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DELHI GOVT UPGRADES SHELTER HOMES WITH BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS, NUTRITION PLANS AND 24X7 MEDICAL CARE

BANKING & FINANCE



INDIA INFLATION TO AVERAGE 4 PC THIS FISCAL, ONE **MORE RBI RATE CUT LIKELY: CRISIL**



EKTA KAPOOR'S BALAJI TELEFILMS LTD, NETFLIX JOIN HANDS FOR CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Demolition drive in Kalkaji displaces hundreds, sparks political storm



OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

Hundreds of families were rendered homeless in South Delhi's Kalkaji area after the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) demolished over 1,200 illegal shanties as part of a courtmandated anti-encroachment drive, triggering political outrage and renewed debate over the capital's urban housing crisis.

The demolition, carried out at Bhoomihin Camp jhuggi near Govindpuri, has not only displaced daily-wage labourers but also reignited tensions between the Aam Aadmi Party and the BJP over rehabilitation and the rights of slum dwellers.

According to the DDA, the demolition was part of a broader encroachment clearance initiative. As part of an in-situ rehabilitation project in Kalkaji Extension, around 1,862

economically weaker families have been allotted flats. However, approximately 1,200 familieslargely those without ration cards—were deemed ineligible for relocation. Residents alleged they received eviction notices just three days before the demolition, leaving them little time to

make alternative arrangements. The demolition has intensified political tensions in the capital. Kalkaji MLA and senior Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi termed the move an "anti-poor" act and blamed the BJP-led DDA for what she called a deliberate effort to push the urban poor out of their homes. She questioned the role of the DDA in approaching the court and accused the BJP of using the judiciary to justify what she described as inhumane actions. Atishi said the displaced families

had also appealed in court, but

Countering her claims, BJP leader and Delhi minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa defended the DDA's actions, stating that all eligible residents had been provided with new homes. He accused the AAP of misleading the public and questioned its record on rehabilitation. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of in-situ housing under the "Jahan Jhuggi Wahi Makaan" initiative, Sirsa said the BJP government was delivering on its commitment, unlike the previous AAP regime which, he claimed, failed to allot a single home to slum dwellers.

Resident Welfare Associations of nearby DDA colonies such as Konark, Kohinoor, Gomti, and Everest Apartments supported the DDA's action. Local residents have long complained about shrinking road access, increasing traffic congestion, and a rise in petty crimes and snatching incidents, which they attribute to the unchecked expansion of the jhuggi cluster. Some residents expressed relief over the demolition, saying it would help restore order and security in the area. Harjinder Singh Harry, General Secretary of the RWA Federation, said crime had become routine in the area, often involving underage children who, knowing their legal protections as minors, carried out thefts and

Delhi LG approves cadre restructuring of irrigation department to boost Yamuna deanup drive

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

In a bid to intensify the ongoing efforts to clean the Yamuna river and upgrade civic infrastructure, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has approved a major cadre restructuring of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department (I&FCD), officials at Raj Niwas said on Monday

As part of the restructuring, 156 new posts have been created across various levels, including

gineers, junior engineers (civil), accounts officers, upper and lower division clerks (UDC/ LDC), and multi-tasking staff (MTS). Officials said the move aims to strengthen the department's operational capacity, particularly in managing the 22 open drains that flow into the Yamuna. "This is part of a broader initiative to rejuvenate the river and enhance civic infrastructure in the capital, an official said. The restructuring is also being viewed as part of the LG's ongoing commitment to improving working conditions for Delhi

India-UK FTA Likely to Unlock Extra Trade worth 25.5 Billion Pounds UK Diplomat



MUMBAI: The India-UK Free Trade Agreement, which eliminates tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports to the UK and 90 per cent of UK exports to India, will unlock 25.5 billion pounds in additional trade value, according to UK Trade Commissioner for South Asia Harjinder Kang.

Participating in a panel discussion here, he said: "This agreement is not just a trade deal; it is a blueprint for the next chapter of UK-India economic cooperation. With 43 billion pounds in existing trade and 25.5 billion pounds in incremental upside, it opens doors to real gains for manufacturers and services providers alike."

Kang, who is also the Deputy High Commissioner for Western India, revealed the next steps: legal scrubbing, Prime Ministerial signing, parliamentary ratification (expected in 9–12 months), and staggered implementation. He affirmed that services liberalisation, auto tariffs (with quotas), and "a future-ready

built into the agreement, with potential expansion into sectors like pharma, semiconductors, and green tech. Detailing the contours of the FTA, he said that under the India-UK FTA, 99 per cent of Indian goods to the UK and 90 per cent of UK goods to India will become tariff-free.

The UK's peak tariff on whisky will reduce from 150 per cent to 40 per cent over 10 years. The CBAM (carbon border adjustment mechanism) is not part of the India-UK FTA, reassuring Indian industry that carbon taxes will not affect bilateral trade terms under this agreement, he explained.

There will also be a significant liberalisation in services under the FTA, with 36 sectors under Contractual Service Suppliers and 16 under Independent Professionals, including IT, R&D, chefs, yoga instructors, and musicians. Alongside the FTA, the UK and India have agreed to negotiate a reciprocal DCC, which will mean employees temporarily working in the other country for up to three years will continue paying social security contributions only in their home country, Kang added.

According to Amisha Vora Chairperson & MD, PL Capital, 72 per cent of India's exports to the UK - including electronics, fuels, chemicals, textiles, and apparel – run a trade surplus, positioning sectors like auto components, engineering goods, and textiles for a meaningful upside.

Emphasising the FTA's services dimension at a panel discussion, she highlighted India's \$18 billion in services exports to the UK, the second-largest after the US, and underscored the increased mobility for Indian IT, creative, and professional talent as a soft power and services export amplifier.

From a macro lens, she framed the deal as reflective of two decisive shifts: Britain's post-Brexit diversification away from China toward democratic demand, and India's effort to anchor deeper into rules-based, like-minded economies without ceding regulatory sovereignty.

Anuj Agarwal, chief economist at Welspun Group, highlighted the opportunity in the textiles sector: "The sector is 2.3 per cent of India's GDP, 12-13 per cent of industrial output, and employs 45 million people. But our UK exports are only \$1.5 billion-far below Bangladesh and Vietnam. **Delhiites to Get Relief from** Scorching Heat as IMD Predicts Thunderstorm



NEW DELHI: Residents of the national capital may finally get some relief from the relentless heat, as the India Meteorologic cal Department (IMD) has predicted thunderstorms and rainfall later on Friday, which are expected to ease the sweltering conditions that have gripped Delhi and surrounding regions for the past several days.

Speaking to media, IMD scientist Akhil Srivastava said: The maximum temperature in Delhi-NCR remains high, and the night temperature is also above normal. Due to these conditions, we had issued a red alert on Thursday. For June 13, we are expecting hot and humid conditions during the day, with a possibility of a heatwave in some parts of the region. Accordingly, we have issued an orange to red alert for today."Srivastava added that thunderstorm activity is anticipated by Friday night, with wind speeds ranging from 40 to 60 km/h. "This weather pattern may persist for the next two to three days, which is likely to bring down the maximum temperature," he said.

Plane Crash: Too Early to Ascertain Reasons, Say Aviation Experts as **Próbe Begins**

NEW DELHI: It is too early to determine the exact cause of the Ahmedabad plane crash, aviation experts said on Friday.

Ministry of Civil Aviation's former Joint Secretary Dr Sanat Kaul, stressed that only a detailed investigation will uncover the real facts

Speaking to IANS, Dr Kaul described the incident as deeply tragic, pointing out that it has resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives.

"Speculations are being made — some are saying a bird might have hit the aircraft, or that there was a flap malfunction — but in my opinion, it appears to be an engine failure, as the aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff," he said.

Responding to questions about Boeing, Kaul noted that the company has faced scrutiny in recent years. "The US Congress has in-

vestigated Boeing following multiple crashes involving the 737 Max. However, the Boeing 787 Dreamliner is generally considered a reliable aircraft and has not reported such issues until now. So, only a proper probe will bring out the truth," he added.

Echoing similar sentiments, aviation expert Sanjay Lazar called the incident "deeply disturbing and heartbreaking".

"I pay my respects to all

those who lost their lives and express my heartfelt condolences to their families," he said. Lazar pointed out that videos from the takeoff show that the pilot had issued a 'Mayday' call immediately after liftoff a clear sign of a serious emergency. "This suggests a possible engine failure or a significant bird strike," he said, but added that all such assessments are preliminary only. "The actual cause will only be known once the investigation is complete and the findings are made public," he said. The Air India flight AI171, en route

from Ahmedabad to Lon-

don, crashed on Thursday

afternoon. There were 242

people on board.

'I can't believe I survived', says lone survivor of Air India crash in emotional meeting with PM Modi AHMEDABAD: Prime Mincal care. Prime Minister Modi also visited the Civil Hospital

ister Narendra Modi on Friday met Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, the sole survivor of the devastating Air India plane crash. Ramesh, a British national of Indian origin, is recovering from injuries sustained in the crash and is being treated at a hospital in Ahmedabad.

Ramesh, traveling with his 45-year-old brother Ajay Kumar akesh, recounted the harrow-Modi during their meeting. "My ent row and didn't survive. I out alive, " he told the Prime Minister. "For a while, I thought



ing moments to Prime Minister happened in front of my eyes -- the noise, the impact, the fire. I brother was seated in a differ- somehow found a small space to escape." Describing the terrifystill don't know how I made it ing seconds before the crash, he said, "After take-off, the aircraft seemed to stall briefly. Then it

into the building. I was on the opposite side of where the plane hit. That saved me."

Ramesh, who was seen walking away from the wreckage despite his injuries, added that he was receiving good medi-

and met with several injured victims of the crash, many of whom are students of the BJ Medical College. The hostel that bore the brunt of the impact was filled with young MBBS students, many of whom had no time to react when the plane hit the building. The ill-fated Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner was en shortly after takeoff from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Thursday. It slammed into the hostel of BJ Medical College in the densely populated Meghaninagar area, just 3 km from the airport.

Gold Crosses Rs 1 Lakh on MCX after Israel-**Iran Conaflict Boosts Safe-Haven Demand**



NEW DELHI: Gold prices on the Multi Commodity with a sharp jump on Fri-tures were up 1.4 per cent day, crossing the Rs 1 lakh mark per 10 grams.

The rally came as rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East boosted safe-haven demand for the yellow metal. Silver prices also gained in early trade.

MCX gold opened higher by Rs 1,108 or 1.12 per cent at Rs 99,500 per 10 grams, compared to the previous close of Rs 98,392.

Soon after, the price surged to Rs 1,00,403, breaching the Rs 1 lakh level for the first time. At 12:44 p.m., gold was trading at Rs 99,673.00, up 1.30

Additionally, retail gold prices in India also reflected the rise. According to data from the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), around 12:50 p.m., 22-carat gold was priced at Rs 9,679 per gram, while 24-carat fine gold stood at Rs 9,917 per gram.

Silver followed a similar trend, opening at Rs 1,06,450 per kg, up Rs 565 or 0.53 per cent from its last close of Rs 1,05,885.

It touched a high of Rs 1,06,799 and was trading at Rs 1,06,328.00 per kg, up 0.42 per cent at 12:45 p.m.

The rise in domestic prices mirrors the global market, where gold climbed to its highest level in over a month.

Spot gold rose 1.3 per cent to \$3,428.28 an ounce after hitting its highest at \$3,449.60. The metal has gained over 3.5 per cent so far this week. The rally in bullion comes

amid heightened tensions between Israel and Iran Reports suggest that Israel carried out airstrikes targeting Iran's nuclear and military facilities, raising fears of further conflict in the region. Such geopolitical uncertainties tend to push investors towards gold which is seen as a safer as-

set during times of crisis. Colin Shah, Managing Director of Kama Jewelry commented on the recent surge, saying, "The gold prices in India hitting an all-time high is on expected lines given the latest developments in geopolitical tensions and the weakening of the Indian Rupee.

He added that while gold prices are likely to face resistance in the short term, they may hover between Rs 1,00,200 and Rs 1,00,500 per 10 grams on the MCX, depending on how international economic and politi-cal events unfold.

Ahmedabad Crash: Black Box Recovered From Air India Al-171 Wreckage



AHMEDABAD: The black box of the Air India Boeing 787minutes after takeoff in Gujarat's Ahmedabad, has been recovered from the wreckage of the aircraft.

The black box, technically known as the flight data recorder, is expected to play a vital role in unravelling the cause

that led to the disaster. It contains crucial information such as flight speed, altitude, engine performance, and cockpit audio, including communications between the pilots

and air traffic control. These specialised devices are built to withstand extreme temperatures, water, and severe impact, ensuring the survival of key data even in catastrophic

Contrary to its name, the

black box is typically painted bright orange to make it easier to locate amid wreckage

Constructed from highly durable materials like steel and titanium, the device houses two main components: the Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) and the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR). The DFDR logs technical flight parameters, while the CVR captures audio from the cockpit, including pilot discussions and radio exchanges with air traffic control.

In a parallel development, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has recovered a digital video recorder (DVR) from the wreckage. Investigators believe this could serve as additional evidence, offering visual insights into the final moments of the crash.

Authorities are now preparing to analyse both the flight recorders and the DVR to piece together a comprehensive timeline of events leading up to the

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the family of former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, express ing grief over the veteran BJP leader's death in Thursday's tragic Air India plane crash.

Tata Group Chairman calls Air India Plane Crash 'One of the Darkest Days' in Company's History

NEW DELHI: Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Friday described the Air India flight crash that claimed 241 lives as 'one of the darkest days' in the company's history.

In a statement, he said the entire Group is in shock and mourning. "This is a very difficult moment. What occurred yesterday was inexplicable, and we are in shock and mourning," Chandrasekaran said. "To lose a single person we know is a tragedy, but for so many deaths to occur at once is incomprehensible," he added.

The crash, which happened in Ahmedabad, has led to a massive outpouring of grief across the country.

Investigative teams from to the public to be patient, stat-



The Tata Group has said it will offer full cooperation and be completely transparent

about the investigation. Chandrasekaran appealed

ing that while there is a lot of speculation around the cause of the crash, the truth will only come out after a proper investigation.

He assured that the Tata

is committed to standing by Some of the speculation may be right, some may be wrong. I want to urge patience," he said.

formation with the public and the families of the victims. "We owe it to the families

and loved ones, to our pilots and crew, and to you," he said. "As a Group trusted by so many, when we took over Air India, ensuring the safety of its passengers was our first

and foremost priority. There was no compromising on it, Chandrasekaran mentioned. He added that while no words or actions can undo the pain and loss suffered by families, the Tata Group

"We will pull together as a Group and find ways to help them," he said.

Israel-Iran Conflict Triggers Surge in Global Oil Prices the Israeli strikes. The Israeli action comes in the backdrop of However, there is a risk of

NEW DELHI: Oil prices in the international market jumped by more than 9 per cent on Friday after Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear facilities and missile production sites led to a further escalation in geopolitical tensions in the Middle East

The price of benchmark Brent crude surged by over \$6 to cross a five-month high of \$78 per barrel. Israel has further declared a state of emergency, expecting

retaliation from Iran. US President Donald Trump has warned that this may lead to a massive conflict, though the US denied any involvement in



talks on a nuclear deal between the US and Iran having soured and Tehran stating that if it is attacked it would retaliate against US bases in Iraq and adjoining countries. The US has asked some of its personnel there to exit. According to a report by Emkay Global, Iran produces around 3.3 million barrels per day (mbpd) of crude oil (3 per cent of global production) and exports around 1.5 mbpd, with China being the main importer (80 per cent), followed by Turkey. Iran is also on the northern side

of the Strait of Hormuz/Persian Gulf through which 20 mbpd+ of oil trade flows, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE etc also shipping, and in the past it has warned of blocking the same.

Hence a wider Middle East conflict with impact on Saudi, Iraq, Kuwait and UAE oil supplies can lead to a sharp spike in oil prices. With the US-China trade conflict, China didn't adhere to western sanctions on Iran and kept buying the same, though in the last few months it was reported that they reduced intake. India doesn't import any Iranian oil, the report states.

this escalating, though earlier also once Israel attacked Iran with the latter retaliating and both claiming success and denying major damage, the tensions faded. However, in this case more details are awaited and in the near term oil would be highly volatile, the report added.

Significantly, with OPEC+ announcing another higher than expected production hike in July, fundamentally oil markets remain well supplied and further Iranian supply cuts can be accommodated, the Emkay report states.

Delhi govt upgrades shelter homes with better living conditions, nutrition plans and 24x7 medical care

New Delhi

In a bid to enhance the quality of life for residents in its shelter homes, the Delhi government has rolled out a series of infrastructural and welfare upgrades, including installation of air coolers, water purifiers, improved washrooms, and revamped nutrition plans tailored to beat the summer heat.

The improvements, implemented under the aegis of the Social Welfare Department, are part of a broader push to create a more comfortable and secure environment for differentlyabled individuals and senior citizens living in governmentrun facilities, including the Asha Kiran Complex in Rohini.

