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Revanth Seeks Real-Time Monitoring Of Schemes

Hyderabad August 4

The state government is set to introduce a real-time digital monitoring system to track the implementation of welfare schemes and development programmes, with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy pushing for technology-driven governance to improve accountability, transparency and effective service delivery.

he will hold a review meeting with secretaries of all departments next week to finalise the modalities for launching the digital tracking system, which is aimed at ensuring better coordination among government departments to accelerate the implementation of flagship welfare and development programmes.

Sources said the proposed system will enable continuous monitoring of the progress of government schemes through an integrated digital platform, allowing the government to identify implementation gaps in real time and take corrective measures without delay.

The Chief Minister has directed officials to establish a digital dashboard that will provide detailed information on the targets, physical and financial progress, implementation status and outcomes of all major government programmes. The dashboard will offer real-time updates from the gram panchayat level upwards.

In addition, the government has decided to set up a dedicated "Speed Cell" to monitor the execution of flagship schemes within deadlines. The Speed Cell will function as a central monitoring mechanism to ensure that bottlenecks are addressed quickly and decisions taken during review meetings are implemented without delay.

Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju has directed all departmental secretaries to be fully prepared for the next week's meeting. Departments have been asked to compile detailed presentations on their achievements, ongoing projects, future targets and innovative initiatives, besides documenting success stories that can be replicated across the state.

Sources said the real-time monitoring platform will be supported by IT and data professionals who will analyse implementation data on a daily basis and provide actionable inputs to senior officials. The system is expected to generate regular performance reports, flag delays, identify underperforming districts or departments and facilitate faster decision-making through evidence-based governance.

Officials said the technology-driven initiative is intended to strengthen monitoring of government programmes, improve inter-departmental coordination and ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes reach eligible beneficiaries within prescribed timelines.

Noted Actor Pradeep Rawat Passes Away at 74

MUMBAI: Renowned actor Pradeep Singh Rawat, best known for his iconic villainous and character roles across multiple film industries, passed away on Tuesday following a heart attack at his residence here. He was 74.

Born in Delhi in 1952, Rawat carved out a prolific career spanning Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam cinema, alongside appearances in several Doordarshan television series. While he gained early recognition primarily as a main antagonist, he later transitioned seamlessly into character roles.

Telugu Journey Began with 'Sye' Rawat made a sensational Tollywood debut with the Nithiin-starrer and S.S. Rajamouli directorial Sye (2004). His chilling performance as the antagonist 'Bhikshu Yadav' earned widespread acclaim and established him as a sought-after villain in Telugu cinema.

He went on to feature in a string of major Telugu blockbusters, including Bhadra, Andarivadu, Chatrapathi, Lakshmi, Stalin, Desamuduru, Yogi, Jagadam, Ghajini, Maska, Oy!, Rebel, Naayak, Baadshah, 1: Nenokkadine, Alludu Seenu, Nenu Sailaja, Sarrainodu, Nene Raju Nene Mantri, Jai Lava Kusa, and Waltair Veerayya, among others.

Bollywood Stint and Awards His Hindi film journey began as early as 1985 with a brief role in Raj Babbar's Aitbaar. Over the years, he appeared in numerous Bollywood films, occasionally securing prominent roles. His latest movie release was Gayapadda Simham.

For his memorable performance in Sye, Rawat won the Filmfare Award for Best Villain (Telugu), the Santosham Best Villain Award, and the prestigious Nandi Award in 2004.

No third-party insurance cover, no fuel: Supreme Court asks Centre to launch pilot project

New Delhi, August 4

Noting that nearly 56 per cent of vehicles on Indian roads lacked a valid insurance, the Supreme Court on Tuesday proposed linking fuel supply with a valid vehicle insurance as part of a pilot project to stop uninsured vehicles from plying.

"It is shocking to learn that nearly 56 per cent of vehicles (16.54 crore of 30.48 crore vehicles) plying on Indian roads remain uninsured… The consequent effect is that the statutory safeguard of victim compensation is often delayed, if not defeated," a Bench of Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra said.

The number of road accidents stood at 4,87,705 in 2024; 4,80,583 in 2023; and 4,61,312 in 2022, it said, pointing out the magnitude of the problem.

The Bench flagged the lack of compliance of provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, requiring all vehicles to have a valid insurance policy covering third parties.

The top court directed the Centre to evolve a pilot project by which fuel can be refused at petrol stations to vehicles not having a valid insurance cover. It directed the Centre to implement a pilot project on certain corridors, substituting the process of stopping at toll plazas, with automatic detection of vehicles passing through toll points.

The Bench also "directed that henceforth, third-party insurance for four years for new cars and six years for new two-wheelers will be required. It asked the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) to immediately issue the necessary directions in this regard.

The top court issued these directions while upholding the Telangana High Court's direction to National Insurance Company to compensate the family of a man who died in a road accident while travelling in an insured vehicle.

Noting that the top court had issued directions mandating the purchase of a third-party insurance for three years for new cars and five years for two-wheelers at the time of purchase/registration of new vehicles in S Rajaseekaran vs Union of India (2018) case, it noted that despite eight years having passed since the said direction, a large number of vehicles remained uninsured.

"While the IRDA and GIC (General Insurance Company) have recommended that this period not be enhanced, we are of the view that it is in the interest of road safety that the period be enhanced by one year," it said.

The Bench directed the insurance companies to display in easy-to-read format on their websites the benefits of obtaining a comprehensive motor vehicle insurance cover.

13,046 farm ponds in Telangana to be completed by August 15

Hyderabad: Telangana Special Chief Secretary for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, M Dana Kishore, on Tuesday, August 4, instructed district officials to complete the construction of 13,046 farm ponds by August 15.

Conducting a video conference, Dana Kishore instructed officials to ensure 100 per cent identification, administrative sanction and grounding of farm ponds in every gram panchayat.

He directed each district to take up at least 50 eco farm ponds through convergence with the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (SERP-NRLM) and animal husbandry, horticulture and fisheries departments.

Officials were asked to accord top priority to water conservation works under Telangana Jalasiri, including farm ponds, soak pits, percolation tanks, borewell recharge structures and open wells.

District officials were asked to undertake daily field inspections, hold regular review meetings with mandal-level officers and closely monitor progress to ensure that the targets are achieved within the stipulated timeline.

He also asked officials to complete the preparation of Gram Panchayat Samagra Abhivruddhi Pranalika (GPSAP) plans and compile comprehensive panchayat-wise data for a three-year development plan.

Shift to T-Fiber by Sept 1: Telangana IT Min to all govt offices

Telangana IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Tuesday directed officials to ensure that all government offices in the state receive internet services exclusively through T-Fiber from September 1.

Reviewing the progress of T-Fiber, the minister instructed officials to provide internet connectivity to all government offices within the stipulated deadline, according to a press release.

He directed that no payments be made to private internet service providers for government offices after September 1.

Sridhar Babu instructed officials to complete the migration of the Telangana State Wide Area Network to T-Fiber within a month.

The minister directed officials to make comprehensive arrangements to provide full-fledged T-Fiber connectivity for the prestigious Future City project.

He instructed officials to expedite the implementation of the state's flagship "Internet to Every Home" initiative.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and IT, Anudeep Durishetty, and T-Fiber Managing Director Venu Prasad, the release added.

With over 9 years of experience in reporting, Yunus Lasania is a journalist who has worked with 3 national dailies in his career. He last worked as the state correspondent… More »

Warangal to get Telangana's 2nd largest govt cancer hospital

Hyderabad: Telangana Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha on Tuesday, August 4, announced that the second-largest government cancer hospital in the state will be set up in Warangal.

He said that the Warangal Regional Cancer Hospital will be developed to provide state-of-the-art cancer services to the people of North Telangana.

SIR enumeration ends in Haryana; 9.7 lakh voters 'uncollectable' in Gurgaon, Faridabad

As the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) field enumeration exercise concluded in Haryana on Friday, over 9.7 lakh voters across Gurgaon and Faridabad districts have been excluded from the upcoming draft voter rolls.The excluded number of 9,73,589 constitutes over 28 per cent of the combined voter base of the two districts. According to official data, these voters have been marked "uncollectable" due to permanent shifting, long-term absence, death, or duplicate entries.

The final status report released on July 24 showed a stark urban-rural divide in electoral verification in the state. Out of Haryana's 2.06 crore registered electors in 22 districts, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) digitised enumeration forms for over 1.72 crore voters, achieving a statewide completion rate of 83.61 per cent. However, the state's total pool of 33.8 lakh unmapped electors remains heavily concentrated in the National Capital Region (NCR) hubs of Gurgaon and Faridabad, which together account for nearly 28.8 percent of all unmapped voters in the state.Official data from the SIR exercise showed Gurgaon district posted the lowest digitisation rate at 70.73 per cent. Out of 15.5 lakh registered voters in Gurgaon, 10.9 lakh forms were digitised, while 4.55 lakh forms were categorised as "uncollectable"Within the district, Gurgaon Assembly Constituency (AC) emerged as the worst-performing seat statewide in terms of voter verification, with 40 per cent of its total electorate of 4,50,200 electors marked uncollectable. Badshahpur, the state's largest constituency by voter strength (5,41,895 electors), followed closely with 1,76,590 unmapped voters (32.59 per cent). Sohna and Pataudi recorded uncollectable rates of 19.14 per cent and 15.56 per cent, respectively.Neighbouring Faridabad logged the second-lowest digitization completion rate in Haryana at 72.57 per cent. Out of 18.8 lakh voters, BLOs digitised 13.7 lakh enumeration forms, leaving 5.1 lakh in the uncollectable column. Ballabhgarh constituency logged the highest unmapped proportion in the district, with 1.01 lakh out of 2.8 lakh electors (35.49 per cent) deemed uncollectable. Faridabad constituency saw 97,619 unmapped voters (35.37 per cent), while Tigaon recorded 99,240 (24.71 per cent), Faridabad NIT logged 91,508 (26.76 per cent), Badkhal recorded 89,309 (25.55 per cent), and Prithla registered 39,234 (16.72 per cent).Demographic analysis of Haryana's Absent, Shifted, Dead, and Duplicate (ASDD) voter data reveals that permanent migration is the primary driver behind the state's unmapped electors. Statewide, permanent relocation accounted for 40.61 per cent (13.74 lakh) of all uncollectable forms. This was followed by absent electors at 27.75 per cent (9.39 lakh), deceased voters at 22.62 per cent (7.65 lakh), duplicate entries at 6.04 per cent (2.04 lakh), and other categories at 2.98 per cent (1.01 lakh).In urban Gurgaon constituency alone, 96,838 electors were found to have permanently shifted, 50,909 were marked absent during door-to-door verification, and 17,561 have died. Badshahpur recorded 79,498 permanent shiftings and 51,969 absent voters.

The slow progress in the urban NCR belt contrasts sharply with Haryana's predominantly rural and agricultural districts, where BLOs achieved digitisation rates exceeding 90 per cent. Fatehabad led the state with a 92.88 per cent digitisation rate, reporting only 50,569 uncollectable forms out of 7,10,261 electors.Mahendragarh recorded 91.46 per cent digitisation, Charkhi Dadri achieved 90.64 per cent, Sirsa reached 90.35 per cent, and Bhiwani touched 90.15 per cent. At the individual constituency level, Ellenabad in Sirsa district recorded the highest digitisation rate in the state at 95.91 per cent, followed by Loharu in Bhiwani (95.12 per cent) and Tohana in Fatehabad (94.78 per cent).Across all 20,629 polling booths in Haryana's 90 assembly constituencies, enumeration form downloading, printing, and distribution reached 100 per cent completion. Pending electors were reduced to zero in 89 of the 90 assembly constituencies as of July 24. Only the Uklana constituency in Hisar district retained a minor backlog of 1,458 pending electors out of its 2,.15 lakh voters, representing a negligible 0.01 per cent of the total state electorate.

From mental health to life lessons: Why Pune residents are learning tango

Growing up in an Anglo-Indian family, dance was a regular part of celebrations.Growing up in an Anglo-Indian family, dance was a regular part of celebrations.For Dr Emma Johnson, 43, Argentine tango was less about learning a new dance form and more about reconnecting with a part of herself she had left behind.Growing up in an Anglo-Indian family, dance was a regular part of celebrations. "Every family gathering ended with people dancing to rock and roll," she says. But as work, marriage and family responsibilities took over, dancing gradually disappeared from her life. Two years ago, tango brought it back.Across Pune, people from different age groups and professions are turning to tango not just to learn steps, but to explore ideas of connection, trust and communication. The Argentine dance form, known for its close partnership, improvisation and reliance on non-verbal cues, has found a small but growing community in the city.Unlike forms built around fixed choreography, tango requires two people to constantly respond to each other. The lead and the follow must listen through movement, making awareness and trust central to every interaction on the dance floor."Tango is not just about memorising steps. It is about listening to another person through movement," says Mitali Chinmulgund, who has been teaching tango in Pune for nearly a decade.Those who attend classes come with different motivations. Some are drawn by the curiosity of learning a new dance, while others find it a way to step away from increasingly digital and individualised lives.

For Muntazir, 28, tango offered lessons that extended beyond dance. "I learnt something from tango about life. It taught me that what matters is committing to a step. It does not have to be the right step or the wrong step," he says.The social aspect of tango has also been a draw for many participants. Sonal Mankar, 38, says the dance provides a space for human connection at a time when personal interactions are increasingly limited."In our culture there are many taboos around sharing personal space and energy. Tango allows you to be in another person's space without emotional pressure. It is not just movement but a connection through music and rhythm," she says.For her, the experience can also be calming. "Today everyone is independent and busy. We often say people need a hug, but simple human touch is becoming rare. Tango creates that connection respectfully and helps the mind relax."Beyond the social experience, some participants are drawn to tango for its physical demands. The dance involves continuous walking, changes in direction and constant adjustment to a partner's movements, which can improve coordination and body awareness.Chinmulgund says she has had students with conditions such as Parkinson's disease, ADHD and social anxiety attend her regular classes. Some joined after doctors suggested tango as a complementary activity, though she emphasises that it is not a substitute for medical treatment."Tango is recognised worldwide for helping with mobility and balance, but it is important to understand that it is not therapy," she says.For CS Shankar, 32, the process of learning tango resembles learning a new language. "In the beginning every step feels awkward, just like learning to speak a new language. Slowly you learn to communicate, first with one person and then with many others. Tango taught me that trust and vulnerability do not always need words," he saysAs one of the learners put it, the most meaningful part of tango is not mastering the steps, but discovering what those steps teach them about themselves.

'These kids have courage': Parents rally behind students at Jantar Mantar

As dawn settled over Jantar Mantar on Saturday, the protest site swelled with a fresh rush of weekend arrivals. Students streamed in with backpacks, families joined in and sat on the mats already spread across the ground, and new posters were unfurled, while others staked out corners under tarpaulin sheets to prepare for the day ahead.With delivery riders physically barred by Delhi Police, food through the morning continued to be bulk-ordered from Connaught Place and ferried in by auto-rickshaws.The site, which drew around 5,000 people by morning, had taken on the character of a self-organised community. And while the protest has been led largely by Gen Z, at least 1,000 people in the gathering were from an older generation: parents, professionals, retired personnel and families who had come from across the country to stand with the young protesters. Some to stand with their children and others to stand in solidarity with a generation they said had found the courage to challenge the government.A 12-year-old girl from West Bengal kept turning around to check that she had not lost sight of her father in the crowd. Her parents had accompanied her after she insisted on coming to the protest. A few metres away, two retired Air Force personnel from Ghaziabad stood among the students. "I came here for these students. They are my kids," said one of them. "If they can compel Modi to release a video at 12 in the night. Inn bacchon mein dum toh hein. (These children are courageous.)"For Neeta, 45, an environmental scientist from Gurugram, the young protesters served as a stark reminder of "the failures of her own generation." She had been at the protest on June 20, when she said she was subjected to tear gas, and had returned on Saturday. "Our generation did nothing. We just did an MBA and minted money. This generation has a brain of its own," she said.What struck her most, she said, was the sense of positivity at the protest. "From demonetisation to Ram Mandir chanda chori to inflation, everything is being raised here," she said.

