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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

PM congratulates Nitish Kumar, now a Rajya Sabha MP

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday congratulated Janata Dal (United) supremo Nitish Kumar after the outgoing Bihar chief minister was sworn in as a Rajya Sabha MP, marking his return to Parliament after more than two decades. "Shri Nitish Kumar is one of the most experienced leaders in the country. His commitment to good governance has been appreciated everywhere. He has made an indelible contribution to the development of Bihar. It will be a great pleasure to see him in Parliament once again. He has also served for many years as a Member of Parliament and Union Minister," PM Modi wrote on X. "I am fully confident that his long political experience will further enhance the dignity of Parliament. Heartiest congratulations to him on taking oath as a Rajya Sabha MP and best wishes for his tenure ahead," he added. The prime minister also congratulated Rajya Sabha deputy chairman and JD(U) leader Harivansh Narayan Singh after President Droupadi Murmu nominated him to the Upper House for a third term. "Shri Harivansh Ji has made invaluable contributions to journalism and public life. He is a respected intellectual and thinker.

Tamil Nadu CM Stalin takes Chennai Metro during poll campaign

NEW DELHI: Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin on Friday made a surprise appearance on the Chennai Metro, travelling from Chennai Central to DMS station as part of his election campaign ahead of the Assembly polls. During the journey, the DMK chief interacted with passengers, spoke to daily commuters and sought support for his party, turning a routine metro ride into a public outreach exercise. 'A journey filled with people's affection' Sharing a video of the ride on X, Stalin described the experience as "a journey filled with people's affection,".

If the govt. is formed in Bengal, we will expel infiltrators from the state: Shah

'BJP to bring UCC in 6 months': Shah pitches common civil law in Bengal, 'BJP can't ally with those wanting Babri in Bengal': Shah

Kolkata On Friday, Union Home Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Amit Shah released the party's manifesto for the upcoming two phases of the Assembly elections in West Bengal.

In this manifesto, strict measures against infiltration, a transparent recruitment system, economic development, and women's empowerment have been identified as key priorities. Following the release of the manifesto, the Union Home Minister stated that if the BJP forms the government in the state this time, a policy of zero tolerance will be adopted regard-



ing the issue of infiltration. He asserted that under the policy of "Detect, Delete, and Deport," every infiltrator would be expelled from the state, thereby ensuring the security not only of the state but of the entire nation. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on strengthening the security of international borders and strictly curbing cattle smuggling. Regarding the recruitment process in the state, he stated that a transparent and corruption-free mechanism would be developed, wherein all vacant government positions would be filled strictly on the basis of merit. Irregularities such as "jobs-for-cash" scams would be completely

The Burden of Education on a Mother's Darlings: Childhood Crushed Beneath Heavy School bags

The heavy schoolbags slung across the backs of young children heading to school have become a bitter reality of today's education system. When these innocent children—often referred to as "a mother's darlings"—leave home in the morning, they carry on their shoulders not merely the weight of books, but also the burden of expectations and the flaws of the system itself. The situation is such that a mother, despite her best intentions, finds herself unable to reduce the weight of her child's bag. It is frequently observed that the bags of children in private and primary schools are stuffed with far more books, notebooks, and other materials than are actually necessary. Strict school regulations, the requirement for separate textbooks for every subject, and daily homework assignments combine to make the children's bags even heavier. In many instances, a child's bag weighs disproportionately more than the child's own body weight—a factor that can prove detrimental to their physical development. A mother's anxiety is entirely natural. She desires to see her child safe and healthy, yet her helplessness in the face of school mandates is painfully evident. Even if she wished to, she cannot remove a single book or notebook from the bag, as every item is deemed "essential." Consequently, these "mother's darlings" are compelled to shoulder this burden day after day. This issue is not merely physical; it is psychological as well. Heavy bags instill a sense of fear and stress regarding school in children. Education—which



ought to be a source of joy—gradually transforms into a burdensome chore. The result is that children begin to shy away from their studies or, succumbing to the pressure, lose their innate curiosity. The government and the Department of Education periodically issue directives aimed at reducing the weight of schoolbags; however, their impact at the grassroots level appears to be quite limited. What is truly needed is for school administrations, teachers, and parents to collaborate in finding a practical solution to this problem. Measures such as integrating digital learning, providing textbooks within the school premises, and ensuring a balanced timetable could prove instrumental in addressing this issue. Ultimately, we must understand that the purpose of education is to uplift children, not to burden them. These "cherished darlings" deserve an environment where they can both learn and flourish—where they can live out their childhood free from fear and pressure. Only then will it be possible to build a healthy and happy generation.

