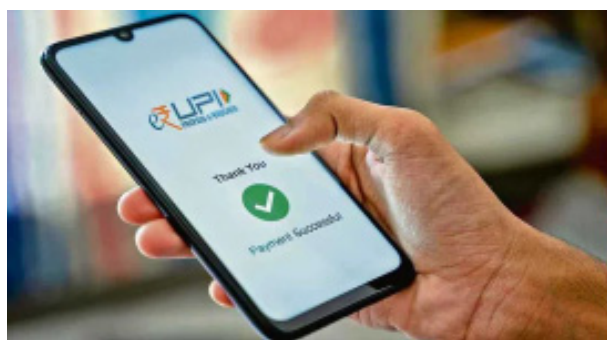
The announcements made by the RBI are aimed at incentivising more foreign capital inflows, especially in government securities (G-secs). With the Govt exempting foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from capital gains tax on investments made in G-secs, the RBI also made a coordinated move, expanding the list of specified securities under the fully accessible route (FAR). It also removed various limits for FPIs under the general route. These moves are likely to boost demand for G-secs, auguring favourably for bond yields, given the risks from an expected fiscal slippage.

UPI transactions rise 24 pc YoY to 23.2 billion in May; value nears Rs 30 lakh crore

Mumbai: India's digital payments ecosystem witnessed continued growth, with Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transaction volumes rising 24 per cent year-on-year to 23.20 billion and transaction value nearing the Rs 30 lakh crore mark in May, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Monday.

According to NPCI, UPI transaction value stood at Rs 29.90 lakh crore during the month. On a year-on-year basis, transaction value rose 19 per cent. On an average basis, UPI processed around 748 million transactions daily in May, with average daily transaction value standing at about Rs 96,465 crore.

However, on a month-on-month basis, UPI transaction volumes rose around 3.8 per cent from April, while transaction value increased nearly 3 per cent. Apart from that, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) transactions stood at 358 million in May. Meanwhile, Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS) transactions reached 88 million in May. In April, digital payment transactions increased 25 per cent year-on-year to reach 22.35 billion,



with transactions worth Rs 29.03 lakh crore in terms of value, which marked a 21 per cent annual growth. On a daily basis, the average number of transactions saw a notable increase to 745 million in the month of April (from 730 million in March). Notably, UPI is now live in more than eight countries, including the UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France,

Nikhil Advani open to Shah Rukh Khan-Saif Ali Khan romance in Kal Ho Naa Ho remake



More than 20 years after making his directorial debut with Kal Ho Naa Ho, filmmaker Nikhil Advani believes parts of the film would be viewed very differently by today's audiences. Advani, who has also directed films such as Salaam-e-Ishq, D-Day and Batla House, said he would not be able to "get away" with the film's ending if it were made today. He also suggested that a contemporary remake could explore a romantic relationship between its male leads, Aman and Rohit. Speaking about changing social attitudes, Advani said younger viewers often interpret Kal Ho Naa Ho differently from audiences who watched it upon release in 2003. The filmmaker recalled that his own daughter was uncomfortable with the way the film treated Kantaben's homophobic assumptions about Aman and Rohit's relationship as a running joke. "It was a bromance," Advani told Mid-day while talking about the dynamic between Aman and Rohit, portrayed by Shah Rukh Khan and Saif Ali Khan. "I will never be able to get away with that ending."

He added that, in his mind, the story effectively ended when the two men made a pact with each other, even though the narrative ultimately centred on Naina, played by Preity Zinta. He said, "The film ended for me when Aman and Rohit made a pact with each other. That pact involved a woman, and that woman was standing outside in the corridor and today most girls wonder why the hell was she standing outside when those two are talking

the whole shit." Advani acknowledged that changing social attitudes have altered how viewers interpret the film and its relationships. "I will never be able to get away with that kind of ending of Kal Ho Naa Ho ever again," he added. The filmmaker further said that if Kal Ho Naa Ho were remade now, it would be interesting to explore the possibility of a romance between Aman and Rohit. "If we were to remake Kal Ho Naa Ho today, it would be interesting to explore that (romance between Aman and Rohit)," he said.

