

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

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Terror can't be strategic asset, must dismantle it: Modi at SCO

BISHKEK,, SEPT 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday warned countries that use terrorism as an instrument of policy and provide safe haven to terrorists, saying "terrorism can never be a strategic asset for anyone". He called for the entire terror ecosystem to be dismantled.

Addressing the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Bishkek, Modi said there could be no "double standards" in the fight against terrorism and urged member states to speak with one voice.

"Terrorism continues to pose a serious challenge

saying they affected energy security, maritime trade and supply chains, with the Global South bearing the greatest burden.

India, he said, had consistently called for conflicts to be resolved through "dialogue and diplomacy" rather than on the battlefield.

The Prime Minister also called for stronger SCO cooperation against drug trafficking, organised crime and information-security threats, urging the grouping's mechanisms to focus on practical coordination and timely action.

He said India's vision for the SCO remained anchored in security, connectivity and opportunity, but the grouping must now translate these pillars into "concrete outcomes" as it entered its next 25 years.

On connectivity, Modi backed efforts to link markets and facilitate trade but stressed that such initiatives must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, in keeping with the SCO Charter. He also called for simpler customs procedures, digital documentation and more efficient logistics networks.

The Prime Minister said the benefits of SCO cooperation must ultimately reach people, particularly the young, entrepreneurs and farmers.

"The true measure of our success should be how many new opportunities our efforts create for young people, how many new markets open up for our entrepreneurs, how much our farmers benefit from technology and how much better the lives of our citizens become," he said.

Calling for greater people-to-people engagement, Modi highlighted India's SCO Start-up Forum, Young Authors' Conclave and the Young Scientists' Forum.

He also announced that the first session of the SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum, an Indian initiative, would be held in India later this year.

Invoking Kyrgyz literary icon Chingiz Aitmatov, Modi urged SCO members to focus on what united them rather than what divided them, saying the grouping should move "from shared geography to shared opportunities" and "from vision to outcomes".



to humanity as a whole. In the fight against terrorism, we cannot remain confined to an action-reaction approach," he said.

"We must dismantle the entire ecosystem of terrorist financing, recruitment, radicalisation and safe havens," Modi said. Linking regional security with Afghanistan, he said peace and stability in the country were essential for a secure Eurasia. India, he said, would continue its development and humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

Modi also cited the West Asia crisis to underline the global consequences of regional conflicts,

Revanth In Delhi To Get Surekha, Chinna Sacked

NEW DELHI, SEPT 1

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has reportedly mounted pressure on the Congress high command to take action against minister Konda Surekha and Planning Board vice-chairman G. Chinna Reddy, seeking their removal for indulging in public indiscipline and making baseless and derogatory remarks against him, his family members and the Congress leadership.

Revanth Reddy, who reached Delhi on Tuesday afternoon, met AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal at his residence and is learnt to have made a strong case for implementing the recommendations of the state party disciplinary committee which had inquired into the controversy and recommended the removal of Surekha and Chinna Reddy.

Interestingly, Revanth Reddy drove to Venugopal's residence without his usual convoy and security and was not accompanied any party leader. This was despite the presence in Delhi of ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Tummala Nageswara Rao and Danasari 'Seethakka' Anasuya and TPCC president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud.

According to party sources, Revanth Reddy told Venugopal that the high command could no longer afford to take a lenient view of repeated instances of public indiscipline by senior leaders. He reportedly recalled that the party had adopted a soft approach towards Surekha, her husband Konda Murali and their daughter Sushmita when they made derogatory remarks against him and the party in October last year.

The high command had then reportedly let off the Konda family with a warning after they assured the leadership that such incidents would not be repeated. Revanth Reddy is learnt to have pointed out that they had not kept up the assurances and that the Konda leaders had continued to embarrass the Congress government and the party by levelling wild allegations.

According to the Chief Minister's assessment conveyed to Venugopal, such statements were providing political ammunition to the Opposition BRS and BJP to attack the Congress government and, more seriously, were causing greater damage to the Congress's reputation in Telangana than the Opposi-



tion itself.

Revanth Reddy reportedly stressed that the timing was particularly critical as the Congress government would have to face the polls to the Hyderabad civic bodies, Legislative Council and the districts and mandals in the next six months. At such a juncture, he is learnt to have argued, adverse public comments against the Chief Minister and Congress leadership by senior leaders holding Cabinet rank would weaken the party's electoral prospects and strengthen the Opposition narrative.

The Chief Minister reportedly made it clear that public display of indiscipline that damaged the Congress should not be tolerated, regardless of how senior or influential the leader concerned may be. He is learnt to have sought stern action against Surekha and Chinna Reddy in line with the Disciplinary Committee's recommendations.

The high command has reportedly entrusted Venugopal with the task of gathering feedback from the Chief Minister and senior Telangana leaders before taking a final call. Venugopal has consequently begun one-on-one consultations with key leaders on the Disciplinary Committee report.

Surekha, who also reached Delhi on Tuesday, is likely to meet Venugopal and put forward her version of the developments. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka will reach Delhi on Wednesday morning.

Telangana HC Division Bench Stays Single Judge Order, Clears Path for Kalyana Lakshmi & Shaadi Mubarak Schemes

HYDERABAD, SEPT 1

:A division bench of the Telangana High Court allowed the state government to continue the implementation of the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes and disbursement of financial assistance to the families of brides at the time of their marriage across all communities within certain family income limits.

The bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin stayed the interim orders issued on August 12 by a single judge bench that had halted the operation of eight government orders (GOs) related to implementation of the schemes and disbursement of the amounts.

Without going into the issue of whether the executive orders through the GOs had legislative backing or not, the bench viewed that the Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG), the guardian of public funds, had not specifically indicted the expenditure incurred under the schemes as lacking legislative or constitutional sanction.

Earlier, the bench asked petitioner Vijay Gopal several times the CAG report had made an indictment of the schemes. When the petitioner submitted that there was no such indictment, the bench observed that that was the answer. Saying so, the bench stayed the single judge's orders.

Vijay Gopal filed the writ petition challenging the GOs issued for implementation of the scheme on the grounds that the executive could not formulate an elaborate welfare policy, prescribe eligibility criteria and disburse thousands of crores of public money merely by issuing government orders without legislative backing. As the government failed to submit counters, the single judge had issued interim stay orders on the GOs. The government later filed counters but the single judge was not inclined to vacate the interim stay. Following this, the state government approached the division bench which heard the matter on Tuesday. Advocate-General A. Sudarshan Reddy argued that the scheme was introduced in 2014, was a continuous scheme and that the Supreme Court had applauded them. He argued that the schemes were consistent with the objectives emphasised by the Supreme Court in matters concerning the prevention of child marriage. He also argued that the petition filed by Vijay Gopal was not maintainable before the writ court, since the petitioner had neither suffered any



prejudice nor demonstrated any violation of his rights as a consequence of the implementation of the schemes.

Gopal contended that his challenge was directed not against any legislation or statutory rule, but specifically against the executive orders under which the schemes were being implemented. He therefore had the locus to maintain the writ petition as a citizen challenging what he described as executive action without statutory authority.

Referring to Article 162 of the Constitution, the petitioner submitted that the state had relied upon the provision to justify its power to frame and implement the schemes. "Article 246 gives Parliament and the State Legislature the power to make laws. No such legislation has been made by the state regarding these schemes," the petitioner submitted.

He argued that while the state legislature was not prohibited from enacting a law for providing such welfare assistance, the executive could not itself assume the legislative function of designing the policy, fixing eligibility standards and prescribing the manner in which the financial assistance would be distributed.

The petitioner submitted that the financial assistance of `1 lakh and above under the schemes was being handed over in the name of the bride's mother, in some instances through MLAs, and contended that such arrangements formed part of the policy framework created by the executive without legislative sanction. The Telangana High Court on Tuesday directed the health and medical department to file a detailed affidavit in regard to action taken on the alleged indiscriminate sale of medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) kits without prescriptions or supervision of registered medical practitioners.



HC Division Bench Suspends Single Judge Order Directing HYDRAA Chief Ranganath's Removal

HYDERABAD:, SEPT 1

A division bench of the Telangana High Court suspended the order of a single judge directing the state government to relieve HYDRAA commissioner A.V. Ranganath from the post over alleged repeated wilful disobedience of court orders in connection with a 40-acre land parcel at Lothkunta in Secunderabad. The bench also directed Ranganath and HYDRAA officials to not to enter or interfere with the disputed property until further orders.

The court, however, grilled Ranganath and HYDRAA for entering and acting upon land that was already the subject of litigation, court orders, surveys not being conducted or demarcated and contempt proceedings.

In regarding to the land at Lothkunta, the bench observed that HYDRAA proceeding with fencing of

the property without first establishing whether the land in Survey No.s 1 and 2 in Lothkunta was the same as, or distinct from, the land covered by GLR 243 amounted to an approach lacking in the caution expected from officials entrusted with protecting government property.

The division bench comprising Justice P. Sam Koshy and Justice Nandikonda Narsing Rao was hearing an appeal filed by Ranganath challenging the single judge's contempt order passed on a petition by Shanta Sriram Constructions Private Limited in regarding the Lothkunta land.

The bench granted an interim stay on the single judge's direction that Ranganath be relieved from the post, and made it clear that the commissioner and HYDRAA personnel should stay away from the disputed site. It adjourned the matter to November 3 for further hearing.

How a Pune wildlife expert fought against Guillain-Barré Syndrome



Using a walker, 38-year-old Sushil Chikane navigates his way into a popular bistro on the Baner-Pashan Link Road. There is a tremor in his hand, but not a drop spills from his cup of coffee. "The only thing that I cannot do today is climb steps without a walker or some assistance. A big thing that we achieved yesterday was to get up if I fall. It might take half an hour, but I will get up on my own," he says.On November 7, 2025, Chikane, a wilderness expert, uploaded a video on social media, captioned, "Trapped in my body, but finally waking up...." To the song The Hanging Tree, the video begins with a shot of Chikane bundled in a wheelchair. It goes on to show him immobilised in a hospital bed, a tube for food running through his nose. There are photos of doctors and physiotherapists helping him with basic actions, such as lifting a hand. It was the first of many intimate posts on an illness that, for hundreds of people, was mired in confusion and ignorance.

Sushil Chikane After being diagnosed with GBS, Sushil Chikane uploaded a video in 2025, captioned, "Trapped in my body, but finally waking up...." The year 2025 had started in Pune with an outbreak of the Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder in which the body's immune system begins to attack the peripheral nerves. By January 22, 2025, Pune had reported more than 110 suspected cases of GBS.Two days after the Ganeshotsav Visarjan in September that year, Chikane, the director of the travel company Journeys, had woken up to a normal day in Bavdhan. He had recently returned from a three-month trip in Sikkim, where he was setting up a homestay with a Tibetan Buddhist monk. He had also visited Ladakh to climb the Himalayas. Four days earlier, he was also hiking in the Western Ghats, looking for snakes.

Sushil Chikane Sushil Chikane was diagnosed with GBS after he returned from a three-month trip in Sikkim, where he was setting up a homestay with a Tibetan Buddhist monk. But that day, working on a video from one of these trips, Chikane realised that he could not click the mouse on his computer. "By the evening, I couldn't get up from my study chair. I realised that the entire body shutting down was not normal," says Chikane.He was diagnosed with GBS. One and a half months later, Chikane was "crying every day, cursing myself, the medical system, everybody around me". He was not able to go to the washroom by himself or even turn in his bed. "Except for

my bowels and my breathing, I had no control over anything. Even the fingers didn't move, the eyelids didn't close," he says.One day at 5 am from a sanitised hospital room, Chikane managed to make a call to his mother, crying as he told her that he had not slept for 74 hours, though he desperately wanted to. Later that day, as his entire family gathered around his bed, his mother, Kumudini Chikane, a former school teacher, told him, "I did not raise you as a single parent so that you can want to die."

