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**In Brief**  
**Delhi HC issues notice to CBI on Kavitha's bail plea**



**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Thursday issued a notice to the CBI on bail plea of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader K. Kavitha, an accused in the alleged excise policy scam. A bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma also called for CBI's reply on writ petition filed by Kavitha, daughter of BRS President and former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), challenging her arrest by the CBI and the subsequent remand in the corruption case. The matter will be taken up for further hearing on May 24 along with her bail plea in the money laundering case. Kavitha moved the high court after a special court here on May 6 turned down her regular bail pleas in cases being probed by both — the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Last week, the ED filed its seventh chargesheet before a Delhi court in connection with the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam, naming Kavitha and others as accused. Kavitha was first arrested by the ED and later by the CBI on April 11 when she was in Tihar Jail.

**I.N.D.I.A. plans to have 5 PMs in 5 years: Modi**

**LUCKNOW:** At four back-to-back rallies in Uttar Pradesh's Lalganj, Jaunpur, Bhadohi, and Pratapgarh on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi continued his unrelenting attack on the Opposition, accusing the SP and the Cong in particular of "selling appeasement, lies, parivarvad and corruption". The Prime Minister said that the ongoing general election is an opportunity for the country to choose a leader who can run a strong government, which "makes the world aware of India's strength". He also repeated his claims that the I.N.D.I.A. bloc wants to make five Prime Ministers in five years and that the Opposition alliance will crumble after June 4. Hitting out at the Samajwadi Party and the Congress for fielding a Trinamul Congress (TMC) candidate in Bhadohi, Modi said that they want to replicate the model of governance where they want to promote political protection for terror," he said. In Azamgarh, Modi said that earlier people used to think of Azamgarh every time a blast took place anywhere in the country. He asserted that Azamgarh's identity changed a decade ago due to the appeasement politics of the previous SP governments in Uttar Pradesh. "Terrorists accused of explosions were pardoned. Sleeper cells were given the cover of politics.



**Revanth Reddy: Revise Market Value of Lands in Telangana**

**CORRESPONDENT Hyderabad -Telangana Capital:**  
 Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy asked officials to take steps to revise market values of lands in the state. He said the land rates in Hyderabad and all parts of the state have increased significantly but there was no corresponding increase in the income earned by the state government through the stamps and registration department. The vast difference between the actual market value of the lands and the government prescribed market value of lands was the reason for this, the Chief Minister opined. He said the actual market



value of lands was manifold higher than the government-prescribed market value and this should be rationalised by revising government-prescribed market value. Revanth Reddy on Thursday reviewed the performance of revenue-earning departments at the Sec-

retariat with ministers and senior officials. He reviewed the revenue collections achieved through departments of commercial taxes, stamps and registrations, excise and mining. He expressed disappointment over departments failing to achieve stipulated revenue targets in the previous fiscal 2023-24. The Chief Minister said, as per norms, the market value of lands should be revised every year under the Indian Stamp Act but the land values were not revised for eight years after the formation of Telangana state. He ordered the stamps and registration department to follow a scientific method in the finalisation of the market values of the lands accordingly in different areas, agriculture lands, vacant lands, plots and apartments. Revanth Reddy suggested that land market prices should be revised to promote the real estate and the construction sector along with increasing revenue of the state. He suggested them to study the stamp duty which is being collected in other states and take a call on either increasing the duty or reducing it. After the formation of Telangana state in June 2014, the state government did not increase the market value of lands till 2021. The market values that were revised in 2013 in undivided AP remained in force for eight years in Telangana till 2021.

**'We will build a temple at the birth place of Sitamma'**



**Sitamadhi:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday announced that the BJP will build a grand temple for Seethammavari at Sitamadhi in Bihar. Addressing an election campaign rally in Sitamadhi on Thursday, he said that the BJP is not afraid of the vote bank. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had built a Ram Temple in Ayodhya and a grand memorial to Seethammavari should be built at her birth place. He said that those who are far away from the Ram Temple cannot do this, and only Prime Minister Modi and BJP have the power to build an ideal temple on the lines of Sitamma's life. Sitamadhi, one of the 40 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar, will go to polls on May 30 during the fifth phase of elections.

**'DAYS OF ONE DISTRICT, ONE MAFIA GONE'**

**Narendra Modi Lauds Yogi, Says 'Mahaul Badal Gaya Hai'**

**Lucknow:** Prime Minister and senior BJP leader Narendra Modi today said praised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while launching a blistering attack on the Samajwadi Party-led previous government in the state. Addressing a rally in the state's Bhadohi, Modi said that while the NDA government is working for 'one district, one product', the then Samajwadi Party government used to have 'one district, one mafia'. Modi was addressing the rally for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in the state. "We are trying everything for vocal for local, one district one product, in SP govt it was 'one district one mafia'... Since Yogi ji has assumed the power 'pura mahaul badal gaya hai'..." said Narendra Modi. Modi also took a potshot at the Samajwadi Party and Mamata Banerjee. "Pehale wali bua (Mayawati), SP waalon ko pehachan gayi aur inhe chhardiya isliye ab Bengal se bua (Mamata Banerjee) lekar aaye hain"... I want to ask 'Babua', the 'Shehzada' of SP, that your 'bua' is so close to you and has come all the way from Bengal, have you ever asked her why she calls the people of UP outsiders in Bengal?" said Modi. PM Modi also said, "In Bhadohi, it's difficult for Samajwadi Party & Congress to save their deposit and hence they're doing a political experiment here. They want to do a trial of TMC's Bengal politics. TMC politics means 'poisonous arrow of appeasement'... Many BJP leaders like Manish Shukla were killed there and TMC's MLAs said 'Hinduo ko Ganga me dubo kar maar denge'.



**"His Assumption...": Supreme Court Junks Probe Agency's Arvind Kejriwal Plea**

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has junked the Enforcement Directorate's plea for action against out-of-bail Arvind Kejriwal, reasoning the Delhi Chief Minister's "... if you vote for AAP (when Delhi's seven Lok Sabha seats poll next week) I won't have to go back to jail" remark did not violate his bail terms. The court told the federal agency Mr Kejriwal's comment constituted his personal opinion, and said, "It is his assumption... we cannot say anything. Our order (on the Chief Minister returning to jail on June 2) is clear. That is the decision of this court (and) we will be governed by the rule of law..." The court - which has heard arguments by the ED about the possible precedence of arrested political leaders receiving bail to campaign during elections - stressed it had not made any "exceptions". "We have not made any exceptions. We welcome criticism of (our) decision (but) we will not go into this issue. Our order is clear... we have set the dates... also given reasons for granting interim bail." The court refused the request to revoke bail and order Mr Kejriwal to jail. Earlier, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued Mr Kejriwal, while campaigning, had said "... if you vote for AAP, I won't have to go back to jail..." "This is a clear violation of conditions set by the court. It is a slap in the face of the judiciary." Responding for Mr Kejriwal, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi pointed out senior union min-

isters - whom he did not name - had made various kinds of statements against his client. On Monday, while campaigning for his party, Mr Kejriwal said he feared being thrown in jail again should the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance win the 2024 Lok Sabha election. He also claimed efforts were made, after being sent to Delhi's Tihar Jail, to "break and humiliate" him. "I have to go back to jail on June 2. I will be watching the results (of the election) on June 4 from jail. If you make INDIA bloc (the Congress-led opposition grouping of which the AAP is a member) win, I will come back on June 5. If there is lack of effort, let us see when we will meet," he had said. The court last week also snubbed a petition seeking Mr Kejriwal's removal. A bench of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta said it was up to Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena to act, if the situation warranted intervention, and refused to interfere.



## Bhupinder Singh Hooda interview: 'Humiliation that women wrestlers faced is going to cost BJP in Haryana'

**Chandigarh:** The BJP swept Haryana in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, winning all 10 seats in the state. In the past five years, the Congress has attempted to revive its base on the ground even as it has battled internal differences among its top leadership. In an interview, Haryana Leader of the Opposition and former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda tells The Indian Express that issues of unemployment, unprecedented price rise, farm protests and the "unfair treatment" of women wrestlers will determine the choice of the electorate as Haryana votes on May 25. Excerpts:

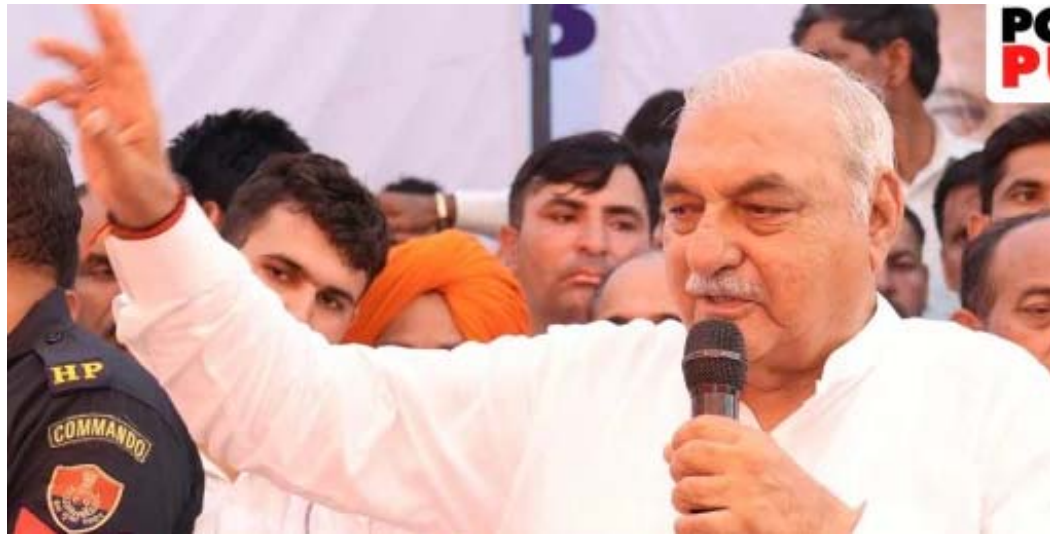
**\* You are confident about the Congress sweeping the polls in Haryana. Why?**

There are multiple factors. The people of Haryana have seen the BJP government in the state for the last 10 years. It has been a non-performing government throughout its tenure in all aspects, whether its per capita income, law and order situation, employment, or price rise.

Thanks to the BJP's policies, Haryana has become number one in unemployment. Young children are forced to leave their homes in search of jobs. The youth is convinced that they have no future under the BJP. That is why every second young person wants to go abroad even if it is illegally through donkey routes.

The Congress wants to make Haryana a state where no youth is forced to leave his motherland. We will bring jobs and ensure vacant government posts are filled. People will not vote for the BJP because it has failed to fulfil promises that it made in 2014 and then in 2019. Did they double farmers' income? Did they ensure employment to youth? Did they give a guarantee on MSP to farmers? A strong wind of change is flowing across Haryana.

**\* BJP leaders are asking**



**people not to focus on national issues when they vote in the Lok Sabha elections.**

The people of Haryana are viewing these (Lok Sabha) polls like the panchayat polls. They are fed up with this non-performing BJP government. People have not forgotten the year-long farmers' agitation in which over 700 farmers lost their lives. People have not forgotten when our daughters (wrestlers who levelled sexual harassment allegations against BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh) who are the entire nation's pride were forced to sit for days on end in New Delhi to seek justice. The humiliation they faced is definitely going to cost the BJP in Haryana.

**\* What is the Congress's central poll pitch?**

People have understood that if they (BJP) come to power for the third time, they will destroy our Constitution. The Congress manifesto, on the other hand, promises 25 guarantees that have touched the hearts of every person in Haryana.