An official from the department said significant repair and renovation work had been completed at the Asha Kiran home, which currently houses around 800 children with special needs. "We have upgraded basic infrastructure such as air coolers, water purifiers, televisions, indoor games and sports



also being renovated to ensure a and improved water supply in more comfortable living space," the official said.

The department has also focused on outdoor comfort, especially for pensioners and beneficiaries who often queue outside social welfare offices during the summer. Plans are underway to install sun-protection sheds in front of office windows to offer relief from the scorching heat. "Earlier, there were no proper facilities for clean drinking water, and even water for daily use was a challenge. These issues are now being addressed through

washrooms," the official said.

Beyond infrastructure, the government has also introduced a revised, age-appropriate meal plan that aims to boost residents' health and hydration. The updated menu includes traditional cooling drinks such as lassi and buttermilk, offering nutritional support especially suited for Delhi's peak summer months. "We want to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, gets nutritious and suitable meals, especially during summer," the official added, noting that meals have been

carefully designed for different age groups and dietary needs. Healthcare services too have received a boost. All shelter homes now have access to 24x7 medical assistance, along with mandatory monthly health check-ups for residents, particularly the elderly and those with

mental or physical disabilities. "There are residents who may harm themselves due to their mental health conditions. To safeguard their well-being, we have stationed dedicated medical teams round the clock," the official said, highlighting the need for continuous supervision and quick intervention.

The developments come amid growing calls for improved conditions at state-run shelter homes, especially Asha Kiran, which has faced scrutiny in the past over its management and care standards. The latest measures are being seen as a step towards institutional reform and compassionate governance.

Officials say more upgrades are in the pipeline, with a focus on dignity, safety, and well-be-

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta launches 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0', plants sindoor tree as tribute to national spirit and environment



OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday launched the second phase of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign by planting a sindoor sapling at a government school in her Shalimar Bagh constituency, calling it a tribute to motherhood, the motherland, and Mother Nature.

The plantation of the sindoor tree — the same sapling planted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence on World Environment Day — was seen as a symbolic nod to Operation

Sindoor, India's recent military response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. The operation was named after the sindoor (vermilion) worn by the wives of many of the 26 civilians killed, who became the face of national grief and resilience.

"This is not just an environmental initiative — it's an emotional, cultural and social commitment," said Gupta. "I thank the Prime Minister and our armed forces for ensuring the dignity of our sisters through Operation Sindoor. This campaign is a reflection of our national spirit." Gupta recalled that she had wished to plant a sindoor

Delhi assembly panel proposes

separate legislative secretariat,

pushes for financial autonomy

sapling after seeing PM Modi do so. "This morning during a public hearing, a few citizens gifted me a Sindoor sapling. I smiled and thought had I wished for more, even that might have come true. It felt as though God fulfilled my desire," she said. Taking a swipe at the previous Delhi government, she accused it of rejecting "people-centric" central government initiatives for political reasons. "Even social and environmental efforts were unfortunately seen through a political lens," she said. Gupta stressed that the Delhi government has set a target of planting 70 lakh trees this year and called for a mass movement by involving schools, religious groups, social organisations, and all

government departments. Citing Delhi's alarming environmental situation, she said tree plantation is among the most effective solutions to combat pollution. She urged citizens to revive traditional practices of planting neem, peepal, and banyan trees — once commonly found in household courtyards for both religious and scientific

AAP slams Delhi govt over school fee ordinance, alleges bias towards private school lobbies



OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

In a sharp criticism of the recently approved school fee ordinance in Delhi, Aam Aadmi Party leader Saurabh Bhardwai on Thursday accused the state government of bypassing legisative scrutiny and acting under pressure from private school lobbies. At a press conference, Bhardwaj said the ordinance was introduced without any public consultation or debate, and alleged that it was crafted to protect the interests of private school owners rather than parents.

The ordinance—titled the Delhi School Education Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees Bill, 2025—was approved by the Delhi Cabinet earlier this week. It seeks to regulate fee hikes in the capital's 1,677 private schools and introduces a three-tier mechanism to oversee the process.

However, Bhardwaj claimed that private schools had already begun arbitrarily increasing fees under various heads, including uniforms, books, air conditioning, extra classes and extracurricular activities, without the necessary approval from the Directorate of Education. "The law clearly requires prior permission, but fees were hiked from April 1. No action was taken against any school, nor was there a rollback. Instead, the government quietly brought n an ordinance," he said.

He questioned the timing and manner in which the ordinance was introduced. "This should have been tabled in the Assembly. Instead, the government avoided scrutiny by seeking Presidential assent.

Priyanka Gandhi hits out at double-engine government in Bihar over lowest sex ratio



PATNA: The latest Vital Statistics Report 2022 of the Civil Registration System (CRS) released by the Office of the Registrar General of India has revealed a sex ratio at birth of ust 891 girls per 1, 000 boys in Bihar.

Responding to this report, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, in a strongly worded post on Monday on social media platform $\dot{\mathbf{X}}$ criticised the Nitish Kumar-led state government. "What is happening that the number of girls among the children born is continuously falling?" she asked. Targeting the JD-U-BJP-led 'double engine' government in the state, she said that the combination was

proving dangerous for women.

continuous brutality against

"On the one hand, there is

women, and on the other hand, the worst sex ratio in the country. This is not a coincidence -- it is a reflection of the government's neglect and societal bias, she wrote. If daughters are not welcomed at birth, Priyanka Gandhi says then slogans of women's empowerment are hollow. "This is not just a question of gender imbalance but it is a challenge to build a civilised and prosperous society, "the Congress leader wrote. According to CRS data in 2020, Bihar's sex ratio at birth stood at 964 girls per 1, 000 boys.

In 2021, the sex ratio in Bihar dropped to 908, and in 2022 it plummeted further to 891. This steady decline paints a grim picture of entrenched gender bias and reflects the persistent social stigma against the birth of daughters, despite various state and Central schemes promoting girl child welfare. While Bihar has seen a drastic decline, the report notes that states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Uttarakhand have generally seen increases in registered births.

J&K CM requests Centre to Ensure Safety of Kashmiri Students in Iran



math of Israeli aerial strikes, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday requested the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to ensure the well-being and safety of Kashmiri students stuck in Iran.

CM Omar Abdullah said on X, "Requesting @MEAIndia to urgently ensure safety and well being of Kashmiri students stuck in Iran. Their families are deeply worried and we stand with them in this difficult time. Every step must be taken to safeguard our students.'

Various Sunni and Shia Muslim organisations of Kashmir have condemned the Israeli strikes in Iran in which two top generals and nuclear scientists of Iran were killed.

Kashmir Valley has a good number of students studying sions in Iran. In addition, a number of local doctors and engineers are working in Iran in various capacities.

The large Shia Muslim community of Jammu and Kashmir has a deep affinity with Iranian Muslims, who are

A number of local religious organisations have organised meetings and gatherings to condemn the Israeli action against Iran. In condemnation of the Israeli action in Iran, both Sunni and Shia Muslims have voiced deep concern and condemned the development with one voice

It must be mentioned here that almost all the high-ranking scholars of the Shia community belong to Iran, and their interpretation of religion is followed obediently by the

Delhi Jal Board projects to be monitored in real time with new software: Minister Parvesh Verma The minister said the system

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

In a bid to curb delays and enhance accountability, the Delhi government will soon introduce a dedicated software for realtime monitoring of all Delhi Jal

Board (DJB) projects, Water

Minister Parvesh Verma an-

nounced on Monday. The digital platform, currently under development, will track the day-to-day progress of DJB projects, map responsibilities to individual officers, monitor deadlines, and reflect the overall status of each project,

Even after killing his two

no tears in his eyes and he

himself narrated the heart

Resident of village Dhanana

in Bhiwani district, Subhash

killed his two children son Bas-

Arushi of age 16 both study-

ing in class XII by poisoning

them and then tried to commit

suicide himself. He gave the

children mango shake mixed

with intoxicating pills when

both became senseless and

said that after Saroi's death, he

used to threaten to kill every-

one and now he has mercilessly

murdered both the innocent

fied incident of deaths of both

children spread in the area in

wrenching story

ant of age 17 and

SATISH HANDA

children, the cruel father had



"The people of Delhi deserve timely services. Project delays erode public trust. That's why we have decided to leverage technology for daily monitoring, clear accountability, and on-time completion," Verma said. "Our goal is transparency, responsibility, and results."

The upcoming software will operate through a structured workflow model, with each project broken into defined phases, deadlines, and assigned officers. Any delay in progress will be automatically flagged, and responsibility will be fixed

would enhance inter-departmental coordination and speed up decision-making processes. 'All updates and data entries will be recorded on a centralised portal, enabling officers to view real-time status of any project,"

By digitising processes, the platform is expected to reduce paperwork, promote data-driven decisions, and strengthen transparency and accountability across the DJB's functioning.

"This initiative is a step towards better governance and more efficient public service delivery," Verma added.

senseless. He first strangled

the son with an iron wire and

then the daughter. To con-

firm the death of both, their

pulse and heart breathing were

also checked by him, finding

both died, both the children

were tied up. He himself took

In a move aimed at bolstering institutional independence, the Rules Committee of the Delhi Legislative Assembly has proposed the creation of a dedicated legislative secretariat and financial autonomy for the House — a first since its constitution in 1993.

OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi

The proposal was put forward during a meeting of the Rules Committee held on Monday. Officials said the panel has agreed in principle to the recommendation, which is expected to be formalised and submitted in a report during the upcoming Monsoon Session of the Assembly.

"The Delhi Assembly has en functioning with dedicated secretarial cadre or financial independence for three decades," an official familiar with the developments said, adding that this has often hampered its operational efficiency. Unlike Parliament or state legislatures, administrative control over appointments and internal matters in the Delhi Assembly currently lies with officers on deputation from various government de-

partments. Speaker Vijender Gupta, who heads the Committee, said the proposal is in line with Articles 98 and 187 of the Constitution that provide for separate secretariats for Parliament and state legislatures. The move also aligns with the resolution adopted during the 82nd All India Presiding Officers Conference in Shimla in for financial autonomy for all legislatures akin to both Houses of Parliament. Gupta further cited Article

239AA(b) of the Constitution, which empowers Parliament to regulate the functioning of the Delhi Assembly, to justify potential amendments to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act, 1991. The proposal seeks to bring Delhi at par with other legislatures — including those of the Union Territories of Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir — in terms of administrative and financial

independence. The Rules Committee includes Deputy Speaker Mohan Singh Bisht and members Ashok Goel, Shikha Roy, Sandeen Sehrawat Jarnail Singh, Pravesh Ratn and Virender Singh Kadian.

Officials pointed out that while the Puducherry and J&K assemblies are statutory bodies created under the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, respectively, the Delhi Assembly is the only Union Territory legislature with constitutional backing. Yet, it lacks structural and financial autonomy — a gap the current proposal aims to bridge.

The demand for a separate legislative secretariat and financial autonomy had also been backed in a letter by the Secretary General of Lok Sabha, dated December 31, 2021, addressed to the Chief Secretary of Delhi. The letter urged swift action in coordination with the Delhi Vidhan

then strangled both to death. arrived, registered a case and predominantly Shia Muslims. Subhash took this step after started an investigation. his wife Satoj's death on May 8 Everyone was shocked to last year due to poisoning and hear the incident in the village serious allegations were made Dhanana on Sunday mornagainst his parents. Howeving. Surprisingly, there was er, during police action his no sign of worry on the face of deceased father Subhash brother-in-law had recorded a statement of accidental death. undergoing treatment in the Subhash's mother Meva Devi

civil hospital Bhiwani because of the killing of two innocent children lost their lives due to poisoning by him, and even after killing his innocent chilchildren.The news of terridren there were no tears in his eves. Information revealed that when children were not ready to commit suicide, he made a



hash said that he first planned his own suicide, then he thought what will happen to the two Finally, he planned to commit suicide along with the children. He thought that the children would not be ready

for this, then he planned to kill both the children by ing both children. The police poisoning them and then com-

mit suicide. Subhash said that he tried to collect intoxicated sleeping pills for the past one month and finally was able to collect 20 - 25 pills. After this he started looking for an opportunity to kill both children when his parents would not be at home, and got that opportunity to kill both. On Sunday, Subhash's father and his mother had gone somewhere for the whole day. He admitted to mixing intoxicated sleeping pills in the Mango Shake prepared by him and made the children drink when both became

poisonous pills and started making a video. Meanwhile, other family members arrived and got him admitted to the After consuming the poison pill, the accused Subhash wanted to ensure that he would not survive. So he started hanging himself from the roof. Before this, he opened one of the two latches of the door so that no one would have to break the

door later. In a statement to police, the accused Subhash said that while he was hanging himself from the ceiling fan, the neighbour's wife saw him and raised an alarm when people gathered and called the people. Then people opened the door and came inside and saw the bodies of both the children tied on the bed. Subhash said that people stopped him from hanging himself. Then he told me that he had taken two poison pills. People immediately informed the police and brought him to the district civil hospital. However, his life was saved.

December 2021, which called Others Produced Before Meghalaya Court

Wednesday, 10 days after the

completion of various medical and legal formalities, all five were produced before the sessions court seeking their police custody for further interrogation and investigation of the case. Heavy security arrangements have been put in place in and around the Shillong court.

24-year-old Sonam Raghuvanshi, the prime accused, was brought in Shillong late on Tuesday night while four other accused — Raj Singh Khushwaha (21), Sonam's alleged lover and the mastermind,



(23), Akash Rajput (19), and Vishal Singh Chauhan (22) were brought to the Meghalaya capital on Wednesday.

The police official said that all five accused, including Sonam, were taken to hospitals in Shillong for their medical checkup. Sonam was arrested for allegedly orchestrating the murder of her husband, Raja Raghuvanshi (29), during their honeymoon tour in Meghalaya's Sohra-Cherrapunji areas of the East Khasi Hills district. Sonam,

who surrendered before police in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur on June 7, was taken to Patna by road, then flown to Kolkata and onward to Guwahati. From Guwahati airport, she was brought

East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police, Vivek Syiem, stated that the Meghalaya Police obtained transit remands of the accused arrested in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Sonam and Raja had tied the knot

departed for their honeymoon tour in mountainous Meghalaya. On May 23, the newlywed couple had gone missing in the Sohra-Cherrapunji areas, leading to the launch of a hectic search operation by the Meghalava Police, National Disaster Response Force, local people and other agencies.

> below the Wei Sawdong parking lot at Riat Arliang in Sohra, sending shockwaves across the country, and a new twist in the case emerged. The Meghalaya Police formed Special Investigation Teams and launched 'Operation Honeymoon', and several teams went to Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and with the help of the police of the two states successfully arrested

which the ruthless father had ruined the whole family kill-Shia Muslims in India. plan to kill them. Accused Sub-Double engine BJP government is completely Honeymoon Murder Case: Sonam, Four failure in Haryana, says Bhupendra Hooda

SATISH HANDA

Panchkula

Double engine BJP government has completely failed in Haryana, Former Chief Minister Bhupendra Hooda raising questions on BJP's 11 years of tenure said there is no progress in the state during this period. He accused the ruling BJP government of not giving any major project to Haryana in the past 11 years rule in the state listing BJP's failures in areas like health, education and employment.sectors. Hooda said that the Congress government had done many development works during its tenure while the BJP government did not take them forward. He also accused the BJP of corruption and bad governance. Former Haryana Chief Minister said on Friday that the BJP, which has been in power



for the last 11 years, has proved tion, employment, agriculture, to be a complete failure, since in 11 years, the double engine government proved to be a complete failure in Haryana, neither did the Center give any major project to Haryana nor could the state government get any

major project from the Center. Talking to the media in New Delhi in the recent past, Hooda had compared the report cards of BJP and Congress with facts and figures. He shared details of the work done for every section including health, educa-

electricity, Dalits, backward and women. Talking to the media Haryana Congress President Chaudhary Udaybhan said that while doing historic work in the field of health, the Congress government had built a new health university, six new medical colleges at Karnal, Mewat, Khanpur, Mahendragarh, Bhiwani, Faridabad, AIIMS-2 and National Cancer Institute Badshah, along with this, 10 national super specialty institutes

were approved in AIIMS-2.

SHILLONG: All the accused in the Meghalaya honeymoon murder case, including Sonam Raghuvanshi, were produced before a Shillong court on

body of Sonam's husband, Raja

Raghuvanshi, was recovered. A police official said that after

along with Anand Singh Kurmi



to the Sadar police station in Shillong late on Tuesday night.

On June 2, Raja's body was recovered from a deep gorge

the five accused.

It is a heart-rending disaster: President, VP express grief over Air India plane crash

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday expressed deep sorrow over the tragic crash of Air India Flight AI171, calling it a "heart-rending disaster" as they conveyed their condolences to the affected families and offered prayers for strength and recovery.

"I am deeply distressed to learn about the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad. It is a heart-rending disaster. My thoughts and prayers are with the affected people. The nation stands with them in this hour of indescribable grief", President Murmu posted on social media platform X.

Vice President Dhankhar also posted his grief on X, saying: "The unfortunate incident in Ahmedabad has left us confronting a devastating human tragedy. My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected. In this moment of grief, the nation stands united in solidarity with them.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his anguish over

CCEA Green Flags Projects

NEW DELHI: The Cabinet

Committee on Economic Af-

fairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, on

Wednesday approved two

multi-tracking projects across

the Indian Railways network

entailing an investment of Rs.