It was at that moment that Chikane decided to fight back. As the first step, he returned to the mountains in his mind. "When I started mountaineering, I was told, 'never look at a peak as this will stress you out'. You look down, and take one step at a time," he says. In his years at Fergusson College, Chikane had worked as a mountain guide to make money. Following the rules of the mountains, now, he stopped asking doctors when he would go back to work. He stopped asking if he would ever be fine."I had become a wilderness traveller because it would bring a change in my life and in society. That's why I work with grassroots organisations rather than big corporations. I want to make a social impact. Similarly motivated, I decided to reach out to others who were impacted by the horrors of GBS. I began a project to document my story on social media," he says.Chikane had heard of GBS patients being wrongly treated for arthritis. A patient even lost her vision. Chikane roped in his sister, Suchitra Chikane, and his nine-year-old nephew, Naksh Chikane, to take photos and shoot videos to help with the posts.Most of his Instagram stories are about the mental issues that come with GBS. "Nobody addresses emotions. Everybody talks about the medical factors," he says. A heart-warming post shows Chikane struggling to move as a voice-over says, "According to all aerodynamic laws, the bumblebee cannot fly as its body weight is not in direct proportion to its wingspan. But, ignoring these laws, the bumblebee flies anyway."He wrote about how frustrated he felt when he couldn't curl his fingers. He talked about the vital role of physiotherapy. Even in the mountains, there are days when you feel that nothing is working. "You want to go back. You have to let that day pass because, maybe, the next day is better," he says. People began to message him, and conversations began, including how patients become vulnerable to quacks and superstition.As his condition improved, Chikane wrote every day. "People told me that they were taking screenshots of my stories and forwarding these. Strangers got in touch with me with varied experiences. There was concern, but also curiosity about how a fit and active guy like me could get GBS. Some people cried," he says.A few months later, Chikane was working on a long-pending book on a favourite creature, the snakes of the Andaman Islands. "People see snakes but don't know what to do with them. In case a snake bites, they don't know which snake it was. We had thought of writing a book for them. Whether we make money from the book was never important. We wanted to create a directory that people could use for the Andaman Islands," he says.

Nepal flood survivors from Tamil Nadu arrive in Chennai after narrow escape



Chennai: Tearful embraces, hushed prayers and narrow escapes marked the scene at the airport here as Nepal flood survivors arrived safely.Twenty-one pilgrims from Tamil Nadu, caught in the jaws of a catastrophic disaster in Nepal, set foot on home soil, carrying with them memories of horror and astonishment at having survived.The group was part of a larger contingent undertaking the sacred Kailash Manasarovar Yatra when tragedy struck on August 26. A sudden, violent burst of flash floods and massive landslides tore through the mountainous Rasuwagadhi region near the Nepal-China border, transforming a serene spiritual journey into a desperate fight for life."It felt like a tsunami falling from the mountains," said one survivor, trembling as she embraced her weeping family. "Within seconds, the water swept away everything. The entire market area in Timure disappeared right before our eyes," she said.The disaster claimed numerous lives and left hundreds missing across the region, including several other Indian travellers. For the Tamil Nadu pilgrims, safety came in the form of a gruelling trek to a border police outpost, where local authorities managed to shelter them before facilitating their transit to Kathmandu.

Through coordinated efforts between central and state officials, the group was flown back via New Delhi from Kathmandu and landed in Chennai on an Air India

flight on Friday night.They were received at the airport by state Ministers N Anand (Rural Development and Water Resources) and D Sarathkumar (Human Resources and Management), who oversaw their immediate welfare and transport home.For these 21 survivors, the relief of returning home is inextricably bound to the haunting memory of a raging river that took so much in mere moments.Some of the survivors shared stories of the devastation they witnessed, noting that entire market areas in Timure were swept away in moments. The incident, which triggered massive landslides and flooding, claimed numerous lives and left hundreds missing, including other Indian travellers.Later, speaking to reporters, Anand said four Tamil Nadu ministers sent to Delhi on the instructions of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay were coordinating well in the national capital."Our efforts will continue till everyone is brought back home safely," he said.Two women from Tiruchirappalli, Vallinayaki and Karpagam, recounted their harrowing experience of surviving a natural disaster in Nepal.They were travelling in a bus towards the Chinese border when they encountered a massive landslide. They described seeing a thick, smoke-like cloud of mud and debris, resembling wet concrete, rushing down the mountain.With no immediate external help, the 21 passengers on their bus worked together to survive. They escaped through the driver's side and climbed steep, rugged mountain terrain. When some women struggled to climb, they used a sari to pull each other to safety before help finally came, they said.They eventually reached a rescue centre after an arduous two-and-a-half-hour climb through difficult, pathless terrain. The group emphasised the critical role played by the Nepal Army and local authorities in their rescue. They also credited the Tamil Nadu and Central governments for coordinating swift rescue efforts and providing assistance with travel and documentation.The survivors expressed deep gratitude for their miraculous escape but requested privacy and sensitivity regarding others who are yet to be traced, noting that constant inquiries are difficult for the families involved.

Bengaluru hacker denied bail over ED evidence of Rs 288 crore money trail

A 30-year-old Bengaluru hacker at the centre of an alleged corruption nexus involving police and politicians amassed over Rs 288 crore through hacking activities, a special court for money-laundering cases noted this week while rejecting his bail plea."The investigation has quantified the alleged proceeds of crime at approximately Rs 288,96,54,677," the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court noted in its August 27 order, rejecting the bail pleas of hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki and his accountant Robin Khandelwal.Sriki has been in jail for three months after being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in May.The court considered prima facie evidence against Sriki—who moved with sons of top politicians in Bengaluru between 2017 and 2021 and allegedly hacked cryptocurrency exchanges, poker and gaming sites, and state e-tender portals—while rejecting his bail plea.The court said that "the material relied upon by the prosecution prima-facie indicates his alleged involvement in generating the proceeds through hacking activities and thereafter in their possession, transfer, concealment and utilisation. Thus, the role attributed to the

petitioner is neither peripheral nor incidental."The ED has specifically alleged that the proceeds of crime were routed through multiple wallets and intermediary channels and that technologies such as mixers and CoinJoin were used for concealing or obfuscating the trail of the virtual digital assets. It is further alleged that the proceeds were utilised towards online betting and gambling, hotel accommodation, travel, luxury expenditure and payments to associates," the court noted.The court said that the contention that no proceeds of crime were recovered or attached from the petitioner's physical possession "does not, by itself, demolish the prosecution case". "The allegations relate substantially to virtual digital assets, which by nature are capable of being transferred through digital wallets and various cryptocurrency platforms," it added.The special court also pointed out that Sriki continued to indulge in illegal activities even after the Bengaluru police arrested him in 2020 for hacking-related offences.Sriki claimed that he had responded to over 30 summonses issued by the ED over five years and argued that his arrest on May 8

What do Gujarat student leaders want? Question after Gen Z protests



Gujarat's universities may have lost student union elections, but not student politics. In fact, the students' focus has moved on to paper leaks, fee hikes, and other issues concerning their academics. The recent protests led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in Delhi's Jantar Mantar, which eventually led to Dharmendra Pradhan resigning as the Union Education Minister, have brought the spotlight back on students in politics.At an event in Ahmedabad on August 21, National Secretary of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the RSS's student arm, Shravan B Raj said, "Gen Z in India does not want to be cockroaches; they want to be lions," in an indirect reference to the Jantar Mantar protests.

Several student leaders agree that campus elections should return.The Gujarat University, the state's largest, saw its last elections in 2020, when the NSUI won six of the eight senate seats. The two others went to the ABVP.Devansh Brahmhatt, 26, the ABVP's Gujarat State Secretary, said students didn't lose interest in politics, and, in fact, they participated enthusiastically when the last elections were held."Gen Z doesn't believe in enduring it. They won't tolerate it (injustice)," he said.Brahmbhatt said complaints regarding the Gujarat Common Admission Service (a centralised admission system for colleges across the state), delayed government scholarships, and shortages of teachers in state universities and grant-in-aid colleges were some of the most common issues reaching the ABVP.

Meanwhile, Rahul Tharoda, 29, Gujarat National Students' Union of India General Secretary (NSUI) and Gujarat University Senate member, said students now were more focused on academics and less willing to join political organisations. The NSUI, therefore, was taking its recruitment efforts to colleges, hostels and paying guest accommodations, he said.He criticised the GCAS admission process, saying it can stretch over months and eat into teaching, examination and extracurricular time. He also pointed out the lack of permanent faculty members, water problems and inadequate lectures in affiliated colleges.Dharmik Mathukiya, an architect and state president of Association of Students for Alternative Politics (the AAP's student wing) Gujarat, said student elections were discontinued in mainstream institutions in Gujarat because of "violence and clashes associated with student politics", but he also argued for how other states have continued to hold the elections."If you don't hold elections, then you can never understand what student rights are, what students want, what problems they are facing.These issues will never reach the government," said Mathukiya. Instead of cancelling elections, he suggested increasing security.

Nitish M Nair, 32, former state secretary of Students' Federation of India (SFI) Gujarat and an advocate, believes Gujarat's student movement had "weakened" over time, and pointed to the 1974 Navnirman Movement as an example of how powerful student mobilisation could become.Satysha Leuva, 27, State Secretary of SFI Gujarat and an advocate, said SFI worked around students' rights, social reforms and issues affecting marginalised sections.On the CJP protests, Tharoda said, the government was "scared of students coming onto the streets".ABVP's Brahmhatt said, "The movement of the students was right. But... political parties came there and started speaking about the restoration of Article 370," he said, adding that issues such as LGBTQ+ rights and religious slogans had nothing to do with the NEET protest.According to Brahmhatt, the ABVP did protest on the NEET paper leak "outside the National Testing Agency's office on May 13, a day after the NEET paper leak was confirmed, and demanded the NTA director's resignation and fast-track courts". He said that protest

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drew as heavy a security presence as the later Jantar Mantar demonstration but "almost no media coverage".However, Brahmhatt was clear that violence on campus should not happen.Brahmbhatt, an MSU Baroda gold medallist now pursuing a PhD, explicitly said that he did not intend to join the BJP full-time. "I am doing my PhD. My mind is set that going forward I want to become a professor."From campus to party officesSeveral in the current leadership of the BJP and the Congress have seen a similar progression: a campus issue led them to a student organisation; organisational work gave them responsibilities and networks; those networks eventually opened a path for them into mainstream politics.Congress Spokesperson Manish Doshi joined the NSUI in 1990 while studying engineering at LD College of Engineering, where a protest over the hostel mess bill led to the Nav Nirman agitation in 1974. He said he came from a simple, rural family with no political background."I joined the NSUI to fight for campus issues," he said. The issues were often ordinary ones: hostel facilities, fees, examinations and access to university authorities. He recalled campaigns against excessive fees charged by private institutions, including an MBA/MCA fee-refund agitation over more than ?17 crore charged without AICTE approval and against donation-based admissions in homeopathy colleges, which he credits with today's centralised single-window admission system in Gujarat."These issues required long-term connection and consistent effort," Doshi said. "The main thing is staying connected with the campus, representing issues properly to administrators and principals."

That process took him from NSUI worker to district president in Surendranagar, then state general secretary, then into Youth Congress and mainstream Congress politics. He credits senior Congress figures — Prabodh Raval, former Gujarat Congress president and education minister; former chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary; Ahmed Patel; Arvind Sanghvi; and Sanat Mehta — with guiding him along the way.Doshi estimated that about half of the Congress party's active young leaders have NSUI or Youth Congress background."Elections are essential for developing new campus leadership," he said. "If there are issues, regulate or control them, but don't suppress student representation entirely."Dr Indravijaysinh Gohil, now Working President of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee, entered the NSUI in 2001 after helping fellow students following the 2001 Bhuj earthquake. He rose to become the NSUI state president (2003-2009). He was then the first elected president of the Gujarat Pradesh Youth Congress in 2009, under an internal-election system introduced nationally by Rahul Gandhi. He noted that former Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot was NSUI's first state president.Bhavik Solanki, 34, a former NSUI and Youth Congress worker now working at the block level for the party, described a more combative apprenticeship — including, by his own account, "vandalising a college campus and locking a principal in his office during a 2013-14 protest". He said he currently has seven FIRs against him, all linked to protests, effigy-burnings and road blockades. He credited Doshi and Gohil as his political mentors.Dr Anil Patel, who joined the Bharatiya Jan Sangh in 1974 and has held party and government positions continuously since, including Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation councillor (2000-2010), spent only about six months in the ABVP before moving directly into full-time party organisational work. Even so, he described ABVP as the training ground the BJP relied on.Union Home and Co-operation Minister Amit Shah is seen among the party's strongest leaders with roots in the ABVP.Before Naresh Desai became Gujarat state general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), he was a student at Bhavan's College, where a lack of basic facilities and "nuisance elements" on campus pushed him towards ABVP.Desai joined the ABVP in 2010 at Bhavan's College, where he said students faced fee-related problems, inadequate sports facilities and "nuisance elements". The ABVP, he said, offered a path to fix those problems. "The ABVP is an organisation that teaches the youth to work for the nation... They work on that ideology, along with the Hindutva ideology, which I also liked."His proudest achievement is keeping the 2015 Patidar, Thakor and Dalit agitations from entering college campuses. By 2019, he had moved into the BJP; in 2021, he became the BJYM's state general secretary.



tics (the AAP's student wing) Gujarat, said student elections were discontinued in mainstream institutions in Gujarat because of "violence and clashes associated with student politics", but he also argued for how other states have continued to hold the elections.

