

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

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Modi Govt Plans 'One Day, One University' Outreach for GenZ



New Delhi: In a major outreach to Gen Z, the Modi government is planning to send one Union minister to one university every day to engage with young people, discuss their concerns and better understand their perspectives on issues facing the country. The proposed initiative also figured at the Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, sources said.

Under the proposed 'One Day, One University' programme, a Union minister will visit an assigned university to interact with students, hear their views on various issues and inform them about government welfare schemes, particularly those aimed at youth and students.

Education minister Pralhad Joshi and youth affairs and sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya have been given the responsibility of coordinating with universities and ministers for the visits.

The initiative comes weeks after Modi urged his ministerial colleagues to strengthen their presence on Instagram and use reels and other social media formats to establish a greater connect with youngsters.

The Cabinet on Wednesday also reviewed the so-

cial media presence and reach of Union ministers, sources said. The government's increased focus on engaging Gen Z comes in the wake of protests by students at Jantar Mantar against the NEET paper leak and other issues concerning the education sector.

Sources said the social media performance of Cabinet ministers was shared at the meeting, with Modi leading the rankings.

The reach of ministers' social media posts also came up for discussion, with emphasis on expanding their audience, particularly among young people and Gen Z.

Modi himself has reached out to students through social media, particularly Instagram, on several occasions following the recent protests over the NEET paper leak in Delhi and other parts of the country.

At a Cabinet meeting in the last week of July, the Prime Minister had advised Union ministers to increase their social media engagement, with a particular focus on Instagram.

The government's youth outreach also featured prominently in Modi's Independence Day address, in which he announced initiatives including free online coaching, an AI skilling programme, a sports talent hunt and expansion of the civil defence network.

He also highlighted opportunities for young people in sectors including manufacturing, space, nuclear energy and semiconductors.

Telangana SIR: CEO discusses claims, objections with officials



Hyderabad, August 19

Telangana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C. Sudharsan Reddy held a video conference on Wednesday, August 19, with all District Election Officers (DEOs), and Election Registration Officers (EROs) on the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

With the draft electoral rolls out, the meeting focused on claims and objections, addressing anomalies, no-mapping cases, and related electoral roll issues.

The CEO directed the DEOs and EROs to pre-

pare and implement a detailed, time-bound action plan based on the anomalies and no-mapping cases of the polling stations at the constituency level, covering distribution of notices, conduct of hearings, disposal of claims and objections, and effective use of manpower.

The CEO reviewed the district-wise action plans for disposal of anomalies and no-mapping cases and stressed the need for timely disposal of claims and objections relating to Forms 6, 6A, 7 and 8 and to ensure that "No eligible elector should be left out and no ineligible person should be included."

Police manpower restructured to meet emerging challenges: DGP

Hyderabad, August 19

: The Telangana Police Department is rationalising its manpower to meet the changing nature of crime and public safety challenges, Director-General of Police C.V. Anand said on Wednesday, August 19, at the Telangana police academy.

DGP Anand said the nature of policing had changed over the decades, and the police were now increasingly required to deal with drug trafficking, cybercrime, online betting, investment fraud, traffic management, road safety and food adulteration.

Senior officers from OCTOPUS, CID, Special Intelligence Branch (SIB), Intelligence and other specialised units attended the meeting. As part of the restructuring exercise, 513 personnel from specialised units, including Greyhounds, OCTOPUS and SIB, are being redeployed to eight departments based on operational requirements.

The largest allocation of 224 personnel has been made to the Traffic Management and Road Safety wing, followed by 80 to Food Adulteration and Drug Control and 79 to Vigilance and Enforcement.



The DGP said the personnel were initially attached to various departments for two months before their final allocation. An 11-day training programme was also conducted at the police academy to familiarise the personnel with the functions and responsibilities of their new departments. "The objective is to make the best use of the available police manpower in areas that directly affect the lives and safety of people," the DGP said.

Ecuador Intel Chief, Five Americans Killed in Kenya Helicopter Crash

NAIROBI, August 19

Ecuador's intelligence chief and five US citizens died when a tourist helicopter crashed in central Kenya on Wednesday, killing all seven people on board, officials said.

The accident happened Wednesday morning in Samburu County, north of the capital Nairobi, according to the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA).

The aircraft had departed from the Loisaba wildlife reserve.

Images shared by the Kenya Red Cross on X in the afternoon showed a crash site in flames. It said difficult terrain hampered rescue operations.

"There were seven people on board the helicopter, one pilot and six passengers," Fredrick Kabunge, director of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Department (AAID), told AFP, confirming that no one had survived.

Contacted by AFP Wednesday evening, Samburu County police chief David Nkoroi said "operations have been suspended until tomorrow because of darkness and the complex nature of the ground and the scene of the crash."

Ecuador's Transport Minister Roberto Luque said the Latin American nation's intelligence chief Michele Sensi-Contugi and his wife were among those killed.

"Today Michele and Stephany left us too soon. Thinking of their family, especially their children and parents," Luque wrote on X.

Sensi-Contugi, 42, is a former businessman appointed as head of Ecuador's National Intelligence Center in 2024.

He was a close associate of Ecuador's right-wing President Daniel Noboa, who has made his country a key US partner in Washington's renewed combat against drug cartels.

A US State Department spokesperson said that five American citizens died in the crash, without providing their identities.

Spanish-language broadcaster Telemundo however announced that one of its senior managers in Florida, Jose Alberto Suarez, had died in the crash.

"We are heartbroken to learn the tragic news that Jose was killed in a helicopter accident in Kenya," said a statement by Cesar Conde, newsgroup chairman of parent-company NBCUniversal, and two other executives.

"Jose was an exceptional colleague who cared deeply about his teams, the communities they served and the important role our stations play in people's lives."



Kabunge said the "helicopter was transporting tourists for a scenic flight".

In a video shared on X, black smoke could be seen billowing into the sky at the foot of Mount Ololokwe, where the crash occurred.

Mount Ololokwe is a sacred mountain for the Samburu people, its summit rising 2,000 metres (6,560 feet) above sea level, and it is a popular hiking destination. Companies offer helicopter flyovers.

The cause of the crash has not yet been established, with KCAA saying investigations were underway.

In March, a helicopter crash in western Kenya killed six people, including a member of parliament.

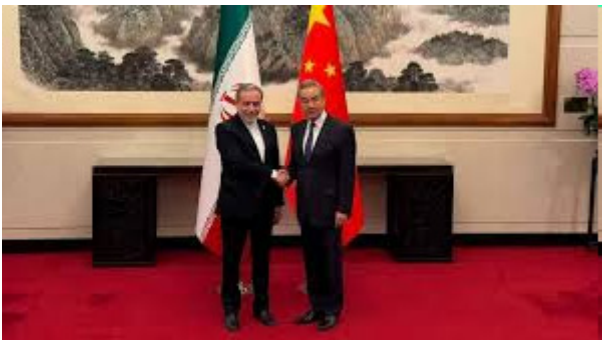
Raja Singh makes fresh appeal to Telangana BJP

Hyderabad: Former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA T Raja Singh has indicated that he remains interested in returning to the party while making a fresh appeal to the Telangana BJP leadership to set aside internal differences and factional politics and work towards strengthening the party in the state.

In a video message on the BJP's organisational affairs, Singh spoke about the absence of a Telangana representative in the party's national executive and urged senior state leaders to introspect on the issue. He recalled that several Telangana leaders had previously held important positions in the national organisation and contributed to the party's growth.

Singh, who was suspended from the BJP following allegations and criticism directed at state party leaders, appeared to strike a conciliatory note in his latest remarks.

US and Iran closing in on memo to end war, sources say



ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON/TEL AVIV, - The United States and Iran are closing in on an agreement on a one-page memorandum to end the war in the Gulf, a source from mediator Pakistan and another source briefed on the mediation said.In an early morning social media post, U.S. President Donald Trump gave no details of any specific proposal but said the war could end if "Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to".The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.The sources confirmed information initially reported by the U.S. media outlet Axios. The proposed 14-point, one-page memorandum would formally end the war, followed by discussions to unblock shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, lift U.S. sanctions on Iran and agree curbs on Iran's nuclear programme."We will close this very soon. We are getting close," said the source from Pakistan, which hosted the war's only peace talks so far and has continued in that role of mediator, ferrying proposals between the sides.

Reports of the possible agreement caused global oil prices to plunge, with benchmark Brent crude futures falling around 11% to around \$98 a barrel . Global share prices also leapt and bond yields fell on optimism of an end to a war that has disrupted energy supplies.In this morning post, Trump said: "Assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, which is, perhaps, a big assumption, the already legendary Epic Fury will be at an end, and the highly effective Blockade will allow the Hormuz Strait to be OPEN TO ALL, including Iran."If they don't agree, the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before," Trump added.Hours earlier, Trump paused a three-day-old naval mission to reopen the blockaded strait, citing progress in peace talks.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards responded by saying that if U.S. "threats" had ended, passage through the strait would be possible under new terms it was putting in place, without giving details.The White House, the State Department and Iranian officials contacted by Reuters did not immediately respond to requests for comment. U.S. news channel CNBC quoted a spokesperson from the Iranian foreign ministry as saying Tehran was evaluating a 14-point U.S. proposal. The source briefed on the mediation said the U.S. negotiations were being led by Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner.If both sides agreed on the preliminary deal, that would start the clock on 30 days of detailed negotiations to reach a full agreement, the source said.The source said the full agreement would include the U.S.

lifting sanctions and releasing frozen Iranian funds, Iran and the United States lifting competing blockades on the Strait of Hormuz, and curbs on Iran's nuclear programme, with the aim of seeking a pause or moratorium on Iranian enrichment of uranium.

While the sources said the memorandum would not initially require concessions from either side, the sources and Axios did not mention several of the key demands that Washington has made in the past and that have previously been rejected by Iran.U.S. demands that were not mentioned include: curbs on Iran's missile programme and an end to its support for proxy militias in the Middle East.While the sources spoke of a moratorium on future Iranian enrichment of uranium, they did not mention Iran's existing stockpile of more than 400 kg (900 pounds) of uranium enriched to near weapons grade.Washington has previously demanded Iran give this up before any end to the war. Iran has in the past insisted on its right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes and denied ever seeking to build an atomic bomb.Earlier, Trump announced a pause to "Project Freedom", a mission he had announced two days earlier to guide ships through the blocked strait.

The mission had failed to bring about any significant resumption of traffic through the waterway, while provoking a new wave of Iranian strikes on ships in the strait and on targets in neighbouring countries.In the latest incident, a French shipping company reported on Wednesday that one of its container ships had been struck in the strait the previous day, and that injured crew had been evacuated.In announcing he was pausing the mission, Trump cited "great progress" in negotiations with Iran, without giving further details.Trump had said last week he was likely to reject Iran's latest proposal for talks. The Iranian offer also contained 14 points, and also called for setting aside discussion of nuclear issues until after the war ended and the shipping dispute was resolved.In comments on a visit to China on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi made no mention of Trump's latest remarks, but said Tehran was holding out for "a fair and comprehensive agreement".A map showing the inbound and outbound shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz, in addition to the maritime boundary between Oman and Iran.Iran has effectively shut the strait to all shipping apart from its own since the United States and Israel launched the war on February 28. In April, Washington imposed its own separate blockade of Iranian ports.Trump's Project Freedom mission to use the U.S. Navy to open the strait failed to persuade merchant ships that it was safe, while provoking new attacks from Iran, which said it was expanding the area under its control to include swathes of the coastline of the United Arab Emirates, on the strait's far side.While the mission was in effect, Iranian drones and missiles hit several ships in and around the strait and targets in the UAE, including the only major Emirati oil port on the coast beyond the strait which allowed exports without crossing through it.Ariba Shahid is a journalist based in Karachi, Pakistan. She primarily covers economic and financial news from Pakistan, along with Karachi-centric stories. Ariba has previously worked at DealStreetAsia and Profit Magazine.

Iran says it is reviewing new US proposal after sources say sides closing in on deal



ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON/TEL AVIV, Iran said on Wednesday it was reviewing a new U.S. proposal, after sources said Washington and Tehran were closing in on a one-page memorandum to end the war in the Gulf while leaving tricky issues such as Iran's nuclear programme for later.An Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson, cited by Iran's ISNA news agency, said Iran would convey its response soon via Pakistan, which hosted the war's only peace talks and has since served as the main conduit for messages between the sides.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.In an early morning social media post, U.S. President Donald Trump gave no details of any specific proposal but said the war could end if "Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to". He later told the New York Post it was still too soon to consider face-to-face meetings to sign an agreement.

A Pakistani source and another source briefed on the mediation confirmed information initially reported by the U.S. media outlet Axios about a proposed 14-point, one-page memorandum that would formally end the war. The memorandum would be followed by discussions to unblock shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, lift U.S. sanctions on Iran and agree curbs on Iran's nuclear programme, the sources said.Reports of the possible agreement caused global oil prices to plunge, with benchmark Brent crude futures falling around 11% to around \$98 a barrel . Global share prices also leapt and bond yields fell on optimism of an end to a war that has disrupted energy supplies.

