

PM Modi Holds Bilateral Talks with New Zealand Counterpart Luxon

Auckland, July 10 Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with his New Zealand counterpart, Christopher Luxon, in Auckland on Saturday (local time).

The bilateral discussions were preceded by a ceremonial welcome at the Government House, where Prime Minister Modi was accorded a Guard of Honour.

Later today, the Prime Minister is scheduled to interact with prominent business and sports personalities. Reflecting the strong people-to-people ties between India and New Zealand, the Prime Minister will also address a large gathering of the Indian diaspora, as per the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

On Friday, shortly after arriving in Auckland, PM Modi described his visit as "historic."

In a post on X, he thanked Prime Minister Luxon for the welcome at the airport and highlighted that this is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to New Zealand in four decades.

"Reached Auckland a short while ago. Thankful to Prime Minister Luxon for the welcome at the airport. This visit is historic, being the first Prime Ministerial visit to New Zealand in four decades," he wrote.

Sharing visuals of his arrival, PM Modi expressed optimism regarding his talks with PM Luxon on the bilateral partnership and his upcoming community address.

"Look forward to holding talks with Prime Minister Luxon and discussing the complete range of the India-NZ friendship. I will also be addressing a community programme tomorrow in Auckland," he added.

PM Modi arrived in Auckland on Friday and was greeted by Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, with whom he shared a warm embrace. This visit is taking place at the invitation of Prime Minister Luxon.



Following the signing of a Free Trade Agreement in April this year, this visit is expected to act as a catalyst to generate further momentum in trade and bilateral relations.

The two leaders previously held a bilateral meeting in New Delhi on March 17, 2025, during Prime Minister Luxon's official visit to India.

Before arriving in Auckland, PM Modi concluded a highly successful visit to Australia, where he participated in the third Australia-India Annual Leaders' Summit with his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese.

That visit marked a significant milestone in the two nations' six-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The meeting, hosted in Melbourne, resulted in a landmark suite of agreements focused on reinforcing Indo-Pacific security architecture, securing critical mineral supply chains, and accelerating the transition to clean energy.

Telangana May Have 182 Assembly Seats After Delimitation: Revanth

Nalgonda: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said the number of Assembly constituencies in Telangana could increase to 182 after delimitation and expressed confidence that the Congress would return to power by winning 117 seats. Addressing a Rythu Ashirvada Sabha at Raghunadhapalem in Khammam district, he said the next Assembly elections may not be held in December 2028 but could be conducted in May or June 2029 along with the Lok Sabha polls.

He said the proposed delimitation exercise could raise the number of Assembly seats from 119 to 182 and Lok Sabha seats from 17 to 26. He expressed confidence that the Congress would win 20 Lok Sabha seats.

"I am predicting the outcome 32 months in advance: in the coming Kurukshetra, the Kalvakuntla family will disappear from Telangana's political landscape. I swear by Lord Sitaramachandra Swamy of Bhadrachalam that the Congress will return to power in the next elections," he said.



The Chief Minister criticised the BJP, alleging that it was attempting to secure majority support for passage of a Delimitation Bill in Parliament. He also accused the BRS of misleading people through surveys, questioning their credibility in the absence of an election context.

Referring to the Kaleshwaram project, he alleged that filling Medigadda could endanger downstream areas, including submergence of vil-

lages, and questioned the intent of BRS leaders.

He also referred to internal differences within the BRS and challenged its leaders on their political positions.

Highlighting state government's welfare measures, the Chief Minister said the government had spent ₹1.7 lakh crore on schemes for farmers over the past 36 months, including crop loan waiver, Rythu Bharosa, Rythu Bheema, bonuses on fine rice, free power to agriculture and

compensation for crop losses. He said crop loans worth ₹20,630 crore of over 25 lakh farmers had been waived.

He said the government had continued welfare schemes of the previous administration and maintained that financial constraints would not affect implementation despite inheriting debt. He said beneficiaries of welfare schemes would support the Congress in the next elections and concluded with the slogan "Aur Ek Baar, Congress Sarkar".

High-alcohol medicinal formulations to require licence, prescription

NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The government has tightened regulations to prevent the misuse of medicinal products with high levels of alcohol by withdrawing their exemption from licensing requirements and bringing them under stricter prescription norms.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has amended the Drugs Rules, 1945, removing the exemption available under Schedule K for medical formulations containing high concentrations of ethyl alcohol.

Certain medicinal products, including tinctures of cardamom, ginger and other aromatic preparations, have been exempted from licensing requirements under Schedule K. Some of these formulations contain 80–90 per cent v/v ethyl alcohol, making them vulnerable to misuse for intoxication.

"References were also received from certain State Governments in this regard. To address this concern, the Government has mandated that all formulations containing more than 12 per cent v/v ethyl alcohol in quantities exceeding 30 mL will no longer qualify for the Schedule K exemption. Consequently, such products will be required to obtain licenses under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940," the ministry said.



The amendment also shifts these products under Schedule H1 of the Drugs Rules, 1945, which mandates sale against the prescription of a registered medical practitioner and stricter record-keeping.

The amendment is expected to strengthen regulatory oversight over those medicinal products containing alcohol, ensuring their supply only through the regulated pharmaceutical supply chain.

The ministry said the revised norms would help reduce the possibility of diversion and misuse while ensuring that the medicines remain available for legitimate therapeutic use.

Bharat Goud Appointed Medchal Malkajgiri DCC Official Spokesperson

"Hyderabad, July 10:The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) has appointed Gaddameedi Bharat Goud as the Official Spokesperson of the Medchal Malkajgiri District Congress Committee. The appointment was made by Medchal Malkajgiri District Congress Committee President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav following the directions of TPCC President Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud. The appointment letter was handed over to Mr. Bharat Goud by Quthbullapur Assembly Constituency In-charge Kolan Hanumanth Reddy in the presence of former TPCC General Secretary Narsareddy Bhupathi Reddy. Party leaders expressed confidence that Mr. Bharat Goud would effectively discharge his responsibilities as the district spokesperson and strengthen the party's outreach and communication initiatives in Medchal Malkajgiri district.



Catholic bishops body urges Amit Shah to withdraw Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill

New Delhi, July 10

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) on Friday urged Home Minister Amit Shah to withdraw the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 and the recently notified rules, stressing that both be redrafted after wider consultation with stakeholders.

The CBCI submitted a memorandum to Shah, raising concerns over the proposed FCRA Bill, 2026, religious freedom, the rights of Scheduled Caste (SC) Christians and the humanitarian crisis in Manipur.

The memorandum, signed by CBCI president Cardinal Anthony Poola and CBCI secretary general Archbishop Anil Couto, was handed to Shah when the delegation met him here.

The CBCI expressed concern over the proposed amendments to the FCRA and said some of the proposed provisions could affect charitable institutions that have served poor and vulnerable communities for decades.

The Conference urged the government to withdraw the proposed Amendment Bill and the recently notified Rules. It requested that both be redrafted after wider consultation with stakeholders, a CBCI statement said.

It said any changes to the law should apply only in the future. They should not affect existing rights, legally acquired assets or ongoing charitable work.

It called for independent judicial oversight in FCRA cases. It also sought safeguards before the government can take over or transfer the assets of an institution. The memorandum said there should be a clear distinction between minor procedural lapses and serious offences. It said charitable assets should

continue to be used according to the intentions of donors.

The memorandum also raised concerns over various state freedom of religion Acts. It alleged that there was a continued denial of SC status to Christians and other religious minorities of SC origin under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.

Noting that these matters are pending before the Supreme Court, the CBCI appealed for an early hearing and final judgment.

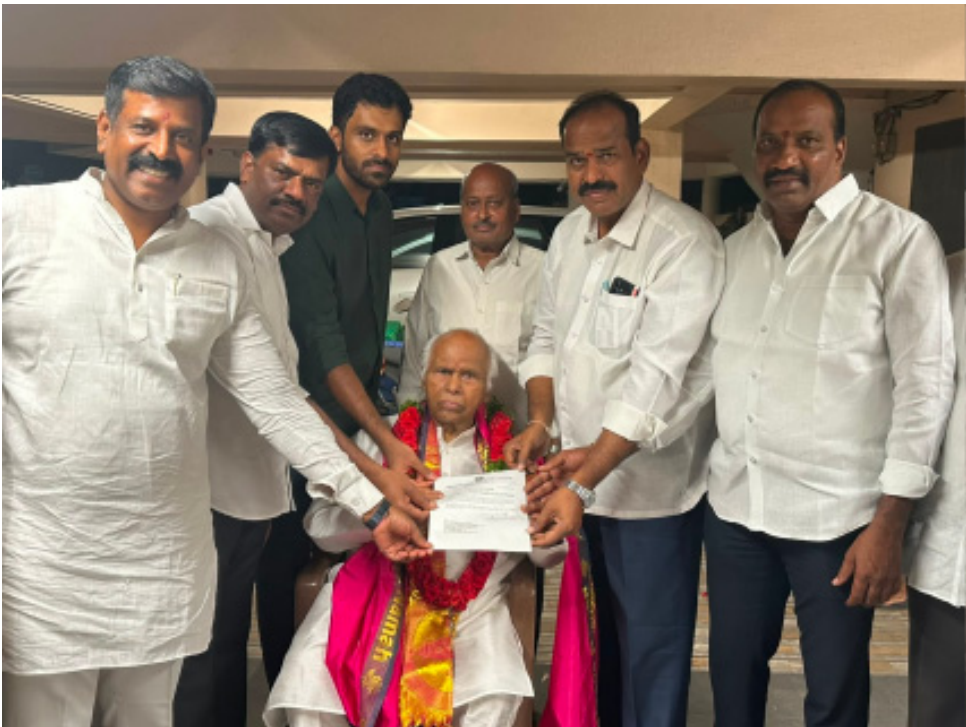
It said the delay continues to affect the dignity, equality and constitutional rights of millions of citizens and creates uncertainty among minority communities.

The CBCI also highlighted the continuing humanitarian crisis in Manipur and said thousands of farming families have lost their livelihoods. Many students have faced disruption to their education, while several families have left the state in search of safety, education and employment, the CBCI said.