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Char Dham Yatra 2026: Why pilgrimage begins from Yamunotri



New Delhi: The Char Dham Yatra, one of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimages, continues to draw thousands of devotees each year to the Himalayan shrines of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. A distinctive aspect of this spiritual journey is that it always begins from Yamunotri, a sequence rooted in both religious tradition and geographical logic. The order of the yatra is not arbitrary but follows a clockwise direction, known in Hindu customs as Parikrama. This directional movement is considered auspicious and is commonly observed in temple rituals and pilgrimages.

Beginning from Yamunotri aligns with this sacred pattern, setting the spiritual tone for the journey. Yamunotri, the source of the holy river Yamuna, holds immense religious significance.

In Hindu belief, the Yamuna is worshipped as a goddess and is regarded as the sister of Yama, the god of death. It is believed that taking a holy dip in the Yamuna helps devotees overcome the fear of death and cleanses them of sins, marking a spiritually purifying beginning to the pilgrimage. The site is also linked to the legend of sage Asit Muni, who is said to have resided in the region. According to mythology, he bathed daily in both the Ganga and Yamuna rivers. In his old age, when he could no longer travel to Gangotri, a stream of the Ganga is believed to have appeared near Yamunotri, further enhancing its sanctity. Beyond its spiritual importance, the sequence of the Char Dham Yatra also has a practical basis. Yamunotri is the westernmost shrine among the four. From there, the route progresses eastward to Gangotri, then to Kedarnath, and concludes at Badrinath. This natural progression makes the journey more manageable through the challenging Himalayan terrain. Each Dham represents a distinct stage in the path of spiritual evolution.

Yamunotri symbolises emotional cleansing through water; Gangotri represents purity and the cleansing of the mind and karma; Kedarnath, dedicated to Lord Shiva, signifies devotion and liberation; while Badrinath, associated with Lord Vishnu, represents ultimate salvation or moksha. Meanwhile, the Char Dham Yatra began on Sunday with the opening of the portals of Gangotri and Yamunotri shrines in Uttarakhand on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya after a six-month winter break. Approximately 19 lakh devotees have registered for the pilgrimage so far this year. More than 51 lakh pilgrims undertook the Char Dham Yatra last year.

Youth critical after arm partially severed in sword attack in Zirakpur: police



Public servants, acting on behalf of the state, must realise that they are the sole guardians of the legal threshold, the Punjab and Haryana High Court stated. A 19-year-old's hand was partially severed in a brutal sword attack at Zirakpur's Highland Park ground on Friday; police have identified three suspects in what appears to be a violent fallout of a gang rivalry. A 19-year-old youth was critically injured when his right hand was partially severed near the elbow in a sword attack over an old rivalry between two groups at Highland Park ground in Zirakpur, local police said on Saturday. Police identified the critically injured person as Bhupinder Singh, a resident of Aastha Apartments on the Patiala road.

Bhupinder suffered multiple grievous injuries, with doctors describing his condition as critical, police said. In

his statement, according to police, Bhupinder said on Saturday that he received a call from his brother Ranveer Singh, who informed him that Gurpreet Singh had assaulted him. When Bhupinder reached the spot, the accused arrived shortly after, along with his six-seven associates, police said. An argument broke out and quickly escalated into a violent clash, a police officer said. "In the ensuing attack, Gurpreet struck Bhupinder with a sword. Despite attempts to defend himself, Bhupinder was repeatedly attacked, resulting in his right arm being partially severed near the elbow. He also suffered deep injuries to his chest and waist before collapsing on the ground," the officer said. "The assailants also attacked Ranveer, inflicting injuries on his head and above the eye, and fled the spot after issuing death threats to the brothers," the complaint stated. Zirakpur SHO Satinder Singh said, "Within 10 minutes of the incident, we reached the spot. The injured was immediately shifted to the Civil Hospital in Dhakoli in a PCR vehicle and later referred to Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector 32, Chandigarh. At the Sector 32 hospital, police recorded the statement of the injured. His right arm was partially severed. He is in extremely critical condition. Doctors are making every possible effort to save him. The accused will be arrested soon." Based on Bhupinder's statement, a case has been registered against Gurpreet Singh and 6-7 unidentified persons under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Zirakpur police station, the SHO said.

‘What future can we build on Rs 9,000?’: The story behind plight of workers in Noida

At a garment factory in Noida, the production of a single kurta or a shirt is broken into a sequence of defined tasks, each carried out by workers who repeat the same motion for hours. Dinesh Shrivastava, 38, is part of this labour chain. Dinesh operates a sewing machine, stitching sleeves and collars. He sits hunched at his table. There is no support to rest his back or even to straighten up. A decade ago, when he was working in Gurgaon, Dinesh earned Rs 90 a day – about Rs 2,700 a month – barely enough, he recalls, to survive on the cheapest meals in cramped rented rooms, while still sending money back home to Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

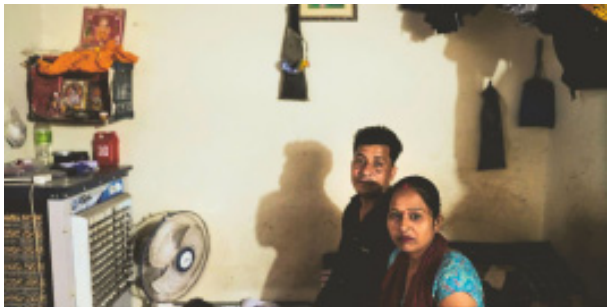
Back then, word filtered through factory floors that factories in Noida were paying nearly four times as much. "I heard from my friends," Dinesh recalls. For workers like him, the promise of higher wages was a semblance of stability. He moved to Noida. His monthly salary rose to Rs 11,000. For a time, it felt like a turning point. "At that time, we believed it was a decision that would change our lives," he said. The expectation was simple: wages would keep rising, and life would slowly become easier. Three years later, he and his wife had a daughter. But the promise did not hold. "Even when I did overtime, incomes almost remained stagnant," he said. The extra hours did little to change. "What looked like a life-changing decision became a struggle," he said. As rent climbed, food prices rose, and even vegetables became a matter of calculation before purchase, the pressure deepened. "Now even dal is Rs 150 a kilo, and tomatoes are Rs 50 a kilo," he said. "How should I send money back home?" Eventually, the family made a difficult decision: they sent their daughter to Faridabad. "We could not afford the cost of raising a child in Noida, especially schooling," he said. She now lives with her maternal aunt and attends school there.

Today, his income stands at around Rs 16,000 a month. Even then, he said, it is not enough. "With this income, I cannot sustain," he said. Over ten years, that amounts to an average increase of roughly Rs 500 a year. "That's the reason why many labourers came onto the streets to protest for a wage hike," he said. "We are in a desperate situation. The cost of living is rising, but our incomes aren't." Dinesh did not join the protest that began on April 10 and escalated into violence on April 13. But his experience echoes a wider pattern among industrial workers in Noida, a city whose high-rise apartments and expanding real estate market tell one story of growth, while its factory floors tell another. Official data underscores the contradiction. Gautam Buddha Nagar, which includes Noida, contributed 11.05% to Uttar Pradesh's GDP in 2024–25, making it the state's largest economic contributor by district. Yet wage growth has lagged far behind the income it helps generate. Noida factory workers are grappling with stagnant wages and rising living costs, sparking protests across industrial units. (Express Photo) Noida factory workers are grappling with stagnant wages and rising living costs, sparking protests across industrial units.

According to the Annual Industry Survey, the average annual wage of a worker in Uttar Pradesh rose from Rs 1.46 lakh in FY21 to Rs 1.76 lakh in FY24. Over the same period, salaries for supervisors and managerial staff climbed from Rs 11.85 lakh to Rs 15.05 lakh. The gap is widening: modest gains for lower-paid workers, faster growth for managerial roles, and productivity increases that do not translate evenly across the workforce. "Supervisors demand work to be done on 60 pieces for Rs 40," Dinesh said. "If the people who earn in crores don't have satisfaction, how can I? If they can earn in crores, why can't they increase our salaries." Last week, the Uttar Pradesh government announced revised minimum wages. In Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, monthly wages for unskilled workers have been raised to Rs 13,690, semi-skilled workers to Rs 15,059, and skilled workers to Rs 16,868. The decision followed pressure from industry workers.

"Workers argued that rising living costs, particularly higher rents, have made it difficult to maintain a decent livelihood and that wages need to be increased," said Dr M.K. Shanmuga Sundaram, Principal Secretary, Labour and Employment Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh. "Employers, on the other hand, said their businesses are under strain due to rising global tariffs, geopolitical tensions in West Asia, and recent labour unrest that disrupted supply chains."

Dinesh lives in Naya Gaon in Sector 83, close to prominent export factories. Here, multi-storey buildings with dozens of rooms and visible cracks house Dinesh and many others who have come from neighbouring states such as Bihar. The lanes are filled with flies, as common washrooms outside the stacked rooms remain uncleared. A few lanes away lives a recently arrived family from Samastipur, Bihar. A loan of Rs 1 lakh forced 35-year-old Manju Devi to move with her husband and three



children – aged 12, 10, and 5 – leaving behind two daughters who are still studying in high school in their village. She has come home for a 20-minute lunch break. Soon, the electricity goes off, and she holds up her phone, using its flashlight as she eats dal, rice, and mashed potatoes. Racing against time, she says she comes home briefly each day only to check on her children, who have not been to school since they left Bihar.

"Though my 12-year-old takes care of her siblings, I'm always worried. My son is ill, and I spent a thousand rupees on his treatment. This room costs me Rs 3,500, and the ration is around Rs 12,000 a month," she says, finishing her last bite. Manju works on finished clothes, removing extra threads for Rs 12,000 a month. Her job runs from 9 am to 9 pm, and she has to stand the entire time. "I take medicines before work so that I can meet the hourly target of 60 pieces, as my legs hurt," she says. Piles of wooden sticks are stacked in a corner of the room, next to a thin sheet on which the family of five sleeps. "The cylinder got empty yesterday, and I cannot spend Rs 400 for a litre," she says. However, she remains unsure whether the government's announced wage hike will ever reach them in reality. "I don't know how much they have increased the prices. Only when we get our salary will I know," she says.

For now, each day's earnings seem to disappear as quickly as they come – into rent, food, medicine, and fuel – leaving little to save and less to repay the debt that brought her here. One of the factories that witnessed a major protest was outside Samvardhana Motherson, a global design manufacturing company with multiple units in Noida. When the protest began, a 28-year-old woman from Sultanpur was still inside the factory premises. She and her younger sister had joined the multinational firm out of financial necessity. Both come from strong academic backgrounds. The elder sister holds a B.Ed. and an M.A. degree and once aspired to become a professor. The younger has completed her M.Sc. and had been preparing for civil services examinations. Their father met with an accident four years ago while working as an electrician and has been unable to work since. "My brother drives a taxi in Mumbai, but it is not enough," the elder sister says. "That is why we both started working here." Labour Two sisters from Sultanpur, one of them UPSC aspirant, who were forced to take up jobs. Abhinav Saha) The elder sister still works at Motherson, wiring harnesses on the factory floor. The younger sister, however, left the job two months ago. "I realised I cannot continue in such a physically demanding job," she says. "With my education and skills, I believe I can find better-paying work." The elder sister earns around Rs 9,000 a month – sometimes less than unskilled workers, she says. "On April 1, HR told us our salary would be increased by Rs 30," she recalls, a hint of disbelief in her voice. "How do you manage a cylinder that costs Rs 400 on that?" Inside the factory, the elder sister describes long hours spent standing on assembly lines. "We are on our feet the entire time – on the sub-assembly line," she says.

Tea breaks come every two hours, she says, but production targets remain high. Food is another quiet grievance among workers. "Managers get proper meals," she says. "For us, the dal is watery, and sometimes the chapatis have fungus."

Her day begins at 4:30 am, followed by punching in and a morning briefing. She says she is not given salary slips. Meanwhile, her sister, after leaving the job, is now searching for work that better matches her qualifications. "There is a committee at every plant level that decides the menu for the week. They all eat from that same canteen," a source close to the company said.

Anything that the government says we will abide by it without any delay. The organisation works paperless, and the money sent via bank accounts to both contractual and non-contractual workers are to be treated as the salary slip. We have a redressal mechanism as well," the official said. The sisters say the protest was not driven by outsiders. "When workers from one unit began questioning pay differences, tensions spread. Someone asked, 'Is your salary too high?' That's how it escalated." For both women, the stakes are deeply personal.

RBI opens premature redemption window for sovereign gold bond 2020-21 series VII

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India has opened a premature redemption window for holders of Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) 2020-21 Series VII, with Monday set as the exit date, offering investors returns exceeding 200 per cent on their original investment. The central bank has fixed the redemption price at Rs 15,254 per unit, calculated as the simple average of closing prices for 999-purity gold over the three preceding business days, according to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).