In his morning post, Trump said: "Assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, which is, perhaps, a big assumption, the already legendary Epic Fury will be at an end, and the highly effective Blockade will allow the Hormuz Strait to be OPEN TO ALL, including Iran."If they don't agree, the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before," Trump added.Hours earlier, Trump paused a two-day-old naval mission to reopen the blockaded strait, citing progress in peace talks.Iran's Revolutionary Guards responded by saying that if U.S. "threats" had ended,

Iran conflict may have motivated Trump dinner shooting suspect, US intelligence report finds

WASHINGTON, - The U.S. Department of Homeland Security identified the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran as a potential motive for the man accused of attempting to assassinate President Donald Trump and senior members of his administration at a White House reporters' gala last month, according to an intelligence report sent to state and local law enforcement nationwide and other federal agencies.The report, a preliminary assessment by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis dated April 27, assessed that the suspect Cole Allen had "multiple social and political grievances." It concluded that the Iran conflict "may have contributed to his decision to conduct the attack," citing social media posts from Allen that criticized U.S. actions in the war.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

The assessment sheds new light on the U.S. government's search for a motive in the foiled attack on the White House Correspondents' Dinner on April 25. Its conclusions, while preliminary, offer the most definitive evidence to date that the Iran conflict, which has killed thousands in the Middle East and rattled the global economy, could have been a trigger.The report, marked as a "Critical Incident Note," was obtained through open records requests by the transparency nonprofit Property of the People and shared with Reuters.Spokespeople for DHS and the U.S. Justice Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The FBI declined to comment.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Justice Department added a charge of assault on a federal officer, accusing Allen of firing at a U.S. Secret Service agent at a security checkpoint, in addition to attempted assassination, discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence, and illegal transportation of a firearm and ammunition across state lines. He has not yet entered a plea.U.S. officials have so far said little about Allen's alleged motivation, pointing only to an email Allen sent to relatives on the night of the attack. The message, which officials have called a manifesto, expressed anger at the administration and referred to his desire to target the "traitor" giving a speech, without mentioning Trump by name.In court documents, prosecutors have alleged that Allen "disagreed" with Trump politically and "wanted to fight back" against government policies and decisions that he found morally objectionable."The FBI has been carrying out a detailed examination of Allen's social media activity and digital footprint in searching for a motive for the attack, a senior law enforcement official told Reuters, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

The examination includes a review of posts on a Bluesky social media account linked to Allen that posted and shared a range of anti-Trump messages in the weeks leading up to the attack. The posts include criticism of the U.S. actions in Iran but also broadsides against the Trump administration on immigration enforcement, Elon Musk, and Russia's war on Ukraine.The account shared a post calling for Trump to be impeached over his April 7 threat to destroy Iranian civilization, which came hours before Trump agreed to a ceasefire. It also shared criticism of reporters who planned to attend the press

passage through the strait would be possible under new terms it was putting in place, without giving details.

The White House, the State Department and Iranian officials contacted by Reuters did not immediately respond to requests for comment.The source briefed on the mediation said the U.S. negotiations were being led by Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner. If both sides agreed on the preliminary deal, that would start the clock on 30 days of detailed negotiations to reach a full agreement.

The full agreement would include the U.S. lifting sanctions and releasing frozen Iranian funds, Iran and the United States lifting competing blockades on the Strait of Hormuz, and some curbs on Iran's nuclear programme, with the aim of a pause or moratorium on Iranian enrichment of uranium.While the sources said the memorandum would not initially require concessions from either side, they did not mention several key demands Washington has made in the past, which Iran has rejected, such as curbs on Iran's missile programme and an end to its support for proxy militias in the Middle East.The sources spoke of potential curbs on future Iranian enrichment of uranium, but made no mention of Iran's existing stockpile of more than 400 kg (900 pounds) of it, already enriched to near weapons grade, which Washington has previously demanded it give up before any end to the war.And even if the reported text appeared to sidestep some demands rejected by Iran in the past, there were indications Tehran could still hold out for more U.S. concessions.In a post on X, Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei, a spokesperson for parliament's powerful foreign policy and national security committee, described the text reported by Axios as "more of an American wish list than a reality"."The Americans will not gain anything in a war they are losing that they have not gained in face-to-face negotiations," he wrote.Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, visiting China, made no mention of Trump's latest remarks, but said Tehran was holding out for "a fair and comprehensive agreement".

TRUMP PAUSES MISSION TO UNBLOCK STRAITEarlier, Trump cited "great progress" in negotiations to announce a pause to "Project Freedom", a mission he had announced two days earlier to guide ships through the blocked strait.The mission failed to bring about any significant resumption of traffic through the waterway, while provoking a new wave of Iranian strikes on ships in the strait and targets in neighbouring countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates.In the latest incident, a French shipping company reported on Wednesday that one of its container ships had been struck in the strait the previous day, and injured crew had been evacuated.A map showing the inbound and outbound shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz, in addition to the maritime boundary between Oman and Iran.Ariba Shahid is a journalist based in Karachi, Pakistan. She primarily covers economic and financial news from Pakistan, along with Karachi-centric stories. Ariba has previously worked at DealStreetAsia and Profit Magazine.Alexander has over a decade of international reporting experience. He is currently a senior correspondent in Jerusalem covering Israel and the Palestinian Territories and was formerly in Dubai

CMA CGM vessel attacked in Strait of Hormuz as shipping halted by US-Iran war

PARIS, - A CMA CGM container ship was attacked while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, injuring crew members and damaging the vessel, the French group said, as the U.S.-Iran conflict left traffic in the crucial oil and trade corridor at a standstill.The incident, which CMA CGM said occurred on Tuesday, was the latest attack on ships since the war erupted, stranding hundreds of vessels and disrupting 20% of global oil trade.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.Washington launched an operation on Monday to help escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz, allowing two U.S.-flagged vessels to exit the Gulf. However, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday the effort would be briefly paused amid talks aimed at a broader deal with Iran.A map showing the inbound and outbound shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz, in addition to the maritime boundary between Oman and Iran.Shipping through the Strait was effectively halted over the past 24 hours, with tracking data showing no vessels transiting the waterway.Tehran, meanwhile, issued a map of the waterway by expanding a zone it said was subject to its control, its state media reported.CMA CGM said on Wednesday that injured crew from the San Antonio vessel were evacuated and receiving medical treatment, declining further comment.Eight crew members were wounded, the UN's International Maritime Organization said, in the 32nd such incident since the war began.France was not specifically targeted, government spokesperson Maud Bregeon said, adding the crew were



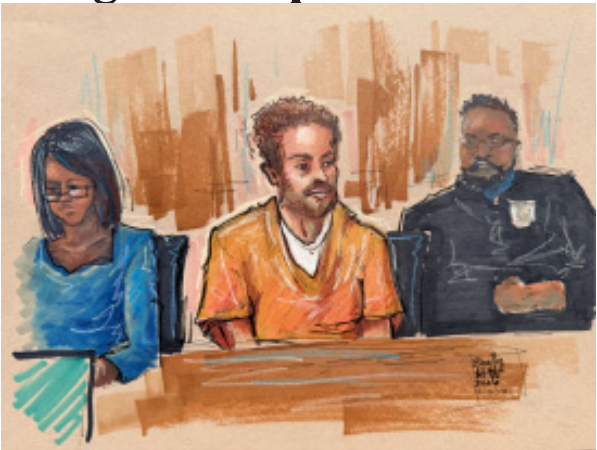
from the Philippines.A maritime security source said the ship was struck by an Iranian projectile while attempting a night transit near Oman.It was unclear if it was sailing under the now-paused U.S. escort operation to release stranded ships.TRANSPORTATION WITHOUT COORDINATION WITH IRAN AT RISKWhile a few ships made it out safely while 'Project Freedom' was in place, it was clear that transits without coordination with Iran entailed significant risk," said Jakob Larsen, chief safety and security officer with shipping association BIMCO.The French firm, the world's third-largest container shipping line, has indicated that 14 of its vessels were stranded in the Gulf at the start of the war. One ship, the CMA CGM Kribi, exited the Strait of Hormuz at the start of April.The Maltese-flagged San Antonio's destination was marked as Mundra in India, according to shipping data.

Zelenskiy accuses Russia of spurning ceasefire proposed by Kyiv

KYIV, - Ukraine accused Russia of flouting a Kyiv-proposed ceasefire on Wednesday by carrying out dozens of battlefield assaults, air strikes and drone attacks in what President Volodymyr Zelenskiy described as Moscow's "obvious spurning" of peace.Zelenskiy had floated the cessation, starting on May 6, in response to Russian leader Vladimir Putin's own proposed ceasefire from May 8 to 9 to coincide with its World War Two victory commemorations.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.In a statement, Zelenskiy said Russia - which did not confirm its adherence to Ukraine's proposal - had committed 1,820 violations by late morning on Wednesday.Officials in the north-eastern Sumy region said two people were killed in separate Russian drone attacks on a civilian car and a kindergarten where children were not present.In major cities such as Kharkiv, Kryvyi Rih and Zaporizhzhia - where an attack on Tuesday killed 12 people - private buildings, infrastructure and industrial sites were damaged in air attacks after midnight, officials said."This shows that Russia rejects peace and its fake calls for a ceasefire

on May 9th have nothing to do with diplomacy," said Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha on X."Putin only cares about military parades, not human lives."Item 1 of 6 A resident with a dog and rescuers run during an air raid alarm at the site of the kindergarten hit by a Russian drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Sumy, Ukraine. [1/6]A resident with a dog and rescuers run during an air raid alarm at the site of the kindergarten hit by a Russian drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Sumy, Ukraine.The rival overtures come amid stalled U.S.-backed peace talks to end the more than four-year war, and as Russia presses an offensive to capture the rest of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.Russia this week will hold a slimmed-down version of its annual military parade in central Moscow, citing an increased threat of Ukrainian attacks.

Zelenskiy said on Wednesday that officials would decide on "further actions" later in the day in response to Russia's attacks. He had earlier said Kyiv would act "symmetrically" if its ceasefire was violated.On Monday, Russia's defence ministry had warned that it would respond to Ukrainian attacks



dinner.The FBI has also reviewed a 2024 post in which an account connected to Allen, while quoting a Bible verse, appears to call Trump "the devil" in response to a message from Trump's daughter Tiffany.The focus on Allen's online activity is in part to stave off conspiracy theories about the motive and online activity of the suspected shooter, the official said, adding that speculation about the online activity of the man who fired at Trump during a 2024 campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, had sparked widely spread conspiracy theories.

Trump delays decision on Iran deal after two-hour White House meeting

Washington: US President Donald Trump ended a two-hour Situation Room meeting on a proposed Iran agreement without announcing a decision, media reports said.Trump had earlier said he would make a "final determination" on a proposal aimed at extending a ceasefire with Iran, reopening the Strait of Hormuz and launching negotiations over Tehran's nuclear programme.

However, after the meeting concluded, the White House offered no indication that a final decision had been reached.CNN reported that a White House official said only that the meeting had lasted about two hours and reiterated the administration's position that Iran must never possess a nuclear weapon.According to The Washington Post, the proposed memorandum of understanding would extend the current ceasefire for 60 days while Washington and Tehran negotiate details of a broader agreement, including the future of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile.Before the meeting, Trump outlined conditions he said Iran would need to meet, including reopening the Strait of Hormuz, removing mines from the waterway, agreeing never to develop a nuclear weapon and allowing the United States to remove or destroy highly enriched uranium.Iran signalled that negotiations remain incomplete.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

India's fire tragedies

raise burning questions

The devastating fire that tore through a Delhi hotel, claiming the lives of 21 people, including six foreign nationals, was a tragedy waiting to happen. It was a classic case of how blatant violations of safety norms and callousness at all levels result in mishaps that could otherwise have been avoided. It has become a disturbing practice in India to discuss the efficacy of safety standards in big cities only when a major mishap occurs. After a round of routine condemnations and the constitution of expert committees to probe the cause, it is back to business as usual. Accountability is never fixed, and lessons are never learned. From Uphaar to Malviya Nagar, from Kolkata hotels to Rajkot gaming zones and Delhi's children's hospital — India's fire tragedies follow an eerily identical script. The details may vary, but the anatomy of the disaster does not:

Overcrowded premises, illegal structures, lack of fire exits, missing NOCs, locked staircases, inflammable décor, and rescues that come too late. The tragedy at 'Flourish Stay' in South Delhi's Malviya Nagar, a bed-and-breakfast facility catering to patients and relatives of those receiving treatment at a nearby private hospital, has brought into focus the urgent need for robust enforcement measures to avert such mishaps. A dangerous mix of building violations, inadequate fire safety measures, regulatory lapses and delayed compliance with court-mandated safety reforms has created a recipe for disaster. As investigators piece together the circumstances behind one of the national capital's deadliest fire tragedies in recent years, emerging details suggest that the building had become a virtual death trap long before the fire broke out.

Several things were wrong with this semi-illegal structure in one of the city's most congested areas. The hotel had just one entry and exit point and did not possess a valid NOC (No Objection Certificate) from the fire department. It has now emerged that the hotel management had raised additional floors without informing the authorities. Once the fire blocked the way, hotel guests had no escape route and were forced either to stay put or jump from windows. Videos showed some people leaping from the burning building to save their lives. Ironically, just five months ago, the Delhi High Court had directed city authorities to urgently address concerns over inadequate fire safety measures in hotels, restaurants and other hospitality establishments across the capital. However, the authorities are yet to comply with the court's order, which required them to formulate a comprehensive action plan to strengthen safety standards and prevent fire-related tragedies. Laxity in enforcing safety norms is inexcusable. From factories and coaching centres to hospitals and entertainment venues, many of Delhi's deadliest blazes have exposed a persistent gap between safety rules on paper and their implementation on the ground. Investigations have repeatedly pointed to lax inspections, faulty electrical systems and buildings operating beyond their approved use.