The conference appealed to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to take urgent steps to restore lasting peace, communal harmony and normalcy in Manipur. It also reaffirmed the Church's willingness to work with the government in promoting reconciliation, humanitarian assistance and social healing. According to a source, the delegation was told by the home minister that the proposed FCRA amendments should not be viewed as being directed against the Christian community. Shah is learnt to have said that the donations received by Christian organisations under the FCRA is only a fraction of the total contributions, and asked the delegation not to think the proposed law was against Christians.

MOGGULLA RAJI REDDY CONGRATULATES KOMMIDI INDRA REDDY ON APPOINTMENT AS INTUC TELANGANA ORGANISING SECRETARY

“Hyderabad: In a significant development for the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), Shri Kommidi Indra Reddy has been appointed as the Organising Secretary of INTUC Telangana State. The official Appointment Letter was presented today by Dr. G. Sanjeeva Reddy, National President of INTUC. “Speaking on the occasion, Dr. G. Sanjeeva Reddy expressed confidence in Shri Indra Reddy’s leadership and commitment to the labour movement. He urged him to work with dedication towards the welfare of workers, strengthening the organisation, and expanding the reach of INTUC’s principles across Telangana. He further emphasized the importance of playing an active role in addressing workers’ issues and enhancing the organisation’s presence throughout the state. “Shri Moggulla Raji Reddy, INTUC Telangana State Chief Vice President and President of TJEU, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Shri Kommidi Indra Reddy on his appointment. He expressed confidence that the new Organising Secretary would make a valuable contribution to safeguarding workers’ rights and further strengthening INTUC’s organisational structure in Telangana. “The programme was attended by Shri Satyajit Reddy, National Vice President of INTUC and ILO Member; Shri Moggulla Raji Reddy, INTUC Telangana State Chief Vice President and TJEU President; Shri Chandrashekar, State General Secretary; along with several senior leaders, office-bearers, and party workers, who conveyed their best wishes to Shri Kommidi Indra Reddy for a successful tenure.



Colaba sees decade’s wettest July day as heavy rain continues to batter city



As Mumbai reeled under a red alert for two consecutive days, the Colaba observatory of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) witnessed its wettest July day in a decade, as intense spells of rain coupled with gusty winds continued throughout the weekend. The wind speed recorded on Sunday was also more than three times the normal level, leading to more than 150 tree-collapse incidents across Mumbai. The IMD, in its five-day forecast issued on Sunday afternoon, announced an orange alert for Mumbai on Monday (July 6), indicating heavy rainfall to continue. Following this, a yellow alert has been issued for Wednesday. Alongside Mumbai, an orange alert has also been issued for the Thane and Palghar districts for Monday, while the Raigad district has been kept under a red alert till Wednesday. Keeping in mind the rainfall situation, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has announced a holiday for all private and government schools, colleges and universities on Monday. The Thane and Navi Mumbai administrations have also announced a school and college holiday on Monday.

Speaking with the an IMD official said that the rains will continue to batter Mumbai till the middle of next week, as a low-pressure area has developed over Maharashtra. IMD’s data show the Colaba observatory recorded 265.6 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Sunday. Before this, the Colaba observatory had recorded the wettest day in the month on July 1, 2022, when 227.8 mm was recorded in this observatory within a 24-hour span. In comparison, the highest July 24-hour rainfall was 161.4 mm on July 9, 2024, and 86.6 mm on July 23, 2025. Meanwhile, the Santacruz observatory recorded 227.7 mm during the same 24-hour pe-

riod, making it the second-highest 24-hour July rainfall at the station in the last five years. The highest 24-hour rainfall in the past five years was recorded at Santacruz on July 8, 2024, when the observatory recorded 267.9 mm. Furthermore, the BMC’s automated weather system shows that Mumbai’s eastern suburbs recorded 217 mm of rainfall, followed by 194 mm recorded at the island city, while 186 mm was recorded at the western suburbs. The downpour, which came during two consecutive days of red alert, has also pushed the city to the brink of achieving its average rainfall for the entire month of July within just the first five days. The persistent spell of rain since July 1 has rapidly narrowed the gap to the city’s monthly rainfall average. Between July 1 and July 5, Colaba received 695.4 mm, accounting for nearly 94% of its normal July rainfall of 734.1 mm. Santacruz recorded 739.2 mm, or about 86% of its July normal of 855.7 mm. With the IMD issuing an orange alert for Monday and forecasting another round of heavy showers, weather officials said Mumbai is likely to cross its average rainfall for the entire month within the next two to three days. Rainfall intensity is, however, expected to gradually reduce from July 8, when only moderate rain has been forecast.

Rain continued through Sunday as well. In the 12 hours ending 8.30 pm, Colaba recorded 49 mm of rainfall, while Santacruz received 66 mm. Heavy rainfall was not confined to Mumbai alone, with several parts of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) also experiencing intense showers. In the 24 hours ending 8.30 pm on Sunday, Navi Mumbai recorded 210.76 mm of rainfall, Thane received 184.66 mm, Vasai logged 179 mm, while Palghar topped the region with 273 mm. Alongside heavy rain, Mumbai also recorded gusty winds throughout the day ranging between 72.4 km/h and 77 km/h – which was more than three times its normal range. In a significant boost to Mumbai’s water reserves, the average water stock in all the seven lakes have jumped by 4 percent-age points in the last 24-hours. According to the BMC’s data, Mumbai’s water stock on Sunday stood at 13.19 per cent or 1.9 lakh million litres against its total capacity of 14.47 lakh million litres. In contrast, the water stock in the lakes stood at 54.27 per cent on July 5, 2025. BMC’s data shows that in the last 24 hours, the highest rainfall was recorded in the catchment areas of Tulsi lake at 321 mm, followed by 275 mm of rainfall recorded at the catchment area of Vihar Lake, 92 mm at Tansa Lake,

Mumbai chawl collapse: Mother, children among dead, Mayor says shanty ‘illegal’

Mumbai rain Mumbai Chawl Collapse The deaths in Mankhurd have taken the city’s death count this monsoon to 10 in less than a week. Late on Sunday, a four-storeyed shanty came crashing down on another at Janata Nagar in Mumbai’s Mankhurd, killing six persons, five of them children, taking the death count in this Mumbai monsoon to 10. According to preliminary information, the dead in Mankhurd include a mother, her children, as well as children from a neighbouring structure who came over to stay at their residence. The victims have been identified as Aliya (7), Muskan (14), Nihal (6), Nabiya (2), Munaf (7), and Soni (32). Officials from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said that while Munaf was taken to Ghatkopar’s Rajawadi hospital, the other five were taken to Shatabdi hospital, where they were declared dead. A passerby, who was trapped in the debris when the shanties collapsed, was grievously injured. He has been identified as Rehan Ali (24), and healthcare staff said his condition is normal now.

The incident was reported at 8.30 pm. The fire department launched a rescue operation and a team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) joined in. The NDRF finished its operation around 3.20 am and officials said no other person was found trapped in the debris. Speaking to the media, Mumbai Mayor, Ritu Tawde, said the shanty that collapsed was “completely illegal” and operated as a godown. “The structure had three storeys built one upon another and was completely illegal. It functioned as a godown, and was completely stacked with goods. When the building collapsed, the goods came crashing on the neighbouring building where a woman, her children and some kids from the



neighbourhood were staying,” said Ritu Tawde. According to sources, the shanties were located on government land, and the residents had been issued multiple notices, asking them to vacate.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has expressed grief over the deaths and announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh each for the families of the dead. Mumbai rain Mumbai chawl collapse Mumbai monsoon A train moves past a waterlogged underpass amid heavy monsoon rains, at Mumbai’s Andheri. The deaths in Mankhurd have taken the city’s death count this monsoon to 10 in less than a week. Earlier on Sunday, a 63-year-old man died after a tree branch fell on him in Kurla. An 18-year-old boy died after a tree branch fell on him in Aarey on Saturday night. Earlier this week, an 11-year-old boy died after a tree crushed a school bus in Chembur on June 30, and a 55-year-old man died after falling into an open manhole in Sakinaka on July 2. Girish Mahajan, Maharashtra State Disaster Management Minister, has appealed to citizens to remain indoors as heavy rain and strong winds lash Mumbai.

‘No child has been missed, right?’: Inside campaign after polio virus found in Ghaziabad sewage

At 11 on a Thursday morning, Rajkumari balances a blue vaccine cold box in one hand and a pink file in the other as she knocks on an iron gate in Vijay Nagar, a densely packed neighbourhood in Ghaziabad. A little girl leans out from a second-floor window. “Is there a small child in the house?” Rajkumari calls. Moments later, a young mother emerges carrying her five-month-old daughter. Rajkumari asks the baby’s name, age and father’s name, recording each answer in her register. Beside her, an ASHA worker gently tilts the infant’s head back. Two drops of polio vaccine land on her tongue. The baby bursts into tears. Before leaving, Rajkumari pauses. “No child has been missed, right?” she asks. “Tell me honestly.” The team moves on. They weave through narrow lanes lined with closely packed houses. Some doors stay shut despite repeated knocks. Others are locked, their occupants away at work. Each missed house is marked in Rajkumari’s register for another visit. A few hundred metres away, Vijay Nagar’s concrete homes give way to a cluster of tin-roofed shelters beneath an under-construction apartment tower. Families from Bihar and nearby districts of Uttar Pradesh have made homes here, many of the men working at construction sites while the women care for children or work as domestic helpers. Stepping past piles of garbage and algae-covered drains, Rajkumari and Manisha stop at every shack. “Is there a child under five?” When Shyam, a 32-year-old carpenter from Darbhanga, spots the health workers, he calls after his young son before the boy disappears into the maze of homes. “Isko bhi pila do (Give him the drops too),” he says, scooping him into his arms. Shyam says vaccination campaigns were a familiar part of life in his village. “I moved here four years ago, but the anganwadi workers would set up booths at government schools back home,” he says. “Many people are afraid. They don’t know what these drops are for. But I know they’re important.” Only later does the reason for Rajkumari’s persistence become clear. Every household now gets the same question more than once. If someone says there are no children inside, she asks again before

moving on. The reason lies in a sewage sample collected from Vijay Nagar on June 5. It tested positive for vaccine-derived poliovirus, a rare strain that can circulate where immunisation coverage is low. India was declared free of wild poliovirus in 2014 after decades of mass immunisation. But environmental surveillance – testing sewage for traces of the virus – continues as an early warning system. After the detection in Ghaziabad, officials traced the sewage network, identified 12 neighbourhoods home to about 150,000 people as high-risk areas, and intensified vaccination efforts under the watch of the National Centre for Disease Control and the World Health Organisation. Rajkumari is one of hundreds of health workers now working under a far more intensive campaign. After the sewage detection, officials strengthened supervision, redraw vaccination maps and instructed teams to revisit locked homes until every eligible child had been reached. “We reviewed every area covered in the last round to make sure nothing had been missed,” says Dr Soniya Patel, the Medical Officer In-charge overseeing the campaign. “We cannot miss any child.” But reluctance is not confined to the city’s poorest neighbourhoods. Amit Pal, 22, another vaccination worker, says some parents refuse to open their doors or insist there are no young children inside. If persuasion fails, supervisors return to counsel the family.

