

# Dumani Mail

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## SC refuses to recall order on stray dogs sterilisation, cites right to live with dignity

New Delhi: The right to live with dignity encompasses the right to move freely without the threat of harm from dog bite attacks, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday while dismissing pleas seeking a recall of its earlier order on the relocation and sterilisation of stray canines.

"The court cannot remain oblivious to harsh ground realities where children, international travellers and old age people have fallen victim to dog bite incidents," a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria said in response to the petitions by animal rights activists and others.

The court also issued a slew of directions to states, union territories and other statutory bodies to augment infrastructure to deal with stray dogs.

On November 7 last year, the court took note of the "alarming rise" in dog-bite incidents in areas such as

educational institutions, hospitals and railway stations and directed that stray dogs be relocated to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination. Stray dogs picked up shall not be released back to their original place, the court said.

On Tuesday, the apex court rejected petitions challenging the validity of SOPs on dealing with stray animals issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI). It observed that there has been a "discernible absence" of sustained efforts on the part of states and UTs to build infrastructure to deal with the rising population of stray dogs.

Implementation of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) framework, it said, remains largely sporadic, underfunded and uneven across jurisdictions. The framework includes sterilisation, vaccination,



sheltering, and overall scientific management of state arms. Prolonged inaction coupled with the absence of institutional commitment to the effective implementation of the ABC framework has led to aggravation of the problem, which has now assumed dimensions "warranting urgent and systemic intervention", the apex court

said. "The right to live with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution of India necessarily encompasses the right of every citizen to move freely and access public spaces without living under a constant apprehension of physical harm, attack, or exposure to life-threatening events, such as dog bites in public areas,"

the court ruled. "The state cannot remain a passive spectator where preventable threats to human life continue to proliferate in the face of statutory mechanisms specifically designed to address them," it added.

States and union territories, it stressed, are under continued constitutional obligation to

ensure the protection of the fundamental right to life and safety of citizens under Article 21a.

"This obligation is not very passive in nature, but casts an affirmative duty upon the states and union territories to take all necessary and effective measures to prevent conditions that pose a threat to public safety, health, and well-being," the bench directed.

The failure to adopt a proactive, structured, and sustained approach to the problem has resulted in a "largely reactive and crisis-driven response necessitated by the escalation of the problem rather than its prevention", the court said.

Such an approach is neither efficient nor capable of yielding durable resolutions, particularly in a matter involving public health, human safety and ecological balance.

The bench said in its three-part order that after reserving judgment on January 29 in the present matter, it has been informed of multiple reports indicating that the incidence of dog bites and stray dog attacks continue to occur across the country with alarming frequency and severity.

It also referred to media reports on dog bite incidents in Rajasthan and other places and said they highlighted deeply disturbing incidents in which young children suffered previous injuries, including mauling of the faces and limbs by the street dogs.

"Such incidents not only endanger the safety and dignity of the citizens and visitors, but also adversely affect public confidence in civic administration and in urban governance. The whole set

of figures reveal staggering dimensions of the problem... the harm caused by such incidents is not mainly statistical in nature but has great human societal and public health consequences..." the bench said.

Continued non-compliance and non-implementation of the directions issued by the apex court and thereafter by the jurisdictional high court, "shall be viewed seriously".

In November last year, the court directed authorities to ensure the removal of all cattle and other stray animals from the state highways, national highways and expressways.

The top court is hearing a suo motu case, initiated on July 28 last year, over a media report on stray dog bites leading to rabies, particularly among children, in the national capital.

### Former Uttarakhand chief minister Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri passes away at 91

New Delhi: Former Uttarakhand chief minister and Union minister Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri, known for bringing military discipline to public service, personal integrity, and simplicity, passed away in Dehradun on Tuesday. He was 91.

Khanduri served in the army for around four decades (1954-1991) and rose to the rank of Major General before joining politics. He was first elected to the Lok Sabha from Uttarakhand's Garhwal constituency in 1991. Khanduri was reelected four times, building a reputation as a disciplined and principled parliamentarian. He served as Union road transport and highways minister between 2000 and 2004.

Khanduri's first term as chief minister lasted from March 2007 to June 2009, when he resigned, taking moral responsibility for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s dismal performance in the 2009 national polls in Uttarakhand. He held the post again from September 2011 to March 2012.

Khanduri, popularly known as "General Sahib", was re-elected to the Lok Sabha for the fifth term in 2014 and served as chairperson of the parliamentary standing committee on defence (2014-2018). He also served on important committees related to transport, public accounts, and home affairs.

In 1983, Khanduri received the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, a military award for distinguished service.



Khanduri held key positions in the Corps of Engineers. He commanded a regiment during the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Khanduri, who was born on October 1, 1934, in Dehradun, held important posts like the army's chief engineer.

Tributes poured in as soon as the news of Khanduri's passing broke. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Khanduri will always be remembered for his invaluable contributions to the armed forces and the political arena. "He remained forever dedicated to the development of Uttarakhand, which was clearly evident during his tenure as Chief Minister. His term as a Union Minister is also inspiring to everyone. He made tireless efforts continuously for the betterment of connectivity across the country."

Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said Khanduri set an exemplary standard of discipline, dedication, and

national service in the armed forces and in public life. "In public life, he established a strong identity through his focus on Uttarakhand's development, good governance, transparency, and an honest work culture. Through several important decisions taken in the interest of the state, he gave a new direction to its development," said Dhami. "His simplicity, forthrightness, and administrative efficiency would always remain a source of inspiration".

Khanduri's daughter, Uttarakhand assembly speaker Ritu Khanduri Bhushan, said her father would be remembered as a leader who combined military discipline with public service. "My father was regarded as a symbol of integrity, discipline, and national service in the politics of Uttarakhand and the country. From his years in the army to his long political career, his life remained dedicated to the selfless service of the nation and society," said Bhushan.

### Indian Railways approves 54-kilometre Kiul-Jhajha third line project at cost of Rs 962 crore

New Delhi: Indian Railways has approved the 54-kilometre Kiul-Jhajha third line project at a cost of 962 crore rupees. The Ministry of Railways has said that the project forms an important part of the High Traffic Density Network of Indian Railways and is expected to strengthen both passenger and freight movement across Eastern and Northern India.

Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav has said that the project will significantly enhance capacity on the heavily utilised Howrah-Delhi corridor and help improve punctuality and operational flexibility of train services. He said the additional line infrastructure will facilitate seamless movement of passenger and freight trains while supporting industrial growth and trade connectivity across the region.

### A new elevated corridor will be built in Gurugram at a cost of Rs 181 crore, improving connectivity.

New Delhi: A major infrastructure project has been proposed to reduce increasing traffic congestion in Gurugram. The elevated road will be extended up to the Sector-10 bus depot, creating direct connectivity between the Dwarka Expressway and the Delhi-Jaipur Highway. This connection is expected to provide significant relief from traffic jams for commuters. The estimated

cost of the project is around ₹181 crore.

According to the design plan, the elevated road will have three lanes on each side, along with two-lane service roads on both sides. The project has been under consideration for several years, with multiple revisions made over time. Earlier, proposals included road widening and flyover construction, but the elevated road is now

considered a more effective solution.

Officials said that electricity, water, and sewer lines will be shifted before construction begins. The project will move forward through coordination between the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority and the National Highways Authority of India.

Meanwhile, Manesar Municipal Corporation

Commissioner Pradeep Singh visited Shikohpur village to review local issues. He instructed officials to complete pending development works quickly and implement projects according to the needs of residents.

Overall, the elevated road project is being seen as an important step toward improving traffic management and urban development in Gurugram.

### IMD issues Yellow Alert for Heatwave conditions in Delhi for next three days

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning for heat wave conditions in the national capital for the next three days. According to IMD, isolated places in the city are likely to reel under intense heat during the day.

A k a s h v a n i ' s correspondent reports that according to the Met Department, the maximum



temperature in Delhi is expected to be around 43 to 45 degrees Celsius today, while the minimum

temperature is likely to hover near 28 degrees Celsius. In the past 24 hours, the maximum temperatures in the national

capital were in the range of 43-45 degrees while the minimum temperatures were in the range of around 27 degrees Celsius. As of yesterday, 44.6 degrees Celsius was recorded in the Ridge area station of IMD. Safdarjung station recorded 43.4 degrees Celsius, Lodi Road station 43.8 degrees Celsius, and 43.5 degrees Celsius was recorded at Palam station.

### UPI accounted for 85.5% of digital transaction volume in H2 2025: RBI report

New Delhi: Reserve Bank of India said the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) accounted for the largest share of digital payment transaction volume at 85.5 per cent in the second half of 2025, highlighting the platform's growing dominance in India's payments ecosystem.

According to the RBI's latest half-yearly Payment Systems Report, National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) and Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) each accounted for 3.6 per cent of transaction volume, while Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)

contributed just 0.1 per cent due to its role as a high-value, low-volume payment system. However, in terms of transaction value, RTGS remained the dominant platform with a 68.6 per cent share of total transaction value, followed by NEFT at 14.9 per cent and UPI at 9.5 per cent. PPIs accounted for only 0.1 per cent of the total transaction value.

The report noted that the figures reflect RTGS' importance for large-value settlements, while UPI continues to drive mass retail digital payments across the country. The RBI said NEFT maintained its



relevance in India's evolving digital payments ecosystem due to its ability to process both small and large transactions with settlement within an hour.

India's digital payments ecosystem has expanded rapidly over the past decade, with transaction volumes increasing 33 times

and transaction values rising nearly three times between 2016 and 2025, according to the report.

Over the last five years alone, transaction volumes have grown more than fourfold, while values nearly doubled, translating into a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 43 per cent

in volume and 17 per cent in value. The RBI attributed the growth to rising smartphone penetration, the expansion of public digital infrastructure such as Unified Payments Interface, and increasing public trust in secure and seamless cashless transactions. The report further stated that total payment transaction volumes in India increased from 6,437 crore in 2021 to 26,819 crore in 2025. In value terms, transactions rose from Rs 1,741 lakh crore to Rs 3,215 lakh crore during the same period, recording a CAGR of 42.9 per cent in volume and 16.6 per cent in value.

### Delhi govt to set up collection centres for damaged idols of deities: CM

New Delhi: The Delhi government will set up dedicated collection centres for receiving broken or damaged idols of deities to ensure their respectful disposal, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Tuesday. People often leave

damaged idols and figurines of deities under trees, in public spaces like parks and roadside or throw them into the river, she said and sought feedback from the public regarding locations for the proposed collection

centres. "We're launching dedicated centres to respectfully recycle our cherished idols, a heartfelt step toward a cleaner, culturally mindful Viksit Delhi," the chief minister said in a post on X.

# Health Rights Lost Amid Industrial Smoke in Rengali Industrial Belt. Big Claims of Development, But Quality Healthcare Remains Out of Reach

Sambalpur-19/05 (DMS) While the government and industrial establishments continue to project the Rengali industrial belt in Sambalpur district as a symbol of development, the common people of the region are still deprived of basic healthcare facilities. Multi-crore industrial projects have come up in the area, yet residents continue to struggle for access to good hospitals, specialist doctors, and emergency medical services. This harsh reality exposes the uneven model of development being carried out in the name of industrialization.

Despite the presence of several major industries in Rengali, the dream of a well-equipped 24x7 government hospital for local residents remains unfulfilled. Many primary health centres are functioning without adequate doctors, while complaints are also being raised about the poor

quality of medicines supplied. Ambulance services are insufficient, forcing critically ill patients to be shifted to Sambalpur or Burla for treatment. There have also been instances where patients reportedly lost their lives on the way due to delayed medical assistance.

At the same time, air and water pollution in the industrial belt is increasing alarmingly. Coal dust, factory smoke, and industrial waste are contributing to respiratory diseases, skin ailments, and several other health complications among local residents. However, the region lacks adequate health screening facilities and specialized medical care to address these growing health concerns. People are now questioning the social responsibility of industries that are allegedly contributing to pollution while failing to ensure



healthcare support for affected communities.

Although the government frequently announces schemes

aimed at improving healthcare services, their impact is hardly

visible in the Rengali region. Many healthcare centres are functioning only in name. Poor villagers are often compelled to borrow money for treatment, highlighting the massive gap between policy announcements and ground-level implementation.