Punjab government mulls

absorption of 60,000 outsourced

employees: Cabinet to take a Call

In a significant move, the Punjab government is planning to absorb nearly 60,000 outsourced employees across its government departments by repealing a 2016 welfare law and replacing it with new legislation to transition them to direct government contracts and eventual absorption. The personnel department's proposal will be placed before the Cabinet meeting at Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's residence on Saturday afternoon.

The proposal seeks the repeal of the Punjab Adhoc, Contractual, Daily Wage, Temporary, Work Charged and Outsourced Employees' Welfare Act, 2016, along with the introduction of two new bills, including the Punjab State Outsourced Personnel (Transition to Contractual Engagement) Bill, 2026, and the Punjab Contractual Personnel (Absorption Against Sanctioned Vacancies) Bill, 2026.

Outsourced employees, who have completed five years of continuous service, will be taken directly on a government contract, as per the proposal. Those working in hazardous categories, such as sanitation workers, sewer cleaners, etc, will be eligible after three years. The transition bill will apply only to Group C and D employees. The second bill aims at eventual absorption against sanctioned vacancies, but this will kick in only after the transition process is completed. It will cover contractual employees who have put in 10 years of service post-transition. The government also plans to withdraw various earlier instructions on the regularisation of contract and daily-wage workers. The proposal further seeks authorisation for Mann to approve any amendments to the draft bills without referring them back to the Cabinet, indicating urgency in the matter. The move comes against the backdrop of persistent demands by employee unions and several rulings by the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which has repeatedly questioned the practice of keeping workers on outsourced rolls for years while they perform perennial government duties. Courts have described outsourcing as a "veil" to exploit long-term workers and have ordered regularisation in multiple cases involving municipal corporations and other entities. Recent strikes by municipal outsourced staff, including a 16-day agitation that ended earlier this month after assurances from Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, have kept the issue alive. The government had then agreed to shift hazardous category workers to contracts after three years and set up a committee for further regularisation demands. The 2016 Act had provided for regularisation of eligible ad-hoc and contractual staff and transition of outsourced workers to contract after three years, but its implementation remained patchy.

Free vaccination drive against HPV begins in

Bengal's health centres for girls aged 14 years



Newly-elected West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari Saturday launched a statewide vaccination campaign against the human papillomavirus (HPV), that aims to protect adolescent girls against cervical cancer, news agency PTI reported. The vaccination drive will be conducted at 881 government health centres, including medical colleges, district hospitals, sub-divisional hospitals, state general hospitals and block primary health centres, officials told the news agency. It comes over three months after India launched a nationwide campaign to vaccinate 14-year-old girls against the virus. Launched on February 28, it aims to vaccinate approximately 1.15 crore girls

Kewal Singh Dhillon's appointment revives old

debate: Can BJP grow in Punjab on its own?



Even before newly-appointed Punjab BJP president Kewal Singh Dhillon could settle into his new role, the party found itself dealing with an unexpected challenge — a public and blunt assessment from one of its tallest leaders, former chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh, and his daughter Jai Inder Kaur, who is the president of the Punjab unit of the BJP Mahila Morcha. "Kewal Dhillon is a good friend, but not the right choice as BJP chief," Amarinder Singh said to a media house while reacting to the BJP high command's decision to replace Sunil Jakhar with Dhillon on Thursday, nearly two months before Jakhar's tenure was scheduled to end. The remark has triggered political chatter within the Punjab BJP at a time when the party is attempting to project unity and prepare for the 2027 Assembly elections.

While voices of dissent have been heard privately within BJP ranks since Dhillon's appointment, Amarinder Singh became the first senior leader to articulate those concerns publicly. The former chief minister also indicated that the existing combination of Sunil Jakhar as state president and working president Ashwani Sharma should have been allowed to continue. They could have continued Sunil and Ashwani Sharma," Amarinder Singh said. The statement is significant because Amarinder Singh rarely comments on internal BJP matters despite formally merging his Punjab Lok Congress with the BJP after the 2022 Assembly elections. Having resigned as Punjab chief minister and quit the Congress in September 2021, Amarinder Singh floated the Punjab Lok Congress and fought the 2022 Assembly polls in alliance with the BJP and the Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt). The alliance, however, failed to make an impact. The BJP won only two of the 73 seats it contested, while the Punjab Lok Congress and the SAD (Sanyukt) failed to open their accounts. Since then, Amarinder Singh has largely remained away from active politics because of health reasons, making his remarks all the more noteworthy.

A former Congress MLA from Barnala, he joined the BJP in June 2022 after spending decades in the Grand Old Party. Though regarded as an accessible leader with strong personal relationships across party lines, his electoral record in recent years has been mixed. Dhillon won the Barnala Assembly seat in 2007 and 2012 when the Congress was in the Opposition. However, he subsequently lost the 2017 Assembly election, the 2019 Sangrur Lok Sabha election on a Congress ticket, the 2022 Sangrur Lok Sabha bypoll, and the 2024 Barnala Assembly bypoll on a BJP ticket. "He has lost four elections in a row and has now been entrusted with leading a party that wants to emerge as a serious contender in Punjab. Many of us are still trying to understand the logic behind this experiment," said a senior BJP leader on the condition of anonymity. Yet the BJP high command appears to have viewed Dhillon differently — as a leader capable of expanding the party's social and political outreach beyond its traditional urban Hindu support base, said sources. Coming from the Malwa region, which accounts for nearly 69 of Punjab's 117 Assembly seats, Dhillon's appointment is also being seen as an attempt to strengthen the party in the state's most politically decisive belt. Interestingly, Amarinder Singh also highlighted a fundamental difference between the BJP and the Congress while discussing the appointment. "In the BJP, they normally don't ask anything; they simply do it. In the Congress, feedback used to be taken regularly," he remarked during an interaction with a media house. The statement indirectly acknowledged the BJP's centralised decision-making structure — a feature that many within the party see as a strength rather than a weakness. Dhillon himself reinforced that point.

"BJP is a disciplined party. Decisions are taken on the basis of organisational assessments. I never went to Delhi even once to lobby for this position. In fact, I was not aware that I would be appointed president. This is the difference between the BJP and the Congress," he said. Calling the BJP's organisational structure a "zameen-aasman ka farak" compared to the Congress, Dhillon argued that such discipline has enabled the party to form governments across 21 states in the country. The BJP has shown signs of growth in Punjab's recent urban local body elections, improving its performance substantially compared to 2021. However, translating civic gains into Assembly seats remains a much bigger challenge. The party continues to face resistance in large sections of rural Punjab, particularly among Sikh voters. The shadow of

annually across India's states and union territories.

Who will be the beneficiaries?

The drive in Bengal aims to target around 7.65 lakh beneficiaries aged 14 years, according to PTI. Girls who have completed 14 years of age, but are due to turn 15, will receive a single dose of the quadrivalent Gardasil-4 vaccine free-of-cost at the designated centres, according to the officials.

Why was the campaign launched?

The campaign against the HPV comes amid growing concerns over India's cervical cancer burden. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in India, accounting for more than 1.2 lakh new cases and nearly 80,000 deaths annually, according to estimates released by GLOBOCAN 2022, a previous report in quoted. Despite being preventable through vaccination and screening sessions, the disease has strained India's public health system, mostly among low-income families with limited access to preventive care. According to the goals stated by the World Health Organization (WHO), vaccinating 90% of girls, screening 70% of women, and treating 90% of pre-cancer and cancer cases—is crucial to eliminating cervical cancer globally.

the farmers' agitation still influences political perceptions, while the AAP remains firmly entrenched as the ruling party. Dhillon's primary task will, therefore, be to transform the BJP from a party with pockets of influence into a statewide political force.

He has already begun outreach efforts. A day after his appointment, he met senior BJP leaders, including former president Sunil Jakhar and national vice-president Saudan Singh, in Chandigarh, signalling an effort to maintain organisational cohesion. "All of us are on the same page. Progress happens when a team works together. We believe in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,' and that is how Punjab will move forward," Dhillon said. He even stated that Capt Amarinder Singh had congratulated him. However, before the public displeasure by Capt Amarinder Singh, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had mocked this appointment. "Congratulations to BJP leader Kewal Dhillon, who was defeated by the people of Barnala in 2017, 2019, and 2024, on becoming the Punjab BJP president. Heartfelt sympathies to Sunil Jakhar. May God give strength to Ravneet Bittu, Manpreet Badal, Fatehjang Bajwa, Tarun Chugh, and Ashwani Sharma to endure this humiliation," the CM posted on X. Sources said that the names taken by CM Mann were also in the race to be the BJP president. Amid the transition, Sunil Jakhar has maintained a measured and statesmanlike tone. Congratulating Dhillon, Jakhar described his tenure as Punjab BJP president as "an honour and responsibility" and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and the party leadership for their support. "My warm wishes and full support are with Kewal Dhillon ji. I am confident that under his leadership, the organisation will continue to grow stronger and serve Punjab with even greater commitment," Jakhar said. Meanwhile, political circles are abuzz with speculation that Jakhar could be accommodated in the Rajya Sabha during the upcoming round of vacancies, though there has been no official confirmation.

Amarinder Singh's intervention also revived another long-running debate within the Punjab BJP — whether the party can realistically form a government in Punjab on its own. The former chief minister reiterated his view that the BJP cannot independently capture power in the state and would eventually require an alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal or another significant regional partner and said that the new president must think on these lines. It is a position he has consistently maintained over the years. The BJP leadership, however, has increasingly projected confidence about expanding independently in Punjab, drawing inspiration from its growth in states where it was once considered peripheral. Whether Dhillon can bridge this gap between ambition and ground reality will determine not only the success of his presidency but also the BJP's prospects in the 2027 Assembly elections. Responding to former chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh's remarks on the appointment of the new Punjab BJP president, party state general secretary Anil Sarin said, "Capt Amarinder Singh is our senior and respected leader. I cannot comment on whatever he has said. That may be his personal opinion."

Sarin stressed that the appointment of a new state president was part of the BJP's organisational process. "In the BJP, organisational elections and appointments are a regular process and take place every three years. The party functions according to a well-defined organisational structure. From the booth level to the state unit and further up to the national leadership, everyone works as a karyakarta. The position of party president is not merely a designation but a responsibility," he said. "We wholeheartedly welcome Kewal Singh Dhillon as the president of the Punjab BJP and will work together as one unit to further strengthen the party's organisational structure in the state ahead of the 2027 polls," he added. Referring to discussions surrounding the BJP's decision to appoint a Jat Sikh leader as state chief, Sarin said the party does not function on religious considerations. "I want to clarify that we do not practise politics based on religion. Our focus is to make Punjab prosperous. Our karyakartas come from different faiths and backgrounds, and we all work for the 'Chardi Kala' of Punjab," he said. Meanwhile, highly placed sources revealed that senior BJP leaders met Capt Amarinder Singh at his Siwan farmhouse on Friday in what was described as a courtesy call following the leadership change in the state unit.

Telangana health department

asks doctors to submit their

grievances on transfers

Hyderabad: The State health department has given a call to government doctors, drawn from various health departments, to submit their grievances or requests, regarding the ongoing transfers in the department, by May 31, 2026.

The Pune doctor whose

memory lives on in Ghole Road



Thousands cross Ghole Road in Pune every day. Students rush towards Fergusson College, buses move through traffic, and office goers pass without a second glance or thought to the history enclosed by the address. The road quietly carries the memory of a legend who stood far ahead of his time: Dr Vishram Ramji Ghole. Vishram Ghole was a surgeon in the British army, a social reformer, and a close associate of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule.

"Dr Ghole was involved in the movement towards women's emancipation and the emancipation of untouchable people, especially those who were called Shudra and Atishudra," said Shraddha Kumbhojkar, a professor of History at Savitribai Phule Pune University. A 'Report of the Third Year' of the Satyashodhak Samaj also mentions that Dr Ghole served as the organisation's president and worked extensively for the education of marginalised sections. At a time when girls' education faced severe opposition, Dr Ghole insisted on educating his two daughters. Since schools for girls were limited, he sent them to the school run by the Phules despite social resistance. His daughter Kashibai, affectionately called 'Bahuli' (doll), would walk daily from their home near the present-day Faraas Khana Police Chowki to attend school. Kumbhojkar shared a tragic incident associated with Kashibai. "That little girl had stopped somewhere on the road for water, and people poisoned her," she said. The child, born in 1869, succumbed to the poison in 1877.

Despite the devastating loss, Dr Ghole refused to withdraw from the cause of women's education. "He did not stop there. He also sent the other daughter, Gangubai, to school," said Kumbhojkar. Gangubai later became highly educated. After marriage, she became known as Gangubai Khedkar and travelled to the US, where she delivered lectures on Indian culture. To ensure that no child would have to ask strangers for water on the way to school, Dr Ghole built a public water fountain known as Bahulichha Houd. At the site, he also installed a statue of a small curly-haired girl in memory of his daughter Kashibai. The little Houd has been moved from its original location and is kept in a corner of the premises of the Faraskhana Police Chowki in Shaniwar Peth. Girl Fountain Dr Ghole built a public water fountain known as Bahulichha Houd. At the site, he also installed a statue of a small curly-haired girl in memory of his daughter Kashibai. (Photo Credit: Special Arrangement) Apart from his work in education and social reform, Dr Ghole also addressed issues of farmer distress, especially during the period following the 1875 Deccan Riots. At a major convention of Deccan Farmers held at the Chaturshringi grounds, he spoke about modern agricultural practices and methods that could reduce the hardships faced by farmers. "He explained how better farming could be done using different methods so that farmers would not have to face distress," Kumbhojkar said. Today, the road, which stretches from Bal Gandharva Rangmandir towards Fergusson College, connects the legacy of a man who dedicated his life to education, social reform, women's emancipation, and the welfare of ordinary people.