“We cannot leave out any child,” he says. Across the road, in the gated towers of Paramount Symphony, the conversations are different, but the hesitation can be much the same. Auxiliary Nurse Midwife Usha Yadav recently spent 45 minutes persuading a mother to allow her child to receive the vaccine. Only after showing news reports on her phone about the virus detected in Ghaziabad’s sewage did the woman agree. Whether the doors belong to tin-roofed shacks or high-rise apartments, the challenge is the same: convince every parent, reach every child. By 1 pm., Rajkumari returns to the Ayushman Arogya Mandir after five hours on foot.

Diljit Dosanjh shares ‘Satluj’ village screening post after ZEE5 removes film in India

Hours after the Diljit Dosanjh-starrer Satluj became unavailable on the streaming service ZEE5 in India, the actor shared a clip on social media Sunday showing the residents of a village in Rajasthan’s Sri Ganganagar district watching the movie on a massive projector under the night sky. “Hun Ni Rukni Film Khalsa Saab Di Avaaz Nu Koi Ni Dabaa Sakda (Now this film won’t stop, no one can suppress the voice of Khalsa Saab),” Dosanjh said in the post. The community screening of the biopic based on human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa’s life took place at the local gurdwara in 6 H village. The event was organised by villager Bhupinder Singh, who had previously circulated an emotional appeal on Instagram inviting families, youth, and children to watch the film together.

“This film is based on the inspiring story of the struggle, courage, and truth of Martyr Jaswant Singh

Khalsa Ji, who dedicated his life to human rights. This is not just a film, but an opportunity to remember and draw inspiration from the great sacrifice made for history, humanity, and truth,” Singh said. Sources said the screening was planned regardless of Zee5 withdrawing the movie in India. Satluj, directed by Honey Trehan and produced by Ronnie Screwvala’s RSVP alongside MacGuffin Pictures, premiered on ZEE5 on July 3 after facing certification hurdles for nearly three years. However, just two days later, the film was suddenly pulled from the platform for Indian audiences. The film, though, remains accessible internationally via ZEE5 Global. “In light of the current developments, Satluj will be unavailable in India until further notice. We remain committed to exploring every appropriate avenue through due process to bring the film back to our audiences at the earliest opportunity,” ZEE5 said in a statement on its X account.

Colaba sees decade’s wettest July day as heavy rain continues to batter city

EMS News Agency, July 9

As Mumbai reeled under a red alert for two consecutive days, the Colaba observatory of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) witnessed its wettest July day in a decade, as intense spells of rain coupled with gusty winds continued throughout the weekend. The wind speed recorded on Sunday was also more than three times the normal level, leading to more than 150 tree-collapse incidents across Mumbai. The IMD, in its five-day forecast issued on Sunday afternoon, announced an orange alert for Mumbai on Monday (July 6), indicating heavy rainfall to continue. Following this, a yellow alert has been issued for Wednesday. Alongside Mumbai, an orange alert has also been issued for the Thane and Palghar districts for Monday, while the Raigad district has been kept under a red alert till Wednesday. Keeping in mind the rainfall situation, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has announced a holiday for all private and government schools, colleges and universities on Monday. The Thane and Navi Mumbai administrations have also announced a school and college holiday on Monday. Speaking with the Indian Express, an IMD official said that the rains will continue to batter Mumbai till the middle of next week, as a low-pressure area has developed over Maharashtra. IMD’s data show the Colaba observatory recorded 265.6 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Sunday. Before this, the Colaba observatory had recorded the wettest day in the month on July 1, 2022, when 227.8 mm was recorded in this observatory within a 24-hour span. In comparison, the highest July 24-hour rainfall was 161.4 mm on July 9, 2024, and 86.6 mm on July 23, 2025. Meanwhile, the Santacruz observatory recorded 227.7 mm during the same 24-hour period, making it the second-highest 24-

Flashfloods block Doda-Kishtwar highway, bury vehicles at under-construction Kwar power project

Jammu: Flash floods triggered by incessant overnight rainfall damaged the Doda-Kishtwar highway on Monday, disrupted vehicular traffic and buried several vehicles near the under-construction 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Power Project in the hilly districts of Doda and Kishtwar. Huge quantities of mud, boulders and debris was deposited on the highway following the flash floods. Officials said that a portion of the highway was damaged, forcing the suspension of traffic. Several vehicles parked along the roadside at Prem Nagar were trapped in the flood debris. However, no loss of life or injuries were reported, they said. Road clearance and restoration work has been launched by authorities, while commuters have been advised to avoid the highway and follow official traffic advisories until the route is reopened. In neighbouring Kishtwar district, heavy rainfall also triggered a major landslide and mudslide near the tunnel area of the under-construction 540 MW Kwar hydroelectric power project. Officials said flash floods carried large volumes of mud and boulders into the project area, bury-

ing several vehicles, including trucks, dozers and other construction equipment, besides damaging construction material. Multiple vehicles sustained extensive damage and remain trapped under the debris, they said, adding clearance operations are underway to retrieve the stranded vehicles and restore the affected site. Minor flash flood incidents were also reported from high-altitude areas of Reasi district, officials said. The administration had earlier issued a weather advisory warning of heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, flash floods and landslides in vulnerable areas of Jammu and Kashmir, urging people, particularly those living near riverbanks and nallahs, to remain alert and avoid unsafe locations. According to the Meteorological department, Samba recorded the highest rainfall in Jammu region during the previous 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Monday with 90 mm, followed by Kathua (66.2 mm), Katra (44.4 mm), Doda (42 mm), Jammu (41.8 mm), Udhampur (40.6 mm), Bhandarwah (33.6 mm), Kishtwar (24 mm), Reasi (10.5 mm), Batote (4.7 mm), Ramban (4.5 mm) and Banihal (0.4 mm).

Electricity bills of up to Rs 9 lakh: Phase 11 residents express outrage over inflated power charges



Punjab launches Mission Samarth 4.0 with attendance reform: Parents to get daily SMS alert if kid absent

Inside 'godman' Kharat's network: 130 bank accounts opened with spurious documents, Rs 63 crore moved

Transactions happened during their tenure. While more than a hundred suspect accounts have allegedly been traced to the Samata society, the number is around 32 in the case of Jagdamba Bawke is also under arrest over a cheating case in which Kharat and his wife are accused. In some cases, multiple accounts were opened in the name of the same individuals, and several appear to have been opened within a short period. Ahilyanagar SP Somnath Gharge said: "So far statements of 20 account holders have been recorded and they have said that accounts were opened without their knowledge and consent. Now we are doing a forensic examination of these accounts." A woman who has alleged sexual assault and forced mis-carry by Kharat is believed to have told investigators that her papers, along with those of her family members, were used for documentation linked to a credit society. She said she was made to sign documents related to the society despite resistance. Another complainant has filed a case linked to a land dispute. Corporate filings show that Kharat is a director in Shree Vyankatesh Farmers Producer Company Limited, incorporated in December 2021. In March 2024, the company was empanelled as a State Level Agency for the procurement of agricultural produce under the MSP system through agencies such as NAFED. A farmer in Shirdi has alleged non-payment following procurement carried out through the company. Investigators are examining whether financial flows reflected in some of the bank accounts are linked to transactions connected to the company. Another firm, Bright Sparks Infra Private Limited, was incorporated in 2024 with the same individuals as appearing across the alleged network, including Bawke. Asked about this, Bawke told The Indian Express before his arrest that the company hoped to get government contracts, and that documentation and investment were handled by Kharat. "He took our papers and said we would start getting contracts after two years," he said.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

How healthy is India? Key insights from NFHS-6

India is actively transitioning from being a young country, as the percentage of the population aged 60 and above has increased from 11.8% to 12.9%. Kerala has the highest elderly population at 20.7%. The phenomenon in Kerala has been noted by demographers, where it has been referred to as the “grey state” because of its rapid transition. Kerala has seen a heavy out-migration of its youth, which has led to households where elderly parents stay back. This has prompted the newly elected government to announce the formation of a Department for the Elderly to oversee the welfare of the aged. While Kerala typically dominates the conversation on ageing, West Bengal has entered an advanced demographic transition, recording the highest surge as its elderly population jumped from 10.9% to 14.1%.

Alongside ageing, it is also important to note the total fertility rate (TFR) to get the complete picture of the demography of a place. A high TFR creates a wide base of children, and can bring down the average age of the population even when life expectancy increases. A TFR of 2.1 is generally considered the replacement rate, where a population can stabilise. The Indian TFR stayed constant at 2 from 2019-21 to 2023-24. It has fallen or stayed constant in almost all the States. Only Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Rajasthan, and Telangana saw a mild increase in TFR. The highest TFR is recorded in Bihar, although it has also seen a decline from 3 to 2.7.