A father-daughter duo had also travelled from Indore to the protest site. Priyank, a surgeon in his 40s, said his daughter, a medical student in Rishikesh, was also participating in the protests.He said the movement had broken what he saw as a long-standing fear of the government. "The fear of the government and Modi has been removed. This government has silenced people for quite a long time now," he said.He said he was worried about the consequences his daughter could face for participating in the protest. But that concern, he added, had not made him afraid.A family from West Bengal had travelled to Jantar Mantar on Saturday, with their 12-year-old daughter insisting on seeing the protest for herself. Keshav said his daughter had wanted to come to the protest alone. They accompanied her instead.Standing near the stage, Keshav kept an eye on her as she repeatedly turned around to make sure she had not lost sight of him in the crowd.There needs to be a solution. I have been wondering for quite some days what the solution is. I think the answer I have come to is resignation. Then systemic reforms," he said. He said he was worried about the consequences of bringing his daughter to the protest. His wife stood beside him, holding their daughter's hand tightly as the crowd moved around them.

The other challenge at Jantar Mantar: 15,000 kg of garbage everyday

At Jantar Mantar, the crowds are growing every day. So is the garbage.Plastic bottles, paper plates and food packets line the protest site, accompanied by a constant stench.There is no standard waste management protocol when more than 5,000 people gather every day," said an official from New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), in charge of managing waste in the area."Earlier, we collected around 500-600 kg of waste from Tolstoy Marg, Sansad Marg and Jantar Mantar Road. Now we lift nearly 15,000 kg of waste every day."To manage the waste, the NDMC has deployed extra workers in three shifts. About 50 workers clean the area in the morning, 15 in the afternoon and 20 in the evening.Catch the latest updates on CJP protest"We also use gobblers – battery-operated, eco-friendly litter-pickers – and vacuum devices designed to rapidly collect solid waste. Fogging machines and disinfectant sprays are also used in regular intervals. Further, auto-tippers and garbage trucks come to the protest site in coordination with the police," the official said.Still, garbage piled up over the last few days, especially next to an abandoned building opposite Kerala House."The NDMC had not collected garbage from the protest area for many days. Today we called them, and they cleared the heap," said Gyan (35), one of the protesters.

According to NDMC officials, they could not enter the area because police permission had not been granted. "We didn't have clearance from the district commissioner of police to clear waste for the last couple of days. As soon as we got permission, the entire area was wet cleaned," said the official.Many protesters, meanwhile, have taken it upon themselves to keep Jantar Mantar clean.Near the protest site, on Tolstoy Road, opposite The Imperial Hotel, Amaldeep Singh (26) – who had travelled from Malout in Punjab for the protest – was seen collecting waste off the footpath amid the sea of people. "This is seva (service). When I came here last night, I saw some children clearing waste. I thought why can't I do this too? Whatever I collect, I put it near the barricade opposite McDonald's," he added.Priya (25), a UPSC aspirant, feels that collecting waste gives her a sense of responsibility."I want to show that we youth are not here to have fun, we can also take some responsibility… Many are littering without any hesitation. What is the kind of message that we are trying to send out there?"NDMC officials said such volunteers have made their work easier."We can't deny it. The children have been really helpful and have coordinated with us throughout to make our work easier," said the official.However, not everyone collecting waste is a volunteer.

Thirteen-year-old Janisar and his uncle Nasim, who collect scrap for a living, have been visiting the protest site for the last few days to gather discarded plastic bottles. The two sell them to a scrap dealer on Minty Road."We have been coming here for the last three-four days. We keep walking around collecting bottles. We eat the free food distributed here and sleep at the protest site," said Nasim, adding that they earn around Rs 800-900 a day.Outside the The Imperial Hotel, meanwhile, stood four portable toilets — three for women and one for all. The Sachkhand Foundation, whose members are volunteering at the protest site, got them installed on Friday.This comes amid reports that many protesters are complaining of headaches and sore throats at Jantar Mantar.

Volunteer doctors present at the site report that the overcrowding and open-air living conditions have left a large number of people grappling with viral infections, dehydration, and other health issues.Amritpal Singh, a volunteer for Five River Heart organisation, said many people are approacing them with throat infections and headaches."Dehydration and hypertension are a few of the conditions we are fighting. The overcrowding and people sleeping out in the open doesn't help either. It is one of the major reasons why the infections are spreading," Singh added.Another doctor from Patiala, requesting anonymity, said due to the large crowds, the infection is spreading through coughing and sneezing.

As Dharmendra Pradhan resigns, Centre moves in cops to clear protest sites in Delhi

The Centre on Saturday moved in police forces at the protest sites in Delhi to clear them of protesters after the Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. DCP of Delhi Sachin Sharma reached the protest site at Parliament Street along with paramilitary forces.Crowds were seen pouring out of Jantar Mantar from the Janpath end near Metro Gate No. 2, cheering, most of them unsure of where they'll head next. Some said they'll stay put until PM Narendra Modi resigned.The other exit towards the Sansad Marg has been sealed off. With only the Janpath end open, the police have left a narrow space for the crowd to squeeze through.Barely an hour before Dharmendra Pradhan announced his resignation, a clash had broken out between protesters and police at Jantar Mantar in Delhi.'Cooperate with Delhi police': CJP

Meanwhile, CJP volunteers urged protesters to remain calm and peaceful and cooperate with the forces and Delhi police deployed at the site, telling the crowd not to jeopardise their 'future' after what they described as achieving their immediate objective.Addressing supporters, volunteers said, "Don't let your future be ruined. We have achieved the goal we set." They also appealed to protesters to immediately inform nearby security personnel if they noticed anyone attempting to create trouble.CJP's national spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka, however, said the protesters would "go home" only if the government accepted their three demands in writing.Addressing supporters at Jantar Mantar, Ranka said, "If you accept our three demands in writing, we will go home." He also said the group had sought permission to organise a peaceful nationwide candle march and urged people across the country to participate at 6 pm.Speaking to the protesters at the site, spokesperson Saurav Das said the group's delegation has been called for another round of talks with the government at 3.30 pm and they would not end their agitation until all their demands were accepted in writing."We've been called at 3:30 pm. We're not going anywhere until all our demands are met and they give them in writing. This is a huge victory," he said.

Scenes of celebration erupted at Jantar Mantar after the news broke of Pradhan's resignation, with protesters cheering, embracing and singing the national anthem.As internet connectivity remained patchy at the protest site, many participants called friends and family to verify the reports before celebrating. Students and parents described the resignation as a major victory for the youth movement but insisted the protest was not over.While some said the minister's exit was their primary demand, others called for wider accountability and education reforms, signalling that the agitation would continue despite the government's decision.Delhi Police issues advisoryDelhi Police on Monday advised citizens to avoid travelling towards the New Delhi area because of heavy crowds and severe traffic congestion. Citizens are advised to avoid traveling towards the New Delhi area due to heavy crowds and high traffic congestion observed across the district.

Over 92 akh Telangana voters yet to submit enumeration forms ahead of August 3 deadline

Hyderabad: With one week remaining to close the window for submission of the enumeration forms (August 3), as on Saturday, more than 92 lakh electors across 33 districts in Telangana were yet to submit their enumeration forms for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.According to the status report of the SIR, enumeration forms were distributed to 3,38,26,448 electors, and of them, 2,46,01,237 were submitted. Still, 92,25,211 electors did not submit their enumeration forms in the State.Chief Electoral Officer of Telangana, C Sudarshan Reddy, and Hyderabad district election officer, R V Karnan, urged the electors to submit their enumeration forms and not keep them pending.

How a Delhi DCP shielded a fellow officer from a violent mob

When a video of a police officer in a green helmet embracing a battered senior officer and slowly pulling him out of a violent mob during the recent student protests in Delhi began circulating on social media, few knew the identity of the man risking his own life.The officer in the green helmet is Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Vinit Kumar. On Wednesday, Kumar was posted at the Tolstoy Marg-Sansad Marg intersection for law-and-order duty. His shift had begun at 4 pm and was to continue until midnight. Around 8.30 pm, as personnel were in the middle of a shift change and several lower staff had moved out, the situation on the ground deteriorated rapidly.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Vivek Bhagat was making his way towards the intersection when he was surrounded by a mob."A constable came running to me and informed me that a police officer had been surrounded by the crowd and was being thrashed," Kumar recalled. "There was no time to think."Accompanied by his operator, Rahul Siwach, and a handful of policemen, Kumar rushed into the crowd. Inside, the assault on Bhagat continued unabated."At one point, I genuinely thought the mob would kill Vivek. There was no chance that one could leave him there like that," Kumar said.He grabbed hold of Bhagat, wrapped his arms around him and began walking backwards, shielding the officer with his own body as the crowd continued to attack them. Kumar, identifiable in videos by his green helmet, became the human barrier between Bhagat and the mob.As they inched their way out, the blows shifted towards Kumar."The crowd started hitting me as well," he said. "Rahul and Deepak tried to protect me."The rescue, however, came at high cost.

Head Constable Rahul Siwach was stabbed in the stomach during the operation. Constable Deepak was struck by a stone that smashed through the visor of his helmet. The impact left him seriously injured, fracturing facial bones and causing neurological complications. He is currently admitted to hospital.Rahul Siwach Injured Head Constable Rahul Siwach (Photo Credit: Special Arrangement)Kumar credits the rescue not only to his team but also to the quick thinking of fellow officers who held their ground despite dwindling manpower.Among them was ACP Rajouri Garden Sharadt Chandra Nirmal, who had been deployed since morning. Even as personnel rotated during the evening shift change, Nirmal stayed back instead of leaving his post."He played a remarkable role," Kumar said. "While we went inside to rescue Vivek, he used his presence of mind to call the RAF personnel inside to help control the mob."For Kumar, the images that have since gone viral capture only a fleeting moment of the operation. They do not show the frantic decisions made in seconds, the officers who absorbed blows to shield one another, or the injuries that followed.

CSIR transfers four indigenous technologies, unveils IoT-based rural water system

New Delhi: The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) organised a Technology Transfer Event here, where four indigenous technologies were licensed to industry and an IoT-enabled rural water service, measurement and monitoring system was commercially launched, an official statement said on Thursday.

The programme — organised by CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO), Chandigarh — also saw recognition of royalty received from Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Panchkula, for licensed production of indigenous defence technologies, the statement from Ministry ofIt saw Pump Academy Private Limited, Bengaluru licensed to produce the Induction Motor Stethoscope (MSCOPE), Portable & Universal Motor-cum-Pump Performance Monitor (PU-MPPM) and i-Power Quality Analyser (IPQA)

Bengaluru civic body officials assaulted during anti-encroachment drive, 10 held

The police arrested 10 people, including street vendors, Tuesday for assaulting officers of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) during a footpath encroachment clearance drive near the Shivajinagar Bus Stand, Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar said.The police said the assault was allegedly led by Basavaraj Padukote, who heads Namma Karnataka Sene, a pro-Kannada organisation. Investigators alleged that a group led by him attacked GBA officials during the anti-encroachment drive.Kumar said GBA officials, including Assistant Executive Engineer Madhav Rao, were obstructed and manhandled by a group while they were carrying out the demolition and footpath clearance operation that was in compliance with a court order."The assault was captured on video, which has become a key piece of evidence in the investigation. Our officers rushed to the spot immediately after the incident. We will arrest everyone found to have participated in the assault," Kumar told reporters.The drive was part of the ongoing Safe Footpath Campaign aimed at reclaiming pedestrian spaces occupied by unauthorised vendors, and clearing temporary structures and commercial encroachments across Bengaluru city.Reacting to the incident, Karnataka Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the government stood firmly with the officials discharging their duties and warned that attacks on public servants would not be tolerated and directed the police commissioner and GBA officials to take stringent action against those responsible."All those who assaulted government representatives during the Safe Footpath Campaign will be arrested. Assaulting public servants while they implement the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is a serious violation of the law," the minister said.The minister said he was personally monitoring the investigation's progress with GBA officials and the Bengaluru police.A case was registered at the Commercial Street Police Station, following which the police arrested five accused. "Our officers are also gathering information about the accused's background," the police commissioner added.

The police said further investigation is underway to identify additional suspects and ascertain the circumstances leading to the assault.In recent weeks, GBA teams have intensified enforcement in several commercial localities, including Shivajinagar, Commercial Street, Gandhi Bazaar and other busy markets where pedestrian movement is frequently obstructed.

'Government should respond to these terrorists': Sadabhau Khot on Delhi protesters

A day after the protest led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in Delhi over alleged NEET paper leaks, Maharashtra legislator Sadabhau Khot triggered a political controversy Tuesday by referring to the demonstrators as "terrorists", drawing sharp criticism from Opposition leaders and even a member of the Maharashtra Government.The remark by Khot, a member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC), came after the Cockroach Janta Party's Delhi protest escalated Monday as thousands of students and supporters marched towards Parliament, demanding action over alleged NEET paper leaks and examination irregularities."The government should give a democratic response to these terrorists. These terrorists cannot tolerate this," Khot told reporters, defending the Centre's handling of the examination controversy.Calling the NEET paper leak a conspiracy, Khot said the culprits had been arrested and investigations were underway as he questioned the demand for Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation."The government has taken the stance that the guilty will not be spared. Those who qualified in NEET are rushing for admissions, but those who have no connection to it are demanding resignations," Khot said.

"Dharmendra Pradhan has no connection to the paper leak issue. However, the INDIA bloc and MVA are in the habit of creating anti-government sentiment and continuously spreading falsehoods. The INDIA bloc and MVA are trying to create a situation akin to terrorism," he added."The government should not accept the Education Minister's resignation under any circumstances. Narendra at the Centre, Devendra in the state, and Dharmendra in education," he said, referring to Prime Minister Modi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Fadnavis, and Pradhan.While Fadnavis said he was not aware of Khot's statement, his Cabinet colleague, Shambhuraj Desai, who belongs to the Shiv Sena, said protesters cannot be called terrorists."In a democracy, everyone has the right to protest. However, smashing and destroying police vehicles, taking the law into one's own hands, is not right.

At the same time, protesters cannot be called terrorists," Desai said.NCP-SP spokesperson Sunil Mane said Khot's statement was "highly deplorable". "He should have thought several times before calling protesting students terrorists. We condemn his words."Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Gopal Tiwari called Khot's statement "shocking"."How can one call a protest by students in a democratic way an act of terrorism? Actually, Khot reflects the mindset of Modi, which treats citizens who resort to democratic ways as terrorists, and it backs those who loot the country."

Another farmer leader, MLA Bacchu Kadu, urged Khot to retract his statement. "Sadabhau Khot's statement is completely wrong. He needs to correct his statement. Protests have been the soul of this country; our nation gained its freedom through movements," Kadu added.

'People will think twice about sailor jobs': UP village mourns man killed in Russian strike

Abhishek Nishad, 22, a native of Uttar Pradesh's Deoria district, was among four Indian seafarers killed on Sunday when a Russian missile struck a merchant vessel shortly after it departed Ukraine's southern port of Odesa. A total of 10 people died in the attack.The voyage was Nishad's first assignment at sea. His family had celebrated his departure, seeing it as the beginning of a promising career abroad."Abhishek became interested in a maritime career after speaking with his cousin, Jairaj Nishad, a sailor for the past few years," said his father, Kaushal Nishad, who runs a small cloth shop in Karmel village."After completing his intermediate studies two years ago, Abhishek began preparing to join the merchant navy and gathered information online."

"On June 9, Abhishek left for his first assignment as an Ordinary Seaman. He flew to Turkey via Mumbai to join the vessel," Kaushal added. "Everyone in our family and neighbourhood was proud that one of our boys had secured a job overseas. We never imagined it would end in such a tragedy."The second of three children born to Kaushal Nishad and his wife Anita Devi, a homemaker, Abhishek was the first member of his family to secure employment abroad. His younger sisters, Sadhna and Aradhna, are pursuing postgraduate and undergraduate degrees, respectively. Abhishek was unmarried.'Spoke just a few hours before the attack'"He called us regularly, and we last spoke on the evening of July 19. He asked how everyone was doing and said he was settling into his new job," his father recalled. "Just a few hours later, the ship came under a missile attack."