**\* Several BJP leaders are facing boycott calls in Haryana villages. How do you see this?**

People's anger is coming to the fore when they see these

(BJP) leaders in front of them. Not only in rural areas, the situation is the same in urban areas too. However, I do not agree with this method of showing anger. People should not stop these leaders from entering their villages or localities. They should exercise their franchise and stop these leaders from entering the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha.

**\* You have campaigned across Haryana but so far you have not visited Sirsa (where Kumari Selja is contesting). Why?**

If a candidate asks me to campaign for them, I shall go there. If Selja also asks me to come and campaign for her, I will visit Sirsa too.

**\* After three Independents withdrew support for it, the BJP government was on shaky ground. What is your take on that?**

The BJP has lost the moral right (to govern) because it has been reduced to a minority. Today, the Opposition has more numbers than the ruling party. The Opposition has already approached the Governor seeking the dissolution of the Assembly. Otherwise, there will be horse-trading. Now, there are reports that several MLAs of the Jannayak Janta Party (which was an ally of the gov-

ernment until March) are in touch with the BJP. There are also indications that JJP may break and that two-thirds of its MLAs merge into the BJP to avoid defection law ... (JJP president) Dushyant Chautala says that his MLAs will have to follow the whip. If the party (JJP) breaks, then where does the whip stand? The Governor should dissolve this Assembly and fresh elections should be held. Let the people of Haryana decide who they want to see in the government.

## Modi decides to make Amit Shah PM in 2025: Kejriwal



**Lucknow:** Kejriwal's Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal said that Modi has decided to make Amit Shah the Prime Minister in 2025. Prime Minister Modi will complete 75 years by September 17, 2025. Modi has decided to declare Amit Shah as his successor and make him the Prime Minister on September 17. Kejriwal said that Prime Minister Modi has not yet said that he will not retire after 75 years. Kejriwal held a media conference with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow. Speaking on the oc-

casional, he said.. Today, he has come to Lucknow to request the voters of UP to vote for the Indian alliance. I want to talk about four things in particular. First, PM Modi is asking in this election to make Amit Shah the Prime Minister. Secondly, if BJP comes to power, they will remove CM Yogi Adityanath from his post in 2-3 months. Thirdly, they said that they are going to change the constitution as soon as the BJP comes to power. SC and ST reservations will be removed. Fourth, Kejriwal expressed hope that

the Bharatiya Janata Party is coming to power on June 4. Kejriwal said that there is no possibility of BJP forming the government at the center once again. This time BJP will get less than 220 MP seats. He said that the seats of BJP are going to decrease in states like Haryana, Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan in this election. Kejriwal expressed confidence that the Indian alliance is going to form the government.

## Man Behind Mumbai Billboard That Collapsed Arrested From Udaipur

**New Delhi:** Bhavesh Bhide, a businessman whose company was responsible for installing the billboard that collapsed in Mumbai's Ghatkopar, was arrested from Rajasthan's Udaipur. A case had been filed against Bhavesh Bhide after the billboard erected by his company collapsed during a storm in Mumbai, leading to the deaths of 14 and injuring at least 74 others. Bhavesh Bhide, the wanted accused in the FIR, had been on the run since the incident occurred. He already has over 20 cases against him, includ-

ing one of rape. The 120X120-foot hoarding that collapsed in Ghatkopar on Monday was so large that it made it to the Limca Book of Records. According to the BMC, billboards larger than 40 x 40 feet are not permitted. Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced that the government would cover the medical costs of those injured and will give Rs.5 lakh in compensation to the families of those killed in the accident. Following the Ghatkopar hoarding incident, BMC announced that no new hoardings would be allowed

in Mumbai at this time; irrespective of whether the advertisement board is in any government or private premises. These instructions are mandatory to follow. The crucial decision was made by BMC Commissioner and Administrator Bhushan Gagrani at a meeting with officials from many agencies that took place at BMC headquarters. The Municipal Corporation Administration has ordered the Railway Administration to remove illegally sized billboards in Ghatkopar to prevent a repeat of similar incidents.



## Congress Follows Mahatma Gandhi, Who Said 'Hey Ram' Before Dying: Priyanka Gandhi

**Raebareli:** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said her party follows the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, who uttered "Hey Ram" before dying, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was wrong in accusing it of being anti-religion. "They accuse us of being against the Hindu religion. We follow Mahatma Gandhi's ideal who had chanted 'Hey Ram' before dying," she said, addressing a poll rally at 'Chaudah Mill roundabout,' about 20 km from the district headquarters. She alleged that while the BJP claims to be a "champion of Hindu religion," the condition of the state-run cowsheds in Uttar Pradesh remains pitiable.

"They accuse us of being against religion for turning down invitations for the consecration ceremony in Ayodhya. Just look at the condition of the cowsheds in UP where a video showed dogs eating the flesh of a dead cow," she said. She said that during



the Congress rule in Chhattisgarh, the party improved the condition of cowsheds and used to purchase cow dung to aid self-help groups running the cowsheds. Priyanka Gandhi has been canvassing every day in the Raebareli constituency, where Rahul Gandhi has thrown in his hat, replacing his mother Sonia Gandhi, who vacated the seat after being nominated to the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan. The Congress leader highlighted the strong bond the Gandhi family has had with the constituency since the days of

Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. "Bhaiya (Rahul Gandhi) will follow the tradition after winning the election," she said. She accused the Modi government of trying to take credit for the free ration scheme by putting his photograph on papers related to it and said it was the Congress-led UPA government that brought the Right to Food Act. The Congress leader also lambasted the BJP over frequent question paper leaks in UP and promised stringent laws to stop such leaks. She promised GST on education would be done away with and the Agniweer scheme for recruitment in the armed forces would be scrapped if her party comes to power at the Centre. She said her party will restore the earlier method of permanent appointment with the provision of pension for Army personnel. The Congress general secretary also spoke about creating a Rs.5,000-crore fund to help small entrepreneurs.

## BJP Slams Kejriwal For Ignoring Question on Maliwal 'Assault', AAP's Sanjay Singh Defends Silence

**New Delhi:** The BJP attacked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for avoiding media questions about the alleged assault on his party MP Swati Maliwal at his residence in Delhi, accusing him of behaving more like a "goon". The Aam Aadmi Party convener was speaking at a press conference earlier in the day in Lucknow with Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav, when the Delhi chief minister was questioned about the incident. Kejriwal avoided the question, which was fielded by AAP MP Sanjay Singh, who was also present. Singh stated that his party has already taken a clear position on the issue.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva chastised the chief minister for avoiding media questions and demanded his resignation immediately, accepting responsibility for the incident. BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed Kejriwal is the main "criminal"



in the incident in which his aide Bibhav Kumar allegedly physically attacked Maliwal at the chief minister's residence. Bhatia also mentioned a phone call Maliwal made to the Delhi Police on the day of the incident. "Kejriwal's silence speaks volumes. 'Out of jail, he's more of a 'goonda' than a chief minister," Bhatia told journalists. Bhatia noted that Bibhav Kumar was photographed with Kejriwal during his visit to Lucknow. At the press conference, Sanjay Singh used incidents of crimes

against women in Manipur, women wrestlers' complaints against BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, and the Prajwal Revanna case to criticise the BJP. The AAP has made its position clear in the Maliwal case, and no one should politicise it, Singh said. Bhatia noted that Singh admitted that a condemnable incident had occurred against Maliwal, and that Kejriwal was expected to act in a case involving a party colleague. Instead, he described the accused as a "twin

brother" travelling with him. "This shows Kejriwal has no commitment to justice for women, while the BJP is fighting for justice for an opposition leader," he said, accusing him of cowardice. Bhatia demanded that the AAP leader break his silence or, if he is a coward, resign. He said that the woman The Rajya Sabha MP has been incommunicado since the incident, and the BJP leader wondered if she had been kidnapped or forcibly removed from the public eye.

## "Don't Trust Mamata Banerjee": Congress' Adhir Ranjan On INDIA Olive Branch

**Kolkata:** The Congress' Bengal boss, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, weighed in on the 'is she, isn't she' debate over Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's membership of the INDIA opposition bloc. Responding to her "... will provide outside support (if the group wins the election)" comment Wednesday, Mr Chowdhury declared, "I don't trust her... she left the alliance. She can also go towards the BJP." "What she

will do from outside (the alliance) or inside... I don't know. That you have to ask her," the Congress leader told reporters. "But I don't trust her. She left the alliance... she could even run to BJP."

Mr Chowdhury - there is little love lost between him and Ms Banerjee, a fact underlined by the latter yesterday explicitly stating "... INDIA alliance doesn't count Bengal Congress..." - also said, "Whatever

complaints she has (about the bloc) she should have raised earlier, when it was created." Mr Chowdhury further pointed out the apparent U-turn came after polling for nearly 70 per cent of all Lok Sabha seats, with the opposition bloc claiming big advances in its bid to oust the ruling BJP. "They (referring to the BJP) were talking about destroying Congress and that Congress would not get 40 seats... but now (what) she is

saying means Congress and INDIA are coming to power," he said, appearing to suggest Ms Banerjee's about-face followed a realisation the BJP will likely be defeated. A day earlier Ms Banerjee - who had put her membership of the bloc on hold after public spats over seat-sharing deals - declared she would provide "outside support" in the event of an election win. "We will give leadership to INDIA and help... from outside.



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# EDITORIAL

## Has the Chief of Defence Staff post improved India's combat efficiency?

Media reports suggest ('Armed Forces' integrated commands structure plan looks at Vice CDS, Dy CDS with clear roles', IE, May 13) that the complex and contentious policy issue of rewiring the Indian military into integrated theatre commands (ITC) is gaining traction and that the armed forces are looking at the appointment of a Vice Chief of Defence Staff and a Deputy Chief of Defence Staff. This is to be cautiously welcomed and while an official announcement would provide more detail, a review of the post of a CDS in India's higher defence management matrix is merited. Lack of an appropriate degree of jointness among the three armed forces has long been identified as a structural constraint that needed redress and to his credit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi picked up the gauntlet. In the first few months of his second term (Modi 2.0), namely August 19, the post of the CDS (Chief of Defence Staff) was announced with fanfare. This was seen as a bold and welcome initiative. The CDS was accorded a daunting and anomalous institutional profile but this was deemed necessary when the post was conceived. Wearing three hats, the CDS is the first among equals along with the other three service chiefs as a four-star general. Concurrently, he is Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Defence and Principal Adviser to the Defence Minister on inter-service issues. This is a demanding combination of roles, wherein professional military expertise has to be harmonised with bureaucratic acumen and a delicate political advisory role. General Bipin Rawat, who retired as the army chief in December 2019, was appointed as the first CDS in January 2020 but the trajectory of this post has been tragic and chequered. General Rawat died in an unfortunate air accident in December 2021 and consequently, many of the policies initiated by him remained suspended. In retrospect, some of them were impulsive and less than sagacious. For reasons that remain inexplicable, the Modi government took nine months to appoint a new CDS and in October 2022, Lt Gen Anil Chauhan (ret'd) was appointed the second CDS. Eyebrows were raised at the time, for this decision to recall a retired officer and appoint him in a higher rank was unprecedented and in my view, avoidable. Since then, there has been considerable internal deliberation about organisational changes but towards the end of Modi 2.0, there has been little tangible movement on the operational front. In summary, if India was to face a war now, the existing command and control structures with the three service chiefs at the apex would have to deal with the exigency. Against this backdrop, it is instructive to note that new posts at the higher level are being envisaged to enable the CDS to realise the larger objective of enhancing jointness (the sharing of domain expertise and assets) and improving composite combat capability. However, the major takeaways from the report appear perplexing and await clarification. The first pertains to the post of a Vice CDS in four-star rank. Rank hierarchy is central to the military and if implemented, the office of the CDS would be tenanted by two four-star rank officers and at a later stage — complemented by three theatre commanders presumably of four-star rank. Concurrently, the three service chiefs who are the original four-star rank officers would have a different profile that would be devoid of the command responsibility. This is a major restructuring of the Indian military and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has cautioned that the creation of theatre commands has taken up to 20 years in bigger countries, adding that while the process is on, it is time-consuming. He also added that many points of view have been taken on board (the Air Force, for example, has strong views on the subject) and that policy steps would be initiated only when consensus has been arrived at. Can this consensus be nudged in a positive manner? One had opined in the past that the existing set of responsibilities for the CDS is a case of avoidable overload and that the role of functioning as a Secretary to the government be reviewed. In the new posts being mooted, it would be desirable if the bureaucratic role could be hived off to the four-star VCDS thereby allowing the CDS to focus on his primary roles. The reference in the report that the Maritime Theatre Command (MTC) is likely to have its base in Coimbatore is perplexing. Karwar had been earlier identified and there was a certain logic to choosing this venue for the MTC. Why Coimbatore and not a location along the coast that will maximise existing infrastructure and assets for the MTC is intriguing. Perhaps the official announcement will provide some answers. With a two-front operational tasking along the land borders (China and Pakistan) and tangled, unresolved territorial disputes that have been festering for over seven decades and compounded by the scourge of state-sponsored terrorism — the challenges to national security and sovereignty remain abiding and tenacious. Kargil 1999, Mumbai 2008 and Galwan 2020 are illustrative of threats and (military) capacity.