Maharashtra gets healthier

kids, sicker adults:

NFHS sounds alarm on

obesity, diabetes surge

The latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6) suggests Maharashtra is winning some of its old public health battles even as it finds itself confronting new ones. While child malnutrition has declined and vaccination coverage has improved, the survey reveals a sharp increase in obesity, diabetes, hypertension and Caesarean deliveries across the state. The trend is particularly pronounced in urban Maharashtra, where lifestyle-related illnesses are becoming increasingly common. The most striking trend is the sharp rise in obesity. Among women, the proportion classified as overweight or obese increased from 23.5% to 31.1% a jump of 7.6 percentage points, or nearly 32% in relative terms. For men, the rise was even steeper, from 24.7% to 32.8%, an increase of 8.1 percentage points. This means Maharashtra has moved from roughly one in four adults being overweight to almost one in three within just five years. The urban-rural divide is even more revealing. More than four out of every ten urban adults are now overweight or obese. Urban women recorded an obesity prevalence of 40.1%, while urban men stood at 41.7%. In contrast, the corresponding rural figures were 24.8% and 27.1%, respectively. The survey also shows a worrying increase in people reporting high blood sugar levels or taking medication for diabetes. Among women, prevalence rose from 12.4% to 16%, meaning roughly one in six women now faces diabetes-related health concerns. Among men, the increase was from 13.6% to 17.7%, bringing the figure close to one in five adults. Urban areas again stand out. Nearly 20.4% of urban men and 19.3% of urban women reported high blood sugar levels or diabetes medication use, compared with 16.4% and 14.1% respectively in rural areas. The increase in obesity and diabetes together points to a growing burden of non-communicable diseases that could place enormous pressure on Maharashtra's healthcare system in the coming decade. High blood pressure has also become increasingly common. The survey found that 24.9% of women and 27.7% of men either had elevated blood pressure readings or were taking medication to control hypertension. Among urban men, the figure touched 30%, meaning nearly one in three men in Maharashtra's cities is living with hypertension. Urban women recorded a prevalence of 26%. Another trend is the increasing reliance on Caesarean deliveries. The state's C-section rate has risen from 25.4 per cent to 33.6 per cent, meaning one in every three births is now delivered surgically.

Massive drone attack raises tensions before Moscow celebrations



Kyiv: Russian air defences shot down 347 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia's Defence Ministry said Thursday, in what appeared to be a major attack after Moscow spurned Kyiv's ceasefire earlier in the week and tension mounted over safety at Russia's upcoming Victory Day celebrations.Incoming drones were destroyed over 20 Russian regions, including Moscow, according to the Defence Ministry, in Ukraine's second-biggest aerial attack since Russia's all-out invasion more than four years ago. The largest was last March when it launched 389 drones.

The attack came ahead of Russia's most important secular holiday, Victory Day, which marks the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. Russian authorities have declared a unilateral ceasefire in Ukraine for Friday and Saturday.Ukraine had responded to that with its own suspension of hostilities from midnight Tuesday. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow disregarded the goodwill gesture and launched fresh attacks. "Russia has not stopped any type

of its military activity. Unfortunately, it has not stopped. Ukraine will act symmetrically," Zelenskyy said in his regular evening video address Wednesday.He said Thursday on X that Russia's attacks have been ceaseless, with drones, missiles, artillery shelling and glide bombs hitting civilian areas of Ukraine, including the power grid and rail network.

In the northeastern city of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest, a drone strike wounded nine people, including three children, local officials said. Tension has grown as Russia's Victory Day celebrations approach and US-led peace efforts gain no traction.All mobile internet access and text messaging services will be shut down in the Russian capital on May 9, state media reported Thursday, citing the country's Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media. Also, a traditional parade in Moscow won't feature the usual tanks, missiles and other military equipment for the first time in nearly two decades.Russian authorities say they are concerned about possible Ukrainian attacks, as Kyiv has expanded its long-range drone and missile capabilities. The Russian Defense Ministry cited the "current operational situation" as a reason for excluding military equipment.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that additional security measures were being taken due to the "rather complex operational situation". The measures being taken "are necessary to ensure the safety of citizens, which is an absolute priority," Peskov told reporters.The restrictions will include websites on the Russian government's so-called "white list," a group of state-approved online services that are kept available during the country's increasingly common connectivity blackouts. Home internet and Wi-Fi will be unaffected, officials said.

Indian-American expert Ashley Tellis espionage case dismissed by US judge

Washington: A federal judge in Virginia has dismissed without prejudice an Espionage Act case against Indian-American strategic affairs scholar Ashley J. Tellis, ruling in favour of a defence argument that prosecutors used the wrong statutory provision in charging him with unlawful retention of classified documents.US District Judge Michael S. Nachmanoff granted Tellis' motion to dismiss on April 16 after hearing arguments from both sides in Alexandria, Virginia. The brief court order said the motion was "GRANTED" and that the case was "DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE." Tellis, a well-known scholar of international security and US foreign policy, had been charged under Section 793(e) of the Espionage Act with wilful retention of national defence information.Prosecutors alleged he removed and stored classified documents at his residence while serving in senior positions linked to the US State Department and the Department of War. The superseding indictment accused Tellis of retaining 11 classified documents containing national defence information.

The government alleged that he "exploited his access to classified information related to the national defence by secreting NDI from his secure workplaces and storing said NDI at his personal residence in hard copy and digital form." But Tellis' legal team argued that the government charged him under the wrong subsection of the Espionage Act. In a detailed filing, his lawyers said Section 793(e) applies only to people in "unauthorised possession" of classified information, while the indictment itself acknowledged that Tellis held a high-level security clearance and had been "entrusted" with access to sen-

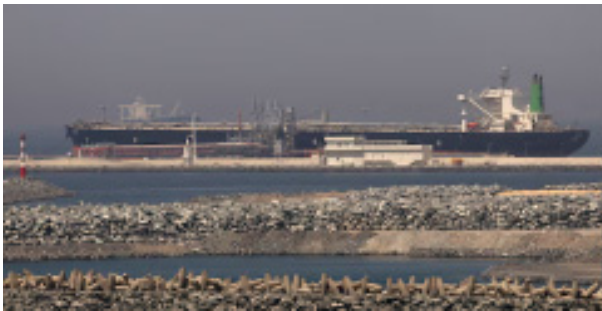
sitive material.The defence argued that Tellis "was entrusted with the relevant documents" and therefore could not legally fall under the subsection prosecutors chose. His lawyers also noted that the government had not accused him of disseminating classified information or accessing files beyond his clearance authority.The filing said prosecutors could have pursued other statutes, including Section 793(d) or Section 1924, which deals with unauthorised removal and retention of classified material by government employees, but "deliberately chose to limit its indictment to the wrong provision." Federal prosecutors had opposed attempts to relax Tellis' strict bail conditions earlier in the case.In one filing, the government argued that Tellis remained both a flight risk and a danger to national security because he allegedly possessed "tens of thousands of pages of classified material, including over 1,000 pages of hard-copy TOP SECRET material."The government also alleged that some material involved information related to China's nuclear and military capabilities and said Tellis retained "decades' worth of sensitive national defence information in his head." After the dismissal order, Tellis filed an unopposed motion seeking release of his secured bond, which prosecutors did not contest.A separate court order later directed the government to respond to Tellis' motion seeking the return of property seized during the investigation. The case drew attention in Washington's national security and strategic affairs circles because of Tellis' long career advising the US government on defence and Indo-Pacific policy.

Hungry to sell, UAE slips hidden oil tankers through Strait of Hormuz

SINGAPORE/LONDON, With their location trackers shut off to avoid Iranian attacks, the United Arab Emirates and buyers have recently sailed several tankers loaded with crude through the Strait of Hormuz ?in a bid to move oil bottled up in the Gulf by the Middle East conflict, according to industry sources and shipping data.The volumes are a fraction of the ?UAE's typical exports before the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran but they demonstrate the risks the producer and buyers are willing to take to free up oil sales. The other Gulf producers - Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar - have either halted sales, deeply cut prices to entice uninterested buyers or are shipping only through the Red Sea in the case of Saudi Arabia.

The Reuters Power Up newsletter provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.In April, the UAE's Abu Dhabi National Oil Co managed to export at least 4 million barrels of its Upper Zakum crude and 2 million barrels of Das crude on four tankers from terminals inside the Gulf, according to three sources, shiptracking data from Kpler and an analysis of satellite data from SynMax.The shipments were either unloaded by ship-to-ship (STS) ?transfer to a vessel that later carried the oil to a Southeast Asian refinery, unloaded into storage in Oman or sailed directly to South Korean refineries, ?according to the three sources, one with direct knowledge of the matter and two familiar with ADNOC's operations, and the Kpler and SynMax data.Tehran responded to the U.S.-Israeli attacks that began on February 28 by effectively shutting the Strait of Hormuz to exports other than its own, bottling up a fifth of global oil and gas ?supply. The closure and a U.S. blockade that has halted Iranian exports in recent weeks has pushed global oil prices over \$100 a barrel.ADNOC has had to cut exports by more than 1 million barrels per day since the start of the war, from the 3.1 million bpd it shipped last year, Kpler data showed. Most of its exports are its Murban grade exported by pipeline from onshore fields to Fujairah.VLCC Hafeet loaded crude at Zirku terminal and transfer its cargo to VLCC Olympic Luck off UAE's FujairahADNOC's shipments risk attacks from Iran. This was highlighted by the ?UAE's accusation on Monday Iran used drones to attack an empty ADNOC tanker, the Barakah, passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

The ships move with their automatic identification system transponders turned off, which reduces the chance they will be spotted by Iranian forces. The tactic is commonly employed by Iran to skirt U.S. sanctions on its oil exports.It also makes it difficult to track the total volumes of ADNOC's exports through industry shipping data, meaning the volumes it ?shipped from the Gulf in April could



be higher.Still, Kpler data showed the VLCC Hafeet loaded 2 million barrels of Upper Zakum inside the Gulf on April 7 and exited the strait on April 15.Outside the strait, the cargo was transferred to the Greek-flagged VLCC Olympic Luck on April 17-18 and shipped to the Pengerang refinery in Malaysia, a joint venture of Malaysia's state-owned oil company Petronas and Saudi Aramco, Kpler data and SynMax analysis showed.Hafeet is managed by the Logistics and Services unit of ADNOC, which declined to comment. Greece-based Olympic Shipping & Management, which manages the Olympic Luck, and Petronas did not respond to requests for comment.Splitting up the ?oil by STS allows ADNOC to sell smaller ?cargoes and free up the VLCCs to move ?quickly back inside the Gulf to load again.One of the broken up cargoes of Upper Zakum sailed to a Northeast Asian refinery and sold at a record premium of \$20 a barrel over ADNOC's official selling price, said the source with direct knowledge of the matter.For Abu Dhabi's Das crude, the VLCC Aliakmon I loaded ?2 million barrels of the grade on April 27 and exited the strait on May 2, discharging at Oman's Ras Markaz storage terminal on May ?3, Kpler data showed.Kpler and ?SynMax also found two Suezmax tankers - the Odessa and Zouzou N. - carrying 1 million barrels each of Upper Zakum, headed to South Korea after exiting the strait.All three tankers are managed by Greece-based Dynacom Tankers Management. It was not clear who chartered the Dynacom tankers and the company did not respond to a request for comment.

ADNOC intends to continue to sell oil from inside the strait, notifying some customers in late April they could load Das and Upper Zakum crude ?from May ?via STS transfers at ports outside the Gulf including Fujairah and Oman's Sohar.The company is holding talks with Asian refiners to sell ?May-loading Das and Upper Zakum cargoes, said the source with direct knowledge of ADNOC's plans, and an Indian refining source, who declined to be identified as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

US and Iran inch towards short-term deal to end fightingAriba Shahid, Steve Holland, Nayera Abdallah

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON/DUBAI,The United States and Iran are edging toward a limited, temporary agreement to halt their war, ?sources and officials said on Thursday, with a draft framework that would stop the fighting but leave the most contentious issues unresolved.The emerging plan centres on a short-term memorandum rather than a ?comprehensive peace deal, underscoring deep divisions between the two sides and signalling that any agreement at this stage would be an interim step.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

Hopes that even a partial deal could lead to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz have already moved markets, with global stocks approaching record highs on Thursday and oil prices nursing steep losses on bets that supply disruptions could ease.Tehran and Washington have scaled back ambitions for a sweeping settlement as differences persist, particularly over Iran's nuclear programme — including the fate of its highly enriched uranium stockpiles and how long ?Tehran would halt nuclear war.Instead, they are working toward a temporary arrangement aimed at preventing a return to conflict and stabilising shipping through the strait, the sources and officials said.

"Our priority is that they announce ?a permanent end to war and the rest of the issues could be thrashed out once they get back to direct talks," a senior Pakistani official involved in mediation ?between the two sides told Reuters.The proposed framework would unfold in three stages: formally ending the war, resolving the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and launching a 30-day window for negotiations on a broader agreement, according to the sources and officials.A Pakistani source and another source briefed on the mediation said a one-page memorandum to formally end the conflict was close, though gaps remain between the sides.U.S. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly played ?up the prospect of a breakthrough since the war began on February 28 with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, struck an optimistic tone.