Unaware of the strike, the family attempted to call him the following day, but his phone went unanswered. Representatives from the shipping company later contacted them with the news of his death."For a while, I simply couldn't believe what I was hearing," Kaushal said, his voice breaking. "I kept hoping there had been a mistake. Even now, I keep wondering whether sending him to work on that vessel was the right decision."He added that the family is waiting for Abhishek's remains to be repatriated and has not yet been informed when the body will arrive home.Jitendra Bahadur Nishad, the village head, said Abhishek was among a handful of local youths who had joined the merchant navy and was the latest to do so.

"This tragedy has shaken our entire village," he said. "Families will now think twice before allowing their children to take up jobs at sea. Abhishek was so excited about embarking on his first voyage."He added that senior district officials are expected to visit the family to offer condolences.When contacted by The Indian Express, Deoria Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Raj Kumar Gupta said he had been informed of Abhishek's death by local residents but was awaiting official communication from government agencies.While the Centre is yet to release the names of the dead, another sailor killed was identified as Akhil Joyan, 26, a resident of the Kasaragod district in Kerala. Family sources said the shipping firm contacted them.Meanwhile, India Tuesday summoned Russia's charge d'affaires and lodged a strong protest over the killing of Indian sailors aboard the Guinea-Bissau-flagged merchant vessel struck off the coast of Ukraine.

Lohagad wasn't first choice: Pune Rural police reveal fresh details in Ketan murder probe

The Pune Rural police investigating the murder of Ketan Agarwal last month said his fiancée, Siya Goyal, and her boyfriend, Chetan Chaudhary, explored other locations, including Tiger Point in Lonavala and some other forts, before finalising the spot at Lohagad Fort.The police also said the two researched other ways, including poisoning, to kill Ketan and also studied ways to protect themselves from getting caught. They added that the two watched some murder conspiracy movies for this purpose."Our investigation suggests that before finalising Lohagad fort as the location where they would execute their plan, Chetan and Siya explored other similar locations in the area, including Tiger Point at Lonavala and other forts near Lonavala, including Visapur, which is next to Lohagad," an officer who is part of the probe said."After they decided on Lohagad, they shared some photos of the fort with each other. They had finalised Lohagad fort sometime before May 31," the officer added.The police, however, refused to divulge how they explored other options and finalised Lohagad.Amidst reports that Chetan and Siya contacted a contract killer, the police said the two discussed the option of arranging a hit to injure Ketan but did not approach anyone.Investigators claim the alleged murder was the culmination of weeks of planning by Siya and Chetan. According to the Pune Rural Police, Siya allegedly made multiple trips to Lohagad Fort with Ketan before the incident, including on May 31 and June 14, to familiarise herself with the location.They also said she tried to persuade him to visit the fort on June 4, but the trip did not materialise after his family objected.The police have further alleged that Siya and Chetan rehearsed the crime days before Ketan's death in an open space near a club lounge in Pune's Lulla Nagar area. Investigators also claim Siya had earlier tried to derail her planned marriage to Ketan by stealing his passport ahead of their proposed pre-wedding shoot in Bali and later discarding it in a washroom at a food mall on the Pune-Mumbai Expressway.Siya and Ketan got engaged on February 19 and were scheduled to marry later this year.

AI helps ECI detect duplicate voters during electoral roll revision in Telangana

Hyderabad: Technology is playing a crucial role in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral roll in the State, flagging duplicate and triplicate votes across the constituencies in the State.After implementing photo similar entries (PSE) and demographic similar entries (DSE) during SIR exercise in West Bengal, the Election Commission of India (ECI) rolled out the same features in ongoing SIR exercise in the State.Using Artificial Intelligence, the PSE, which is embedded in the Electoral Roll Management system, is flagging voters who have identical or closely matching photographs for the BLOs and EROs to verify the electors.

In addition, the DSE search has been deployed to scan through the voters' details such as the elector's name, father's name, mother's name, spouse's name, age and date of birth, and address.The application is flagging issues if same or similar demographic entries appear in two or more electoral lists. This is enabling the authorities to verify the details with electors.Speaking to 'Telangana Today', one of the BLOs in the Kukatpally constituency said he found three votes of a person with the same name but with different spellings."I came across one voter, Shankar, whose name has different spellings in different polling booths. However, father's name remained the same in all three votes. The application flagged it as a triplicate vote, and I have to call up the voter to ascertain which one vote has to be retained," the BLO said.

Another BLO revealed that after he filled up details of a voter in the ERONET, the application flagged double votes, with one in Khairtabad constituency and another in Amberpet constituency."Using the PSE and DSE, the application is mapping voter details in the given database and flagging the double or multiple votes of a person. Since it's a double vote, there is a need to verify with the voter before marking it as a double vote for removal," the BLO said.Not just intra-State, the application has been flagging individuals with multiple votes across the different States, aiding officers to issue notices for removal of votes.According to the ECI, a staggering 6.44 crore votes had been removed from the final electoral roll of West Bengal after SIR 2025 and 2026. This could be made possible using the PSE and DSE applications in the ERONET.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ashram 'encroached' on land beyond lease limits; SIT to probe

The Karnataka government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to inquire into the alleged land encroachment by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's ashram and allied groups, based on an October 2025 survey that flagged encroachment of 291 acres of land reserved for animal grazing and public needs.A government order issued on Tuesday stated that the Art of Living Foundation "encroached land beyond the limits of the land leased to it by the government". The alleged encroachments took place in survey numbers 160, 164/1, 164/2, 150, and 137 of Kaggalipura village, Bengaluru South taluk, which has government land, lakes, and stormwater drains.In 2023, three people—Chandrashekar N, Mahesha B, and Muniraju S—moved the Karnataka High Court alleging that the foundation had constructed buildings over a stormwater drain. They also flagged a lake's encroachment. The court issued directions in 2025 for the revenue department to clear the encroachment, according to the order.The order further said that a few locals and agents of the foundation had obstructed repeated attempts to conduct a survey as per the law, noting that the majority of the lake in survey no 150 was encroached on.As per the order, the foundation has built a compound wall on land of 291 acres and 38 guntas, including 60 acres leased to it. The lease period for 41 acres expired in 2015, while the lease period for the rest of the 60 acres will expire in

2033.When contacted, Chandrashekar said, "We had compiled documents regarding encroachment of the lake and stormwater drain before approaching the court."Among the related organisations accused of encroachment along with the foundation are Veda Vijnana Maha Vidayapeeta Institute, Sumeru Global Support Solutions Private Limited, and Sumeru Realty Private Limited.The SIT will investigate the violations, how the lands were encroached upon, the conditions allegedly violated by the foundation, and other land-related complaints against it. The SIT will verify land grant documents and also identify public roads, water sources, and other common land that the foundation is accused of encroaching on.

The theatre of hope: Md Zeeshan Ayyub returns to stage with Jhilmilganj Ke Sitare

As actors Md Zeeshan Ayyub and Gagan Dev Riar rehearse Jhilmilganj Ke Sitare, they suddenly break into a rhythmic chant, "Khus phus khus phus khus, phus khus phus khus phus", while seamlessly transforming a scene. Their playfulness underscores a darker moment in the story: the town's powerful plot to build a dam that goes against the interest of Jhilmilganj's residents.For Ayyub, the production marks a long-awaited return to the stage after nearly eight years. Directed by actor-director Rasika Agashe, the Hindi adaptation of James Hindman's Popcorn Falls pairs him with Riar in a demanding two-hander that celebrates the resilience of theatre itself.When Ayyub told Agashe, his wife, that he wanted to return to acting on stage, she reached out to Riar, who suggested several two-hander plays before they settled on Popcorn Falls."A certain monotony sets in after doing on-camera work for several years. I had been yearning to act in a play. Everything aligned this time — from acting with Gagan, whose work I have long admired, to connecting with the play itself," says Ayyub.

While preserving the spirit of the original, the team has thoroughly Indianised the setting. American references have been replaced with local ones — the mayor becomes a block development officer (BDO), cultural references have been reworked, and songs have been woven into the narrative.The story follows BDO Tousif, who discovers that Jhilmilganj is set to disappear under a proposed dam project. Along with his secretary Jogi, he embarks on a frantic mission to save the town, meeting an array of eccentric residents along the way. Their unlikely solution is to stage a play that can rally the community."The play's core message is that art can save the world. But it is never preachy," says Agashe.

The production's greatest challenge lies in its form. Between them, Ayyub and Riar play around 20 characters, with Riar portraying nearly 15 roles and Ayyub donning five. The performance depends on split-second costume changes, rapid vocal shifts and sharply defined physical transformations.Ayyub last appeared on stage

with Agashe in Iss Kambakht Sathe Ka Kya Karein?, which they performed between 2008 and 2018. Since then, he has become known for films such as Raanjhanaa, Raees and Tanu Weds Manu Returns.For Riar, whose theatre credits include Stories in a Song and Piya Behrupiya, and who has appeared in A Suitable Boy and Scam 2003: The Telgi Story, the play has been unlike anything he has attempted before."It's a difficult play to shape. After every few scenes, we'd ask ourselves, 'How do we take this forward?' It was physically exhausting because of the number of characters. But that's also what makes it exciting," he says.Ayyub agrees that the mechanics of the play demand unwavering focus."With so many quick transitions, we have to stay alert all the time. Sometimes a character has just one line, but even that requires a completely different approach. Every entry has to feel distinct."The production also prompted him to revisit skills he had not practised in years."I learnt stage singing at NSD, but I hadn't done voice exercises in a long time. This play pushed me to reconnect with that training."Beyond the technical rigour, both actors say the experience reaffirmed what makes theatre irreplaceable."That connection with your fellow actors and with a live audience is unlike anything else," says Riar.For Ayyub, the return is less about nostalgia than rediscovering the exhilaration of live performance.

INDIA bloc MPs seek answers over alleged force on NEET protesters

New Delhi: The Congress party and its allies in the INDIA bloc on Thursday staged a protest at Makar Dwar of the Parliament, demanding answers from the NDA government over the alleged use of lethal force against student protesters during the July 20 'Sansad Chalo' march against NEET paper leaks.

Holding banners carrying the message 'Who gave the orders?', INDIA bloc MPs gathered at the Parliament premises and sought accountability over the police action against students who had participated in the demonstration against NEET-related irregularities and paper leaks.The protest came a day after Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, raised serious questions over the alleged use of force against the students and sought answers from Union Home Minister Amit Shah on who had ordered the reported "firing" during the NEET protests.

The BJP and its allies strongly objected to LoP Gandhi's remarks, particularly his allegation that the Union Home Minister had directed action against the protesting students, and questioned the basis of his claims.Speaking to IANS, BJP MP Praveen Khandelwal, reacting to the allegations, said, "Whatever Rahul Gandhi says, people no longer take his statements seriously because he only knows how to make allegations.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

Profits remain elusive for India's e-commerce sector

India's e-commerce industry presents a paradox: On the one hand, it is one of the world's fastest-growing markets, while on the other, it remains unprofitable despite years of rapid expansion. While the sector is not short of growth, capital or ambition, what it has struggled to build, cycle after cycle, is a business model in which growth and profit move in the same direction at the same time. The tough and increasingly transactional global trade environment, coupled with a still-unresolved domestic cash-burn habit, is forcing the industry's hand. The platforms most likely to emerge as durable winners will probably not be the ones that deliver the fastest or offer the deepest discount, but the ones that quietly figure out how to make each order, each return, and each customer relationship pay for itself. The latest 'India E-Commerce Report 2026' by Delhi-based policy think tank, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), argues that policy around India's online retail sector has focused excessively on tackling market concentration—a few dominant players controlling too much of the market—while overlooking the structural reasons why most e-commerce firms remain unprofitable despite years of rapid expansion. India's merchandise e-commerce market expanded from about $14 billion in 2014 to $120-130 billion in 2024, and is expected to reach $300-350 billion by 2030, growing at an annual rate of 20-25%. However, despite exponential growth in the sector, profitability remains elusive. The challenge is less about market concentration and more about cost economics. In many ways, the country's e-commerce industry is at an inflection point.

The era of rapid expansion fuelled by abundant capital, discounts, and customer acquisition is giving way to a phase where profitability, efficiency, and innovation will determine success. While the long-term fundamentals remain robust—supported by digital payments, rising internet penetration, and a vast consumer base—the winners are likely to be companies that excel in AI-driven operations, logistics, export capabilities, and sustainable unit economics, rather than those that rely solely on aggressive growth strategies.

At present, the average revenue per user is only $107, far below $1,330 in China, $514 in Mexico, and $350 in Brazil. Indian consumers also spend less per order, particularly in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities where average order values range from Rs 500 to Rs 700, compared with around Rs 900 or more in Tier-1 cities. Moreover, nearly half of all online orders in India are still paid through cash on delivery, which increases costs for e-commerce firms. Logistics and warehousing remain the biggest expenses for e-commerce companies, with last-mile delivery accounting for around 60% of delivery costs. Data collection, strengthening export logistics for cross-border e-commerce, expanding digital commerce into rural markets, supporting MSMEs through digital platforms, and addressing the welfare of gig workers are other areas that need attention. Going forward, policymakers should avoid excessive intervention that could discourage investment while simultaneously strengthening enforcement against anti-competitive practices.

After deadly blaze, Lucknow building being partially razed over violations

About a month after a fire tore through a two-storey building in Lucknow, killing 15 people, the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) on Saturday began demolishing portions of the structure after determining that it allegedly violated the approved building plan.The action came after the owner of the building, located in the city's Aliganj neighbourhood, failed to remove the unauthorised construction within a 15-day deadline.

LDA officers, accompanied by district administration personnel and police, arrived at the site in the morning and started the process to raze the sections identified as being built in violation of the sanctioned plan. The razing work may take two to three days to complete, said an officer."The owner had begun demolishing the building himself after being served a notice. He was given 15 days to complete the work, but the deadline expired today; so the LDA has stepped in to carry out the demolition," said Dhruv Kumar, station house officer of Aliganj police station.Preliminary findings indicated that the building had been sanctioned for residential use but was allegedly being used for commercial activities, officials said.Kumar said heavy earth-moving equipment was deployed for the operation as authorities closed the adjoining road and suspended electricity supply in the area for a safe demolition.Following the fatal fire on June 22, the LDA had issued notices to the building's owners after an initial inspection found alleged violations of the sanctioned building plan.The building housed a pet clinic and pet shop on two floors, while another floor was occupied by a company involved in art production and game development.According to police, records show that the land on which the building stands is jointly owned by Virendra Prasad Shukla and his brother, Surendra Shukla.The police registered a case against several individuals for culpable homicide and endangering life or personal safety.So far, police have arrested four people, including the building owner, in connection with the case. The other three were those who had the spaces on rent.

Protesters clash with police in Bihar amid call for statewide bandh, Tej Pratap detained in Patna

Protesters clashed with police in several districts of Bihar, including capital Patna and Chapra, as the protests against the NEET paper leak expanded to a nationwide protest.Clashes also broke out between the police personnel and protesters in at least three districts: Patna, Aurangabad, and Chapra.Janshakthi Janta Dal (JJD) chief Tej Pratap Yadav was detained in Patna after he joined the protesters who had gathered in support of the statewide bandh over NEET paper leak, and police action on protesting students over the past few days, PTI reported.Yadav joined protesters during a sit-in protest at Ram Gulam Chowk in Patna, from where he was taken away in a police vehicle. Clinging to the vehicle door, Yadav said, "We are standing shoulder to shoulder with the students. If need be, I am willing to die for the students' rights."Left-wing protesters carrying banners of All India Students Association (AISA) and Revolutionary Youth Association (RYA) blocked the Samastipur-Patna main road by burning tyres and raising slogans against the government, PTI reported.Visuals shared by news agency ANI showed damaged police vehicles. They also showed miscreants attacking cars, stone-pelting civilians, and lathicharging police personnel in Chapra, Patna, and Aurangabad.In Bihar's Siwan district, AISA, RYA and other left-wing organisations also staged protests at JP Chowk against police action on students on July 22, it added.Visuals of police vehicles being vandalised and toppled in Patna circulated over social media, according to ANI. The police personnel also used tear gas shells to disperse the protesters.Former MLA and CPI(ML) leader Amarjeet Kushwaha, present during the protest, told PTI, "Protest has been underway at Delhi's Jantar Mantar for the last 26 days. Students also came out on the streets of Patna on Wednesday. However, both in Delhi and in Patna, they faced brutal police action. Even women and girls were not spared."He alleged that the government has adopted a dictatorial approach towards handling protests, according to the report.