The first project relates to

the doubling of the 133 km

Koderma–Barkakana railway

line which passes through a

major coal producing area of

Jharkhand. It also serves as the

shortest and a more efficient rail

link between Patna and Ranchi

doubling of the 185 km Ballari-

Chikjajur railway line which

traverses through Ballari and

Chitradurga districts of Kar-

nataka and Anantapur district

seven districts across the states

Andhra Pradesh, will increase

Railways by about 318 kms and

are expected to generate direct

employment for about 108 lakh human-days during construc-

tion, the official statement said. The approved multi-tracking

project will enhance connectiv-

ity to approximately 1,408 vil-

lages, which have a population

proved operational efficiency

and service reliability for Indian

These multi-tracking pro-

posals are poised to streamline

operations and alleviate conges-

tion. The projects are in line

with Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's vision of a 'New India'

which will make people of the

region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of

comprehensive development

in the area which will enhance

their employment/self-employ-

ment opportunities, the official

The projects are the result of

the PM-Gati Shakti National

Master Plan for multi-modal

connectivity which have been

made possible through inte-

grated planning and will pro-

vide seamless connectivity for

services, the statement said.

These are essential routes for

transportation of commodities

steel, cement, fertilizers, ag-

riculture commodities, and

capacity augmentation works

traffic of magnitude 49 MTPA

(Million Tonnes Per Annum).

vironment friendly and energy

efficient mode of transporta-

statement added.

The Railways being an en-

statement explained.

of about 28.19 lakh.

Railways.

The two projects covering

of Andhra Pradesh

The second project involves

Worth Rs 6,405 Cr To

Double Railway Lines



the incident, calling it a national

"The tragedy in Ahmedabad has stunned and saddened us. It is heartbreaking beyond words. In this sad hour, my thoughts are with everyone affected by it. I have been in touch with ministers and authorities who are working to assist those affected, "he said on X.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also extended his condolences and assured that all

necessary emergency response mechanisms had been activated.

"Pained beyond words by the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad. Disaster response forces have been quickly rushed to the crash site. I have spoken with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi, and the Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad, to assess the situation, "Shah posted.

BJP National President and

Union Minister J.P. Nadda termed the crash "extremely tragic" and said he had been in close contact with state leaders to monitor ongoing relief operations. "I spoke with Gujarat BJP State President and Union Minister C.R. Paatil and Health Minister Rushikesh Patel to get updates on healthcare arrange-ments and relief efforts," Nadda

He urged BJP workers to assist on the ground, adding: "I appeal to all BJP workers to actively engage in relief and rescue operations and provide every possible assistance to the affected families. I pray for strength for the bereaved and a speedy recovery for the injured.

The crash occurred shortly after Air India Flight AI171 took off from Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport en route to London's Gatwick Airport. The aircraft, carrying 242 passengers and crew, went down near the Meghaninagar area, causing widespread panic

Former Gujarat CM Rupani's Last Rites to be held in Rajkot on Saturday

AHMEDABAD: The last rites of former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who died in the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, will be held in Rajkot on Saturday

Rupani's son, Rishabh Rupani, who lives in the United States, is en route to Ahmedabad and is expected to land at 4 a.m. on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Anjali Rupani arrived in Ahmedabad from London on Friday via a special chartered flight and proceeded directly to their Gandhinagar Leaders from various

quarters have been visiting his Gandhinagar residence to offer condolences to his wife, Anjali Rupani, and the grieving family. Several senior BJP leaders, including Cabinet Minister

valiya, Kuber Dindor, Bhanu Babaria, and Union Minister Parshottam Rupala, have paid their respects at the residence.

Mulubhai Bera, Kunvarji Ba-

Government officials have also visited the grieving family



this time of loss. Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally met with Anjali Rupani and other family members to extend his condolences.

In a post on social media platform X, PM Modi wrote: 'It is unimaginable that Vijaybhai is no longer among us. I've shared a decades-long bond with him. We worked shoulderto-shoulder during some of the most challenging times. He was humble, sincere, and deeply committed to the ideology of the party. Rising through the ranks, in the organisation and went

on to serve Gujarat as its Chief Minister with great dedication. Vijay Rupani began his political journey with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) before becoming an active BJP worker. He rose through the ranks of the party, serving as the Rajkot Mayor, a Rajya Sabha MP, and the Gujarat BJP President. Known for his disciplined and low-key style, he held key port-

of Gujarat in 2016. During his tenure, he focused on infrastructure development, digital governance, and industrial investment in the state.

folios in the state cabinet before

being appointed Chief Minister

Rupani remained a dedicated party lovalist who carried out the BJP's vision with humility and steadfast commitment.

The Air India Dreamliner crashed into the hostel building of B.J. Medical College in the Civil Hospital campus shortly after takeoff. The crash triggered Vijaybhai held key positions a massive explosion, killing 241

Congress condemns brutal treatment meted out to Indian student in US



KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

The Congress has strongly condemned the brutal treatment meted out to an Indian student at the Newark airport in the United States. The party also played the video of the chilling ordeal of the student who was pinned down as if he was a hardened criminal.

The party asked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to immediately lodge a strong protest with the US President Donald Trump and tell him that this is unacceptable. The party questioned the silence of the government of India on such a serious and sensitive

Congress Spokesperson and the Chairperson of the Social Media and Digital Platforms Ms Supriva Shrinate said, this was not the first incident of humiliation and insult meted out to an Indian by the US authorities. She blamed Prime Minister Modi for failing to protect the honour and dignity of Indians in the US.

She said that the Prime Minister should immediately pick up the phone and call Trump telling him this is not acceptable. She said, if the PM does not do that, then what is he even the Prime Minister for, if he can't even ensure safety and dignity of Indians?

She suggested that the weak ness shown by the government of India towards the US Presihandcuffed in military planes. She said, people from countries like Nepal were deported in commercial flights, but the In-

PM Modi Highlights Youth-Led Tech Innovation as Nation Strengthens Self-Reliance seamless governance, citizen

ter Narendra Modi has lauded India's young innovators for their pivotal role in advancing technology and driving the nation's self-reliance.

He said over the past 11 years, Digital India has empowered the youth to harness innovation, reinforcing India's position as a global technology powerhouse.

PM Modi also remarked that over the past 11 years, leveraging the power of technology has ought innumerable benefits for the people of India.

In a post on X on Thursday, he wrote, "Powered by the youth of India, we are making remarkable progress in innovation and application of technology. It is also strengthening our efforts to become self-reliant and a global tech powerhouse.

He said this while responding to posts on X by MyGovIndia.

Leveraging the power of technology has brought innumerable benefits for people. Service delivery and transparency have been greatly boosted. Furthermore, technology has become a means of empowering the lives of the poorest of poor," of Jharkhand, Karnataka and

> highlighting its various achieve- about people, progress, and ments. In a post on the X, the possibility.



government explained how Digital India has rebooted governance for every citizen. It said that 11 years ago, a silent digital revolution began reshaping how India connects, governs, and grows. "Under PM Modi's visionary leadership, the Digital India initiative has turned technology into a tool for empowerment – bridging gaps, unlocking opportunities, and making governance more accessible and transparent for

press release said. It said that from Internet access in remote villages to realtime digital payments leading the world, this transformation The government is marking has been there, adding that it

every citizen," the government

The government has said that the 11 years of Digital India is a story of inclusive growth, innovation, and India's emergence as a digital powerhouse.

"How India Is Powering the Next Global Digital Wave From digital deserts to a datadriven democracy- India's tech journey over the last 11 years is nothing short of revolutionary," the MyGovIndia said in a post on X on Thursday.

It further said that under the leadership of PM Modi, India has transformed into a hub of digital innovation, tech-led governance, and global trust.

From manufacturing to space tech, from digital payments to rural connectivity — the change is visible, impactful, and lastdevices and platforms. It's about she emphasised.

empowerment, and building a tech-first Viksit Bharat," the post mentioned..

Explaining further the digital growth story, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that there has been a more than 90 times rise in direct benefit transfer (DBT) in just a decade under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government.

Moreover, India leads the world in real-time payments, with more than Rs 260 lakh crore worth of transactions processed in 2024-25, the Finance Minister informed on the X social media platform. "From Rs 7,368 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 6.83 lakh crore in 2024-25, there has been a 90X+ rise in DBT transfer in just a decade under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, ensuring that every rupee reaches to every citizen,' said FM Sitharaman. According to the Finance

Minister, India's tech journey over the last 11 years is nothing short of revolutionary. "India has transformed into a hub of digital innovation, tech-led governance, and global trust. From manufacturing to space tech, from digital payments to ing. "But this isn't just about is visible, impactful, and lasting,"

top five economies: Rajnath Singh on '11 Years of Seva' under PM Modi freedom

NEW DELHI: Marking a significant milestone of 11 years of governance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Singh on Monday hailed the achievements of the nation, especially in the defence and economic sectors. Taking to X, Singh lauded

ment to Atmanirbharta (self-India's global standing.

narendramodi's vision of #AtmanirbharBharat, the defence sector has moved firmly towards Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance), and India now stands proudly among the top five economies of the world. India today stands wellequipped, confident, and unwavering in its resolve, "the Defence Minister posted.

tion makers, who envisioned a democracy that is not just political,

but also social and economic. Under PM Modi's dynamic leadership, India is not just..." Singh said, reflecting on the broader democratic and developmental vision realised during PM Modi's tenure.

In a message to citizens, Singh extended his gratitude for their continued support in this journey of progress and nation-building.

"On the completion of these remarkable #11YearsOfSeva, I congratulate every Indian who has been a proud part of this growth story, development journey, and history in the making. Together, we move forward -- stronger, prouder, and united," he concluded.

message underlines the Modi government's focus on buildng a 'resilient, self-sufficient India, 'one that is not only capable of defending its inhave been a story of the re- world stage economically and

India now stands proudly among

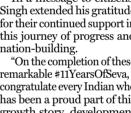
Defence Minister Rajnath

the government's commitreliance) and its impact on

"Inspired by PM Shri @

Rajnath Singh's remarks come as the government celebrates 11 Years Of Seva. highlighting the transformation India has witnessed since 2014, particularly in areas of defence manufacturing, economic progress, and global diplomacy.

alisation of the dreams of our strategically.



The Defence Minister's

dent Trump's repeated insults of India was one of the reasons for such audacity of the US authorities that a student was treated like a hardened criminal. The Congress spokesperson said that if anyone is found to be at odds with the law there, he should be treated according to the law, but not be treated like hardened criminals in the most inhumane way. But, she noted, the people of Indian origin were being treated brutally in US, like animals. Shrinate pointed out how the US deported 682 Indians in the most humiliating way,

Clear Focus on Good Governance and Transformation: PM Modi on 11 Years of 'Seva'

The increased railway line **NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister capacity will significantly en-Narendra Modi has said that hance mobility, resulting in im-

India has witnessed rapid transformations across diverse sectors in the last 11 years, and the NDA government, guided by the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas', has delivered pathbreaking changes with speed, scale and sensitivity. Marking the 11 years of the

NDA government at the Centre. PM Modi on Monday took to social media to highlight the efforts made across key sectors. India has undergone a decade of remarkable transformation, driven by the principles of Seva. Sushasan, and Garib Kalyan, he said. PM Modi said there has been a clear focus on good governance and transformation. "Powered by the blessings and

collective participation of 140 crore Indians, India has witnessed movement of people, goods and rapid transformations across dise sectors. Guided by the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas', the NDA Government has delivered such as coal, iron ore, finished pathbreaking changes with speed, scale and sensitivity," PM Modi Petroleum products etc. The wrote on his X post. He said that from economic growth to social will result in additional freight upliftment, the government's focus has been on people-centric, inclusive and all-around progress. India today is not just the fastestgrowing major economy, but also a key global voice on pressing issues like climate action and digital

tion, will help both in achieving climate goals and minimising innovation. logistics cost of the country, re-We are proud of our collective duce oil import (52 crore litres) success but at the same time, we and lower CO2 emissions (264 look ahead with hope, confidence crore kg) which is equivalent to and a renewed resolve to build a plantation of 11 crore trees, the Viksit Bharat!" said the Prime Minister. PM Modi shared links

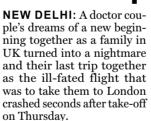


about India's Vikas Yatra, showcased through interesting videos, infographics, and articles on the NaMo App, and urged people to explore these. He said the last 11 years have brought many positive changes and boosted 'Ease of Living.' "The NaMo App takes you through this transformative journey in an innovative manner, through interactive games, quizzes, surveys and other such formats that inform, engage and inspire. Do have a look...," PM Modi shared and urged people to participate.

The Centre has released an -book, "Viksit Bharat ka Amrit Kaal: Seva, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan ke 11 Saal", on its achievements across all the sectors over the past 11 years under the leadership of PM Modi. "The year 2025 marks 11 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. These 11 years have been dedicated to bring about development which is inclusive, progressive, and sustainable. The government under Prime Minister Modi has been steadfast in its commitment of creating equity and opportunity for all citizens. PM Modi has brought the politics of development – Vikasvaad – into the mainstream, making it the focal point around which political

discourse and policy action now

revolves," said its introduction



Now, the young couple from Rajasthan's last selfie with their children has emerged and is breaking hearts.

The Air India 171 flight to London-Gatwick that the doctor couple and their three little children were on, took off from Ahmedabad airport on



climb further and descended rapidly and exploded into a fireball after hitting a building, killing all but one of the in a hospital in Udaipur, had

Thursday and was in the air for 242 people aboard the plane 32 seconds before it failed to and numerous others on the

According to NDTV, doctor Komi Vyas, who used to work

ground.

quit her job and was moving to join her husband, Dr Prateek Joshi, in London with their three children. Dr Joshi had moved to London some time ago and had returned to Banswara in Rajasthan earlier this week to take the family with him. "They left for Ahmedabad yesterday to take the flight to London. Prateek had come here just two days ago to take his wife and children with him. Several other members of both families went to see them off, " Dr Joshi's cousin, Nayan told

The selfie that emerged on

Friday, taken by Dr Joshi on the ill-fated aircraft, shows him and his wife seated on one side, smiling, and their young twin boys Nakul and Pradyut (5) and elder daughter Miraya (8) sitting across the aisle.

planes, handcuffed and under

most inhuman conditions.

The joy on their faces was infectious as the family looked forward to a new life in London together.

Now, the last selfie taken by the family is all that is left as a reminder of a beautiful yet short life they had lived together before they were snatched away by the cruel hand of fate.

By the end of 2025, India may be in the top position in population-Reports United Nations

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA

India has already surpassed China to earn the title of 'the most populous country in the world.' According to a recent report from the United Nations Population Fund (UN-FPA), India's population is projected to reach 1.46 billion by the end of 2025.

After the census in India was halted in 2011, the United Nations reported in 2023 that India had surpassed China to claim the top position. At that time, it was reported that the population of India was slightly over 1.42 billion. Recent reports indicate that among the total population this year, 24 percent are aged 0-14 years, 17 percent are aged 10-19 years, and 26 percent are



aged 10-24 years.

However, the report titled 'State of World Population 2025' (SWP) indicates a decrease in the overall population growth rate in India. The chapter titled 'The Real Fertility Crisis' forecasts a reduction in fertility rates. It is noted that the birth rate is declining. On average, Indian women are giving birth to fewer children than necessary to maintain the

overall population size from one generation to the next, as stated in the re-It is note-

worthy that this trend is not limited to India; the United Na-

tions reported in 2022 that it is a global phenomenon. It was stated that it took 12 years for the world's population to rise from 7 billion to 8 billion. However, reaching from 8 billion to 9 billion will take approximately 14 and a half years. This is due to the decline in birth rates worldwide. By the year 2080, the global population is expected to peak, exceeding 10 billion.

Despite Global Headwinds, Domestic Demand and Prudent Investment drive Small Business Optimism: ASSOCHAM Dun & Bradstreet Small **Business Confidence Index**

TANVIR KAUR New Delhi

ASSOCHAM along with Dun & Bradstreet, a leading global provider of business decisioning data and analytics, has released its Small Business Confidence Index for Apr-Jun 2025 quarter. The findings from the Index, which tracks the optimism of small and medium enterprises in India, indicate a slight decline in small business sentiment, with the confidence index edging down by 1.8% in Apr-Jun 2025 quarter compared to the previous quarter, settling at 105.4. This suggests a more cautious outlook among small business executives. However, the index remains notably strong-up 6% year-over-year and well

above the long-term averagesignaling that overall optimism continues to hold steady.

The findings of the AS-SOCHAM-Dun & Bradstreet **Small Business Confidence** Index reflect a phase of cautious optimism among India's small businesses, especially due to global uncertainties and supply chain disruptions. However, it is encouraging to note the underlying strength of domestic demand, improved hiring intentions and expectations of better financing access as monetary conditions ease. ASSOCHAM remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders to create a conducive environment for economic prosperity," said ASSOCHAM President Sanjay Nayar.