The creation of the CDS in 2019 was to enable an enhancement in overall combat efficiency across the board and prepare for new exigencies that will be shaped by the techno-strategic churn that is now taking place. The wars in Ukraine and Palestine and the spillover into the Arabian Sea are cases in point. An objective review would suggest that the needle of India's overall combat efficiency — the ultimate litmus test — has not moved significantly since 2019 and the announcement of the post of a CDS. A new government will assume office in June and whether Modi 3.0 or otherwise, the evolution of the CDS as an institution should be resolute and objective and guided by abiding national security considerations. Sage counsel from former naval chief Admiral Arun Prakash when the first CDS was appointed merits recall: "The military ethos requires that he (CDS) retains his professional independence and upholds his oath of allegiance to the Constitution."

## Harish Rao condemns CM's remarks on power employees

**Hyderabad:** Former Minister and MLA T Harish Rao condemned Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's remarks against the field staff of power utilities for power cuts in the State. Revanth Reddy was attempting to hide his inefficiency and shifting the blame onto the opposition parties as well as staff of electricity companies, he said.

"I strongly condemn Revanth Reddy's reluctance to accept his government's failures with regard to power cuts and blaming the opposition parties and electricity employees," he said. In a statement, Harish Rao emphasized the irony in Reddy's accusations against the opposition, given the BRS government's track record of ensuring uninterrupted power supply with the support of the employees and field staff of the power utilities.



"The BRS government built a robust system with the cooperation of the electricity employees to supply uninterrupted power to all sectors, making it the lone State to do so," he stated. In contrast, the Congress govern-

ment destroyed the entire system within just five months, leading to a power crisis for domestic, agricultural and industrial sectors.

He said Revanth Reddy's remarks which were made to cover up his inefficiency to utilise the available system and resources, have hurt the self-esteem of electricity workers, who played a pivotal role in the Telangana movement and subsequent reconstruction of the State. He urged the Chief Minister to refrain from undermining the contributions of employees and instead, focus on rectifying the power crisis. "It is unfortunate that the Chief Minister does not have the sincerity to correct the power cuts except to make excuses and blame the electricity workers," he remarked. He urged Revanth Reddy to set aside politics and focus on governance.

## BRS warns against attacks on party activists by Congress

**Hyderabad:** BRS working president KT Rama Rao warned the Congress leadership against physical attacks on BRS activists in Telangana. He questioned Congress senior leader Rahul Gandhi over the high-handedness of the Congress leaders in Atchampet of Nagarkurnool district on Tuesday, where the brother-in-law of a BRS councillor was attacked. "Yahi Hai Kya Aapki 'Mohabbat Ki Dukaan' Rahul Gandhi? Brazenly attacking opponents and abusing power. Shameful that police have become part of the abuse and attack," he posted on social media platform X.

Tagging DGP Ravi Gupta, he cautioned that if the police did not register cases against the attackers and preferred to be a spectator, the BRS would approach the Human Rights Commission for justice. Highlighting the attack, BRS Nagarkurnool MP candidate RS Praveen Kumar questioned the inefficiency of policemen in Atchempet town who remained silent spectators even as the Congress leaders attacked the BRS activist in front of their eyes.

"Is this the way policemen are trained to respond in Telangana? Or are they asked



to stay silent. The inability to apprehend at least one accused till now bolsters the suspicion that they are hand in glove with the aggressors. Please take disciplinary action on all those who are responsible for this," he urged the DGP.

The Congress workers in Atchampet of Nagarkurnool district attacked the brother-in-law of BRS councillor Sunkari Nirmala on Tuesday. According to the police, a verbal spat between Sunkari Balakrishna and Lalaiah led a heated argument where

Lalaiah along with his followers attacked Balakrishna along with his brother Mahesh at their residence where their another brother and BRS leader Balaraju along with his wife and ward councillor Nirmala also reside. In a video which went viral on social media, two police personnel who reached the spot, could be seen witnessing the attack for some time and intervening only after locals tried to pacify the Congress activists. The police registered cases only after the BRS activists staged a blockade on the highway.

## BRS gears up for Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates constituency election

**Hyderabad:** Buoyed by the response to its campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, the BRS is now gearing up for the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal Graduates constituency elections to be held on May 27. BRS working president KT Rama Rao held a meeting with party leaders from the erstwhile districts of Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal at Telangana Bhavan on Wednesday to chalk out the campaign plan for the next 10 days.

About 4.7 lakh registered graduate voters will exercise their franchise to elect the MLC. Since the State formation, elections to the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduates constituency were held four times and the BRS won all four elections.

The BRS fielded a BITS-Pilani alumni A Rakesh Reddy, while Chintapandu Naveen alias Teenmaar Mallanna is contesting the elections from the Congress.

Speaking to mediapersons on the occasion, Rama Rao exuded confidence that the BRS would win the election for fifth consecutive term and retain the seat. He emphasised the need for an educated and



committed leader like Rakesh Reddy as MLC to question the State government on behalf of the graduates regarding their issues. He reminded that the previous BRS government led by former Chief Minister

K Chandrashekhara Rao took numerous initiatives for graduates and also government employees.

"The BRS filled nearly two lakh vacancies in different government departments and also gave 73 per cent fitment benefit to the government employees making their salaries highest in the country. Comparatively, the Congress which promised to fill two lakh jobs within a year, is shamelessly taking credit for the recruitment taken up for 30,000 posts during the BRS regime," he said. The BRS president pointed out that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy who promised to announce a mega DSC in the first Cabinet meeting itself and also release a job calendar, was yet to initiate any measures in this regard. He also said the Congress leaders who found fault with the then BRS government for charging Rs 400 for TET applications and promised to conduct the exams at free of cost, had now increased the application fee by five times to Rs.2,000.

## Heavy rains accompanied by thunderstorms lash Hyderabad



**Hyderabad:** A massive downpour of rain accompanied by thunderstorms swept through Hyderabad, bringing rainfall exceeding 50 mm. Commencing around 3 pm, the rain pounded the city, causing disruptions in daily activities. Khairatabad recorded the highest rainfall at 51.3 mm, followed closely by Qutubullapur at 44.3 mm and Serilingampally at 40.8 mm. Malkajgiri followed with 40.5 mm of rainfall. Almost all parts of the city experienced rainfall exceeding 20 mm. In Telangana, districts including Medchal, Siddipet, Medak, Vikarabad, Kamareddy, Sircilla, Rangareddy, and Sangareddy received rainfalls of around 30 mm on Thursday. The yellow alert indicating heavy rainfall across the state continues till May 20. The rain prompted concerns for the upcoming Sunrisers Hyderabad match against Gujarat Tigers at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal, with forecasts predicting further downpours.

## Mumbai hoarding crash: Death toll reaches to 16 as two more bodies recovered



**Mumbai:** Two more bodies were recovered here from the debris at the site of the giant hoarding crash of May 13, taking the toll to 16, the BMC Disaster Control said. The bodies of a male and a female were found in a highly decomposed state and have been identified as Manoj Chansoria, 60, and Anita Chansoria, 59. The rescue work is still underway at the site of Chheda Nagar for the fourth day after the monstrous hoarding collapse. The rescue operation on Wednesday also led to the recovery of several vehicles buried under the debris, raising fears of more casualties. The incident sent shockwaves in Mumbai which is dotted by 1025 big and small hoardings, besides many others on railways properties. The BMC has started yanking off all illegal or oversized hoardings violating the permissible size of 40x40 feet (1600 sq feet). The civic body has also slapped notices to the Central Railway and Western Railway to immediately identify and remove all illegal hoardings on its properties immediately.

## Expired food articles found at famous food establishments in Jubilee Hills

**Hyderabad:** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Task Force team conducted inspections at multiple food establishments in Jubilee Hills and found violations ranging from expired food products to storing meat with vegetarian products together. At 36 Downtown Brew Pub in Jubilee Hills, expired food articles such as Sneh Chicken, Done's Button Mushroom, Hoisin Sauce and Knorr Chicken Saucing Powder worth Rs.4,000 were discarded. Semi-prepared food articles which were stored inside refrigerator without proper labels were also found in the bar's kitchen. Further dustbins were found open without lids and there were no medical fitness certificates for food handlers. Expired food articles worth Rs.4,970 were also discarded at another similar establishment Makau Kitchen & Bar. Moreover, authorities spotted cockroaches in the store area. Along with improper labels, Naturals Ice Cream didn't display their FSSAI license at the time of inspection. The authorities issued strict warnings and follow up inspections are expected soon.

## Film co-edited by Telangana youngster selected for Cannes Film Festival

**Mahabubnagar:** A feature film co-edited by Vuppuganti Raghavender from Wanaparthy district centre was selected to be screened at the 77th Cannes Film Festival beginning on May 14. Raghavender was invited to the 12-day long event recently. Titled 'In Retreat,' the film with an hour and 15-minute long run time will premiere on May 20. It is the first to have been selected under Association for the Diffusion of Independent Cinema (ACID) Cannes programme at the global film festival. The film illustrates the emotions of a man who returns to his village after 30 years of migration to faraway places in search of livelihood. "It is a dream come true moment for me. It brings recognition to independent filmmakers," Raghavender told 'Telangana Today.' An alumni of Film Institute of India-Pune, Raghavender edited movies titled 'Malleham' and 'How is it for Monday?' He worked on short films. Another editor of the movie was Maisam Ali. The film was directed by Harish Khanna, alumni of National School of Drama-New Delhi. It was jointly produced by Abhishek Kherotia, Thanikachalam SA and Maisam Ali. Ten films were selected from around 700-800 films applied for screening in the ACID Cannes programme. Seven of them were from France.



## BJP Seeks Cancellation Of Nominations Of Trinamool MP, Another Candidate

**Kolkata:** The West Bengal BJP said it has approached the Election Commission (EC) demanding the cancellation of nominations of two Trinamool Congress candidates on the grounds of serious defects in their paper. Speaking to media persons, BJP State General Secretary Jagannath Chattopadhyay said that the first one is Trinamool Congress candidate from Kolkata-Dakshin, Mala Roy, who is also the sitting MP from the constituency. "Besides being an MP she is also the chairperson of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC). This office is deemed to be an 'office of profit'. She had filed her nomination this time without resigning from that post. Even if she says that she is not drawing any salary as the chairman of KMC, she will not be out of the ambit of that 'office of profit,'" Mr Chattopadhyay said.