Meanwhile, speaking to the reporters today, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Patna, Raj Kishore, said, "People have come from outside as well, and we have caught those who pelted stones…"Protesters also pelted stones and bricks at police personnel at Dak Bungalow Chouraha in Patna, following which police detained several students, according to PTI reports."Protesters pelted stones at us. They even tried to break the barricading. We have detained several students. Police is on high alert. We will trace the troublemakers and take appropriate action against them," Patna SSP Kartikeya K Sharma told reporters.Security has been tightened with heavy police deployment in Patna, Siwan, Jehanabad, Sheikhpura, Rohtas and other districts across the state, the PTI report stated.Although there wasn't much impact of the bandh on normal life in Patna, police did initiate flag marches in several areas, including Patna's Paliganj locality, as a precautionary measure, the report noted.On Wednesday, violent clashes broke out at JP Golambar in Patna as police used water cannons, tear gas shells and resorted to lathi charge to stop the protesters marching towards Raj Bhavan under the banner of the AISA. The demonstration was organised in solidarity with the ongoing student agitation at Delhi's Jantar Mantar and to protest the recent police action against protesters there, according to a report in The Indian Express.

'Sebaashray camp is a scam': Bengal CM targets Abhishek Banerjee, warns of strict action

Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari Saturday took a dig at Abhishek Banerjee over his Sebaashray health camps and warned that the government will take appropriate action at the right time.Making a statement in the Assembly, Adhikari said several FIRs have been registered against Banerjee over alleged large-scale corruption involving the Sebaashray project, and assured that all allegations will be investigated by the Criminal Investigation Department and a Special Task Force.The chief minister said in the Assembly, "The nephew's (referring to Abhishek Banerjee) Sebaashray camp is a scam." He then showed several photographs of people who allegedly lost their limbs after getting treated at Sebaashray camps.Subsequently, CM Adhikari informed the Assembly of the measures the state government has taken about Sebaashray.He said, "We have taken action. We have written to the Atomic Energy Department of the Central Government and the Health Department. We have seized X-ray machines and USG machines. We have seized expired medicines. We have acted against the government funds spent on the project in Diamond Harbour and Nandigram, and against the government doctors who were assigned duty there. A thorough investigation is being conducted involving the CID, STF, and the district police. Every complaint from those who were harmed at the Sebashray camp has been taken as an FIR. Rest assured, those who have committed such a grave crime will not be spared. Time will tell. All evidence is being collected."Banerjee was recently booked after a woman complained that she lost a leg following treatment for knee pain at a Sebaashray camp, a healthcare outreach initiative launched by the Diamond Harbour MP in West Bengal a few months ago.Banerjee launched the Sebaashray health camps in 2025 across his Lok Sabha constituency, among other places.The TMC leader also faces allegations relating to alleged misappropriation of Cyclone Amphan relief funds, illegal soil extraction and irregularities in government housing schemes. He has been named in multiple cases, including one involving the alleged forgery of signatures on a Trinamool document and another over his remarks on the use of DJs during an election rally.

Abhijeet Dipke down with typhoid, says illness won't slow CJP movement

"Have been diagnosed with typhoid, but the fight will go on until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns!" Dipke said in a social media post. He also posted a video, saying, "

EMS News Agency, August 3Abhijeet Dipke said he was diagnosed with typhoid.Abhijeet Dipke said he was diagnosed with typhoid.CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke on Saturday said he was diagnosed with typhoid, but vowed that his illness would not slow the movement seeking Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.This comes a day after the CJP founder, who has been protesting at the Jantar Mantar site, said he was unwell and receiving intravenous medication.

"Have been diagnosed with typhoid, but the fight will go on until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns!" Dipke said in a social media post. He also posted a video, saying, "The treatment is going on. I am getting IV drips every day. But I want to thank all the cockroaches who are protesting peacefully across the country."Dipke had been unwell for the past few days and was undergoing treatment. While informing of his illness, he thanked CJP supporters for keeping the protests alive across the country and said that the movement would achieve its objective."The treatment is going on. I am getting IV drips every day. But I want to thank all the cockroaches who are protesting peacefully across the country," he said.Dipke said he believed sustained peaceful protests would help them achieve their key demand, which was Union minister Pradhan's resignation."Congratulations to all of you for making this movement such a big success. I am very sure that if we continue protesting like this, we will get Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation," he said.In an earlier social media post, he said he was feeling weak due to fever and receiving injections and intravenous medication. I've been down with a fever and severe body pain for the last few days, but I've been pushing through with painkillers. My apologies if you don't see me at Jantar Mantar today. I need to get a few hours of rest and recover.Heading back to Jantar Mantar after a night full of IVs, injections, and blood tests. Physically I'm still feeling weak due to fever, but the fight must go on. Our peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar will continue until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns," he said.

The CJP-led agitation, which started as a protest at Jantar Mantar, has spread across the country with protesters demanding demanding accountability in the examination system, reforms in recruitment and entrance tests, and Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.

Punjab's fugitive gangster Joban Billa extradited from Indonesia

The Punjab Police, in coordination with Central agencies, secured the extradition of fugitive gangster Jobanjit Singh alias Joban Billa from Indonesia and brought him back to the state

The Punjab Police, in coordination with Central agencies, secured the extradition of fugitive gangster Jobanjit Singh alias Joban Billa from Indonesia and brought him back to the state .Wanted in multiple criminal cases, including murder, attempt to murder, narcotics, and Arms Act offences, Joban Billa has been evading arrest by operating across multiple countries over the past six months. He is wanted in four murder cases registered in Punjab, the police said.The capture of Billa marks the culmination of Operation Nomad Hunt—an intelligence-driven manhunt involving sustained global surveillance and coordination by multiple agencies.

The Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) and the Overseas Fugitive Tracking and Extradition Cell (OFTEC) — specialised agencies of the Punjab Police — have played a crucial role in Billa's extradition.OFTEC Punjab was established in January to systematically address the challenges posed by foreign-based gangsters, terrorists, and other absconders who remotely control organised crime, extortion, targeted killings, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and related activities within Punjab.OFTEC's key role is to streamline international police cooperation and close procedural gaps that had caused delays when cases were handled at the district or police-station level. Its key functions include identifying and monitoring absconding criminals, especially gangsters, operating from abroad, notably the US, UAE, Canada, UK, Germany, and other locations.It also prepares and processes Interpol notices like Red Corner Notices, Blue Corner Notices, etc, extradition requests, Mutual Legal Assistance Requests (MLARs), and Letters Rogatory (LRs).

Punjab invokes 1911 law to keep garbage moving during strike

Justice Jain took on record an affidavit filed by secretary (local government) Ghanshyam Thori, pursuant to the court's July 20 order directing Punjab to place on record the steps taken to tackle the sanitation crisis across municipal bodies. (File)Justice Jain took on record an affidavit filed by secretary Ghanshyam Thori, pursuant to the court's July 20 order directing Punjab to place on record the steps taken to tackle the sanitation crisis across municipal bodies. All Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Punjab have been directed to ensure that "under no circumstances" is there any disruption in the collection, lifting, transportation and disposal of municipal solid waste during the ongoing strike by sanitation workers, the state government informed the Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday.

Noting the state's assurance that these directions will remain in force till the issue of strike is resolved, a bench of Justice Pankaj Jain adjourned the matter to August 11.The HC has been hearing a writ petition filed by Sangrur residents Pardeep Kumar and others. Justice Jain took on record an affidavit filed by secretary (local government) Ghanshyam Thori, pursuant to the court's July 20 order directing Punjab to place on record the steps taken to tackle the sanitation crisis across municipal bodies.Along with the affidavit, the State placed before the court an internal communication issued by the Department of Local Government to Deputy Commissioners, Commissioners of Municipal Corporations and Executive Officers of Urban Local Bodies across Punjab. The communication stated that "…all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are directed to ensure appropriate contingency measures…that, under no circumstances, there is any disruption in the collection, lifting, transportation, and disposal of municipal solid waste".The communication further directs to ensure that adequate door-to-door collection of municipal solid waste is carried out from all designated collection points and all collected garbage is transported and disposed of only at the designated waste disposal/dump sites."After the lifting of garbage, proper sanitization and disinfection of the affected areas are carried out…Sensitive locations where garbage accumulation is generally high are monitored regularly to prevent excessive accumulation of waste," it reads, adding that "all necessary measures are taken to ensure efficient collection, transportation, and scientific disposal of municipal solid waste in accordance with the applicable rules and guidelines".The communication further provides that "all

the Deputy Commissioners are directed to immediately invoke Section 233 and 234 of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911 and ensure that all the Municipal Councils, Nagar Panchayats in the State of Punjab have alternate contingency measures to ensure that work of municipal waste is not disrupted."

With regard to Municipal Corporations, it states that "the Government, while exercising the power under Section 405 of the Punjab Municipal Corporation Act, 1976, issues directions to all the Commissioners to take similar action as described action."The court, during the hearing, also recorded the submission of senior counsel Anu Chatrath, appearing for the respondent municipal council, that "the directives issued by the Secretary, Department of Local Bodies, Punjab (supra) shall remain in vogue till the issue of strike is resolved."On July 20, while hearing the same petition, the court had expressed concern over the sanitation crisis arising out of the strike by sanitation workers across Punjab.

The court had held that the monsoon has already set in, it apprehended that the prevailing situation may lead to a risk of an epidemic. The court had thus directed the Punjab government to file an affidavit detailing the action taken in all municipal councils to tide over the situation and warned that if the affidavit was not filed before the next date of hearing, the Secretary, Local Bodies, would have to remain present in person.The petition, filed by Sangrur residents, alleges that repeated failures to ensure uninterrupted sanitation services have resulted in garbage accumulation and pose a serious threat to public health.The petitioners have sought directions to the Punjab government and municipal authorities to ensure continuous sanitation services and put in place effective contingency arrangements during the ongoing strike by sanitation workers.

Over 2,300 measles cases recorded in US, worst outbreak in 35 years | What's happening

As many as 2,318 confirmed cases of the contagious illness have been recorded since the beginning of 2026, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This figure surpasses the 2025 total of 2,289 cases and three deaths, including two young children.The last time the US experienced such a high number of measles cases was in 1991, when 9,643 cases were recorded.According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the symptoms of measles, which is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus, include a cough, runny nose, high fever, and rash all over the body. It also infects the respiratory tract.It can cause severe complications and can even lead to death. Although the disease can infect anyone, it is most common in children.Measles was declared eradicated in the US in 2000 because of vaccination. However, before the development of the measles vaccine in the early 1960s, the contagious disease killed hundreds of children annually in the US, and it reportedly continues to claim lives worldwide, according to a report by news agency AFP.

The virus has made a comeback in recent years, which has been linked by medical experts to declining immunization rates. A trend many attribute in part to vaccine skepticism espoused by President Donald Trump's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, reported Reuters.Andrew Racine, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said, “Since early last year, federal leaders have dismissed measles as benign and unavoidable and have spread misleading information about the MMR vaccine,” reported Reuters.Melissa Nolan, a professor of epidemiology at the University of South Carolina, said she believes that there is an “underdiagnosis.””When you think about the people who are choosing not to vaccinate their children, these are also the people that have medical hesitancy in general," she told AFP.Although the measles vaccine is mandatory in the US, people in much of the country can bypass the requirement by claiming religious or philosophical exemptions.Since the COVID-19 pandemic, these non-medical exemptions have surged alongside a rise in vaccine misinformation.A September 2025 poll by The Washington Post and the nonprofit KFF showed that one in six American parents avoid or delay vaccinating their children due to fears of side effects and a lack of trust in health authorities.

Trump’s tariffs likely to stick around despite unpopularity

President Donald Trump’s latest tariffs are drawing anger from trading partners and voters, but the leverage and revenue they offer could make it hard for future presidents to fully give them up.Heading into the midterm elections, Trump’s tariff agenda has been a major Democratic talking point as voters express anger over the cost of living. Heading into the midterm elections, Trump’s tariff agenda has been a major Democratic talking point as voters express anger over the cost of living.A longtime advocate for a more protectionist trade agenda, Trump argues that his policies have unleashed a US economic boom, and when they haven’t, he says the duties are useful sticks in negotiations with trading partners. He continues to threaten more tariffs against allies like Canada, even though polling consistently shows that the tariffs are unpopular with voters, who are already frustrated with stubbornly high inflation.

But while criticism mounts globally and domestically, that doesn’t mean a future president would fully roll back Trump’s agenda, experts said, suggesting a Democrat could seek to make changes, to smooth relations with allies and ease the economic impact, without throwing them all out. For example, former President Joe Biden maintained — and in some cases expanded — the tariffs Trump implemented on China during his first term.“I do think in general tariffs are going to be more sticky than a lot of people believe,” said Josh Lipsky, vice president and chair of international economics at the Atlantic Council, who noted that the tariffs are part of broader trade deals and provide revenue. “I think the pull of this will be hard to get away from.”The latest tariff action, a 10% or 12.5% duty on imports from most trading partners, took effect Friday. They’re based on allegations by the Trump administration that the targeted countries and economies failed to prevent forced labor in their supply chains, which several have said are baseless.Trading partners see it as unlikely that the forced-labor levies are rolled back any time soon, according to an official from a European Union member country. It’s also doubtful whether there will be a return to the lower duty levels that preceded Trump, as the US disposition toward tariffs doesn’t change much between administrations, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Tax Policy Center estimates that tariffs will raise about $1.7 trillion in the next 10 years, with $179 billion raised in 2026. The revenue will decline over time according to the TPC projection, as US buyers will gradually shift away from imports with high duties. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has called this the “melting ice cube” theory of tariffs.But tariffs are a Catch-22 when it comes to the deficit. The revenue they generated in 2025 and early 2026 did help to narrow the US budget gap before Trump’s ‘emergency’ tariffs were invalidated by the Supreme Court. But tariffs can also be a drag on economic growth, making it harder to reduce the deficit-to-GDP ratio.The latest effort is also not as lucrative as the sweeping tariffs that were struck down, and which the administration is currently in the process of refunding. A new analysis from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says the current tariffs, including those announced this week, will replace less than 60% of the revenue lost by the ruling.Even when Trump acknowledges they don’t work, he has offered tweaks to his tariffs rather than giving up on them wholesale.Despite tariffs, the “primary aluminum, which is critical to the US economy and defense industrial base, is still in insufficient supply,” Trump said in a proclamation he signed on Monday. The policy change would halve duties on some aluminum imports in an effort to incentivize more smelting in the US.Heading into the midterm elections, Trump’s tariff agenda has been a major Democratic talking point as voters express anger over the cost of living. A YouGov survey of almost 9,700 US adults this week found 72% believed the president’s levies increased the prices they paid for goods.Republicans are bracing for losses in the November midterm elections, given voter frustration over the economy and Trump’s leadership. The GOP is defending their majorities in Congress, with the narrowly divided House of Representatives particularly vulnerable.The cost of living remains a key frustration for Americans. While data out earlier this month showed consumer prices fell amid lower gasoline prices in June, the cost of the fuel has headed back up since then and inflation remains elevated.That economic focus is likely to continue in the 2028 presidential primary. Given that, a future Democratic president will likely face pressure to make changes to the tariffs, said Matt Bennett, co-founder of the moderate Democratic think tank Third Way.