A timely push for economic momentum

he Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest monetary policy decisions reflect a clear and welcome pivot: growth is now the priority. With inflation at a 69-month low and remaining subdued, the central bank has seized the moment to support the economy through lower interest rates and improved liquidity. Cutting the reporate by 50 basis points to 5.5 per cent, following two earlier reductions this year, will make borrowing cheaper for households and businesses – provided banks pass on the benefit. The concurrent reduction in the cash reserve ratio by 100 basis points strengthens this move, freeing up more capital for lending. It is also pragmatic that the apex bank has returned to a "neutral" stance. While accommodative in April, the shift acknowledges economic uncertainties, both domestic and global. It leaves the door open for future rate hikes should inflation unexpectedly rise, while avoiding the signal that more cuts are inevitable. Growth, currently projected at 6.5 per cent for 2025–26, is not high enough for India's ambitions. With the government's fiscal space narrowing – given spending ceilings, social commitments, and increased defence outlays — monetary policy must carry more of the load. The RBI's move suggests welcome alignment between the central bank and the finance ministry. This is the right time to act. Prices are stable, the monsoon is unfolding favourably, and there are no major political events on the horizon. The RBI has correctly judged that the real risk now lies in sluggish growth, not runaway inflation. Its decisions are sound in timing and scope — and show a measured commitment to India's long-term economic resilience. India cannot afford to let weak investment and poor credit flow stall its recovery. With this policy shift, the central bank has done its part.

LETTERBOX

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IT'S A TRAGIC FACT TO DIE IN AN ACCIDENT

GABRIELLE ZEVIN

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

PAWAN AGARWAL SAYS TRANSPARENCY, EDUCATION, AND SCIENCE-BASED EVIDENCE ENSURE FOOD SAFETY

Decoding food safety

his year, the theme of World Food Safety Day, which is observed on June 7, is "Food Safety: Science in Action". It is an opportune moment to reflect on India's journey, evolving from a narrow focus on preventing food adulteration to embracing a more comprehensive, science-based approach to food safety. But

despite the progress, there are gaps and

India's journey on food safety began with the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act of 1954, which viewed food safety as a simple, binary issue — food being adulterated or not. This approach treated all contaminants alike, whether they were intentionally added adulterants, food additives, pesticide residues, veterinary drug residues, or even naturally occurring toxins. The quantity

consumed was not considered.

The turning point was the enactment of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which established the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Drawing on international best practices, particularly those of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the FSSAI adopted a risk-based approach to food safety. This included setting maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides, defining safe levels for food additives, and adopting standards for contaminants and veterinary drug residues.

By 2020, the FSSAI managed to develop and align India's food safety standards so that they were almost on a par with those in advanced countries. However, this rapid progress also exposed certain weaknesses.

The gaps and challenges in risk assessment

A fundamental issue is the lack of Indiaspecific toxicological studies. Most safety standards, including MRLs for pesticides

and acceptable daily intake (ADI) values for food additives, are based on international data, which may not accurately reflect Indian dietary habits, agricultural practices or environmental conditions. The absence of total diet study (TDS) further complicates risk assessment. Such studies are essential to assess the cumulative exposure of consumers to various contaminants through their entire diet. Without TDS, India relies on fragmented data, which weaken the scientific basis of its safety standards.

Another challenge is effective risk communication. Technical terms such as MRLs and ADIs are expressed in minute quantities (parts per million, or ppm, or parts per billion, or ppb) – that are difficult for consumers to understand. These can lead to confusion, especially when safety limits are revised. For instance, the decision to revise the MRL for pesticides from a highly restrictive 0.01 mg/kg to a more practical 0.1 mg/kg led to public concern, with many interpreting it as a reduction in safety.

An example of legacy issues

A persistent legacy issue is the regulation

of monosodium glutamate (MSG), a flavour enhancer that has been extensively studied and consistently found to be safe. Since 1971, the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) has declared MSG safe for consumption. In 1987, the JECFA allocated an "ADI not specified" status to MSG. All countries follow this global consensus now.

In India, MSG regulations have evolved significantly. Initially, MSG was only allowed in meat products, but its use has gradually been permitted in all foods, but with a mandatory warning label that it is unsafe for infants. This is in sharp contrast to other countries, where MSG is recognised as a safe food additive, and outdated warning labels have been removed.

The warning label in India is misleading because glutamates (naturally occurring compounds chemically identical to MSG) are abundant in everyday foods such as tomato, mushroom and garlic, as well as breast milk. As a result, consumers are often left with the mistaken belief that MSG is inherently harmful, leading to unnecessary fear and confusion. As a result, consumers are often left with the mistaken belief that MSG is inherently harmful, leading to unnecessary fear and confusion.

Such a legacy approach contradicts global scientific consensus and exposes the challenge of balancing consumer concerns with scientific evidence. It also reflects a broader problem, which is India's tendency to allow some outdated regulations to persist, even when they conflict with current scientific understanding.

A path to greater scientific rigor

India has made significant strides in food safety, but sustaining this progress

requires targeted efforts. Investing in India-specific research, including localised toxicological studies and a comprehensive TDS, is vital to understand cumulative exposure to contaminants. Risk communication should be improved by simplifying scientific messages and replacing confusing labels, such as those for MSG, with clear, evidence-based information. Strengthening the capacity of risk assessors through continuous training ensures that they stay updated with the latest science for sound decision-making. Regular reviews and updating standards in line with new research, while maintaining transparency, are essential. Finally, building public trust through open and consistent engagement with stakeholders including industry, consumers, and the public is key. These steps will help India uphold and advance its commitment to safe, science-based food systems that protect public health and promote informed choices.

The FSSAI has laid a strong foundation for food safety in India, but sustaining this progress requires a commitment to science, transparency, and public education. Regulatory decisions must be driven by evidence rather than public fears or out-dated perceptions. As we look ahead, India must continue to balance scientific rigour with effective risk communication, ensuring that consumers are informed, confident, and protected without harbouring unnecessary fear.

Pawan Agarwal is the former CEO of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. He is currently the CEO of the Food Future Foundation (India), a non-profit organisation, and a Senior Adviser to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a global organisation. Views are personal.



NATASHA AGGARWAL EXPLAINS WHY INDIA LAGS GLOBAL PEERS IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Can regulators learn to listen?



n May this year, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a policy framework for how it will publish regulations, directions, guidelines and notifications. This follows a similar move by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in February, which published regulations setting out the procedure it would follow to issue regulations.

Regulators such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and SEBI, have been created by Acts of Parliament and have quasi-legislative powers. Within this context, strong procedural safeguards and robust checks and balances are essential to uphold the rule of law. The recent frameworks, which outline the procedures that the RBI and SEBI must follow when making law, are a welcome start. When proposing any new regulations or amendment to existing regulations, the RBI will now conduct "impact analyses" and SEBI will state the "regulatory intent and ives". Both regulators will public comments for 21 days. Moreover, they will now periodically review their own

These reforms signal a welcome shift toward more transparent and consultative regulation-making. Yet, they can, and should go further. Two additions will make these processes more robust, and ensure greater transparency and accountability. First, regulators should clearly identify the economic rationale for their interventions, and second, they should institute mechanisms to ensure accountability for periodic reviews and responses to public comments.

The issue of market failure

The RBI's impact analyses and SEBI's statements of objectives must be grounded



in economic rationale that identifies the problem that their proposed regulation will address. In 2013, the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) emphasised that "laws must be defined in terms of their economic purpose". Regulatory practices in other jurisdictions also support the FSLRC's suggestion.

For example, executive memoranda in the United States mandate that regulators undertake a cost-benefit analysis before proposing or adopting a regulation. Regulators there must also ensure the "least burden on society", adopt an approach that maximises benefits, and assess the feasibility of alternatives to direct regulation. As another example, under the European Union's Better Regulation Framework, impact assessments involve identifying the problem, potential solutions and their impact, and mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the results.

Currently, RBI's framework calls for "impact analysis" considering "economic environments". SEBI must explain its objectives. However, neither are explicitly required to provide the economic rationale of any proposed regulation or identify the underlying market failure. This can be contrasted with

the framework implemented by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), which must state the issue that its proposed regulation seeks to address.

Financial sector regulators such as the RBI and SEBI should: identify the market failure that necessitates regulatory intervention; demonstrate how the proposed regulation will address such failure; conduct a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the expected impact of the proposed regulation, and formulate a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of the regulation.

Strengthening accountability

The track records of the regulators in consultative regulation-making are not encouraging. It was found by two researchers that between June 2014 and July 2015, the RBI had sought public comments on 2.4% of its circulars while SEBI had done the same on less than half of its regulations. Even though this suggests the limited opportunities for stakeholders to submit their views on proposed regulation, one is optimistic that this will now change. However, the regulators must be transparent in their approaches toward consultative regulation-making. The reporting of the following information on an annual basis will strengthen accountability: the number of public consultations vis-à-vis the number of proposed regulations or amendments; responses received; suggestions that have been accepted and rejected; rationale for acceptance and rejection; the impact of public feedback on the proposed regulation or amendment, and, finally, all associated timelines. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Some of this information can be found in the agendas for SEBI's board meetings. But

typically, as in SEBI's latest board meeting, the summary of public comments is "excised for reasons of confidentiality".

In addition, the RBI and SEBI must define the intervals at which they will review their regulations. This is relevant in the context of promises toward deregulation. Once again, this is may be contrasted with the IFSCA's framework, which mandates a review every three years. Regulators should, at pre-defined and reasonably frequent intervals, assess whether current regulations are achieving their intended objectives and addressing the problems they were designed to solve.

A hur

Good regulatory practice warrants meaningful justification for regulatory intervention, and the RBI and SEBI have taken the initial steps in that direction. Notably, limited state capacity is a significant hurdle to implementing regulatory impact assessments and consultative practices.

Moreover, piecemeal reforms by individual regulators may not be sufficient to ensure consistent adherence to good regulatory practice. Parliament could contemplate enactment of a law, similar to the Administrative Procedure Act in the United States, with standardised procedures for regulation-making, which includes impact analysis, public consultation and periodic review.

The United Kingdom and Canada have issued guidelines for regulation-making by agencies. Such an approach would institutionalise transparency and accountability for all regulators in India.

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BOOKS: REVIEW

Fresh look at global history of a gentleman's game

est cricket has always been a curious blend of tradition, romance, and resilience. In *Test Cricket: A History*, Tim Wigmore delivers a sweeping, data-rich, and globally conscious chronicle of the game that is both accessible and thought-provoking. The book spans nearly 150 years and 539 pages, but never drags. It is paced like the game itself at its best—measured, layered, and full of unexpected turns.

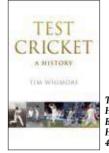
Wigmore sets the tone early. His preface encourages readers to take the book as a narrative, a linear telling of the sport's evolution. This is sound advice. Though the most devoted cricket tragics may happily dip in and out by chapter or theme, the book's power lies in how it charts change—social, political, technological—through the prism of Test cricket. From its colonial roots to its fragile modern-day relevance, the sport emerges as a mirror to the world it inhabits.

One of the book's strengths is the author's youth and neutrality. At 34, Wigmore is not weighed down by nostalgia or the established hierarchies of old-world cricket thinking. His vision is clear-eyed. There are no sacred cows here, and as a result, *Test Cricket: A History* avoids both romanticism and gloom. It neither laments the past nor prophesies doom, even as it confronts serious challenges facing the format. The numbers are sobering.

The numbers are sobering. A 2024 player survey by the World Cricketers Association found that only 49% of respondents saw Test cricket as the most important format, down sharply from 86% in 2019. That decline is not just generational fatigue. It is a reflection of the rise of T20 leagues, player workloads, shifting fan attention, and commercial logic. Wigmore details how, time and again, cricket's administrators have

One of the book's strengths the author's youth and neuality. At 34, Wigmore is not eighed down by nostalgia or ne established hierarchies of d-world cricket thinking. His sion is clear-eyed. There are o sacred cows here, and as a

What elevates the book beyond a mere historical record is its commitment to fairness. rigour, and nuance. Wigmore engages with the big controversies-neutral umpires, the Muralitharan chucking scandal, the introduction of the Decision Review System with detachment and depth. His discussion of a Royal Statistical Society study on lbw decisions between 1986 and 2012 is a case in point. When both umpires were from the home country, visiting batters were 16% more likely to be given out. With two neutral umpires, that figure dropped to 1%. Such facts are not just trivia—they reveal systemic



Test Cricket A History By Tim Wigmore; Hachette India; 400 pages; Rs 899.

biases and underline why reforms matter.

There are plenty of such details throughout: how reverse swing transformed matches, how sports scientists debunked myths about cloud cover and swing, and how rules were rewritten not to suit individual players, but to reflect scientific understanding. Wigmore neither sensationalises nor skims. He treats the game's history with the seriousness it deserves, without losing the spark that makes cricket so compelling.

Importantly, the book takes a global view. This is not a history told only through England, Australia, and India. Wigmore travels wide—across continents, teams, and eras. He acknowledges cricket's neglected fron-

tiers, from Argentina to Canada, and treats every region not as a footnote but as part of a shared, if uneven, journey. The challenge for Test cricket

today is not merely to survive but to justify its place in a crowded, fast-paced sporting ecosystem. The game has always adapted—whether through formats, technology, or playing conditions. But its future now depends on inclusiveness and imagination, not insularity. That, perhaps, is the book's most important message.

Test Cricket: A History is not a farewell elegy or a nostalgic tribute. It is a living, breathing, intelligent account of a sport that has endured revolutions and reckonings. And like the finest matches, it rewards patience, thought, and curiosity.

If there is a single book to understand why Test cricket still matters—and how it must evolve—this is it. Tim Wigmore has delivered what will surely stand as a classic of cricket literature. Monumental in scope, meticulous in detail, and refreshingly modern in voice, it is a fitting tribute to the longest form of the game.

IOC finalises India's largest green hydrogen

plant at Panipat

IndianOil by 2027

The Indian Oil Corporation

Limited (IOCL) has finalised

its biggest green hydrogen pro-

duction plant at its Panipat in

Haryana Refinery and Petro-

chemical Complex in the north-

ern part of the country slated

to be ready by December 2027.

Arvinder Singh Sahney, Chair-

man of IOC, during an exclusive

SATISH HANDA



India's PSUs and PSBs Turn into Wealth Creators in Last 11 Years

PSUs in India

Minister Narendra Modi-led government has strengthened India's public sector undertakings (PSUs) in the last 11 years. turning them into wealth creators and making them integral to the nation's growth, the datafocused X handle infoindata showed on Wednesday.

With focused reforms, strategic autonomy, and capital support, PSU market cap surged across the energy, power, and infrastructure sectors. While NTPC saw its market cap reach Rs 3.27 lakh crore in 2025, from 0.99 lakh crore in 2014, Power Grid saw its market cap touch Rs 2.80 lakh crore in 2025, from 0.55 lakh crore in 2014 (till June 9), as per data sourced from the DIPAM and the Department of Public Enterprises. Other PSUs like IOCL, Power Finance, BPCL, GAIL, NHPC, BHEL, etc, also saw a meteoric rise in their market caps in the last

years. The SBI saw its market cap reach Rs 7.32 lakh crore in FY26, from Rs 1.51 lakh crore in FY16. PNB saw its market cap touch Rs 1.29 lakh crore in FY26 from 0.06 lakh crore in FY16, while Bank of Baroda's market cap reached Rs 1.28 lakh crore from 0.34 lakh crore in the same time frame, as per the data. "In 11 years, the Modi gov-

ernment transformed public sector banks from the NPA

On the other hand, the mar- crisis of the UPA era to record ket cap of public sector banks market capitalisation through (PSBs) also surged in the last 11 structural reforms such as asset quality review, bank mergers, targeted recapitalisation, and measures to resolve bad loans,"

said infoindata on X. Meanwhile, India's top public sector companies in the financial, power and energy sectors recorded a robust growth in profit during the January-March quarter of 2024-25, which is expected to further strengthen the government's

State Bank of India (SBI), and insurance giant Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) led the charge with a net profit of Rs 18,643 crore and Rs 19,013 crore, respectively. SBI's net profit for the financial year 2024-25 has now soared to Rs 70,901 crore, while LIC has recorded an impressive net profit of Rs 48,151 crore for the year.

In the energy sector, Coal

India earned a net profit of Rs 9.604 crore during the fourth quarter, while Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) registered a net profit of Rs 7,265 crore, with upstream oil exploration giant ONGC registering a net profit of Rs 6,448 crore during the quarter. In the power sector, the country's largest electricity producer, NTPC, recorded a net profit of Rs 7,897 crore, while Power Finance Corporation (PFC), which also comes under the Ministry of Power,

Import Duty Reduced on Crude Edible Oils to 10%



NEW DELHI: In a significant move to curb rising edible oil prices, the government has reduced the Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on crude edible oils—soybean, sunflower, and palm—from 20 per cent to 10

This step, announced on Wednesday, is expected to lower the overall cost of these oils and provide relief to con-

The Food Ministry stated that the reduction in duty will increase the gap between the import duties on crude and refined edible oils from 8.75 per cent to 19.25 per cent.