The second candidate of Trinamool Congress, whose cancellation of nomination has also been demanded by the state BJP, is the ruling party candidate from Basirhat Lok Sabha in North 24 Parganas dis-



trict, Haji Nurul Islam, who had been the Trinamool Congress MP from the same constituency from 2009 to 2014. According to Mr Chattopadhyay, anyone filing the nomination and who had been in any government, legislative or parliamentary position before, has to produce the "no dues certificate" from the government for the last 10 years along with his nomination.

"However, Haji Nurul Islam has not submitted that 'no dues certificate'. If you remember our first candidate for Birbhum Lok Sabha constituency, Debasish Dhar, a former Indian Police Service officer,

got his nomination cancelled because he also could not produce that 'no dues certificate' from the state government, following which we had to change our candidate," Mr Chattopadhyay said. He said that already the BJP has approached the EC pointing out these deficiencies in the nominations of Ms Roy and Mr Islam. "We will go to the extreme point in the matter including the Supreme Court of India," Mr Chattopadhyay said. Till the time the report was filed, there was no reaction from Ms Roy, Mr Islam or any other Trinamool Congress leader on the issue.

## Chandigarh Election Officer Issues Notice To Congress' Manish Tewari

**Chandigarh:** The Chandigarh district election officer has issued notices to Congress party's Chandigarh candidate Manish Tewari and the party's state unit chief HS Lucky for the alleged violation of the Election Commission of India's instructions.

According to an official statement, the DEO-cum-returning officer issued the notice to Mr Tewari and the state president of the Congress based on multiple complaints that "the Congress workers were engaged in the making and distribution of Congress Guarantee Cards in different areas like Maloya, Daria, Kishangarh, Manimajra, Bapu Dham Colony, EWS Flats Dhanas, whereby important details of voters were being collected by inducing them to vote in favour of Congress in lieu of promised guarantees in guarantee cards". Field reports which were obtained from flying squads in this regard by assistant returning officers reported that some of the residents had been made to fill such forms in which their details like name, address and phone number by the Congress party workers, it said. "Following the examination of complaints and reports received, a prima-facie case of violation of



ECI instructions was made out against the candidate and the political party at whose behest this illegal electoral activity is being done," said the statement.

"The candidate and office-bearers of the Congress have been directed to immediately ensure that no such illegal electoral activity is done further," it said. It has been made clear that if any such illegal electoral activity is reported in the Chandigarh parliamentary constituency in future, immediate penal action will be initiated against the candidate and the office-bearers of the political party, it said. "Show-cause notice has been issued to explain their position within 24 hours of the receipt of the notice, failing which they will be held li-

able for violation of the above-cited laws and of Model Code of Conduct and strict penal action as prescribed above in the law will be taken," it said.

Referring to the ECI instructions issued on May 2, the statement said such practices are "in the nature of inducement to the elector, aimed at enticing the individual voters to vote in a particular way in lieu of a future benefit which is a prohibited activity under Section 123 (1) of Representation of People Act, 1951". This is also a violation of Section 171 (B) of the Indian Penal Code which deals with bribery an offence related to elections, it said. Polling for the lone Chandigarh seat will be held in the last of Lok Sabha elections on June 1.

## India Registers Record \$778 Billion Export In 2023-24: Report

**New Delhi:** India registered record exports in the just concluded financial year 2023-24 at USD 778 billion, sources in the commerce ministry said. In 2022-23, the country exported goods and services combined at USD 776.3 billion. In break up, services exports rose from USD 325.3 billion to USD 341.1 billion in 2023-24. Merchandise exports though marginally declined from USD 451.1 billion to USD 437.1 billion. Among various steps the government took was to launch a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in varied sectors, including electronic goods, to make Indian manufacturers globally competitive, attract investments, enhance exports, integrate India into the global supply chain and reduce dependency on imports. These seemed to have reaped dividends. China, Russia, Iraq, UAE, and Singapore are among the countries where India's exports in the just-concluded financial year have risen substantially, though with a low base. The other countries in the Top 10 list are the UK, Australia, Saudi Arabia, the Neth-



erlands, and South Africa. Coming to overall imports, they declined from USD 898.0 billion in 2022-23 to USD 853.8 billion. Both merchandise and services exports declined during the financial year. Overall trade deficit significantly improved from USD 121.6 billion in 2022-23 to USD 75.6 billion in 2023-24. In the first month of 2024-25 - April, India exports, including merchandise and services, rose from USD 60.40 billion to USD 64.56 billion. Imports however rose from USD 63.02 billion to USD 71.07 billion. The trade deficit during April rose from

USD 2.62 billion to USD 6.51 billion on a yearly basis. During April, exports of electronic goods, organic and inorganic chemicals, petroleum products, and drugs and pharmaceuticals were higher on a yearly basis. On the contrary, exports of engineering goods, iron ore, gems and jewellery, marine products, and oil meals declined. On the import side, petroleum crude and products, gold, electronic goods, pulses, and vegetable oil, rose while pearls precious metals and precious stones, iron and steel, among others, declined.

## PoK Was Always India's, We Will Take It Back: Amit Shah's Big Statement

**Serampore, West Bengal:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah today referred to protests in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and said "PoK is part of India and we will take it". Addressing a rally in Serampore, Amit Shah said while peace has returned to once trouble-torn Kashmir after abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir "now echoes with slogans of Azadi and protests." "After the abrogation of Article 370 by the government in 2019 peace has returned to Kashmir. But now we witness protests in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Earlier slogans of Azadi were heard here, now the same slogans are heard in PoK. Earlier stones were pelted here, now stones are pelted in PoK," he said.

Hitting out at Congress leaders for not supporting the demand of taking over PoK, Mr Shah said, "Congress leaders like Mani Shankar Aiyar say it should not be done as they have an atom bomb. But let me say this Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is part of India and we will take it."

Amit Shah said the present Lok Sabha elections are about "choosing between corrupt leaders of INDI alliance and honest politician Narendra Modi, who despite being Chief Minister and then Prime Minister never had an allegation of single paisa against him." "It's a fight between the 'Chinese guarantee' of the INDI Alliance and the concrete promises of Modi Ji. It's a fight between infiltration and the guarantee of citizenship under the CAA. It's

a fight between 'Vote for Vikas' and 'Vote for Jihad'. The choice is yours," he said.

Dubbing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as "Hirak Rani" in an apparent reference to the film "Hirak Rajar Deshe" by Oscar-awarded filmmaker Satyajit Ray, Amit Shah said, "Satyajit Ray was a great artist and filmmaker. He made a movie - Hirak Rajar Deshe. It was quite a famous movie." "But when Mamata ji came to power, Satyajit Ray was not there, otherwise, he would have made a movie named 'Hirak Rani', instead of 'Hirak Rajar Deshe'. Mamata Banerjee is the Hirak Rani," he said. "Bengal is the land which gave us Vande Mataram and the national anthem Jana Gana Mana and played a key role in Bengal's freedom struggle. Both the communists and the TMC tried to end nationalism and patriotism in Bengal," he said. Hitting out at the TMC over various scams, Mr Shah said "No one will be spared even if Mamata Banerjee tries to protect them." "Those involved in corruption and scams and looting common people of Bengal should be prepared to go to jail. No one will be spared," he added.

Amit Shah slammed Banerjee for opposing the CAA and "taking out rallies in support of infiltrators" to appease her vote bank. "Mamata Banerjee is spreading lies and canards about CAA. Why is she against refugees obtaining citizenship? She is supporting infiltration in Bengal but opposes Hindu refugees getting citizenship. She is



taking of supporting infiltrators and Mullahs," he said.

The Centre in March implemented the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, notifying the rules four years after the law was passed by Parliament to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014. Referring to politics of appeasement by the TMC in Bengal, Amit Shah said invitations for the consecration ceremony were sent to both Mamata Didi and her nephew (Abhishek Banerjee), but they chose not to attend it, "as they are afraid that infiltrators, who are TMC's vote bank, might get offended." Hitting out at TMC candidate and sitting MP from Serampore Kalyan Banerjee for mimicking Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Mr Shah said Mamata Banerjee and TMC leaders are known for flouting the constitution.

"Mamata Banerjee and TMC continue to flout the Constitution. Mamata Banerjee's 'representative' and the TMC leader Kalyan Banerjee's ridiculous act of mocking the vice president has been a shameful case of insulting a high constitutional position in the country," he said. A political row unfolded last year after Kalyan Banerjee mimicked Dhankhar during the opposition's protest on the Parliament stairs, condemning the suspension of opposition MPs. Criticising the TMC's resistance to central projects in Bengal, Mr Shah said during the Congress-led UPA regime Bengal received around 2 lakh crore in a period spanning 10 years from 2004-2014. "On the other hand, the Modi government in the last 10 years have provided a whopping 9.25 lakh crore. But this money did not benefit the common people as this fund was siphoned by TMC goons....," he said.

## Slovak PM Shot Multiple Times After Cabinet Meeting, Suspect Detained

**Handlova:** Slovakia Prime Minister Robert Fico was on Wednesday shot multiple times and rushed to hospital with life-threatening injuries after a cabinet meeting, officials said, in an attack condemned by EU chiefs. Fico, a populist leader accused of being Kremlin-friendly, has been prime minister since last year. "Today, after the government meeting in Handlova, there was an assassination attempt on the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Robert Fico", the government said in a post on social media.

"He is currently being transported by helicopter to Banska Bystrica in a life-threatening condition, because it would take too long to get to Bratislava due to the necessity of an acute intervention", it said. Fico was shot multiple times, said a post on his official Facebook page. "We confirm the attack on the prime minister," police spokesman Matej Neumann told AFP. Handlova local hospital director Marta Eckhardtova said "Fico was brought into our hospital and he was treated at our vascular surgery clinic". She was unable to describe his injuries.



The Dennik N daily said its reporter heard several shots fired and then saw security guards lift the premier off the ground and into a car. The newspaper also reported that police had detained the suspected gunman. Slovak President Zuzana Caputova said she was "utterly shocked by today's brutal and reckless attack on Slovakia's prime minister... which I condemn in (the) strongest possible terms". "I wish him a lot of strength in this critical moment and early recovery," she said on X, formerly Twitter. Czech Prime Minister

Petr Fiala also called the news of the attack "shocking". "I hope the prime minister will get well as soon as possible. We must not tolerate violence, it must have no place in society," he said on X.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said: "Robert, my thoughts are with you in this very difficult moment". As well as his current stint as premier, Fico also headed the government in 2006-10 and 2012-18.

Since he was elected last October, Fico has made a string of remarks that have soured ties between Slovakia and

neighbouring Ukraine. He has notably questioned Ukraine's sovereignty and called for a compromise with Russia. He also sparked mass protests with controversial changes, including a media law that critics say will undermine the impartiality of public television and radio. At a press conference following the shooting, MP Lubos Blaha from Fico's Smer party lashed out against his critics. "You, the liberal media, and progressive politicians are to blame. Robert Fico is fighting for his life because of your hatred," Blaha said.

## Jharkhand Minister Arrested By Probe Agency In Money Laundering Case

**Jharkhand Rural Development Minister Alangir Alam** has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case linked to the seizure of over Rs.35 crore in cash from a flat linked to his personal secretary and the latter's house help. Mr Alam was questioned for over nine hours at the Enforcement Directorate office in Ranchi and he was called again. He was interrogated for six hours and was arrested for not cooperating with the investigation, ED sources

said. The agency had raided a 2BHK flat in Ranchi occupied by Jehangir Alam, a house help of the minister's Personal Secretary Sanjiv Lal, last week and recovered Rs.35.23 crore from there and an additional over Rs.1.5 crore from other premises. A total of Rs.37 crore was seized. Mr Lal and Jehangir Alam were arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) the next day and are currently in ED's custody. The case against Mr Alam and

his aide is related to the alleged Jharkhand tender scam, under which commissions were collected and then distributed under Mr Lal's supervision. The 70-year-old Congress leader was first elected to the Jharkhand Assembly in 2000 and has also served as its Speaker. His arrest comes months after Jharkhand chief minister and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader Hemant Soren was taken into custody by the ED in the land scam case.