Grave consequences': Kharge at CWC meet says government's women quota move violates poll code

NEW DELHI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday claimed that the Narendra Modi-led government's proposed move to amend the women's reservation law and expand the number of parliamentary seats could violate the Model Code of Conduct and have "grave consequences". He also asserted that the opposition will move unitedly on this.



Kharge said the issue required deeper consultation and that the opposition would respond col-

lectively. "Therefore, following this meeting, we will formulate a collective strategy by holding discussions on these issues with our colleagues in the opposition as well. We will move forward unitedly," Kharge was quoted as saying by news agency PTI. The Congress chief also questioned the timing of the special Parliament session scheduled from April 16 to 18.

Adequate Fuel Stocks with LPG Distributors and Petrol Pumps in the Country: Sujata

New Delhi Amidst the West Asia crisis, the government stated on Friday that LPG distributors and petrol pumps across the country possess adequate stocks of fuel. The government reported that there have been no reports of any shortages whatsoever. The supply of domestic cooking gas—i.e., LPG—remains normal, with 98 percent of bookings currently being processed online, while the supply of commercial LPG has been restored to 70 percent. Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary (Marketing and Oil Refineries) at the Ministry of Petroleum and Gas, shared this information while addressing an inter-ministerial press conference. Ms. Sharma noted that



since March 14, approximately 106,000 tonnes of commercial LPG have been sold, with daily sales currently ranging between 6,000 and 6,500 tonnes. She further explained that the relief measures include doubling the supply of 5-kg gas cylinders, which are available without the requirement of any ID proof. Ms. Sharma stated that approximately 100,000 cylinders are being sold daily, while a total of 1.1 million cylinders have been sold since March

23. Approximately 80 percent of supplies to industries have been restored, and supplies to the fertilizer sector have been restored to 95 percent. Piyush Singh, Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Power, stated that during the West Asia crisis, the Ministry issued directives under Section 11 to ensure the full operational status of power plants relying on imported coal, resulting in the availability of approximately 4,000 MW of additional electricity.

'BJP hides behind institutions': Akhilesh accuses Center

NEW DELHI: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday accused the BJP of using the Election Commission during bypolls in Uttar Pradesh, saying that the party uses institutions when it begins to lose on real issues. "Election commissions are working at the behest of the BJP. Of all



the bypolls in Uttar Pradesh, the Election Commission has worked on the directions of the BJP. When the BJP starts to lose on real issues, it hides behind institutions to carry out its attacks," he said during a visit to

Rajasthan. In the final voter list of Uttar Pradesh released on Friday after the Special Intensive Revision, the electorate has increased by over 84 lakh. Chief electoral officer Navdeep Rinwa said the final voter list now has 13.39 crore voters, up from 12.55 crore in the draft roll published in January.

Rinwa said the process involved hearings and verification, and stressed that no voter's name was removed without due process. "If a name present in the draft roll is missing in the final list, it is either due to a Form-6 application or a decision taken by the ERO after due hearing," he said.

Kargil War Hero Sonam Wangchuk Dies, Defence Minister, Army Pay Tributes

New Delhi: Army veteran Col Sonam Wangchuk (retd), who received a Maha Vir Chakra for his gallantry in the 1999 Kargil war, passed away on Friday, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hailing him as a "proud son of Ladakh" whose heroics during Operation Vijay inspired Army personnel in the demanding high-altitude conditions. The Indian Army offered deepest con-



lences at the veteran's demise, saying the force stands in solidarity with the bereaved family in this hour of grief. In a post on X on Friday, Singh paid glowing tribute to Col Wangchuk describing him as a highly decorat-

ed officer of the Army, renowned for his gallantry, resolute leadership and unwavering commitment to duty. Deeply saddened by the passing of Colonel Sonam Wangchuk. He was a highly decorated officer of the Indian Army, renowned for his gallantry, resolute leadership and unwavering commitment to duty. A proud son of #Ladakh, he exemplified the spirit of the region—resilient, steadfast.

MP: In-laws demand buffalo for dowry, woman consumes acid; dies

BHOPAL: A 21-year-old newlywed woman died after consuming acid in Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh, allegedly unable to bear the daily harassment by her in-laws who demanded a 'Murrha' buffalo as dowry. Police have registered a case against her husband and four family members for dowry harassment and abetment to suicide. Vimlesh Baghel got married to Dinesh Baghel.