This widened differential is

designed to promote domestic refining by making crude oil imports more attractive than refined oil imports.

As a result, the move is expected to boost capacity

utilisation in the local refining industry and decrease India's dependence on imported re-

The ministry further noted that the decision was made in response to a spike in edible oil prices caused by the September 2024 duty hike and rising

international market rates. To ensure the benefits reach consumers quickly, the Union Food Ministry has directed edible oil industry associations to immediately reduce prices.

They are required to update their Price to Distributors (PTD) and Maximum Retail Price (MRP) accordingly. A reporting format has also been issued to companies to track compliance.

The ministry emphasised the importance of passing on the reduced costs throughout the supply chain so that retail prices reflect the duty cut.

This measure is part of the government's broader efforts to manage inflation and ensure essential commodities remain affordable for the gen-

tons per annum is likely to

tion with

media stat-

ed that the

plant, with a

production

capacity

of 10,000

commence production by the schedule time making IOC's entry into the green hydrogen space with India's largest-ever green hydrogen project to date, however, he did not give costing and other financial details about this project. Green hydrogen is hydrogen gas produced by splitting water using renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, or hydropower. On burning, it produces only water. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation has finalised the levelized cost of hydrogen (LCoH) for setting up a 10,000 tonnes per annum green hydrogen generation unit at its Panipat refinery and petro-

chemical complex in Haryana,

advancing India's clean energy

ambitions thus making IOC's

entry into the green hydrogen

space with India's largest-ever

green hydrogen project to date. According to an IOC spokesperson, the commissioning of this plant is expected to be completed by December 2027, and the green hydrogen produced will replace fossil-derived hydrogen in refinery operations, resulting in substantial reduction in carbon emissions. He said, Hydrogen is a fuel that can

ED files supplementary charges in Rs 48,000 crore PACL scam

NEW DELHI: The Directorate of Enforcement's (ED) Delhi zonal office has filed a Supplementary Prosecution Complaint (SPC) against Harsatinder Pal Singh Hayer and others before the special PMLA court, New Delhi, in connection with the massive Rs 48, 000 crore PACL investment scam. The SPC was filed on May 17, and the court

June 9, the ED

said in a press

release here on

Tuesday. The



of an FIR by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), BSFC, New Delhi, under Sections 120-B and 420 of the Indian Penal Code, alleging that PACL Ltd., PGF Ltd., their directors, including N.S. Bhangoo and others ran fraudulent investment schemes that duped lakhs of investors across India, the

Piyush Goyal pushes for Closer Ties with Swiss Machinery, Electrical & Metal Industry

BERNE: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday co-chaired a productive Business Roundtable on the Machinery, Electrical & Metal (MEM) Industry with Swiss Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin. Goyal said that he discussed

boosting innovation, facilitating partnerships, and joint workforce training with Parmelin, who is also the Head of Switzerland's Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) "We also focused on unlocking new investment opportunities post operationalisation of the India-EFTA TEPA," Goyal said in a statement on X.

The Minister chaired two focused roundtables with sectoral leaders from Swiss industry, covering biotech & pharma. healthcare, precision engineering, defence, and emerging



Swiss and Indian investments. Besides, the Commerce Minister witnessed the sign-

ated India's willingness to work

towards regulatory harmonisa-

tion and mutual recognition

agreements, highlighting India's

proactive stance on building

reciprocal bridges to encourage

ing of an MoU between the Indian business chamber ASSOCHAM and Swissmem to strengthen industrial collaboration, foster innovation, growth, and skill development. Swissmem is the leading association for SMEs and large companies in Switzerland's technology industry (mechanical and electrical engineering and related technology sectors). The objective of the MoU also includes cooperation in areas like technical transfer,

ment opportunities, trade fairs, exhibitions, policies, and economic legislation pertaining to the foreign trade of the two

Both the industry bodies would also support each other in exchange for trade missions, project study groups, import, export, trade and investment linkages. The areas of Cooperation also include exploring and organising joint activities to promote trade and investment opportunities in the interest of members of both organisations.

In addition to industry interactions, Goyal also met members of the Switzerland Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). He lauded the chapter for its contributions and for upholding the high standards and global reputation of the ICAI, while strengthening the India-Switzerland professional and busi-

BEL, Metamind & Persistent Systems Join Forces to Deliver Cutting-Edge **Al-Driven Solutions Across Sectors**

ARUN KUMAR RAO

Bengaluru

In a significant move that promises to reshape India's digital innovation landscape, Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has inked a landmark tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Metamind Systems Private Limited and Persistent Systems Limited. The agreement paves the way for the collaborative development of next-generation software solutions leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Data Analytics and Cyber Security.

The MoU was formally signed by Smt Durga G K, xecutive Director (Software), BEL; Sri Hrishikesh Kinikar, Director, Metamind Systems; and Sri Rajesh Gharpure, Chief Delivery Officer, Persistent



tor (Bengaluru Complex), and Sri Manoj Jain, Chairman & Managing Director, BEL.

This strategic alliance is designed to create powerful synergies by combining BEL's deep-rooted expertise in defence technologies with Metamind's AI-driven innovation and Persistent Systems' global software engineering capabilities. Together, the three entities aim to build scalable, secure and futureready software solutions for key sectors including Aerospace & Defence, Healthcare, Telecommunications, Energy

be produced from a variety of sources that have vast applications across industries ranging from oil refineries to steel plants and can power vehicles including cars, trucks, trains, ships,

Revenue, EBITDA and Market Capitalisation: Linkage in Valuation of Pharma Companies in India



the ing connect between the value and the source of the value of any asset remains important for investment in assets as well as successful management of assets. Market Approach to Valuation is based on the 'principle of it is assumed that the price of an asset will be only the cost of acquiring an equally desirable substitute. So, the the prices which have been Valuation method or Comparable Company Approach lays emphasis on identification, and pricing of an exact identical firm in terms of cash flows, growth rate, and risks. Instead

Revenue multiple measures the value of the equity or the business relative to the in FY25, and MCAP of the revenue generated. Revenue company was also the lowmultiple is one of the widely used measure in Valuation, companies. For FY25, Cipla and this holds true for pharmaceutical sector as well. well as MCAP. DRL is ranked Table 1 shows the revenue, Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation, and Amortisation (EBITDA), and market this, Divi's Labs is ranked 9th capitalisation (MCAP) of top in terms of EBITDA whereas ten pharmaceutical companies in terms of M-Cap, it is ranked in India. For Sun Pharma, 2nd among pharmaceutical which is number one pharma companies in India. company in terms of MCAP, market share, revenue, as well as EBITDA, M-Cap is 7.66 times of revenue. In contrast ratio. There are exceptions to this, MCAP of Divi's Labs is too. Among top 10 pharma 18.56 times of revenue of the companies, Mankind Pharamong top 10 pharma companies in India. For other top Limited (BSV), for a purchase pharma companies in India consideration of Rs. 13,768 in terms of market capitalisation, MCAP to Revenue funded through a combina-

times for Abbott India: Aurobindo Pharma (2.12), Dr. (4.10), Zydus Lifesciences (4.16), Cipla (4.39), Mankind Pharma (7.95), Torrent Pharma (9.26), and Abbott India (10.44).

Correlation is positive (0.67) between revenue of top ten pharma companies in FY25, and their MCAP. Sun substitution' under which Pharma had the highest revenue as well as MCAP among pharmaceutical companies in India. Abbott India had the lowest revenue among top 10 price of an asset is based on pharma companies in India, and it had the lowest MCAP paid for similar assets in the too. Divi's Labs is ranked 9th relevant market place. Under in terms of revenue whereas the Market Approach, Relative in terms of MCAP, it is ranked 2nd among pharmaceutical companies in India.

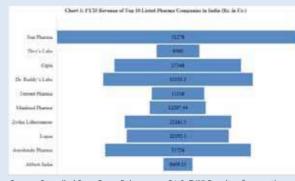
Correlation is positive (0.76) between EBITDA of pharma companies in FY25, and their MCAP. Sun Pharma of capturing intrinsic value, had the highest EBITDA as relative valuation reflects the well as the highest MCAP current mood of the market. among pharmaceutical companies in India. EBITDA was the lowest for Abbott India est among top 10 pharma is ranked 3rd in EBITDA as 2nd in terms of Revenue and EBITDA but ranked 4th in MCAP for FY25. In contrast to

Most of these pharma companies are cash-rich companies, and have low debt-equity Bharat Serums and Vaccines Crores. The transaction was

of Top Ten Listed Pharmaceutical Companies in India

Company	Revenue in FY25	EBITDA in FY25	MCAP (June 6, 2025)
Sun Pharma	52,578.00	15,271.70	4,03,076.28
Divi's Labs	9,360.00	2,967.00	1,73,814.23
Cipla	27,548.00	7,128.00	1,21,202.01
Dr. Reddy's Labs	32,553.50	9,213.30	1,10,197.47
Torrent Pharma	11,516.00	3,721.00	1,06,654.31
Mankind Pharma	12,207.44	3,159.00	97,097.37
Zydus Lifesciences	23,241.50	7,058.50	96,643.74
Lupin	22,192.10	5,479.20	91,065.08
Aurobindo Pharma	31,724.00	6,605.00	67,387.51
Abbott India	6,409.15	1,694.60	66,935.30

Source: Compiled from Press Releases on Q4 & FY25 Results of respective pharmaceutical companies; MCAP as on June 6, 2025



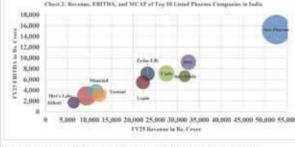
Source: Compiled from Press Releases on Q4 & FY25 Results of respective pharmaceutical companies

Non-Convertible Debentures and Commercial Papers. Mankind Pharma recognized this transaction as EBITDA margin-accretive acquisition. Even with the debt, Mankind Pharma is likely to maintain a Net Debt to EBITDA ratio below 2x by FY26. Mankind Pharma took debt for the first time, as founders have always been averse to taking debts.

For Sun Pharma, MCAP stood at 26.39 times of EBITDA. In contrast to this, MCAP of Divi's Labs on June 6, 2025, stood at 58.58 times of EBITDA of the company for FY25 which is the highest company which is the highest ma acquired 100% stake in among top 10 pharma companies in India. For other top pharma companies in India in terms of market capitalisation, MCAP to EBITDA multiple varies from a low of multiple varies from a low tion of internal accruals and 10.20 times for Aurobindo along with their subsidiaries

7,000 Crore that comprised times for Abbott India: Aurobindo Pharma (10.20), Dr. Reddy's Labs (11.96), Zydus Lifesciences (13.69), Lupin (16.62), Cipla (17.0), Torrent Pharma (28.66), Mankind Pharma (30.74), and Abbott India (39.49). Like any other sector, in ad-

dition to Revenue and EBITDA of companies, company-specific variables influence the valuation as even top pharmaceutical companies in India vary significantly from each other. The parameters for consideration of differences among pharmaceutical companies include product profile, markets served by these pharmaceutical companies, expected growth rate of their segments, scale of their operations, their cost structures, technology used by respective pharma companies, etc. Pharma companies in India of 2.12 times for Aurobindo external debt of about Rs. Pharma to a high of 39.49 earn revenue from different from lactose intolerance. Pre-multiple cannot be represen-companies will be affected.



Source: Based on FY25 Revenue, EBITDA, and MCAP as on June 6, 2025

geographic areas, and from dif- cision-fermented protein has ferent therapeutic categories. Geographic territories, and therapeutic categories vary substantially in contribution to EBITDA of respective pharma companies. Recent examples explain these parameters to

acknowledge these differences. At the time of acquisition of BSV by Mankind Pharma, growth rate of Bharat Serums and Vaccines (BSV) was in the range of 15-20% versus Mankind Pharma's growth rate of 12%. EBITDA of Mankind Pharma was in the range of 25-26% whereas EBITDA of BSV was in the range of 28-30%.

Pharma companies keep on identifying new growth drivers, e.g., in August 2024, Zydus Lifesciences signed an agreement with Perfect Day Inc., a Temasek portfolio company, to acquire about 50 per cent shareholding in Sterling Biotech Limited. This agreement marked Zydus's tech products for health and nutrition, specifically catering to consumers who prefer animal-free protein or suffer that pharma sector-specific MCAP of respective pharma

application in cream cheese, ice creams, sports nutrition products, and baked goods. On March 11, 2025, Zydus Lifesciences announced that the company had entered exclusive negotiations to acquire a controlling stake in Amplitude Surgical SA for €256.8 mn to foray into the global medical devices market. for growth of medical devices, and is eyeing three segments namely orthopaedics, interventional cardiology and nea facility for manufacturing stents too. The company has plans to leverage its global presence in pharmaceuticals

to launch its medtech play. positively contribute to MCAP of pharmaceutical companies 2 highlights the relationship foray into specialized bio- of MCAP with Revenue, and EBITDA of top 10 pharma- turn, this will affect revenue, ceutical companies in India. and EBITDA of respective

From above, it is apparent

fundamentals. General profile of pharma industry, demandstructure of the industry within the country and outside companies export, pricing system such as products brought under the price control due to changes in the National (NLEM), availability of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), Key Starting Materials (KSMs), and Drug Intermediates (DIs), reliance of respective pharma companies on imports of APIs/KSMs/DIs or on captive capacity, regulatory framework, governments policies, etc. have their implications for the industry as a whole, or for specific pharma companies.

recent changes in prices of certain APIs. Recent reports show that prices of six APIs dropped sharply, e.g., the price France-based medtech firm of paracetamol dropped to Rs. 250 from the high of Rs. 900 per kg during Covid-19, Similarly, price of other products Zydus recognized opportunity such as Sitagliptin dropped to Rs. 5,000 (from Rs. 5,900 in 2024), Vildagliptin to Rs. 4,800 (from Rs. 5,300 in 2024), Melitracen to Rs. phrology. Zydus had acquired 13,300 (from 14,500 in 2024), Fusidic Acid to Rs. 38,000 (from Rs. 44,000 in 2024), and Deflazacort to Rs. 70,000 (from Rs. 1,00,000 in 2024). This drop in prices is likely Revenue and EBITDA of to affect pharma companies pharmaceutical companies differently, e.g., users of these APIs in their formulation, manufacturers of these APIs, in a significant manner. Chart those who are in the process of capacity expansion of these APIs within country, etc. In

pharma companies. Finally,

Revenue multiple, and differ widely, and further, EBITDA multiple appear relsector-specific multiples have evant in valuation of pharma will find it difficult to relate tions such as non-considersector-specific multiples to ation interest, maintenance capital expenditure, i.e., depreciation, amortization, etc. supply position, competitive Analysis regarding top pharmaceutical companies in India also suggest that revenue and India where Indian pharma EBITDA cannot be ignored while looking at market capi-

talisation. **REFERENCES: -**

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maceutical industry. Economic Times. Zydus to acquire 50% stake in Sterling Biotech from Perfect Day to enter into fermentation-

based protein business. Zvdus Press Release dated August 23, 20-24. Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish-

Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali),

DISCLAIMER: Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

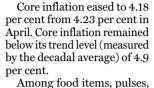
India Inflation to Average 4 Pc This Fiscal, Indian Stock Market opens in One More RBI Rate Cut Likely: Crisil

current inflation trajectory, headline inflation is projected to average 4 per cent this fiscal (FY26), from 4.6 per cent last fiscal, a Crisil report said

Lower inflation keeps the window open for one more repo rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), apart from the 100 basis points cut announced so far, the report forecast.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation dropped to 2.8 per cent in May, the lowest reading since February 2019, from 3.2 per cent in April as food inflation continued to decline.

Fuel and core inflation also softened. Food inflation fell to 1 per cent, the lowest since October 2021, from 1.8 per cent in April. Fuel inflation reversed trend and eased marginally to 2.8 per cent from 2.9 per cent.



vegetables and spices saw deflation, while cereals recorded

According to Crisil Intelligence—Research's Thali

(SBI) on Wednesday said it has

and local-based officers," said

"As we onboard this new

capabilities by implementing

structured skill development

NEW DELHI: Digital lending

software-as-a-service platform

Biz2X has announced ambitious

growth targets, aiming to disburse Rs 17,000 crore in loans to micro.

small and medium enterprises

during the 2025-26 financial year.

This represents a significant

increase from the Rs 14,000 crore

disbursed through its India op-

erations in the fiscal year ended

taining consistent year-on-year

growth of 25-30 percent, facili-

tated by its turnkey global SaaS

platform that enables financial

institutions to deliver custom-

ised online lending experiences

for small and midsize business

According to Rohit Arora, Co-

Founder and CEO, Biz2X and

Biz2Credit, this growth trajectory

reflects the company's strategic

emphasis on artificial intelligence-

driven product enhancements

and deeper solution integration,

which has accelerated new cus-

tomer acquisition and strength-

The company reported main-

March 2025.

SBI Chairman CS Setty.

Index released last week. the cost of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian thalis in May fell $\bar{6}$ per cent each on-year largely due to lower vegetable prices.

The Ministry of Agriculture's Third Advance Estimates has indicated a robust rabi harvest with record wheat production.