When Nikhil Advani called Kal Ho Naa Ho 'director-proof'

Earlier, in a conversation with Digital Commentary, Nikhil Advani had opened up about the making of Kal Ho Naa Ho and credited writer-producer Karan Johar for the film's success. The filmmaker said the script was so detailed and well-written that it was "director-proof," leaving him largely responsible for the technical execution of the project. "I read somewhere that Karan's greatest regret is that he did not direct Kal Ho Naa Ho. But that's not true because in my opinion, I think the script was director proof. Like some writers say that no matter who directs it, it would have been what it was. It was director-proof. Everything was written in it," he shared. Advani said several memorable moments from the film, including its comedy tracks and emotional beats, were already present in Johar's screenplay. "Karan is an incredible dialogue writer. The emotions in the second half... Jaya ji's emotion, the revelation that Shah Rukh is dying at the interval point. It was director-proof," he said. The director added that his primary contribution came through the film's visual and technical treatment. "I was the one who was doing things like split screen, shot breakdown, the breaking of the fourth wall... I don't remember if I showed something to Karan or he showed me something and we said fantastic," he recalled. Released in 2003, Kal Ho Naa Ho marked Advani's first feature film as director. Produced by Karan Johar under Dharma Productions, the film followed Naina's journey as she falls in love with the terminally ill Aman, while Rohit harbours feelings for her.

Michael Jackson The Verdict: A reality check for fans after \$850-mn biopic whitewash

Michael Jackson The Verdict: Two months ago, Michael Jackson's biopic released in theatres and it was a massive success. Shockingly, everyone around the world, or at least those who helped in its box office collections of \$850 million, chose to ignore that the man at the center of this film was accused of sexually abusing young boys. A strange kind of whitewashing of Michael Jackson's reputation has been in the works ever since he died in 2009, and it is well known that his estate has been running the show. How else would you explain that the estate went from being in a debt of \$450 million at the time of his death, to now being a \$3.5 billion empire? On Wednesday, June 3, Netflix released the three-part documentary series Michael Jackson The Verdict, which focuses on the 2003 trial where Jackson was accused of molesting a 13-year-old boy, Gavin Arvizo, on his Neverland ranch.

It is strange that since Michael Jackson's death, his popularity has increased and his fan army, with the support of his estate, has made it their life's mission that Michael was innocent. "Nothing ever happened," we are told via some of the old news footage as journalist Diane Dimond recalls that this was like a "mantra" that was repeatedly said by his supporters – even when Michael admitted that he was sharing his bed with pre-pubescent boys. This documentary series challenges the currently popular notion of portraying Michael as the good guy who was wronged, and examines the facts that were presented in court and discussed in the media at the time. Even though, it says, that Michael was pronounced 'not guilty' in 2005, there is enough room to talk about hard facts as it heavily implies that the prosecution did a shoddy job of presenting their case, which gave enough opportunity to the hawk-like team of Jackson's lawyers to grill teenage boys, and cast enough doubt on their harrowing stories. His lawyers, along with him, are clearly the villains here who could poke holes in anyone's story and take complete advantage of the justice system so it comes out in their favour. Michael Jackson The Verdict also discusses Jordan Chandler, the 13-year-old who first accused Michael of inappropriate behaviour, and informs the viewers why Michael did not face a trial then. Not just him, many other young boys' stories are also discussed, and there's a constant hint at the power imbalance between Michael and those boys, and their families. Credible talking heads, and news footage of the coverage of the trial is aptly used to paint a picture of why Michael ultimately managed to come out as 'not guilty', and without mincing words, we are told that the lawyers were not prepared enough in presenting the victims' cases, thus complicating the case. Wade Robson, who later opened up about his abuse at Neverland in the documentary