Moreover, investors who subscribed at the original issue price of Rs 5,051 per unit stand to pocket capital gains of over 200 per cent. While those who applied online at issuance and availed a Rs 50 per gram discount have seen effective returns climb to nearly 205 per cent, excluding interest. SGB holders additionally earn 2.5 per cent annual interest, disbursed semi-annually over the holding period. The tranche which was issued on October 20, 2020, became eligible for early redemption after completing five years, consistent with RBI guidelines permitting premature exit on interest payment dates post the fifth year.

The bonds carry a full maturity of eight years, though investors are not obligated to hold until final redemption. In addition, investors seeking to exit must submit their redemption request at the bank branch, SHCIL office or post office where the bonds were originally purchased. Proceeds are automatically credited to the registered bank account on the redemption date. Investors with updated personal details such as bank account,



mobile number or email are advised to notify their respective bank, post office, or Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL) ahead of the deadline to avoid settlement delays. However, capital gains treatment varies by holding period and investor category. Under post-Budget 2026 rules, gains remain tax-exempt only for original subscribers redeeming at full maturity. Early or premature redemptions attract long-term capital gains tax if held beyond 12 months or slab-rate taxation for shorter holding periods. Bonds acquired via the secondary market carry no capital gains exemption on redemption, and interest income remains taxable as per the investor's applicable income slab in all cases. Notably, no fresh SGB issuances have been announced for FY2026-27, and the government has yet to release a new issuance calendar as of April 2026, leaving the future of the scheme uncertain.

Immigration agent gets 3 years of rigorous imprisonment in Rs 19-L visa fraud case

A Mohali court has sentenced an immigration agent to three years of rigorous imprisonment in a Rs 19 lakh visa fraud case, holding her guilty of cheating and unauthorised immigration operations. (File Photo) A Mohali court has sentenced an immigration agent to three years of rigorous imprisonment in a Rs 19 lakh visa fraud case, holding her guilty of cheating and unauthorised immigration operations. A local court in Mohali has convicted an immigration agent in a visa fraud case and sentenced her to three years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1.02 lakh to be paid as compensation to the complainant.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Anish Goyal held Chhavi Sharma, a resident of Chandigarh's Sector 48, guilty under Section 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 24 of the Immigration Act. According to the order, "The convict has been awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1 lakh under IPC Section 420, along with one year of imprisonment and a fine of Rs 2,000 under the Immigration Act." According to the prosecution, a case was registered at the Mataur police station on January 18, 2024, in connection with an alleged fraud of Rs 19 lakh. In November 2022, the complainant approached Star Future Education and Immigration Services in Mohali's Sector 70 to secure an Australian study visa for his daughter. The accused promised to arrange the visa within 90 days and collected nearly Rs 19 lakh in instalments. However, the visa process was neither completed within the stipulated time



nor was the money refunded. After waiting for over a year, the complainant found the university's offer letter provided by the accused to be fake, prompting him to approach the police. During the trial, the court observed that financial transactions and elements of cheating were clearly established through bank records and witness testimonies. "The evidence on record sufficiently proves the offence of cheating and unauthorised immigration activity," the court noted. However, the court also remarked that the complainant failed to independently verify the authenticity of the offer letter from the concerned university. After evaluating the evidence and hearing both sides, the court acquitted the accused of charges related to forgery and criminal conspiracy, but held her guilty of cheating and operating without proper authorisation under the Immigration Act."

his arrest, Kamdar complained of chest pain and was admitted to the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. After the ED informed the court about its inability to produce Kamadar physically, the court sought a report on his health condition and ordered the central agency to produce him on Monday if he was in a position to be brought to the court. "The ED authority shall not make endeavour to interrogate the accused person without leave of the court at the cost of health hazards," the court ordered. The ED is investigating a housing scam, focusing on allegations of land grabbing, illegal construction, and extortion. It is alleged that Biswajit Poddar, alias Sona Pappu, and his associates ran an extortion racket under the guise of real estate promotion, and that the money collected was funneled to several influential individuals. According to the ED, the Sunday's searches at the Deputy Police Commissioner's house and the arrest of Kamdar followed the searches on April 1 at places linked to Sona Pappu.

ED searches residence of Kolkata Dy Police Commissioner, arrests businessman

Reacting to the ED carrying out searches at the residence of one of the top cops in Kolkata, CM Mamata Banerjee said that she is "keeping a record of everything". (File Photo) Reacting to the ED carrying out searches at the residence of one of the top cops in Kolkata, CM Mamata Banerjee said that she is "keeping a record of everything". (File Photo; enhanced using Google Gemini) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday carried out searches at the residence of Deputy Commissioner (Special Branch), Kolkata Police, Shantanu Sinha Biswas, and later arrested Kolkata-based businessman Joy Kamdar in connection with the money laundering probe in a land grabbing case, officials said. Early Sunday morning, the ED began searches at three different locations – the Ballygunj residence of Biswas, another residential building close to his residence, and the Behala residence of Kamdar. While Kamdar was arrested, sources said that Biswas was being questioned. Following

EYE SECRETS Editorial

The child behind the curriculum

The Supreme Court’s recent observations on the introduction of a third language in Class IX have brought an important educational question into focus. The debate surrounding language policy is often shaped by political, cultural and constitutional considerations, but there is another perspective that deserves equal attention: the child who must ultimately experience the policy in the classroom.

Learning additional languages can enrich children’s intellectual and cultural development, broaden communication and deepen their understanding of India’s diversity. The question, therefore, is not whether multilingual learning has value, but when and how it should be introduced.

A curriculum cannot be designed merely by deciding what children ought to learn; it must also consider their age, developmental readiness and existing academic demands. Every educational policy ultimately reaches the child as a classroom experience, and its success must, therefore, be judged not only by its objectives, but by how meaningfully the learner is able to absorb it.

Children possess a remarkable capacity to learn languages, particularly when exposure begins early and occurs naturally. In the formative years, language learning can become part of everyday communication rather than another subject to be mastered for examinations. Educational policy must distinguish between learning a language and preparing to pass an examination in it. The former can broaden a child’s world; the latter may add to an already crowded academic burden. The transition to secondary education is already demanding for many students. By Class IX, academic expectations rise as schools begin preparing children for Board examinations and families become increasingly conscious of future academic choices. When additions are made without examining the overall workload, even well-intentioned reforms can reduce the time available for meaningful learning, recreation and personal development.

The present discussion raises a question that extends beyond the three-language policy. How often do we examine educational reform from the perspective of the child who must experience it? Curriculum decisions are frequently judged by the knowledge and skills they seek to introduce. Less attention may be paid to whether students have adequate time, preparation and developmental readiness to engage with them meaningfully. New knowledge, technologies and competencies will inevitably enter classrooms. Yet every addition occupies time and demands attention. Unless existing requirements are reviewed simultaneously, continuous additions can leave students learning more subjects but understanding fewer of them deeply. The quality of education cannot, therefore, be measured by the quantity of content in a syllabus. A well-designed curriculum requires careful choices about what should be taught, at what stage and for what purpose. Reform should also create space for deeper learning and recognise that childhood itself has educational value. India’s educational landscape is marked by considerable diversity in resources, linguistic backgrounds and access to trained teachers. While some schools may be equipped to introduce an additional language effectively, others may struggle with shortages of qualified teachers, suitable textbooks and instructional time.

Bengal CM talks to families of those missing in Nepal, offers help in getting Chinese visas



West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Friday spoke to the families of residents from the state who have been missing in Nepal after flash floods struck the neighbouring country, and offered them help in getting Chinese visas to travel to find if their loved ones had entered Tibet. The CM, who connected with the families through video conferencing from Bhabani Bhaban, the state police headquarters, said, “We will help those who want to go to China. Though it will be subject to getting visas from China, the state administration will provide necessary help for that.”

If the Centre gives permission, a state government delegation will be sent to Kathmandu for better coordination, he added. “At least 37 people from West Bengal are missing. Of them, two Poddar family members have been found,” he said. The families asked the CM whether the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) could provide a list to find out whether their relatives had entered Tibet. Meanwhile, a UK-based couple, who hail from Kolkata, are also missing in Nepal, it is learnt. Anal Kar (56) and his wife Sanjukta Kar (50) reached Kathmandu from New Delhi on August 18 and were last traced to Timure near the Nepal-Tibet border.

The couple’s daughter and son are arriving in India to trace their parents who were on a pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar. Anal Kar’s sister Jhuma Majumdar, who lives in Behala, said the family was struggling to cope with the situation. “It has been four days and we have yet to get any information about them. I did not inform our ailing father, but he got to know about it through TV news. Since then, he has been very upset and unwell,” she said.

Karnataka man acquitted in 2015 murder case hacked to death in public



A man acquitted in a 2015 murder case was hacked to death in public in Karnataka’s Hubballi on Friday afternoon, with the police suspecting the killing was linked to an old enmity. According to the police, the victim, Dadapeer Udayakar, was riding a two-wheeler near Siddeshwara

Park in Banashankari Layout in Vidyanagar around 1 pm when two unidentified men allegedly intercepted him and attacked him with sharp weapons. The assailants fled the spot after the attack. According to preliminary information, Udayakar was an accused in the 2015 murder of a person named Maruti. He was acquitted in the case in 2017, the police said. However, the police are yet to ascertain whether the killing was connected to the earlier case or any existing enmity.

Senior police officials, including Hubballi City Police Commissioner N Shashikumar, visited the spot and reviewed the circumstances. Police teams have been formed to trace the attackers and CCTV footage from the area is being examined to establish their movements. “We are trying to zero down on the accused and will register a case,” Shashikumar told the media on Friday. A senior police official said the accused are yet to be traced and further investigation is underway.

Onion prices soar as wholesale market sees sharp drop in arrivals

Onion prices in Pune have climbed over the past few weeks, with traders blaming a steep fall in the supply arriving at the city’s wholesale market. According to Yogesh Yadav, an onion trader at the Gultekdi APMC market, Pune typically needs around 125 trucks of onions a day, each carrying about 10,000 kg, to meet demand. Currently, only about 50 trucks are arriving daily, a short-fall that has pushed prices upward across the city. Wholesale rates for good quality onions are now ranging between Rs 35 and Rs 40 per kg, while lower-grade, older stock is selling for Rs 30-35 per kg. The impact is even more visible at the retail level, where prices swing widely across Pune, from Rs 45 per kg to over Rs 65 per kg depending on the locality and quality.

Traders trace the roots of the current squeeze back to April, when unseasonal rains damaged onion crops and hit output. Adding to the pressure is an expected delay in the arrival of the kharif crop, along with continuing exports, both of which are keeping supplies tight. Yadav said, “If the conditions remain the same, onion prices are likely to remain elevated, in the range of Rs 45-50 per kg. One such intervention has already been made. On Friday, the first ‘Kanda Express’ – a dedicated rail rake carrying roughly 453.65 tonnes of onions from Nashik – reached Delhi, part of a government push to boost supplies in the capital and neighbouring cities and cool down prices there. The move, however, has had a ripple effect back when the wholesale onion prices at Nashik’s Lasalgaon APMC, the country’s largest onion market, fell by about 10 per cent, dropping from Rs 4,250 per quintal on Thursday to Rs 3,800 per quintal. The Centre’s move has not gone down well with onion growers, who say the timing could not have been worse. Jaideep Bhadane, Nashik district president of the Maharashtra State Onion Growers Association, pointed out a recurring pattern: authorities step in quickly to shield consumers when prices



rise, but rarely act with the same urgency to support farmers when prices crash, and losses mount. Bhadane recalled that growers went through a particularly difficult stretch between March and July, when wholesale prices routinely fell below the cost of production, estimated at around Rs 2,000 per quintal. He said, “Farmers’ associations had asked for compensation of Rs 1,500 per quintal for those forced to sell below viable rates, but the demand went unanswered.” Now, he said, just as growers were finally beginning to see better returns, the release of buffer stock onions has triggered another price fall, undercutting the recovery. The price rise is also being felt in Pune’s restaurants. Ganesh Shetty, president of the Pune Restaurant and Hoteliers’ Association (PRAHA), said, “

The hotel industry was already under pressure from the hike in LPG prices and rising costs of other essentials, and that expensive onions are now adding to the squeeze on profits.” He explained, “In most Indian kitchens, chopped or pureed onions form the foundation of the majority of gravies and curries, accounting for close to 80 per cent of a typical curry’s preparation. If onion prices remain high for another two to three months, hoteliers may be left with little choice but to raise menu prices.”