"The India Meteorological

Department (IMD) has forecast above-normal monsoon of 106 per cent of the long period average (LPA). The rains would have a positive impact

on the upcoming kharif sea-

son," said the report. Both the above will keep food inflation in check this fiscal, provided there are no monsoon disruptions. Though the monsoon has lost some momentum in June, with all-India cumulative rainfall deficiency at 34 per cent of LPA, it is the rains in July and August that matter the most for kharif crops.

On the energy front assuming no sustained impact of geopolitical tensions, Brent crude oil prices are projected to remain subdued, ranging between \$65 and \$70 per barrel in the current calendar year, which should help contain non-food inflation, the report mentioned.

Red as Israel-Iran Tensions Rise MUMBAI: The Indian benchmark indices opened sharply lower on Friday as tensions

escalated between Israel and Iran. Heaving selling was seen in the auto, IT, Financial service and PSU Bank sectors in the early trade.

At around 9.33 am, Sensex was trading 896.5 points or 1.10 per cent down at 80,795.44 while the Nifty declined 278.5 point or 1.12 per cent at

Nifty Bank was down 633.80 points or 1.13 per cent at 55,448.75 The Nifty Midcap 100 index was trading at 57,836.95 after dropping 603.90 points or 1.03 per cent. Nifty Smallcap 100 index was at 18,272.30 after declining 192.75 points or 1.04 per cent.

Analysts said that the economic consequences of this Israeli strike can be profound if the attack and counterattack by Iran lingers long. Israel has

per cent in home loans and auto

On Monday, Finance Min-

ister Nirmala Sitharaman re-

ceived a dividend cheque of

Rs 8, 076.84 crore on behalf

of the government from SBI

for the financial year 2024-25.

The cheque was presented to

the Finance Minister by SBI

Chairman at her office in the

India's top public sector compa-

nies in the financial, power and

energy sectors have recorded

a robust growth in profit dur-

ing the January-March quarter

of 2024-25, which is expected

to further strengthen the gov-

ernment's fiscal position. SBI's

net profit for the financial year

2024-25 soared to Rs 70, 901

The robust dividend came as

presence of senior officials.

loans, respectively.



declared that the operation will last several days.

"The impact on the market will depend on how long the conflict lingers. In the near term the market will be in a risk-off mode. Sectors that use oil derivatives as inputs like aviation, paints, adhesives and tyres will be hit hard. Oil producers like ONGC and Oil India will remain resilient," explained Dr VK Vijavakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments

According to analysts, the Nifty fell over a percent yesterday, as geopolitical tensions

in the Middle signs of erupting. As of this

morning, Israel

has launched

after the bearish "upside gap

two crows pattern" earlier in the

week was an indication of cau-

tion creeping in," said Akshay

Chinchalkar, Head of Research

of Axis Securities. Meanwhile,

in the Sensex pack, Tata Mo-



markets offer a refuge for global macro uncertainty as domestic policies remain favourable, HSBC Global Investment Research said on Wednesdav.

Sentiment has improved significantly, and the Indian markets are well placed amid global uncertainty and trade tensions.

tors, L&T, PowerGrid, Kotak "As per our proprietary po-Mahindra Bank, SBI, Titan and sitioning data, Asia and global Infosys were the top losers. In emerging market (GEM) funds have started to rebuild pothe Asian markets, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Jakarta, Japan, Seoul sitions in India (that is, cut and China were trading in red. their underweights), but global investors are still cautious. A weaker dollar and softer inflation suggest the foreign inflows can persist in the coming months," the HSBC report

> The Central government and the central bank are both providing policy support. Government capex surged to a record high in Q1 2025, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has adopted a more pro-growth stance than an-

This is evident from the recent larger-than-expected cuts in the benchmark rate (50bps) and cash reserve ratio (100bps). This should bode well for domestic growth. Stable inflows from domestic investors provide another key

Earnings growth in Q1 came as a surprise. Industrials, healthcare and telecom reported strong growth. Consumer discretionary saw EPS grow 14 per cent on the back of strong numbers in retail

"Despite the beat in Q1, we believe a sustained recovery in earnings growth is still a few quarters away," the report

Indian equities rebounded notably in the past few weeks on the back of lower domestic bond yields, now down to a 3-vear low. Lower local bond yields are very supportive of local equities. "In this environment, we prefer stocks that we believe offer good growth, preferably for strue iosyncratic reasons," the HSBC report said, adding that they are "neutral on India from the Asian perspective with

RBI Deputy Governor Calls for Reforms as Microfinance **Sector Faces Rising Concerns**



MUMBAI: India's microfinance sector is under increasing strain due to persistently high interest rates, rising levels of borrower over-indebtedness, and aggressive recovery tactics, according to M. Rajeshwar Rao, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Speaking at an event in Mumbai on June 5, Rao said, "The sector continues to suffer from a vicious cycle of overindebtedness, high interest rates and harsh recovery practices." His remarks were published on the RBI's website on Monday.

Banks and financial institutions have raised alarms over growing stress in the microfinance segment, especially since **NEW DELHI:** Union Finance the start of the current financial

> declining rural incomes, borrower defaults, and temporary disruptions caused by ongoing

Rao criticized lenders for charging higher-than-expected friendly approach.

interest margins, even those with access to cheaper funds. Although there has been a slight decline in interest rates in recent quarters, many lenders still maintain excessively high rates and margins. He urged microfinance in-

stitutions to move away from viewing the sector merely as a "high-yielding business" and focus on responsible lending

Rao emphasised the importance of robust credit assessments to avoid over-leveraging of borrowers and called for an end to coercive recovery meth-

Rao also highlighted structural issues within microfinance organizations, stating that flawed incentive structures and business models could lead to poor outcomes for customers. "This calls for an introspection around the models," he concluded, stressing the need for a more ethical and borrower-

Investors amid Global **Jitters, Foreign Inflows** to Persist: HSBC

India Offers Refuge for

pre-emptive strikes on Iran and that's led to **NEW DELHI:** Indian stock a broad-based "Technically, on the Nifty, investors amid jitters about we have been warning that Wednesday's "buyer rejection" candle immediately occurring

support to equities, according to the report.

the 2025-end index target of 82,240 for the Sensex".

SBI hires 13,455 junior associates to boost customer experience: Chairman **Preparation for 8th Pay Commission** lender the State Bank of India



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA

There is good news for pensioners regarding the preparation process of the 8th Pay Commission. If the government implements a new fitment factor, there could be a significant increase in pension amounts. Currently, the pensions received by pensioners are determined based on a fitment factor of 2.57. However, if the new fitment factor is either 1.92 or 2.28, the pension amounts could nearly double.

Government employees who retired with a grade pay of 2000 rupees currently receive a pension of approximately 13.000 rupees. If a fitment factor of 1.92 is applied, their pension could increase to 24,960 rupees. Conversely, level 3 pensioners have the potential to receive a pension of 27,040 rupees based on a fitment factor of 2.28. Those whose current pension is 16,000 rupees may also have the possibility of receiving 30,720 rupees.

The current pension for grade pay of 2,800 rupees is 15,700 rupees. With the implementation of the new pay commission and a fitment factor of 1.92, this amount could increase to 30.140 rupees. If the fitment factor of 2.28 is applied, the pension could rise to as much as 32,656 rupees. For level 5 pensioners, the minimum pension may be set at 39,936 rupees (using the 1.92 factor) and 43,264 rupees (using the 2.28 factor).

The current pension for retired Level 6 employees with a grade pay of 4,200 rupees is approximately 28,450 rupees. If a fitment factor of 1.92 is applied, this pension could increase to 54,624 rupees. Conversely, with a fitment factor of 2.28, the pension could reach 59,176 rupees.

If the central government implements the 8th Pay Commission and revises the fitment factor, it could provide significant benefits for



ing functional and technological requirements," he said in a

The SBI has over 2, 36, 000 talent pool, we further aim to employees, committed to creatstrengthen our human resource ing meaningful employment and nurturing the next generation of banking professionals. The home loan portfolio of

Digital Lending Platform Biz2X Targets

₹ 17,000 Cr MSME Disbursements in FY26

ened lending infrastructure.

Arora expressed confidence in

sustaining current growth mo-

mentum, projecting potential

increases of 15-20 percent for

However, he acknowledged

external challenges that could

impact performance, particularly

regarding global trade dynamics

large part to Indian exports, and

many exporters could lose credit

significantly," Arora noted, while

expressing optimism that swift

resolution of these issues could

enable the company to achieve

approximately 20 percent growth.

strategy capitalises on increasing

global digitisation trends, artificial

intelligence advancement, and

growing international market

opportunities. Biz2X aims to scale

its reach and impact across the

financial ecosystem in response

to rising demand for inclusive

The company is particularly

The platform's expansion

"Indian SMEs contribute a

the current fiscal year.

and US tariff policies.

42.20 lakh crore.

the bank has crossed Rs 8.3 lakh crore. As of March 2025, the bank has a deposit base of over Rs 53.82 lakh crore with CASA ratio of 39.97 per cent and advances of more than Rs

SBI commands a market

focused on enhancing service

delivery in high-growth regions,

aligning with India's expanding

role in the Global Capability Cen-

ter landscape, which is projected

to reach USD 110 billion by 2030.

Addressing policy considerations for the MSME sector,

Arora suggested that while gov-

ernment initiatives have been

beneficial, India could benefit

from adopting international best

for MSME loan portfolios in capi-

banking practices, where institu-

tions typically hold MSME loans

on their books with limited secu-

ritisation compared to markets

like the United States, present

opportunities for improvement.

the credit guarantee program

operated by SIDBI, while per-

forming well, has potential for

Regarding international ex-

pansion, Biz2X currently main-

tains operations across India, the

United States, and the United Arab Emirates, with ongoing

further enhancement.

Additionally, Arora noted that

He emphasised that current

India Embraces Cashless Revolution in Last 11 Years: Nirmala Sitharaman



Minister Nirmala Sitharaman year. on Monday said that India is embracing a cashless revolution with world-class digital initiatives like unified payments interface

In the last 11 years, India has seen a remarkable journey under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the finance minister said on a post on X. "India is embracing a cashless revolution. With Rs 70,000 crore+ worth UPI transactions daily and 59.6 crore transactions in a single day, digital payments are now the norm," the minister added. From making life easier for the common citizen to boosting business confidence, it's been a decade of real and visible change. she further stated. India today is not just the fastest-growing major economy, but also a key global voice on pressing issues like climate action and digital innovation. In the month of May, UPI posted a robust growth by processing 18.68 billion transactions, up from 17.89 billion in

expansion into Saudi Arabia. The company continues to focus on diversifying its product portfolio within India while advancing AI-driven solutions. Through AI-based underwriting utilising digital footprints, Biz2X positions itself as supporting small businesses in addressing significant credit gaps in the April. As per data by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the UPI transactions mark a 33 per cent year-on-year (YoY) surge compared to 14.03 oillion transactions in the same month last year.

Rs 25.14 lakh crore (by value) last month, a 5 per cent increase from Rs 23.95 lakh crore in April. This reflects a 23 per cent rise from Rs 20.45 lakh crore in May last year. The average daily transaction volume stood at 602 million. while the average daily transaction value reached Rs 81,106 crore. The UPI has strengthened its dominance in India's digital payments system with its share in the total transaction volume rising to 83.7 per cent in 2024-25 from 79.7 per cent in the previous financial year. The RBI's annual report shows that UPI facilitated 185.8 billion transactions during 2024-25, which represents a 41 per cent year-on-year increase. In value terms, UPI transactions rose to Rs 261 lakh crore from Rs 200 lakh crore in FY24

Vedanta Aluminium Partners With Central Bank of India for MSME Financing

NEW DELHI: Vedanta Aluminium has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Central Bank of India to provide collateralfree financing solutions to its downstream customers, with a primary focus on Micro, Small, nd Medium Enterprises.

The partnership will be executed through Vedanta's subsidiary, Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO), and aims to enhance financial accessibility within the aluminium value chain. The financing programme

onth last year. will offer working capital loans The UPI transactions rose to ranging from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 10 crore, featuring minimal documentation requirements and competitive interest rates aligned with industry standards.

The initiative will be integrated into Vedanta Metal Bazaar, the company's digital platform for aluminium products, enabling customers to access financing options alongside real-time invoice tracking and lien marking

The digital platform will host the financing facility with standardised repayment terms of 90 days, including a 15-day ace period for borrowers.

The programme incorporates API-based services designed to expedite loan disbursements and enhance



process transparency. Currently, over 100 customers utilise financing services through the platform in partnership with four existing banking institutions

The addition of Central Bank of India, with its extensive national branch network, is expected to significantly expand the reach and accessibility of the financing initiative.

This partnership represents an expansion of the existing financing ecosystem that Vedanta has developed to support its customer base. Rajiv Kumar, Chief Ex-

ecutive Officer, Vedanta Aluminium, emphasised the strategic importance of the partnership in strengthening the aluminium value chain by improving working capital accessibility for MSMEs, which constitute the foundation of India's manufacturing and industrial sectors.

He noted that over 60 percent of the company's downstream clientele comprises MSMEs, making this initiative particularly relevant for business expansion and competitiveness enhancement.

Kumar highlighted that the programme aligns with the company's vision of developing a self-reliant and competitive aluminium industry that contributes to India's economic growth, employment generation, and global manufacturing capabilities.

The initiative is positioned to unlock new opportunities for business development within the downstream aluminium sector.

Vedanta Metal Bazaar currently features over 750 product variants, including ngots, billets, wire rods, primary foundry alloy, rolled products, and Restora, which is marketed as a low-carbon aluminium variant.

India's CPI inflation falls to 2.82 pc in May, lowest since Feb 2019 exuded in the last meeting, but

credit access.

NEW DELHI: India's inflation rate based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) declined to 2.82 per cent in May this year compared to the same month of the previous year. This is the lowest level of retail inflation since February 2019, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Statistics on Thursday.

Food Inflation declined to 0.99 per cent during May, which is the lowest since October 2021. This is the seventh month in a row that food inflation has registered a decline as the agricultural output has been on the rise. The significant decline in inflation during the month is mainly attributed to the decline in inflation of pulses, vegetables, fruits, cereals, household goods & amp; services, sugar, and eggs, according to the official statement. Inflation also declined due to a moderation



prices of crude oil coming down during the month.

The RBI has also revised its inflation outlook for 2025-26 downwards from the earlier forecast of 4 per cent to 3.7 per cent, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Friday.

CPI inflation for the financial year 2025-26 is now projected at 3.7 per cent, with Q1 at 2.9 per cent, Q2 at 3.4 per cent, Q3 at

cent. The RBI Governor pointed out that Inflation has softened significantly over the last six months from above the tolerance band in October 2024 to well below the target, with signs of a broad-based moderation. The near-term and mediumterm outlook now gives us the

confidence of not only a durable

alignment of headline inflation

with the target of 4 per cent, as

the target at the margin. While food inflation outlook remains soft, core inflation is

expected to remain benign with easing of international commodity prices in line with the anticipated global growth slowdown, Malhotra said. The sharp decline in inflation has enabled the RBI to go in for a 50 basis points cut in the reporate from 6 per cent to 5.5 per cent to spur growth in the economy in the monetary policy review last week. The RBI also announced a 100 basis point cut in the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR). from 4 per cent to 3 per cent, to be implemented in four tranches of 25 bps each. The step is expected to inject Rs 2.5 lakh crore into the banking system, boosting liquidity

also the belief that during the year, it is likely to undershoot

and supporting credit flow.

INTERNATIONAL

UN Chief Guterres offers Condolences to Victims of Air India Crash Israel Launches Preemptive Strikes on

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has sent his "heartfelt condolences" to the families of the victims of the Air India crash in Ahmedabad, according to his Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq.

"The Secretary-General is deeply saddened by the news of the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on 12 June, which claimed the lives of more than 200 people aboard as well as the loss of life and injuries at the BJ Medical College hostel, which was struck during the crash", he said on Thursday.

Guterres "extends his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and to the people

el ban issued by US President

Donald Trump took effect amid

growing chaos over the Trump

administration's immigration

Over the weekend, protesters

clashed and faced off with Na-

tional Guard troops in downtown

Los Angeles during the demon-

strations against immigration

raids that swept across California.

In New York City, demonstrators

occupied the Trump Tower on

enforcement.



and Government of India, as well as to all countries whose citizens were affected by this tragedy. He wishes a swift and full recovery to those who were injured", Haq added.

HOUSTON: An extensive trav- Monday, demanding the release

of immigrants detained in recent

raids. Police arrested at least 20 of

them after a standoff lasting about

20 minutes, Xinhua news agency

Trump signed a proclamation

last week, fully banning the entry

of nationals from 12 countries,

namely Afghanistan, Chad, the

Republic of the Congo, Equato-

rial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran,

Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, Su-

dan and Yemen, citing national

reported quoting local media.

a flight to Gatwick Airport near London crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad Airport

The plane had 242 passengers and crew, and there were The Boeing Dreamliner on reports of at least one person

According to a release by the

White House, these countries

were found "to be deficient with

regards to screening and vetting

and determined to pose a very

high risk to the United States."

surviving the crash. At least five people were killed on the ground when the plane hit a medical college campus, reports said.