Justice Varma Dropped Exit News To Inquiry Panel

New Delhi Justice Yashwant Varma resigned as a judge of the Allahabad High Court while a parliamentary inquiry committee was already in session, informing the panel midway through its proceedings and after it had formally started hearings on the assumption that he was still contesting the charges. He had been under fire after the recovery of a huge stash of cash from his house in Delhi last year. He had then denied the cash belonged to him. Members of the Judges



Inquiry Committee were handed Justice Varma's resignation letter only after the committee had begun its sitting on Thursday morning. Until that point, the panel had received a 13-page communication from the judge that disclosed he had written separately to the President, but made



no reference to a resignation. On the basis of that letter alone, the committee proceeded with the scheduled hearing. It was only during the course of the meeting that Justice Varma's letter conveying his decision to step down was placed before the members. By the afternoon, committee mem-

bers were confronted with two parallel claims from the judge: a formal withdrawal from the inquiry on grounds of unfairness, and a resignation from office communicated directly to the President. In his letter to the committee, dated April 9, Justice Varma said he was "recusing" himself from the proceedings because "a fair inquiry is not being conducted," adding that he was taking the decision "with deep anguish" and was "fully cognizant of the gravity" of withdrawing at this stage.

10-Parachute Landing System Successfully Tested For Gaganyaan Crew

New Delhi As human spaceflight once again captures global attention, India is methodically advancing its own carefully calibrated journey towards sending astronauts into orbit. On Friday, the

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted the second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02) of the Gaganyaan Crew Module at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, a

crucial step in validating how Indian astronauts, or Gaganyatris, will return safely to Earth after enduring the searing "trial by fire" of atmospheric re-entry. The test focused on one of the most critical and

unforgiving phases of any human space mission: descent and landing. In this phase, human lives depend entirely on the flawless performance of a complex parachute-based deceleration system. For

the Gaganyatris, their survival will quite literally "hang by a thread", the nylon cords of 10 ingeniously designed and manufactured parachutes. During IADT-02, a simulated Crew Module weighing

CBI Court Convicts 3 Retired Bank Officials, 6 Others In PNB Loan Fraud Case

Ahmedabad: A special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court in Ahmedabad has sentenced nine convicts, including three retired officials

of Punjab National Bank (PNB), in a fraud case linked to sanctioning loans based on forged documents. The court handed down a two-

year rigorous imprisonment sentence to the three retired PNB officials -- identified as Gurinder Singh (Retd. Chief Manager), and K.E. Surendiranath.

“Mission Shakti 5.0: Open Discussion on Women’s Issues at ‘Haq Ki Baat’ and ‘Shakti Samvad’ Programs in Ghazipur; Directives Issued for Immediate Action on 27 Cases”

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur | Under the second phase of ‘Mission Shakti 5.0’, the ‘Haq Ki Baat with the District Magistrate’ and ‘Shakti Samvad’ programs were organized at the Rifle Club in Ghazipur, presided over by District Magistrate Avinash Kumar. During the event, various social issues affecting women and girls—such as gender inequality, domestic violence, workplace harassment, land disputes, and child marriage—were discussed openly. In the course of these discussions, 27 specific cases emerged involving issues related to domestic violence, land disputes, love mar-



riages, sanitation facilities, housing, and self-help groups. Taking all complaints seriously, the District Magistrate directed the concerned officials to initiate immediate action. He

urged the women and girls present to fearlessly bring their grievances before the administration, assuring them that the government and the administration would extend every possible

assistance.

As part of the ‘Shakti Samvad’ initiative, the District Magistrate interacted with children currently benefiting from the ‘Chief Minister’s Child Service Scheme (COVID-19)’, the ‘Chief Minister’s Child Service Scheme (General)’, and the ‘Sponsorship Scheme’; during these interactions, he gathered infor-

mation regarding their education, health, and their guardians. Furthermore, he provided information about various government welfare schemes and encouraged the women and children to avail themselves of these benefits.

The event witnessed the presence of the District Probation Officer, the team from the ‘Hub for Empowerment of Women’, the Manager of the ‘One Stop Centre’, as well as a large number of women and girls.

The primary objective of the program was to create awareness among women and girls regarding their rights and to empower them.