"They want to make a deal... it's very possible," he told reporters at the White House on Wednesday, adding later that "it'll be over quickly."The proposal would formally end the conflict in which full-scale warfare was paused by a ceasefire announced on April 7. But it leaves unresolved key U.S. demands that Iran suspend its nuclear programme and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the sources said.Israel, which has also been ?fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon, said on Thursday it had killed a Hezbollah commander in an airstrike on Beirut a day earlier, the first Israeli attack on the Lebanese capital

US senators urge stability, cooperation between US, China

BEIJING, A delegation of U.S. senators visiting Beijing has called for stability and peaceful cooperation ?between the world's two largest economies a week before the countries' leaders meet."I strongly believe that we want to de-escalate, not decouple. We want stability, we want mutual respect," Senator Steve Daines, who is leading the bipartisan delegation, said ?in opening remarks at a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang ?Yi on Thursday.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.U.S. President Donald Trump is scheduled to travel to the Chinese capital to meet President Xi Jinping on May 14 and 15.

"It's been about nine years since there was a purchase made of Boeing aircraft here," he said, according to ?a media pool report.China has yet to announce Trump's visit, saying the ?two sides maintain communication regarding the trip. Relations between the two powers remain generally stable after ?striking ?an uneasy trade truce last October following their leaders' meeting in South Korea.Speaking to Daines, Wang said China and the U.S. should be partners rather than rivals, despite their differences, and called on Washington to view Beijing objectively and establish a rational

since a ceasefire there was agreed last month.

Hezbollah triggered its ?latest conflict with Israel by opening fire in support of Iran on March 2. A halt to Israeli strikes in Lebanon is another key Iranian demand in Tehran's negotiations with Washington, and Iranian officials signalled scepticism over the U.S. proposal to end the wider war.A foreign ?ministry spokesperson said Tehran would respond in due course, while lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei described the proposal as "more of an American wish-list than a reality."Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf appeared to mock reports that indicated the two sides were close, writing on social media that "Operation Trust Me Bro failed" and portraying the negotiations as U.S. spin following its failure to reopen the strait.Reports of a possible agreement caused global oil prices to shed roughly 11% on Wednesday, with benchmark Brent crude trading at around \$98 a barrel on Thursday.Global share prices also rose and bond yields fell on optimism about an end to a war that has disrupted energy supplies."The contents of the U.S.-Iran peace ?proposals are thin, but there is an expectation in the ?market that further military action will not take ?place," said Takamasa Ikeda, a senior portfolio manager at GCI Asset Management.

A line chart of the percent change in price of energy commodities since Trump's electionNBC News, citing two unnamed U.S. officials, said Trump decided on the pause after Saudi Arabia suspended the U.S. military's ability to use a Saudi base for the operation.Saudi officials ?were surprised and angered by Trump's announcement that the U.S. would help escort ships through the Strait, leading them to tell Washington they would deny the U.S. permission ?to fly military aircraft out of a Saudi base or through Saudi airspace, NBC reported.The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report.The U.S. military has kept up its own blockade on Iranian ships in the region. U.S. Central Command said forces fired at an unladen Iranian-flagged oil tanker on Wednesday, disabling the vessel as it attempted to sail toward an Iranian port.The source briefed on the mediation said the U.S. negotiations were being led by Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared ?Kushner. If both sides agreed on the preliminary deal, that would start the clock on 30 days of detailed negotiations to reach a full ?agreement.

The sources said the memorandum did not mention several key demands Washington has made in the past, which Iran has rejected, such as the restrictions on Iran's missile programme and an end to its support for proxy militias in the Middle East, including Hezbollah.



understanding."It is hoped ?that the U.S. could truly respect China's core interests, properly manage differences, join hands to do more major, practical ?and good things that are beneficial to the two ?countries and ?the world," Wang was quoted in a statement by his ministry.In a separate meeting with the U.S. delegation in Beijing, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said China ?stands ?ready to enhance exchanges and cooperation with the ?U.S. side in various areas and expand practical cooperation, according to a pool report.

Flights carrying women and children linked to IS group land in Australia



Airliners carrying Australian women and children with alleged ties to the Islamic State group landed in Australia on Thursday.A plane reportedly carrying three Australian women and eight children landed in Melbourne, while a separate plane carrying a woman and her son arrived in Sydney soon after.The Australian government announced on Wednesday that after spending years in a Syrian desert camp, they planned to return to Australia.

Police said the women face potential criminal charges relating to their alleged time in the Islamic State group's so-called caliphate that spanned Syria and Iraq.Both Qatar Airways flights took off minutes apart from Doha bound for Australia's two largest cities. QR904, which landed in Melbourne first, was followed by QR908 in Sydney.The Australian government had condemned the women for supporting Islamic State militants by traveling to Syria and had refused to help repatriate them.Police have been investigating for more than a decade Australians' potential involvement in atrocities while in Syria, including terrorism offenses and crimes against humanity such as slave trading.Deakin University extremism expert Joshua Roose said Australian authorities were investigating abuses within the caliphate including enslaving Yazidi women and harsh policing of sharia law."Some of the worst forms of violence were in fact

US judge orders release of controversial Epstein jail note

New York: A note Jeffrey Epstein's former cellmate claimed he found after the millionaire sex offender's first suspected jail suicide attempt was made public Wednesday, years after being sealed and locked in a courthouse vault as part of an unrelated legal dispute.

US District Judge Kenneth Karas in White Plains, New York, ordered the release of the note after The New York Times asked him last week to unseal it and other documents in a case involving the former cellmate, Nicholas Tartaglione. Federal prosecutors did not oppose the request. Few people had known about the note until Tartaglione, a former police officer serving a life sentence for killing four people, mentioned it last year on writer Jessica Reed Kraus' podcast.Tartaglione claimed he discovered the note in a book after Epstein was found on the floor of their cell at a Manhattan federal jail on July 23, 2019, with a strip of bedsheet around the financier's neck.

‘I ignored period pain, then my organs got stuck together’: How a 31-year-old teacher beat endometriosis to birth a child



For years, Sunanda Jadhav (name changed), a 31-year-old assistant professor from Navi Mumbai, quietly endured excruciating pain each month, convinced it was “normal” period discomfort. “I used to manage with pain-killers. Some days, the pain was so bad that I struggled to concentrate at work but I thought every woman goes through this,” she says.Little did she know, the signals her body had been sending were a warning of endometriosis, a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus, often on the ovaries, fallopian tubes or pelvic tissues. Over time, this can cause painful periods, cysts and adhesions that make organs stick together, and in severe cases, affect fertility, threatening a woman’s ability to conceive naturally.

Sunanda’s symptoms were subtle yet persistent. She had pelvic pain, digestive discomfort and irregular ovulation cycles. It was only after she underwent detailed tests at Motherhood Hospital, Kharghar, including transvaginal sonography (TVS) and color Doppler scans, that the extent of her condition became clear. “My left fallopian tube was damaged and overlapped with my intestine. Because of that, even eating something as simple as bread caused unbearable pain. I had noticed it especially during my time in Europe. I ate a lot of bread there and my pain worsened,” she says.Like many women, she normalised the suffering until she failed to conceive after four years of marriage.

Why endometriosis affects fertility

The overgrown tissue can cause pelvic organs to stick together, block fallopian tubes and reduce egg quality, with 30% to50% of people with the condition facing infertility. Inflammation hinders ovulation and implantation of the embryo. “Her left fallopian tube was severely affected and almost ‘frozen’ alongside surrounding organs,” says Dr Surabhi Siddhartha, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Motherhood Hospitals. “Endometriosis often causes organs to stick together due to scar tissue, making natural conception difficult.” She needed surgery to clear out the overgrowth.A multi-step interventionSunanda had advanced laparoscopic surgery to remove cysts and sticky tissue mass. Then she was put on hormonal injections (Leuprolide) to suppress residual endometriotic tissue. In March 2025, she conceived naturally and delivered a 3.1 kg baby girl in October via planned C-section.The birth seemed easier com-

pared to the surgery to remove the overgrown tissue, according to Dr Siddhartha. “We discovered that the uterus had stuck to the bladder in the front and the intestines behind. Separating these organs required extreme precision to avoid injury. The aim was to restore normal anatomy so natural conception could occur,” she says. The surgery lasted nearly two hours. Sunanda then needed three cycles of hormonal injections to suppress remaining endometriotic tissue and allow her reproductive system to heal.

Diet played a crucial role in her recovery and conception. “After my laparoscopy, I gave up bread completely; no burgers, pizza and pav. I also gave up packaged and processed foods,” says Sunanda. Before conceiving, she also added an empty stomach morning routine that included ½–1 teaspoon of overnight soaked fenugreek seeds, a walnut, five almonds and five to six raisins. She stopped drinking fenugreek water once she conceived.Her breakfast included simple home-cooked foods such as upma, poha, idli, dosa followed by a cup of tea. Her mid-morning snacks were fresh fruits. For lunch she packed home-cooked roti, bhaji and salad followed by roasted seeds and makhana for evening snacks. She would eat dinner by 7 pm.“Under my doctor’s guidance, I included Vitamin C-rich foods such as amla, murabba and strawberries. Since I am a vegetarian, I also had a homemade probiotic drink called kanji made of carrots and beetroots. I exercised regularly. In short, diet and activity were real game-changers,” she says. That’s why she conceived naturally within two to three months of surgery.“This is not unusual,” explains Dr Siddhartha. “With timely surgery, hormonal support and careful monitoring, many women with severe endometriosis can still conceive naturally. It requires precision and close follow-up but outcomes can be remarkable.”

Given the extent of adhesions, Sunanda’s pregnancy was closely monitored. “We recommended a planned C-section to ensure safety. What mattered were frequent antenatal visits, hormonal support and careful observation of both mother and baby,” says Dr Siddhartha, adding cases like Sunanda’s are increasingly common in India.“Previously, endometriosis was rare, perhaps one in a thousand women. Now, in clinical practice, it is closer to one in a hundred. We see women mostly above 26 years of age, though even those as young as 24 are being diagnosed in our clinic,” she says. Lifestyle factors such as sedentary habits, dietary patterns and delayed child-bearing are contributing to this spiral. “But most women do not understand what their menstrual pain means. Many women consider severe cramps normal. Pain that affects your daily routine and digestion during cycles, leads to irregular ovulation or difficulty conceiving are warning signs that require evaluation,” says Dr Siddhartha.During menstruation, retrograde blood flow can carry uterine-like tissue to the ovaries, fallopian tubes or pelvic tissue.

Hope for pancreatic cancer? Top oncologists explain how an experimental vaccine hunts down rogue cells

Pancreatic cancer remains one of the deadliest forms of cancer, with fewer than 13 per cent of patients surviving beyond five years after diagnosis. Unlike cancers that benefit from routine screening methods such as colonoscopies or mammograms, pancreatic cancer has no standard early-detection test, and symptoms often emerge only after the disease has reached an advanced stage. Treatment options are limited and only about 20 per cent of cases are considered operable. Now imagine a vaccine custom-built just for the patient, designed to teach their own body to fight off cancer.That’s exactly what researchers at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Center have done. They developed an experimental, individualized therapeutic cancer vaccine that uses messenger RNA (mRNA) to treat pancreatic cancer. Messenger RNA is a molecule that carries genetic instructions from DNA to help in protein synthesis. Follow-up results from a phase 1 clinical trial show that nearly 90 per cent of people whose immune systems responded to the vaccine were still alive up to six years after receiving the last treatment.“These early results show this new immunotherapy approach has the potential to make a difference for one of the deadliest cancers,” Dr Vinod Balachandra, the trial’s principal investigator and director of the Olayan Center for Cancer Vaccines at MSK, was quoted as saying. The findings were presented at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR).What does this mean for the future of treatment? Dr Deepak Govil and Dr Vivek Tandon, who deal with such cases in GI Surgery and GI Oncology at Medanta, Noida, explain that the findings show how cancer therapies can become more targeted and personalized. “Early research has shown that in some patients, this approach can trigger a strong immune response and may help reduce the risk of the cancer coming back after surgery. However, it is still being studied in clinical trials, and it may work best when combined with other treatments like chemotherapy or immunotherapy,” they told the Indian Express. Over to them.

How does an mRNA cancer vaccine work?

A personalised mRNA cancer vaccine is an emerging type of treatment designed to help the body’s own immune system to recognise and attack cancer more effectively. This is in contrast to traditional treatments, such as chemotherapy or radiation, which broadly target cancer cells and can also impact healthy tissue, and is highly personalised for each individual patient.Pancreatic cancer is especially difficult because it often “hides” from the immune system, so the body does not see it as a threat. In this approach, doctors first remove the tumour during surgery and closely study it to identify specific genetic changes. These changes create unique proteins, called neoantigens, which are found only on that patient’s cancer cells. Scientists then use this information to design a personalised mRNA vaccine that carries instructions to make these same proteins.When the vaccine is given, the mRNA enters certain immune cells in the body and guides them to produce harmless copies of these cancer-specific proteins. This acts like a signal or alert, showing the immune system exactly what the cancer looks like. Immune cells, especially T-cells, are then trained to



recognise these markers and begin searching for real cancer cells carrying them. Once they find them, they attack and destroy them. In simple terms, the vaccine works like a “training tool” or “wanted poster” for the immune system, helping it identify and fight cancer more effectively.

Why is it effective in pancreatic cancer?

Pancreatic cancer is a fast growing type of cancer that is often diagnosed late and difficult to treat. Even with surgery and chemotherapy, the chances of recurrence are high. And this is where a personalised vaccine could help – by teaching the immune system to continue to target any residual cancer cells that may remain in the body.The latest results are promising, with years of tumour-free survival for roughly 80 per cent of patients. This means that, for some people, the immune system was effectively “trained” to keep the cancer in check for a significant period of time. However, these results should be interpreted with caution. These are early clinical findings in a relatively small number of patients, and not all patients may respond in the same way.