Industries in the region have been established on land and resources that once belonged to local communities. Yet, those very people remain deprived of quality healthcare. Questions are also being raised over the actual benefits reaching the public under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, despite claims of crores being spent by industrial houses. Local residents argue that if industries had genuinely fulfilled their social responsibilities, the healthcare system in Rengali would not have remained in such a deplorable condition. Even after

repeated demands from the public, no permanent solution has emerged. Promises are made during elections, but forgotten afterwards. Residents say the issue is no longer limited to healthcare alone, but has become a symbol of social injustice. Their fundamental question remains: if industries are generating huge revenues, why are people of the same region denied proper healthcare facilities?

If the development of the Rengali industrial belt cannot ensure the health and safety of its people, such development cannot truly be called successful. Equal importance must be given to healthcare infrastructure alongside industrial growth. Otherwise, the people of Rengali may face an even deeper health crisis in the coming years, for which both the government and industrial establishments will be held responsible.

## Shivraj Singh Chouhan Offers Prayers at Jagannath Temple in Puri



Puri : Shivraj Singh Chouhan visited the Jagannath Temple along with his wife and offered prayers to Lord Jagannath.

During the visit, the Union Agriculture Minister performed rituals as per temple traditions and prayed for the peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of the country. Amid heavy rush of devotees in the temple premises, Mr. Chouhan was accorded a traditional welcome.

He had darshan of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra and sought their blessings.

Sambit Patra was also present on the occasion. He accompanied the Union Minister during the temple parikrama and discussed the significance of Jagannath culture and traditions.

Speaking to the media after the visit, Mr. Chouhan said that with the blessings of Mahaprabhu Jagannath, the country is continuously moving forward on the path of progress. He also praised Odisha's rich spiritual heritage and the grandeur of the Shrimandir.

## Sand mafia attacks police during raid



Dhenkanal (DMS) Dhenkanal police are conducting a special operation to check the illegal transportation of sand, laterite and black rock in the entire Dhenkanal district. This morning, IIC Bhuban police station along with its staff conducted a raid in Murdanga village and seized two tractors loaded with sand that were illegally transporting sand. The IIC and its staff seized the tractors and while they were transporting the tractors, the tractor owner, Debashish Sahu and the driver, Bharat Chandra Das, both from Bartanda village in Sukinda, Jajpur district, suddenly attacked them by throwing stones and trying to

snatch both the tractors. However, the police personnel managed to detain both the accused. After this, Kamakhyanager SDPO and police personnel raided the house of the accused and recovered 30 trips of sand and a scooty. Another case has been registered in Sukinda PS against the accused Debashish Sahu for illegal storage of sand on the basis of a written report of the mining workers of Jajpur district.

A case has been registered in Bhuban PS PS Case No. 250 dated 19.05.2026 U/s.303(2)/120(6)(2)/296/121(1)/221/109(1)/351(3)/3(5) BNS, R/W Section 21 of the MMMA Act/ Sections 180/181/192/196 MV Act.

## JSW JFE Steel Launches Biodiversity Conservation Week 2026; Signs MoU with IIT Kharagpur.

Sambalpur-19/05 (DMS) : Reinforcing its commitment towards environmental sustainability and responsible industrial growth, JSW JFE Steel, Limited inaugurated Biodiversity Conservation Week 2026 at Mahanadi Hall, IB River Guest House, marking, another significant milestone in its biodiversity conservation and decarbonisation journey.

Organized by the Environment Management Department, the program witnessed the participation of senior leadership, zonal and departmental heads, employees, and distinguished representatives from government and academia. The event was graced by Shri Gyanendra Lima, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Government of Odisha, as the Chief Guest. Senior leaders present included Shri Prakash Sapa, Sr. Vice President & Head - Operations, JSW JFE Steel Limited, and Shri Vikas Jain, Vice



President & Zonal Head (Rolling Mills). Distinguished guests also included Unnikrishnan Menon, Post-Doctoral Scholar, IIT Kharagpur, and Rakesh Kumar Panda, Assistant Environment Engineer, Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB), Sambalpur.

The key highlight of the event was signing of a strategic Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) between JSW JFE Steel Limited and IIT Kharagpur to jointly develop innovative technologies for Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCUS) and broader decarbonisation initiatives. The collaboration aims to accelerate research and innovation in carbon reduction, environmental sustainability, biodiversity enhancement, and climate resilience. The initiative has

been undertaken under the leadership and continuous guidance of Shri Umesh Rai, Whole-Time Director & CEO, JSW JFE Steel Limited, and Prof. Brajesh Kumar Dubey, IIT Kharagpur. Addressing the gathering, dignitaries appreciated the company's proactive environmental efforts under its Biodiversity Management Plan, which includes biodiversity

awareness programs, habitat conservation, greenbelt enhancement, butterfly park development, installation of artificial bird nests, aquatic biodiversity initiatives, and stakeholder engagement activities. Speaking on the occasion, senior leadership emphasized that sustainable industrial growth and ecological conservation must progress together. The company reiterated its commitment to responsible steel manufacturing

aligned with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and long-term environmental stewardship. During the program, dignitaries also unveiled several biodiversity-focused initiatives, including the installation of artificial bird nests on trees, placement of biodiversity QR codes, and the formal unveiling of the MoU document with IIT Kharagpur. The program concluded with the felicitation of guests and a vote of thanks by the organizing team.

## One dead in elephant attack in Keonjhar

Keonjhar : Panic spread in Sadar range area, after a 56 year old trampled to death by a tusker. The incident was took place in

Ostapanga village under Naranpur section of Sadar Range on Tuesday morning. This has created panic in the locality. The deceased has been identified as Raibu Naik and his residence is Ostapanga under Bakshibargaon Gram Panchayat of Harichandanpur Block, the Forest Department has informed.

According to the

sources early this morning, while Raibu was going to pick fruits in the mango and cashew orchards in Jamudihi village, a single tusk elephant suddenly appeared and attacked him. As a result, he was seriously injured and lying in a critical condition. On receiving information, the villagers reached and rescued him and took him to Dharanidhar Medical College and hospital for treatment where the doctor declared him dead. Later, on receiving information, the Forest Department staff reached the hospital.

After receiving information from forest department, police of Pandapada police station reached the hospital and recovered the dead body, sent it to the District Head quarter hospital for autopsy. Later police handed over the body to the family members. Financial assistance will be provided as per the government rules. The movement of the elephant is being monitored and information is being provided to the locals, said Forest Range Officer, Sadar range Ajit Das. (EOM)



## Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for World Peace Maha Yajna in Puri

Puri: A Bhumi Pujan (groundbreaking ceremony) for the upcoming Vishwa Shanti Maha Yajna was organized by the Srinilachala Kshetriya Khandayat Mahasabha in Puri.

The ceremony was conducted under the leadership of the association's president, Shridhar Jena. On the occasion, it was announced that the Vishwashanti Rudra Maha Yajna will be held from June 30 to July 3.

Several members and devotees attended the event. Addressing the gathering, Mr.

Jena emphasized the need for collective spiritual awakening and unity to promote global peace and harmony in society. He urged people to come together with devotion and faith in the service of humanity and divine values.

Among those present were Sarbeswar Pradhan, Anup Pradhan, Biswanath Sahu, Ishwar Chandra Pradhan, Patitapaban Jena, Jij Swain, Kailash Chandra Biswal, Prasanna Dalai and Trinath Pradhan, among others.



## Mothers are first teacher of kids

Jagsinghpur . At the 11 Annual Function of Royal Kids English Medium School Sub-Collector Prasant Kumar Tarai joined as Chief guest and in his address said that, Mothers are the first teacher of Kids. Dr. Saroj Kumar Sarangi and Educationist Nikunja Kishore Behera give importance upon all round development of children's and guardians should give chance to kids to select their objective as per their choice. Principal Anita Das President over function and wel come guest and director Rama kanta Das given vote of thanks. Successful students of different competition awarded by guests and cultural programme by students was very attractive.

## Recovered 21 Kg 500 grams of contraband Ganja (Commercial Quantity)

Jharsuguda : In continuation with operation "NISHA MUKTA ODISHA ABHIYAN" In a major crackdown against illegal narcotics trafficking, Odisha Police under the jurisdiction of Brajrajnagar Police Station successfully detected and seized a commercial quantity of contraband Ganja on 18 May 2026 within Brajrajnagar PS limits.

Acting on reliable information, a police team led by SI Pravakar Patra along with accompanying staff conducted a special raid near Chowk No. 5, Rampur Colliery under Brajrajnagar Police Station limits. During the operation, the team intercepted one Hero Pleasure Scooty bearing Registration No. OD-14-3536 and one Hero Super



Splendor Motorcycle bearing Registration No. OD-23-E-4970 and recovered the following items noted below. (1) 21 Kg 500 grams of contraband Ganja (Commercial Quantity) (2) one Hero Pleasure Scooty bearing Registration

No. OD-14-3536 (3) one Hero Super Splendor Motorcycle bearing Registration No. OD-23-E-4970 (4) Three mobile phones. The accused persons were found transporting the

contraband for illegal sale in the local market for monetary gain. Preliminary investigation revealed involvement of other suspected suppliers linked to the illegal narcotics network.

A case has been registered at Brajrajnagar Police Station under Sections 20(b)(ii)(C) and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and further investigation is underway to trace the forward and backward linkages of the racket.

Name of the Acqd. Persons - Ramji Santosh Prasad (37) of OPM Colony, PS- Brajrajnagar, Anurag Rai @ Aloo (24) of Gwalapada, Lamtibahal PS- Brajrajnagar, Santosh Yadav @ Tiger (22) of Adivasi Colony, Mandaliya PS- Orient

## Special Intensive Revision meeting held in Paradip



Paradip - A preparatory meeting of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was held at the ADM office conference hall in Paradip on May 18, 2026 Monday. The meeting was presided over by Niranjan Behera, ADM, Paradip. Among others Abhishek Panda, EO, Paradip Municipality, Swaroop Nandan Behera, Tehsildar, Kujang, Deepak Prasad Swain, BDO, Kujang, Maheswar Behera, Tehsildar, Tirtol, Miss Sayeda Nayela, Dy. Collector, Paradip, Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO) alongwith BJP, BJD, Congress, BSP political parties leaders were present and discussed strategies for making electoral rolls clean and error-free by including eligible voters and verifying details.

## Delhi: Fire at New Ashok Nagar police station doused; no one hurt

New Delhi: A fire broke out in a parking area of the New Ashok Nagar police station in east Delhi on Tuesday afternoon, prompting authorities to rush eight fire tenders to the spot, officials said. No loss of life or injuries were reported in the incident. According to the Delhi Fire Services (DFS), a call regarding the blaze was received at 1.06 pm, following which eight fire tenders were pressed into service.

## Major milestone for Paradip Port : High Capacity Gantry Cranes delivered for Western Dock expansion projects



Paradip - The equipment vessel 'MV RUN ZHOU' has successfully berthed at Jindal Paradip Port Limited (JPPL) at the South Jetty of Western Dock. The vessel has arrived carrying 2 units of high-capacity 3000 TPH Multi-Purpose Gantry Cranes, set to significantly enhance operational efficiency and cargo handling capabilities. According to sources, the advanced cargo-handling equipment is expected to substantially strengthen terminal productivity, improve turnaround times and boost overall operational efficiency at the Western Dock facility. Designed for versatile and efficient cargo operations, the cranes will facilitate faster loading and unloading activities, reduce vessel waiting times and strengthen the dock's ability to manage growing trade demands.

## Judges Inquiry Committee investigating allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma submits report to LS Speaker

New Delhi: The Judges Inquiry Committee investigating allegations concerning Justice Yashwant Varma submitted its report to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at the Parliament House. It was presented in accordance with the statutory requirements under the Judges (Inquiry)

Act, 1968. The committee was constituted on August 12 last year by the Lok Sabha Speaker to inquire into allegations against former High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma. The report will be laid before both Houses of Parliament in due course. The Presiding Officer

of the Judges Inquiry Committee, Supreme Court Judge Justice Arvind Kumar, along with the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Senior Advocate of the Karnataka High Court B.V. Acharya, presented the Report of the Judges Inquiry Committee to Mr Birla.