India is seeing a falling TFR along with an increasing elderly population. Unlike Western and East Asian countries that aged after becoming high-income countries, India is experiencing the same while still at a lower-middle-income level. India may not have sufficient infrastructure to handle this demographic shift, as standard primary health centres are not equipped for multi-morbidity geriatric care, and most of the elderly population relies on very low state welfare pensions for financial support.

To examine the overall well-being of the population, we explore the percentage of mothers who received an antenatal check-up in the first trimester. The national figures have increased from 70% in National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 to 76.2% in NFHS-6. The highest increase happened in Goa from 70.3% to 92.1%, the highest in the country, followed by Maharashtra. Kerala, however, recorded a sharp decline in this number from 93.6% to 85.5%, followed by Odisha, which saw a fall by 6.3%. Bihar has a low number at 63.9%, although it has increased from 52.9%. Similarly, we can also explore the percentage of mothers who consumed iron and folic acid for 100 days or more during pregnancy. While the national figures increased from 44.1% to 54.9%, the highest such increase was seen in Sikkim, followed by Karnataka. Bihar has the lowest figure at 21.9%, while Kerala has the highest at 92.6%. India is ageing while still at a lower-middle income level, putting pressure on inadequate health infrastructure and low state welfare pensions, leaving the elderly increasingly vulnerable. The national percentage of children under 5 years who are underweight has fallen from 32.1% to 31.8%. The cases of Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh are especially distressing because they have the highest in the country at 41.1% and 39.7%, respectively, and have also recorded an increase in this number. While the number for Bihar and Gujarat is also quite high at 35.7% and 35.5%, these States have seen a decline. Although Jharkhand is mineral-rich, its population experiences high rates of multi-dimensional poverty. A report mentions that household food security is often limited to basic calorie intake rather than nutritional diversity.

Allies seek to expand their footprint, BJP chief tells them not to



The seat-sharing negotiations within the BJP-led alliance for the next year’s Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh are going to be a challenging affair

The seat-sharing negotiations within the BJP-led alliance for the next year’s Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh are going to be a challenging affair, with the smaller parties seeking to contest more seats and the BJP asking them not to make any specific claims on seats. BJP national president Nitin Nabin, who concluded his two-day visit to UP on Sunday, met the leaders of alliance partners, including Apna Dal (Sonelal), Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), and Nishad Party.

Sources said that in the meeting, Nabin asked the alliance leaders to maintain coordination and “not make claims on specific seats”. Asking alliance leaders to “work together” to win seats lost by the BJP-led NDA in 2022, Nabin told them that discussions on the distribution of seats will be held in Delhi later, said sources.

Nabin’s suggestion to the alliance partners came after RLD general secretary (Organisation) Trilok Tyagi told the BJP that his party has expanded its organisational base beyond its stronghold in west UP, and has held rallies and public programmes in all the 18 divisions of the state, with a focus on eastern and central UP. Sources said that Tyagi told the BJP chief that RLD president and Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary recently held “grand public programmes” in Deoria, Basti, Varanasi, and Sonbhadra, all in eastern parts of the state. Sources said that the RLD leader also sought an opportunity for the party to contest a few seats in eastern UP, suggesting that whichever party appears to be strong in terms of social equations

Rs 700-cr medical supplies fraud: Key suspect ‘manipulated tenders’, missing; hunt on



Sources said the tender specifications and terms were allegedly drafted to favour chosen firms and fake companies were put on records to create confusion. Sources said the tender specifications and terms were allegedly drafted to favour chosen firms and fake companies were put on records to create confusion. The Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi government has conducted multiple raids after Rajiv Rangila, a “supplier and pharmaceutical trader” accused of manipulating tenders linked to the Rs 700-crore procurement fraud case, was found missing from his home in East Delhi’s Laxmi Nagar area, sources told The Indian Express. Rangila (50) was summoned for questioning by the ACB last week in connection with the fraud case linked to the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) and the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS). After serving him multiple notices, when he failed to appear before the agency, ACB officials launched searches for him across Delhi-NCR and Uttarakhand, sources said. Rangila has been actively supplying medicines and medical equipment in Delhi and Uttarakhand for over a decade, according to investigators. The agency is also planning to issue a look out circular (LOC) against him, sources added.

Rangila, said officers, is a key suspect in the case. He has been named in the FIR for allegedly creating fake companies and firms using fictitious owners. He is accused of colluding with manufacturers of medical equipment to fix supply rates and the kickbacks that were to be paid back in cash. “Some of these firms include F Med Devices, Technocrats, Raj Shree, Ashi Surgical and Phar-

maceuticals, and M Sahib and Sons Pvt. Ltd. Even as these firms were created with others registered as owners, the actual operator is Rajiv Rangila,” the complaint filed by the Vigilance Department with the ACB states. The ACB converted the complaint into an FIR on June 2.

The alleged irregularities first came to light in May this year when the Vigilance Department conducted raids at the offices of the Central Procurement Agency (CPA), the nodal agency responsible for procuring and supplying medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to Delhi government hospitals and healthcare facilities, following complaints. Sources said the tender specifications and terms were allegedly drafted to favour chosen firms and fake companies were put on records to create confusion. Rangila allegedly prepared restrictive specifications in collusion with manufacturers, after which the documents were routed to Dr Vinod Kumar Ranga, Head of Office (HOO) of the CPA, who placed them before the tender committee. Ranga was the first one to be arrested in the case on June 18. According to the complaint, members of the tender committees were allegedly coerced into approving these tailor-made specifications.

Former DGHS chief Dr Vatsala Aggarwal, who was arrested on June 27 in connection with the case, allegedly gave the final approval to the skewed tender conditions. Along with Aggarwal, Deputy Controller of Accounts (DCA) Neeraj Chopra was also arrested. Officials alleged that fake companies controlled by Rangila submitted bills for supplies made to the CPA, and payments were released within one or two days. As per the complaint, several tenders that have already been awarded and fully paid for continue to appear on the Government e-Market-place (GeM) portal as “active”, “under process”, or at the stage of “financial bid evaluation”. According to officials, this modus operandi prevented the public and competing firms from knowing whether a tender had been finalised, who had secured it, and at what rates. “It has also been informed that payments to medicine suppliers that had been supplying medicines to the CPA/DGHS in previous years have remained pending for the last two years. However, payments for tenders awarded since October, in which Rajiv Rangila is allegedly involved, were made on the same day or the following day,” an official said.

From Captain vs Bajwa to Warring vs Channi: The forever ‘versus’ situation in Punjab Congress



The popular American comedian and aphorist Joey Adam’s witty one-liner quite aptly sums up what the Congress party in Punjab has been practising for over a decade now: scripting their own defeats before rival parties would. Ahead of every crucial election in the past decade, the Punjab Congress has found itself in an “action replay” mode: A “versus” situation between two senior party leaders, and other leaders jostling to join either “camp”. In every such situation, one senior party leader is seen pitted against the other, either to grab a plum posting or become the Chief Ministerial (CM) face. Here’s a look at how Punjab Congress’s bigwigs have been engaged in such “battles of political umpmanship” and how the party is always seen divided into “two camps” for over a decade now: Captain Amarinder Singh Vs Partap Singh Bajwa (2015) After the Congress lost the 2012 Punjab Assembly polls and the 2013 Moga bypoll to the SAD-BJP under his leadership, Captain Amarinder Singh, then PPCC president, was removed in 2013 and replaced by Partap Singh Bajwa. However, ahead of the 2017 Punjab assembly elections, Captain Amarinder (now in the BJP) spearheaded a rebellion against Bajwa. Captain’s supporters held multiple rallies and protests, flaunting the slogan: “Captain Liyao, Punjab Bachao” (Bring Captain, Save Punjab). The demand was to remove Bajwa as PPCC president and announce Captain as the CM face for the 2017 polls. Ultimately, Captain Amarinder got his way.

After a series of rallies against his leadership, Bajwa was forced to resign as the PPCC president in November, 2015. Returning as the PPCC president, Captain then led the party to victory in the 2017 assembly polls. He took an oath as Punjab CM for the second time. After he became the CM, Sunil Jakhar took over as PPCC president in 2017. Captain Amarinder Singh Vs Navjot Singh Sidhu (2017 onwards) The power tussle in the Congress did not stop even after the party came to power in 2017, defeating the SAD-BJP alliance. The party was then divided into two factions — one led by then CM Captain and the other by then cabinet minister and former cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu. Sidhu had jumped from the BJP to the Congress ahead of the 2017 Assembly polls. He was included in Captain Amarinder Singh’s cabinet as the local government and tourism minister. However, the bickering between both continued publicly, as Captain blamed him for being “inefficient”. Stripped of the local government portfolio, Sidhu was then assigned “power and new energy”. But he refused to join his new role and, in protest, he resigned from the Cabinet in June, 2019, with a one-line resignation letter sent to Rahul Gandhi, not the CM. Even as Sidhu exited from Captain Amarinder’s cabinet in June, 2019, he and his supporters continued to run an anti-Captain campaign. In 2021, Sidhu was declared the PPCC chief by the Gandhis; he replaced Jakhar, who was considered a pro-Captain man. Ahead of the 2022 Assembly polls, Charanjit Singh Channi was appointed the CM on September 19, 2021. Warring was forced to resign unceremoniously as the chief minister and eventually resigned from the Congress in November 2021. Months after “working together” for Captain Amarinder’s ouster, Channi and Sidhu projected themselves as the Congress’s CM face for the 2022 polls. The party was again divided into two camps — Channi vs Sidhu; the factionalism went on for months, after which Rahul Gandhi stepped in.

In a massive rally in Ludhiana on February 6, 2022, Gandhi announced Channi as the party’s CM face, with Sidhu also on stage. “People want a gareeb ghar ka CM

(People want a CM from a poor household),” Gandhi said from the stage. The fractured state Congress contested the 2022 polls with Channi as the CM face and Sidhu as PPCC president, only to face a massive drubbing at the hands of the AAP. Sidhu resigned as PPCC chief and was replaced by former minister Amarinder Singh Raja Warring in April 2022. Bharat Bhushan Ashu vs Raja Warring (2024 and 2025) When Warring took over as PPCC president in April, 2022, former minister and the party’s prominent Hindu face from Ludhiana, Bharat Bhushan Ashu, was also elevated as the party’s working president. However, ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Punjab Congress witnessed two new camps again — one led by Warring and the other by Ashu.