“Whoever will become president will have spent two years arguing that Trump has raised prices intentionally and that’s going to be pretty hard to work back,” he said, noting that there will be pressure to “lift a tariff and bring down prices.”Trump is already facing legal pushback at home. Small businesses filed a pair of lawsuits in the US Court of International Trade on Friday, accusing the president and US officials of unlawfully using Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to try to replace the earlier rounds of tariffs.Generally, Section 301 tariffs “are on stronger legal ground,” despite legal challenge, trade historian and Dartmouth economics professor Douglas Irwin told Bloomberg TV. “It’s not clear that the courts will overturn them, so these tariffs are probably here to stay for some time.”Wendy Cutler, senior vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute, said a new president who wanted to work with foreign allies may be “more sympathetic to try to find exit ramps with our allies and partners.”

Killer of Air India bombing suspect gets 15-year jail term in separate murder case

Toronto, A contract killer, who is already serving a life term for the murder of a former suspect in the Air India Kanishka bombing, has been sentenced to an additional 15 years in prison by a Canadian court in a separate case involving a fatal shooting, according to a media report.Tanner Fox, 25, was sentenced on Wednesday after pleading guilty to the manslaughter of 41-year-old Chad Colivas of Abbotsford in British Columbia, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported on Friday.Police said Colivas was found with gunshot wounds at his home on March 21, 2022, and later died of his injuries.

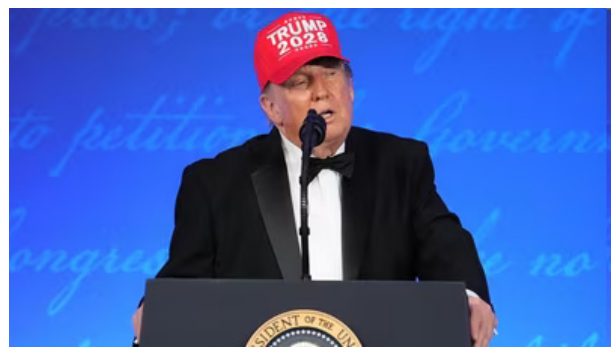
Fox was arrested in 2023 along with 30-year-old Laetitia Acera. Acera pleaded guilty to break and enter and was sentenced to four years in prison, followed by two years of probation, while Fox pleaded guilty to manslaughter with a firearm in April this year.Less than four months after Colivas' killing, Fox shot dead Sikh businessman Ripudaman Singh Malik on July 14, 2022, while he was sitting in his Tesla at a business park in Surrey, British Columbia.Malik was one of the main accused in the 1985 Air India Flight 182 "Kanishka" bombing executed by Canada-based Sikh separatists. All 329 people, including 268 Canadians, 27 British citizens, and 22 Indians on board the flight, were killed in the terror attack.Fox later pleaded guilty to the second-degree murder of Malik, who, along with co-accused

Ajaib Singh Bagri were acquitted in 2005 after a Canadian court ruled there was insufficient evidence to convict them in the terror attack.Inderjit Singh Reyat, who admitted to assembling the bombs, was the only person convicted in connection with the terror attack. He was later released in 2016 after serving nearly two-thirds of his sentence.In 2025, Fox was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for 20 years for Malik's killing. During sentencing, he told the court he had been "young and dumb" when he carried out the contract killing.

Over 92 akh Telangana voters yet to submit enumeration forms ahead of August 3 deadline

Hyderabad: With one week remaining to close the window for submission of the enumeration forms (August 3), as on Saturday, more than 92 lakh electors across 33 districts in Telangana were yet to submit their enumeration forms for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls.According to the status report of the SIR, enumeration forms were distributed to 3,38,26,448 electors, and of them, 2,46,01,237 were submitted. Still, 92,25,211 electors did not submit their enumeration forms in the State.Chief Electoral Officer of Telangana, C Sudarshan Reddy, and Hyderabad district election officer,

'Regime toppled, being run by gay dictator': Trump's indirect jibe at Mojtaba Khamenei



United States President Donald Trump called Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei ‘gay’ during the White House Correspondents' Dinner on Friday, without taking his name directly.Talking about his administration's achievements which, as per him, are often overlooked by “fake news media”, he spoke of the country's ongoing war with Iran and said, “A once feared and powerful regime that relentlessly attacked America has finally been toppled. Their former leaders have been removed and they’re now being run by a gay dictator facing internal divisions."Trump made the remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner held at Waldorf Astoria in Washington DC on Friday.

During his hour-long address, which was full of jokes and potshots at journalists including praises for some, Trump touched on multiple aspects of his second presidential term including the country's ongoing war with Iran and also quipped about a possible third term in office, before saying that he was “just kidding”.The dinner, which originally took place back in April, was rescheduled after a shooting incident at the security gate prompted an immediate evacuation of the venue.Trump began his address with a remark stating that it had “not been an easy evening for him” after multiple awards were handed out to journalists over the course of the night, many of whom had been critical of his administration.‘Press Secretary has one of the hardest jobs in White House'Drawing back to the original dinner which took place in April, the President remarked that he “suspected” many members of his audience were “lucky” that their last dinner was “cut short” due to the fierce criticism he had planned on delivering. He then went on to label the Press Secretary's role as “one of the hardest jobs in the White House”.“She has to deal with all of you all of the time and you can be very difficult... this place is really the largest group of Trump Derangement Syndrome people ever put together at one time I suspect,” he added.Besides singling out multiple people for personal attacks including journalists such as Don Lemon and Lawrence O'Donnell, politicians like Chris Christie and Adam Schiff, and celebrities including Bruce Springsteen and Jane Fonda, the President also hinted at running for a possible third term in office.“I won three times — now I'm going to do it again,” he said while putting on a red cap with “Trump 2028” labelled on it.Constitutionally, the 22nd Amendment explicitly bans a person from being “elected to the office of the president more than twice”.Meanwhile, the US-Iran conflict entered a fresh round of confrontation on Friday as multiple strikes were reported in parts of the Gulf region. Several explosions were heard near Erbil airport in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, where US-led coalition troops and a major US consulate complex are located.In retaliation, the United States targeted a Revolutionary Guards base in the northern province of Gilan as per deputy governor Ali Bagheri. Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi warned countries against supporting the US in its attacks, adding that the country "reserves its right to take all necessary measures within the framework of self-defence".The US House of Representatives also passed a resolution calling for the White House to halt military action against Iran without explicit authorisation. The move, however, remained largely on paper as the US military continued its attacks for the 13th consecutive night.

'Xi, Putin assured they won't arm Iran': Trump places trust on two 'major countries'

US President Donald Trump on Friday said he trusted Russia and China were not participating in support of Iran in the ongoing West Asia conflict and also warned that any involvement by the two countries would be "very bad" and against their interests.In a post on Truth Social, Trump said Chinese President Xi Jinping had assured him during their recent meeting in Beijing that China would neither give nor sell weapons to Iran, including through Chinese companies.

"President Xi, at our recent meeting in Beijing, China, told me that he would not, under any circumstances, give or sell Weapons to the Islamic Republic of Iran — And that statement included Chinese Companies," Trump wrote, adding that he trusted Xi's assurance.Trump also said Russian President Vladimir Putin had told him Russia would not sell weapons to Tehran."President Putin... told me that he would not sell Weapons to Iran. He understands that I do not sell Weapons to Ukraine, but to NATO Countries," Trump said, adding that both Russia and China were "not participating" in support of Iran."Therefore, two major Countries that people speak of often in terms of Iran are, in my opinion, not participating. If they did, it would be very bad for them — Certainly not in their best interests," he added.Speaking to reporters later at the White House, Trump said he trusted both leaders."I don't know that they're enabling (Iran)," Trump said. “I think I trust them”, according to a Reuters report.Trump's remarks came despite comments earlier this week by US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who told lawmakers that Russia and China were helping Iran in ways he did not specify."There are ways in which both of those countries are, at different levels, enabling some of the things Iran is doing, yes," Hegseth said during a Senate hearing.

Iranian strikes on CIA targets in the Gulf earlier in the conflict prompted US intelligence agencies to investigate whether Russia had provided Iran with targeting information or drone technology, according to a Reuters report.The Kremlin declined to comment on the report on Thursday, the report added.The United States has also imposed sanctions on individuals and companies in Russia and China accused of helping Iran procure weapons.The Hill noted that CNN reported in March, citing unnamed US officials, that Russia had been providing Iran with Russian satellite imagery to track the location and movement of American troops.Additionally, it also said NBC News reported in May, that Iran may have used Chinese missiles and long-range early-warning radar during the war.

'Lapdog media': Indian reporters caught in youth protest anger

The physical attack on Kotak was unusual but through the protests, which gained momentum last week, people have heckled and abused crews from almost all of India's mainstream television channels, calling them pro-government and sold out

NEW DELHI, When Indian television reporter Dev Kotak went to cover a massive youth protest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government this week, he planned to deliver a live broadcast, mill around ?and leave.Instead, amid chants of "godi (lapdog) media", he was beaten by dozens of protesters, because his channel is seen as pro-government. Mobile phone cameras captured the assault and ?the clip later went viral on social media.The Reuters Inside Track newsletter is your essential guide during the World Cup. Sign up here.

The physical attack on Kotak was unusual but through the protests, which gained momentum last week, people have heckled and abused crews from almost all of India's mainstream television channels, calling them pro-government and sold out."The mob might have actually killed me. There was a seething anger among them because they felt the media hadn't reported their side of the story," said Kotak, 36, who covers general news ?for the Times Now channel."There were slaps, kicks, punches and water bottles being thrown. I was very scared and feared for my life; I just wanted to get out ?alive."Anger has boiled over especially since a police crackdown on tens of thousands of protesters marching on parliament on Monday injured many students."People kept ?shouting that we hadn't shown their side of the story." Kotak said. "That's simply not true — I've reported injuries on both sides."Times Now's editor-in-chief, Navika Kumar, did not respond to multiple requests ?for comment.The hostility towards reporters reflects a broader debate over declining media freedom in the world's most populous democracy since Modi took office in 2014 and started dominating Indian politics.

India's ranking in the ?Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index has deteriorated sharply over the past decade. The country ranked 122nd in 2010 but fell to 157th out of 180 countries in 2026.The Paris-based media rights watchdog has attributed the decline to violence against journalists, concentration of media ownership in business that are aligned with the government and growing political polarisation.The Editors Guild of India condemned what it called ire "directed at representatives of the media outlets considered close to the government and the ruling party".But it also said: "Flawed and biased reporting not only makes a bad situation worse, but has more serious and longer-lasting consequences which impact the fabric of our society and also weaken the media's position as one of the key pillars of a functional democracy."The Information and Broadcasting Ministry and Modi's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A spokesperson ?for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party declined comment.Prominent journalist Ravish Kumar, a winner of the Ramon Magsaysay Award, regarded as Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize, is credited with coining the term "godi media", which has spread widely because it also rhymes with Modi.The term has come to include almost all TV channels and some national newspapers for what critics say is their lack of scrutiny of government, coverage of Modi that borders on the fawning and ignoring or criticising any dissent.

"The godi-media is anti democracy, anti-people, anti-opposition," Kumar said. "They vilify any opposition, label critics as agents of foreign governments, and barely ever feature voices of political parties from opposition."A spokesperson for the protest movement, led by the Cockroach Janta Party, said organisers had repeatedly urged demonstrators not to mistreat reporters."We have urged and we keep urging protesters to not misbehave with godi-media," said Deepak Baliyan."Let them do their job. We want to make sure that no one gets mistreated here."Manisha Pande, editorial ?director of news website Newslaundry, said the distrust was the product of years of growing disillusionment with mainstream television news."We have always had propaganda, partisanship, opinion-driven prime-time news," Pande said. "But what has really happened after 2014 is that you have seen a clear shift in how news has become anti-people."Digital commentator Akash Banerjee said the decline in trust of traditional news outlets had helped drive audiences toward independent online platforms."The fact that the media has stopped questioning the government has resulted in a rise of alternative digital media, which would not have happened otherwise," said Banerjee, ried its own dangers.

The worries in India's push beyond E20 fuel — and lessons it can take from Brazil

The Union government Wednesday exempted higher ethanol-petrol blends (22%-30% ethanol) from central excise duty, putting their tax treatment on a par with the 20% ethanol blend (E20) that's currently the standard at pumps.Both measures signal the government's intent to prepare the country's vehicular and fuel ecosystems for the next stage of ethanol adoption. But they also have differing implications.The first measure — the transition from E20 fuel to higher blends — is aimed at most petrol cars.The second move — the draft amendment to recognise E85 and higher fuel — targets an entirely new category called flex fuel vehicles. Such vehicles are designed to operate on varying blends of petrol and ethanol but are still some way away from being widely introduced to the Indian market.For now, it is the first proposal that has caused concern among carmakers and motorists — especially considering their experience with the initial transition to the E20 ethanol blend from E10. Here's a look at the many problems with shifting to higher ethanol blends.Last year, India achieved 20% ethanol blending in petrol, five years before target.E20 fuel, denoting 80 parts petrol to 20 parts of ethanol, is now the standard petrol variant nationwide.

For people with E10 certified vehicles or older ones, the transition to E20 came in just three years, with little warning of the pitfalls. The experience left motorists, especially those owning older cars and two-wheelers, feeling shortchanged.There are multiple problems with using a higher ethanol blend in petrol for engines not designed for these blends. Engine damage: Ethanol has a higher content of water, which is corrosive. So, E20 or higher ethanol blends could damage the parts of the internal combustion engine. This is especially true for older engines and the ones used on two-wheelers, where high-grade aluminum or steel casts are not used for the engine block.

Mileage: Many customers had flagged a drop in mileage after the E10 to E20 shift. The drop could be between 5-12%, depending on when the car was manufactured. The Petroleum Ministry, however, has said that the drop in mileage would be "marginal". The only option: Vehicle owners in India currently do not have an option to choose different fuels at the petrol pump, unlike their counterparts in Brazil — a country that has successfully and structurally integrated ethanol with its automobile ecosystem. Brazilian law, unlike India, also provides for a discount for higher ethanol blends Ignition issue: Regular ICE cars running on higher ethanol blends are hard to start on winter mornings because ethanol burns at a higher temperature than petrol. Exponentially worse performance: While a fuel with 10% ethanol (E10) makes little difference to a car's performance, anything above that level is said to cause problems in engines that aren't specifically built for it. And this performance worsens exponentially as the blending levels increase. The impact could be higher in the transition from E20 to E25 than from E10 to E20. E25 is what the government is now targeting as the base fuel, up from the current E20.The Petroleum Ministry has said that these concerns around higher ethanol blends are not backed by "scientific evidence".A senior technical expert at a major automaker acknowledged that there are no conclusive studies on the long-term impact of blended fuel on non-compliant vehicles. But the expert also told The Indian Express that it could definitely have an impact on the engine's life, its various rubber parts, valves and piston heads, among others.

"In case of this new transition too, the consumer will likely end up bearing the brunt of any drop in fuel efficiency. For older vehicles, there is the added question over vehicle damage due to the high ethanol mix. That too is left to the consumer," a representative of an auto manufacturing association said.

The E25 transition will require additional engineering and validation work around engine calibration, fuel-system durability, corrosion resistance and material compatibility. All this, just months after the E20 transition.Vehicle costs will increase and likely fall on the consumer.Carmakers have flagged concerns over this rapid transition. They have called for greater policy clarity and alignment across fuel infrastructure, dispensing systems and nationwide fuel consistency before higher ethanol blends can be rolled out at scale.Beyond that, in private, they're willing to talk about some anomalies in this E20 to E25 transition."Some of the concerns have been conveyed, especially through (auto) industry representatives. Indications are that the transition towards a base fuel having a higher blend of ethanol (above E20) is likely to happen, alongside the progressive rollout of the E85-E100 fuels," a senior auto industry executive told

Oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil and Bharat Petroleum, too, will face challenges. A government source involved in the process indicated that OMCs have made it clear that they can only offer two ethanol blends at any given point.Why is the government pushing for blends beyond E20? The government is looking to progressively increase ethanol blending in petrol from the current E20 level to E25, before transitioning towards flex-fuel vehicles and E85-E100 fuels.This is an integral part of India's strategy to reduce its dependence on imported fossil fuels — especially after the experience with the West Asia conflict that drove up prices.India currently imports nearly 88.5% of its crude oil requirement, making the economy and energy security vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions.There's a political angle too: the agricultural lobby, especially from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, is pushing hard for ethanol blends to be hiked since farmers such as those growing sugarcane are sitting on significant overcapacity.