## Why Indians Are Still Stuck On Ship Months After It Hit US Bridge



**New Delhi:** In the early morning of March 26, a container ship hit a major commuter bridge in Baltimore, collapsing it within seconds, killing six and halting shipping traffic at one of the most important ports on the US East Coast. The Singapore-flagged container ship Dali and the crew - 20 Indian and one Sri Lankan - have remained in place since. The 2.6-km-long, four-lane Francis Scott Key Bridge over the Patapsco River came crashing down after being struck by the 984-foot ship. Several video footage showed nearly all the ship's lights going off shortly before the stunning collapse. Now, a preliminary report by federal investigators released Tuesday said the Dali suffered two electricity blackouts in the moments before the disaster. The report by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) also detailed two blackouts about ten hours before leaving Baltimore. Crews de-

molished part of the bridge in a bid to free the Dali. Authorities hope that it would help the crew move a bit closer to a reunion with their families, miles away.

The crew has been unable to disembark the ship due to visa restrictions and investigations by the NTSB and FBI. Jim Lawrence, a spokesperson for the Dali owner Grace Ocean Private Ltd., recently told IANS that the Indian crew members are on board and "in good spirits". "In addition to performing normal duties on board the ship, they are also assisting with the investigations and with the ongoing salvage work," Mr Lawrence said. In April, the FBI launched a criminal probe targeting the ship, with its agents boarding the Dali as part of the investigation. The crew has been left almost without communication with the outside world as their cellphones have been seized by the FBI as part of the investigation, executive

director of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Centre The Rev. Joshua Messick told PTI.

The crew has been given SIM cards and temporary cell phones without data included, Mr Messick told BBC. They also received care packages - including Indian snacks and quilts - from various community groups, according to a BBC report. The NTSB said the Dali was just 0.6 miles from the bridge when the electrical breakers that fed most of the ship's equipment and lighting unexpectedly tripped, causing the first blackout. It lost propulsion and steering and began to drift off course. The crew managed to restore power briefly, but with the Dali just 0.2 miles from the bridge, the lights went out again. US President Joe Biden promised last month to "move heaven and earth" to rebuild the bridge, pledging federal funds and saying a new channel for shipping traffic would open by the end of May.

## "Probe Agency Can't Arrest Accused If...": Supreme Court's Big Ruling

**New Delhi:** In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court curtailed the Enforcement Directorate's power to arrest an accused - under Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, or PMLA - if the accused appears as summoned by a special court that has taken cognisance of the complaint. In such cases the agency must first seek that court's nod, the top court said. "After cognisance is taken of the offence... the ED and its officers are powerless to exercise powers under Section 19 to arrest the person shown as accused in the complaint," the Supreme Court said. Section 19 of the PMLA allows ED officers to arrest an individual "on the basis of material in possession (and) reason to believe (to be recorded in writing) that the person is guilty..." Crucially, the agency must inform the individual, "as soon as may be" of the grounds for the arrest. Specifically, the top court said in cases where an accused was not arrested till the time the ED filed its complaint, they could

not be arrested afterwards. The special court must first issue a summons and, if the accused duly answers that summons, they could not be seen as being 'in custody'. "If the ED wants custody of (an) accused after the person (answers a special court's) summons, it needs to apply to the special court," a bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhayan said, adding, custody could only be granted if that court believes custodial interrogation is required. An arrest warrant - under Section 70 of the Code of Criminal Procedure - can only be issued if the accused failed to answer the summons, and, in the first instance, this must be a bailable warrant. In a significant ruling - one seen as emphasising protection offered from arbitrary arrest by the central agency - the top court also said accused individuals not arrested before answering a court summons - need satisfy the stringent 'twin test' for bail as laid down by the PMLA.

The 'twin test' states bail will only be given to money laun-

dering accused if the court is satisfied the individual is not guilty and if they are unlikely to commit crimes, including similar offences, on bail. The specific background to this ruling is a money laundering case in which the accused had appeared before a special court as summoned. The question then was if the accused had to meet the 'twin test' for grant of bail if the special court had taken cognisance of the offence in question. The top court had earlier reserved its judgement on April 30.

Today's landmark ruling comes two months after the top court dismissed a petition seeking review of an earlier verdict that said the ED is required to furnish grounds of arrest to an accused in writing "without exception", saying there was no error in its judgement warranting reconsideration. Then the court had noted that "mere non-cooperation of a witness, in response to summons issued under Section 50, will not be enough to render him/her liable to arrest under Section 19".

## UK Woman Had A Panic Attack, So She Used An AI Therapist For Help. Read Her Experience

Needless to say, we are living in the era of Artificial Intelligence. The possibilities of AI are limitless, and it is only just beginning to be explored. Now, millions of people are turning to AI for one of the most personal tasks: therapy. With a global shortage of therapists and a surge in mental health issues, these AI-powered bots offer cheap, convenient, and immediate support.

Recently, a woman in the UK revealed that she turned to an AI therapist when she had a panic attack, Metro reported. Recounting her experience, Molly Pennington said that she was "outright cynical" about

using it, but decided to give it a chance. She first typed AI Therapy into Google and clicked on the first link that greeted her with a disclaimer: "This is not a replacement for medical or professional help".

She was then connected with an AI therapist who asked for her name and how it could help her through automated messages. Ms Pennington explained that she was having a panic attack. The bot then guided her through several grounding exercises focused on her breathing. The woman claimed the exercises helped her and her panic attacks started to ease.

Though she had a positive

experience, she couldn't get over the fact that she wasn't communicating with a human and felt a little uneasy.

Ms Pennington told Metro, "Somehow it felt performative and disingenuous. I've never had that feeling in traditional therapy - though admittedly this could be because I've been lucky to only work with fantastic therapists and because I knew they were human!"

She was also concerned whether an AI therapist would be able to handle a more complicated situation than a panic attack. "Don't misunderstand, I'm glad I tried it and it certainly helped me in the moment, but I'm not sure if I would personally use AI therapy again," she said.



## Infra Sector Turnaround Due To PM Modi's Personal Monitoring: Finance Minister

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi active role and personal monitoring is responsible for the turnaround of the infrastructure sector, which suffered due to policy paralysis during the UPA regime, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

In a contrast to the previous regime, the current government under the leadership of PM Modi has spearheaded a shift towards prioritising infrastructure development and capital expenditure with an aim to bolster the Indian economy. Taking a dig at the Congress-led UPA regime from 2004-2014, she said, "@INCIndia-led UPA (2004-14) wasted India's economic growth potential and left it among the 'Fragile Five' economies without focusing on effective infrastructure development. Under UPA, almost all aspects of India's economic needs were mismanaged or ignored." The UPA government's neglect of infrastructure creation not only denied India much-needed roads, railways, power, etc, but it also compromised India's long-term economic potential, she said in a post on X.

"The UPA government's term was replete with examples of decision stasis. Cost overruns, stalled projects and lack of timely approvals were common between 2004-14," she said.

However, she said, "Prime Minister Modi's active role has made the infrastructure turnaround possible. PM has personally monitored the progress of projects, even those launched earlier, through the PRAGATI platform. "This led to the successful completion of long-delayed projects. Through 43 PRAGATI meetings, PM Modi has reviewed projects worth Rs.17.36 lakh



crore." Pointing out that infrastructure spending not only boosts GDP growth through its multiplier effects on consumption and investment, but also improves the long-term efficiency of the economy by reducing logistical constraints, she said, adding that an NIPFP study points out that every rupee directed towards capital expenditure in India increases economic output by Rs.4.8. The share of capex in total expenditure dropped sharply under the UPA from 23 per cent in 2003-04 to an average of 12 per cent between 2005 and 2014, she said.

"It is also unwise to expect that @INCIndia would have learnt from their mistakes. INCIndia returns to their neglect of Capex and infrastructure. The 2024 Budget presented by the Congress government in Karnataka slashed the share of capital expenditure in total spending by 28 per cent," she said. Imagine the opportunity cost lost due to Congress not investing adequately in capital expenditure, Ms Sitharaman said.

"Our government significantly increased the outlay for capex. As a proportion of total expenditure, Capex rose to over 21 per cent in 2023-24, compared to just 12 per cent in 2013-14," she said. Since 2014, the Modi government has allo-

cated a total of Rs.43.53 lakh crore in Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) capital expenditure, an increase of 3.72 times compared to 2004-14. Giving details of various segments, Ms Sitharaman said, 3.74 lakh km of rural roads have been built under the PM Gram Sadak Yojana in the last 10 years, almost double of 3.81 lakh km of rural roads built till 2014. Over 99 per cent of rural habitations are now linked with rural roads. Since 2014, there has been a 500 per cent increase in road transport and highway budget allocated, she added.

National Highway (NH) network has expanded 60 per cent from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,145 km by 2023; compared to only 39 per cent expansion from 65,569 km to 91,287 km between 2004-14. Under PM Modi, Indian Railways has ushered into an era of modernisation with modern stations, modern trains, modern facilities and modern technology. In 2023-24, she said, allocation for Railways' capex increased to Rs. 2.43 lakh crore. It is a 30-times increase over 2004-05, and 8 times over 2013-14. On the power sector, she said, India has transformed from being power-deficient to power-sufficient by adding 193 GW of generation capacity (249 GW to 442 GW). Investments in upgrades, grid modernisation, and smart technologies are be-

ing done to help reduce power outages, voltage fluctuations, and disruptions, she said. As of November 2023, she said, the availability of power in rural areas increased from 12 hours in 2015 to 20.6 hours, and in urban areas, it rose to 23.8 hours 100 per cent rural electrification was achieved in 2018. Since 2014, the Metro network has expanded around four times, from 248 km of operational lines in five cities to 939 km in 20 cities, she said. As the first of the eight RRTS corridors, she said, the Delhi-Meerut stretch will be completed by June 2025.

With regard to aviation sector, "India's aviation network has doubled with the construction of 83 new airports since 2014. Operational airports rose from 74 in 2014 to 157 in 2024. The passenger traffic has increased from 169 MPPA (Million Passengers Per Annum) in 2014 to 376 MPPA in 2024." The Modi government has actively engaged in improving India's maritime sector to promote the blue economy. A 10-year blueprint 'Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030)' was released to boost the maritime ecosystem. Besides, she said, FDI norms were relaxed to attract investments in port development and operations. Up to 100 per cent of FDI was allowed for port and harbour construction and maintenance projects.

## Not Necessary To Make Arrests In Every GST Case: Supreme Court Tells Centre

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court told the Centre that there is no need for making arrests in all Goods and Services Tax (GST) cases and that it can be done only if there is credible evidence and tangible material to prove culpability. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna, MM Sundresh and Bela M Trivedi, which reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas challenging the constitutional validity and interpretation of provisions relating to the Customs Act and Goods and Services Tax Act, said the power of arrest is different from necessity of arrest. "The legislation does not say that for completion of investigation you need to be arrested. It is not the object of the legislation. It is not necessary for you to arrest in each and every case of GST. It has to be based on some credible evidence and tangible material," the bench told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju.

The bench, which posed several questions to SV Raju on provisions of arrest under the GST law, said the legislation has itself kept liberty on a high pedestal and it should not be diluted. SV Raju said arrests are mostly made during the investigation as there can be no arrest after the probe in a case has been completed. "The arrest is not based on mere suspicion but when there are reasons to believe indicating commission of some grave offence," he said, adding that reasons to believe cannot be on strict interpretation of commission of offence. "Adjudication must precede arrest," the bench said, adding that it will examine the question of "reason to believe" and "grounds of arrest" under the Customs Act and the GST Act. The top court said while there were instances of high-handedness by the GST authorities, there were also cases of wrong-doing on



the part of tax payers, and it will take into account all these aspects when giving its decision.