Congress’s Ludhiana Lok Sabha MP Ravneet Singh Bittu shifted to the BJP. Rahul Gandhi picked Warring to contest against Bittu. Ashu, a two-time former MLA from Ludhiana West and a former minister, was “ignored”, and his supporters projected Warring as a “parachute” candidate. Warring, however, defeated Bittu by a whisker. But Warring vs Ashu did not end there, until it made Congress face another humiliating defeat — the Ludhiana West bypolls, 2025. With Congress’s candidate Ashu and state president Warring not even on talking terms, the campaign never saw a united face. Even as Channi rallied behind Ashu and led his campaign, Ashu faced a massive loss to the AAP’s Sanjeev Arora by over 10,000 votes. After the loss, Warring said he was never “asked” by Ashu to campaign for him; Ashu said, “If pardhaan saab expects an invite for everything, he should sit comfortably in Chandigarh.” Taking the “entire responsibility” for the Ludhiana bypoll defeat, Ashu resigned as Punjab’s state working president. Ahead of the 2027 Punjab Assembly polls, while the ruling AAP is going all out to win a second term, the Congress again has two camps — Warring Vs Channi. The party high command’s recent decision to retain Warring as state president has irked Channi and his supporters, who want him to be the CM face and the PPCC president. Warring, however, has rejected reports of rifts in the party. On Saturday, he addressed Channi as “his elder brother” and “crown on Congress’s head”. Warring has also clarified that he will support whoever is declared the CM face by the party high command. “But Raja Warring is not in this (CM face) race. My only goal is to make Congress win,” he said.

Man stabbed to death in Balapur; two suspects on the run



EMS News Agency, July 9 Hyderabad: A 29-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death following a dispute at Mariyam Colony in Balapur on Monday early hours. The victim was identified as Fahad Bin Abdul Rahman Balkhashar, who owned a vehicle washing service centre. He is survived by his wife and a son. According to police, Fahad was acquainted with the suspects identified as Salam Boum and Sayeed Boum, through a local gym. The three had reportedly been involved in an unknown dispute over the past few days. Officials said that one of the suspects had allegedly gone to Fahad’s residence with a knife a day before the incident. However, the situation was defused after the victim’s brother intervened.

As Dalai Lama turns 91, a call for compassion and renewed focus on Tibet



The Dalai Lama turned 91 on Monday, with celebrations taking place across the world as the Tibetan spiritual leader continues to recuperate in Leh, Ladakh, following knee replacement surgery he underwent last month in New Delhi.

Marking the occasion, the Kashag—the executive branch of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)—issued a statement paying tribute to the 14th Dalai Lama’s lifelong commitment to peace, compassion, non-violence, and interfaith harmony. It extended greetings to Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, as well as to Buddhist monastics and supporters worldwide participating in the celebrations. The Kashag said the Dalai Lama’s Four Principal Commitments—promoting universal human values, fostering harmony among religions, preserving Tibetan religion, culture, and the fragile ecosystem of the Tibetan Plateau, and reviving ancient Indian wisdom alongside modern education—remain a guiding vision for addressing global challenges and building a more compassionate world.

Reviewing the “Year of Compassion”, launched during the Dalai Lama’s 90th birthday celebrations last year, the CTA said the campaign had inspired exhibitions, conferences, cultural festivals, educational programmes, documentary screenings, book distributions, humanitarian initiatives, environmental campaigns, and community service activities across Tibetan settlements and among supporters worldwide. It also welcomed the decision by several cities, particularly in the United States, to proclaim the Dalai Lama’s birthday as a “Day of Compassion”. The Kashag said the values championed by the Tibetan leader have become increasingly relevant amid growing armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, and environmental challenges, urging individuals and governments alike to embrace compassion, ethical conduct, and dialogue as enduring principles rather than temporary campaigns. The statement also expressed concern over China’s recently implemented Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress, alleging that it seeks to assimilate non-Chinese nationalities by weakening their distinct languages, cultures, religions, and identities. The Kashag argued that the legislation has implications beyond China’s borders and called on the international community to closely examine its impact on human rights and cultural diversity.

Referring to the self-immolation protest by Tibetan activist Lobga Rangzen (Lobsang Palden) outside the United Nations headquarters in New York on July 2, the Kashag said the protest sought to draw international attention to the new legislation and the situation in Tibet. Calling for unity among Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile, the Kashag said it was preparing a comprehensive strategy to respond to the law while strengthening efforts to preserve Tibet’s language, culture, religion, and national identity. It also urged the Chinese government to suspend implementation of the legislation and pursue dialogue based on mutual respect and the protection of the rights of all nationalities.

Government launches new DTC bus route: See which areas it will connect



The Delhi government on Sunday introduced a new Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus route connecting Mori Gate ISBT with Kheri Baba Pul in west Delhi. Officials said that the aim is to improve public transport connectivity for residents of Janakpuri, Vikas Puri, Uttam Nagar, Hastal and neighbouring areas. Route 753 Ext has been launched on an experimental basis, officials said. It has established a direct bus link between central Delhi and several densely populated residential localities in west Delhi, while also improving access to the Mori Gate interstate bus terminal.

According to the Transport department, the route starts from Mori Gate Terminal and passes through Kashmere Gate, Red Fort, Delhi Gate, Ajmeri Gate, Paharganj, Rajendra Place, Shadipur, Naraina, Maya Puri, Janakpuri, Uttam Nagar, Vikas Puri, Hastal and Shiv Vihar before ending at Kheri Baba Pul. Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh said the route is part of the government’s effort to strengthen Delhi’s public transport network and make commuting easier across the city. “The newly introduced route will significantly improve accessibility for residents of Janakpuri, Vikas Puri, Hastal, Shiv Vihar, Uttam Nagar, Hari Nagar and adjoining localities by providing them with a direct and affordable public transport connection to Central Delhi and Mori Gate,” Singh said in a statement. Officials said the route has been designed to cater to office-goers, students and daily commuters by connecting several residential areas with commercial hubs, Metro stations and major transport interchanges. Besides passing through key arterial roads, it links passengers to Kashmere Gate and Mori Gate ISBT, one of the Capital’s busiest interstate bus terminals. The Transport Department also said that the service is expected to particularly benefit travellers heading to eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

Iran called him a traitor. He's refereeing their World Cup



Somewhere in Qom, south of Tehran, there is a poster of Alireza Faghani standing with Donald Trump and Gianni Infantino, all three of them giving a thumbs-up after last year's Club World Cup final. In the original photograph, Faghani is wearing a medal. In the poster, the medal has been replaced with a potato. The caption reads: "Congratulations on your medal, traitor." On Tuesday at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey — the same venue as that Club World Cup final — Faghani took charge of France vs Senegal. He denied Kylian Mbappé a penalty after consulting the pitchside monitor, awarded a goal-kick, and France won 3-1. Routine, for a referee officiating his fourth consecutive World Cup, a record no one else holds. Nothing else about his presence here is routine.

Faghani was born in Kashmar, Iran, the son of a referee. He had a short-lived playing career before picking up the whistle himself in 1994. He became a FIFA referee in 2008 and built a career that took him to four

The goalkeeper who wept for his mother. Now Washington is trying to get her there

On Monday night in Atlanta, Vozinha produced seven saves to hold Spain to a goalless draw in Cape Verde's first ever World Cup match. At full time he wept. His mother had not been there. Ana Candida Evora had been unable to travel from Sao Vicente because she could not afford the bond payment the Trump administration requires from Cape Verdean citizens before a US visa is considered – up to \$15,000 under rules introduced in January. Washington dropped the bond requirement for World Cup ticket holders last month, but by then, Vozinha told reporters, it was already too late. “The money for the visa, we didn’t manage on time, and I would like her to be here,” he said. By Tuesday morning, three things had happened simultaneously.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries wrote to Secretary of State Marco Rubio asking him to personally ensure Vozinha's mother could attend Cape Verde's next match – against Uruguay in Miami on Sunday. "No mother should miss the chance to see her child make history," Jeffries wrote on X, according to The Hill. A crowdfunding campaign titled "Help Our Goalkeeper Vozinha Bring His Mother to the USA" surpassed its target by Tuesday evening, Newsweek reported. And the State Department said it had no record of a visa application being filed for

Shubman Gill emerges as ODI leader in Kohli's absence and Rohit's subdued form

A series that was promoted as a test of the old guard has quickly become a stage for asserting the incumbent captain's hold over the role. Shubman Gill was handed the reins of the ODI team last October, to go with his Test captaincy, and there are ample indications that the selectors and the team management lean towards having one skipper across the three formats. But with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma still around in the 50-over game, they still cast a long shadow over the team they have built over a long period of time.

But with Kohli missing the Afghanistan series due to injury and Rohit not managing a substantial knock in the first two games, the stage was set for Gill to show – with the bat – that he is the man to lead from the front. After shepherding a chase of 195 in 25 overs in Dharamsala, that could have got tricky, staying till the end as Kohli used to, the captain took control of proceedings, after India were sent in at Lucknow with a century that oozed calm, class and control from the first ball he faced. That the latter innings came at No.3 – after giving up his customary opening slot to Yashasvi Jaiswal for the game – would only buttress his captaincy credentials and paint a picture of a captain who thinks of the bigger picture and not just about his own fortunes. When Jaiswal failed to make the opportunity count, Gill ensured there was no cause for alarm. The innings, and the shots that comprised it, wouldn't have looked out of place in a Test match. There was no frenetic hitting even as Gill and Rohit ensured a run rate of around eight runs an over in the Powerplay. Some of the cover drives he unleashed from the start of his innings had connoisseurs drooling. His mastery on the offside meant he was only seeing gaps,

Messi reveals Rafa Nadal inspiration after World Cup hat-trick, explains emotional first goal

After a blockbuster hat-trick on Argentina's opening night at the 2026 FIFA World Cup against Algeria, Lionel Messi revealed that he was seeking inspiration from an unlikely corner, a Netflix documentary series involving a tennis giant.