The aircraft had issued a distress call moments before losing altitude, and investigators are now focused on retrieving the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder - commonly known as black boxes — to reconstruct the final moments of the flight.

Indian Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, who rushed to the crash site from Vijayawada, confirmed that the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has been tasked with

leading the inquiry. Trump's travel ban takes effect amid growing chaos over immigration enforcement

Meanwhile, the proclama-

tion partially restricts the entry of nationals from seven countries -- Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela. "The restrictions and limitations imposed by the Proclamation are necessary to garner cooperation from foreign governments, enforce our immi-

gration laws, and advance other

important foreign policy, national

security, and counterterrorism

objectives, "the White House said

TEHRAN: Israel launched major airstrikes against Iran in the early hours of Friday morning, significantly escalating tensions in the region and raising the specter of a broader conflict between the long-standing rivals.

The attacks come amid mounting concerns over Tehran's nuclear program and its perceived threat to Israeli national security.

In a televised statement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that Israel had initiated a "targeted military operation to roll back the Iranian threat to Israel's very survival.'

This operation will take as long as is needed to complete the task of fending off the threat of annihilation against us," Netanyahu declared, underscoring the gravity of the move.

The offensive was further confirmed by Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz, who described it as a "preemptive strike" aimed at neutralizing imminent threats. In response to the heightened risk, Katz also announced a special state of emergency across Israel to ensure national preparedness and civilian safety.

Meanwhile, Iranian state



media reported that loud explosions were heard in several parts of the capital, Tehran, during the early morning hours on Friday. IRIB, Iran's state broadcaster, noted that the source of the blasts had not yet been officially identified, though speculation is mounting that the Israeli strikes may have

Iran, Major Explosion Heard in Tehran

Earlier on Monday, Iran's top security body warned that its armed forces would immediately target Israel's "secret nuclear facilities" if the Islamic Republic comes under military attack, following claims it has obtained "sensitive Israeli intel-

The Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) issued the statement days after Intelligence Minister Esmaeil Khatib said Iran had acquired a "significant cache" of Israeli documents $through\ intelligence\ operations.$

According to the council, months of intelligence gathering had enabled Iran's armed forces to identify high-value Israeli targets for potential retaliatory strikes, should Israel

strategic ambiguity.

India Advises Nationals in Israel to Stay Vigilant as Tehran-Tel Áviv Tensions Escalate

NEW DELHI: Amid escalating hostilities between Israel and Iran, the Embassy of India in Tel Aviv has issued an urgent advisory to Indian nationals currently in the country, urging them to stay vigilant, avoid non-essential movement, and follow local safety instructions.

The advisory comes after Israel launched major airstrikes on Iran early Friday morning, sparking concerns of a broader regional conflict.

In its message on social media, the Indian mission stressed the importance of caution and preparedness for Indian citizens residing or travelling in Israel.

"In view of the prevailing situation in the region, all Indian nationals in Israel are advised to stay vigilant and adhere to the safety protocols as advised by the İsraeli authorities and ȟome front command (https://oref. org.il/eng). Please exercise caution, avoid unnecessary travel within the country and stay close to safety shelters. the Embassy of India in Israel wrote in a post on X. The embassy also urged Indian citizens to stay updated through official channels and to remain in touch with the mission in case of any emer-

The advisory follows Israel's declaration of a special state of emergency, after it launched what it called a "preemptive strike" on Iran. The situation remains fluid, with explosions reported in Tehran and heightened security measures in place across Israel.

The attacks come amid mounting concerns over Tehran's nuclear programme and its perceived threat to Israeli national security.

In a televised statement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that Israel had initiated a targeted military operation to roll back the Iranian threat

to Israel's very survival." preemptive strike

targeted military infrastructure or nuclear-related facilities.

initiate military action against Iranian interests. Israel is believed by many

to possess nuclear weapons, though it has never officially confirmed or denied this, maintaining a longstanding policy of

Russia downs 102 **Ukrainian drones** overnight



MOSCOW: Russia's air defence systems intercepted and destroyed 102 Ukrainian fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicles overnight, the country's Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday via its official Telegram channel. According to the ministry, the drones were neutralised between 9:50 p.m. Moscow time on Monday and 5:50 a.m. on Tuesday, across several regions in western and central Russia. Forty-six unmanned vehicles were downed over Bryansk Oblast, 20 over Belgorod Oblast, nine each over Voronezh Oblast and Crimea, four each over Kaluga Oblast and the Republic of Tatarstan, three over Moscow Oblast, two each over Leningrad, Orvol, and Kursk Oblasts, and one over Smolensk Oblast, said the ported. Ukraine's overnight drone

strikes have forced a temporary

suspension of flights in all airports

serving Moscow and the country's

second-largest city, St. Petersburg,

but caused no damage, Russian

officials reported on Tuesday.

Russian President Putin, other world leaders express grief over Ahmedabad plane crash

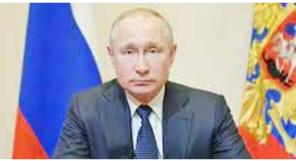
MOSCOW: Condolences from leaders across the world continue to pour in for the people affected after an Air India flight bound for London, carrying over 240 passengers, crashed shortly after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon. The incident occurred near the Meghaninagar area of the city, triggering a massive emergency response. At least 169 Indians and 53

British nationals were travelling in Air India's flight AI171 from Ahmedabad to London's Gatwick airport. Russian President Vladimir

Putin sent a message of condolences to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the passenger plane crash in Ahmedabad... "Please accept the deepest

condolences over the tragic consequences of a passenger plane crash in Ahmedabad. Kindly convey the words of sincere sympathy and support to the to the families and loved ones families and near ones of the time as well as wishes for a speedy recovery to all those injured in this catastrophe,

President of Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu expressed grief the Government and people cial media, offering condolences



of India.

"I express profound sadness at the tragic crash of Air India flight AI 171 near Ahmedabad. At this difficult time, the government and people of Maldives stand in solidarity with the people and the Government of India," Muizzu posted on X.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Union, also expressed shock over the "heartbreaking news" from

"My deepest condolences grieving this terrible loss. We Modi, Europe stands in solidarity with you and the people of India in this moment of sorrow,

Maldives Foreign Minister and extended solidarity with Abdulla Khaleel took to his so-

on the tragic plane crash. "I am deeply saddened by the tragic crash of an Air India flight. I extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones affected by this devastating incident. Our thoughts are with the injured and all those impacted, including the emergency responders working tirelessly at the scene, "Khaleel posted on X.

Foreign Minister of Israel, Gideon Sa'ar expressed sorrow over the incident and offered thoughts to the Indian people.

"Deeply saddened to hear Ahmedabad, India. Our hearts are with the Indian people following this terrible incident, " Sa'ar posted on X.

Chinese Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong also extended solidarity with all those affected

in the tragic plane crash. "Deeply saddened by the

tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad. Our hearts go out to the passengers and their families. We stand in solidarity with all those affected in this difficult time, "Xu Feihong posted on X.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry of Azerbaijan also offered deepest condolences to the people affected in the accident and

prayed for their recovery.
"We are deeply saddened by the tragic plane crash in Ahmedabad, India. We extend our condolences to the families and loved ones of those affected. We hope for strength and healing in the days ahead, "the Ministry posted on X.

On behalf of the US mission in India, US Charge d'Affaires Jorgan Andrews expressed sadness and offered thoughts to families affected by the horrific

"On behalf of the US Mission in India, we are deeply saddened by the tragic plane hmedaba heartfelt condolences and thoughts are with the families who have been affected by this horrific tragedy. We stand with India in this time of grief, "the US Embassy in India posted on X.

US President Trump launches \$5 million 'gold card' immigration website

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has officially launched a new immigration pathway for wealthy foreigners, dubbed the "gold card", offering a route to permanent residency in exchange for a \$5 million payment to the government. The long-discussed program

was unveiled on Wednesday through a new governmentbacked website, trumpcard.gov, where interested individuals can now register their details to join the waiting list. "For five million \$dollars,

the Trump card is coming, "the US President declared in a post on his social media platform, Truth Social. Thousands have been calling and asking how they can sign

up to ride a beautiful road in gaining access to the Greatest Country and Market anywhere in the World, "he added. The program, which Trump

promotes as a fast-track immiration option, aims to attract high-net-worth individuals seeking to live and eventually itizens of the Unite States. Marketed as a more sophis-

ticated alternative to the existing EB-5 investor visa, Trump described the gold card as "green card privileges plus."

However, despite the buzz requirements.



the gold card is not yet available for purchase. According to the official website, users can currently only submit their contact information to be notified once applications open. "Enter your information below to be notified the moment access opens, "reads the message on the homepage of trumpcard. gov. Clarifying the scope of the program, Trump emphasised that the gold card does not grant immediate citizenship.

"It's somewhat like a green card, but at a higher level of sophistication, "Trump said, adding, "It's a road to citizenship for people, and essentially people of wealth or people of great talent." Reports by USA Israel Katz, who described at while the \$5 million payment opens the door to permanent residency, it does not guarantee automatic citizenship, which would still require meeting certain of emergency across Israel to legal criteria and residency

"This operation will take as long as is needed to complete the task of fending off the threat of annihila-

tion against us," Netanyahu declared, underscoring the gravity of the move. The offensive was further confirmed by Israeli Defence Minister aimed at neutralising imminent threats. In response to the heightened risk, Katz also announced a special state ensure national preparedness and civilian safety.

TRUMP-MUSK REINVESTMENT LOVE

California Crisis Weaken's Musk Grip in American Politics



MISRA

American tycoon, who sym-

bolises a new generation of having allegiance with the aggressive business leaders, appears to have reinvented his political alliance with US being traced to the aggres-President Donald Trump. He sive marketing of Chinese had deserted his Democratic electric vehicles in Califormentors in favour of the Re- nia, but he forgot that the publicans; even had funded Chinese have been having 300 USD to enable the ruling a full trade mission in Caliparty to storm the American Congress.

the US Vice-President, J.D. who chose to remain in the doned her promising career in law to script her spouse's regret for attacks. Musk has already stated that he Much against the wishes of "went too far" during a public feud between the men last buses are already plying in week. Musk had also spo- California. ken with the White House

chief of staff, Susie Wiles. However, those who have been watching statements of Musk are also unhappy that Musk, made unnecessary comments against the California Bullet Train project being funded by the Chinese companies Communist Party of China. His opposition, however, is

fornia for the past 11 years. Another factor of this Those closely watching renewed ties between the American politics, perhaps, estranged political allies have realized the go-between could be the expansion of between the estranged lov- the Chinese electric vehicle ers, were none other than manufacturers in the US despite Trump's 'noisy' rhetoric Vance, and his petite win- about the threat of imposing waning, but it is not because some intelligent wife, Usha, huge tariffs against Chinese goods. Wang Chuanfu, the shadows. Usha had aban- founder of BYD, the most sought-after electric vehicle, had overtaken Elon Musk's political career. It is believed Tesla in 2024. His vehicles that the power couple, Vance with new rechargeable batand Usha had ensured that teries are already present in Elon Musk and Trump com- California, where the federal municate with each other government is facing anger before publicly expressing for not supporting the ongoing bullet train project.

Washington, Chinese electric



sales of the electric vehicle in the U.S. are reaching record highs, Tesla is charting a different course. In one of the key findings from a new analysis by Moto-integrator. conducted in collaboration with the research experts at DataPulse Research, Tesla's market share is falling, and investor confidence is also drivers are anti-electric. On the contrary, EV sales overall are rising, with electric vehicle sales in the U.S. up 11 per cent for the same period. Tesla's technology has always led the pack.

According to a few political observers, the problem could be less about motoring and more to do with Musk's high-profile political career. Tesla's outlier status has coincided with Musk's increasingly visible role in U.S. politics, suggesting that

ground to competitors could be part of a deeper brand backlash. In other words, it is not surprising that the Chinese are ready to fill the vacuum caused by the recent feud between the two political titans.

Musk Expresses Regret Musk's decision to back off could be traced to the quiet peace between the two allies by senior administration officials, including Vance, with Musk finally saying that he had gone "too far." Earlier, he had launched bitter criticism against Trump on respective social media sites by calling Trump's sweeping tax and spending bill a "disgusting abomination." In other remarks, he called

it too expensive. The political pundits feel that too much analysis is not needed about Musk's post Interestingly, the recent declining sales and loss of that he did not specify about

his regrets regarding his adverse comments. Meanwhile, Trump has wished Musk 'well'. Earlier, their political divorce appeared to be inevitable with Musk threatening to start a rival political party and suggested Trump be impeached. In other words, he was threatening to pull down the American political system. The truce between them

could give some relief to the investors, who were supporting Tesla, SpaceX and the rest of Musk's sprawling business empire, including Starlink, which depends heavily on its relationship with the federal government.

Meanwhile, in his guarded comment before the media, Vance told reporters at the Kennedy Centre recently that he had spoken with Musk and Trump about "trying to ensure that Elon is publicly supporting and privately supporting the president's agenda." He also admitted that Trump was "rightfully very frustrated" with Musk's comments, but had no desire to be in a long-term feud with the billionaire and big campaign donor.

Gopal Misra has been associated with national and international media. His books on journalism and geo-politics have been well-appreciated. Views are personal.

Gulf Air flight lands safely in Kuwait after bomb threat, suspect detained

KUWAIT CITY: A Gulf Air flight landed safely at Kuwait International Airport following a bomb threat, with all passengers evacuated and the suspect arrested, Kuwait's aviation authority said.

Flight GF213, on Sunday, was subjected to full security screening on arrival, and emergency procedures were activated in coordination with Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Interior, the DGCA said in a statement. "All passengers were safely evacuated, and no injuries were reported, "the statement said, adding that passengers were moved to a designated



in good condition.

"The report was immediately addressed in accordance with security procedures and protocols at Kuwait International Airport, in full coordination with the Ministry of Interior and relevant authorities, "the DGCA said on its social media platforms. DGCA spokesperson Abdullah Al Rajhi said that the airport lounge and remained incident did not affect airport

operations, and flights continued as scheduled. Security teams conducted thorough checks of the aircraft in line with standard emergency procedures, and passengers were disembarked as a precaution, Xinhua news

agency reported. Precautionary security procedures were carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Interior to ensure the safety of passengers and crew, and to confirm the aircraft was free of any threat. Authorities confirmed that the person responsible for the bomb threat had been taken into custody. Legal action and further investigations are underway.

Ukraine denies delaying prisoner swap with Russia

KYIV: Ukraine's Coordinating Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War denied Russia's claim that Kyiv is delaying a prisoner exchange agreed on

"Today's statements by the Russian side do not reflect the reality and previously reached agreements, "the agency said in a statement on Saturday.

According to the statement, Ukraine has handed over to Russia the list of prisoners designated for the exchange, including those seriously wounded and ill. However, Russia has submitted different lists that "do not meet" the agreed parameters of the swap.



The agency said Ukraine has given Russia relevant comments and the next move is expected from the Russian side.

Earlier Saturday, Russia accused Ukraine of indefinitely delaying a planned swap of prisoners and the handover of fallen soldiers' bodies, Xinhua news agency reported.

Russia said Ukraine unexpectedly postponed a transfer involving prisoners of war and the bodies of dead soldiers, leaving more than 1, 200 frozen Ukrainian bodies waiting in refrigerated trucks at an exchange point with no one to col-Russian Presidential Aide

Vladimir Medinsky said in a Telegram post that Russia has handed over the first list of 640 prisoners to Ukraine and begun transferring bodies of dead Ukrainian soldiers, but Ukrainian negotiators did not arrive at the exchange site.

Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms Ltd, Netflix Join Hands for Creative Collaboration

MUMBAI: Streaming giant Netflix and TV Czarina Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms Ltd. have teamed up for a long term creative collaboration for a range of projects across different formats

Ekta Kapoor, Joint Managing Director, Balaji Telefilms, said,"At Balaji Telefilms, storytelling has always been at the heart of everything we do whether through cinema, television, or digital platforms."

She added that partnering with Netflix is a big moment.

Ekta added: "It allows us to bring powerful, culturally rooted, and emotionally resonant stories to a global audience. The beginning of this new collaboration marks an exciting new chapter where we continue to push creative boundaries and deliver content that entertains, inspires, and connects people everywhere.

Balaji and Netflix have previously collaborated on several beloved titles, including Kathal, Pagglait, Jaane Jaan and Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare. Speaking about the collabo-



India, said, "Ekta has been a force in shaping Indian entertainment with unforgettable stories and characters that made it to pop culture, even before hashtags existed.

"Her creative instinct and deep understanding of the audience's pulse have consistently set her apart in shaping what India chose to watch and love for more than two decades. At Netflix, our focus is to serve audiences with very diverse tastes and this collaboration will bring unique stories in rooted ways, marking an excit- Ghar Ghar Kii, Kasautii Zindaing new chapter in our creative gii Kay, and Kahiin To Hoga.

journey," Shergill added.

The line-up which includes an untitled series in advanced stages of development, this collaboration will deliver new stories in formats tailor-made for streaming audiences.