Vadodara-Mundra air taxi service launched to cut travel time between industrial hubs

A DIRECT air taxi service has been launched between Vadodara and Mundra, promising faster connectivity between two of Gujarat’s key industrial centres and offering an alternative to long road journeys for business travellers and professionals. The service, described as an initiative aimed at strengthening connectivity between industrial and commercial hubs, is expected to particularly benefit industrialists, executives and professionals travelling to Mundra Port and the surrounding industrial region.

The regional air taxi network will also connect Mundra with Jamnagar, Diu and Rajkot, with return services on all three routes, creating a small regional air network linking Gujarat’s key business, industrial and coastal centres. The website of Fly Air Taxi has listed the new routes as open from Friday. The tickets are expected to be priced between Rs 499 to Rs 3400 as per dynamic pricing. The regional air taxi and direct flight service between Ahmedabad and Mundra by Star Air officially commenced on August 17, marking the beginning of the expanded connectivity programme.

Operating under the tagline “Connecting Business, Powering Progress,” the service will offer multiple morning departures from Vadodara and evening return options from Mundra, according to the schedule released for the new service. The flights from Vadodara Airport to Mundra will operate daily between Monday and Sunday. Three services — FAT 201, FAT 202 and FAT 203 — are scheduled to depart at 6:30 am, 6:55 am and 7:20 am, respectively. An additional service, FAT 204, has been scheduled at 7:45 am on Sundays. The return schedule has been divided according to the day of the week. From Monday to Thursday, flights FAT 305, FAT 310 and FAT



315 are scheduled to arrive in Vadodara between 6:32 pm and 7:22 pm. On Fridays and Saturdays, flights FAT 319, FAT 323 and FAT 327 will arrive between 6:21 pm and 7:11 pm. On Sundays, four return services — FAT 335, FAT 330, FAT 332 and FAT 334 — have been scheduled, with arrivals spread between 11:36 am and 6:26 pm. The service has been positioned as a premium travel option, with limited seating and an advance booking arrangement. Passengers have been advised to book in advance because of the aircraft’s restricted capacity. According to information released about the service, passengers will be offered a faster check-in process, comfortable seating and trained crew, with the service focusing on safety and convenience. The Vadodara-Mundra connection could be particularly significant for business travellers who frequently move between central Gujarat and the Kutch industrial belt. Mundra is home to one of the country’s largest ports and a major industrial and logistics ecosystem, while Vadodara remains one of Gujarat’s principal manufacturing and commercial centres.

Retired army jawan booked for killing neighbour’s pet dog in Khammam

Khammam: A retired army jawan was booked on charges of killing a neighbour’s pet dog with an air gun at Mutharam village of Mudigonda mandal in the district. According to police, the accused jawan, Routhu Janaiah, who retired from service nearly 30 years ago, shot the pet dog that was playing in front of his house on Thursday. One of the locals who witnessed the incident posted a message on a local WhatsApp group.

The dog owner, Gunja Ramu, who learnt about the incident, lodged a complaint with the local police. Based on his complaint, ASI Srinivasa Rao registered a case on Friday and launched an investigation into the incident at the directions of Inspector of Police Murali. The locals expressed outrage over the retired jawan’s action of killing an innocent animal out of anger after the pet dog wandered into his house. Locals allege that two monkeys died in the past due to electric wires which Janaiah installed to keep monkeys out of the garden in his house.



A retired army jawan in Khammam district has been booked for allegedly shooting dead a neighbour’s pet dog with an air gun. The incident sparked outrage among locals, who accused him of earlier causing the deaths of monkeys with electric wires installed around his garden.

UP family’s anxious wait after Nepal floods



On Wednesday, Ashok Kumar Chaurasia called his daughter Shivani in a panic. The floodwaters around their home in Nepal’s Nuwakot district were rising, he told her, and he feared the situation could worsen.

For the next 24 hours, there was no word from Ashok. He and his brother, Panna Lal, had run a clothing shop in the district for nearly four decades. Ashok’s two daughters, living in Uttar Pradesh’s Ballia and Varanasi, watched news channels in mounting alarm as images showed the flash floods sweeping through districts along Nepal’s border with Tibet, leaving 600 dead and 2,000 missing.

The sisters called relatives, tried their family’s phones again and again, and waited for any sign that their father and six other members of their family — their mother, two brothers, and uncle’s family — in Nepal were safe. Finally, on Thursday evening, Diksha Chaurasia, Ashok’s eldest daughter, saw her brother Saurabh on a news channel. “That was the first moment I felt some relief that someone in my family was safe,” she said. Speaking to The Indian Express, Diksha, 28, said her sister was the first to tell her about their father’s call. Initially, no one could be contacted. Later, I spoke to people there and learned that the area around Trishuli, where our house and shop are located, had been flooded,” she said. Diksha eventually managed to get in touch with her father through several sources. Ashok told her that their house, shops and godown had been swept away by the floodwaters. Then came the news that two members of the family were still missing. “He told me that all the family members had been traced except our aunt, Usha Devi, and her son Rahul, who are still missing,” Diksha said. Her father also said they had been left with little more than the clothes they were wearing, with no food or safe drinking water. “When I told my father that several news channels had reported that the Indian government was sending relief supplies, he said they had not received any assistance,” Diksha said. Diksha said she then called the emergency helpline set up by the government and informed officials about her father’s situation. “I told them about the difficulties my family was facing and requested help.” For the sisters, the ordeal also meant missing a festival they had expected to share with their brothers.

Nepal floods leave grim trail in UP: 10 bodies found in Gandak river



Officials have recorded details of jewellery and other belongings found on the bodies, as well as distinctive physical features such as tattoos and other identifying marks. Photographs of the deceased have also been circulated in nearby areas.

The Gandak River has carried a grim trail of Nepal’s devastating floods into Uttar Pradesh: 10 bodies have been recovered from the river in Maharajanj and Kushinagar over the past two days, with authorities yet to identify the deceased or trace their families. An official said all the deceased were adults, believed to be Nepalis, and that the bodies were in an advanced state of decomposition. The bodies have been taken to mortuaries in Maharajanj and Kushinagar, where they will be kept for 72 hours.

Officials have recorded details of jewellery and other belongings found on the bodies, as well as distinctive physical features such as tattoos and other identifying marks. Photographs of the deceased have also been circulated in nearby areas. Additional District Magistrate of Maharajanj Prashant Kumar said four of the bodies — three women and a young man — had been found in the district. “If no one comes forward during the 72-hour period, further action will be taken in accordance with government guidelines,” Kumar said. A report on the recoveries has also been sent to the state government and is expected to be forwarded to the central government for further information and necessary action.

Ravi Pratap Rai, a disaster management expert posted in Kushinagar, said they recovered six bodies — three men and three women. Teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the flood battalion of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) are working alongside the district administration and police in the affected areas of Maharajanj and Kushinagar. An official said the immediate flood threat had eased as water levels had receded. Authorities, however, have urged residents to stay away from rivers and low-lying areas. Several other items, including vehicles, household goods, gas cylinders, drums, furniture, logs and other debris, have also been seen floating in the Gandak and washing up along its banks, officials said. A large number of villagers have been gathering along the river to retrieve articles being washed ashore.

Death toll rises to 7 in Tibet flash floods, 554 remain missing



Beijing: The death toll from flash floods in Tibet near the Nepalese border has climbed to seven, with 554 people still missing as rescue and relief teams intensified efforts in the affected areas, the Tibet emergency management department said on Saturday. The flash floods hit Gyirong County in the Tibet Autonomous Region on Wednesday, sweeping through villages and towns near the border area with Nepal.

The death toll in the region has risen to seven, while 554 people are still missing, Tibet's emergency management department said. Of those missing, 260 have been identified as foreign nationals but their nationalities have not been released yet. Chinese officials said on Friday more than 1,000 people, including 555 tourists and 499

Trump praises Indian-origin astronaut Anil Menon, invites him to Oval Office

Washington: President Donald Trump has praised Indian-origin NASA astronaut Anil Menon and two crewmates as "great Americans, great patriots, brave people" during a call to the International Space Station, inviting them to the Oval Office after their return to Earth. "This is a great honor, to be with you is a great honor and I just want to thank Jessica, Anil, Jack, great Americans, great patriots, brave people," Trump said during Friday's call from NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

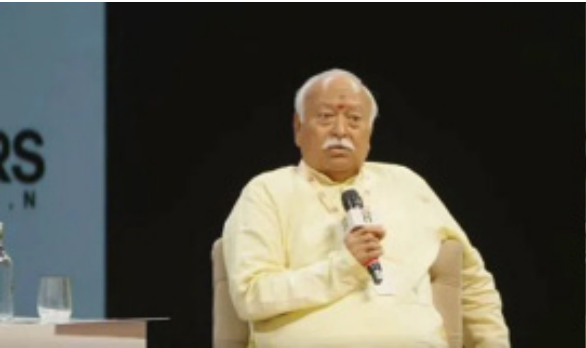
"I wouldn't do it. I will tell you right now, I hate to admit it, I would not want to do it, but some people love it more than anything," he said. Trump praised the courage of Menon, Jessica Meir and Jack Hathaway, saying that even their selection for the mission was an achievement. Menon, a colonel in the US Space Force, told Trump that he was proud to serve in space and spoke about a spacewalk he completed last week. "Thank you, sir. And I would like to say, as a colonel in the Space Force, that I am very proud to serve in the largest domain imaginable," Menon said. "And last week, I got the great honor of doing a spacewalk and got to look at the space station from the robotic arm and saw the incredible ingenuity that we are capable of," he said. Menon said he was "so proud and excited" that the United States was preparing for missions beyond low-Earth orbit. "We are going to pave the way to our next journey to the Moon, Moon Base and Mars," he said. "And thank you for propelling us in that direction." The call followed Trump's announcement of plans for a US Space Academy. He told the astronauts that the proposed institution would be placed at the same level as West Point, the Naval Academy, the Coast Guard Academy and the Air Force Academy. "If we're going to do it, it has to be at that very high level. Those are among the hardest schools to get into in the whole country," Trump said. Menon's wife, Anna Menon, joined Trump at the space centre and briefly addressed the astronauts. "Hi, it's Anna. Great to see you guys up there. We love you guys. You're doing a great job," she said. Trump said he



was proud of establishing the Space Force during his first term. He argued that space-based intelligence had become important to US military operations and would grow further in importance with advances in technology. "You're really pioneers. In a true sense, they're really pioneers," Trump told the crew.

Hathaway, a Naval Academy graduate, said the institution would be ready to support the proposed Space Academy. Meir said the crew was completing several spacewalks and preparing for another one next week. Trump concluded the call by asking the astronauts to return safely and offering to receive them at the White House. "Great job. Very proud. We're going to see you when you get back. In fact, if you want, Oval Office time, right?" Trump said. "So you'll - we'll see you in the Oval Office, OK? Thank you very much. Be safe." Menon was born and raised in Minneapolis to Indian and Ukrainian immigrant parents. NASA selected him for its 2021 astronaut candidate class after he had worked as SpaceX's first flight surgeon and as a NASA crew flight surgeon supporting International Space Station missions. He launched aboard Russia's Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft on July 14 with cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina. NASA said three-member crew would spend about eight months aboard the orbital laboratory, conducting research and technology demonstrations before returning to Earth in April 2027.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat to speak at Madison Square Garden where PM Modi made US debut



New York: The Madison Square Garden (MSG), where the RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat will be speaking on Saturday, is a massive arena that has special significance across politics, entertainment, sports and religion. Bhagwat will take the rostrum at a venue where Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his US public debut as the leader of the world's biggest democracy shortly after his 2014 election, when he visited the city for the United Nations high-level meeting. The arena, with a 22,000-capacity, overflowed as his supporters and those curious about the leader who stormed to power in India thronged to hear and cheer him. It was here that US President Donald Trump made a triumphant return in 2024 to the city where he had faced legal troubles. Presidents

Why toilet paper prices could rise for Americans amid President Trump's tariffs

The development follows Washington's latest tariff measures and Canada's decision to retaliate with tariffs on a wide range of American goods. The Guardian reported that paper products are among the sectors caught in the dispute, with Canada preparing tariffs of up to 50% on certain paper inputs. Why toilet paper is caught in the trade warAlthough much of the toilet paper sold in the US is manufactured domestically, American producers rely on Canada for lumber and other raw materials used in paper production. According to The Guardian, the US imported about \$328 million worth of toilet paper from Canada in 2024, making Canada by far the largest exporter of the product to the US. The dependence on Ca-

locals, were evacuated from Gyirong County. No tourists remains stranded in the area now, official media reported.