Shortly after Argentina romped to a 3-0 win on the back of his maiden World Cup hat-trick in his 200th international appearance, Messi revealed that he was inspired by Rafael Nadal's journey through the lens of his four-part documentary, released on May 29 this year. Despite suffering an injury concern in the lead-up to the World Cup, Messi shrugged off all concerns when he blasted his opening goal in the 17th from open play with a curling shot that blasted into the right corner of the Algerian goal.

After tripling his tally in the 76th minute for his first World Cup hat-trick, Messi took home a bunch of colossal records, including equalling the World Cup record for most goals (16) while surpassing Cristiano Ronaldo for the most international hat-tricks in men's football (11*).



AFC Asian Cups, the 2016 Olympic final, the 2018 World Cup, the 2022 World Cup. In 2019, he moved to Brisbane with his family. "When I spoke with some friends living in Australia, I felt that living there would suit my family situation better," he told SBS Persian. "There is a system in place here. Personal views don't influence the system." He did not elaborate on what he meant by personal views. But in 2022, the Islamic Republic of Iran Football Federation removed him from their international referees list. The delisting, according to IranWire and multiple reports, came in retaliation for his support of the Mahsa Amini protests. He began representing Australia as an international referee in 2023. The switch was bureaucratic. The reasons were not. Then came the Club World Cup final. Trump descended to the pitch for the presentation ceremony. Faghani shook his hand. They posed together, thumbs up, smiling. "A final is never just another match. Grateful for the opportunity to be part of football history once again," he wrote on Instagram. Iranian state television commentators did not use his name during the broadcast, and the presentation ceremony was cut short on Iranian state television, the Sydney Morning Herald reported. Qom erected the poster. IranWire noted the paradox this week: "Few Iranians worldwide view Faghani as an 'Australian' referee at the 2026 World Cup; to the public, he remains entirely their own." Iran officially disowned him. Iran claimed him anyway. This World Cup, Iran trained in Tijuana because US visas arrived only the day before their first match. The federation president was denied entry. Fans' ticket allocations were revoked. Iran crossed the border for each game and returned to Mexico the same night.



Evora, and confirmed it was actively reaching out to the family to assist. All relatives of players, it noted, are eligible for visa bond waivers – a provision that had apparently not reached her in time for Monday's match. There is a further complication: according to CNN, Evora does not currently hold an active passport and is in the process of obtaining one. Cape Verde play Uruguay in Miami on Sunday. It was reported that Vozinha's Instagram following rose from 40,000 to nearly six million within hours of full time. The goalkeeper had not been expecting to play at all – he had nearly retired before teammates persuaded him to stay on for the World Cup. He turned 40 a week before the tournament began.



relying on timing and placement instead of brute strength. The current captain and his predecessor in a big partnership would have been a narrative for the broadcasters to bite into, but Rashid Khan didn't play ball, breaching Rohit's defence when he was two short of a half-century.

That left the stage open for Gill, and as he approached three figures, the onus was largely on Ishan Kishan to play the big shots – an ode to the time when the rest of the batting order used to play around Kohli as he came closer to a milestone. The pattern ensured that Ishan entered the 90s before the captain reached three figures – off 77 balls with almost 18 overs left in the innings. Kishan got to this hundred soon after – in 71 deliveries. India will face tougher opposition than Afghanistan as they build towards the 2027 ODI World Cup – and other teams will not be so shoddy in the field and toothless in attack under an unforgiving sun – but the two matches have been useful in conveying who is in charge, as the phase of ‘transition’ becomes operational.



The relentless pursuit for success brings the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner closer to the legendary career of Nadal, the Spaniard who clinched 22 Grand Slams during his pro career that ended at 38, the same age as Messi is today. "I've liked playing football since I was a kid, and when I'm feeling good like this, I give it my all. I'm watching the Rafa Nadal documentary; I think we're very similar in that sense.

'I swear he doesn't care': Messi's long-time team-mate on records being broken



With his opening match hat-trick against Algeria in Argentina's Group J encounter at Kansas City Stadium on Wednesday, World Cup winner Lionel Messi not only levelled with German Miroslav Klose for most goals in FIFA World Cup history with 16 goals but also became the oldest player to score a World Cup hat-trick. The 38-year-old Argentine star's hat-trick came exactly 20 years after his FIFA World Cup debut when he came on as a substitute in a group match against Serbia and Montenegro in the 2006 World Cup in Germany. Messi's team-mate Rodrigo De Paul, who also assisted Messi in his first goal of the match, shared how Messi does not care for records and how Messi is enjoying his football without the pressure at present.

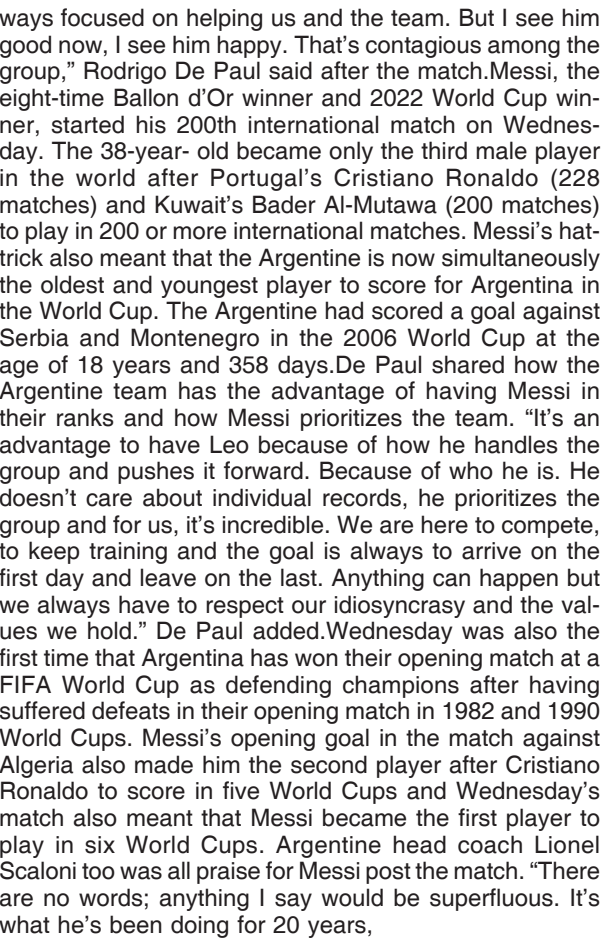
"I swear he doesn't care. Sometimes we'll be in a room drinking mate and we'll tell him 'hey man, you're just one way or two away' or whatever. And I swear he has no idea. I don't know how that works. He's an animal. What makes me the happiest is that I feel like he's enjoying it. That he doesn't feel the weight of the pressure that he felt for so long. Everyone knows his mentality. He doesn't let himself enjoy things much because he's al-

‘Not yet. I think...’ England coach Thomas Tuchel on singing national anthem

With England facing Croatia in their Group L opener at Dallas on Wednesday, it all also be the first time that coach Thomas Tuchel will be in the helm of affairs for the England team in a FIFA World Cup. The 52-year-old German, who was appointed the head coach of England in 2024, is only the third foreign coach for England in their football history with Sven Goran Eriksson and Fabio Capello being the first two. As England chase the World Cup trophy, a title which has eluded them since 1966, Tuchel has shared that he is not ready to sing the national anthem 'God save the King' yet and it might be possible towards the end of the tournament implying he may sing it if England wins the title. When asked about whether he is ready to sing the national anthem, the England coach replied in negative.

"Not yet. I think we are not there yet. At the very end maybe. I am still a bit shy. I don't want to offend people and don't want to have the focus on that now," Tuchel told the media ahead of the team's opener. When asked if he knows the words of the national anthem, Tuchel replied in affirmative.. "It's not so difficult," he added.

The German coach was appointed England's head coach in March last year after Gareth Southgate resigned from the job after England's Euro 2024 exit. Tuchel, who has guided Paris Saint Germain and Bayern Munich to Ligue 1 and Bundesliga titles respectively apart from coaching Chelsea to the Champions League title in 2020-2021, has seen England win all of their FFA World Cup Qualifying matches with the team winning eight matches in the qualification. Under Tuchel the England team has won a total of 11 matches out of 14 matches with a loss each against Japan and Senegal apart from a draw against Uruguay. Tuchel is also one of the two England coaches till present, who have won nine of their first ten matches as England's coach with the first being Glen Hoddle. The 52-year-old, who is based in the German city of Munich, flies to England for the preparatory camps and has been spending his time in England since March ahead of the World Cup preparations. Tuchel also spoke about how he feels at home when he lands in England and how he felt the same while training England club side Chelsea earlier in his career. "I can't explain it but it



ways focused on helping us and the team. But I see him good now, I see him happy. That's contagious among the group," Rodrigo De Paul said after the match. Messi, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner and 2022 World Cup winner, started his 200th international match on Wednesday. The 38-year-old became only the third male player in the world after Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (228 matches) and Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa (200 matches) to play in 200 or more international matches. Messi's hat-trick also meant that the Argentine is now simultaneously the oldest and youngest player to score for Argentina in the World Cup. The Argentine had scored a goal against Serbia and Montenegro in the 2006 World Cup at the age of 18 years and 358 days. De Paul shared how the Argentine team has the advantage of having Messi in their ranks and how Messi prioritizes the team. "It's an advantage to have Leo because of how he handles the group and pushes it forward. Because of who he is. He doesn't care about individual records, he prioritizes the group and for us, it's incredible. We are here to compete, to keep training and the goal is always to arrive on the first day and leave on the last. Anything can happen but we always have to respect our idiosyncrasy and the values we hold," De Paul added. Wednesday was also the first time that Argentina has won their opening match at a FIFA World Cup as defending champions after having suffered defeats in their opening match in 1982 and 1990 World Cups. Messi's opening goal in the match against Algeria also made him the second player after Cristiano Ronaldo to score in five World Cups and Wednesday's match also meant that Messi became the first player to play in six World Cups. Argentine head coach Lionel Scaloni too was all praise for Messi post the match. "There are no words; anything I say would be superfluous. It's what he's been doing for 20 years,



felt like this from the first weeks at Chelsea. It just felt so good to be in the country and a part of the Premier League. Every day was a gift almost. What the league brings out of players and what the fans expect from the players, the coach made me feel very comfortable. I liked it from the first day. I cannot say often enough, it's an honour for me to be England head coach. I feel basically at home when I land. I would say now: 'I fly home.' I fly home to my home in London. It feels like home when I land in London and I'm in England." Tuchel said.