Deputy CM and Agriculture Minister conduct aerial Survey



Lucknow

Acting on the directions of Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak and Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi conducted an aerial survey of the districts most affected by the disaster, including Barabanki, Ayodhya, Ambedkarnagar, Azamgarh, Amethi, Sultanpur, Fatehpur, Unnao and Lucknow. The government has taken swift action to assess the extensive crop damage caused by unseasonal rains, strong winds and cyclonic conditions in the State this week. The Deputy CM and Agriculture Minister assured farmers that the government stands firmly with them during this difficult time. The Yogi government is committed to Providing all Possible assistance, including financial aid, to affected farmers. Farmers were informed that, as Per the Chief Minister directives, Strict instructions have been issued to district administrations to conduct detailed surveys to accurately assess crop losses and ensure immediate relief to Farmers. Following the aerial survey, review meetings were held in Azamgarh and Fatehpur to assess the ground Situation. District Magistrates, Chief Development Officers, Deputy Directors of Agriculture and other concerned officials attended these Meetings. During the discussions, the Progress of crop surveys was reviewed in detail. Officials were directed to complete the survey work of affected crops at the earliest and submit a comprehensive report to the government so that relief funds can be disbursed to affected farmers without Delay.

23 Lakh Free Textbooks Distributed on Time in Schools: Minister Dr. Dhan Singh

Dehradun

For the first time in the State Education system, 2,371,789 free textbooks have been distributed to students across government and aided schools within just one week of the commencement of the new academic session. This achievement is the result of the leadership and continuous efforts of Education Minister Dr. Dhan Singh Rawat. Due to his initiative, students from Class 1 to 12 have received their textbooks on time. With the availability of new books, academic activities in schools will continue smoothly and students will find it easier to Study. Following strict directives from Education Minister Dr. Dhan Singh Rawat, the Education



Department has broken the long-standing tradition of delays and for the first time, ensured the timely distribution of free textbooks to Students. According to the department, as soon as the academic session 2026-27 began, textbooks for students from Classes 1 to 12

were distributed in Schools. Within one week of the Session Start, the department distributed a total of 2,371,789 free textbooks. District-wise distribution includes: Almora: 137,334 books, Bageshwar: 46,891, Chamoli: 129,461, C h a m p a w a t :

78,142, Dehradun: 436,134, Haridwar: 446,311, Nainital: 197,687, Pauri: 107,799, Pithoragarh: 118,329, Rudrapur: 74,869, Tehri: 104,559, Udham Singh Nagar: 425,176, Uttarkashi: 69,097. Officials stated that a total demand of 7,818,145 textbooks was received from all districts, out of which most have already been supplied, while the remaining books are being distributed on a war footing. To ensure no Shortage of books in Schools, concerned officials have been instructed to continuously monitor and collect feedback.

Officials further added that timely availability of textbooks has not only ensured smooth academic activities but has also increased students enthusi-

asm towards studies. Parents have also appreciated this initiative of the government, calling it a significant improvement in the education System

More than 23 lakh free textbooks have been distributed to Children within one week of the new academic session. For the first time, students have received their books at the beginning of the session itself, which is a strong indication of a Positive Change in the education system. Instructions have been issued to ensure that Such arrangements continue in the future. Our Priority is to Provide quality education to every Child so that their future becomes bright. Dr. Dhan Singh Rawat, Education Minister Uttarakhand.

Private Sector Should Accelerate Participation in R&D Activities: Dr. Jitendra

New Delhi

Union Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Jitendra Singh, stated that the private sector has been called upon to accelerate its participation in Research and Development (R&D) activities. He emphasized that the active involvement of the industry is absolutely essential to strengthen India’s innovation ecosystem. Release of Two NITI Aayog Reports While releasing two reports by NITI Aayog, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted that the government has taken several significant steps, including opening up sectors such as space and atomic energy for private participation. Additionally, special mechanisms—such as the Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) Fund—have been established to encourage the private sector to invest in research. Dr. Jitendra emphasized that the focus must now shift from merely formulating policies to assessing their actual impact. He noted that effective reforms are possible only by understanding the practical challenges faced by researchers.

Nominated Members Will Also Participate in City Development: Municipal Commissioner

Ghaziabad

At the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation headquarters, nominated councillors met Municipal Commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik. The Commissioner congratulated all the nominated councillors and discussed various development works in the city.