A large number of Indian pilgrims are visiting Tibet to take part in the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra following an improvement in ties between China and India. Some of the Indian pilgrims were reportedly present at the immigration building at the Tibet-Nepal border when it was hit hard by the flash flood. The Chinese government is in the process of releasing information about the stranded and missing tourists to the respective embassies in Beijing, including the Embassy of India. A total of 2,141 rescue workers and 86 specialists from natural resources and other relevant fields in China have been deployed in the disaster area in Tibet, according to official media reports. "As far as I can see, it's nothing but debris," rescue official Zou Mingqi told state media. With specialised equipment, rescue teams have stepped up inspections for geological hazards across surrounding slopes, roads and other critical zones. On Thursday, China sounded a Level-IV alert, warning that a newly formed barrier lake at the confluence of Chhochon Khola and Purepu Tsangpo rivers faces a high risk of breaching and flooding downstream areas. A five-person monitoring post has been set up to keep the barrier lake under constant observation and guard against potential secondary disasters. In addition, over 1 kilometre of road has been cleared and re-opened to traffic. The flash floods have killed 626 people on the Nepalese side.



Kathmandu: The death toll from the flash floods reached 616 on Saturday morning, while hundreds remain missing, local media reported, citing officials. As of 6 a.m. on Saturday, police had recovered 233 bodies in Chitwan, 158 in Nawalparasi East, 48 in Gorkha, 47 in Nawalparasi West, 45 in Dhading, 41 in Nuwakot, 31 in Tanahun and 13 in Rasuwa, according to leading Nepalese daily The Kathmandu Post.

Meanwhile, search and rescue operations are underway across the affected districts of the Himalayan nation. Officials said that police are coordinating with residents and other agencies to locate missing people and assist those stranded by the floods. Rescued people are being taken from high-risk areas to safer locations. Additionally, search and rescue officials are working to clear roads blocked by flood debris and landslides to reopen

US clears plan to scrap H-1B job-loss grace period

Washington: The Trump administration has completed its review of a proposal to eliminate the discretionary 60-day grace period available to H-1B and other foreign professionals after their employment ends, potentially affecting thousands of Indian workers and their families. The Department of Homeland Security proposal, titled "Eliminating the Discretionary 60-day Grace Period", was submitted to the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on August 6. The review concluded on August 27 with the action listed as "Consistent with Change", according to the official regulatory record. The designation means the proposal cleared the White House review process with changes.

The proposal has not been published, and its full provisions remain unavailable. The existing 60-day protection therefore remains in force. The next step would ordinarily be publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register, followed by a public comment period. DHS would then have to consider the comments and issue a final rule before any change could take effect. The proposal carries Regulatory Information Number 1615-AD22 and is being developed by US Citizenship and Immigration Services. The regulatory record describes it as a proposed rule that is not economically significant and has no legal deadline. Under the current regulation, eligible workers may receive up to 60 consecutive days after their employment ends, or until the expiration of their authorised stay, whichever period is shorter. The window allows affected workers to find another employer willing to sponsor them, seek a change of immigration status or prepare to leave the United States. It covers people holding H-1B, L-1, O-1 and several other temporary employment visas.

Indian nationals, who constitute the largest group of H-1B beneficiaries, could face particular uncertainty if the administration proceeds with the proposal. Ajay Jain, Bhutoria, a former member of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, condemned the proposed change and called for the existing grace period to be extended rather than eliminated. "I strongly condemn and slam this proposed DHS policy. Eliminating the 60-day grace period is both inhumane and unworkable. When a high-skilled worker faces a sudden termination, 60 days was already dangerously short. Stripping away this protection entirely leaves thousands of law-abiding individuals with zero time to wrap up their lives," Bhutoria said. He warned that



affected families may not have sufficient time to manage their homes, children's education and other personal matters after an unexpected termination.

Bhutoria said he had secured unanimous support from the White House advisory commission in 2023 for a recommendation to extend the grace period from 60 days to 180 days. He argued that recruitment in technology, healthcare and engineering frequently involves several interviews, followed by immigration paperwork required to transfer a worker's status to a new employer. "Eliminating the 60-day grace period for re-trenched H-1B workers is a drastic step backward. When I presented my recommendation to the White House AANHPI Commission in March 2023 to extend the window to 180 days, it was grounded in the reality of corporate hiring, where multi-stage interview cycles and visa transfer paperwork take months to complete," Bhutoria said. "Removing this window entirely will force skilled Indian professionals and their families out of the country overnight. I call on community organisations and business leaders across the U.S. to mobilise and submit public comments against this regulation as soon as it opens in the Federal Register," he added. The 60-day provision became effective in January 2017 as part of a broader regulation covering high-skilled immigrant and non-immigrant workers. It permits the grace period once during each authorised validity period but allows immigration authorities to shorten or deny it as a matter of discretion. The H-1B programme permits American employers to hire foreign professionals for specialised occupations requiring advanced knowledge. Technology companies are among its largest users, and Indian nationals have consistently accounted for a substantial majority of approved H-1B beneficiaries.

UN chief calls on US, Iran to resume negotiations

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on the United States and Iran to resume negotiations to end their conflict through diplomacy, his spokesman said. Asked about the secretary-general's view on the stalled talks between the United States and Iran six months into the war, Stephane Dujarric, the



spokesman, said: "This is a sad marker of six months of this ongoing conflict. We again stress that the only solution to this is a diplomatic solution. And we urge both the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran to engage in meaningful negotiations."

energy, he said. The secretary-general's personal envoy for this conflict, Jean Arnault, remains available and in contact to assist the parties and mediators in reaching a durable solution, said the spokesman. The United States and Israel launched military attacks against Iran on Feb. 28. In retaliation, Iran attacked Israel and US military bases in the Gulf. The Strait of Hormuz, a major maritime chokepoint for global energy trade, was largely blocked, severely disrupting the flow of oil and other commodities. On June 18, the United States and Iran signed a memorandum

How plastic whistles are becoming an anti-ICE resistance tool in Chicago



CHICAGO,As the shrill sound of whistles echoed through a parking garage in Chicago's North Side on Tuesday, two people flung their car doors open, ducked inside and shrank down into their seats. Outside, a convoy of federal immigration enforcement vehicles that had arrived in the area just minutes prior sped off."We just saw a bunch of guys with whistles that chased them out," said Luke, a landscaper who was working nearby and declined to share his full name.

Read about innovative ideas and the people working on solutions to global crises with the Reuters Beacon newsletter. Sign up here.The Trump administration in early September launched a targeting what it said were hardened criminals among immigrants in the U.S. without legal status, though many noncriminals have been swept up in raids.

Since then, the piercing blow of a whistle has become a Chicago-wide means of signaling that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents are present. It warns undocumented people to flee and invites U.S. citizens to come to the scene to record arrests, give detainees legal information and discourage agents from lingering.Anti-ICE signs hang in the window of a home, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., October 21, 2025. REUTERS/Jim Vondruska Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabThe aggressive immigration enforcement effort - which has no end date - has sparked widespread protests and resentment among residents. Hundreds of federal agents have fanned across the third-largest city in the U.S. and its suburbs, often carrying assault rifles and wearing military fatigues. Agents have teargassed crowds, rappelled from a Black Hawk helicopter to raid an apartment building, dragged immigrants from cars, held people at gunpoint and shot

two people, including one fatally.Against this heavily militarized force, whistles have become a modest but effective tool to fight back."It grew like wildfire," said Baltazar Enriquez, president of Little Village Community Council, a community group in one of Chicago's largest Latino enclaves. "If we have to patrol our neighborhood for the next three years, we're willing to do that just to keep our community safe."The group began handing out the whistles to neighborhood residents over the summer. Since then, relentless promotion turned the whistles into a defining symbol of Chicago's resistance against ICE.A woman holds a whistle she uses to alert others about the presence of federal agents during immigration raids, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., October 21, 2025. REUTERS/Jim Vondruska Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

and local activist groups have passed out the whistles at local festivals and parades and dropped them off at Little Free Libraries. Some residents have picked up whistles from community groups that advertised them on social media - others have simply bought them from dollar stores and Amazon."Our officers are highly trained," said Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Homeland Security, and "they are not afraid of loud noises and whistles."Their ease of use and low cost have contributed to their soaring popularity on the streets and on social media. But the impact of a whistle against squads of armed, fast-moving immigration officers is limited.On a quiet residential street in another North Side neighborhood, residents ran out of their apartments to confront ICE officers as they detained a group of landscapers. Their whistles and shouts managed to draw a crowd and elicit names of detainees to be passed on to immigration rights groups, but officers still drove away with two people."I'm sure I'll cry again later," said Joanne Willer, a resident of Albany Park who used her whistle to sound the alarm about the detention. "It's just really upsetting."Community members hold whistles used to alert others about the presence of federal agents during immigration raids, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.,/Jim Vondruska Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabAfterward, other residents of Albany Park, a Chicago neighborhood known for its diversity that was tear-gassed by federal immigration agents earlier this month, carried different kinds of noisemakers as they patrolled the streets.Jordan, who declined to share her last name out of fear of retribution, carried her son's toy train whistle."I'm Jewish, and I feel very personally tied to what's going on here because of our history as a Jewish people

Northern Ireland court finds soldier not guilty of murder over 'Bloody Sunday' killings



BELFAST, 3A Belfast court on Thursday found a British soldier not guilty of murder in the only trial of a member of the British armed forces over the 1972 "Bloody Sunday" killings of 13 unarmed Catholic civil rights marchers in Northern Ireland.The British government in 2010 apologised for the "unjustified and unjustifiable" killings, when members of the British army's elite Parachute Regiment opened fire in the mainly Irish nationalist city of Londonderry in one of the defining moments of Northern Ireland's recent history.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.But all efforts to prosecute soldiers have failed and many relatives of victims and their supporters now believe the chance of a successful prosecution of British armed forces is remote.Belfast Crown Court was silent when the verdict was read. The soldier, who cannot be identified legally and is known as Soldier F, was in court but hidden behind a blue curtain to protect his identity.He was found not guilty of killing two men and trying to kill five others.Judge Patrick Lynch said in his verdict that he was satisfied that soldiers had lost all sense of military discipline and opened fire with intent to kill and that "those responsible should hang their heads in shame".But he said the case fell short of the burden of proof.

"Delay has, in my view, seriously hampered the capacity of the defence to test the veracity and accuracy of

the hearsay statements," he said."The evidence presented by the Crown ... signally fails to reach the high standard of proof required in a criminal case; that of proof beyond a reasonable doubt."Mickey McKinney, brother of William McKinney, one of the two victims named in the case, said he put the blame for the failure to successfully prosecute any soldiers squarely with the British state."Soldier F has been discharged from the defendant's criminal dock, but it is one million miles away from being an honourable discharge," McKinney told journalists outside the court.A DEFINING MOMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S 'TROUBLES'Bloody Sunday became one of the defining events of the Troubles, three decades of sectarian violence involving nationalists seeking a united Ireland, unionists wanting Northern Ireland to remain a province of the United Kingdom, and British forces.The shootings fuelled suspicion of the authorities among the Catholic minority and prompted dozens to join the Irish Republican Army's violent campaign against British rule.Thirteen people, all unarmed Catholics, were killed when the soldiers opened fire in the staunchly nationalist Bogside area of Londonderry on January 30, 1972. A 14th victim later died from wounds sustained on the day. The troops said they shot at people armed with guns or nail bombs.

Defence lawyers did not call any witnesses and said that the core of the case, military statements taken over 50 years ago, were manifestly unreliable, with no independent supporting evidence offered to back the prosecution case.Earlier in the trial the court heard a short statement Soldier F gave to police in 2016, in which he said that while he was sure he properly discharged his duties as a soldier that day, he no longer had any reliable recollection of the events and therefore was unable to answer the officers' questions.The British government in 2010 apologised for the killings after a judicial inquiry found that the victims were innocent and had posed no threat to the military.That inquiry had been set up by British Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1998, after an original 1972 investigation absolved the paratroopers of blame.In a statement on the verdict the British government said it was "committed to finding a way forward that acknowledged the past, whilst supporting those who served their country during an incredibly difficult period in Northern Ireland's history."

What will happen to Louvre jewellery after heist? There are two likely scenarios

The spectacular heist of jewellery from the Louvre museum in Paris has many people wondering how a theft like this could occur in broad daylight and what might happen to the items that were stolen from the museum.In a matter of minutes, four thieves were able to enter through a first-floor window, break into secure glass displays, and take nine items of jewellery of immeasurable value.Although an alarm was set off and museum guards were nearby, the thieves were able to escape quickly, using motor bikes to get away. They dropped one stolen item, a diamond and emerald-encrusted royal crown that had belonged to Empress Eugenie, Napoleon III's wife.Their loot include jewellery from French imperial times - brooches, necklaces, earrings and a tiara. The French prosecutor's office said the jewels were worth some 88 million euros (A\$157 million), not including their historical value.The speed and professionalism of the heist shows this was a well-planned crime, carried out by highly skilled perpetrators. That suggests they are linked to organised criminal groups.Several media outlets reported a number of smaller thefts from French museums in recent weeks, including gold nuggets from the Paris Natural History Museum. There is no suggestion these thefts were linked to the Louvre heist.