Last year, Tuchel had spoken about how he has to earn his right to sing the national anthem and how he can earn his rights with results. "First of all, you have a very powerful, emotional and meaningful national anthem and I could not be more proud to be on the sideline and be in charge of the English national team. It means everything. But I can feel it because it is that meaningful and it is that emotional and it is so powerful that I have to earn my right to sing it. I feel that it is not just a given. You cannot just sing it. I will earn the right with results, with building a group, with doing my job properly and by creating a feeling where maybe even you guys (in the media) say at some point: 'Now it's time that you sing it. It feels like you properly earn it and you're a proper English guy now!' Maybe I have to dive more into the culture and earn my right from you, from the players, from the supporters, so everyone feels like:

When contrasting worlds of Erling Haaland and Aymen Hussein converged



If not for football, the world could feel disjointed. Patches of land that ought never to intersect. Like Norway and Iraq. Blessed with political stability and economic prosperity, Norway is the seventh-happiest nation in the world, ranks second on the Human Development Index, and seventh on GDP per capita. Iraq, shaped by decades of war, sanctions and militant insurgencies, sits at 101, 126 and 116, respectively. Which crest a football wears is the consequence of a geographical lottery. What is not, however, is how they perform once the whistle blows. Per the official scoreline, Norway made light work of Iraq in a 4-1 win at the Boston Stadium. Beyond the scoreline, though, the night belonged as much to Aymen Hussein as it did to Erling Braut Haaland.

The sport owes nothing to anyone. A trailblazer like Johan Cruyff never won the World Cup. Neither did Ferenc Puskás or Paolo Maldini. George Best never played in one. The tournament would have survived without Haaland. But it would not have been as enthralling. Being the highest goal-scorer for Norway at the 2022 qualifiers proved inadequate to earn his team their first World Cup qualification since the turn of the millennium. Having scored 18 goals in his first 13 Premier League games for Manchester City, Haaland could have added to the goal tally in Qatar, had he been there. He was not. Public relations' nightmare, and not one to mince his words, Haaland had acknowledged, unabashedly: "To watch other people score & win games in the World Cup, it triggers, motivates & irritates me." The trigger, motivation and irritation saw him score 16 of Norway's 37 goals at the 2026 qualifiers. Four seasons into his Premier League career, he already sits among the competition's 25 highest scorers. If he maintains this pace, the summit is merely a matter of time. And yet, the jury is still out on what is Haaland's greatest quality. Not the flair like Lionel Messi, certainly, and neither the vigour of a prime Cristiano Ronaldo. On Tuesday, the Nordic cyborg put it on display — his tenacity.

The first goal against Iraq was a tap-in. The second

Dacoit movie review: Adivi Sesh returns with a raw, emotional punch that’s hard to shake off



Dacoit movie review: There is a specific kind of Telugu film that Adivi Sesh has made his own. It is not the loudest film in the room, nor does it rely on star power alone. It builds slowly, plants an emotional hook early, and then pulls on it hard when you least expect it. In recent years, Sesh has consistently delivered films marked by a distinct style and strong box office performance. After a four-year gap, he is back with Dacoit, and the wait feels mostly worth it.Hari, played by Adivi Sesh, is not a complicated man when we first meet him in the mid-2000s. He falls in love with Juliet, played by Mrunal Thakur, with the kind of openness that only becomes dangerous when the world around it refuses to cooperate. Their relationship is forbidden not by circumstance but by the deeper, older logic of caste.

That makes Juliet’s betrayal hit harder than it otherwise would. When she turns on him and Hari ends up convicted for a crime he never committed, it is not simply a man losing his freedom. It is a man who trusted someone across every boundary the world had drawn between them, and paid for it with years of his life. He breaks out, and he comes back with one thing on his mind. Not survival. Not a second chance. Juliet.This is where Dacoit really holds its ground. Adivi Sesh delivers a nuanced performance as an actor and a very engaging script as a writer. His commanding screen presence and the dialect shift work brilliantly for his character. He plays Hari across two very different emotional states and makes the shift between them feel real. His work in the quieter first half is particularly good because it is doing the harder job of making you care before the chaos begins. But Mrunal Thakur outdoes him.

Mrunal’s Juliet is the kind of female character that Telugu cinema has not always been comfortable writing. She is not a moral fixed point. She makes a choice that destroys someone she loves, and the film does not immediately ask you to forgive her or condemn her. It asks you to understand her, which is a more difficult thing to

ask. She is the emotional centre of the film in a way that sneaks up on you, and after the interval, her performance gives the story a depth that it would struggle to carry without her.Anurag Kashyap plays Inspector Swamy, the investigator tracking the escalating crime wave set in motion by Hari. Casting a filmmaker of Kashyap’s calibre adds a welcome unpredictability to his scenes as he resists playing to type. Prakash Raj also features in the cast, bringing a dependable screen presence to every frame he occupies.

The first half of Dacoit works because it earns its emotion rather than demanding it. The love story between Hari and Juliet feels grounded, the kind of relationship that makes sense before the world intervenes. When the world does intervene, the manipulation and the social pressure that surrounds them, it does not feel manufactured. It feels like the logical consequence of who these people are and where they live.The second half shifts gear but does not abandon the human core. The chase sequences are sharp and the action is constructed with visible craft and scale. But what keeps the film from becoming just another technical exercise is that director Shaneil Deo never lets you forget what started all of this. The momentum in the back half is driven by plot mechanics, yes, but the emotional engine underneath it is still the same story that began in the mid-2000s in Hindupuram. That is a harder balance to strike than it appears, and Dacoit largely manages it.

The movie is not flawless. The narrative can feel overcrowded, juggling multiple emotions, sequences, and plot threads that create some confusion around the storyline. There are stretches, particularly in the second half, where the film piles on one more twist when you were already processing the last one. It is the kind of overcorrection that comes from a team that has a lot to say and is not entirely sure which things to cut.At first glance, Dacoit does not promise anything you have not seen before. Love, betrayal, a man stripped of everything trying to claw it back. Writers Shaneil Deo and Adivi Sesh know this, and they do not waste time pretending otherwise. What they do instead is use that familiar skeleton to carry a story with genuine weight. It uses the framework of forbidden love and personal vengeance to examine things that are worth examining: what caste still costs people, what the pandemic revealed about whose lives institutions are designed to protect, how a medical system can punish people simply for being poor, and what it looks like when the legal system fails someone completely and without accountability.

By the end, Dacoit leaves you with a love story told in a grand and commercial way, supported by strong storytelling and excellent technical quality. Adivi Sesh has built his career on choosing stories with something to say, and Dacoit fits that pattern

‘It disturbed my performance’: Aamir Khan reveals why seeing son Junaid’s version of Laal Singh Chaddha made him doubt himself



Aamir Khan has often spoken about the disappointing box office performance of his 2022 film Laal Singh Chaddha, a remake of Tom Hanks-starrer Forrest Gump. The film, which was particularly close to his heart, failed to connect with audiences, leaving the actor deeply affected. He later took a break from films before returning with Sitaare Zameen Par in 2025.Now, in a recent conversation with JioHotstar, Aamir revealed that he initially wanted his son Junaid Khan to play the titular role.Aamir recalled that when Junaid returned to India after completing his acting training in Los Angeles, he was curious to see how his son had evolved as an actor. Aamir decided to test him as a filmmaker, so he could evaluate his talent.Recalling the early stages of the film, Aamir said, “I loved the script of Forrest Gump, we were very excited about it. At that time, Junaid had just completed his acting course in LA. He came back quite experienced and I thought, let me see what he has learned.”

He asked director Advait Chandan to film select scenes with Junaid, not only to assess his son, but also to gauge the director’s ability to handle a project of that scale.“So I told Advait, take 7–8 scenes of Laal Singh and give it to Junaid. I want to see what he has learnt, but the test really is for you because I want to see whether you can helm a film like this because before that, he made Secret Superstar and this was a different scale altogether. So I said, I want to see how you direct this film. You don’t direct me, you direct Junaid. I want to see how you do that.”

“He shot about 20 minutes of film, two–three difficult scenes that we picked. When I saw it for the first time, I was shocked, Junaid was so good.” Even then, Aamir questioned whether his reaction was because of personal bias. He turned to those closest to him for an honest opinion. “I asked Kiran, is it father’s love coming out? Kiran said no, he is good.”He then screened the footage for family and industry insiders. “I showed it to my family, Mansoor. He said, Aamir, you should take Junaid, you should not do this film. He is Laal. Then I showed it to other people in the industry as I wanted to be sure and

almost everyone said he is really good, he is really fitting the part. He should do the part.”By then, Aamir was convinced. “At that point, I was very certain that we should take Junaid as Laal Singh Chaddha because he was doing really well.”Junaid’s performance affected Aamir’s performanceWhat made the situation more complex, Aamir admitted, was how deeply Junaid’s performance affected him as an actor. “To be quite honest, as an actor, once I saw him doing it, I found Laal. So then I was like, if he is Laal, how am I to play Laal?”Even after ultimately taking on the role himself, Aamir says Junaid’s version lingered in his mind. “And the honest truth is, when I finally did the film, I used to keep referring to Junaid, how he would have done it, and I think that also somehow disturbed my performance as I had seen his performance. If I had not seen it, it would not have mattered with me.”“I saw the magic. As a father, on merit I wanted to cast him. On merit, I was not casting myself but him,” he said.