Leaving Neverland, was still Michael's pawn back then and as you see him as a child, it sends a chill down your spine. It is very openly suggested that the stardom of Michael Jackson was the biggest factor in making the jury decide in his favour as two of the jurors appear here, and it is obvious that one of them was so awed by the presence of Michael that to date, she can't forget how Michael looked at her, and nodded at her with a "thank you". Through the trial in 2003, which ended in 2005, Michael can be seen performing a show for his fans. He slows down his car for the screaming fans and cheers them on as they declare him 'innocent'. He gets on top of his SUV and almost breaks into a dance as he rallies the crowd. It is also very clear here that Michael, like many celebrities, knew that he could hire the best defense attorney money could buy, someone who perhaps looked like a character out of Boston Legal or Suits, and knew how to give a performance so the jury could be in Michael's favour. It is heartbreaking to re-learn how full-grown adults grilled teenage boys about the most scarring incident in their life, and possibly celebrated when they won. Conversations about Michael's race, and how his family saw this as a racist attack on them, are also brought up, but not given enough airtime for everyone involved here knows that this was probably just a defence for them. Michael's music had such an impact on that generation that even when the prosecution played some evidence in the court, the attendees, jury and the lawyers could not help but tap their feet to it. One of the talking heads is a fan who quit her job to be there for his trial and she describes it as her love for him, and in this moment, you know that love for such figures is blind, but what's shocking is that decades later, these fans continue to exist and cheer for him. Michael Jackson The Verdict is truly meant for those who blindly went in for the multi-million-dollar-earning movie and came out cheering for the popstar, as if no famous or successful celebrity has ever been evil behind closed doors.

Yash, wife Radhika buy beachfront property in Alibag for Rs 24 cr: report

Yash is gearing up for two of his most anticipated releases, Toxic and Ramayana. Recently, the actor and his wife, Radhika Pandit, have taken a major step in their personal investments, purchasing premium beachfront land in Alibag, Maharashtra. Property registration documents accessed by real estate consultancy firm Liasas Foras show that the couple bought two adjoining agricultural land parcels in Village Kamath, Taluka Alibag, District Raigad, for Rs 24 crore. The transaction was registered on May 18, 2026, at the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Alibag. According to the documents, the property is located in a strategic coastal pocket of Village Kamath, a micro-market adjacent to Kihim beach. The combined landholding is bounded by a village road on the eastern side and the sea on the western side, while a narrow lane on the northern boundary provides direct access to the beach. The deal includes agricultural land spanning approximately 5,289 square metres (0.5289 hectares) and also comprises a residential structure. The buyers paid Rs 1.44 crore in stamp duty, along with Rs 60,000 in registration fees and Rs 5,200 towards document handling charges. The land has been classified as agricultural under Section 7, with a recorded valuation rate of

Rs 3,750 per square metre. The transaction was executed through attorney Prashant Dileep Hardikar, appointed by both purchasers via separate specific powers of attorney dated May 11, 2026. The sellers in the deal were Naseem Iqbal Halim and Ifat Shafique Ahmadi. Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups is one of Yash's most anticipated action films, which was earlier slated to release alongside Dhurandhar 2 but was later postponed to June 4. The film was postponed again and currently has no confirmed release date. Amid these developments, Yash has remained positive about the project. He recently praised his director Geetu Mohandas, known for Moothon and Liar's Dice, highlighting her distinct cinematic voice and perspective. He told American content creator Sabeen Faheem, "That's the most exciting part. What happens is that when you generally say action films, it's only restricted to male directors. That's been the history in India. A lot of people have done that. A large-scale action film, that too a gangster film with a female gaze, is something which is very new and refreshing." He also spoke about Geetu's influence in shaping the film's sensual and emotional layers, elements that have already sparked discussion since the first look was released earlier this year. He said,

After admitting to fake sexual harassment charges, Shilpa Shinde blames 'paid PR'



Shilpa Shinde, best known for her television show Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain, recently admitted that she made false sexual harassment allegations against producer Sanjay Kohli almost a decade ago when they were in the midst of a serious battle with regard to her contract for the show. Since then, Shilpa is being criticised by many on social media and in response to those criticisms, she blamed "poor approach by paid PR" and said that she does not care what the world has to say about her. Shilpa shared a video on Instagram, alleging that there is a PR campaign in the works against her. "The PR that is going on, and after that, the kind of comments that are coming in... I just want to tell them that you will reap what you sow. What you guys are writing without understanding the situation... You are lying to a person who told the truth," she said.