He emphasized the need to enhance monitoring of Cleanliness in internal wards, along with improving oversight of other civic works. Special focus was laid on strengthening monitoring in the Construction Department and the Water Works Department. Nominated councillors including Ankush Arora, Pradeep Chaudhary, Suman Singh, Sunil Yadav, Parmjeet Singh, Sanjay Rawat, Shyam Sharma and



others were Present in the meeting. Each councillor introduced themselves and Shared details about the Public welfare work they have carried out in the city. The Commissioner advised both the officials and nominated councillors to work jointly and Prepare a coordinated Plan for the betterment of the City. The Commissioner also mentioned that meetings with nominated councillors were held during the Public grievance sessions (Janata Darshan). A

Part from 100 elected councillors, 10 nominated councillors will also contribute to the development of Ghaziabad. He stated that nominated councillors will have an active role in development works, especially in internal wards. During the meeting, Chief Engineer (Construction) Narendra Kumar Chaudhary was instructed to Prioritize the development works suggested by the nominated Councillors.

India-US Trade Portal Launched, Target of \$500 Billion Bilateral Trade

New Delhi

The ‘India-US Trade Facilitation’ Portal was virtually launched by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. The Primary objective of this Portal is to accelerate efforts to achieve the target of \$500 billion in bilateral trade between the two countries by 2030. The Portal will act as a bridge between Indian exporters and American importers, helping simplify trade Processes. During his three-day visit to the United States, Misri stated that the Portal will serve as a key mechanism to strengthen trade ties between the two nations. It is expected to reinforce existing supply Chains and help develop new business Relationships. The initiative is also expected to boost MSME and startups, as the Platform specifically focuses on Providing global opportunities to micro, small and medium enterprises, as well as startups and improving their access to international markets. This digital initiative will strengthen supply Chains and foster



new commercial linkages between India and the United States. Indian Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, was also Present at the launch event. Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, urged Indian businesses and exporters to make maximum use of the Portal. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal Shared the information on

social media Platform X, stating that Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri virtually launched the India-US Trade Facilitation Portal. He added that the Portal aims to unlock new trade opportunities, improve ease of doing business, support MSME and startups and accelerate efforts toward achieving the \$500 billion trade target by 2030. In another Post, Jaiswal described the initiative as a

significant step toward realizing the full Potential of India-US trade. He also appreciated the role of the Consulate General of India in New York in designing and advancing the Initiative. During his visit, the Foreign Secretary will also meet senior US officials to review trade and defense relations and discuss Global issues, Particularly the situation in West Asia.

Backward Classes Commission Chairperson Holds Review Meeting; Directs Timely Redressal of Grievances

She directed the concerned officials to ensure the timely redressal of matters related to the Commission

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, Chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes, held a review meeting on Friday at the Circuit House auditorium to discuss issues concerning Backward Classes and various welfare schemes. During the meeting, she directed the concerned officials to ensure the timely redressal of matters related to the Commission. The meeting also addressed complaints regarding the medical treatment of those injured in an accident that occurred in Kaushambi. The Chairperson took cognizance of a complaint lodged by a patient admitted to Swaroop Rani Hospital, alleging negligence in treatment and the failure to provide ambulance services to patients who had recovered and were ready for discharge. She directed Dr. V.K. Pandey, Principal of Motilal Nehru Medical College, to investigate the matter and submit a



report. The Chairperson emphasized that proper medical care must be ensured for patients admitted to hospitals, and that they be treated with sensitivity. She directed that the practice of prescribing medicines from outside the hospital be prohibited

and that patients be treated with courtesy. She also requested that a category-wise list of doctors, paramedical staff, and sanitation workers posted at the hospital be provided. Furthermore, she directed that all complaints and applications related to Backward Classes be resolved within the stipulated timeframe. She emphasized that no applicant should face difficulties in obtaining caste certificates, and that these certificates must be issued within the prescribed time limit. Additionally, she issued directives to ensure 100% compliance with reservation provisions regarding appointments. Present at the meeting were DIG Vijay Dhull, Additional District Magistrate (Finance and Revenue) Vinita Singh, the Principal of Motilal Nehru Medical College, CMS Dr. Neelam Singh, and Ashok Kumar Gautam (Officer for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Backward Classes Welfare), along with other concerned officials.

Knife Attack in Family Land Dispute: Uncle Critically Injured; Case Registered Against Two



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Utraon. In Katahara village, located within the Utraon police station area of Prayagraj district, a dispute over the partition of family land escalated into a violent clash. It is alleged that a nephew attacked his own uncle with a knife, leaving him critically injured. Based on the victim's written complaint, the police have registered a case of attempted murder against two individuals. According to

reports, Sadhu Ram Mali, a resident of Katahara village, had been embroiled in a long-standing dispute with his family members regarding the division of land. Following a heated argument over this very issue, the situation spiraled out of control, leading the nephew to launch a frenzied knife attack on his uncle. Bleeding profusely, Sadhu Ram Mali collapsed at the scene, causing panic and chaos in the locality. Upon receiving news of the incident,

family members and villagers rushed to the spot and transported the injured man to a nearby hospital for treatment. Meanwhile, the injured Sadhu Ram Mali has submitted a written complaint at the Utraon police station against his own brother and nephew, demanding strict legal action. Acting on the victim's complaint, the police have registered a case of attempted murder against Jamuna Prasad and Monu Mali.