Why the decision changedDespite his conviction, the final call didn’t go his way. Aamir revealed that concerns from the studio played a crucial role in the decision to retain him as the lead.“Ultimately, for various reasons, we didn’t go with Junaid. One of the main reasons was because the head of the studio in LA, Jim, was a little unsure. I think he might have felt I am trying to push my son. He said we have signed this deal with you as the lead and we would like that to remain that way.”The kind of person I am, I don’t like to force my decision, especially where my relations are involved. So I respected his decision,” he said.What Aamir had said earlierAhead of the film’s release, Aamir Khan, in a conversation with TV9, had said the character required a certain innocence that Junaid naturally had. However, he had given a different reason for not casting him.He said, “Aditya Chopra and Atul Kulkarni, the writer of the movie had objected. They wanted me to play the character. According to them, the story of Forrest Gump isn’t that solid. It’s an episodic movie which requires a star. A new actor can’t pull this off. I finally bought their reasoning. Sometimes you may be really good but the time is not right.”About Laal Singh ChaddhaLaal Singh Chaddha, written by Atul Kulkarni, also featured Kareena Kapoor, Mona Singh, Manav Vij, and Naga Chaitanya in key roles. Produced by Aamir Khan Productions, Paramount Pictures, and Viacom18 Studios, the film earned around Rs 130 crore worldwide against a budget of Rs 200 crore.

Lady Gaga, DoeChii release new track ‘Runway’

Los Angeles: Singers Lady Gaga and DoeChii have released a new single, “Runway”, which will feature in “The Devil Wears Prada 2”.Gaga and DoeChii shared the news with a collaborative post on their respective Instagram handles on Friday. It featured the poster with the title of the track.“Runway w/ @doechii @ladygaga Out Now | ‘The Devil Wears Prada 2,’ read the caption.The track is co-produced by Andrew Watt alongside Bruno Mars, Cirkut, and Dernst “D’Mile” Emile II. Watt also co-wrote the song with Gaga, Mars, DoeChii, Cirkut, D’Mile, and Jayda Love.

Sandeep Reddy Vanga slams those calling Dhurandhar 2 propaganda, warns Aditya Dhar and Ranveer Singh against ‘kaala drishti’



Earlier in the day, it was reported that filmmaker Sandeep Reddy Vanga, currently busy shooting his next, Spirit, with Prabhas, took time out to watch Aditya Dhar’s recent blockbuster Dhurandhar 2. Images of the two watching the film in a theatre in Hyderabad quickly went viral. Now, Vanga has once again grabbed attention after taking to X to share his thoughts on Dhurandhar The Revenge, the discourse surrounding the movie since its release last month, and a word of caution for both Dhar and Ranveer Singh.’When truth started getting labelled as propaganda’

Vanga began his note by slamming those who claim that Dhurandhar 2 is propaganda. He wrote, “Writers & actors built careers on propaganda, and the industry stayed quiet like cats. Now the same clan mock Dhurandhar. You don’t get to call yourself liberal if your first instinct is to Mock. Don’t know when truth started getting labelled as propaganda…… strange times.”He then warned Aditya Dhar and Ranveer Singh against the “evil eye,” writing, “COMING TO THE POINT……I want to

‘I won’t even pay Rs 50 to watch you’: Aayush Sharma says father refused to spend Rs 10 cr to launch him, said he was a ‘lame horse’



Actor Aayush Sharma has opened up about his early days in Mumbai, recalling how his decision to become an actor led to a sharp reaction from his father. He also talked about the moment when he later asked his father for Rs 10 crore to launch him in Bollywood, only to be met with a blunt response.In a conversation with Cyrus Broacha, Aayush recalled his early days in Mumbai, revealing how he initially kept his acting ambitions a secret from his family.

Aayush moved to Mumbai under the pretext of studying. He enrolled in Jai Hind College for a BMS course, rented an apartment in Bandra, had a house help, and even convinced his father to buy him a car.At the same time, he had already begun exploring acting, enrolling in a workshop. When his college attendance dropped drastically his father was called from Himachal Pradesh.“My father was called by the college and told that your son’s attendance is 9 percent. My dad came to Mumbai—he was quite ashamed. My mom was also upset and said, ‘What have we not given you— we gave you a house, a car, and you’ve brought us shame. We told the entire family that our child is going to Mumbai and will make something of himself.”That confrontation became the moment Aayush finally revealed his dream.“I told my dad

Aayush Sharma recalls living in a Bandra apartment with Xbox, house help while ‘struggling’ in Bollywood: ‘Paid Rs 1.5 lakh for acting workshop’

Actor Aayush Sharma has spoken candidly about his journey to Bollywood, which is quite different from the usual “outsider struggle” narrative. Before making his debut with Loveyatri (2018), produced by Salman Khan Films, Aayush admits he entered Mumbai with comfort, not hardship. The actor, who is married to Arpita Khan, comes from a politically influential family. He is the son of BJP leader Anil Sharma, an MLA from Mandi, and the grandson of former Union Minister Sukh Ram.In a conversation with Cyrus Broacha, Aayush spoke about arriving in Mumbai with a dream to become an actor but with no understanding of what it takes to become one. Ayush says financial backing was never his immediate challenge.

‘I didn’t struggle, I can’t even glorify it’Aayush said his move to Mumbai was to become a hero. He enrolled at Jai Hind College and shifted to the city. But unlike the typical outsider narrative, his early days were far from difficult.“I came to Mumbai for the first simple thing, hero banna hai. It was just one craving in the heart. I used to live in Bandra, I didn’t struggle. Sad part about my life is I can’t even glorify my struggles.”

He described a lifestyle that many would associate

tell @AdityaDharFilms & @RanveerOfficial yeh kaala drishti aise nahi jaayega... Muthi bhar ke laal mirch se kaam nahi chalega.... poora khet jalana padega (This evil eye cannot be removed easily. A handful of red chillies won’t be sufficient, you’ll have to burn down a crop). Watched #Dhurandhar2?TheRevenge last night.... Outstanding film.” Writers & actors built careers on propaganda, and the industry stayed quiet like cats. Now the same clan mock Dhurandhar. You don’t get to call yourself liberal if your first instinct is to Mock.

Aditya Dhar was quick to respond to Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s praise. Replying on X, he wrote, “Mere Pyaare Sandeep, (My dearest Sandeep) I genuinely love the way you stand your ground and give it back when it matters. There’s a real honesty and belief in that and it’s something I truly respect. I’ve always looked up to how you back your cinema without any doubt or noise. That kind of conviction reminds all of us to trust our voice and just go for it.”In the same tweet, he further wished Vanga the best for Spirit, adding, “Give my love to the Legend Prabhas sir! Big love and all the best for Spirit. Really looking forward to it. And if there’s ever anything I can do, I’d genuinely love to help a brother. Thanks again,” I genuinely love the way you stand your ground and give it back when it matters. There’s a real honesty and belief in that and it’s something I truly respect.This is not the first time Sandeep Reddy Vanga has praised the franchise. Last year, he had also watched the prequel and shared his review on X, lauding Dhurandhar for having a “masculine spine.” He wrote, “Dhurandhar is built like a man who doesn’t talk much & carries a masculine spine. Dhurandhar – The title fits because the film moves with dominance & fierce. The depiction is very clear with zero chaos.”For those unaware, Ranveer Singh’s wife Deepika Padukone was initially set to star in Spirit. However, she was later replaced by Triptii Dimri after reportedly demanding an eight-hour work shift, among other conditions.

that I want to be an actor. I showed him my photoshoot and my CD of my performances. It was a very important moment of my life.”What followed was a harsh reality check.

“My father said, “Neither are you tall, nor do you have a physique, nor do you have a voice, nor are you good-looking. You have no personality whatsoever. When you walk on the road, nobody looks at you. Has anyone ever told you that you can become an actor?”“You are nothing close to Bachchan sahab, you are nothing close to Dharmendra ji. You are not going to be a hero at all. I am not going to pay even Rs 50 to watch you on screen.”“His father also made his stance clear.“He said, ‘I have given you money, I have given you too much support. You pack your bags, come to Himachal and do business.”“So dad said, I am not going to pay you. Figure it out yourself—and the money stopped.”“I had Rs 20 left”Things shifted when his father cut off his financial support. Aayush was left with a house (with rent paid), a car, and limited savings.“Things came down to a point where I had Rs 20 left.”It was during this phase that a friend stepped in to help. “My friend called me to say he had got a job of Rs 50,000 per month. When he found out about my situation, the next morning my account was credited with Rs 50,000.”The Rs 10 crore pitch and a brutal replyAayush also shared how he later approached his father with an ambitious plan, to launch himself as an actor.“I went back to Himachal and said, ‘Dad, I want Rs 10 crore to launch myself.’ That’s the number somebody gave me.”His father’s response was just as blunt as before.“He said, ‘Beta, tune dekha hai kabhi langde ghode pe paisa lagate ho? Main to chalo 10 crore beta samajh ke de bhi dunga, but tere ko dekhne kaun aayega?’ (Have you ever seen anyone bet money on a lame horse? I might still give you Rs 10 crore thinking of you as my son, but who will come to watch you?)”Grandfather stepped inEventually, it was Aayush’s grandfather who convinced his father to give him another chance.“Luckily, my grandfather told my dad that he is the first one in the family who is trying to do something on his own.

with success, not struggle.

“The first thing was where to stay. I didn’t want to stay in town as I love non-veg. The first battle was where I have to reside. So I convinced my dad that I wanted to stay in a solo place so that I could study well. I got Superstar Apartments, Perry Cross Road. I had an Xbox, a house help—life was good.”Even his attempt to experience Mumbai’s local trains lasted just a day.“I experienced the Mumbai train for one day. I was pushed into the train and very soon I was about to be pushed out. So I was like, ‘ye nahi ho payega.”Instead, he turned to a more comfortable alternative.”Then I wanted to get a car for myself. After a lot of convincing, I managed to get a Maruti Ritz. I still have the car.”Aayush shared how convenience shaped even his college routine.”The first time I took the car, I parked it away from college as there was no parking nearby, and then took a cab to college. So I used to pay for parking and then take a cab and pay again.”Despite the comfort, Aayush admits he had no roadmap to becoming an actor. “I wanted to be an actor but had no clue how to do it. I didn’t know anything.”He enrolled in an acting workshop after spotting an advertisement promising a “60 percent success rate