Shilpa said that she expected this kind of reaction and blamed the viewers, as she added, "The world does not appreciate anything good, especially people like you who make such comments. I didn't need to say anything. I came back to the show after 10 years. I could have said it then, but I didn't. I didn't do it for the show." She again admitted that her accusations were a lie, and no one forced her to say what she did. "It was a lie and no one asked me to lie. I couldn't have lived with that lie. One day, I was going to say it. I didn't do it for money. I left that show and I had left it all behind," she said. Shilpa insisted that since the producers were creating a difficult work atmosphere for her, and were not letting her work anywhere else, she believed she had no other option but to fabricate a lie. "Sorry is a small word now but he (Sanjay) also knows that I didn't have an option back then. I was contemplating suicide at that point," she said. She ended her video by showing the middle finger to the audience as she said, "I am ready to take all the brickbats. It does not matter to me." Her video was accompanied by the caption, "Passing judgment on a single line without watching the entire podcast is a poor approach by paid PR."

After Shilpa's admission on Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiya's podcast, television actor Hina Khan took

Shah Rukh, Salman's films earn over Rs 200 even before release, claims Nikhil Dwivedi

For anyone doubting if the holy trinity of Bollywood – Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Aamir Khan – are showing any signs of slowing down, that doesn't seem to be the case. While Shah Rukh is on a roll again, with blockbusters Pathaan and Jawan in 2023 and Siddharth Anand's action thriller King slated to release in cinemas this Christmas, Aamir and Salman seem to be having a tougher time at the box office. While Aamir's latest release, RS Prasanna's coming-of-age sports dramedy Sitaare Zameen Par did help him bounce back a little from debacles Thugs of Hindostan (2018) and Laal Singh Chaddha (2022), Salman's misfortunes continue with the failure of Sikandar last year and uncertainty over the release of his next, Maatrubhumi. Economics of Khans' films

But irrespective of the recent bumps, all three Khans continue to fuel the film industry purely on the basis of the massive hype their films generate even today, even over 30 years since they made their debut. "On an average, the digital, satellite, and music rights of a film by any of the three Khans – Shah Rukh, Salman or Aamir – is somewhere between Rs 150 crore and Rs 200 crore," claimed actor-turned-producer Nikhil Dwivedi in an interview with Vickey Lalwani. He explained that a large chunk of the budget of any Khan film is recovered from the pre-release business itself. This includes the digital rights sold to a streaming platform, the music sold to music companies, and the satellite rights sold to a television network, in that order. Since none of the three Khans no longer take fixed pay on a film, and share the revenue instead, it considerably reduces the cost of production, a major chunk of which hinges on the A-list star's fees. While the budget of any of the three Khans' films today is much higher, Nikhil spelled out the economics of Prabhu Deva's 2019 hit cop drama Dabaangg 3, on which he was a co-producer along with Salman and his younger brother Arbaaz Khan. "If the digital, satellite, and music rights sale of his film are between Rs 180 crore and Rs 200 crore, and the film's budget is Rs 80 crore to Rs 100 crore, then he obviously doesn't need any money," said Nikhil. "He has all the paraphernalia of a producer. The shooting of his films get done just on the money they have received from the advances. If anyone is producing a film with any of the Khans, then I want to assure you they just want to give you work and a chance to be more

to social media to criticise her accusation. While she did not name Shilpa, her long note was presumably directed towards her. Hina Khan and Shilpa Shinde were fierce rivals on Bigg Boss 11, where Shilpa emerged as the winner. Hina started her note by saying that she does not like to talk about others but was choosing to speak up now as this was "something sensitive, something that affects all of us as a society, especially as women."

Calling the fake accusation "shameful", Hina said she was "shocked beyond words". She said, "Using your sex to malign someone's image in order to win during a conflict is absolutely shameful. And everyone is absolutely right to call it out and demand justice. I am shocked beyond words." She then called the producer the "real victim" in this situation and said that he went through quite an "ordeal" after she made false claims. "As admitted by the female actor, her allegations were not just baseless, they were used to gain advantage to win, to score, to claim, to settle without the utilisation of law," she wrote. Since Shilpa returned to the same show, produced by the same producer, Hina said, "And even after that, the same producer gives the same show to the same person. Another launchpad, another mouthpiece, another relevance, another chance to legitimise her fake claim of sexual assault. What if the actor repeats it? After all, the actor has been given the same show by the one she falsely accused." She ended her note by saying, "I am appalled. The joke is on us."