Watermelon, lemon or coconut water? The summer drink that replenishes electrolytes best

As temperatures rise across India, hydration becomes critical not just for comfort but for maintaining energy, muscle function and overall health. Summer heat increases fluid loss through sweat, and with it the body also loses essential electrolytes such as sodium and potassium. While plain water remains the gold standard for daily hydration, many people turn to fruit-infused waters and natural drinks for minerals or electrolytes.These help regulate fluid balance, support nerve signalling and keep muscles functioning efficiently. During prolonged heat exposure or physical activity, the body loses significant amounts of sodium through sweat, along with smaller amounts of potassium and magnesium. Replacing lost electrolytes becomes important to prevent fatigue, cramps and dehydration, making the right beverage choice more than just a matter of taste.Watermelon is nearly 92 per cent water, which makes it naturally hydrating and particularly appealing during hot weather. It also contains small amounts of potassium and natural sugars that can

Sramcbled wrods: real reason you can still read jumbled text



You’ve probably seen it on social media before: a paragraph of scrambled text that looks like nonsense at first glance, yet somehow you can read it with surprising ease.Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn’t mttiae in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt thng is taht the frist and lsat ltteers be at the rghit plcae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can siltl raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteer by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.This effect, often playfully referred to as typoglycemia, is frequently shared online as a quirky insight into how our brains work.But this viral claim is only part of the story. To understand why it works, we need to look at how the brain actually processes written language.The claim that usually accompanies this snippet is that as long as the first and last letters of a word are in the right place, the order of the middle letters doesn’t matter.At first glance, the claim seems plausible.But while there is a kernel of truth here, the explanation is misleading.

Reading scrambled words has much less to do with a magical “rule” about first and last letters, and much more to do with how our brains use context, pattern recognition and prediction.When we read, we typically don’t painstakingly process each letter in sequence. Instead, skilled readers recognise words rapidly by drawing on multiple cues at once.

Psycholinguistic research shows that we process words as patterns rather than as sequences of individual sounds.These include familiar letter patterns, the overall shape of the word and, crucially, the context of the sentence. Our brains are constantly predicting what is likely to come next, then checking those predictions against the visual input.This is why we often miss typos in our own writing. We don’t see what’s actually on the page, we see what we expect to be there.The same principle helps us make sense of jumbled words. Even when letters are out of order, enough of the structure remains for the brain to make an educated guess.Word shape and structure matter

The viral meme suggests that only the first and last

India may avert 10 million cervical cancer but vaccine cover remains low

High-income countries could eliminate cervical cancer by 2048, but without expanded efforts in vaccination and screening, many women in other regions will still face high risks of cervical cancer according to a new modelling study in The Lancet. The study highlights that reaching the World Health Organization’s (WHO) goals—vaccinating 90% of girls, screening 70% of women, and treating 90% of pre-cancer and cancer cases—is crucial to eliminating cervical cancer globally and saving millions of lives.

Achieving these goals could avert 37 million cervical cancer cases over the next century and accelerate progress toward elimination. “For India, reaching these targets would avert over 10 million cervical cancer cases over the next century, accelerate progress toward elimination, and would reduce inequalities with high income countries,” said Prof Marc Brisson, Canada Research Chair in Mathematical Modelling and Health Economics Related to Infectious Diseases and lead author of the study.Importantly, working towards these targets, India rolled out its HPV vaccination campaign earlier this year. Over 1.5 lakh primary health centres across the country screen for three most common forms of cancers in the country, including cervical cancer. And, the country is working towards setting up more cancer centres and creating a grid to ensure people are able to access care.The lancet model findingsUsing current national cervical cancer vaccination and screening efforts, researchers estimated that high-income countries are on track to eliminate cervical cancer by 2048, while low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) will see only slight reductions over the next century. As a result, the gap between regions will widen dramatically, with women in the poorer countries facing much higher rates of this preventable disease.For India, according to Prof Brisson, a low HPV vaccination coverage would mean that the incidence rate would increase from 2 times more than high income countries to 12 times more by the end of the century. “However, if India reaches 90% vaccination coverage of girls, elimination would be possible by 2085, preventing 6 million cervical cancer cases over the next century,” he said.

The study authors also said that recent advancements, such as lower-cost and single-dose vaccines, ex-

letters matter.But this oversimplifies what’s really going on. We are sensitive to how letters relate to each other within a word. Common spelling patterns and familiar combinations make words easier to recognise, even when slightly distorted.This is also why certain visual disruptions make reading harder. Text in alternating caps, such as “AlTeRnAtInG CaPs”, is difficult to process because it disrupts the usual visual contour of words. The same goes for “ransom note” lettering made from mismatched fonts, which interferes with pattern recognition.

In other words, readability depends on preserving enough of a word’s internal structure, not just its outer letters.If the meme were true, any sentence with intact first and last letters should be easy to read. But that’s not what we find.It follows the supposed “rules”, yet it is much harder to decipher. In fact, this is the opening of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” So why is the viral paragraph so much easier to read? Because it has been carefully (if unconsciously) engineered to be readable.

Several factors make the famous example easier to process than it appears.First, many of the words are short, which limits how many possible combinations the letters could form. Words like “you” and “can” are often left unchanged.Second, function words such as “the”, “and” and “is” are usually intact. These small, common words provide the grammatical scaffolding of the sentence, making it easier to predict what comes next.Third, when longer words are scrambled, the changes are often minimal. Adjacent letters are swapped (“wrod” for “word”), which is much easier to process than more extreme rearrangements.

Finally, the passage itself is highly predictable. Once you recognise the topic and rhythm, your brain fills in the gaps automatically, much as it does when listening to speech in a noisy environment.The key to understanding this phenomenon is context. Words are not processed in isolation. Each word is interpreted in relation to the others around it, and within a broader framework of meaning.This allows us to compensate for missing or distorted information.But there are limits. As scrambling becomes more extreme, or as words become less predictable, comprehension quickly breaks down. Reading speed also slows noticeably, even when we can still make sense of the text.

Interestingly, computers can now unscramble jumbled words with remarkable accuracy. By analysing probabilities and patterns across large datasets, algorithms can determine the most likely original form of a word or sentence.In this sense, machines and humans rely on similar principles. Not rigid rules about letter position, but flexible systems that weigh patterns and probabilities.



panded screening programmes. Multi-age cohort vaccinations and efforts to include boys in vaccination campaigns can help make cervical cancer elimination feasible worldwide but require global, coordinated efforts from governments and international health agenciesLow uptake of HPV vaccinationIndia accounts for a fifth of all cervical cancer cases in the world, with it being the second most common form of cancer among Indian women. India reports over 1.2 lakh cases and 80,000 deaths each year. So, the HPV vaccination campaign for all 14-year-olds rolled out on February 28 this year was a welcome move.

“It is true that the uptake of HPV vaccination is very slow/ low in India. There are multiple factors such as the timing of HPV vaccination launch just before the final examinations, with majority of schools on summer break in April and May. There was not enough awareness generation or demand generation from the public, no strong messages on social media, in fact negative messages, videos are also going viral,” Dr Smita Joshi, senior scientist at Prayas, said. Data from Gol’s central digital platform U-WIN portal suggests that till April 10 this year, only 10.63% of the 1.15 crore girls eligible for vaccination got their shot. Dr Joshi added that successful strategies from the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Malaysia could be studied.Cervical cancer screening coverage is also very low in India with less than 2% of the women getting screened, she said. “We need to screen at least 70% women aged 30 to 49 with an HPV test yet we are still using VIA.

utes vitamin C and small amounts of potassium, while its sharp flavour often encourages greater fluid intake. Adding a pinch of salt significantly improves its utility by introducing sodium, the primary electrolyte lost through sweat. This simple combination creates a light rehydration drink that can be particularly useful after moderate outdoor exposure. It offers a practical balance between taste and functionality without the excess sugar often found in packaged beverages.Among natural hydration choices, coconut water stands apart for its electrolyte profile. It is naturally rich in potassium and also contains magnesium and modest amounts of sodium, making it more effective for replenishment than standard infused waters. Research has shown that coconut water can support post-exercise rehydration comparably to some sports beverages, particularly for mild to moderate fluid loss. However, because sweat losses are primarily sodium-heavy, coconut water alone may not always be sufficient after prolonged intense activity.

Messi could have retired after 2022 WC win, why is he back for a final fling?



In Lusail, under fireworks and gold confetti, he stood wrapped in a black bisht, the World Cup in his hands and Argentina at his feet. Around him, teammates screamed, cried, collapsed. Millions back home flooded the streets of Buenos Aires. Men climbed traffic lights. Grandmothers leaned out of balconies, waving flags. Generations seemed to exhale together.The country that had spent decades trapped between nostalgia and frustration had finally found peace through a footballer who carried both emotions inside him.Four years later, the story arrives at another strange crossroads. When the World Cup kicks off across the United States, Mexico and Canada – a sprawling, commercial, multilingual spectacle spread across a continent – Messi, rather improbably, will still be at the centre of it.

There is something almost cinematic about the route his career has taken since Qatar. The boy who crossed the Atlantic at 13 for growth-hormone treatment in Spain has returned to the Americas as football's most recognisable face, carrying the World Cup into the very market FIFA has always dreamt of conquering completely.When Messi joined Inter Miami in 2023, the move was initially framed as retirement disguised as ambition. America has long been football's soft landing spot – a glamorous final stop for ageing superstars. Pelé did it. David Beckham did it.But Messi's arrival felt different because he didn't come to America as a fading star searching for comfort. He arrived as the reigning world champion.

Suddenly, Major League Soccer (MLS) stopped feeling peripheral. Stadiums transformed. Celebrities lined the touchlines. Children in pink shirts screamed his name in cities that barely followed 'soccer'.In many ways, even FIFA could not have scripted the transition better.The greatest footballer of the era moved to the continent hosting the next World Cup just as the sport there reached a cultural tipping point. America had spent decades trying

to import football prestige. Messi brought it instantly.And through it all, Argentina followed him.One of the most fascinating threads connecting Qatar 2022 to US-Mexico-Canada 2026 is that Messi's career arc no longer mirrors Argentina's suffering.For most of his time with the Albiceleste, Messi represented longing. Every tournament defeat deepened the national neurosis. The lost World Cup final of 2014 and the back-to-back Copa America defeats that followed turned Messi into football's saddest genius. Even his brief retirement from international football in 2016 felt symbolic of a country permanently exhausted by disappointment.Under head coach Lionel Scaloni, Argentina stopped obsessing over ghosts. The team became emotionally lighter, tactically clearer, and less dependent on Messi performing miracles. Younger players stopped worshipping him from a distance and began competing alongside him naturally. Julian Alvarez pressed defenders like a street-fighter. Rodrigo de Paul became Messi's bodyguard and emotional amplifier. Enzo Fernandez brought swagger. Emiliano Martínez brought madness.For the first time, Argentina looked like a modern football team instead of a shrine to its own history.

Messi changed, too. The explosive dribbler who once tore through entire midfields stopped trying to dominate every second and instead manipulated matches in moments. A pause. A disguised pass. A glance before a through ball.That evolution is why 2026 no longer feels impossible. At 39, Messi will not arrive at the World Cup as the sport's best athlete. But he may still arrive as its sharpest mind.Lionel Messi during practice for the FIFA World Cup in Kansas City. (AP Photo) Lionel Messi during practice for the FIFA World Cup in Kansas City. And there is poetry in where this final act unfolds. Mexico carries the ghosts of Maradona and 1986. The United States represents football's commercial future. Canada symbolises the sport's expanding geography. Messi somehow connects all three ideas at once: history, spectacle and globalisation wrapped in one player.By then, his relationship with Argentina may resemble something deeper than fandom. He is no longer merely their greatest footballer. He has become a national reference point, a shared emotional language.

Even the pressure feels transformed now. In Qatar, Messi played as though chased by destiny. Every touch carried urgency. Every match felt loaded with consequence. In 2026, there may instead be a strange freedom surrounding him. The burden has vanished because the story is already complete.Which is precisely what makes the possibility of one final run so seductive.Sport rarely grants perfect endings. Most legends fade slowly, painfully, inevitably.

India A tri-series starring Sooryavanshi to get full-scale televised coverage

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi IPL RRVaibhav Suryavanshi of Rajasthan Royals celebrates his century (100 runs) during Match 36 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026 between Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur, India, on April 25, 2026. (CREIMAS)Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's inclusion was the headline development when the India A squad for a tri-series in Sri Lanka was announced and now, the rubber will be televised live, a rarity for series that doesn't involve senior international teams. Sony Sports Network has announced that the series, which starts on June 9, will be telecast on its channels and streamed live on Sony LIV."India A, Sri Lanka A and Afghanistan A are all set to battle it out in the #TalentTV Cup ODI Tri-Series. Watch all the action LIVE from 9th June, 10 AM onwards, on Sony Sports Network TV channels & Sony LIV," said Sony Sports Network on its social media handles. The tri-series will feature hosts Sri Lanka A, India A and Afghanistan A. Following the limited-overs tri-series, India A will also play two multi-day matches against Sri Lanka A, with the squad for the red-ball fixtures to be announced at a later date.