## Cyber fraud racket using fully undetected APK files busted; two arrested: Delhi Police

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has busted a cyber fraud racket involving the use of malicious mobile applications to gain remote access to victims' phones and arrested two persons, including the alleged mastermind from Uttar Pradesh, an officer

said on Tuesday. The accused allegedly developed and supplied "FUD" (fully undetected) APK files -- malicious applications designed to bypass antivirus and security systems -- to cyber fraudsters operating across the

country, he said. The case stems from a complaint lodged in July 2025 by a man who was cheated of over Rs 1.2 lakh after receiving a fake call claiming that his electricity connection would be disconnected if immediate payment was not made.

## Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav virtually flags off Bengaluru-Mumbai Express train

New Delhi : Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Sunday virtually flagged off an express train between Bengaluru and Mumbai on Sunday, marking a major step in strengthening connectivity between Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Vaishnav stated that long-pending demands of South and North Karnataka are now being fulfilled. Further, he announced that the Vande Bharat Sleeper service between Bengaluru and Mumbai is expected to start soon. Highlighting infrastructure growth, he noted a significant increase in railway funding in recent years, accelerating project execution across Karnataka.

Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, 61 stations are being redeveloped at a cost of Rs 2,160 crore, with 9 already completed. Bengaluru Cantonment station is being redeveloped at Rs 485 crore, and Yeshwantpur at Rs 367 crore, the Ministry of Railways said. Since 2014, about 1,750 km of new railway lines have been constructed in Karnataka, and complex electrification works in the Hassan-Mangaluru section have been completed, and testing is going on. On the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project, he stated that work is progressing across all four corridors. For the Baiyappanahalli-Chikkabanavara and Heelalige-Rajanukunte corridors, land acquisition has been completed, and station works are currently

in progress. The KSR Bengaluru-Devanahalli alignment has been jointly approved by the state government and the Railways, and the geotechnical survey has been completed.

The Kengeri-Whitefield alignment was recently approved, and survey work will commence shortly. And he said that the suburban rail network will integrate key hubs, including the airport, Electronic City, Marathahalli, and Hebbal.

The Railway Minister further stated that Karnataka currently operates 12 pairs of Vande Bharat trains. Testing on the Bengaluru-Mangaluru route is underway and will soon improve coastal connectivity up to Madgaon. Bullet train corridors connecting Bengaluru with Hyderabad and Chennai have also been approved, Vaishnav highlighted. He further noted that, with a long-term vision to connect Mumbai, Bengaluru, and other major cities, the network is expected to expand to 7,000 km.

The Union Minister of State for Railways, V Somanna, while addressing the gathering during the flagging off of the train, expressed his gratitude to Vaishnav for sanctioning the new Bengaluru-Mumbai train, stating that it will greatly benefit passengers on one of the busiest routes

and further boost Karnataka's development.

He highlighted that Karnataka currently operates 12 pairs of Vande Bharat trains covering 14 districts. He noted that a Vande Bharat Sleeper maintenance depot will be established at Thanisandra at a cost of Rs 270 crore, along with a chair car maintenance facility at SMVT Bengaluru costing Rs 52.73 crore. Doubling of Baiyappanahalli-Hosur (Rs 1,116 crore), Bettahalasuru-Rajanukunte (Rs 248 crore), and quadrupling works around Bengaluru (Rs 1,347 crore) are being undertaken to enhance capacity.

Somanna informed that automatic signalling works are being implemented across key sections, including Yesvantpur, KSR Bengaluru, Lottogollahalli, Baiyappanahalli, Penukonda, Mysuru, and Jolarpettai, at a total cost of Rs 6,396 crore. Highlighting overall growth, he stated that Karnataka has received a record railway budget allocation of Rs 7748 crore.

Since 2014, about 3,840 km of railway lines have been developed and 3,742 km electrified, taking the state close to 100% electrification. He added that the number of ROBs/RUBs has increased from about 150 before 2014 to 707 now, with 146 more to be completed within the next year, and all level crossings targeted for elimination in the next three years.

## Delhi set to sizzle under extreme heatwave, IMD warns of 45 degrees Celsius days

New Delhi: Heatwave is tightening its grip across large parts of India, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning that several northern and central states are likely to face dangerously high temperatures over the next few days. Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and nearby regions are expected to witness intense heat conditions till May 22, raising concerns over public health and daily life.

The national capital is likely to see temperatures climbing close to 45 degrees Celsius next week, with weather officials predicting a steady rise in mercury levels over the coming days. Hot winds and warm nights are expected to make conditions even more uncomfortable.

Delhi likely to get hotter over next three days

According to the IMD, Delhi could witness a rise of around 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in maximum temperatures in the next three days. On Sunday, the city is expected to experience partly cloudy skies along with the possibility of

thunderstorms and gusty winds later in the day. However, once skies clear, temperatures are expected to rise sharply again.

Strong winds reaching up to 40 kmph may offer temporary relief, but weather experts say the overall heat conditions are likely to remain severe through the week.

What counts as a heatwave?

The IMD declares a heatwave when temperatures rise far above normal levels for a particular region. In plains like Delhi, a heatwave is usually announced when temperatures cross 40 degrees Celsius and remain significantly above average. A severe heatwave is declared when temperatures rise more than 6.4 degrees Celsius above normal or cross 45 degrees Celsius.

Officials warn that such conditions are not just uncomfortable but can also become dangerous, especially for children, senior citizens and people working outdoors for long hours.

Rain and thunderstorms in Northeast, Southern states

While North India continues to bake under extreme heat, several

northeastern and southern states are expected to receive rainfall and thunderstorms. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura are likely to witness moderate rain accompanied by lightning and gusty winds.

Parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh may also receive showers over the next few days. Isolated rainfall is also expected in Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Health risks rise as temperatures soar

Doctors and weather officials have advised people to avoid stepping out during peak afternoon hours, especially between noon and 4 pm. Continuous exposure to extreme heat can lead to dehydration, heat exhaustion and even heatstroke in severe cases.

People have been urged to stay hydrated, wear loose cotton clothing and regularly check on elderly family members, children and outdoor workers as temperatures continue to rise across the country.

## Delhi set to sizzle under extreme heatwave, IMD warns of 45 degrees Celsius days

New Delhi: Heatwave is tightening its grip across large parts of India, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning that several northern and central states are likely to face dangerously high temperatures over the next few days. Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and nearby regions are expected to witness intense heat conditions till May 22, raising concerns over public health and daily life.

The national capital is likely to see temperatures climbing close to 45 degrees Celsius next week, with weather officials predicting a steady rise in mercury levels over the coming days. Hot winds and warm nights are expected to make conditions even more uncomfortable.

Delhi likely to get hotter over next three days

According to the IMD, Delhi could witness a rise of around 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in maximum temperatures in the next three days. On Sunday, the city is expected to experience partly cloudy skies along with the

possibility of thunderstorms and gusty winds later in the day. However, once skies clear, temperatures are expected to rise sharply again.

Strong winds reaching up to 40 kmph may offer temporary relief, but weather experts say the overall heat conditions are likely to remain severe through the week.

What counts as a heatwave?

The IMD declares a heatwave when temperatures rise far above normal levels for a particular region. In plains like Delhi, a heatwave is usually announced when temperatures cross 40 degrees Celsius and remain significantly above average. A severe heatwave is declared when temperatures rise more than 6.4 degrees Celsius above normal or cross 45 degrees Celsius.

Officials warn that such conditions are not just uncomfortable but can also become dangerous, especially for children, senior citizens and people working outdoors for long hours.

Rain and thunderstorms in Northeast, Southern states

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continues to bake under extreme heat, several northeastern and southern states are expected to receive rainfall and thunderstorms. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura are likely to witness moderate rain accompanied by lightning and gusty winds.

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## JSW JFE Steel Launches Biodiversity Conservation Week 2026; Signs MoU with IIT Kharagpur.

Sambalpur-18/05 (DMS) : Reinforcing its commitment towards environmental sustainability and responsible industrial growth, JSW JFE Steel Limited inaugurated Biodiversity Conservation Week 2026 at Mahanadi Hall, IB River Guest House, marking

another significant milestone in its biodiversity conservation and decarbonisation journey. Organized by the Environment Management Department, the program witnessed the participation of senior leadership, zonal and departmental heads, employees, and distinguished representatives from government and academia.

The event was graced by Shri Gyanendra Lima, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Government of Odisha, as the Chief Guest. Senior leaders present included Shri Prakash Sapa, Sr. Vice President & Head-Operations, JSW JFE Steel Limited, and Shri Vikas Jain, Vice President & Zonal Head (Rolling

Mills). Distinguished guests also included Unnikrishnan Menon, Post-Doctoral Scholar, IIT Kharagpur, and Rakesh Kumar Panda, Assistant

Environment Engineer, Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB), Sambalpur. The key highlight of the event was signing of a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between JSW JFE

Steel Limited and IIT Kharagpur to jointly develop innovative technologies for Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCUS) and broader decarbonisation initiatives. The collaboration aims to accelerate research and innovation in carbon reduction, environmental sustainability, biodiversity enhancement, and climate resilience.

The initiative has been undertaken under the leadership and continuous guidance of Shri Umesh Rai, Whole-Time Director & CEO, JSW JFE Steel Limited, and Prof. Brajesh

Kumar Dubey, IIT Kharagpur. Addressing the gathering, dignitaries appreciated the company's proactive environmental efforts under its

Biodiversity Management Plan, which includes biodiversity awareness programs, habitat conservation, greenbelt enhancement, butterfly park development, installation of artificial bird nests, aquatic biodiversity initiatives, and stakeholder engagement activities.

Speaking on the occasion, senior leadership emphasized that sustainable industrial growth and ecological conservation must progress together. The company reiterated its commitment to responsible steel manufacturing aligned with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and long-term environmental stewardship. During the program, dignitaries also unveiled several biodiversity-focused initiatives, including the installation of

## Bail Question

THE Supreme Court's reiteration that "bail is the rule and jail the exception" even in cases under UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) has again turned the spotlight on the prolonged pre-trial detention of activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam. Granting bail to an accused in a narco-terror case, the Bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan has disapproved of the judgment delivered by another two-judge SC Bench in the Gulfisha Fatima case pertaining to the 2020 Delhi riots. In that case, several accused got bail in January this year, but Umar and Sharjeel were denied relief. The Court had made a distinction on the basis of a "hierarchy of participation," holding that the duo stood on a "qualitatively different footing" from the co-accused.

It's not common for the apex court to question its own verdicts. Introspection and self-correction that serve the interests of justice are welcome. The landmark judgment in the KA Najeeb case (2021), which recognised long delay in trial as a ground for bail in cases under UAPA, should be followed in letter and in spirit by Supreme Court and high court judges across the board. The grant of bail to Syed Ifikhar Andrabi in the narco-terror case drives home the Court's point that national security concerns cannot eclipse the fundamental right to personal liberty. The judgment aims to restore the balance between state power and individual rights. Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution guarantee protection against arbitrary detention, and these safeguards remain valid even if the allegations are grave.

Thousands have been arrested under UAPA over the years, yet the conviction rate remains dismally low (around 5 per cent). Umar and Sharjeel are among those who have spent years behind bars before trial, effectively serving punishment without conviction. It's vital to ensure speedy trials and consistency in bail decisions under anti-terror laws. Failure to do so can undermine the presumption of innocence — the bedrock of any democratic legal system.

## SEX Ratio

PUNJAB's slight improvement in sex ratio at birth — from 922 girls per 1,000 boys in 2024 to 924 this year — offers little reason for celebration. Beneath the marginal rise lies a deeply disturbing reality: 14 of the state's 23 districts have recorded a decline, with the Malwa region emerging as the worst affected. The figures from districts such as Muktsar, Sangrur, Mohali and Fatehgarh Sahib expose the persistence of a social prejudice that prosperity and legislation have failed to erase. For decades, Punjab has grappled with the stigma of son preference. Despite awareness campaigns, legal safeguards and repeated political assurances, daughters continue to face discrimination even before birth. The continuing imbalance suggests that the problem is embedded in social attitudes shaped by patriarchy, inheritance anxieties and dowry-related pressures. That relatively prosperous and urbanised districts are among the worst performers only underlines how economic development alone cannot guarantee social reform.