The petitioners who have challenged various provisions of the Customs Act and the GST Act have alleged gross misuse of arrest provisions under both the laws. They have claimed they are being threatened and coerced to pay liability without following the due procedure under the laws.

Section 69 of the GST Act deals with the powers of arrest, while section 104 of the Customs Act of 1962 allows an officer to arrest someone if they have reason to believe the person has committed an offence. On May 9, the top court had told the Centre that any arrest under the GST Act should not be on mere suspicion but based on cogent material and in adherence to proper procedure. It had said the material upon which an arrest is made should be verifiable by a magistrate. The court had earlier directed the Centre to not use "threat and coercion" during search and seizure operations against traders for recovery of GST and instead persuade them to clear the dues voluntarily.

On May 2, the top court had asked the Centre to furnish details about the issuance of notices and arrests effected under the provisions of the GST Act, saying it may interpret the law and lay down appropriate guidelines to avoid harassment of citizens by depriving them of their liberty. It voiced concern over the "ambiguity" in section 69 of the GST Act that deals with the powers of arrest. The top court had said it would interpret the law to "strengthen" the concept of liberty.

## Veteran Congress Leader Kamla Beniwal Dies In Jaipur Hospital

**Jaipur:** Veteran Congress leader and former governor of Gujarat Kamla Beniwal died at the age of 97 at a private hospital in Jaipur. Kamla Beniwal was admitted to the hospital after a brief illness. One of her family members said the funeral will be held.



Apart from Gujarat, she also served as governor of Tripura and Mizoram. A seven-time MLA, Kamla Beniwal also remained the deputy chief minister of Rajasthan, apart from holding other positions in the state government and the Congress party. Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra, Chief Min-

ister Bhajanlal Sharma, former chief minister Ashok Gehlot and other leaders condoled the demise of Kamla Beniwal. Kalraj Mishra expressed grief on the demise of Kamla Beniwal and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

In a post on X, the chief minister wrote, "The news of the demise of Dr Kamla Beniwal, former governor of Gujarat and former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan, is extremely sad. My condolences are with the bereaved family." Speaker of Rajasthan assembly Vasudev Devnani said recalled

Kamla Beniwal was a "good administrator and public representative". Vasudev Devnani, in a statement said, the Congress leader participated in India's Independence struggle and had a "long experience in the field of politics". "Dr Kamla was elected as MLA seven times. She was also the chairperson and member of various committees of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly," he added. Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot said he was deeply shocked by the news of the demise of Kamla Beniwal. "Her personality was multi-faceted and she did exemplary work in every field, apart from politics," he said.

## "Helped Him In Crisis," Recalls Sharad Pawar After PM Modi's Attack

**Mumbai:** A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed Sharad Pawar over farmers' plight, the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief said today that when he was the Union Minister (2004-2014), he had helped the then Gujarat Chief Minister - now the Prime Minister - a lot for the agricultural crisis in his state. Sharad Pawar was the Union Agriculture Minister from 2004 to 2014. He said that on one occasion, the then Gujarat chief minister once called him and said he wanted to visit Israel to study the unique farming techniques there. "He used to come to me with the problems of the agriculture sector and even took me to Gujarat. Once he wanted to visit Israel so I took him there also. Whatever Narendra Modi says now I am not concerned,"



said Mr Pawar. Years later, Narendra Modi became the first Indian PM since Independence to visit Israel in July 2017. The NCP (SP) chief's retort came a day after PM Modi attacked Sharad Pawar - without taking his name - accusing him of doing nothing for the cause of farmers when he was the Union Agriculture Minister.

Even on earlier occasions during the ongoing Lok Sabha campaign, PM Modi has slammed Sharad Pawar for having abandoned the peasantry, and not doing anything for their welfare, while contending that the farmers benefited hugely during the last 10 years of the Bharatiya Janata Party government.

## These Are 10 Most Common 4-Digit PINs. Change Yours Now If It's On The List

With a 33% year-on-year increase in cyber attacks in the first quarter of 2024, India has been one of the most targeted nations in the world, a Check Point Software Technologies Ltd report said. Cybercriminals target people, businesses, and governments by finding weaknesses in computer systems and networks. They use various methods like phishing scams and ransomware to steal sensitive information.

**But what contributes to such a humongous rise in cyber attacks?**

A weak PIN is the easiest way for attackers to breach any system. A weak PIN could be something obvious such as "1234" or "0000," or something easily guessable based on personal information, like your birth date or phone number.

**What are the most common 4-digit PINs?**

And now, a recent cybersecurity study by Information is Beautiful shows that many tend to use simple patterns in their security codes. Of the 3.4 million PINs examined, the most common patterns are -

1234  
1111  
0000  
1212  
7777  
1004  
2000  
4444



2222  
6969

Choosing a simple or easily guessable PIN can make you an easy target for cybercriminals. It is important to prioritise security when selecting a PIN to protect your accounts and devices. A strong, unique PIN can significantly reduce the risk of unauthorised access to your sensitive information.

ESET cybersecurity expert, Jake Moore, advised against using simple passcodes, which can make people vulnerable to cyberattacks, reported Daily Mail. According to Mr Moore, many people underestimate the risk "until they are compromised."

Skilled hackers can potentially crack a significant portion of passcode guesses within a limited number of attempts. The global cybersecurity advisor strongly recommends avoiding using birth years, personal in-

formation, or repeated passwords for personal accounts including social media. Using easy-to-guess PINs "enables attackers to target people more easily," he said.

**Here are some of the least common 4-digit PINs**

8557  
8438  
9539  
7063  
6827  
0859  
6793  
0738  
6835  
8093

Despite precautions, passcodes can still be hacked. Therefore, Mr Moore suggests using password managers for added security. These tools can safeguard personal information and "can help generate completely random codes so you don't rely on your birthday or anniversary", Mr Moore said.

## "India Landed On Moon, While We...": Pakistani Lawmaker In Viral Speech

**Islamabad:** Pakistani lawmaker Syed Mustafa Kamal drew a comparison between India's achievements and the precarious situation in Karachi, by mentioning India's moon landing mission. The Muttahida Quami Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) leader said that while India is landing on the moon, Karachi is making news of children being killed by falling in open gutters. "Today, the condition in Karachi is that, while the world is going to the moon, children are dying by falling into gutter in Karachi. On the same screen, there is news that India landed on the moon, and just after two seconds, the news is that a child died in an open gutter in Karachi," Kamal said in his address to the Parliament on Wednesday. He further highlighted the lack of fresh water in Karachi. The MQM-P leader also said citing a report that there are 70 lakh children in Karachi and over 2.6 crore children in Pakistan, who are not able to go to schools.

"Karachi is the revenue en-

gine of Pakistan. The two seaports operational in Pakistan since its inception, are both in Karachi. We (Karachi) are the gateway to the entire Pakistan, Central Asia to Afghanistan... For 15 years, Karachi was not given even a bit of fresh water. Even the water that came, the tanker mafia hoarded it and sold it to the people of Karachi," Kamal said. "We have a total of 48,000 schools, but a new report says that out of that 11,000 are 'ghost schools'. 70 lakh children in Sindh don't go to school and a total of 2,62,00,000 children in the country don't go to school... if we just focus on this, the leaders of the country shouldn't even get proper sleep," the Pakistani Parliamentarian added. In August last year, India's Chandrayaan-3 lander became the first spacecraft from the country to safely reach the lunar surface in August 2023.

India also became the first country in the world to land on the South Pole of the moon. Meanwhile, Pakistan -- which



is grappling with economic distress, high inflation, and mounting debt -- is seeking a new loan programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). A team of the global lender is currently in Pakistan to hold talks on the issue. It has urged Islamabad to bring "strong cost-side reforms" to restore

the viability of the country's energy sector, reported ARY News. It has also urged an 'overhaul' of its tax system. Last month, Pakistan completed a short-term USD 3 billion program, that helped stave off sovereign default, however, the government has highlighted the need for a fresh, longer-term program, according to Dawn.

## "No Exception" In Bail To Arvind Kejriwal: Supreme Court Amid Criticism

**New Delhi:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's release on interim bail was "not an exception" the Supreme Court said today after the government complained that its decision has been criticised by many. "We have not made any exception for anybody. We said in our order what we felt was justified," said a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, who had given the order over the weekend, providing a boost to the Aam Aadmi Party during elections. In an unexpected step, court, which was hearing the Chief Minister's challenge to his arrest last week, also said it would hear his appeal for bail. While granting interim bail in the same hearing, the judges had made their reasoning clear: That elec-

tions are "vis viva" (life force) of a democracy and Mr Kejriwal heads a national party, that he is not convicted and is not a threat to society.

The top court's move also follows its frequent argument for bail being the rule and jail an exception. The bench also steered clear of political leaders' comment on the matter. Earlier this week, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said he does not see the Supreme Court's decision as a routine judgment and stressed that many in the country believe that "special treatment" was given. When senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who was representing Mr Kejriwal, referred to the matter without naming the minister, the court said it would not go into that. The judges also put aside



the Enforcement Directorate's argument -- that Mr Kejriwal's comment that if the INDIA bloc wins, he would "not have to go back to jail" -- is a contempt of the court. Calling it an "assump-

tion" of the Chief Minister, the judges said, "Our order is very clear about when he has to surrender. It is the order of the Supreme Court. The rule of law shall be governed by this order".

## "Who Will Be Held Responsible?"

### P Chidambaram On NewsClick Founder's Arrest

**New Delhi:** Former Union finance minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram welcomed the Supreme Court's judgment pronouncing the arrest of the NewsClick founder invalid, saying that justice has triumphed. "NewsClick founder was arrested on October 3, 2023. The Supreme Court ruled today that his arrest was illegal. Justice will ultimately triumph and it has today," Mr Chidambaram said in a post on X. "Who will be held responsible for the illegal arrest? Who will pay the penalty for depriving the journalist of his freedom for over 7 months?" the Congress leader asked in the post. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court declared the arrest and subsequent remand of NewsClick founder and Editor-in-Chief Prabir Purkayastha invalid. Mr Purkayastha was arrested by Delhi Police in connection with a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) on October 3, 2023. The Supreme



Court ordered that Mr Purkayastha be released, subject to him furnishing surety and bail bond.

The bench, in its verdict, took into account that a copy of the remand application and grounds of arrest were not provided to Mr Purkayastha, which violated principles of natural justice. Pronouncing the arrest of the appellant... Though we would have released him without surety, since the chargesheet has been filed, we release him with surety and a

bail bond." Mr Purkayastha has been in custody since October 3 last year under the UAPA in a case over receiving Chinese funds to propagate anti-national propaganda. According to the FIR, a large amount of funding to the news portal allegedly came from China to "disrupt the sovereignty of India" and cause disaffection against the country. The probe agency also alleged that Mr Purkayastha conspired with a group, - People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism (PADS) - to sabotage the electoral process during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

## Careless Driver Destroys Historic Death Valley Tower While Using It To Pull Vehicle From Mud

An irresponsible driver knocked over a historic 113-year-old salt tram tower in Death Valley National Park, New York Post reported. According to the National Parks Service (NPS), the tower which is a part of the Saline Valley Salt Tram was pulled down from its concrete footing and tossed into the mud sometime between April 1 and April 24. The NPS further said that the nearby tyre tracks show that a vehicle drove off the road a bit and got stuck in the mud. By using the tower to get the car out, they pulled the structure's concrete anchors out of the ground, knocking the whole thing on its side. Notably, the wooden tower was part of the 13-mile aerial tram the Saline Valley Salt

Company built in 1911. It was used to transport salt from Saline Valley to Owens Valley and traversed more than 7,000 feet upward in elevation. It's listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its age, length, steepness, preservation, and location.