Sooryavanshi's selection in the series comes ahead of what could be a historic inclusion in the senior squad for their T20I tour of Ireland. The Indian Express had learnt earlier that the 15-year-old is in contention to be part of the team that is scheduled to play two T20Is in the country. Sooryavanshi followed up a remarkable debut in the 2025 IPL by winning the Orange cap in the recently concluded 2026 edition of the tournament. He scored 776 runs in 16 innings at a scarcely believable strike rate of 237.30 and average of 48.50 with one century and five



half-centuries.Sooryavanshi missed out on centuries by a whisker in both of Rajasthan Royals' playoff matches. Over the course of the innings against SRH in the Eliminator, Sooryavanshi broke Chris Gayle's record for most sixes in a single season of the IPL. The West Indies great had set it just a year after Sooryavanshi was born. He eventually fell on 97 off 29 balls at a ridiculous strike rate of 334.48.In RR's next match against Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2, Sooryavanshi was more measured in his approach with his side losing wickets at the other end, thus showing a different facet to his game. Even then, he eventually accelarated and was dismissed on 96 off 47 balls.India A will be led by Tilak Varma in Sri Lanka. Riyan Parag was initially slated to be vice-captain but he was ruled out with an injury that he had sustained over the course of the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) in which he captained the Rajasthan Royals. While Parag was initially replaced by Ruturaj Gaikwad, the latter is also set to be replaced by Rajat Patidar after he was called up to the senior Indian squad to replace the injured Virat Kohli.

Praggnanandhaa in three-way battle for Norway Chess title heading into final round

Oslo: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa has put himself firmly in contention for the Norway Chess title after a commanding classical victory over compatriot D Gukesh moved him to within half a point of leader Wesley So of the USA, setting up an intriguing final round battle here.Praggnanandhaa piled more misery on Gukesh, defeating the world champion in a classical game to earn three full points and put himself in the hunt to become the first Indian chess player to win the prestigious tournament.

He moved into the sole second place on 15 points, just behind American GM Wesley So (15.5) after Round 9, with one round remaining on Friday.The tournament could hardly have asked for a more dramatic finale, with France's Alireza Firouzja also in title contention on 14.5 points in third place, leaving three players with a realistic shot at the title heading into the final round. Significantly, whoever emerges victorious on Friday will be crowned Norway Chess champion for the first time.Playing black, Praggnanandhaa came armed with the ambitious Nimzo-Indian Samisch Variation and sprang a surprise on Gukesh. The game followed an even course through the opening before Praggnanandhaa introduced a fresh idea on move 14.Gukesh's response turned out to be a decisive mis-step, allowing Praggnanandhaa to win a rook and wrest complete control of the position.Yet the game was far from being straightforward. Gukesh dug in and fought tenaciously, creating practical chances and even briefly reviving hopes of a comeback. Having let a winning position against the world champion slip away in their earlier meeting amid a time scramble, Praggnanandhaa was determined not to repeat the mistake.This time, he kept a firm grip on the game,

neutralised every counter-chance and converted his advantage with precision to claim a crucial victory.Praggnanandhaa will face Germany's Vincent Keymer in the decisive final round, while leader Wesley So takes on Alireza in a clash that could determine the destination of the title.With So on 15.5 points, Praggnanandhaa on 15 and Firouzja on 14.5, all three remain in contention and are likely to push for victory rather than settle for safety.American So holds the advantage, as a classical win would guarantee him the championship, but any slip-up could reopen the race, with Praggnanandhaa and Firouzja poised to capitalise if results fall their way.So defeated Magnus Carlsen in the Armageddon tie-break after holding his nerve in a tense finish, a result that ultimately proved decisive in the standings.Had So lost the Armageddon, he would have been tied with Praggnanandhaa on 15 points, keeping the title race even tighter going into the final stretch. Carlsen pressed hard throughout the game, but So defended resiliently to secure a crucial win.Reigning world blitz champion Bibisara Assaubayeva clinched the Norway Chess women's title with a round to spare, even after an Armageddon tie-break loss to Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk added just a single point to her tally.The Kazakh star's consistency carried her to 16.5 points, enough to secure the title despite the Armageddon setback, as she entered Round 9 with a commanding five-point lead. She needs just half a point to seal the championship.Zhu Jiner delivered the only decisive classical result in the women's section, defeating Divya Deshmukh with the black pieces after maintaining steady pressure through a tense middlegame, eventually converting in time trouble to secure three crucial points and climb into second place.

Bebeto, Romario were not friends, then the cradle celebration happened



Two afternoons before the quarterfinals against the Netherlands, Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Pereira told his men to unwind. Some of them hit the swimming pool, some went to explore Dallas. But striker Bebeto did not leave his room, and pranced restlessly in the corridor, waiting for the hotel phone to ring.

Hours passed, and he went down to the teleoperator and sat with him. His wife Denise was heavily pregnant when he left for the tournament. Soon after he left, she was robbed of her car and Rolex at gunpoint. In the morning his father told him that she was going to the labour. "We were expecting our third child, and I was there with her for the other two," he later told FIFA.Around sunset, the phone finally buzzed. It was his mother, who broke the news that a son, Mattheus, was born. Hours later, broadcast giants Globo arranged a video call with Bebeto, his wife and newborn, through an expensive video-phone device. "I broke down in tears and kept crying for minutes. I couldn't talk, I was so emotional because I was not there with them," he would say.

The media called the father baby-faced assassin, for his fresh-faced looks. He played in a front-two with the hubristic Romario, the lead act who scored with a sniper's precision but fitfully volatile. Bebeto's role was to facilitate Romario's fearsome strikes, to create space by dragging the defenders with his clever runs and finessed passes. The management was initially worried because of they were not the best friends, an animosity that flared in the leagues of Brazil and Spain, and they were of contrasting personalities (Bebeto is a family type, stay at home. I'm a street cat, Romario once said), but on the turf, they telegraphed each other's designs with a clairvoyant's intuition.Romario was all the rage in the 1994 World Cup, but the afternoon in Dallas was Bebeto's. First, he sprinted nearly 30 yards to pick a cross from his half, conjured a perfectly weighted pass onto Romario marauding into the box, which he smacked on one bounce to the nets. Minutes later came a glorious goal and an iconic moment in the World Cup. Bebeto's cradle celebration, the ode to his son.

A stray header from Branco bubbled towards

Sri Lanka's Pathirage breaks record for 2nd longest javelin throw by an Asian

Sri Lanka's Rumesh Pathirage became the first javelin thrower to cross the 90m mark in the 2026 season. The 23-year-old threw 92.62m at the Rome Diamond League on Thursday night to make the new meet record, new national record for Sri Lanka, and take the World lead. Overall, it sits eighth in the all-time list for longest throws in men's javelin, with Pathirage overtaking current India national coach Sergey Makarov.

One of the most consistent throwers this season, Rumesh broke the national record earlier in March and took the world lead with 89.37m throw. He crossed 89m again at the Kip Kenio Classic in April throwing 89.28mCompeting in an elite field with current world champion Keshorn Walcott, former world champion Anderson Peters, former Olympic champion Thomas Rohler, former Olympic silver medalist Jakub Vadlejch, Rumesh took the lead with his first throw of 84.49m and recorded 92.67m in his second throw. The rest were foul throws.

A medium pacer turned thrower, Rumesh trains under his coach Tony Prasanna."It was coach Tony who introduced me to javelin. He always tells me that if I master the basics and do them the right way, I will eventually reap the rewards. He is more than a coach. He doesn't just teach me the sport but about life as well," Rumesh had incredible consistencyWith Rumesh's rise, the Asian Games 2026 will feature an elite field with the likes of Double Olympic medalist Neeraj Chopra and reigning Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem featuring in the event. Consistency has been trademark of Rumesh throughout his career. Unlike the talented but erratic former Sri

Romario halfway in the Dutch box. They vociferously claimed an offside, Romario certainly was. But he didn't touch the ball, and the Dutch left it unattended. Bebeto sprang onto it, controlled the ball with his right thigh, slid away from a Dutch defender's stretched leg from behind, ran three measured strides, rounded off the goalkeeper Ed De Goey and slammed the ball into the empty nets. He recollected the sequence: "Romario was offside. I looked at their last man and thought, 'I'm not offside.' I was off with everything I had. At that moment, I pleaded with God to allow me to score a goal against Holland in homage to my son," he said.Beaming, he galloped to the touchline, contorting his arms like a cradle and rocking it, as though he were cradling an imaginary baby. He turned to his left, he saw Romario doing the same; he gazed to the right, midfielder Mazinho was doing the same. Mazinho had two sons — Thiago and Rafinha. Thiago (Alcantara), a silken midfielder, chose the nationality of his mother and won trophies for Spain; he was Pep Guardiola's midfield conduit in Bayern Munich. Rafinha, barely one then, played for Barcelona and Brazil. Romario had a nine-month-old son too — Romarinho, who also became a footballer, turning out for Fluminense among others.

Romario, burying all the differences with Bebeto, hugged him and whispered, or so the myth goes, "I love you." "It was so beautiful. It was a simple gesture. But I didn't know it would become this famous," Bebeto told FIFA.So famous that it is often the first entry into any list of goal celebrations, recreated faithfully by every footballer who became a dad thereafter. The move was unheard-of, he would say. He put it poetically: "When I made that celebration maybe it was like Mattheus was baptised by God." He has reprised a hundred times to excited strangers in different corners of the world. "It doesn't matter where I go in the world, everyone wants to talk to me about that celebration. I still get emotional talking about it. It means so much to me, my family."But he gets emotional each time someone whips up the moment. He calls it the Mattheus goal. And his favourite goal. "I scored a lot of goals in my career – wonder goals, goals that won titles – but everyone only remembers the Mattheus goal. And that's one I remember the most too," he said.And what of Mattheus. He grew up watching others celebrate his father's foal, and became a footballer himself, an attacking midfielder good enough to turn up for Portuguese club Sporting CP, now playing for the Tampa Bay Rowdies in Florida. "Football was all he was ever interested in. I think his first ever word was probably 'football'," Bebeto told Globo. But the son never became the player his father was, or replicated his father's famous celebration himself, even though he is a father himself. "For some reason, I have never felt like doing it," he told Fox Sports. As an afterthought he added: "Maybe, before I retire, I would one day! Then, the most fabled celebration of all time would complete a full circle.



Lankan thrower Sumedha Ranasinghe, the first of his country to cross 85m and then slipped, Rumesh has consistently crossed 82m-mark (13 times in the 2025 season)."I had a successful season last year and finished seventh in my very first World Championships. Because of that, I am trying to push myself to achieve even more this season," Rumesh had said.Indian Javelin thrower Sachin Yadav finished eighth on his Diamond League debut with a poor throw of 79.18m. Competing in a bid to breach the Commonwealth Games qualification mark of 82.61m set by Athletics Federation of India, Sachin failed to cross the 80m mark. After Federation Cup in Ranchi earlier this month, this is second consecutive tournament where Sachin hasn't crossed the 80m mark.He started with a foul throw and recorded 79.18m mark in his second throw. However, he failed to better that effort in his subsequent throws with marks of 77.02m, 76.62m, 75.54m. Former World champion Anderson Peters finished second with 83.91m while USA's Curtis Thompson finished third with 82.44m.

After SC dismisses its plea, WFI acknowledges Vinesh's reply to show cause notice



The Wrestling Federation of India on Thursday said that it had received the reply of Vinesh Phogat's show cause notice which was issued on May 9. The national federation issued a statement after the Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea by WFI against a Delhi High Court order, allowing the World Championships medalist Vinesh to participate in selection trials, terming it as "infructuous" in view of subsequent developments.

"WFI has received the Respondent's (Vinesh's) reply to the Show Cause Notice, which shall be adjudicated in accordance with WFI's rules and procedures," WFI president Sanjay Kumar Singh said in the statement as per PTI."WFI further notes that the conduct of certain wrestlers at the Selection Trials is under consideration and a decision in that regard is yet to be taken," he added.Last Saturday, Phogat's comeback to the wrestling mat ended in heartbreak as Asian Championships

silver medalist Meenakshi Goyat defeated her in the semi-final of the Asian Games trials on Saturday at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi.Vinesh, who returned to the mat after two years, won two bouts but failed to make it past Meenakshi. Playing in the 53 kg category, Vinesh started with a 7-1 win over Jyoti but suffered a scare against Nishu in the next round. After she defeated Nishu in a highly charged bout which saw multiple stoppages and a scuffle at the end, Vinesh faced Meenakshi in the semis. Meenakshi played an aggressive game against Vinesh and attacked from the start and despite a late surge from Vinesh in the second half, won 6-4.Earlier this month, the WFI had declared Vinesh ineligible to participate in domestic events till June 26, citing the mandatory six-month notice period linked to athletes returning from retirement under anti-doping rules.

Virat Kohli ruled out of Afghanistan ODIs

New Delhi/Mullanpur: Indian batting superstar Virat Kohli was on Thursday ruled out of the upcoming ODI series against Afghanistan due to a hamstring injury that he sustained during the recently-concluded IPL.

Ruturaj Gaikwad, who was supposed to play for India A in the tri-series in Sri Lanka is likely to be summoned for the rubber in place of Kohli based on his performance during last appearance in ODIs for India.

When Trisha called Vijay her ‘home’: ‘We have the same love, comfort, friendship’



Vijay and Trisha in GhilliVijay and Trisha in Ghilli, the 2004 blockbuster that made them one of Tamil cinema's most recognised on-screen pairings. There is a version of Vijay that Tamil Nadu saw on Monday, the man standing at the centre of the state's biggest political upset in decades. And then there is the version Trisha Krishnan has been describing in interviews for years, the one who walks onto a film set, finds a corner, stares at a wall, and says almost nothing to anyone. Vijay and Trisha appeared on Coffee With Anu, the chat show hosted by actress Anu Haasan, together during the period when they were Tamil cinema's most in-demand on-screen pair, fresh off the back of back-to-back hits starting with Ghilli in 2004.