The contrast within Punjab is equally revealing. Several districts in Doaba have reported healthier sex ratios, reflecting the impact of higher literacy, social awareness and better institutional vigilance. Malwa, despite being the state's political powerhouse, continues to lag behind on key social indicators. The sharp decline in Sangrur — Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's home district — should particularly serve as a wake-up call for the government. Official claims that no complaints of female foeticide have surfaced cannot become grounds for complacency. Sex-selective practices have become increasingly covert and technologically sophisticated. The state must move beyond symbolic campaigns and ensure rigorous enforcement of the PC-PNDT Act through surprise inspections, tighter monitoring of diagnostic centres and community-level social interventions.

Punjab cannot aspire to progress while its daughters continue to disappear silently before birth. A skewed sex ratio is as much a demographic concern as it is a reflection of society's moral failure.

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# The New Geography of Globalization

Raghu Nath mahapatra

When Thomas Friedman declared in his 2005 bestseller, "The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century" that technology had "flattened" the world, he captured the optimism of an era shaped by hyper-globalization. Fibre-optic cables, personal computers and workflow software, he argued, had weakened the importance of geography, enabling individuals and firms to compete on an increasingly level global playing field. Two decades later, the world is more connected—but not flat. Geography evolved. Economic power is concentrated in strategic hubs, trade routes are being reshaped by conflicts and digital connectivity has created new forms of exclusion. Globalization has not erased geography; rather, it has rewritten it.

The initial decades of globalization dramatically expanded global trade and production networks. Global merchandise trade rose from nearly 20% of world GDP in the mid-1990s to roughly 30% before the pandemic. Developing economies became deeply integrated into these networks. China emerged as the world's manufacturing powerhouse, accounting for nearly 31% of global manufacturing output. India built a globally competitive IT services industry, with software exports crossing \$200 billion annually, and the Philippines became a global business-process outsourcing hub. Globalization expanded opportunity. A software engineer in Bangalore could serve clients in London. A factory in Shenzhen could produce goods for consumers in New York City. Distance mattered less than before.

But this reduced distance did not translate into equal opportunity. Richard

*Geopolitical shocks brought physical geography back into focus. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of over-concentrated supply chains. The Russia-Ukraine war disrupted grain exports, fertiliser supply and energy markets in most parts of the world. Attacks in the Red Sea forced vessels to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope, increasing freight costs and delivery times. More recently, tensions involving the United States and Iran brought fresh attention to the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly one-fifth of global oil trade passes, much of it destined for Asia.*

Florida challenged Friedman's thesis by arguing that the world was not flat but "spiky," with innovation, capital and talent concentrated in a handful of cities. Events since then validated that argument. While digital connectivity expanded, access remained deeply unequal. According to the International Telecommunication Union, nearly 2.6 billion people still remain offline globally. Even within connected economies, globalization often produced winner-take-all outcomes, widening income inequality and fuelling political backlash in many advanced economies.

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At the same time, the United States-China trade war has accelerated a restructuring of global production. Tariffs, semiconductor restrictions and

strategic competition have pushed firms toward "China+1" strategies, redirecting investment toward Vietnam, Mexico and India, reflecting a broader shift from a globalization model driven primarily by efficiency to one increasingly shaped by resilience.

This emerging geography does not signal the end of globalization; it reflects its reorganisation. Trade, capital, technology and data still move across borders, but through selective routes. Manufacturing is shifting toward countries seen as politically stable and cost-efficient, such as Vietnam, Mexico and India. Critical mineral supply chains now revolve around regions rich in lithium, cobalt and rare earths. Energy chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea remain central to global commerce, while digital infrastructure—from semiconductor clusters to data centres—has become concentrated in strategic hubs. The world remains interconnected, but globalization is becoming more regionalised, security-driven and strategically managed.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has repeatedly warned that friend-shoring, near-shoring and industrial subsidies are reshaping investment flows. Governments are intervening in sectors once left entirely to markets—from semiconductors and clean energy to rare earth minerals and

pharmaceuticals. Even the internet, once celebrated as the ultimate borderless space, is fragmenting. European Union regulators are tightening digital rules, China maintains strict internet controls, and countries increasingly insist on data localisation. The so-called "splinternet" reflects the same truth visible in trade: borders are reasserting themselves. For countries like India, this shifting geography presents both opportunity and pressure. As firms diversify away from excessive dependence on China, India could emerge as a larger manufacturing and digital-services hub.

As Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has argued, this is not de-globalisation but a reconfiguration of global trade flows. Global trade expands and digital services remain cross-border, and multinational supply chains are being rerouted rather than dismantled. But the era of frictionless globalization is fading. The new geography of globalization will be shaped by trusted trade partners, resilient supply chains, digital regulation, energy security and strategic manufacturing capabilities.

Governments can no longer rely on the old assumption that markets alone will optimise global integration. They must invest in skilling, infrastructure, trade diversification and regulatory coordination while protecting economic resilience. The challenge is no longer to connect with the world—it is to remain competitive in a world where connections are becoming more selective. And this new geography is far less borderless than the world once imagined.

The writer is Former Senior Project Associate HSS Department, IIT Kanpur

## An Exam That Never Ends: What NEET(UG) Retest is Doing To Young Indians' Minds

In India, millions of students prepare for one examination with the intensity of a national mission — NEET, the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test. For years, this exam has been described as a "gateway to becoming a doctor." But for many young Indians today, NEET no longer feels like a gateway. It feels like a tunnel with no exit.

And when the exam is cancelled, questioned, leaked, delayed, or repeated through retests, the emotional burden becomes even heavier. The psychological damage caused by uncertainty is often invisible, but it is real. Across India, students are not only preparing for an exam anymore — they are surviving an endless cycle of anxiety, exhaustion, comparison, and fear.

Recent controversies surrounding NEET retests, paper leaks, and administrative failures have triggered anger and emotional distress among students and parents across multiple states.

The Retest Is Not "Just Another Exam"

For policymakers, a retest may appear to be a technical correction. If an exam was compromised, conduct it again. Simple.

But for students, a retest means restarting a mental marathon after they have already crossed the finish line.

A NEET aspirant does not merely "study." They sacrifice birthdays, friendships, hobbies, sleep, social life, and often their teenage years. Many prepare for two or three years in isolated coaching environments where every mock test determines self-worth.

When the examination ends, students expect relief. Even disappointment feels manageable because at least the uncertainty is over.

But a retest destroys closure.

The brain that had finally relaxed must suddenly return to panic mode. Students reopen books they had emotionally buried days earlier. Sleep schedules collapse again. Families begin discussing ranks and possibilities again. Coaching institutes restart pressure campaigns again.

It becomes psychological whiplash.

Students in several cities expressed grief, anger, and anxiety after NEET-UG retest announcements and uncertainty around examination integrity.

India's Teenagers Are Living Inside Permanent Performance Pressure

The deeper issue is not only the retest itself. It is the ecosystem around NEET.

Most Indian students preparing for medical entrances enter a system where life becomes hyper-competitive from Class 11 onward. School becomes secondary. Coaching becomes primary. Conversations become numerical:

"How many questions did you solve?" "What was your mock score?" "How many hours did you study?"

Eventually, students stop seeing themselves as people. They begin seeing



themselves as ranks.

On online forums, students openly describe feeling "stuck," "emotionally drained," and "burned out" after repeated NEET attempts.

One student wrote that drop years destroyed friendships and social life, leaving them isolated and mentally exhausted. Another described feeling trapped in a loop where motivation disappeared after repeated setbacks. These are not rare stories anymore. They are becoming common.

The Fear of Falling Behind

Perhaps the most painful part of a retest is not the extra studying. It is the fear of time slipping away.

In India's competitive culture, students are constantly told that one year matters enormously. A "drop year" becomes emotionally loaded. Students watch classmates enter colleges while they continue solving mock papers in small rented rooms.

When NEET faces disruption, many students feel their lives are being paused by forces outside their control.

Courts themselves have acknowledged the mental stress caused by retest-related situations. In one case linked to power outages during NEET examinations, judges observed that even brief disruption can damage a student's composure during a high-stakes paper.

The emotional message students receive is dangerous: "You can work hard for years, and still lose certainty overnight."

That creates helplessness.

The Silent Mental Health Crisis

India often discusses NEET as an education issue. But it is increasingly becoming a mental health issue.

Students experience: chronic anxiety, sleep disorders, burnout, panic attacks, emotional numbness, fear of disappointing parents, and identity collapse after poor scores.

Mental health professionals and students online have increasingly spoken

about "NEET trauma," where repeated academic pressure damages self-esteem and emotional stability.

Even high-performing students are struggling. One recent report highlighted a student scoring over 97% in board exams while privately battling burnout and panic linked to competitive exam pressure.

This contradiction defines modern academic culture: Students may appear successful externally while internally feeling exhausted and emotionally fragile.

Parents Are Suffering Too

The psychological toll is not limited to aspirants.

Parents invest enormous emotional and financial energy into NEET preparation. Many middle-class families spend lakhs on coaching institutes, hostel fees, test series, and travel. Entire households reorganize life around one child's preparation schedule.

When examinations become uncertain, parents also experience panic: "What if another year is wasted?" "What if counselling gets delayed?" "What if my child breaks emotionally?"

Many families feel trapped between supporting their children and unintentionally pressuring them further.

Social Media Makes Everything Worse

Today's aspirants do not suffer privately. They suffer publicly.

Every score comparison, AIR prediction, leaked-paper discussion, rank analysis, and coaching topper video appears instantly on social media. Students cannot escape the competition even after closing their books.

A retest multiplies this toxicity: new rumours spread daily, fake answer keys circulate, YouTube panic videos explode, coaching influencers create fear-driven content.

The result is emotional overstimulation.

Students remain mentally "on alert" 24 hours a day.

An Education System Built on Scarcity

Part of the emotional crisis comes from the brutal mathematics of NEET

itself.

Millions compete for a limited number of MBBS seats. Students know that years of effort may still not guarantee admission. This scarcity transforms preparation into survival.

Many online discussions now argue that NEET no longer feels like a test of talent but a filtering mechanism built on extreme competition.

In such an environment, even minor uncertainty becomes psychologically explosive.

A retest is not viewed as a small inconvenience. It feels like a threat to years of sacrifice.

"No Exam Is More Important Than Your Life"

Recently, authorities themselves acknowledged the emotional pressure surrounding NEET. Mental health advisories and helplines were highlighted for students facing severe stress and anxiety.

That acknowledgment matters. Because for too long, Indian society has romanticized suffering in competitive exams. Exhaustion is called dedication. Burnout is called hard work. Isolation is called focus.

But mental collapse should never become a normal side effect of education.

India Must Redefine Success

The larger question is uncomfortable but necessary:

Why are teenagers carrying levels of stress that many adults cannot handle?

An examination should test knowledge — not emotional endurance.

A student failing to secure an MBBS seat is not failing in life. Yet the system often makes young people believe exactly that. Retests deepen this belief because they repeatedly tell students that certainty does not exist.

India urgently needs: stronger mental health support in schools and coaching centres,

less toxic academic comparison, more career awareness beyond medicine and engineering,

fairer and more transparent examination systems, and public conversations that separate marks from human worth.

Because the greatest danger is not one cancelled exam.

The greatest danger is a generation slowly believing that their value depends entirely on a rank list.

And no country can build a healthy future by exhausting the minds of its young people before adulthood even begins.

Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal? Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

## NCSC Takes Cognisance Of Use Of Derogatory Terms In SCs List During Punjab Census

New Delhi, 19/5: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) on Tuesday took serious cognisance of a complaint regarding the use of objectionable and derogatory terms in the list of Scheduled Castes during the upcoming Census process in Punjab. The complaint was submitted to NCSC Chairperson Kishore Makwana by the Vice-Chairperson of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, Hardeep Singh Gill. According to the complaint, the use of derogatory language in reference to the Valmiki community during the census process has triggered outrage among members of the community. Considering the sensitivity of the issue, the Commission acted promptly and issued notices to the concerned departments. The NCSC has ordered the Director of the



Directorate of Census Operations, Punjab, and the Principal Secretary of the Department of Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities, Government of Punjab, to submit an action taken report within 15 days. Chairperson Kishore Makwana stated that protecting the honour, rights, and dignity of

Scheduled Castes remains the Commission's highest priority. He added that the Commission would take further necessary action based on the report submitted by the concerned authorities and the measures taken in the matter. Earlier in March, the NCSC had also raised concerns regarding the implementation of welfare

schemes for Scheduled Castes in Punjab following a two-day review meeting with senior government officials in Chandigarh. At the time, Makwana had stated that the condition of Scheduled Castes in Punjab required "urgent corrective steps." The Commission had highlighted several issues, including irregularities in scholarship disbursement, non-implementation of central welfare schemes, rising school dropout rates among SC students, and shortcomings in atrocity prevention mechanisms. The Commission had also pointed out lapses in the handling of cases registered under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. According to the NCSC, many complaints were allegedly dismissed at police stations without FIRs being registered.

## SC Collegium Recommends Appointment Of 19 Judges In Madras HC

New Delhi, 19/5: The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, has approved proposals for the appointment of 19 advocates and judicial officers as judges of the Madras High Court. In a statement issued on Tuesday, the apex court Collegium said that in its meeting held on May 18, it approved the proposal dated November 4, 2025, for the appointment of six judicial officers as judges of the Madras High Court. These include Dr P. Murugan, M.D. Sumathi, S. Alli, C. Thirumagal Chandrasekar, Dharmalingam Lingeswaran, and Karthikeyan Balathandayutham. "The Supreme Court Collegium, in its meeting held on 18th May, 2026 has approved the following proposals for appointment of below-named persons as Judges in the Madras High Court," the statement said. Further, the Collegium approved the proposal dated November 21, 2025, for the

appointment of six advocates — Natarajan Ramesh, G.K. Muthukumaar, Ramakrishnan Rajesh Vivekananthan, Sankaranarayanan Raveekumar, Nagarajan Dilip Kumar, and Ellappan Manoharan — as judges of the Madras High Court. In another proposal dated December 7, 2025, the apex court Collegium cleared the names of advocates Krishnaswamy Govindarajan, Rajnish Pathiyil, K. Appadurai alias Kandavel Appadurai, and Ramasamy Anitha for elevation to the Bench of the Madras High Court. The Collegium also approved the proposal dated December 10, 2025, recommending the appointment of judicial officers Shanmugam Karthikeyan, Baluchamy Murugesan, and N. Gunasekaran as judges of the Madras High Court. The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by the Chief Justice of India and comprising the senior-most judges of the apex court, is responsible

for making recommendations relating to appointments and transfers in the higher judiciary. As per the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) governing the appointment of High Court judges, the proposal for appointment is initiated by the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court in consultation with the two senior-most judges of that High Court. The recommendation is forwarded by the Chief Justice to the Chief Minister, who transmits it to the Governor. The Governor, in turn, forwards the proposal to the Union Minister of Law and Justice, along with relevant inputs and documents. The proposal is then processed by the Centre before being placed before the Chief Justice of India, who consults the senior-most judges of the Supreme Court for finalising the recommendation. Following the Collegium's approval, the recommendation is sent to the Central government.

## Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi Calls For Expanding 'Smart Power' In Volatile World

New Delhi, 19/5: Pointing to the turmoil in the Strait of Hormuz, Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Tuesday led discussions on how the country can integrate military, diplomatic, economic and technological instruments to expand its "Smart Power" to navigate an increasingly volatile global environment. Speaking at a National Seminar on "Security to Prosperity: Smart Power for Sustained National Growth," General Dwivedi shed light on forces of trade becoming tools of strategic leverage. "Semiconductors and their selective availability have become tools of strategic leverage. The Strait of Hormuz has become a zone of active contestation," he said. Highlighting that the boundary between security and prosperity is no longer a boundary at all, he said the vision of collective progress has been overshadowed by other matters of national interest and stressed on expanding the nation's "Smart Power" in the fractured, fast-moving and unforgiving world. Elaborating on the possible architecture of India's "Smart Power" in today's world, he quoted experts who have described it as the strategic intelligence to know



which instrument to deploy at what intensity and towards what end. "For India, it means using national strength with strategic wisdom to secure peace, accelerate growth and shape the global environment in our favour," said the Army Chief. General Dwivedi said there is a need for the traditional strategic framework of DIME — Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic elements — to be supplemented with new elements like technology and a "whole of nation" approach. "The raw calculus of hard power has once again reclaimed the centre stage of the global order. But to respond to it, we must first read the world as it is, not as we wish it to be. The 21st

century began with a confident belief that forces of trade, supply chains, and digital connectivity would make nations too interdependent for conflict. Paradoxically, the same forces that were expected to bind nations together have progressively become instruments of coercion," he said. General Dwivedi said contemporary conflicts impose sustained demands not only on armed forces but on industrial production, research systems and governance structures. "Security is no longer a cause that prosperity must bear. It is the precondition for prosperity to commence its progressive journey," he said, describing the umbrella of hard power as the new normal.

## Stray Dogs Case: Maneka Gandhi Flags Illegal NGOs, Seeks One Contract Per Organisation

New Delhi, 19/5: Animal rights activist and former Union Minister Maneka Gandhi on Tuesday flagged the numerous illegal stray dog NGOs in the country and urged the government to providing training to the recognised ones and also issue only one contract per NGO. The former reaction came after the Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to recall its earlier directions on the management of stray dogs in public places, while issuing a series of fresh directions to ensure stricter implementation of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) framework across the country. Calling the apex court's directions as "undoable", she remarked: "The Supreme Court has accepted defeat." Speaking to IANS, Maneka Gandhi said: "ABC centres have been closed in Delhi while none has been created." She flagged that majority of stray dogs NGOs in the country are run illegally. "There are only 16 NGOs in the country which are trained and honest. One company runs multiple NGOs and they simply divide the money and pretend to have performed sterilisation. This is happening in over 150 districts



in the country," she alleged. "Ninety-five per cent of the current ABC centres in the country are fake. They don't perform sterilisation on stray dogs and keep half of the money with themselves and give the rest to some municipality officer. At least Rs 500 to 600 crores have been spent this way," she said. Giving an example, Maneka Gandhi said: "There is a place called Mandla in Madhya Pradesh which had given contract for ABC centres. That centre came up and was raided after two weeks. During the raid it was found that no stray dog underwent 'ABC' at the centre. Moreover, it had bought testicles and ovaries from Bhopal

and Indore (of dead stray dogs). "By showing those, that centre was earning Rs 10 lakh per week," the Union Minister added. She also alleged: "The government has spent around 700 crores each week for eradication of polio but how much has it spent on the stray dog issue? Nothing... Let them spend that much money in the entire programme and then see the difference." Maneka Gandhi urged the Union government to take action in the matter with efficiency and honesty. When asked what should be the way ahead in the matter, the former Union Minister urged states to open 780 ABC centres, arrange

for training of NGOs and make a law that no NGO can take more than one contract. Maneka Gandhi alleged that an NGO in Chennai had taken 11 contracts. "Another NGO in Maharashtra's Vasai-Virar has taken five contracts. This has transformed into a mafia," she said. "In Haryana, eight to nine contracts have been taken by NGOs which are illegal," she added. The former Union Minister appealed for the removal of such fake NGOs. The apex court bench also referred to reports showing 1,084 dog bite incidents in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district in a single month. Responding to the dog bite incident reports by the Supreme Court, Maneka Gandhi questioned the alleged absence of ABC centres in Ganganagar. "There are no trained NGOs in Rajasthan except one, named 'Help and Suffering' in Jaipur," she alleged. She noted that had the apex court ordered that if ABC centres are not opened then the area's Municipal Commissioner would be punished, then such centres would have been opened.

## UPI Commands Largest Share Of Transaction Volume At 85.5 PC In 2025 2nd Half: RBI Report

New Delhi 19/5: The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) commanded the largest share of transaction volume at 85.5 per cent in the second half (H2) of 2025, followed by NEFT at 3.6 per cent and Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) at 3.6 per cent, according to a latest report by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). RTGS accounted for a mere 0.1 per cent, reflecting its role as a high-value, low-volume system. "Conversely, in terms of transaction value, RTGS dominated with 68.6 per cent of the total transaction value, followed by NEFT at 14.9 per cent and UPI at 9.5 per cent, with PPIs contributing only 0.1 per cent — a clear illustration of how RTGS handles large-value settlements while UPI drives mass retail transactions," said the half-yearly Payment Systems Report by the RBI. NEFT, positioned as a hybrid system capable of processing both small and large transactions with settlement within an hour, holds the second-highest share in both volume and value, underscoring its versatility and continued relevance in India's evolving payments ecosystem. India's digital

payments ecosystem has witnessed impressive expansion, with transaction volumes surging 33 times and values rising by almost 3 times over the 10-year period 2016 to 2025. Over the most recent five-year period, volumes have grown more than 4 times and values have nearly doubled, translating into a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 43 per cent in volume and 17 per cent in value. "This reflects the nation's rapidly expanding digital landscape, driven by ubiquitous smartphone penetration, transformative public infrastructure such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and growing public trust in secure, seamless cashless transactions," the report explained. The payments ecosystem in India has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years. In terms of volume, the payment transactions grew from 6,437 crore in 2021 to 26,819 crore in 2025 and, in terms of value, from Rs 1,741 lakh crore to Rs 3,215 lakh crore during this period recording a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 42.9 per cent and 16.6 per cent, respectively.

## Delhi Court Denies Umar Khalid's Plea For 15-Day Interim Bail

New Delhi, 19/5: A Delhi court on Tuesday dismissed an interim bail plea filed by jailed student activist Umar Khalid, who had sought temporary release to attend the Chehlum of his uncle and to take care of his ailing mother, scheduled to undergo surgery next month. Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai of the Karkardooma Courts rejected the application filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), read with Section 439 of the CrPC, seeking 15 days' interim bail. According to the plea, Khalid's uncle, Khurshed Ahmad Khan, passed away on April 10, and the 40th-day ritual (Chehlum) is scheduled to be held in Delhi on May 24. He also submitted that his mother has been unwell and has been advised surgery for lump excision on June



2 at a private hospital. The plea stated that although Khalid's family consisted of his parents and five sisters, his 71-year-old father was not in a position to take care of his mother, and his sisters lived away from the parental home after marriage. It was argued that, being the eldest

and the only son in the family, Khalid was required to assist his mother before and after the surgery. Opposing the plea, the prosecution contended that the accused was attempting to misuse the court's leniency and that the grounds raised were not compelling. The Special Public

Prosecutor submitted that the uncle did not fall within the category of "close relations" and that attendance at the Chehlum ceremony was not necessary. Regarding Khalid's mother's surgery, the prosecution argued that his sisters and father could take care of her and described the procedure as a "minor surgery" requiring only local anaesthesia. After hearing both sides, the court observed that although Khalid had previously been granted interim bail on multiple occasions and had complied with all conditions, each application must be assessed independently on its merits. "Not only the applicant but other co-accused persons have been granted interim bail, and they never flouted the conditions as imposed by the Court, but it doesn't mean that on every

occasion whenever the accused seeks bail, the Court should grant the same," the judge said. Rejecting the first ground, the court observed: "Attending the Chehlum ceremony of his uncle is not that necessary. The things would have been different if the ceremony was of a person who was in immediate relation with the applicant." It further said that if the relationship was so close, Khalid would have sought release at the time of his uncle's death itself. On the second ground relating to his mother's surgery, the judge said that Khalid has multiple family members who can support his mother. "There seems to be no actual requirement or help from the side of the applicant," the court said, adding that the surgery appeared to be a simple procedure.