National Park officials are now asking for the public's help in finding the person responsible for the damage. "The National Park Service (NPS) seeks information about recent damage to a historic salt tram tower in Saline Valley. It appears the 113-year-old tower was pulled over while a person used a winch to extract their vehicle out of deep mud. The damage happened sometime between April 1 and April 24, 2024, the National Park Service said in



a statement. Before this damage, the National Park Service had a project planned to stabilize the tram towers. The Death Valley National Park Superintendent, Mike Reynolds, expressed disappointment over the damage to the historic tower and urged the responsible party to come

forward to discuss restitution. "I have hiked along sections of this tramway, and am amazed by the tenacity it took to build. I hope the person responsible for this damage will contact us so we can discuss restitution," Superintendent Mike Reynolds said in a statement.

## Parking Dispute In Gurugram Turns Deadly, 28-Year-Old Run Over By Neighbour

**New Delhi:** A 28-year-old man was killed after being run over by his neighbour in Gurugram over a parking dispute, police said. The man's brother and mother were also injured in the incident, which took place. Rishabh Jasuja, returning from work, had parked his car outside the residence of Manoj Bharadwaj, a resident of Sector 49. This seemingly innocuous act ignited a heated confrontation between Manoj and the Jasuja brothers. According to eyewitnesses, Manoj, embroiled in previous altercations with Rishabh over parking, confronted the brothers as they stepped out of their residence to investigate the commotion. Allegedly, Manoj attacked both Rishabh and his brother Ranjak with sticks before deliberately ramming his Hyundai Creta into them. Rishabh succumbed to his injuries on the spot, while Ranjak was rushed to a private hospital in critical condition. The assailant fled the scene immediately after the incident. Gurugram police have registered a murder case and launched a search operation to catch the accused.



# SPORT

## Trent Boult's Priceless Reaction As Yuzvendra Chahal Takes A Stunning Catch vs PBKS

Rajasthan Royals were handed a 5-wicket defeat by Punjab Kings in their IPL 2024 game at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati on Wednesday. A hilarious incident took place during PBKS' chase when a seemingly nervous Yuzvendra Chahal took a good catch to dismiss opener Prabhsimran Singh. The batter top-edged the ball of Trent Boult in the first over of PBKS' chase of 145 runs. Chahal ran behind from short third man and didn't look in complete control before he somehow managed to take the catch. While Chahal was going for the catch, Boult kept himself composed and hopeful. As soon as Chahal managed to complete the catch, Boult had a priceless reaction on his face. Captain Sam Curran starred as Punjab Kings beat Rajasthan Royals by 5 wickets to dent their hopes of a top-two finish in IPL 2024 points table.

## "Divorces Have Shot Up Since Women Started...": Saeed Anwar's Sexist Rant Slammed On Social Media

Former Pakistan cricket team captain Saeed Anwar's controversial views over women entering the workforce and that resulting in more divorces has gone viral on social media. In a video that has surfaced on social media, Anwar can be heard saying that divorces have risen by almost 30 per cent in the past three years in Pakistan. He connected that to more women entering the workforce in the country. He also added in his sexist rant that because of financial independence, women have decided to run their own households according to their own wishes. The video has attracted a lot of criticism from users on social media.



he added. Anwar went on to say that he has seen a similar pattern all around the world and families are suffering because of women entering the workforce. "I have travelled the world. I am just returning from Australia, Europe. Youngsters are suffering, families are in bad shape. Couples are fighting. The state of affairs is so bad that they have to make their women work for money," the former Pakistan cricketer is

heard commenting in the video. Anwar also made an explosive revelation that New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and an Australian mayor also expressed similar concerns in front of him. "New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson called me to ask, 'How will our society get better?'... The Australian mayor said to me, 'Our culture has been destroyed since our women entered the workforce,'" he further said

## Bad News For Royal Challengers Bengaluru Ahead Of Chennai Super Kings Clash. 5-Day Forecast Paints Grim Picture

The much-awaited clash between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) is in danger of being washed out at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday. The weather forecast has predicted the possibility of "showers and a thunderstorm" in Bengaluru for the next five days from Friday, May 17 to Tuesday, May 21. In case of a washout, both teams will be awarded a point each. However, RCB will crash out of the tournament while CSK will qualify for the IPL 2024 playoffs. As per Accuweather, there will be 99 per cent cloud cover around the stadium "with with a couple of showers and a thunderstorm in the afternoon." In the evening, there is 74 per cent chance of rain while the temperature will fluctuate from 30-34 degree celsius. On the other hand, there will be 100 per cent cloud cover at night with around 62 per cent chance of rain. There might be a few thunderstorms as well. The temperature, meanwhile, will drop to around 21-22 degree celsius at night. If not a washout, the continuous rainfall



might reduce the probability of a full game. As per the IPL playing conditions, the shortest game that can take place is five overs which can begin latest by 10:56 PM. As far as the IPL 2024 playoffs' concerned, Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals have already sealed the berth for themselves, while a total of five teams are still in race for the remaining two spots. CSK, SunRisers Hyderabad, Delhi Capitals, RCB and Lucknow Super Giants are the teams fighting for the top-4 fin-

ish. DC have exhausted their quota of league matches, beating LSG in their final game to achieve 14 points from as many games. Among the other contenders, barring SRH, all the other teams have only one match remaining. It means that net run-rates will most probably come in to play to decide the final spot for the IPL 2024 playoffs. The RCB vs CSK clash, however, seems to be the most crucial with fans and experts already labelling it as a virtual knockout.

## "Don't Come": Ex-India Star Blasts England Stars Leaving IPL 2024 Midway

The IPL 2024 playoffs will not have any England cricketer competing who are part of the T20 World Cup 2024 squad as they were called back by the England Cricket Board (ECB) for a training camp ahead of the competition. As a result, the likes of Jos Buttler (Rajasthan Royals), Phil Salt (Kolkata Knight Riders) and Will Jacks (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) will not be a part of the competition anymore despite the fact that all of their teams are in the race for the playoffs. Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan took to social media to express his feeling regarding the development and he delivered a brutal message for the departing players. "Either be available for full season or don't come!" he posted on X (formerly Twitter). Meanwhile, Rajasthan Royals slumped to a 5-wicket loss against Punjab Kings with Sam Curran producing a bril-



liant all-round performance. RR captain Sanju Samson opened up about the loss. "We needed a few more runs. I think we were 10-15 runs short. It was a 160 kind of a wicket. We would have easily got more than 160 (had we played better), that's where we lost the game. Would have been nice to have one more bowling option. I am getting used

to five quality bowlers. We have to sit back and accept that we are going through failures, have lost four games on the trot." "Got to find out what's not working out for us as a team. Somebody needs to step up, we have so many match-winners in the team. This is the time we need to show character. We need to score more runs.

## Antoine Griezmann Hat-Trick Fires Atletico Madrid Into Champions League

Antoine Griezmann secured Champions League qualification for Atletico Madrid with a hat-trick in a 3-0 triumph at Getafe on Wednesday in La Liga. Diego Simeone's side ensured they will finish in the top four and therefore reach Europe's top competition for the 12th consecutive season. Inspired by France international Griezmann, the Rojiblancos romped to victory in the Madrid suburbs at Getafe's Coliseum Alfonso Perez. Atletico, fourth, trail Girona by two points and now lead fifth-place Athletic Bilbao by 11 as the Basque side fell to a 2-1 defeat at struggling Celta Vigo.

Despite a strong start and becoming the only side in Spain to beat new champions Real Madrid this season, Atletico's season began to crumble. Athletic ousted them in the Copa del Rey semi-finals and Borussia Dortmund knocked them out in the Champions League quarters.

Atletico knew a victory would guarantee them a return to the competition next season and the superb Griezmann did not give Getafe, 10th, a chance.

"It's been a lot of years getting into the Champions League, which is something to value, but with the team we have and the talent we have, and the coach we have, it's something we have to do," Griezmann told Movistar. The 33-year-old forward had netted only twice in his previous 13 La Liga appearances, with concerns emerging over his form, but he put them to bed with his second treble of the campaign. "Without my team-mates I am nothing," continued Griezmann. "My ankle was annoying me a lot (in recent weeks)... working with the physios and pushing hard, the pain has gone and I can enjoy myself." Atletico's all-time leading goalscorer opened the scoring in the 27th minute when he ran on to Rodrigo De Paul's scooped pass and beat Getafe stopper David Soria with a low effort. Griezmann converted his second before half-time from Angel Correa's low pass across the area, with the goal given after a VAR review after it had been flagged offside.

The former Real Sociedad striker netted again to complete his hat-trick after the break, finishing a sharp



Atletico move. The visitors played the ball out neatly from the back and Lino threaded through Griezmann, who prodded home at the near post for his 16th league goal of the season. "The boys made a great effort, we knew the importance of having a good game today and having our place in the Champions League booked," said Simeone. "Good work as a team, in defence and attack." Celta's comeback win over

Athletic leaves Cadiz's hopes of survival hanging by a thread despite their late 1-0 win at Sevilla. Williot Swedberg and Hugo Alvarez's goals helped Celta triumph at Balaídos to move five points clear of the drop zone, after Alex Berenguer had sent Copa del Rey winners Athletic ahead with a goal direct from a corner. Sergio Guardiola's 96th-minute winner for 18th place Cadiz means they are four points from safety with two matches remaining.

## 'Retiring As A Legend': FIFA Pay Tribute To Sunil Chhetri With Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo Comparison

Following Sunil Chhetri's official announcement in which the striker announced that he will be playing his last game for India against Kuwait on June 6, many boards, teams and players have come out pay tribute to the Indian captain's stellar career. The official handle for the FIFA World Cup has posted a tribute for Chhetri as well which included the iconic photo of him standing with Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo on a podium, which signifies the top three active international goal scorers.

The picture was coupled

with a caption, "Retiring as a legend". "Sunil Chhetri, the world's third-highest active international goalscorer, will play his final game for Indian Football in next month's FIFA World Cup qualifiers," added the official account for the FIFA World Cup on X (formerly known as Twitter).

The 39-year old played his 150th game for his country against Afghanistan last month. He has scored 94 goals so far in his international career with fans hoping he finds the back of the net at least one more time in the blue tigers jersey

during the game vs Kuwait at Salt Lake Stadium. FIFA



World Cup's official account also posted a video of Chhetri's

previous interview in which he talked about the comparisons made between him, Messi and Ronaldo. "Some of the fans go overboard and think about comparing (with Messi & Ronaldo) but there are footballing fans who understand there is no comparison between the kind of players that we are but I will definitely compete with them with all my might in terms of giving the best for your country. There I probably would not lose," Chhetri had said to FIFA

## In the Mood for Cricket: Top 5 Traditions of Celebrating IPL in India

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is much more than a cricket tournament; it's a cultural extravaganza that captivates the nation's imagination every year, and Parimatch contributes to this excitement with its Festival of Winnings. As cricket fever sweeps across India, various traditions emerge, showcasing the diverse ways in which fans celebrate the sport. Here are the top 5 IPL celebratory traditions across India, with a spotlight on Parimatch's Festival of Winnings as the fifth tradition.

### Community Screenings

From big cities to small villages, lots of people get together to watch IPL matches. Whether it's a makeshift screen set up in a neighborhood park or a projector installed in a local club, these gatherings bring communities together, fostering a sense of unity among cricket lovers. Families, friends, and neighbors come together under the open sky or in cozy indoor spaces, sharing the excitement of the game and cheering for their favorites. These gatherings not only amplify the thrill of the Indian Premier League but also create lasting bonds among fans, transcending



barriers of age, gender, and social status.