What might happen to the loot?

The stolen jewellery includes well-known pieces that are easily recognisable. This will make it difficult, if not impossible, to sell them on the black market, even to well-heeled collectors and buyers.This problem is well-known from other museum heists - such as the theft of the Canadian "Big Maple Leaf" giant gold coin from Berlin's Bode Museum in 2017 or the famous heist of 13 masterpieces by Degas, Manet and Rembrandt from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston in 1990. Those paintings have never been recovered.Instead, most experts believe one of two scenarios are more likely.In the first, the jewellery would be broken down into smaller pieces. Diamonds and other gemstones may be taken out, altered and then offered for sale. Silver and gold may be

used to manufacture other pieces or may be sold separately.

This scenario would make it easy to conceal the origin of the pieces and sell them openly or online. The combined value, however, would be significantly lower compared to leaving the pieces intact. It is thus doubtful the thieves targeted the specific jewellery for this purpose.Scenario two would involve the thieves, or more likely the masterminds behind them, trying to sell the pieces back to the Louvre or trying to extort money from the French government for their return.This may be done through brokers or other middlemen and may not happen for a while, until there is less public and media attention and the perpetrators feel sufficiently safe to contact - directly or indirectly - museum or state authorities.Given the historical significance of the pieces coupled with the embarrassment caused by the heist, the Louvre and the French government would be keen to have the pieces returned as swiftly as possible and might be willing to negotiate, albeit secretly.Much of this remains, however, speculation. Only a few days have passed since the heist occurred and many questions about the events, perpetrators and their motives remain unanswered. And just who may be behind this spectacular heist from France's largest museum has everyone guessing.

The Louvre theft brings to mind the jewellery heist at the Green Vault at the Zwinger Palace in Dresden, Germany, in 2019.In this case, the perpetrators had closely examined the museum's security system for many days and were able to enter the building without being caught on camera. They entered through a window on the first floor and within minutes stole 21 pieces of jewellery from several displays.Unlike the Paris heist, the Dresden thieves entered at night and used brute force to damage the displays to take their loot.Some years after the robbery, German authorities were able to identify and arrest the thieves involved in the heist - all five were members of a notorious Berlin-based crime family.

Saudi Arabia appoints Sheikh Saleh bin Fawzan al-Fawzan as kingdom's new grand mufti

Dubai: Saudi Arabia appointed a prominent ultra-conservative scholar late on Wednesday as the country's new grand mufti, the kingdom's top religious scholar.Sheikh Saleh bin Fawzan al-Fawzan, 90, took over the position, the state-run Saudi Press Agency reported. The decision came from King Salman, based on the recommendation of his son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the report added.

Sheikh Saleh, reportedly born Sept 28, 1935, in Saudi Arabia's al-Qassim province, studied the Quran with a local imam after his father's death.He became a prominent scholar, speaking to the faithful via the "Noor ala al-Darb," or "Light the Way," radio show and via multiple books he's authored and his television appearances. His fatwas, or religious orders, have been shared via social media as well.

Sheikh Saleh has faced criticism in Western media in the past for some of his pronouncements. Human Rights Watch in 2017 reported Sheikh Saleh, when asked if Sunni Muslims should view Shiites as their "brothers," responded: "They are brothers of Satan." The Shiite "lie about God, his prophet, and the consensus of Muslims... There is no doubt about the unbelief of these" people, Human Rights Watch separately quoted Sheikh Saleh saying at another moment.Such comments about the Shiite from religious leaders in Saudi Arabia are common, particularly amid political tensions between the kingdom and Iran. Sheikh Saleh also criticised Yemen's Houthis rebels for firing missiles toward holy sites in the kingdom.In 2003, Sheikh Saleh was quoted as saying: "Slavery is a part of Islam. Slavery is part of jihad, and jihad will remain as long as there is Islam." The sheikh also had a fatwa attributed to him in 2016 banning the mobile game "Pokemon Go" as a form of gambling. Saudi Arabia under



Crown Prince Mohammed now owns a sizable stake in Nintendo and the gaming division of Niantic, the maker of "Pokemon Go".

Sheikh Saleh takes the post after the September death of Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, who held the position of grand mufti for a quarter century.The al-Sheikh family, descendants of Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdul-Wahhab, long had seen its members serve as the grand mufti.Sheikh Mohammed's ultraconservative teachings of Islam in the 18th century, widely referred to as "Wahhabism" in his name, had guided the kingdom for decades, particularly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran saw the kingdom grow even more conservative.The grand mufti is one of the top Islamic clerics in the world of Sunni Muslims. Saudi Arabia, home to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, hosts the annual Hajj pilgrimage required of all able-bodied Muslims once in their lives, making the pronouncements of the grand mufti that much more closely followed.

Vance says Trump's policy rejects Israeli annexation of West Bank

TEL AVIV, Vice President JD Vance said on Thursday President Donald Trump would oppose Israeli annexation of the occupied West Bank and it would not happen, suggesting a move by Israeli lawmakers to that end looked like a stupid "political stunt".A bill applying Israeli law to the West Bank, a move tantamount to annexation of the territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war, won preliminary approval from Israeli lawmakers on Wednesday.The Reuters Gulf Currents newsletter brings you the latest on geopolitics, energy and finance in the region. Sign up here.Asked by reporters about the move, Vance said: "If it was a political stunt, it is a very stupid one, and I personally take some insult to it."Vance spoke after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that moves toward annexing the territory that Palestinians seek for part of an independent state could endanger Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, which has yielded a shaky ceasefire so far."The West Bank is not going to be annexed by Israel. The policy of President Trump is that the West Bank will not be annexed. This will always be our policy," Vance said during a trip to Israel to help shore up the Gaza truce.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said after Vance's remarks that the government had not decided to bring the vote on annexation forward at this stage in order to ensure the success of Trump's multi-stage Gaza plan.The U.S. has long been Israel's most powerful and staunch major power ally and the Trump administration is particularly close to Israel with considerable sway over its leadership.Senior U.S. officials including Rubio have been visiting Israel seeking to keep alive the brittle ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas after two years of devastating war that has upended the Middle East.Vance told reporters in Tel Aviv that he "feels pretty good" about the Gaza ceasefire after having talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.Repeated bouts of gunfire and explosions have shaken the deal and the two sides have traded blame for violations of its first phase, which has seen the return of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, a handover of bodies of some deceased hostages, and a partial pullout of Israeli troops.

Item 1 of 4 A member of the Israeli force stands guard as the Israeli forces block the access of Palestinians and foreign activists to olive trees during the olive harvest, near Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.Both sides have reiterated their commitment to the U.S.-mediated ceasefire after two years of war triggered by the October 7, 2023 cross-border Hamas assault on Israel that killed



1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.Israel's air and ground war in response has killed over 68,000 people and reduced much of the tiny, heavily urbanised Gaza Strip to rubble, Gaza health authorities say.The U.S. State Department said Rubio was visiting Israel to support the implementation of Trump's 20-point Gaza plan and pave the way towards reconstruction, stable governance and possible steps towards Palestinian statehood.He was preceded by Vance, who was also due to meet Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer on Thursday before departing.

There are hundreds of thousands of people living in Jewish settlements across the West Bank. The United Nations and much of the international community consider the settlements illegal under international law.Israel's government cites biblical and historical connections to the West Bank, territory that it regards as disputed, and opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state.The settlements are a highly volatile issue that have for decades loomed as a major obstacle to Middle East peace, as they fragment territory Palestinians want for a viable state.Wednesday's vote was the first of four needed to pass the law and coincided with Vance's visit to Israel - a month after Trump said he would not allow Israel to annex the territory.Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party did not support the legislation, which was sponsored by lawmakers outside his ruling coalition and passed by a vote of 25-24 out of 120 lawmakers.Netanyahu's government had been pondering annexation as a response to a string of major Western allies recognising a Palestinian state to put pressure on Israel to stop its war in Gaza, but appeared to shelve the idea after Trump objected.Settlement building has been expanding rapidly since 2022 when Netanyahu's government - the most right-wing

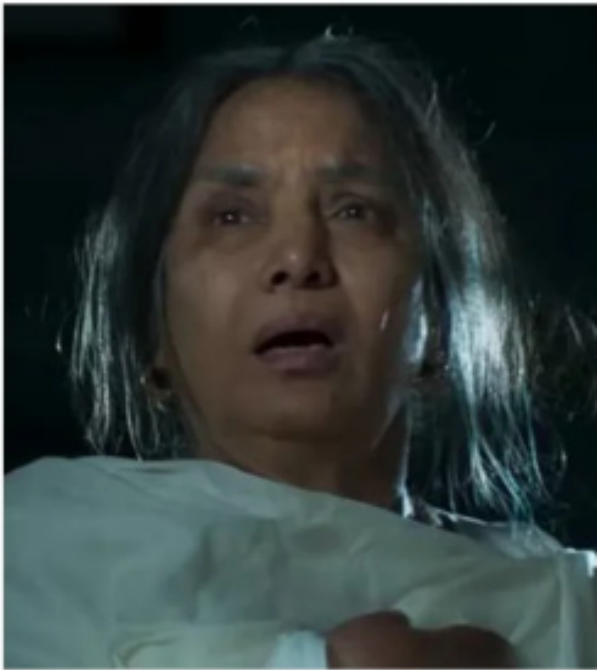


range weapons can truly change the course of the war."Zelenskyy has been seeking Tomahawk missiles from the United States.

Zelenskiy appeals to EU leaders over long-range weapons

BRUSSELS President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged European allies on Thursday to supply Ukraine with long-range weapons after failing to secure a promise from U.S. President Donald Trump to provide Kyiv with powerful Tomahawk missiles.Zelenskyy, who addressed European Union leaders in Brussels, also called on them to agree as soon as possible on a plan to use frozen Russian assets and said Kyiv would use a "significant part" of any funds made available to buy European-made weapons."When we talk about long-range weapons for Ukraine, we mean that the Putin regime should feel real consequences from this war. I urge you to support everything that helps Ukraine get such capabilities — because it really makes a difference for Russia," he said."Just look at how nervous (Russian President Vladimir) Putin became when this topic came up. He understands that long-

Batwara 1947 failed as people couldn’t accept Sunny Deol as a Muslim: Shabana Azmi



Batwara 1947, released on August 14, has tanked at the box office, with the film earning just Rs 53 crore so far. In contrast, Emraan Hashmi’s Awarapan 2, which released on the same day, has crossed the Rs 200 crore mark. Reflecting on the film’s poor box-office performance and its reception among audiences, actor Shabana Azmi, who plays an important role in Batwara 1947, said people may be unable to accept Sunny Deol playing a Muslim character. She compared it to Amitabh Bachchan, who, despite being the biggest star of his time, played Muslim characters with ease and was widely accepted in those roles. In a conversation with Zoom, Shabana Azmi said, “Firstly, I am very surprised at the total box office disaster that Batwara 1947 has been because I am surrounded by people who come and tell me they have loved the film.

They tell me that they loved the message. A lot of them feel that it is very important to speak about humanity in today’s environment. On the other hand, people didn’t go to the theatre and the ones who did, they walked out with confused reactions.”

She explained, “The thing is that you cannot accept Sunny Deol as a Muslim. In Coolie and in many other films, Amitabh Bachchan very comfortably played Muslim characters. In Deewaar, he put 786 and that was accepted. So how do we understand this? Are they creating an environment where such decisions are being taken on purpose? I am not able to understand.” The actor also highlighted that, in many cases, people who have watched the film may not have fully understood it. “I am surprised at how people are reacting to it. Even the ones who have watched the film think Sunny Deol is playing a Pakistani. He is not. It is simply not registering in their heads. Even Bushra Ahmed (Pakistani actor) objected to the film’s language. She said the Punjabi dialect used by the villain is not right. If both religions are not liking the film, it means it is something which is pure and beautiful.” Pointing to the current environment, the actor said, “The problem is that you cannot touch the subject of Hindustan and Pakistan in this setup, which is very disappointing. This is a film which is politically not incorrect in any way. You can’t find fault with it. Sunny has done a very good job. It is very surprising and also contradictory that when I meet people, why are they praising the film so much?” Batwara 1947, starring Sunny Deol and backed by Aamir Khan, is directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and was expected to be one of the biggest releases of the year. The film marked the reunion of Ghatak and Gadar collaborators Sunny Deol and Santoshi. It also marked Preity Zinta’s return to the big screen after an eight-year gap. However, none of these factors appear to have worked in the film’s favour at the box office. The film is reportedly made on a budget of Rs 120-150 crore. The year 2026 has seen a number of films attempting to portray the human side of war and the people caught on either side of the conflict,

Rupali Ganguly says she prefers Goa after Maldives holiday: ‘Hindustan se better kuch bhi nahi’

Anupamaa actor Rupali Ganguly recently took a family holiday to the Maldives and gave fans a glimpse of her getaway through a YouTube vlog. While the actress was excited to explore the island nation, including experiencing a seaplane ride, her excitement soon gave way to homesickness after checking into her hotel. “Hindustan se better kuch bhi nahi hai,” she said. In her vlog, Rupali shared several moments from her vacation with her husband, son and mother. While spending time with her mother in their private pool and teaching her how to swim, the Anupamaa actor also revealed that she was missing her dogs back home. Rupali, who is known for her love for animals, particularly dogs, said she missed seeing stray animals during her stay. “I have not seen a single stray animal in Maldives. That’s something that I miss. Maldives is nice but okay. I prefer my Goa. You can go anywhere in the world, but there is nothing better than India. Hindustan se better... Bharat se better... kuch bhi nahi. Humara Bharat mahaan,” she said.