Peace Committee Meeting Concludes at Kotwali Regarding Ambedkar Jayanti Preparations

The meeting was presided over by the Kotwali In-charge



Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Ghazipur: A significant meeting was organized within the local Kotwali premises—under the jurisdiction of the Kotwali Mohammadabad police station in the district—with the objective of maintaining peace and order in view of the upcoming Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. The meeting was presided over by the Kotwali In-charge, Virendra Pratap, and featured detailed discussions on ensuring the

smooth and successful conduct of the event. During the meeting, various arrangements were reviewed, including the route for the procession scheduled for the occasion of the Jayanti, lighting arrangements, the availability of drinking water, and other essential amenities. Additionally, suggestions were solicited from the attendees to ensure the program could be organized in the most effective manner possible.

The meeting was attended

by prominent citizens of the area, village heads (Gram Pradhans), and representatives from various religious communities. Also present on this occasion were Outpost In-charge Arvind Kumar, Sub-Inspector Ishwar Chandra Tripathi, Lallan Bind, and other police personnel. Issuing clear directives, the Kotwali In-charge stated that no new traditions would be introduced or implemented; rather, the program would be conducted strictly in accor-

dance with established, long-standing traditions. He appealed to everyone to immediately report any objectionable activity observed anywhere to the Kotwali, so that timely action could be taken and peace and order could be effectively maintained. The primary objective of the meeting was to ensure that Ambedkar Jayanti is celebrated in a peaceful and orderly manner, fostering a spirit of mutual brotherhood and harmony.

Passenger Slips While Boarding Moving Train; RPF Constable's Presence of Mind Saves a Life

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj. A commendable incident involving the rescue of a passenger's life has come to light, carried out by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) Post, Prayagraj, under "Operation Jeevan Raksha" (Operation Life Protection). While on duty at the platform, an RPF constable demonstrated great alertness by safely pulling out a passenger who had fallen into the gap between a moving train and the platform. The incident occurred at Platform Number



01 of Prayagraj Junction. On Wednesday afternoon, at approximately 12:11 PM, Train Number 12987 was departing on its scheduled time.

During this time, a passenger lost his balance while attempting to board the moving train and fell into the gap between the train and the platform. Upon witnessing the incident, RPF Constable Sunil Kumar Kushwaha—who was deployed at the spot—displayed exemplary courage and presence of mind without wasting a single moment.

Acting immediately, he pulled the passenger out to safety. His swift intervention averted a major tragedy. The rescued passenger has been identified as Suresh Kumar Saroj, a resident of Sarai Hariya, Post Bahadurgarh, District Prayagraj. He was traveling from Prayagraj Junction to Abu Road. Following the incident, the passenger stated that he was completely safe and continued his journey. Other passengers and members of the public present at the scene lauded the RPF constable for his heroic act.

Editorial

Over 1 Lakh US Troops Are Stationed In Europe. What Happens If They Leave?

After the United States and Iran had agreed on a two-week ceasefire. Obviously, the pause in the West Asia war was going to dominate the press conference at the White House. During the press briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt dropped a bombshell. In response to a question, she casually revealed that President Donald Trump would be discussing the US's potential exit from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with Secretary General Mark Rutte later that day. Trump has been angry over the fact that several European NATO members refused his call to support the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran. Only days earlier, he had signalled how far he was willing to go, saying America's membership was not "beyond reconsideration". Then came the meeting itself. Trump and Rutte spoke privately for nearly two hours, described afterwards as a blunt and tense exchange. If there had been hope that diplomacy might cool tempers, it faded quickly. Within minutes, Trump took to Truth Social and delivered a pointed message: "NATO WASN'T THERE WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, AND THEY WON'T BE THERE IF WE NEED THEM AGAIN."