## CAQM Invokes GRAP-1 Measures As Delhi AQI Rises To 208

NEW DELHI, 19/5: The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region (NCR) on Tuesday invoked all actions under Stage-I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the entire region as the air quality index (AQI) in Delhi increased to 208. The Sub-Committee ordered the implementation of all GRAP-1 measures for Poor AQI (201-300), including basic controls like strict PUC (Pollution Under Control) norm enforcement, dust management at construction sites and mechanised street sweeping. The Sub-Committee invoked GRAP-1 after reviewing the air quality scenario in the region and India Meteorological Department

(IMD)/Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) forecast, a statement said. Meanwhile, as many as 39 violations across Construction and Demolition (C&D) sites, industrial sector and Diesel Generator (DG) sets were detected during 125 air quality-related inspections carried out by the flying squads of CAQM between April 29 and May 19. The action included 20 inspections across C&D sites, 51 inspections across the industrial sector, and 54 inspections related to DG sets. "Of the 39 violations reported, 10 pertained to C&D sites, 10 to industrial sector and 19 to DG set violations," the statement issued after the 131st meeting of the Enforcement Task Force (ETF) said.

# India And Nordic Nations Will Work Together To Strengthen Rules-Based Global Order: PM Modi

Oslo,19/5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that India and Nordic nations will continue to work together to strengthen rules-based global order amid the current global tensions. Addressing a joint press meet with leaders of Nordic nations following the third India-Nordic Summit in Oslo on Tuesday, PM Modi stated that India and Nordic countries agreed that reform of multilateral institutions is necessary. "In this era of global tensions and conflict, India and the Nordic countries will continue to work together to strengthen a rules-based global order. Whether it is Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue to support the earliest resolution of conflicts and efforts towards peace. We agree that reform of multilateral institutions is both necessary and urgent. We have clear and united stand on terrorism – no compromise, no double standards," he said. PM Modi stated that India and Nordic countries are natural partners due to their shared commitment to democracy, multilateralism and rule of law. He noted that



investment funds from Nordic countries are becoming key partners in India's rapid growth. "I am delighted to have participated in the 3rd India-Nordic Summit today. First of all, I express heartfelt gratitude to the Prime Minister of Norway for hosting this Summit. I welcome all Nordic leaders here. Our shared commitment to democracy, rule of

law and multilateralism make us natural partners. Our shared priorities in technology and sustainability create abundant opportunities for collaboration. In light of this, we established this format eight years ago to accelerate and strengthen our relations with the Nordic nations. In the past few years, we have made special progress in our

relations." "In 10 years, our bilateral trade has increased almost four-times. Investment funds from Nordic countries are also becoming key partners in India's rapid growth. In the last decade, investment from Nordic countries into India has increased by almost 200 per cent. The rapidly growing trade and investment have not only

contributed to India's growth story, but have also played a very positive role in the economies of the Nordic countries and created thousands of new jobs," he added. Earlier in the day, PM Modi and leaders of Nordic countries participated in the third India-Nordic Summit in Oslo, with discussions focussed on several aspects, including sustainability, innovation, clean energy, emerging technologies and strengthening cooperation for a peaceful and prosperous future. "Participated in the 3rd India-Nordic Summit in Oslo, which reflected the growing depth and dynamism of India's partnership with the Nordic region. Our discussions focused on several aspects, including sustainability, innovation, clean energy, emerging technologies and strengthening cooperation for a peaceful and prosperous future," PM Modi posted on X. "India and the Nordic countries are united by shared democratic values, trust and a common commitment towards human-centric development," he added.

# India And Finland To Work Together In Futuristic Sectors, Deepen Linkages In Climate Change: PM Modi

Oslo,19/5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with his Finnish counterpart, Petteri Orpo, in Norway's Oslo on Tuesday, discussing new engagement opportunities for bilateral relations. "Delighted to meet the Prime Minister of Finland, Mr Petteri Orpo. This year has witnessed extensive engagements as far as India and Finland are concerned. PM Orpo himself had come to India for the AI Impact Summit. Our meeting today is aimed at giving new energy to bilateral relations," PM Modi wrote on X after the meeting. "We spoke of working together in futuristic sectors like 6G, AI, education, nuclear energy and more. We also discussed how to deepen linkages in climate change, circular economy, sustainable development, and more," he emphasised. The leaders also announced India and Finland jointly hosting the World Circular Economic Forum in September 2026 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India, noted the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Both Leaders emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration between industry, research institutions, and academia, according to the MEA. They underscored the pivotal role of sustainability and digitalisation in driving future economic growth and development. MEA highlighted that both leaders, "took stock of ongoing cooperation in the areas of trade & investment, digitalisation, AI, 5G/6G, quantum technologies, space, sustainability, renewable energy, circular economy, innovation, education, mobility and people-to-people ties." Both sides also welcomed the steady growth in bilateral trade in goods and services despite global challenges and reaffirmed their commitment to doubling existing bilateral trade by 2030. "The Finnish side appreciated the significant contributions of Indian professionals to the growth and innovation of Finland's technology sector," said MEA. MEA stated that "India and Finland share warm, friendly and multi-faceted relations, rooted in shared democratic values. Finland is a valued partner for India in the European Union and the Nordic region."

# Pakistan falters to meet IMF conditions, provinces asked to raise PKR 400 billion in taxes

Islamabad,19/5 The Pakistan government has asked provincial administrations to collect over Rs 400 billion in additional taxes in the next fiscal year as the cash-strapped country struggles to meet stringent conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Express Tribune reported. The move is expected to further burden citizens already grappling with soaring inflation and economic uncertainty, with the combined additional taxation target under federal and provincial budgets projected to exceed Rs 1.1 trillion for FY2026-27. Pakistan Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with provincial finance ministers to discuss new revenue targets tied to IMF commitments, government officials said. Under the proposed framework, the federal government is expected to generate nearly Rs700 billion through fresh tax measures, stricter enforcement actions and increased petroleum levy collections, while provinces have been tasked with mobilising more than Rs400 billion in additional revenues, The Express Tribune

reported. According to reports, Sindh has been assigned the highest target of around Rs200 billion, followed by Punjab with Rs175 billion, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Rs 45 billion and Balochistan with nearly Rs20 billion. The latest measures come as Pakistan remains heavily dependent on IMF support to stabilise its fragile economy amid mounting fiscal pressures and persistent revenue shortfalls. The IMF has reportedly asked provinces to increase tax collection equivalent to 0.3 per cent of GDP, or roughly Rs 430 billion. Pakistan's widening fiscal imbalance, with the government facing an estimated revenue shortfall of nearly Rs1 trillion due to weak performance by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). To bridge the gap, authorities are relying on aggressive tax collection drives, higher petroleum levies and cuts in development spending, The Express Tribune reported. The IMF has also pushed Pakistan to improve tax collection from sectors considered undertaxed, particularly agriculture, real estate

and services. According to the IMF assessment, agriculture contributes nearly 24.6 per cent to Pakistan's economy but faces an effective tax rate of just 0.3 per cent. In contrast, petroleum products continue to face extremely high taxation, with the IMF reportedly estimating the effective tax rate on petroleum at 166 per cent. Pakistan is expected to collect Rs1.727 trillion through petroleum levies in the next fiscal year, nearly Rs260 billion higher than the current target. The IMF further noted delays and enforcement failures in implementing agricultural income tax reforms despite repeated commitments by Pakistani authorities. Provinces have now been directed to expand the GST net on services, improve property tax collection and enhance enforcement mechanisms. Pakistan has also assured the IMF that provincial governments would avoid introducing policies that could undermine commitments made under the lender's reform programme.

# From Offshore Wind To Green Tech: India, Norway Sign 5 Strategic Agreements

New Delhi,19/5: India and Norway has strengthened their science and technology partnership with the signing of five major agreements focused on green energy, sustainable development, ocean technology, innovation and geoscience collaboration during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Norway. The collaborations are aimed at strengthening institutional partnerships, promoting industry and startup engagement, enhancing academic cooperation and accelerating sustainable growth initiatives between the two countries. One of the major agreements signed was a Memorandum of Understanding between DSIR/CSIR and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to enhance collaboration in research, technology development, innovation and capacity building. The agreement provides for joint workshops, collaborative research and development projects, scientist exchange programmes and



implementation mechanisms focused on global challenges and Sustainable Development Goals, including climate change, clean energy, ocean research and healthcare. CSIR also entered into a Collaboration Agreement for 2026-2029 with SINTEF, Norway's leading independent research organisation, under the framework of an existing 2014 agreement between the two institutions. The partnership will focus on circular economy and sustainability transition through joint innovation and research programmes in areas

such as bio-based materials, ocean energy, offshore wind, carbon capture, storage and utilisation, and waste valorisation. In another important development, several CSIR institutes signed a project-specific collaboration agreement with SINTEF institutions for cooperation in ocean energy and offshore wind energy technologies. The collaboration involves CSIR-Structural Engineering Research Centre, CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories, CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography and

CSIR-Fourth Paradigm Institute along with SINTEF Ocean, SINTEF Digital, FME NorthWind and SINTEF Community. The joint programme aims to strengthen India's offshore renewable energy capabilities and support national renewable energy and carbon neutrality goals. The project will focus on floating offshore wind technologies, lowering the Levelized Cost of Energy (LCOE), sustainability standards, ESG frameworks, pilot demonstrations, skill development and industrial growth. CSIR will provide funding support of nearly Rs 341 lakh for the initiative. A Joint Declaration of Intent titled "Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation for the Green Shift" was also signed between CSIR, the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

# Rajnath Singh Meets Vietnamese Prez To Lam, Reaffirms Commitment To Deepen Defence Ties

Hanoi,19/5: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called on Vietnamese President To Lam on Tuesday and reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening cooperation under the Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations. In a post on X, Singh said, "Honoured to call on the General Secretary and President of Vietnam during my visit to Vietnam. Conveyed warm greetings from Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and reaffirmed India's commitment to further deepen Defence cooperation, which is a key pillar of the Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between our two countries." "India and Vietnam share a strong bond rooted in mutual trust, shared values and close cooperation in defence, security and regional stability," the Defence Minister said. Singh also met with his Vietnamese counterpart, General Phan Van Giang, to review the partnership between their nations and discuss ways to deepen cooperation in maritime security,



the defence industry, training, and regional stability. In a post on X, Singh said, "Held a productive bilateral meeting with Gen. Phan Van Giang, Defence Minister of Vietnam. We reviewed the growing India-Vietnam defence partnership and discussed ways to further deepen cooperation in maritime security, defence industry, training and regional stability." He said that India remains committed to strengthening its Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Vietnam. Both leaders also jointly inaugurated the Language Lab established at Vietnam's Air Force Officers

College. "Glad that both sides also exchanged a MoU in the field of AI and quantum technology, marking another important step in our Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Singh added. Earlier in the day, Singh paid tributes to Ho Chi Minh, the founding father of Vietnam, at the Mausoleum in Hanoi on the occasion of his 136th birth anniversary. Singh arrived in Hanoi on Monday afternoon for a two-day visit to Vietnam, marking 10 years of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations, which was upgraded to Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic

Partnership during the State visit of Vietnamese President To Lam earlier this month. Taking to X, the Defence Minister said, "Paid homage to the founding father of Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh, at Mausoleum on his 136th birth anniversary." "His vision, leadership and enduring commitment to national liberation and global solidarity continue to inspire generations. India-Vietnam friendship remains rooted in shared values and mutual respect," he added. Singh is on an official visit to Vietnam from May 18 to 19, followed by a visit to South Korea from May 19 to 21.