### Home Gatherings

The Indian Premier League matches provide the perfect opportunity for friends and families to come together and enjoy a night of cricketing action. Living rooms transform into mini-stadiums, adorned with team banners and flags, as fans gather to cheer for their favorite teams. Delicious

snacks, homemade treats, and lively conversation further elevate the festive atmosphere, creating memories that last a lifetime. Whether it's the thrill of a last-ball finish or the joy of a stunning catch, these intimate gatherings allow fans to experience the magic of cricket in the comfort of their homes, forging strong bonds of unity and companionship.

### Street Cricket Rivalries

In every corner of the country, the spirit of cricket fills the air during IPL season. Streets and playgrounds become battlegrounds for friendly matches, as aspiring cricketers imitate their heroes and showcase their skills. The spontaneous games not only foster a love for the sport but also nurture a sense of sportsmanship and teamwork among players.

## Big Love For Ananya Panday's "Forgotten Photos" Of Swimsuit Looks

Ananya Panday is in throw-back mood and her latest Instagram post can vouch for that. The Liger actor shared a bunch of "forgotten" photos of herself on her Instagram feed. In some of the pictures, Ananya can be seen rocking pink, violette and sky blue swimsuits. In one click, Ananya can be seen pointing her finger to a board where "Famous for no reason" is written (Ananya's message for trolls, perhaps). In the last pic of the carousel post, Ananya can be seen holding a breadstick like a cigarette. Ananya also explained it in her caption to avoid trolls. Ananya wrote in the caption, "Forgotten photos from my camera roll. (The last pic is a breadstick and it's meant to be a cute pic pls calm down)."

The comments section was flooded with compliments from Ananya's friends and colleagues. Ananya's BFF Shanaya Kapoor dropped an emoji. Gauhar Khan wrote, "Hotness." Ananya's mother Bhavana Pandey dropped a series of love emojis. Casting director of Yash Raj Films Shanoo Sharma wrote, "Oh hi, it's Tuesday." Stylist Tanya Ghavri wrote, "Loveee" and dropped a series of love emojis. Take a look at the post here: Meanwhile, Ananya Pandey has reportedly broken up with Aditya Roy Kapur. According to a Bombay Times report, the rumoured couple parted ways in March. A close friend of the two actors told Bombay Times, "They broke up almost a month ago. They were going quite strong, and the break-up came as a shock to all of us. They are cordial with each other. Ananya is trying to move on, of course, there's hurt. She is spending time with her new furry friend. Aditya is also trying to deal with the situation maturely."

Ananya Panday welcomed



pet pooch Riot a couple of weeks back. Introducing him, Ananya shared a bunch of pictures of her new furry friend. In one picture, Ananya can be seen holding Riot adorably. In another click, Ananya can be seen taking a selfie with Riot by her side. Sharing the pictures, Ananya wrote, "Guys, say hello to my baby jaan -'Riot'. he is the cutest little boy in the whole world and I'm madly ob-

essed ps. This is gonna become a RIOT fan page." Take a look: In terms of work, Ananya Panday was last seen in the Netflix release Kho Gaye Hum Kahan, directed by Arjun Varain Singh. The film also starred Siddhant Chaturvedi, Adarsh Gourav and Kalki Koechlin. Her upcoming projects include Control and The Untold Story of C Sankaran Nair. She will next be seen in the show Call Me Bae.

## Love Me trailer: A ghost captivates Daredevil's heart!

The official trailer for the film "Love Me" featuring Ashish and Vaishnavi Chitanya has been released. The trailer is intriguing due to its portrayal of a distinctive narrative. The trailer commences with the portrayal of individuals who are gripped by fear due to a malevolent apparition that manifests at a specific moment. Next, we are introduced to Ajay, played by Ashish, who is a fearless and audacious youth. His heart desires to engage in activities that are cautioned against. Despite the warnings from everyone, he ventures to a location inhabited by a female ghost, and not only does he search for her, but he also develops romantic feelings for her.



Is it possible for a ghost to experience love for a human being? The concept appears intriguing. The trailer is also enjoyable. Ashish is paired up with Vaishnavi Chaitanya, who is known for her role in the movie 'Baby'. Simran

Choudary takes on the role of another female protagonist. MM Keeravani is responsible for composing the music, while PC Sreeram operated the camera. "Love Me" is set to be released on May 25 under the Dil Raju Productions banner.

## Ram Pothineni explains what real success is

Ram Pothineni turned 36 today. He took to social media to share a new photo for his birthday. He thanked his fans for being a part of his journey. He also mentioned that the true challenge is to live life on our own terms. That is real success, he added. Ram Pothineni is currently working on "Double iSmart," for which a teaser was released. Here is what he wrote.... "From Acting & Directing School Plays to Book readings at the Oxford University Press to Theatre to Short films to Feature films.. The biggest success in your life is being able to do what you love the most in life, for most of your life...at your own pace..on your own terms.. Doing whatever makes you Feel Alive..is the whole point of Being Alive..Thank you...for being a part of this journey... Bless you...for always being there for me..Love you...for being you..can't wait to see where this takes us all.. Coz, We-Are-Just-Getting-Started!!!"



## Adhyayan Suman Reacts To Heeramandi Co-Star Sharmin Segal Being Trolled: "Star Kids Face This"

Sharmin Sehgal, who played the role of Alamzeb in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's debut web series Heeramandi, has been at the receiving end of relentless trolling by fans for her performance ever since the show released on streaming giant Netflix. The hate received from the Internet users also led to Sharmin disabling the comments section under her Instagram post. Among those raising a voice against the trolling and coming in support of Sharmin was also her Heeramandi co-star Adhyayan Suman. In an exclusive chat with News18 Showsha, Adhyayan Suman, who plays a nawab in the historical drama series said, "It shakes your confidence. It also depends on how you're as a person and how you handle these things. No matter how thick-skinned you pretend to be, it still affects you somewhere. Like, I shouldn't be talking about the two haters who questioned my screen time out of the 20,000 positive messages I got and yet I feel the urge to discuss those two. You do want to give some kind of a clarification because it does hurt you somewhere." "In case of



Sharmin, I don't know how much backlash she's facing because I've only heard good things about her. I honestly don't know of the personal attacks they're making at her. But a lot of star kids face this," Adhyayan added. Earlier, Taha Shah Badussha, who plays Sharmin's love interest Tajdar balock in the series, spoke up against the trolling that his co-star is facing. Taha told ZoomTV that it is unfair to compare her to seasoned actresses like Manisha Koirala. Explaining that he was not

aware that Sharmin Segal was being trolled, Taha Shah said: "I didn't know that. She has done two films. I feel she follows the method of keeping it subtle at times. I have worked with her and I do know as an actor she has tried her best. I literally felt that people would not give me any love, but not the way I am getting. So, the audience can react in a very unpredictable way, to be very honest. As far as Sharmin and her performance is concerned - I lived with her literally on set. She was

always punctual. She was always there on time. She was always trying to do her best. How it comes off to the audience is a different ball game altogether and I can't comment on that. But I know she has got a great heart. She was always present on set and as an actor that's all you need" Sharmin Segal made her acting debut in the 2019 film Malaal, Taha Shah Badussha is known for his work in projects such as Luv Ka The End, Gippi, and Baar Baar Dekho, among others.

## Jason Shah On Breakup With Anusha Dandekar: "Trying To Make Me Fit In A Box"

Actor Jason Shah is enjoying his moment in the spotlight thanks to his role as Alastair Cartwright in the Netflix series Heeramandi. The actor's spirited performance has sparked renewed interest in his professional and personal life. Jason Shah was reported to be dating VJ and actress Anusha Dandekar but the relationship was short-lived. While the relationship was widely reported in the media, Jason Shah has remained tight-lipped about the details of the breakup.

Now, in an interaction with ETimes, Jason Shah confirmed the breakup but refused to divulge details about it or his current relationship status. He said: "I have had a big spiritual change in my life since then (his last breakup), which has made me wiser." The only thing he will say about the relationship is this - "It was rushed. I didn't really think about it. The other person didn't really understand me and I felt they were

trying to make me fit in their box. And that is not going to happen, right?"

Reflecting on modern relationships, Jason Shah added: "A huge problem with relationships today, and one of the main reasons for breakups and divorces is that people don't really listen to the other. They're only trying to put forth what they feel. That's the sad part. Only when you listen to what a person says, especially earlier on, will your relationship last longer."

In an April 2021 interview with The Times Of India, Jason Shah had confirmed his relationship with Anusha Dandekar and added that there was a "cosmic connection" between them. He had said: "I have known Anusha and her sister Shibani [Dandekar] for a very long time now, but I got to know Anusha closely just a few weeks back. She is gorgeous, extremely kind and a free spirit who believes in living life in the moment. I love



that about her. We have been dating for a while and life has been beautiful with her." He also said: "I haven't been in a relationship for the last three years. And I have been focusing on my work. When I relaunched my sister in a music video, I was directing it and Anusha was also acting in it. That's when we met and clicked really well. I have never met someone like her. She never judges me. We are just enjoying this phase and are

spending quality time together. Anusha and I also have many common friends and it's fun. There is a great cosmic connection between the two of us. Hopefully, this will only grow stronger in the future." Meanwhile, Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar also features Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditi Rao Hydari, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Sharmin Segal, and Richa Chadha. It is available for streaming on Netflix.

## Deepak Tijori On His Friendship With Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan: "We Used To Party Together"

Director-actor Deepak Tijori is currently busy with the promotional campaign of his film Tippsy. As part of the promotions, Deepak Tijori reflected on his personal and professional journey over the years. Recently, he spoke to Indian Express about the work culture of the 90s and the bond he shares with Bollywood superstars such as Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan. He said that they were "in a clan" in the 90s. "When we work together, we are the best of friends. The moment we move away, we still remain friends, but it is not like we are meeting each other every day for parties. That happens when you are in a clan. There was a time when we were in a clan, the whole of 90s, we used to party together, whether it is Shah Rukh, Pooja (Bhatt), Raveena (Tandon), Ashutosh Gowariker, Rahul Roy, all of us used to party. We don't remain the same age, so we obviously grow." He added that he shares a warm camaraderie with most people he worked with. Deepak Tijori explained: "When we

start growing and living in our spaces, the fact remains that when we meet, we go back to how we were. I am fortunate enough to have created this bond with most of the people I have worked with, whether it is the 90s or now." Speaking about his relationship with Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan today, Deepak Tijori said: "They are still very sweet, whenever I come across Shah Rukh or Aamir or any of the guys I have worked with, they have been nice. We have been the best of friends then, but obviously over the years I made my choice of making independent films, which are not very conventional, my subjects are different...If there is a story I feel I should go to Shah Rukh or Aamir with, I wouldn't stop myself, but as of yet, no... I don't want to ever be in a position where they think, 'Achha, let's think about this because he is a friend.' No, only if I feel I have a worthy story for them."

"When we were making Kabhi Haa Kabhi Naa, it was party time for us. We used to



continuously work together because it was fun," he said, about the SRK film. Contrary to popular opinion, Deepak Tijori said that he feels even today's stars enjoy good friendships with their co-stars. "See, we used to party together, if there was a party at Shah Rukh's place, Pooja [Bhatt] or me, we all would assemble and invite others. I don't know these young actors, but I do see Ranveer Singh, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Kiara

Advani and others of this generation going out, and partying together," adding that they are often spotted together in "Manish Malhotra or Karan Johar's parties". He said that everyone aspires "to work in an atmosphere which is comfortable." Deepak Tijori has played integral roles in Aamir Khan films such as Jeeta Wohi Sikandar, Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin, Ghulam as well as SRK films like Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa, and Baadshah.