This collaboration will be undertaken by Balaji Telefilms Ltd, including its divisions-Balaji Motion Pictures and

Balaji Telefilms Digital. Ekta began her career at the age of 17 and became known for producing a large number of television soap operas in Hindi including Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Kahaani

Why It's the Last Cry for Help in Mid-Air Emergencies ARUN KUMAR RAO Ahmedabad A routine transcontinental flight turned into a nightmare when Air India Flight AI-171, en route from Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad Plane Crash: What is a 'Mayday' Call and

tigation, but aviation sources confirm that a "Mayday" call is always a serious, final alert signalling grave danger.

What is a Mayday Call?

In aviation, a "Mayday' call is the most critical distress signal a pilot can send. It means the aircraft is in immediate and serious danger-be it due to a technical failure, fire, cabin pressure loss, or an impending crash. The term is always repeated three times—"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday"-to eliminate confusion and alert all nearby ATC and aircraft.

It's not just a phrase. It's a code for urgency, survival, and rapid response.

Origin of the Word "Mayday"

The word Mayday originates from the French phrase "m'aider", meaning "help me." It was coined in the 1920s by Frederick Stanley Mockford,

a senior radio officer working air traffic between London and Paris, who was asked to devise a word that would be easily understood by both English and French-speaking pilots and controllers. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) later adopted it as the standard emergency call

When is Mayday Used?

Pilots invoke Mayday only under extreme conditions, including:

- Engine or technical failure Fire on board
- Fuel shortage or contami-
- nation Loss of cabin pressure
- Threat of mid-air collision Imminent crash landing It instantly prioritizes the

aircraft in distress, clears the airspace, and initiates rescue coordination — a vital lifeline in chaotic seconds that often separate survival from disaster.

DGCA Begins High-Level Probe The DGCA has dispatched

a technical and safety team to the crash site. "Flight AI-171 was operated by aircraft VT-ANB. The crash occurred shortly after takeoff," confirmed a senior DGCA official. While black box recovery and cockpit voice recordings will be key to unearthing what went wrong, early reports indicate possible engine failure or avionics malfunction.

Local authorities report multiple casualties and injuries in Meghani Nagar, where homes were damaged and panic spread as the aircraft slammed into the area, leaving a trail of wreckage and unanswered questions.

As India grapples with one of its most tragic air disasters in recent years, the Mayday call from Flight AI-171 stands as both a haunting signal and a crucial part of the investigation puzzle. For those on board, it was a cry for help. For the aviation community, it's a call to re-examine safety protocols, aircraft systems, and pilot preparedness in high-stress scenarios.

As more facts emerge, one thing is clear: the skies may offer freedom, but when systems fail, a single word becomes the final plea for life — Mayday.

Deepika Padukone Comes Onboard Allu Arjun, Atlee's Magnum Opus AA22XA6!



of Telugu Star Allu Arjun's

tor Atlee, being tentatively

referred to as AA22 X A6, on Saturday welcomed actress Deepika Padukone onboard the film's unit. Taking to its X timeline, Sun Pictures, ducing the film, wrote, "The Queen marches to conquer! Welcome onboard @deepi kapadukone #TheFacesOfAA22xA6. #AA22xA6 – A Magnum Opus from Sun Pictures. @alluarjun @Atlee dir #SunPictures #AA22 #A6" The production house shared a video of Atlee meeting Deepika Padukone and narrating the script to her. The clip also gives a glimpse of Deepika Padukone's motion capture portions in the film. The visuals give the impression that Deepika Padukone plays a queen, who rides in the film. The film, which has already triggered huge expectations as it is believed that it will be like no other film that has ever been done before, will have world-class experts working on it. It may be recalled that Sun Pictures had released an announcement video about the film some time back. In the anof world-class technicians who are to work on the film, shared their thoughts about the script. Well known VFX who is known for having worked in films like 'Iron Man 2' and 'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts', had said, 'I just got done reading the script and I got to say, my

Flipkart CEO Turns Wishmaster for a Day, **Celebrates Ties with Farmer Partners**

ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru

In a powerful gesture reinforcing Flipkart's commitment to inclusive growth, Kalyan Krishnamurthy, CEO of the Flipkart Group, stepped into the shoes of a Flipkart Wishmaster for a day — delivering smiles and groceries to customers, while also connecting with the people who help power the e-commerce giant's fresh produce supply chain: India's farmers.

Krishnamurthy, along with Kabeer Biswas, Vice President of Flipkart Minutes, visited Malur in Karnataka to meet and engage with farmers who are part of Flipkart's direct sourcing net-



work. These farmers ensure that Padma, a woman farmer who fresh vegetables and greens make their way to Flipkart's Minutes Fulfillment Stores each morning, helping the platform guarantee quality, freshness, and conve-

nience to its urban customers. Among those he met was with over 17 years of experience growing capsicum, cucumber, and chillies on his 4-acre farm. He spoke of how the partnership with Flipkart has not only improved price realization but also reduced market un-

Also present was

has nurtured her 3-acre land for over a decade, cultivating leafy greens such as coriander, fenugreek (methi), and spinach (palak). "I feel proud knowing my greens reach homes directly through Flipkart. It saves me the Krishnappa, a dedicated farmer effort of going to the mandi every



On a tip-off, the Special Operations Team (SOT) conducted a raid on a resort at Erlapally on the outskirts of Chevella in

to London Gatwick, crashed

in the Meghani Nagar local-

ity shortly after take-off on

Thursday afternoon. The Boe-

ing 787-8 Dreamliner, carrying

242 people, issued a "Mayday"

call before losing contact with air traffic control — a chilling

signal that all was not well in

Now, as emergency services

sift through the debris and the

Directorate General of Civil

Aviation (DGCA) launches a

full-scale investigation, a single

word reverberates through

headlines and public con-

At 2:45 PM, Captain Sumeet

Sabharwal, a seasoned Line

Training Captain with over

8,200 hours of flying experi-

ence, and First Officer Clive

Kundar (1.100 hours) radioed

a Mayday call to the Ahmed-

abad ATC. Within minutes,

the aircraft went off radar

and was later confirmed to

have crashed into the Meghani

Nagar area, causing feared ci-

vilian and passenger casualties.

cy call remains under inves-

Rangareddy district early on

The reason for the emergen-

sciousness — Mayday.

What Happened?

the sky.



at the Tripura Resort around 2 a.m., police caught a person consuming ganja at the venue. agement at Chevella Police Station under the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate.

The police were looking into alleged violations, including drug use, absence of official permissions, and illegal use of sound systems.

The singer had allegedly organised the birthday party without prior police permission, and the liquor was served at the party without permission from

The police also booked the General Manager of the Tripura Resort for allowing the event to take place without the necessary approvals. The police also seized DJ equipment that was being used without a sound permission license.

The police conducted a drug test on 48 of those who were present at the party. It was immediately not known how many

Vicky Kaushal and **Katrina Kaif cheer for** Diljit Dosanjh's thriller **'Detective Sherdil'**



Katrina Kaif have extended upcoming thriller "Detective Sherdil." The star couple recently took to social media to cheer for the film. Taking to her Instagram stories, Katrina shared the film's trailer and wrote, "Looks like so much fun...Superb team @diljitdosanjh." Vicky too posted the trailer on his Instagram stories, writing, "Mazzedaar trailer! Best wishes team #detectivesherdil." On June 9, the makers released the trailer of the film on social media, introducing Detective Sherdil as an unconventional and astute investigator with a knack for cracking the most baffling cases. Teaming up with Natasha, a composed and intelligent detective, the duo delved into a complex maze of hidden family secrets, betrayals, and high-stakes financial motives. Directed by Ravi Chhabriya, the film featuring Diljit as a brilliant detective centers on the shocking death of a flamboyant billionaire tycoon in Budapest. While the case initially appears to be a hate crime, it soon unravels into a far more complex and sinister plot. The movie also stars Diana Penty, Boman Irani, Ratna Pathak Shah, Chunky Panday, Sumeet Vyas, Banita Sandhu, and Kashmira Irani. Speaking about his role, Diljit had earlier shared, "Playing Detective Sherdil has been fun for me.

"Fatal Obsession: A Bengaluru Love Story Turns Into a Blood-Soaked Tragedy" **ARUN KUMAR RAO**

What began as a secret affair between a married mother of two and a younger man spiraled into a night of blood, betrayal, and death inside a hotel room in South Bengaluru — a crime that has sent chills through the city.

The victim, Harini R, 33, a sident of Hemmigenura in Banashankari 6th Stage, was found brutally murdered inside a room at an OYO hotel in Poornaprajna Housing Society Layout. The killer — her 25-year-old former lover Yashas, a BCA graduate and tech employee from Kengeri Satellite Town — confessed to stabbing her 13 times after she told him it was over.

Their doomed final meeting began like any other — a private rendezvous, rekindled affection, a few hours of intimacy. But beneath the surface, emotions simmered, fueled by heartbreak, jealousy, and rage. Police believe Yashas had already made up his mind. He had brought a knife, concealed it, and waited for the moment Harini would say she was leaving him for good.

At around 9:30 PM on June 6, after spending a few hours in the room, Harini reportedly told Yashas she needed to return home and made it clear that she could no longer continue their relationship. Enraged, Yashas snapped. He pulled out the knife and attacked her mercilessly, stabbing her neck, chest, back, and abdomen in a fit of fury. Harini struggled but couldn't five days of police custody.

escape. She died on the spot. of eerie silence. The killer re-



Timeline of a Tragedy

2012: Harini marries Dasegowda; they have two children 2022: Harini meets Yashas at a village fair 2024-END: The affair is discovered; families intervene JUNE 6, 2025: Final meeting at a hotel; Harini is murdered JUNE 7, 3:15 AM: Yashas calls police after stabbing himself JUNE 9: Hotel staff alert authorities

JUNE 10: Yashas is arrested and remanded in police custody

mained in the blood-soaked room with the lifeless body. At 3:15 AM, in what appeared to be a desperate act of drama or guilt, Yashas stabbed himself in the chest. Bleeding, he called a police officer from Kengeri police station and confessed.

By the time Subramanyapura police rushed to the scene, it was too late. Harini lay cold and lifeless on the hotel bed. Her dreams, her secrets, her second life — all ended in a pool

Yashas was initially treated at a private hospital and then shifted to KIMS. Discharged on Sunday evening, he was arrested and produced in court the next day. He has been remanded to

What followed was hours A Secret That Turned Deadly Harini had been married

since 2012 to Dasegowda H.P., a 41-year-old farmer. Together, they had two children. Their life, by all accounts, was modest and rooted in village traditions. But three years ago, Harini met Yashas through a mutual friend at a village fair. What began as friendship slowly turned into a full-blown affair.

When her husband discovered the relationship a few months ago, he informed both families. Harini was counseled and promised to cut ties with Yashas. For a while, she did. But love — or its twisted version doesn't always fade quietly. The two reconnected recently and decided to meet one last time. Police now believe this meet-

"If I Can't Have Her..."

ing was a trap.

In his chilling confession, Ya-

showing signs of heat stress.

shas told police: "If she couldn't be with me, she shouldn't be

Investigators say the young techie had grown increasingly possessive and mentally unstable over the past few months. The idea of Harini returning to her family and leaving him behind was unbearable. "Harini had made a clear de-

South, Lokesh B Jagalasar. "Out of jealousy and rage, Yashas decided to kill her."

Hotel staff grew suspicious when Harini failed to check out. Two days later, they opened the door and were met with a horrific scene.

A Family Shattered

In his police complaint, Dasegowda said he had dropped Harini off at a friend's house in Kengeri and was supposed to pick her up later that evening. Her phone had gone silent. The next morning, police contacted him. His world crumbled.

What remains is a family devastated — two children orphaned of their mother, a husband betrayed and broken, and a community gripped by a brutal reminder of what obsession can lead to.

Police Probe Continues

Subramanyapura police have registered a case of murder. Investigations are ongoing into how long Yashas had planned the crime and whether anyone else had prior knowledge. For now, Yashas remains in custody — and the city mourns a woman who paid the ultimate price for a love that turned lethal.

Bollywood Actor Vidyut Jammwal Joins Anti-Drug Campaign, Champions Yoga for Youth Empowerment

ARUN KUMAR RAO

Bengaluru

In a powerful message to India's youth, Bollywood action star Vidyut Jammwal lent his voice and presence to the nationwide anti-drug initiative "Yuva Shuddhi Abhiyan", urging young people to embrace the discipline of Yoga and lead a life of mental and physical freedom. The actor was a special guest at the state-level launch of International Yoga Day and International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in Bengaluru in the presence of Karnataka Governor Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot.

Known for his martial arts prowess and fitness discipline, Vidyut Jammwal struck a chord with the audience — especially the youth — as he emphasized the role of inner strength, focus, and self-control in resisting addiction and negative influences.

"Yoga is not just about flexibility or poses — it is a way of life. It teaches you to control your mind, your emotions, and vour reactions. That's real strength," Jammwal told a cheering crowd. "Today, we are not just celebrating Yoga; we are declaring war against drug addiction. And the warriors in this war are our youth."

Actor as Role Model: Power. Purpose, and Positivity

Vidyut's participation brought star power and authenticity to the event. A vocal supporter of clean living and natural fitness, the actor reflected on how discipline, determination, and self-awareness — core principles of Yoga — have shaped his own journey.

He urged the youth to find

purpose through positive choices. "Drugs don't make you cool. Self-mastery does," he said, receiving thunderous applause.

The actor also interacted with volunteers, yoga practitioners, and de-addiction counselors, expressing his admiration for those working on the frontlines of the campaign. He applauded the integrated approach of combining Yoga, spirituality, medical support, and awareness to combat substance abuse.

A Call to Rise

Launched as a joint effort by the Ministry of AYUSH, Narcotics Control Bureau, S-VYASA University, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, and other partners, the Yuva Shuddhi Abhiyan aims to empower youth to lead India's de-addiction movement. The event's theme - "Yoga and Deaddiction: One Health, One Earth" — highlights the deep connection between personal wellness and planetary sustainability.

Governor Gehlot, in his keynote address, emphasized how Yoga builds positive energy and self-control — qualities that can shield the youth from addiction. Vidyut Jammwal echoed this

Nearly 150-year-old Portuguese era library reopens in Goa

sentiment: "Yoga gives you the weapons to fight the biggest enemy - your own weakness.' Beyond the Screen: Vidyut's Real-Life Action

Often referred to as India's own action hero, Vidyut Jammwal is a trained Kalarpayattu martial artist and a fitness icon who embodies the values of discipline and wellness. His presence at the campaign launch wasn't just symbolic — it was motivational, especially for thousands of students and young profes-

"Our culture has given us Yoga — a tool for mental clarity and physical power. Let's use it. Let's rise above," he concluded. Highlighting Hope: The Way Forward

sionals tuning in.

With a potent combination of policy, health interventions, spiritual support and youth engagement, the Yuva Shuddhi Abhiyan is gaining momentum nationwide. The launch of the Manas Rajya Sahayavani Helpline and new de-addiction centers reinforces the state's commitment to rehabilitation and recovery, not just enforce-

Hot days, cool moves for animals at Wildlife SOS centres

As summer temperatures climb across northern India, Wildlife SOS has reactivated its seasonal heat management protocols to ensure optimal care for the rescued sloth bears and elephants at its Agra and Mathura centres. With animals particularly vulnerable during extreme weather, the summer-care management focuses on hydration, environmental enrichment, and ther-

mal relief. At the Agra Bear Rescue Fa-



cility (ABRF), the quantity of hydrating seasonal fruits like fitted with coolers and overhead sprinklers, while dedicated wawatermelon and cucumbers offered to the bears has increased. ter pools offer much-needed re-Cooling enrichments such as ice lief during peak heat hours. Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) popsicles and frozen fruit blocks have been introduced, offering is also being administered to prevent dehydration in bears both nutrition and sensory en-



Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC) and Elephant Hospital Campus (EHC) in Mathura, new adaptations include rescheduling walks to cooler parts of the day-early mornings and late evenings-allowing the elephants to remain active while avoiding midday heat. Sprinklers, regular pool maintenance, and additional ORS intake are keeping the elephants hydrated and comfortable. Clean drink-

ing areas are maintained mul-

tiple times a day, while shade Meanwhile, at the Elephant structures and mud wallows help regulate body temperature naturally.

Kartick Satyanarayan, Cofounder and CEO of Wildlife SOS, mentioned, "India's summers are becoming increasingly intense, and animals under our care feel it as much as humans do. Our teams anticipate these challenges every year, ensuring each bear and elephant has what they need to remain healthy, hydrated and happy.'

DOMINIC RODRIGUES

Panjim

The newly renovated, Portuguese era Ataide municipal library was reopened to the public after a Rs 3.8cr makeover at Mapusa, in north Goa

Vishwanath Rane, Goa, Minister for urban development, tcp, health and forest, inaugurated the 1883 established library, which has over the years amassed a significant collection of over 25000 titles, including more than 5000



Portuguese titles.

Post Goa liberation, the library was taken over by the Mapusa municipal council. Declaring arts and culture as being very relevant in Goa's heritage, Rane said, that the Goa government considered

this very important and was providing all the needed funds in this regard, including for this library. Mapusa MLA Joshua d> Souza and Aldona MLA Carlos Alvares Ferreira were also present on the oc-