The government maintains that the rollout of higher ethanol-petrol blends will only be done after proper testing and consultations. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), on May 19, also notified fuel standards for these higher ethanol blends.According to a source in the government, the move towards blends higher than E20 is "not being pushed through in a hurry and there will be enough time given for vehicles and oil companies to gear up for this transition". "Too much should not be read into (Wednesday's) notification" on the excise duty exemption, said this source.So how will this transition to higher blends work?In the medium term, consumers may have two categories of fuel available at petrol pumps. One would be the standard fuel — E20 today, and potentially E25 if the government pushes ahead with its plans. The other would be high-ethanol fuels such as E85 or E100.The high blend would likely be priced lower. A consumer with a flex fuel vehicle can also consider the pricing before deciding which one to use.

Automakers say the move to E25 would require fresh tests on existing vehicles to evaluate compatibility with the higher ethanol blend.For new vehicles, manufacturers would have to recalibrate engines and undergo fresh emissions certification and homologation, since current models have been tested and approved using E20 fuel. Homologation, the process of certifying a vehicle's roadworthiness, would need to be repeated for E25, just as it was done when E20 was introduced.Ultimately, however, they will likely make a shift to flex fuel vehicles — a project that is still a work in progress, and delayed on multiple counts.Brazil's decades-long experience with ethanol-blended fuels may offer a template for how India could move forward.The South American country has widely adopted flex fuel vehicles, driven by government mandates, price incentives for consumers, clear guidance for automakers and robust public awareness campaigns.

'Black like sewage': Why South Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods are struggling for clean water

Inside a white metal cabin beside Gate 2 of Gulmohar Park, residents have begun reading numbers they never expected to care about.The readings appeared on June 11 on a newly installed online water analyser that continuously monitors the quality of water entering one of South Delhi's most affluent societies before it reaches homes.Installed after a three-week contamination scare, the Delhi Jal Board is testing the system in Gulmohar Park before deciding on a wider rollout.The analyser tracks key indicators: whether the water is too acidic, whether enough disinfectant remains to help keep it safe, and how clear it is.For residents, those readings have become more than data. They have become a way to measure whether normalcy is returning.

Just weeks earlier, many had stopped trusting the water coming from their taps.'Black like sewage': Why South Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods are struggling for clean water A newly installed water analyser. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna)Across parts of South Delhi — including Gulmohar Park, Hauz Khas, Sarvodaya Enclave, and Green Park — residents say this summer exposed a troubling reality: a deteriorating water and sewer system alongside recurring seasonal shortages.Behind incidents of foul-smelling tap water, sewage contamination, and weeks of flushing operations, residents point to an ageing underground network strained by construction activity, rising demand, overloaded sewers, and utility maps that, in some areas, no longer exist.

"This entire saga started somewhere around May 22," recalled Atul Bal, president of the Gulmohar Park RWA.Some residents said the water smelled foul. Others described murky supply. Families reported falling sick. WhatsApp groups filled with photographs of contaminated water and questions no one seemed able to answer: Was the contamination coming from inside the colony? From outside?'Black like sewage': Why South Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods are struggling for clean waterOfficials spent days tracing possible sources.Bal said one suspected point emerged near B Block, where houses under construction had temporary toilets allegedly positioned above a water pipeline. The structures were removed. Attention then shifted to Gate 2, where Delhi Jal Board teams dug up the area and found a punctured pipe.But the problem did not disappear.Residents said contamination continued to move through the colony's ageing internal network for nearly two weeks.

"Since contamination existed for almost two weeks across the pipeline in the colony, which is almost 60 years old now, residual contamination was still there," Bal said.The colony eventually began flushing pipelines from the tail end to push out what remained inside, Bal said.After weeks of disruption, the answer was continuous monitoring.For residents, the analyser offers reassurance. But it also raises a larger question.'Black like sewage': Why South Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods are struggling for clean water A resident of Hauz Khas shows his water tank. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna)For Gulmohar Park residents, the three week disruption extended beyond bad-smelling water. The daily-life toll was significant, the residents said. Several among them missed work because of illness, some spent money on treatment and tank cleaning, and others paid for private water. "Overall the quality of life had gone down," Bal said.Vimal Bhan, vice-president of the RWA, said his own health deteriorated during the episode. "It was a health scare. My wife and several other neighbours also fell sick," he said.

Low pressure created another problem. Bhan said household pumps began pulling harder and damaging ferrules. "When the pressure was low, my pump pulled and the ferrules got damaged," he recalls.Several residents eventually dug up their own service lines and replaced ferrules before realising some of the remaining issues lay within household connections.The colony also had to run a parallel water-supply operation while repairs were underway, the residents said.'Black like sewage': Why South Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods are struggling for clean waterBal said the RWA coordinated with DJB for tankers "It was a mammoth exercise – a colony of 700 houses, most of them asking for water," he said. At one stage, 13 tankers operated in shifts, making around 30–35 trips carrying 10,000 litres each.

But even that did not reach everyone. Some residents bought private tanker water, especially those dependent on overhead tanks or unwilling to return to piped supply.A few kilometres away, in Hauz Khas Village's Y Block, amid the simmering mid-June heat, the crisis remained visible in trenches and exposed service lines as workers replaced old pipes.Standing near the dug-up stretch, Prakash Chand Gupta, a Y Block resident, described what had been coming through the taps."Nalla ka paani aata hai, ek dam kala. (Sewage-mixed water comes in, completely black.) It has been ten days."

His family had been arranging drinking water separately."This work has been going on for four days now," he said, expressing hope that repairs would bring relief. "Mostly by this evening... it will get fixed..."Residents estimated that around 200 people in the area had faced water contamination issues this summer.Nearby, Manoranjan Singh, chief of the federation of RWAs in Hauz Khas, pointed to the underground tank at his house."Look… you can't see the bottom. It is so dirty. Earlier it wasn't like this at all. We could clearly see the bottom."

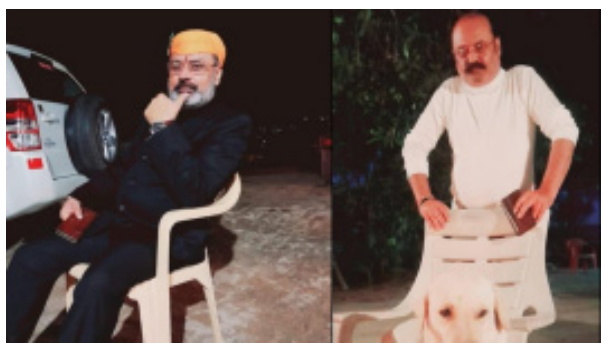
Residents linked the crisis to ageing infrastructure, intermittent supply and low pressure. Gaurav Sharma, secretary of the RWA of Geeta Bhavan Lane in Hauz Khas, explained that empty pipelines can become vulnerable to contamination."When the water stops, there's no water in the pipeline," he said.If sewage accumulates nearby, he said, contaminated water can enter through weak points."When fresh water comes from behind, it pushes all that sewage into the next few houses."

Singh argued that uneven demand and erratic supply had worsened the situation."There is no checking nor limits imposed. By the time heavy demands of the first few residences are met, the tail-end houses get really poor supply. The erratic timings of the water supply has been another concern," he said.In Sarvodaya Enclave, RWA head Shaffali Mittal said a similar episode surfaced in the first week of May at the end of one lane, affecting around 10 houses.Before residents realised the scale of the issue, she said, some had already suffered diarrhoea."We wouldn't have ever known," Mittal said."One person wrote that the water is smelly. Then the entire group started speaking up."DJB teams later dug up the pipeline and found a fault."Pipes have gotten old. They are corroding," Mittal said, adding that the affected section was replaced.But the repairs exposed another concern."They kept asking us for maps," she said."There is no plan. Our colony is like a 60-year-old colony."

Mittal said sewer pipelines had come under growing pressure over the years. "Another major problem nobody is talking about is builders," she said.She pointed to makeshift toilets at construction sites, waste dumped into drains and polishing residue entering sewer lines. "On ground the problem is so visible. Every colony where big constructions are going on, the lane there faces sewer blockage problems. Eventually there are complaints of bad water," she alleged.In Green Park, the immediate concern has been water shortage.RWA head Neha Puri said two blocks had received inadequate water supply for nearly 20 days, with the disruption still continuing."My own family is also affected," Puri said. "I am currently abroad, but I have had to arrange drinking water for my ageing parents back home."

On June 6, Municipal Corporation of Delhi issued an advisory for under-construction buildings in Green Park: that no damage be caused to sewer lines, water lines, prohibited labour huts and barred construction material from being stacked on roads.

Royal family feud, a petrol pump, proposed resort: Behind shooting at Madhya Pradesh's Parsmania Garhi fort



The princely state of Nagod in Madhya Pradesh formally disappeared in 1950 when its ruler signed the Instrument of Accession. But while the kingdom vanished from India's political map, the family that once ruled it did not. Stripped of sovereignty but not of land, property or influence, the former royals reinvented themselves as one of the most prominent landed and political families in the Vindhya region of central India.The forces pulling the family apart are not entirely unfamiliar. As in earlier chapters of the dynasty's history, disputes over property, succession and control of family assets lay at the heart of the conflict, turning private disagreements into a bitter feud, The Indian Express has learnt.

The dispute spilled into public view on June 11, when Yogita Singh, the estranged wife of Rupendra Kumar Singh, was shot in the abdomen during a confrontation at the family's Parsmania Garhi fort in Satna district. Police have arrested Sunita Singh Parihar, who allegedly fired the .22-bore rifle used in the shooting. Yogita's family alleges that Parihar shared a close personal relationship with Singh, a claim that Singh's representatives reject, describing her instead as a long-time business partner and investor in several family ventures.Behind the criminal investigation lies a dispute that family members say had been building for years. At issue were not only a marriage that had broken down, but also disagreements over the management of a petrol pump, a proposed resort project inside the family fort and the future control of assets associated with one of the Vindhya region's most prominent former royal households.

Royal family feud, a petrol pump, proposed resort: Behind shooting at Madhya Pradesh's Parsmania Garhi fort Rupendra Kumar SinghAt the centre of the dispute is Rupendra Singh, popularly known as Baba Raja, a member of the Nagod royal family and a relative of a sitting BJP MLA. The son of Kantidev Singh, Rupendra has long managed the family's affairs at Parsmania Garhi, a sprawling fort estate near Unchehra that remains one of the most visible symbols of the family's continuing influence.For much of the last two decades, Yogita Singh occupied the position of recognised daughter-in-law of the household. Belonging to a prominent family of Udaipur in Rajasthan, she married Rupendra Singh in 2000, later served as sarpanch of Parsmania panchayat and is the mother of the couple's only son, Prithudev Singh.Sunita Parihar's entry into the family's affairs came much later. Originally from Umri village in Satna district, Parihar first became associated with social work and NGO activities in the Parsmania area before entering Rupendra Singh's business circle.Royal family feud, a petrol pump, proposed resort: Behind shooting at Madhya Pradesh's Parsmania Garhi fort Sunita Singh PariharAccording to a representative of Rupendra Singh, Parihar had been associated with him since 2016 and was involved in several commercial ventures. "She is not only a working partner but also a financial partner in multiple ventures. She has invested money in businesses connected to him, including the petrol pump and the proposed resort project at Parsmania Garhi," the representative told The Indian Express.The petrol pump emerged as one of the central points of conflict.According to the representative, the proprietorship of the outlet remained with Yogita Singh, but disputes arose over its management and operation."The proprietorship of the petrol pump remained with Yogita Singh, but there were disputes regarding its operation and management. Those disagreements became one of the recurring issues between the parties," Rupendra Singh's representative said.The representative said Parihar had played an active role in the business and had invested in it financially. He also said operations at the outlet had been suspended for a period before being restored.The disagreement extended beyond the fuel station. Discussions were also underway regarding the commercial development of Parsmania Garhi itself. Family members and people familiar with the matter say "parts of the fort were being considered for conversion into a hospitality venture". According to Rupendra Singh's representative, Parihar was also an investor in the proposed resort project.By 2024, the marriage between Rupendra and Yogita Singh had entered a legal phase of separation."They are not divorced, but Rupendra Singh filed for separation in 2024. For some time before the incident, Yogita Singh was not residing with him and was staying separately. There had been longstanding differences between them and several disputes arising out of the separation," the representative said.The confrontation on June 11 unfolded against that backdrop.In an FIR registered on the basis of a complaint lodged by Rupendra Singh, he alleged that his brother-in-law, Nagendra Singh Rathore, and two others assaulted him using broken glass, pieces of a chandelier cover and a steel bottle. He claimed injuries to multiple parts of his body and alleged that he was threatened before the men left. Those allegations are being investigated.An FIR based on a complaint from Yogita Singh's side alleges that she was shot at during the confrontation. Parihar was subsequently arrested and sent to judicial custody.The dispute was also shaped by the position of Prithudev Singh, the couple's only son. Several people familiar with the family described him as the next-generation heir to Rupendra Singh's branch of the household. One member of the extended family said that even after relations between Rupendra and Yogita deteriorated, discussions surrounding Prithudev's future remained central to interactions between the two sides.Said a member from the royal family, "The couple (Rupendra and Yogita) last time met at a family function in Jaipur, where Rupendra Singh said he could not live with her, but allayed all fears that their son would not inherit the property. However, that did not help."Yogita Singh's family rejects the suggestion that the dispute was confined to business disagreements. Family members allege that Parihar's growing role in the affairs of Parsmania Garhi, her involvement in businesses linked to the estate and her presence at the fort had been a source of tension for several years. They contend that the "conflict gradually widened from a marital dispute into a broader disagreement over influence, access and decision-making within the household".Police say they are proceeding cautiously. "These are all aspects that will be investigated if such statements come before police. At present, our primary focus is on the shooting incident and the offences arising out of it," Additional Superintendent of Police Prem Lal Kurwe told

Claude models access issue: BJP MP warns against dependence on foreign AI

Bengaluru: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Yuva Morcha President and Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya on Saturday said recent restrictions imposed by the United States on access to some of its most advanced artificial intelligence (AI) models underscore the importance of India developing its own sovereign AI capabilities. Reacting to reports that the US government has suspended foreign nationals' access to certain cutting-edge AI models over national security concerns, Surya said the development serves as a stark reminder.

India squad for Sri Lanka Test series to be announced by Tuesday, confirms BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia

New Delhi: The Ajit Agarkar-led senior men's selection committee will announce India's Test squad for the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka by Tuesday, said BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia on Saturday.The Shubman Gill-led squad is scheduled to play two Test matches in Sri Lanka as part of their ICC World Test Championship (WTC) commitments. "By Tuesday, we'll announce the Test team," Saikia told IANS.

The opening Test match will be played at the picturesque Galle International Cricket Stadium (GICS) from August 15 to 19. The second and final Test will be played at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in Colombo from August 23 to 27.IANS had previously reported on July 20 that the Indian team will land in Colombo on August 4 and will play a four-day warm-up game from August 7 to 10 at the Nondescripts Cricket Club (NCC) in Colombo.While the majority of the squad will be the same, India's main concerns will be around the status of ace fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah and off-spin bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar. Bumrah missed the series-deciding third ODI against England at Lord's after suffering an impact injury and reactive swelling on his left knee in the second game in Cardiff.