The Leaked Messages

One could see it coming. Last year, in an accidentally leaked WhatsApp chat, Vice President JD Vance and War Secretary Pete Hegseth called the Europeans "free-loading". There is a strong feeling in the Trump administration that Europe has taken the US for a ride for far too long. "Yeah I think they've been free-loading," Trump had told reporters back then, when asked if he agreed with Hegseth, who was quoted as saying in the leaked Signal chats. A user identified as Vance had even said, "I just hate bailing Europe out again", and a user identified as Hegseth replied: "I fully share your loathing of European free-loading. It's PATHETIC." Will the US, however, really leave the 32-nation alliance? If America, its most powerful member, were to leave, defence experts in Europe believe the consequences would extend far beyond the continent.

The Unmistakable Numbers

To understand the scale of such a move, it is important to begin with what the US currently provides to NATO. Around 1 lakh highly trained American troops are stationed across Europe. The US has air bases in Germany and Italy, naval facilities in Spain, intelligence hubs, logistics networks, missile defence systems and rapid response units across Europe. These forces are deeply integrated into NATO command structures and would be among the first to respond during a crisis. Needless to say, their presence acts as a deterrent in a big way, particularly against Russia. It is to be noted that the American role is not limited to troops. The US makes up the backbone of NATO's nuclear deterrence. It is no secret that American nuclear weapons are stationed in several European countries under NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangement. More important than the weapons is the guarantee behind them. The credibility of NATO rests on the assumption that the US would come to Europe's defence. If Washington were to withdraw, that assumption would certainly weaken. Even if treaties remained, the psychological impact would be immediate, because deterrence depends as much on perception as on capability.

America Is, After All, The Strongest

The first impact of a US withdrawal would, therefore, be operational. European militaries are bound to face capability gaps. The US currently provides much of NATO's airlift capacity, intelligence-gathering, missile defence and long-range strike capability.



Ahead Of Bengal Polls, Decoding The Bhadrakalok's Views On SIR

Jayanta Ghosal

In Kolkata's social vocabulary, a particular group has long held a special place - the 'bhadralok', or what is often referred to as the 'madhyabita' (middle-class). In English-language discourse, this social class was once described as the "middling class", and the term later evolved into the "educated middle class", sometimes simply called the "middle class". During the colonial period, British officials, who first encountered this social group, referred to them as "educated natives." Like most modern social classes, however, the boundaries of the bhadralok community are difficult to define precisely. In West Bengal, and particularly in Kolkata, the bhadralok have historically played a central role in shaping public opinion. In earlier decades, the Congress party enjoyed considerable support among Kolkata's urban middle class, while rural Bengal leaned more towards the Left parties. Later, during the final phase of Left rule, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee maintained significant support among urban educated voters, while Mamata Banerjee emerged as the political favourite in rural Bengal. Eventually, Banerjee managed to expand her influence across both demographics. However, in the 2026 Assembly election, a different pattern appears to be emerging in parts of urban Kolkata. In some areas, there is visible anti-incumbency after nearly fifteen years of



Banerjee's government. Among sections of the bhadralok, too, a certain level of dissatisfaction has become evident. Their concerns revolve around several issues that have dominated political debates in the state, including the education recruitment scam, allegations of corruption in political campaigns, and the activities of the so-called "syndicate" networks involved in construction and local contracting. For many members of the Bengali bhadralok community, these controversies have created a sense of disillusionment with the present administration. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list has added another layer of controversy. Some argue that the deletions disproportionately affect slum residents or minority communities in Kolkata, while others suggest that the exercise targeted illegal infiltrators, including Bangladeshis living in railway colonies or old refugee settlements.

Differing Opinions

Renowned filmmaker Arindam Sil said, "We are not

against SIR, but we are worried about the abrupt huge deletion. Bengali cultural degradation is a wrong perception because there are good films Bengalis are still creating. Tagore's songs, dance and book fairs -- all are still happening. But deleted voters can't get hearings from tribunals. This is unthinkable." Painter and renowned artist Samir Aich disagreed. "After the RG Kar and Sandeshkhali incidents, Bengali culture has completely eroded. I do not subscribe to any particular party but, as a creative person, I think Bengal has lost its cultural glory in the past 15 years. Vote bank politics should be stopped. The SIR idea is good," he said. Retired police officer Nazrul Islam also said implementing the SIR was a good decision and that the Trinamool Congress government in the state had "destroyed" the state's development model. Banerjee and the Trinamool have argued that many genuine voters have been removed from the list and that the deletions do not affect only minority com-

munities, but also a significant number of Hindu voters. There have been several reported instances where academicians, teachers, professors, college students, and government employees discovered that their names were missing from the voter lists. For many people, the process of correcting the records and re-entering their names has proven to be complicated. The SIR verification procedure requires filling out multiple forms and appearing for inquiries, which many citizens have found difficult and stressful. The BJP has tried to counter these criticisms by arguing that voter list revisions have taken place in several other states as well, including Kerala, Assam and Tamil Nadu, without similar political turmoil. The party says the protests in West Bengal are largely incited by the Trinamool. Banerjee, however, has argued that there is a political conspiracy behind the process, claiming that it is being used as a method to remove voters sympathetic to her party. In her campaign speeches, she

accused the Election Commission of functioning as a political instrument of the BJP, an accusation that the saffron party has denied.