# US Races To Contain Ebola Outbreak

Washington,19/5: The United States announced a sweeping diplomatic, humanitarian and public health response to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda, mobilising emergency funding, tightening travel restrictions and coordinating with international partners to contain the deadly disease before it spreads further. In a media note, the US Department of State said it moved quickly after learning of confirmed Ebola cases in the region earlier this month. "By working to contain the outbreak before it reaches American shores, the United States is protecting the health of Americans at home and abroad," the Department said. According to the State Department, an interagency coordination cell and incident management system was established in Washington within 24 hours of confirmation of the cases on May 15. American embassies in the DRC, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda have also formed monitoring groups to track developments and communicate with US citizens in the region. "The Department is convening a daily leadership-level meeting to ensure the response

remains a top priority," the statement said. The Biden administration's immediate focus, officials said, is to protect Americans overseas and prevent the outbreak from reaching the United States. The State Department said it worked closely with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a Title 42 order issued on May 18 prohibiting travel to the United States for foreign nationals who have visited the DRC, Uganda and South Sudan within the previous 21 days. The Department said it is also coordinating with the Department of Homeland Security on implementing the order globally, along with any quarantine and isolation guidance issued by the CDC. Officials added that the United States is working with the CDC and the U.S. military on the "potential repatriation of affected Americans, based on assessed exposure and health needs". Within 48 hours of activating its response plan, Washington mobilised an initial \$13 million in foreign assistance for emergency outbreak efforts. The funding will support surveillance systems, laboratory capacity, risk communication,

safe burials, border screening and clinical case management in affected countries. The State Department said additional bilateral assistance for outbreak response and humanitarian support is being prepared as officials gain a clearer understanding of the scale of the crisis. "This additional funding builds on US investments in disease surveillance and outbreak detection, and response efforts made through bilateral health MOUs signed with both the DRC and Uganda under the America First Global Health Strategy," the statement said. Washington also said it is leveraging investments in United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) pooled funds to speed up humanitarian assistance and coordinate with the UN system. Senior State Department officials have already spoken with UN Secretariat leadership and humanitarian coordinators in affected countries. The Department said it is leading donor coordination efforts with the European Union, the United Kingdom and other international partners to ensure what it described as a "coordinated and effective response".

## Vedanta Aluminium Helps Kalahandi's Villages Adopt Resilient Farming Practices, Benefitting 10,000 People

Bhubaneswar 19/5: In the villages surrounding Odisha's Kalahandi district, the arrival of summer is often accompanied by a sense of growing uncertainty. As temperatures rise and water bodies recede, farmers turn their heads towards the sky, awaiting signs of the rains that have grown increasingly erratic over the years. For generations, agriculture in the region has remained heavily dependent on the monsoon, leaving thousands of farming families vulnerable to crop failures, declining incomes, and seasonal migration. In districts like Kalahandi, changing rainfall patterns and water scarcity have steadily intensified the challenges faced by local communities. Today, however, a quiet transformation is beginning to reshape this reality across dozens of villages near Lanjigarh with support from Vedanta Aluminium, leading the revival of local water systems, scientific watershed planning, and community participation. Through its efforts, villages that once struggled with recurring water stress are gradually witnessing the return of



dependable irrigation sources and renewed confidence in farming as a dependable livelihood. Vedanta Aluminium's watershed development initiative, Project Sangam has enabled access to irrigation across more than 800 acres of farmland in 41 villages of Kalahandi, positively impacting over 9,000 people. More importantly, for local farming communities, the initiative is helping restore faith in agriculture as a sustainable and reliable livelihood. At the heart of the programme lies a simple yet powerful idea: conserving rainwater where it is naturally available. By rejuvenating

traditional water bodies, strengthening local irrigation infrastructure, and scientifically managing monsoon runoff, the initiative has created more than 11 lakh cubic metres of water recharge potential. This has significantly improved groundwater availability in several pockets of the district, ensuring that water remains accessible well beyond the monsoon season. The impact is increasingly visible across agricultural fields. Land that once remained dry after a single crop cycle is now supporting extended cultivation and multiple cropping seasons. Improved soil moisture

retention and stabilised groundwater levels are enabling farmers to plan agricultural activities with greater certainty, reducing their dependence on unpredictable rainfall. For many, the change has been transformative. "For years, our farming depended entirely on uncertain rainfall. Now we have assured irrigation for our fields. Water remains available for a much longer period, crop yields have improved, and families are earning better incomes. Earlier, many people worried about leaving the village in search of work during dry months. That need has reduced significantly," said Jugeswar Dalpati, a farmer living in Lanjigarh. The significance of such interventions is particularly important in climate-vulnerable regions like Kalahandi, where experts have repeatedly underlined the need for decentralised watershed systems to combat groundwater depletion and erratic rainfall patterns. Project Sangam addresses this challenge through a combination of scientific planning and strong community

ownership. Local residents actively participate in identifying water structures, maintaining assets, and managing water usage, helping create long-term sustainability rather than dependence on external support. Beyond agriculture, the initiative is also contributing to broader ecological and social improvements. Enhanced groundwater recharge is supporting wider drinking water availability, while improved soil moisture is aiding land restoration and greener landscapes. Vedanta Aluminium now aims to expand irrigation coverage to more than 3,500 acres, while further strengthening year-round access to water for farming and domestic use. In many ways, the story unfolding across Kalahandi is about far more than irrigation infrastructure. It is about rebuilding rural resilience in the face of climate uncertainty, restoring confidence in local agriculture, and demonstrating how sustainable water management can transform the trajectory of entire communities.

## India Leads Global Workplace AI Adoption With 41 PC Daily Users: Report

New Delhi: India emerged as a global leader in artificial intelligence adoption, with 41 per cent of employees reporting that they use AI nearly every day, a report said on Tuesday. The report from ADP Research said that around 80 per cent of employees in India use AI at least multiple times a week – the highest levels recorded across all surveyed markets. Indian usage is significantly higher, as only half of the workers surveyed globally use AI multiple times a week. Nigeria (39 per cent) and Vietnam (36 per cent) followed India in terms of daily AI usage. However, the findings also revealed a growing disconnect between AI adoption and perceived productivity. While 30 per cent of daily AI users reported being fully engaged, they were four times more likely than non-users to feel less productive. As AI took over routine tasks, employees felt their contributions were harder to quantify and evaluate, the report noted. "India is among the leading adopters of AI at work, but high adoption alone does not guarantee greater productivity. Many employees carry a quiet anxiety



about the future of their careers, and whether AI is making their contribution harder to measure," said Rahul Goyal, managing director, ADP India and Southeast Asia. "Ultimately, the organisations that succeed will be those that invest in making their people more adaptable, not just more efficient," he added. Frequent AI use is also linked to higher engagement and lower stress as AI users on a daily basis reported mental stress at 11 per cent versus 23 per cent for non-users. Daily users were also more likely than less frequent users to feel their jobs are safe from elimination, indicating a strong link between regular AI use and job confidence. Women in India are using AI more frequently than men, with 44 per cent using AI nearly every day at work compared to 40 per cent.

## India's 4 Pc Fuel Price Hike Lowest Among Major Economies

New Delhi, 19/5: India's increase of Rs 3.91 per litre in the prices of petrol and diesel announced this week, works out to 4.4 per cent, which is the smallest hike of any major economy outside the directly subsidising Gulf producers such as Saudi Arabia, according to figures compiled by GlobalPetrolPrices.com. An Indian Oil official pointed out that the Rs 3.91 increase, which restores only part of the rise in crude prices, has been undertaken after 76 days of complete absorption of costs by the public sector oil companies. In sharp contrast, the rest of the world has been adjusting prices for the rise in crude costs through increases ranging from 10 to 90 per cent in the retail prices of the two fuels. The pass-through has been steepest in liberalised emerging markets directly exposed to West Asian supply and freight, where governments do not absorb volatility. Myanmar, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates have all seen petrol move up by more than half the pre-war price, with diesel rising even more sharply because of its closer link to global trade and freight. The Pakistani consumer is paying about 55 per cent more for petrol today than three months ago, the Malaysian about 56 per cent



more, and the Emirati consumers about 52 per cent higher prices, the figures show. In the advanced economies, the increases are smaller in percentage terms but still substantial. American petrol prices, which respond quickly to crude because federal and state excise loadings are modest, have risen by close to 45 per cent and diesel by 48 per cent. In Europe, where excise duties dampen the swing, the United Kingdom is up about 19 per cent on petrol and 34 per cent on diesel, Germany about 14 per cent on petrol and 20 per cent on diesel, and France about 21 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. In the case of Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, the hike in petrol prices has been held below 20 per cent. The price of diesel has risen considerably

faster, with Singapore registering a 65 per cent jump. In India's case, the Rs 3.91 per litre increase has helped reduce the daily losses that the government-owned oil companies were incurring due to the skyrocketing cost of imported crude, from Rs 1,000 crore a day to Rs 750 crore. The retail increase in fuel prices has resulted in cutting losses by only 25 per cent, the Indian Oil official said. "India is the visible exception as until 15th May 2026 the public sector oil marketing companies held petrol and diesel prices essentially unchanged from their 23rd February 2026 levels, absorbing the cost of crude at refinery gate and accumulating daily under-recoveries of around Rs 1,000 crore," he added.

Mumbai, 19/5: Indian benchmark equity indices erased their intraday gains and closed lower on Tuesday as weakness in banking, financial and metal stocks weighed on investor sentiment. The Sensex declined 114.19 points, or 0.15 per cent, to close at 75,200.85. The Nifty settled 31.95 points, or 0.14 per cent, lower at 23,618. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that a sustained move above the 23,700-23,800 region will be essential to strengthen recovery momentum toward the psychological 24,000 mark, where stronger selling pressure is likely to emerge. "On the downside, the 23,600-23,500 zone continues to remain a crucial immediate support area, and a decisive breakdown below this region could extend weakness toward the broader 23,300 zone," a market



expert mentioned. Among the major laggards in the Nifty index were Titan Company, UltraTech Cement and Tata Consumer Products. Kotak Mahindra Bank were the top loser on Sensex. Other top laggards were Titan Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma and IndiGo. On the other hand, Infosys led the gainers pack. HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Eternal and TCS were among top

gainers on the same index. The Indian rupee weakened sharply during the session, falling 25 paise to touch a fresh low of 96.61 against the US dollar. The currency eventually settled at 95.53 per dollar, compared to its previous close of 95.36. Sectorally, banking and financial shares remained under pressure throughout the session. The Nifty Private Bank

index emerged as the worst-performing sectoral index, while the Nifty Bank and Nifty Financial Services indices also underperformed the broader market. However, some sectors managed to buck the weak trend. The Nifty IT, Nifty Realty and Nifty Chemical indices ended higher and outperformed the benchmark indices. Broader markets showed resilience despite weakness in frontline indices. The Nifty MidCap index rose 0.91 per cent, while the Nifty SmallCap index gained 1.17 per cent during the session. Meanwhile, Rupee traded weaker by around 10 paise near 96.53, as elevated crude oil prices and continued pressure on capital flows kept the currency under stress. "The broader trend remains weak, with rupee expected to trade in a range of 96.25-97.00 in the near term," an analyst stated.

## EPFO intensifies efforts for reduction of litigation through mission mode disposal drives: Mansukh Mandaviya

New Delhi, 19/5: Union Minister for Labour & Employment Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday said that the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has undertaken focused, mission-mode initiatives to reduce litigation and ensure the timely resolution of pending cases across various legal forums. Union Minister Mandaviya said that EPFO launched a dedicated mission-mode drive for the disposal of cases pending before consumer courts. Under the "Nidhi Aapke Nikat (NAN)" programme, cases were identified in advance and taken up for expedited resolution. As a result, the number of pending consumer cases declined significantly from 4,936 as on 1 April 2024 to 2,646 as on 31 March

2026. "EPFO is also proactively identifying cases pending before consumer courts and reaching out to citizens through Nidhi Aapke Nikat to facilitate faster grievance redressal," he added. Mansukh Mandaviya further added that the overall pendency of litigation cases has reduced from 31,036 cases as on 1 April 2025 to 27,639 cases as on 1 April 2026, reflecting a reduction of 3,397 cases. This marks the lowest ever level of litigation pendency in EPFO. "Special emphasis was also placed on reducing long-pending cases. Consequently, the number of cases pending for more than 10 years declined from 8,539 to 4,665, registering a reduction of 3,874 cases, or nearly 45.4 per cent," the Minister added. In

another important initiative to reduce litigation, EPFO conducted a nationwide Special Campaign during February-March 2026 for cases pending before Central Government Industrial Tribunals (CGITs). The campaign focused on disputes relating to interest payable by employers on delayed remittances under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. Zone-wise Nodal Officers were appointed to coordinate with stakeholders and various CGITs. This initiative resulted in the disposal of 353 appeals, while efforts are continuing for the expeditious disposal of another 650 related cases.