Pooja Bedi, in a chat with Variety India, also criticised Shilpa and said that she was "betraying the very cause those laws were created to serve." "False accusations not only destroy innocent lives but also make it harder for genuine survivors to be believed. Such misuse of the law is unacceptable and must carry serious consequences," she said.

Previously, Shilpa had admitted, "Today, through this platform, I want to say that it was false. I am confessing this for the first time. After that, we reached a settlement and the payments that were due to me at the time, which we used to receive after three months, were cleared." She added, "What I am saying today is a very big thing. Lying is not easy. A lie is a lie, whether it is small or big. I had told them that if life ever gave me the opportunity, I would confess that it was false. I know people will react after hearing this, but it was false. I am telling the truth today. I am not afraid of anyone."

Why Shilpa Shinde left Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain Shilpa Shinde left the popular show Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain in 2016 amid a lot of controversy. She exited amid contract dispute and alleged non-payment of dues. The producers accused her of unprofessional behaviour and served her a legal notice about the same. Soon after, Shilpa accused producer Sanjay Kohli of sexual harassment. She also claimed that the industry was trying to blacklist her and block her employment elsewhere. The matter eventually ended with the settlement of Shilpa's dues.



popular," he added, claiming that Salman just "gave him a chance to be called a producer" on the threequel. Shah Rukh and Salman's similarities While Nikhil has never worked with Shah Rukh, he was once planning to produce an action thriller with Shah Rukh in 2016, which was being co-produced by his banner Saffron Magicworks and Anirudh Dhoot of Videokon. However, the film never saw light of the day. Nikhil maintains that both Shah Rukh and Salman are very different personally, but strikingly similar when it comes to their professional dealings. "They're very different people. They're poles apart as people, but their core values are the same. If Shah Rukh or Salman commits to someone, then no paperwork is needed. It'll happen. They never misuse anyone's money," said Nikhil. After making his debut as an actor with the 2008 crime drama My Name Is Anthony Gonsalves, Nikhil turned producer with the 2018 buddy comedy Veere Di Wedding, which he bankrolled along with Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Motion Pictures and Anil and Rhea Kapoor's Anil Kapoor Films & Communication Network. After producing money-spinners like Veere Di Wedding and Dabangg 3, Nikhil is now backing films like Vikramaditya Motwane's 2024 cyber thriller CTRL, which released on Netflix India, and Anurag Kashyap's upcoming crime drama Bandar, starring Bobby Deol, which is slated to release in cinemas this Friday on June 5.

Triptii Dimri recalls getting 'beaten quite a lot' while growing up

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Triptii Dimri, whose latest release is the chaotic comedy drama "Maa Behen", took a trip down memory lane and shared amusing anecdotes from her childhood, saying that she got her fair share of beatings while growing up. Triptii recalled her younger days with humour, and said that getting punished by parents was a common experience. Asked if she's had her share of scoldings and 'maar' from parents, Triptii told IANS: "I think everyone has gotten a beating from their parents at some point. I was beaten quite a lot growing up." She added with a laugh: "The day I didn't, I used to get beaten up... I used to go home and someone would say, 'what happened? you seem very happy today'." "Maa Behen" by Suresh Triveni is streaming on Netflix. It also

stars Madhuri Dixit Nene, Dharna Durgaa, and Ravi Kishan in pivotal roles. They are joined by Geetanjali Kulkarni, Arunoday Singh, and Shardul Bhardwaj. At the heart of "Maa Behen" is Rekha, a mother who's already juggling enough until life throws her the ultimate curveball, a dead body in her kitchen. With her two daughters, Jaya, the responsible one, and Sushma, the wild card, this trio must think fast, lie faster, and somehow keep their nosy neighbors from sniffing out the truth. She will next be seen in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit starring Prabhas. The film is scheduled to release next year in March. The shoot for "Spirit" commenced in November 2025. The Mahurat ceremony of the action entertainer was graced by many bigwigs from the entertainment industry.