While describing life on a film set, Trisha pointed out that the cast and crew generally spent their downtime together, socialising, hanging around between shots, the usual rhythm of a long shoot day. Vijay, she said, did not

do any of that. "Instead, he would find a corner somewhere on set, sit down facing a wall, and stay there for hours. He always has his calm and did not talk much on set," she recounted. Vijay, sitting beside her on the show, had a response ready. He was not, he said, simply sitting in a corner doing nothing. He was thinking about the scene for the next shoot. In an old interview with Behindwoods, Trisha reflected more fully on what four films with Vijay had actually meant to her professionally and personally. Calling Vijay amazing, she acknowledged the four films, Ghilli, Thirupaachi, Aathi and Kuruvi, and spoke about what it was like to work with someone she had not immediately connected with when they first started. "When we started Ghilli I didn't have much of a rapport with him," she said, "because everyone knows Vijay is a very quiet person. Very reserved, comes on set, does his work. But thanks to my team of Ghilli, we became really good friends." What she found on the other side of it was someone she has not stopped talking warmly about since. "Vijay is a person who will always be very special to me because he was the co-star with whom I have given the biggest hits," she said. "I've never seen him lose his cool. He's so professional on set, he does his work, completes his task." She described him as a very kind, gracious person, and then added, "He's someone who you always look back and say, that one person I'll always be fond of. He's one of them." By the time Vijay and Trisha reunited for Leo in 2023, fifteen years after Kuruvi, she had not changed her description of him in any meaningful way. At the Leo success meet, standing on stage in front of a packed auditorium, she said working with him again felt like meeting a school friend. "There was the same comfort, love and friendship. In my 20-year career, the most long-term journey I had with a co-star was with Vijay. They say home is not a place, but a person."

‘Main hi karunga’: Kanu Behl recalls how Rahul Roy cast himself in Agra as Bollywood stopped calling

Last week, Rahul Roy had to issue an explanation about his financial state after rumours doing the rounds online that the actor, once a 1990s heartthrob, has been abandoned by family and is out of work that he's had to collaborate with unknown social media influencers to earn his livelihood. He admitted that he kept waiting for work in the Hindi film industry, but took matters into his own hands once nobody showed up knocking on his door. Rahul's last appearance on the screen was in Kanu Behl's psychological drama Agra, last year. After premiering at the Cannes Film Festival in 2023, the film underwent a long and arduous journey to see a theatrical release in India. It's now streaming on Prime Video India. Kanu, in an exclusive interview with SCREEN, talked about how the unlikely collaboration between him and Rahul took place.

"We always knew we probably need some sort of a face in the casting of the seven primary characters. Because none of the others weren't prominent faces," said Kanu. Agra starred newcomer Mohit Agarwal as the protagonist Guru, Ruhani Sharma, Priyanka Bose, Devas Dikshit, Vibha Chibber, and Rahul Roy, with the latter playing Daddy ji, the protagonist's father. "Ruhani is a big star down South. But at that point, she was also just starting out," said Kanu. "So, I felt like we needed a little something. We talked to a few people who were not completely unknown, including Rahul. He was looking to transition into something he usually doesn't do," he recalled. But Kanu wasn't certain of the casting, and he did three-month workshops with three actors as options for all seven primary characters, including Daddy ji, and selected the final casting halfway through. Rahul Roy recreates his Aashiqui performance at a Bihar wedding. Rahul Roy recreates his Aashiqui performance at a Bihar wedding.

"In that environment, for someone with the pedigree of a Rahul Roy, with the history that he has, to come in every morning at 9 am and be the last one to leave at around 10-10:30 pm, that just that had me hooked early on," said Kanu. He then recalled one particular night, when it was just the two of him left at the workshop, having chai together. That's when Rahul took him by surprise and said out of the blue, "You know what? Ye picture main hi karunga. Aur koi nahi karega. Main bata raha hu aapko. (I'll only do this film. No one else will. I'm telling you right now)."

"I think that made the final decision for me because he wanted to do it so bad, and he was putting so much into this, that he's probably the right choice," said Kanu, adding with a smile, "He didn't give me a choice. He cast himself. "Besides Rahul's "exemplary dedication", Kanu also argued that what sealed the deal was that the character of Daddy ji demanded the kind of life experiences Rahul had had in his own. The actor, who broke out with

Salim Khan recovering ‘slowly but surely’ after health scare, new picture reassures fans

Veteran screenwriter Salim Khan is steadily recovering after a major health scare earlier this year that left fans and the film industry deeply concerned. Months after spending nearly a month in hospital, the legendary writer appeared in a new picture shared by trade analyst Komal Nahta, who also provided an update on his recovery. On Wednesday, Komal took to X to post a photograph from his recent visit to Salim Khan's residence. The image shows the veteran writer seated on a beige sofa, dressed in a colourful checkered shirt, light trousers and white sandals, while Komal and his friend Raja Shetiya sit beside him. The picture appears to have been taken at the Khan family's residence in Bandra. Sharing the update, Komal wrote, "Was delighted to meet Salim Khan saab yesterday at his residence, with friend Raja Shetiya. The veteran writer is recovering slowly but surely after his 28-day hospitalisation in February-March. Thank you Dr. Sandeep Chopra for making this meeting possible." Was delighted to meet Salim Khan saab yesterday at his residence, with friend Raja Shetiya. The veteran writer is recovering slowly but surely after his 28-day hospitalisation in February-March. Thank you Dr. Sandeep Chopra for making this meeting possible. pic.twitter.com/

CMKNOHLJ3TSoon after the post surfaced online, fans flooded social media with messages wishing the veteran writer a speedy recovery. One fan commented, "It was wonderful to hear that Salim Khan Sahab is recovering. Given the gravity of a 28-day hospital stay, 'slowly but surely' is exactly the kind of progress one would hope for." Another wrote, "Glad to hear that Salim Khaan Saab is recovering." Earlier, Salim Khan made his first public appearance following his discharge from the hospital during Eid celebrations in March. He joined son Salman Khan on the balcony of Galaxy Apartments to greet fans gathered outside their residence. Salman had also shared a video from the moment and thanked fans for their prayers. "Eid Mubarak, Thank you very much for your blessings, Dad is back home thank you," Salman wrote. In the video, Salim Khan was seen seated in a wheelchair. Salim Khan, 90, was admitted to Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital on February 17 following a minor brain haemorrhage. He underwent a medical procedure soon after being hospitalised, after which the family requested privacy regarding his health updates. Several close friends and film personalities, including Aamir Khan, Sanjay Dutt, Shilpa Shetty and Javed Akhtar, visited him during his hospital stay. Salim Khan remains one of the most influential screenwriters in Hindi cinema history.

Dhurandhar actor R Madhavan says he taught son Vedaant about contraception, boundaries before teenage



There is a particular kind of parent who decides, early on, that the most dangerous thing they can do for their child is keep them comfortable and uninformed. R. Madhavan is that kind of parent. He spoke to his son Vedaant about sexual touch before most parents would have thought to and he explained contraception. He laid out the realities of celebrity life, the good parts and the parts that quietly do damage, before Vedaant was old enough to stumble onto them on his own. In a recent conversation with Kumudam, Madhavan opened up about how he raised Vedaant, now in his early twenties, and the picture that formed was of a father who decided long ago that honesty was cheaper than the alternative.

"I have treated him as an adult since a very young age," he said. That was not just a philosophy, Madhavan explained, it had a practical edge. He talked to Vedaant about sexual touch, about boundaries, about contraception, not when he was a teenager but well before that, at a point when most households would not have considered the conversation necessary or appropriate. "I have always treated him as an adult since a very young age, be it talking about sexual touch, or using condom," Madhavan said. "Since the age of 4, I've been talking freely with him. This has instilled a kind of trust in him, like 'my father treats me with respect', this has made him feel responsible as well. This became easy for me to communicate."

That early groundwork, he explained, made the harder conversations that followed feel like extensions of the same ongoing dialogue rather than sudden, uncomfortable interruptions. "I think addressing them and giv-

‘Why Akshay Kumar does 4 films a year’: Ekta Kapoor reveals secret ‘pure commerce’ keeping Bollywood alive



Producer Ekta Kapoor is basking in the success of Bhooth Bangla and recently took to social media to highlight the importance of discipline and consistency in the film industry. Reflecting on the journey of cinema, she praised her father and veteran actor Jeetendra and actor Akshay Kumar for their strong work ethic and lasting contributions.

In her note, Ekta emphasised that actors like Jeetendra and Akshay Kumar have played a crucial role

ing them the importance makes them responsible at a very young age," Madhavan said. "It became easy for me to communicate." Teaching Vedaant how to treat women with respect, walking him through what growing up inside a celebrity household actually means, making sure he could tell the difference between the privileges of that life and its pressures, all of it traced back to the same decision made years earlier: to speak to his son plainly and trust him with the truth.

Any parent who has tried to get a genuine reaction from their child about their own work will recognise exactly what Madhavan described next. Vedaant's favourite film of his father's is Yaavarum Nalam, the 2013 Tamil horror thriller released in Hindi as 13B. When Rocketry: The Nambi Effect came out in 2022, the National Award-winning film that Madhavan spent years producing, directing and inhabiting completely, he waited for his son's verdict. "He told me, 'not bad dad'," Madhavan said, with the measured delivery of a man who has made complete peace with the fact that his son is not easily moved. "He is very difficult to impress." That line landed because it is so recognisable. A father who poured years of his life into a single project, who took on the story of scientist Nambi Narayanan when few others would, who directed, produced and starred in the film simultaneously, and the person whose opinion matters most to him responds with two words. The conversation also touched on something fathers in the film industry are often expected to feel. "Every father wishes for his son to continue their legacy. It is not important for me," Madhavan added.

Madhavan has spent more than two decades building one of the most respected careers in Indian cinema, moving across Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam films with a consistency that very few actors from his generation have matched. Rocketry, his most personal work, earned him recognition that went well beyond industry appreciation. The assumption from the outside would naturally be that a man who has invested that deeply in his craft would want to see it carried forward by his son. What he wanted for Vedaant was not a continuation of his own story but the equipment to write a different one. That, he suggested, was always what the early conversations were building toward. The celebrity environment, he acknowledged, comes with real and specific risks for a child growing up inside it. Constant attention, easy access, the steady presence of people whose interests do not always line up with the child's. Madhavan said he worked deliberately at making sure Vedaant could see those dynamics clearly rather than drift into them unprepared. "I wanted to make sure he doesn't come under bad influence," he said.

in keeping the business side of the industry alive. She highlighted how their ability to consistently work across multiple projects ensures opportunities for producers and helps sustain the broader ecosystem of filmmaking. She also pointed out that while occasional big projects may bring attention, it is the regular output of disciplined actors that keeps the industry thriving. Ekta's remarks come at a time when Bhooth Bangla, featuring Akshay Kumar, has been performing well and contributing to the current box office momentum.

Ekta Kapoor's note read, "The time has come for me to say my thank yous... ?? This picture of Dad and Akshay Sir reminds me exactly of what discipline can do. They are so similar that every time I talk to Akshay Sir, I feel like I'm talking to my Dad... Their discipline & their belief in the producer's conviction, along with deep trust and respect is just wonderful!" She added, "These two men are the reason the commerce of our industry is alive and why producers continue to have some agency. Doing a few films with top directors once in a while only sustains one layer of the industry... For an industry to thrive, you need actors who work regularly so that every producer gets a chance." "The pure commerce these two men have brought is rarely appreciated. So, every time someone asks, "Why does Akshay Kumar do four films a year?" know it's because of the Dharmendras, the Jeetendras, and the Akshays that this industry flourished. In volume, there is job creation. That is what they bring to the table! Thank you, Akshay Sir, for giving every producer, from the top to the mid-sized, a chance to put their best foot forward! Love you, Gurujii ?? @akshaykumar," she concluded. Bhooth Bangla, backed by Ekta Kapoor, has emerged as one of the notable horror-comedy successes of the year, drawing audiences with its mix of humor, spooky elements, and mass appeal.

Panicked Ranbir Kapoor called mom Neetu at Shimla set during India-Pakistan conflict: ‘Please come back’



Shot in Shimla, Daadi Ki Shaadi turned into more than just another film set for its cast. Away from the usual chaos of vanity vans and luxury hotels, the team spent weeks living in neighbouring cottages, bonding closely while filming the family entertainer. But during the shoot, the atmosphere off-screen suddenly became tense as

Operation Sindoor took place in May 2025. Recently, the cast of the film, including Neetu Kapoor, Kapil Sharma and Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, sat down together and recalled those unforgettable days on set. Kapil Sharma recalled how much Neetu Kapoor enjoyed the filming experience and revealed that she herself had admitted she had not had this much fun on a set in years. Neetu agreed and explained how the unusual setup in Shimla helped everyone connect more naturally. "That's true. We had so much fun during the shoot. These days, everyone stays inside their vanity vans, but there were no vanity vans there," she said. Kapil added that the lack of film-set luxuries unexpectedly became one of the most memorable parts of the schedule. "There wasn't even enough space there for vanity vans, and we weren't staying in hotels either. We stayed in cottages nearby and genuinely had a great time together," he said. The actor-comedian then revealed that the India-Pakistan conflict had broken out while they were shooting the film. "So many things happened during the making of this film. The war had started, and the situation had become very serious at that time. I think Ranbir had called you," Kapil said while speaking to Neetu Kapoor.