Mumbai, 19/5: Domestic equity markets traded higher on Tuesday in early trade amid hopes of a de-escalation in the West Asia conflict after US President Donald Trump indicated a possible nuclear deal with Iran. Sensex rose as much as 368 points or 0.48 per cent to hit an intraday high of 75,683 in morning trade, while Nifty was trading at 23,758, up 110 points or 0.45 per cent. Sectorally, IT stocks led the gains, with the Nifty IT index surging 4 per cent. Similarly, the Nifty MidSmall IT & Telecom index advanced nearly 3 per cent, while the Nifty Chemicals index rose 1.16 per cent. Among laggards, the Nifty Private Bank index slipped by 0.11 per cent. Nifty Auto and Nifty Metal indices were also trading marginally lower. From the Nifty pack, Hindalco Industries declined the most, falling over 1 per cent, followed by Coal India which slipped 0.93 per cent and ONGC which traded 0.81 per cent lower. Titan Company was down around 0.6 per cent, while Kotak Mahindra Bank and Eternal fell 0.54 per cent and 0.49 per cent, respectively. JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement and Shriram Finance were also trading lower by up to 0.47 per cent. Heavyweights HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank slipped marginally. Analysts said concerns over elevated valuations in global AI-linked stocks were prompting



investors to look at relatively attractive segments in India. "If FII buying gathers momentum, large-cap financials, especially leading banks, are likely to outperform given their reasonable valuations and growth potential," market experts said. On the broader macroeconomic outlook, analysts said concerns related to growth, inflation and currency depreciation continue to persist amid the ongoing energy crisis. They advised investors to focus on sectors that are relatively insulated from these headwinds, including pharmaceuticals, power-related companies and defence

stocks. Commenting on earnings, analysts said fourth quarter results were encouraging and, in many cases, better than expected, signalling that the economy had started recovering due to last year's fiscal and monetary stimulus measures before being hit by the latest energy shock. "A quick resolution of the Strait of Hormuz crisis could help the economy recover faster and limit the extent of the slowdown expected this year," they added. Markets found support after American President Trump said he had paused a planned attack on Iran following a peace proposal

from Tehran and that there was a "very good chance" of reaching a deal on Iran's nuclear programme. In commodities, oil prices traded lower, with international benchmark Brent crude declining 2.74 per cent to \$109.02 per barrel, while US WTI crude traded 2.16 per cent lower at \$102.12 per barrel. In Asia, markets traded mixed. Japan's Nikkei and South Korea's KOSPI slipped up to 3 per cent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng traded marginally higher. Overnight in the US, the S&P 500 ended nearly flat, down 0.07 per cent, while the Nasdaq declined 0.51 per cent.

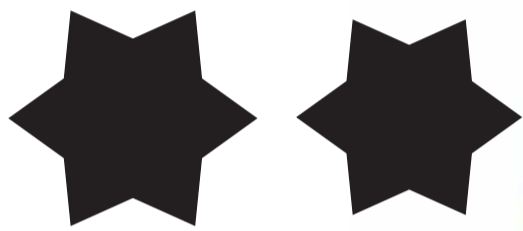
## Shikhar Pahariya excited for Janhvi Kapoor and Ram Charan's 'Peddi', calls her "lady don" after trailer release

Actor Janhvi Kapoor's rumoured boyfriend, Shikhar Pahariya, seems to be excited about her upcoming film 'Peddi'. After the trailer of the film was launched in Mumbai on May 18, Shikhar shared his reaction on social media and left fans talking with his fun post for Janhvi Kapoor. Taking to his Instagram Stories, Shikhar praised Janhvi and called her a "lady don" in both reel and real life. Sharing the trailer, he wrote, "@janhvikapoor lady don in reel life and real life. @alwaysramcharan too good, brother mass. Can't wait." Actor Varun Dhawan also reacted to the trailer and showered praise on Janhvi Kapoor and the team. He wrote, "Janhvi Kapoor u r looking amazing can't wait to watch u all the best for peddi. Congratulations to the entire team @alwaysramcharan is fire." The three-minute and seven-second trailer opens with the massy introduction of Ram Charan while the actor flexes his batting and wrestling skills. At one point in the trailer, Boman Irani hailed Ram Charan as the cross athlete of India. The trailer showcases a sweeping rural drama where the lead character's undying love for sports is dominated by struggles orchestrated by the landlords and other powerful antagonists. Ram Charan plays a multi-talented athlete who earns his livelihood through sheer physical strength, straddling cricket, wrestling and sprinting. According to the video, Divyendu is expected to play the role of an antagonist in the film. Ram Charan was also seen romancing with actress Janhvi Kapoor in the movie. The movie is produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under the banner of Vriddhi Cinemas. The film's music is composed by AR Rahman. The film is slated to release in theatres on June 4.



## Cannes 2026: Jacqueline Fernandez stuns in black sequin dress at Chopard event

Actor Jacqueline Fernandez has returned to the Cannes Film Festival, making another high-profile appearance at the 2026 edition of the prestigious global event. The actor attended luxury jewellery brand Chopard's "Miracle" show on the French Riviera during the ongoing 79th Cannes Film Festival. Jacqueline shared glimpses from the evening on her official Instagram handle, posting a photograph of herself walking on a purple carpet outdoors at dusk. In the image, she is seen wearing a sparkling strapless black mini-dress paired with classic black pumps. The actor captioned the post, "Tonight for @chopard Miracle show in Cannes! Beautiful collection, congrats @chopardbycaroline @carolinescouture @chopard." For the event, Jacqueline opted for a chic monochrome look featuring a strapless, form-fitting black mini dress embellished with shimmering sequins and beadwork. Representing Chopard, she accessorised the outfit with a statement diamond necklace and a matching diamond bracelet. Her beauty look featured voluminous Hollywood waves styled with a middle parting, along with soft, smoky eye makeup and a neutral nude lip. The 79th Cannes Film Festival, running from May 12 to May 23 marks Jacqueline's third consecutive high-profile appearance at the festival. In 2024, she attended the premiere of "The Substance" while representing India at Cannes. In 2025, she was recognised as one of six global honourees by the Red Sea Film Foundation's Women in Cinema initiative for her contributions to cinema. On the work front, Jacqueline Fernandez was recently seen in the Sonu Sood-directed action thriller 'Fateh' and the star-studded comedy 'Housefull 5'. She will next be seen in 'Welcome to the Jungle', the third installment of the comedy franchise, directed by Ahmed Khan. Fernandez stars alongside a massive ensemble cast including Akshay Kumar, Paresh Rawal, and Suniel Shetty



## SPORTS

### 'One Last Time in Yellow?' Emotional MS Dhoni Moment at Chepauk Leaves CSK Fans in Tears After SRH Defeat

NEWDELHI, 19/5: An emotional night unfolded at Chepauk as fans watched Chennai Super Kings suffer a crushing defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL 2026. But the result quickly became secondary as attention turned towards one man — MS Dhoni. Sunrisers Hyderabad chased down 181 runs to seal a five-wicket victory and secure their IPL 2026 playoff spot. The defeat pushed Chennai Super Kings closer to elimination. Yet long after the match ended, thousands of fans remained inside the MA Chidambaram Stadium, hoping to witness one more unforgettable moment involving Dhoni.



For many supporters, the night carried a painful possibility — this could have been MS Dhoni's final appearance at Chepauk in CSK colours. There was no retirement announcement, farewell speech or official confirmation from Dhoni. Still, the atmosphere inside the stadium felt unusually emotional. At 44, with fitness concerns becoming a major talking point this season, speculation around

Dhoni's IPL future has intensified. The legendary former captain has largely stayed away from the playing XI this year as Chennai carefully managed his workload. Fans entered the stadium hoping to see vintage Dhoni one more time — a quick stumping, a trademark six, or his familiar calm presence behind the stumps. Instead, they watched from a distance, uncertain whether another opportunity would come. Ironically, the

biggest roar of the night had nothing to do with the match itself. During the innings break, CSK players gathered for the franchise's traditional final-home-game photograph. As soon as Dhoni walked onto the field wearing the iconic yellow jersey, the entire stadium erupted. Supporters instantly stood up and cheered loudly as cameras captured an emotional Dhoni acknowledging the crowd. What looked like a routine team photo

suddenly turned into one of the most emotional moments of IPL 2026. For nearly two decades, Dhoni has become the face of Chennai Super Kings. His leadership, calmness under pressure, trophy-winning legacy and loyalty to the franchise have created a bond few cricketers share with any city in world cricket. This time, however, the applause carried a deeper emotion — fear that the Dhoni era may finally be nearing its end.

### India vs Afghanistan 2026: Rohit's Fitness Under Scanner, Pant May Lose Vice-Captaincy as BCCI Faces Big Selection Calls

NEWDELHI, 19/5: The Indian cricket team could witness major changes ahead of the upcoming Afghanistan series as the BCCI selection committee prepares to finalise squads for the Test and ODI matches in Guwahati on Tuesday. From Rohit Sharma's fitness concerns to a possible leadership reshuffle involving Rishabh Pant, selectors are expected to take several high-impact decisions that could shape India's roadmap toward the next ODI World Cup. One of the biggest talking points before the squad announcement is the fitness of Indian captain Rohit



Sharma. According to reports, selectors are concerned about Rohit's physical condition after a difficult IPL 2026 season with the

Mumbai Indians. With a packed international calendar ahead, the management is reportedly considering whether the veteran

opener should be rested for portions of the Afghanistan series to avoid long-term fitness issues. Another major development revolves around Rishabh Pant. Sources suggest the team management is debating whether Pant should continue as India's vice-captain in the Test format. The discussion reportedly centres around allowing Pant to focus completely on wicketkeeping and batting responsibilities rather than leadership pressure. While no final decision has been taken yet, the possibility of a leadership reshuffle has sparked widespread discussion among cricket fans.

### Salman Khan clarifies viral 'lonely' post



Actor Salman Khan has cleared the air after his recent "alone and lonely" post created speculation online. The actor took to his X account on Sunday, asking fans to "chill" as the post was not about his personal life. Earlier, Salman had shared a shirtless picture of himself relaxing on a couch and wrote, "By I me myself, 2 ways to be by yr self. Alone and Lonely, Alone is by choice n lonely when nobody wants to be with u..... Ab iske aage you Figure out what you need to do." The post went viral in no time, with several of his fans wondering if the actor was hinting at loneliness. However, Salman later shared another message and assured everyone that there was no reason to worry. Reacting to the chatter around his post, Salman wrote, "Arre yaar Mai apne bare mai nahi baat kar raha tha. How can i be alone when i have such a large amazing family n friends n how can I be lonely when I have u guys, your wishes n Duas... I would be the biggest na shukra ever." The actor also jokingly shared that sometimes he gets tired of being around people all the time and likes spending some quiet time alone. "Kabhi Kabhi logon ke saath reh kar pak jaata hun, isliye some me time, buss... Iss baar koi photo nahi breaking news bana diya, Mummy pooch rahi hai, 'Kya

hua beta?' Chill maro yaar," he added. On the work front, Salman will next be seen in the film 'Maatrubhumi', where he will share screen space with Chitrangada Singh. The film, earlier titled 'Battle of Galwan', is based on the 2020 Galwan Valley clash between India and China. Directed by Apoorva Lakhia and produced under Salman Khan Films, 'Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace' is expected to release soon

### French Riviera Witnessed Mouni Roy Making A Striking Comeback For Bombay Stories Showcase At Cannes 2026

International fashion and cinema circles turned their attention to the French Riviera as prominent Indian actress Mouni Roy made her highly anticipated appearance at the ongoing 79th Cannes Film Festival. Stepping out publicly just days after verifying her marital split from entrepreneur Suraj Nambiar, the actor shared a captivating glimpse of what she described as her "Cannes & Chaos" moment on social media. Capturing snapshots from her hotel balcony, she displayed a meticulously styled monochrome ensemble featuring a sharp black mini dress, a structured trench coat, and knee-length leather boots. This high-profile outing transitions her narrative away from personal speculation back to her professional achievements as a global artistic ambassador. The performer traveled to France specifically to participate in the prestigious Marche du Film, a crucial marketplace where global distributors gather to acquire international projects.