Washington, meanwhile, is recovering from a right hamstring strain which ruled him out of the game at Lord's, and it's yet to be known if he will be in time for the series, which is India's first trip to play Tests in Sri Lanka after 2017. A return for veteran left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja will also be on the cards after he was rested from the one-off game against Afghanistan in New Chandigarh and wasn't selected for ODIs in England.Meanwhile, the BCCI's review meeting to dissect the national team's recent white-ball performances is expected to happen soon once the ongoing T20I series against Zimbabwe is over on Sunday. "Regarding the review meeting, we are going to do it sometime in the beginning of the next month, that is August," added Saikia.It is understood that top BCCI officials will meet at the headquarters in Mumbai with head coach Gautam Gambhir, T20I captain Shreyas Iyer, Centre of Excellence (COE) head of cricket VVS Laxman, and the five-member selection panel.The review meeting comes after India had T20I series defeats in Ireland (2-0) and England (4-0) before losing the ODI series 2-1. While no knee-jerk changes are expected, it is understood the meeting will address long-term tactical planning, execution of game plans in overseas conditions, and the wider roadmap leading into the 2027 Men's ODI World Cup.

India's rising stars set to shine at FIH Hockey Men's World Cup 2026

New Delhi: As the Indian Men's Team gets ready for the FIH Hockey World Cup in Belgium and the Netherlands 2026, their 20-player squad combines seasoned players with up-and-coming talent. Notable young players aiming to stand out include goalkeeper Mohith HS, defender Yashdeep Siwach, and midfielders Rajinder Singh and Aditya Arjun Lalage, all of whom have showcased impressive performances and earned spots toLalage, a 23-year-old attacking midfielder known for his pace and skill, is preparing for the biggest tournament of his career and is dedicated to making the most of this opportunity.

"Playing in the World Cup has been a childhood dream of mine, and being part of the squad is a very special feeling. Right now, my focus is on making the most of this opportunity by giving my 100 per cent in every training session and every match. I want to contribute in whatever way the team needs me to," Lalage said."The senior players and coaches have always guided me on what I can improve, and that has given me a lot of confidence. Everyone in the camp is working hard every day. We all have the same mindset of giving our best for India," he added.His fellow midfielder Rajinder Singh, also 23, has brought a mix of skill and strength to India's midfield, quickly making a name for himself with his energetic presence. Rajinder praised the camaraderie within the team.

"What makes this team special is the connection we share. We communicate constantly on the field, but that bond is just as strong off the field as well. Everyone puts in the effort for each other, and if someone makes a mistake, there's always a teammate ready to cover for him. I think that unity is one of our biggest strengths," Rajinder said.Meanwhile, 25-year-old defender Yashdeep Siwach concentrated on their rigorous training.The preparation for the World Cup has been really intense. We've worked hard on every aspect of our game, from fitness and strength to the smallest technical and tactical details. Every camp has pushed us to raise our standards and bring out the best in each other," Siwach said.Siwach emphasised the guidance he gets from senior team members, such as captain Harmanpreet Singh, Jarmanpreet Singh, and Amit Rohidas, as he shares defensive responsibilities with them.

Having experienced players around me has made a huge difference. They're always willing to share their experiences and guide me through the finer details of the game, which has helped me build confidence. Everyone understands their role and responsibility, and we're excited for the challenge ahead," added Siwach.Goalkeeper Mohith HS has demonstrated remarkable reflexes and calmness in goal. Having observed the previous World Cup from the junior national camp in Bengaluru, he is now gearing up to participate as part of the Indian team, aiming to break a 51-year drought and win another World Cup."I still remember watching the last World Cup from the junior national camp in Bengaluru. At that point, I always believed I would one day represent India at a major tournament, although I didn't expect the opportunity to come this soon. It's a very special feeling to now be part of the World Cup squad," said Mohith."From the Junior World Cup to now, I feel I've grown a lot as a goalkeeper, both physically and technically. I've always tried to learn from the coaches and senior players, whether it's improving the finer details or preparing for situations like shootouts. We have a great balance of experienced and young players, and everyone understands their role within the team," he added.

No flu on our watch': Dr. Pardiwala details India's health shield at Glasgow Commonwealth Games

Glasgow: As wet weather and cold temperatures settle over the 2026 Commonwealth Games, India's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala, has issued a strict health advisory to the Indian contingent.Since upper respiratory infections present a continual threat at major international events, Dr. Pardiwala stressed that strict personal hygiene and preventive care should form India's first line of defence against possible flu outbreaks.Navigating chilly Scottish conditions is one of the primary hurdles for athletes arriving from warmer climates. To prevent illness before competition even begins, the medical team implemented firm protocols around outdoor exposure and ceremonial duties.

"The weather is cold and it is raining. So the advice is primarily to just protect yourselves, don't get wet and we are making sure that each of the athletes who doesn't need to be out, doesn't need to be out. So try and protect them as far as possible," Dr. Pardiwala told IANS."So therefore even in the opening ceremony we made sure that none of the athletes who were participating immediately afterwards were part of the opening ceremony. We don't want to land up with colds and flus etc. just before participation."Preventing illness across a multi-sport contingent requires daily vigilance. According to Dr. Pardiwala, simple habits remain the most effective shield against viral spreads in shared athlete facilities."Just simple health and hygiene, making sure that everyone is keeping their hands clean and hand hygiene is being followed and that is the best way I think to just prevent any outbreak amongst the teams," he noted. "We get a morning update everyday amongst the Chief Medical Officers of the contingents and fortunately we don't have any outbreak of any flu or any colds and coughs amongst any of the contingents right now. So that is a good sign and we hope that it continues that way."

"In most large continental events, usually it is the upper respiratory tract infections that is the biggest blow to athletes performing at their best and fortunately this time it is under control."To ensure athletes maintain peak physical condition, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) established an independent, fully equipped sports science and recovery facility directly at the games village.

"You know whenever you have got a large contingent going out for the Olympics or the Asian Games or Commonwealth Games, you need sports science, you need injury management, you need preparation recovery services for the athletes. So what the Indian Olympic Association has done this time again… we have set up a recovery room here for all of our athletes. So all of our athletes will be supported by world class recovery and preparation before their events," Dr. Pardiwala said.To avoid potential delays in local healthcare systems, the team brought specialized recovery hardware and medical supplies directly from India."We have got a whole load

of equipment from India for that purpose and these are the things that we would normally use for most athletes. So compression, cryo-compression, all of the physiotherapy means and besides that just to make sure that we are autonomous and we have easy access to medicines… we have got all of our medicines and all of our requirements so that if anyone has any sort of medical problem, we can take care of it."Addressing queries regarding athlete readiness, Dr. Pardiwala clarified that fitness tracking is an ongoing, multi-layered responsibility carried out long before athletes reach the competition site."There is a constant process of fitness assessment. This is of course not done by the IOA medical team, this is done by the federations, the coaches, the physios, any athlete coming in really needs to be fit if they are going to be representing their country. So this is done by the federations to make sure that the fittest athletes do come in for competition."Injuries are going to take place all the time but if it is something minor which can be managed then that is great. If it is something significant which can't be managed then unfortunately that athlete is going to be unfit for competition."Beyond physical treatments, establishing a sense of security plays a critical role in mental preparation. Dr. Pardiwala highlighted the strong support network behind the contingent—involving the Sports Ministry, the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), and the IOA."To be quite honest we are getting a fabulous amount of support from not just the sports ministry but Sports Authority of India and our Target Olympic Podium Scheme, the TOPS and of course IOA. So I think the support that we need is to make sure that our athletes have the best opportunity to perform, that's number one."Ultimately, having immediate, accessible care removes anxiety, leaving athletes free to focus entirely on their performance."What we have heard from many of our athletes over the years is that the fear that if they get injured what is going to happen to them… just to have that insurance, that safety blanket there knowing that 'Look, I have got a team that is looking out for me. If I do get injured I am going to be taken care of, if it is a minor injury I am going to be taken care of and I will be back on the field the next day.' I think that itself is self reassurance and I think that gives them the confidence that they can do their best."

Jadumani Singh's 5kg gamble pays off, enters Round of 16

India's Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (blue) competes against Scotland's Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg Round of 32 boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026, in Glasgow, Friday, July 24, 2026. Jadumani won the bout by a 5-0 unanimous decision to advance to the Round of 16. (PTI Photo)India's Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (blue) competes against Scotland's Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg Round of 32 boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026, in Glasgow, Friday, July 24, 2026. Jadumani won the bout by a 5-

Jadumani Singh had a successful 2025 – a year that was built on his southpaw excellence in the 50kg category. But the men's boxing weight classes at major amateur events all start at the 55kg category. So the Manipuri boxer made the tough call – a five-kilogram jump in weight and the uncharted territory that comes with it would have to follow. The Commonwealth Games and its lack of seeding would have to be the first major tournament in the weight class.

The 23-year-old boxer turned in a spectacular opening round, one that set the tone for the judges over where this bout was headed, and defeated home favourite Aaron Cullen 5-0 in a unanimous win to start his Commonwealth Games campaign on Friday evening.The lack of seeding meant that what could have been a bout for the later rounds was played out as an opener. In these situations, Indians have struggled, especially after the Tokyo Olympic cycle. But Jadumani fashioned a victory, one which came from an agile lead foot that kept him a moving target for Cullen, and set his lightning-fast left hand.The left hook, followed by a left uppercut, was the bread and butter shot of the Indian. It found its mark in key moments. Cullen responded

with a stinging right jab that found its mark. But on output, the Indian boxer, making his Commonwealth Games debut, was the clearer victor in the first round.The second round, though, is where boxing struggles to survive as a sport. Cullen's control of the centre of the ring was absolute, and his adjudging of range was precise. When those two conditions were met, his shots landed aplenty. Jadumani changed his stance, deployed himself lower than his stance, and bobbed his head, but was not able to defend that first punch from Cullen's right. The Scottish boxer made it a close fight in the second, but the Indian got all five judges to give him the round 10-9. That surety on the scorecards was not what was showing in the ring. Jadumani had landed shots, but Cullen surprisingly failed to turn any of the judges' heads.The third round needed Cullen to produce an extraordinary knockout. But Jadumani coasted through the third, avoiding any heavy shots and preserving his body for the wars to come.

Brazil in advanced talks to play international friendly in Kolkata this October:

New Delhi: The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) is in late-stage talks with Indian sports organisers to schedule an international friendly in Kolkata, likely happening in early October 2026.

Initial reports from ESPN Brasil, later confirmed by outlets like Estadão, indicate that only the final contractual details are pending before an official announcement.The media outlet also confirmed with the CBF that Brazil plans to hold additional home friendlies in 2027, especially in cities typically overlooked in the national team's schedule. During the recent World Cup, Kolkata transformed into a lively display with murals of Neymar and Vini Junior adorning the city streets, particularly in north Kolkata.

Although organisers in Bangladesh, Singapore, and Qatar also showed interest, negotiations have only advanced with India. The CBF rejected proposals to include more matches in the region because of squad travel and recovery considerations.The proposed match occurs following Brazil's elimination by Norway in the Round of 16 at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, under head coach Carlo Ancelotti. This game in Kolkata is the main event of a 16-day "Super FIFA Window" running from late September to early October.

Although authorities in Dhaka, Singapore, and Doha presented lucrative proposals, negotiations with Indian

organizers have skipped over competing bids, moving directly to administrative procedures before the final signature.If confirmed, this event will be Brazil's first major appearance of the national team in Kolkata, adding to the city's history of hosting international football legends.If negotiations succeed, Kolkata will rekindle a nearly 50-year-old love affair with South American football. Since Pelé played at Eden Gardens with the New York Cosmos against Mohun Bagan in September 1977, the city has admired Brazilian style.For a region recovering from the post-World Cup slump, the appearance of yellow-and-green jerseys on home soil provides an instant boost.

No IOC scrutiny for Infantino over Trump's intervention at FIFA World Cup

US President Donald Trump has admitted that he intervened to get FIFA to allow Folarin Balogun to play the hosts' FIFA World Cup round of 16 match against Belgium. (AP Photo)US President Donald Trump has admitted that he intervened to get FIFA to allow Folarin Balogun to play the hosts' FIFA World Cup round of 16 match against Belgium.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino won't be investigated by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for US President Donald Trump's role in overturning the suspension of an American player after he had received a red card in the previous match, the Olympic body has said. The IOC said that decisions made during the World Cup was beyond its jurisdiction and it hence cannot investigate Infantino's alleged lack of political neutrality.

The statement comes after a complaint was made by a London-based NGO formally complained to the IOC ethics commission about Infantino. United States forward Folarin Balogun had been handed a red card in their round of 32 match against Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the mandatory one-game ban was then overturned by FIFA. In the minutes after FIFA announced the decision, reports emerged of Trump having influenced the decision. Trump later admitted to having a conversation with Infantino over telephone to allow Balogun to play in USA's round of 16 fixture against Belgium, which they lost 4-1.The IOC's Olympic Charter cites neutrality among "fundamental principles of Olympism" for sports bodies like FIFA and its 100-plus members, which has included Infantino since 2020.No formal investigation will be opened, the IOC said, because the complaint by rights group FairSquare did not relate to FIFA's or Infantino's specific relations with the Olympic body.The complaint "refers only to (FIFA's) decisions on its governance and its management, including its relations with government, and to (FIFA's) implementation of the rules of its sport," the IOC said in a statement."Consequently, the complaint falls outside the IOC ethics commission's jurisdiction," the statement said.The ethics body does not have independent powers to start investigations and sanction officials, but can make recommendations to the IOC executive board chaired by President Kirsty Coventry. She attended the World Cup final last Sunday at East Rutherford, New Jersey.Action has been taken against just one IOC member in the past eight years for unethical conduct: Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah, a key power broker who built a reputation as the "kingmaker" of Olympic elections.

Srihari Nataraj enters 50m backstroke semifinals, Budigina reaches para swimming final

Glasgow: India's swimming campaign at the Commonwealth Games 2026 started on a high note on Friday as Olympian Srihari Nataraj secured a place in the men's 50m backstroke semifinals, while para swimmer Budigina and Ali Imam produced impressive performances to qualify for the men's 100m freestyle S13 final.

Nataraj finished fifth in Heat 4 of the men's 50m backstroke after clocking 25.52 seconds to comfortably book his place among the top 16 swimmers progressing to the semifinals.England's Oliver Morgan won the heat in 24.91 seconds, while compatriots Jack Skerry (25.08)

After Dhurandhar success, will we never witness Ranveer Singh's soft boy avatar again?

Last year, in the same week that Ranveer Singh's watershed spy thriller Dhurandhar released in cinemas, he completed 15 years in the Hindi film industry since the release of his debut movie, Manish Sharma's 2010 romantic comedy Band Baaja Baaraat. Ranveer's Dilli ka launda Bittoo Sharma burst onto the screen with his quiet, unassuming charm intact. As Salim-Sulaiman's "Tarkeebein" played in the background, his silhouette emerged into the sunlight falling in the balcony of a Delhi boys hostel, Ranveer covered his eyes for a few seconds before gingerly letting his eyes face the sun. A cozy stretch followed, as he finally basked in his moment in the sun that he'd been longing for years.

Fifteen years later, as Shashwat Sachdev's "Ishq Jalakar" blares in the background, Ranveer faces the scorching sun of the Afghanistan desert sun in Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar, sporting an unkept mane and a homogeneous identity, given he's now a spy obliterating his past identity as he steps into the chopper ferrying him into a new mission — and a whole new life — in Pakistan. Ranveer is no stranger to wiping out his past identity as an actor as well, completely dismantling the image of his previous role to breathe life into a new one. But both in and with Dhurandhar, and its even bigger sequel Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge earlier this year, the stakes are too high now.Ranveer Singh is no longer playing the boy next door, whiling away his time at the corner chai ki thadi snacking and swearing on bread pakoda. He now wolfs down heaps of biryani in his adopted home of Liyari, without realising the tears trickling down his cheek because he's begun to realise what he's left behind. He carries the burden of an entire country in the film, and post the unprecedented success of Dhurandhar, also carries with him the burden of a struggling film industry. That's exactly why when the actor was recently 'banned' by a film body, the film industry was set in motion to the rescue of its new saviour.