Her love for India was evident even while returning from the holiday. As soon as Rupali and her family boarded their flight, they were seen enjoying homemade theplas. Sharing the moment with her viewers, she said, “You can



take Indians out of India but never India out of Indians. As soon as we sat down, we all started eating thepla.” She further explained, “Whenever Nani travels, she travels with a lot of food.” Rupali also revealed that she was pleasantly surprised to find Indian breakfast options, including idli, chutney and poha, at her hotel. Rupali was accompanied by her husband, son and mother on the trip. The actor first became widely popular for her role in Sarabhai vs Sarabhai and later achieved massive fame with Anupamaa. The show became a major hit during the pandemic and turned Rupali into a household name. Several of her dialogues from the series have since gone viral, with fans frequently recreating them on social media.

Nimisha Sajayan shines, but weak murder mystery holds it back



Babita Singh Reporting movie review: Babita aka Baby is your average Indian woman, trying to navigate politics at the work-place as well as in her domestic sphere. It could be the story played out in millions of households, but the thing that makes this film different is that Babita is a cop, elevated by circumstances into her position. The fact that hers is a ‘compassionate posting’ keeps coming up: a death in Baby’s family empties up a spot at the police station, which she steps into, with her colleagues expecting her to earn her place over and over again. The fact that it parallels her home situation, as a wife and daughter-in-law, is not hidden either: dutiful bahus are expected to fill empty spots day after day, to keep the family happy.

This duality is captured deftly in Ambiecka Pandit’s atmospheric film which threads societal ills through a police procedural, a well-established genre flourishing in the age of streaming. Arriving in small-town Rewa with husband Sharad (Anshumaan Pushkar) for her sister-in-law’s (Priya Yadav) godh-bharaai, Baby’s focus is split between her domestic duties and the sordid murder of childhood friend Bansi (Barun Sobti). It is when the director and writer Amita Vyas train their sights on the spikiness that happens within the chaar-diwari — mother-in-law

(Sunita Rajwar) ruling the roost, sister-in-law behaving like the entitled nanad, and husband doing the passive-aggressive act — that the film works best. Not this sari, that one; haldi doodh at the crack of dawn — all the petulance is saved for the daughter-in-law, who realises that she is being put upon but keeps soldering on regardless.

The ensemble cast is solid, led by a wonderful Nimisha Sajayan, as she does about trying to keep everyone happy, pausing to check in on herself only when she can. But the performances can’t paper over the weaknesses of the film. The victim is thinly-written. We never really get a satisfactory sense of who he is. Why does Baby get so involved? Was there something between the two? Why would a woman who is clearly not confident of her own abilities go barrelling into tricky situations which are clearly above her pay-grade? This is where Baby, and the film stumbles: her attempts at understanding the weight of patriarchy and her tentative pushing back has more impact, than the unravelling of the mystery. You may get reminded of Sandhya Suri’s ‘Santosh’ in the way an ‘anukampa’ posting is used to prop up a woman who learns to learn on the job, as well as Rajwar’s presence. But the small town woman, and the small town cop, sometimes one playing the other, are in the danger of becoming tropes, if they haven’t already: Sudip Sharma (Pataal Lok, Kohrra) is co-producer here, and well-versed in creating atmospheric, grounded crime thrillers. Having liked Pandit’s short ‘Under The Waters’ very much, I was waiting to see what she did with her debut feature. It lags, but there is also no doubt that there is a voice here. Babita Singh Reporting cast: Nimisha Sajayan, Anshumaan Pushkar, Sunita Rajwar, Priyanka Setia, Priya Yadav, Barun Sobti, Ravi Jhankal, Geetika Vidya Ohlyan, Rajesh Kumar Babita Singh Reporting director: Ambiecka Pandit Babita Singh Reporting rating: 2.5 stars

Pitbull pays heartfelt tribute to late music legend Dolly Parton

Los Angeles: Rapper Pitbull has shared a heartfelt tribute for the late singing legend Dolly Parton, as he said that she “believed” in her when a lot of folks didn’t. The rapper was performing at Northwell at Jones Beach Theater in New York, when he paid the tribute to the late singer.

At Aamir Khan-Saif Ali Khan’s Dil Chahta Hai reunion; fans ask, ‘Where’s Akshaye Khanna?’



Farhan Akhtar’s directorial debut Dil Chahta Hai recently clocked 25 years of its release, on August 10. The film, starring Aamir Khan, Saif Ali Khan, and Akshaye Khanna continues to be considered among one of Bollywood’s most loved cult classics. To celebrate the special milestone, the team of Dil Chahta Hai reunited in Mumbai. However, Dhurandhar star Akshaye Khanna was missing from the celebration. Preity Zinta was also not seen at the event. On Friday, the cast members and director of the film met at an event to celebrate the silver jubilee. Actors Saif Ali Khan, Aamir Khan, Farhan Akhtar, Dimple Kapadia were spotted in several paparazzi videos surfacing on social media. Co-producer Ritesh Sidhwani was also snapped posing with the team of Dil Chahta Hai. However, fans flooded the comments section, wondering about the absence of one of the main leads — Akshaye Khanna.

Preity Zinta, who is currently in Paris, also couldn’t make it to the event in Mumbai. “Incomplete without AK n PZ,” a fan wrote. Another comment read, “Where is

Rahman dakait?” referring to his character in Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar. “Akshaye got too busy after Dhurandhar??” a curious user asked. “Not gonna lie, I low-key expected this of him,” a person commented.

During an interview with Anupama Chopra on the film’s 25th anniversary, Farhan Akhtar reflected on the impact of Dil Chahta Hai. He said, “I feel that what Dil Chahta Hai writing embodied was what was happening around us all the time. It’s just that nobody was capturing it and putting it into a script or putting it into a film. I just happened to be the right person at the right place at the right time.” He further added, “Nothing really represented me, you know. Or my friends. It was time to represent it the way that we felt it.” About Dil Chahta Hai Helmed by Farhan Akhtar, Dil Chahta Hai explores the story of three best friends, Akash (Aamir Khan), Sameer (Saif Ali Khan) and Siddharth ‘Sid’ (Akshaye Khanna), who go through the ups and downs of friendship and love together. The movie also featured Preity Zinta and Dimple Kapadia as female leads. The coming-of-age drama has achieved the cult status over the years.

Orry refuses to be introduced to India’s Got Latent panel, asks Samay Raina to stay in his lane

For the fifth episode of Samay Raina’s India’s Got Latent Season 2 on Netflix, the comedian welcomed Archana Puran Singh, Orry, Nishant Suri and Sharon Verma to the panel. While the episode was among the funniest instalments of the season, it was the banter between Orry and Samay that stole the limelight. After introducing the panel, Samay said, “What a panel,” prompting a hilarious response from Orry. Looking at the branding products placed on their table, Orry said, “You have got such cheap sponsors! It’s all falling apart. We move even a little, and it falls apart.” Archana quickly joined in and replied, “With cheap guests like you, what did you expect?” leaving everyone in splits.

Orry had reportedly flown all the way from London to appear on Samay’s show. Explaining this, he said, “I took a ten-hour flight for the first time, only to sit on a panel where I know no one but myself. Who are the other people?” Samay responded, “I will introduce them, man.” Archana then took a dig at Orry and said, “He always wants to seem busy, so he tells people he’s from London. He’s from Dahisar, but he tells everyone he’s from London.”

Samay then curiously asked, “Orry bhai, what are you doing these days?” Pointing at the other panelists, Orry said, “This, unfortunately. Look at my state, I am stuck here.” He added, “Imagine. I go out with such big shots, we party, make content. Now I am stuck with them. My first time on a panel where I only know myself. I don’t know anyone else.” When Samay once again offered to introduce him to the other panelists, Orry looked at them and quickly replied, “No, thanks.” When Samay asked, “Why not?”, Orry said, “No, it’s okay.” “Why so mean, Orry?” Samay asked. “It’s okay, I pass,” Orry replied. Looking at his response, Samay joked, “I am gonna f*** him up today.” Samay then said, “Orry, I love you. Thanks for coming. Have you seen the show?” “I will. I will watch it,” Orry replied, confessing that he had not watched the show yet. Samay later took a dig at Orry’s sexuality during their banter. Orry warned him, “The people I know, you will go in, but you won’t come out. Be careful. Aukat mein raho (stay in your lane).” Samay immediately quipped, “Where?



In Vantara?” Samay then asked Orry to explain his now-viral hand-on-chest pose.

Explaining the pose, Orry said, “I am not saying this, people think that when I put my hand on their body, their age goes down a bit. That they feel younger.” He clarified, “I am not saying. They think so, not me.” When they finally began calling contestants onto the show, the first contestant, a singer, said that he made jingles for an ad agency. However, Samay misheard this as “Arijit Singh.” Highlighting the number of advertisements and brand deals associated with the show, Sharon pointed at Samay and said, “Ad agency toh teri bhi ho gayi hai.” Orry added, “It feels like we are in some market.”

He then looked at Samay and asked, “Are you that short on money, Samay? YouTube, Netflix, brand deals... He’s got every sponsor in the world here.” Samay replied, “I don’t get paid to hold my hand to my chest like you.” Orry then turned to the contestant and asked, “What’s the biggest brand jingle you have made?” When the contestant replied, “PhonePe,” Orry joked, “Kis Phone Pe?” Archana and Samay, surprised by his response, clarified, “Arre, PhonePe. It’s a brand name.” “Never heard of it,” Orry replied. He then proceeded to read a line from the form submitted by the contestant. He read, “Main nashta nahi karta aur kabhi nahi karunga!” The contestant immediately corrected him: “Nasha!” The correction left everyone in the audience in splits. Samay laughed at Orry’s mistake and said, “Abey yaar!”

Archana Puran Singh calls laughing on Kapil Sharma’s jokes ‘toughest’: ‘Ek job hai, vo bhi...’

Comedian Samay Raina is back with another hilarious episode of his controversial Netflix show – India’s Got Latent 2. And this time, he welcomed Orry, Archana Puran Singh, Nishant Suri, and Sharon Verma in the guest panel. At one point, he age shamed Archana and asked her to share her plastic surgeon’s number. He also joked about the actor’s iconic laugh and made her admit that laughing on Kapil Sharma’s jokes is the ‘toughest work’. “For the first time when I saw you, it was when you played Miss Breganza. I am a big fan. From that time till now, you haven’t aged a single day,” said Samay. As soon as she thanked him, he said, “You have aged decades.”

After ageing decades, if I still look like this, then learn something from me,” Archana replied. “Then, please give me your plastic surgeon’s number,” Samay said, leaving her in splits. Archana Puran Singh, who has around 1.31 million subscribers on YouTube, has been vlogging with her family since 2024. The comedian asked the audience if they’ve watched her vlogs. “I have seen in your vlogs that neither your husband works, nor your two useless sons. They are sitting here in the first row,” Samay pointed out. “I told you beforehand that don’t sit in the front row, because this is not how you get fame, this is how you get insulted,” Archana looked at her sons Aaryaman and Ayushmaan, and emphasised. “You know how you get fame?” Samay shot back, and instantly mimicked Archana’s signature laugh. When Samay Raina teased the actor about not taking her job of ‘laughing’ seriously,



Archana told him that it’s the most difficult task. “That’s the toughest work,” she said. “Laughing on Kapil Sharma’s jokes is tough?” Without thinking twice, Archana Puran Singh said, “Yes”. She immediately realised her mistake and said, “I fell right into that one.” Samay didn’t leave any stone unturned to take humorous digs at Archana’s husband, actor Parmeet Sethi. When Archana and Parmeet started dating in 1988, she had already achieved recognition after Jalwa (1987), while he was still finding his space in the industry. “I never thought of money when I was dating,” said Archana, during a conversation about what women want. “Ya, but your husband did,” Samay replied. To which, Archana added, “