But in the process, is the industry placing on him too much responsibility? The scale and stake expected from Ranveer now may never allow him to go back to the carefree comic timing of Band Baaja Baarat. Or the quiet strength of Vijay in Vikramaditya Motwane's 2013 period romance Lootera. Or the kaleidoscopic buffoonery of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 2013 romantic drama Goliyon Ki Rasleela: Ram-Leela. Or even the Jim Carrey-style action comedy in the first half of Rohit Shetty's 2018 cop drama Simmba? Ranveer has displayed his range captures intensity as intently as lightweight comedy, as demonstrated in parts of all the above mentioned films. But the full-blown arcs of his characters now run the risk of being stripped off another facet of his personality that he perfected with as much aplomb — the soft boy presence.

The strategic shift started right after the success of Dhurandhar this past December when he walked out of Farhan Akhtar's Don 3. He'd signed the film at probably the lowest point of his career, when his films were either underperforming at the box office or getting shelved. Don was exactly the franchise he needed to cash on, before he emerged victorious with a franchise of his own. As he eyes Jai Mehta's zombie apocalypse thriller Pralay as his next, his goal is to scale up from Dhurandhar. But one must not overlook the fact that it was his films with Excel Entertainment, particularly Zoya Akhtar, which allowed him to lend that quiet, brooding intensity to Hamza in the first part of Dhurandhar.After Vikramaditya Motwane tapped into that aspect of Ranveer's personality, Zoya took it to a whole new level with Dil Dhadakne Do (2015) and Gully Boy (2019). While the former starred him as Kabir, an heir to a multi-crore Delhi empire, the latter traced his character Murad's rise from the streets of Mumbai to a self-made rapper. But what bridged both the performances were the scenes and moments where he spoke volumes with his character. We've seen him bring the house down at Bollywood parties and weddings. We've also seen him dazzle the red carpet in signature Sindhi out-there looks, but he put all of that unhinged energy and aesthetic aside to downplay his parts in both the films, allowing his character to take the forefront. In fact, we barely notice him in the opening scene of Gully Boy, as he let Vijay Varma's Moeen own the main character energy.Had both Dhurandhar films been one as originally planned, it'd have been interesting to observe the inflexion point in his character arc, from being strategically relegated to the background in the first to taking over the Karachi throne in the second. But by splitting the film into two parts, Aditya Dhar has fed into the rising monolithic myth of Ranveer Singh on the big screen. Even in his personal life, despite becoming a father, he's kept his infectious joy and energy at bay. He's doing what he's shied away from doing all his career — keep a low profile. Wearing a mask while visiting Hansal Mehta's office for his next, evading the paparazzi without as much of an acknowledgement, and even giving up on brands in order to shape his own are practices the old Ranveer Singh may not approve of.

Remember the time when he made even a packaged noodles commercial his own by collaborating on it with director Rohit Shetty like it's a tentpole film? Or when he collaborated with adult star Johnny Sins for the most fun condom commercial? Or when he bared it all for a magazine cover shoot? Or even he donned padded underwear to accentuate his assets in Aditya Chopra's 2016 rom-com Befikre? Risqué may have become risky now for Ranveer, who's now endorsing much bigger brands like RuPay and Dubai Tourism, which also match his newfound stature.Is is true then that Ranveer Singh charming his way into our hearts with Rocky Randhawa will be the last we see of him in that light? Will we no longer see him make fun of Akshay Kumar's readiness to dance at a mundan ceremony because he himself has joined the senior actor as a brand ambassador of Naya Bharat? Will he be now playing only his songs during the baaraat ceremony of the next Ambani wedding, instead of giving shoutout to his idols in attendance, playing their signature songs as the unofficial DJ, and dancing along the beats like a hopeless fan? If a video clip of him mimicking Shreya Ghoshal singing "Lattoo" from April 2026 is to be believed, Ranveer is still the same soft boy with a softer heart.

Inside Aamir Khan-Gauri Spratt wedding: Unseen photos of star guests go viral

Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt tied the knot in a private ceremony at their Bandra residence on July 5. The wedding was attended by close friends and family members, including the couple's children from their previous marriages. While the official wedding photo and a few inside videos have already won hearts on social media, several more unseen photos from the celebration have now surfaced online, giving fans a closer look at the couple's special day.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, Elli posted a warm picture with bride Gauri Spratt. The candid snap captured the two smiling for the camera, with Gauri looking radiant in her elegant bridal ensemble. The bride wore a sophisticated ivory and silver-grey lehenga featuring intricate floral embroidery, paired with a sheer dupatta and statement polki jewellery.Filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker, businessman Mukesh Ambani, politician Raj Thackeray, cricketer Irfan Pathan, and actor Rhea Chakraborty were also among the guests who attended the private celebration.

Filmmaker Rajkumar Santoshi too attended Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt's intimate wedding along with his wife, Manila Santoshi, and their daughter, Tanisha Santoshi. After the ceremony, Tanisha gave fans a glimpse of the celebrations by sharing a heartwarming photo of the Santoshi family posing with the newlyweds, Aamir and Gauri.

But that's not all! More unseen photos from Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt's intimate wedding are now going viral across social media. Among those sharing glimpses was Gayatri Vasudeva Yadav, Group Chief Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, Chairman's Office at Reliance Industries Limited. She posted a series of inside photos from the private ceremony, giving fans another look at the newlyweds and the warm, close-knit atmosphere of the celebrations attended by family members and close friends.One of the highlights was a cheerful group selfie featuring Lagaan director Ashutosh Gowariker along with actors Amin Hajee and Kareem Hajee, and Prasoon Joshi among others. Sharing the picture on her Instagram Stories, Gayatri captioned it, "Baraatis." She also posted a heartwarming selfie with bride Gauri Spratt.Aamir Khan's children, Junaid Khan, Ira Khan and Azad Rao Khan, were present at the wedding, as was Gauri Sportt's son Quinn, from her previous marriage, making it a close-knit family affair.

'Jaswant Singh Khalra abducted again': Kunal Kamra questions CBFC over Satluj OTT removal

Diljit Dosanjh-starrer Satluj battled censorship issues for over three years in its bid for a theatrical release. However, the film never made it to the big screen. Instead, it quietly premiered on ZEE5 last Friday in its uncut version. By Sunday evening, it had been removed from the streaming platform, sparking outrage online and reigniting the debate around censorship in India. The latest to criticise the move is comedian Kunal Kamra, who penned an open note to CBFC chairperson Prasoon Joshi.Addressing Joshi, Kamra wrote, "Can you please enlighten us on why 127 cuts were recommended for the film Punjab '95? The same film, now renamed Satluj, has been taken down from an OTT platform in less than two days. The CBFC has no jurisdiction over OTT platforms or international releases."

He further added, "Punjab '95 tells the story of Jaswant Singh Khalra, a man who exposed documented human rights abuses and paid for it with his life. If a film based on documented facts cannot be seen by Indian audiences, then the public deserves to know why. This sends a very direct message to filmmakers and production companies: if you're paying homage to a great personality from a minority community, you'll have to face e CBFC."Red carpet for The Kashmir Files but not SatlujKunal Kamra also questioned what he called the censor board's double standards. "Journalists should be asking the people running this censor board some hard questions. Why are some politically sensitive films able to pass with ease while others spend years in limbo? A red carpet for The Kashmir Files, The Bengal Files and The Kerala Story. Roses for Dhurandhar 1 & 2, a fictional documentary/explainer for the unthinkable and the unexplainable. How does it feel to feast on four years of a director's career?" he wrote.Concluding his note, Kamra said, "In Nehru's India, this would have been litigated in court. If filmmakers cannot tell the stories of people who stood up for justice without years of obstruction, what kind of cinema are we encouraging them to make? Jaswant Singh Khalra abducted again, this time by the CBFC."Directed by Honey Trehan, Satluj was taken down from ZEE5 in less than 48 hours after its surprise release. The film stars Diljit Dosanjh as late human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra and was originally titled Punjab '95.ZEE5 also issued an official statement, saying, "In light of the current developments, Satluj will be unavailable in India until further notice. We remain committed to exploring every appropriate avenue through due process to bring the film back to our audiences at the earliest opportunity."Diljit Dosanjh had hinted that such a move was possibleDuring an Instagram Live session, Diljit Dosanjh said, "See, our film has released. Where we want the conversation to reach, it's bound to reach there. Those who haven't watched it yet, do that as soon as you can. Just understand what I'm trying to say."He added that the film could disappear at any moment. "It can happen. There's that fear. Today is Saturday. It could be pulled down by Monday. But let's not worry. You can download the film till now. Those who want to stop the film can do that. Those who want to take panga can do that. There's no tension."In another social media post, Diljit wrote, "What happened to Satluj is exactly what had happened to Jaswant Singh Khalra."Satluj, previously titled Punjab 95, had remained stuck with the CBFC for years after the board reportedly recommended over 127 cuts before granting certification. Despite the matter reaching the courts, the impasse remained unresolved, ultimately prompting the makers to opt for an unannounced OTT release in its original, uncut form.

Kriti Sanon says she was sidelined in promotions by male actor, given smaller room and car

Kriti Sanon has acknowledged, from her own decade-plus experience in the film industry, how it's designed to favour men over women, whether it's in the roles written for the screen or how differently the male and female actors are treated on set. She does maintain that there's progress now, but back when she started out in 2014, the situation was rather bleak."When I was starting off, the female character would not be well-defined — What does she do? Where does she come from? Who are her parents? What is her family like? Not much. Sometimes, she's just the love interest. It's changing now. Women are choosing meatier parts for themselves. And films were very male-centric. Most of the films even now are. It's getting better, I'd still say that," said Kriti.

"And just the little environment on how a man is treated and how a woman is treated. Especially in the beginning, when I was new, I've seen it more," the actor told Lilly Singh.Kriti Sanon admitted there's resistance on set when a female actor asks too many questions."I'm known for asking questions to my director on set. I'm curious. I've always been. That's how I've grown. I've never been trained in acting or done theatre. I'd rather ask questions than be absolutely dumb," confessed Kriti."When a man asks questions, he's really 'involved.' So many times, when I suggest something, I'm told, 'You're overanalyzing this.' But when it'd come from the guy, they'd say, 'Ya, maybe we can do that.' I said the same thing! I felt that initially," she added.

Kriti Sanon recalled being given less preferential treatment on a few films, though she'd stand up and not take discrimination most of the times. "Many times, there are small things like the kind of room or car a male actor is given vs the room or car a female actor is given. I don't care so much about the car and the room, but don't make me feel less," argued the actor."Of course, when it comes to senior actors, I totally get it. But when it's not so senior, even the ADs (assistant directors) have the tendency of calling the girl to the set first. But is he (male actor) ready? Because if he's not ready, why are you calling me to the set right now? I feel people don't even realise they're a little more scared of the actor's timings than the female actor's. Sometimes, female actors can be taken for granted," added Kriti.Lilly Singh recalled her own incident of being a junior artiste on the set of Anees Bazmee's 2011 romantic comedy Thank You, starring Akshay Kumar and Sonam Kapoor. When Sonam wanted to take a pee break, she was repeatedly asked to wait for Akshay to show up for their shot together, for the next 20 minutes, only for her to look at Lilly, whom she didn't even know personally back then, and say, "See, this is a man's world."Kriti argued that she'd just go to the washroom as and when needed, signalling that there's been a change on film sets over the years, where women actors are putting their foot down. "I feel gender discrimination bothers me for days if I don't stand up for myself. There have been times when I felt less valued, I reached a point where I did stand up for myself," she admitted.

Kriti Sanon also recalled during the promotions of a film, the male actor would decide where she should get involved during the promotions. "I found that so weird and almost disrespectful that I felt if you don't need me for promotions, then you should promote the film alone. Then I just stepped back," revealed Kriti. But after an earnest request from the director, she did participate in a promotional event because she's "ethical at the core" and it wasn't the director's "fault." "But a lot of it, I just backed out," confessed the actor.Kriti made her acting debut with Sukumar's 2014 Telugu psychological action thriller 1: Nenokkadine opposite Mahesh Babu. Later that year, she made her Bollywood debut with Sabbir Khan's action romance Heropanti opposite Tiger Shroff. Since then, she's appeared in tentpole films like Rohit Shetty's 2015 action romance Dilwale opposite Varun Dhawan, and Dinesh Vijan's 2017 romantic fantasy Raabta opposite Sushant Singh Rajput.

Her other memorable films include Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari's 2017 romantic comedy Bareilly Ki Barfi opposite Ayushmann Khurrana and Rajkummar Rao, Laxman Utekar's 2019 rom-com Luka Chuppi opposite Kartik Aaryan, Farhad Samji's 2019 fantasy comedy Housefull 4 opposite Akshay, Ashutosh Gowariker's 2019 period war drama Panipat opposite Arjun Kapoor, and Utekar's 2021 dramedy Mimi, for which she won her maiden National Award for Best Actress.Kriti Sanon went on to appear in Samji's 2022 action comedy Bachchhan Paandey opposite Akshay, Amar Kushik's 2022 creature comedy Bhediya opposite Varun, Rohit Dhawan's 2023 action comedy Shehzada opposite Kartik

Shirish Kunder skipped Farah Khan's birthday bash because it wasn't a 'milestone' celebration

Filmmaker Farah Khan recently visited actor Neelam Kothari's home along with her longtime cook, Dilip. During the visit, Farah, Neelam and actor Sameer Soni bonded over how similar their husbands are when it comes to social gatherings. The trio joked about how both Sameer and Farah's husband, Shirish Kunder, have a habit of quietly walking out of parties, with Sameer even recalling the time Shirish skipped Farah's birthday because it wasn't a "milestone" celebration.

As Farah toured Neelam's home, she pointed to a seating area and jokingly asked, "You sit in this hall and Sameer in the other one?" Defending their arrangement, Neelam laughed, "Opposites attract." Farah replied, "This is the best." "We just cross paths," Neelam added.Quipping about the similarities between the two men, Farah said, "The other version of Sameer is at my place," referring to Shirish. Sameer laughed and responded, "I am aware of that. He didn't even come to your birthday." Farah defended her husband, saying, "Because it was not a milestone birthday."

Talking about Farah's famous house parties, Neelam recalled, "We have always had a blast on your terrace." Farah quickly added, "Yeah, but not with Shirish." Sameer chimed in, "I am like Shirish. I am his duplicate. I just have shorter hair."Neelam revealed, "Whenever my friends come over, Sameer just goes inside his room." Laughing, Sameer said, "I really haven't met him in a long time." Farah's witty response left everyone in splits. "Nor have I!" she joked before quickly clarifying, "No, that's not true. I meet him every day. You never know, people will make this the headline."Neelam admitted, "I need Sameer on and off." Farah responded, "I do get to see Shirish at home." "The wife is always right," Sameer remarked. "Sirish never tells that to me," Farah laughed.

Neelam then shared that before every social gathering or shoot, she folds her hands and requests Sameer not to say anything inappropriate. "I have become very infamous for this," Sameer admitted.Farah defended him, saying, "That's because Sameer is a very straightforward person." "That's the problem," Neelam laughed. "There is no filter. He doesn't care. He says what he wants and then walks out." Farah recalled watching the same behaviour on The Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives. "I could understand because Shirish does exactly the same," she said. "But that was Sameer in Season 1. In the later seasons, he became better."Neelam agreed but remembered another incident. "He did become better, but during Bhavana and Chunky's wedding vows ceremony, he walked out again." Sameer added, "Farah, I don't know if you remember, but we both left." Farah burst into laughter and said, "I do remember. Who would want to see Bhavana and Chunky take their vows again?" She then joked, "I made appearances for free," before once again adding, "I completely understand Sameer because I have one exactly like him at home."Neelam and Sameer open up about their love storyThe conversation later shifted to Neelam and Sameer's relationship. Neelam recalled, "I went to watch Sameer's play Anything But Love. I told Ekta that he looked cute and was very well-spoken. Ekta then played cupid and went and told him about our conversation."Farah pointed out that she too had played a small role in their love story.

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