Voices Raised

As a result, two parallel currents are now visible in Kolkata's public discourse. On the one hand, there is genuine discontent among sections of the bhadralok community regarding governance issues. Many of these voices regularly appear in television debates and discussions across social media platforms. Among sections of the Bengali middle class, criticism of the government has been growing. However, the SIR controversy has also caused discomfort among several independent intellectuals and professionals who do not align with the Trinamool Congress. For example, Dr Kunal Sarkar, a well-known cardiologist, and Professor Chowdhury, emeritus professor of Jadavpur University, have expressed concerns about the way the process has been handled. These figures are generally regarded as free-thinking public intellectuals rather than supporters of any particular political party, yet they have voiced dissatisfaction with how the Election Commission and judicial officers conducted the SIR process Sarkar said, "It is terrible. The BJP should not advance its political interests through the Election Commission and SIR." In the end, how all these factors will influence the final electoral outcome.

The Real Reason China Stayed 'Quiet' About Its US-Iran Ceasefire Role

Tara Kartha



Pakistan's media is ecstatic. After all, it was the country's apparent mediation that paused a disastrous war, and it is probably going to host the first delegation as early as next week. This is Pakistan's moment in the sun, or so it seems. But a tweet posted by the Prime Minister exposed embarrassingly enough that there might have literally been a US handle working the mediation machine. Standing quietly in the shadows is China. Its Foreign Minister has been busy, having made some 26 calls recently. It is also to host the US President soon. Meanwhile, Trump acknowledged Beijing's

intervention in a single line. That counts for something. From this mess, some will emerge as winners. Others will scramble to clean up the dust. At first sight, Pakistan's diplomatic cup seems to be overflowing. Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas, has expressed gratitude and appreciation on X for the 'brotherly country' of Pakistan, though not just praising Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif but also Field Marshal Asim Munir. That should cloud the former's already knitted brow a bit. But Munir

has apparently been working the lines the whole night, talking to the US and Iranian negotiators, all of which adds considerably to his stature. That's a big plus for his longevity in a country where former political heads or even army chiefs have had a sticky end. Consider that former Chief of Army Staff Javed Bajwa died un-mourned and mysteriously recently. The biggest win for Munir, and for his country, however, cannot be publicised. And that is, keeping Pakistan out of the Iran-Saudi war and thereby sliding out of implementing last year's 'Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement'. That was a black-and-white commitment.

Three Things May Happen At The End Of The 14-Day Ceasefire (Or Earlier)

Abhishek Kadiyala

The two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran, announced on April 7, 2026, has provided a temporary halt to what had become an accelerating cycle of escalation. US President Donald Trump framed it as a victory, claiming the US had met its military objectives and that a longer agreement was close to finalisation. Iran accepted the ceasefire on the condition that ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz would do so in coordination with its armed forces. Both sides had reasons to welcome an off-ramp. Neither side has fully stopped fighting. The ceasefire, as it stands, may be better understood as a pause rather than a settlement.

What Iran Wants From This Deal

After months of experiencing constant high-alerts, missile strikes, and assassinations, Iran's primary incentive for accepting a two-week pause for talks has been a promise of breathing space. Iran's agreement to the talks despite the temporary two-week window, countering the very first point of its 10-point proposal, only confirms this theory. In these two weeks, irrespective of the negotiation's outcome, Iran is looking to recover and

regroup, in terms of military strength, public morale and broader political consolidation under the new leadership. However, hours after the ceasefire announcement, Israel has reportedly continued its strikes on Iran, as confirmed by Israeli military officials. These Israeli strikes may derail US-Iran negotiations, as proven twice in the past. The IRGC may not observe a political agreement that does not address the core condition of a ceasefire. These reported ceasefire violations are not marginal complications. They suggest this deal rests on the assumption that US agreement ensures Israel's alignment. This assumption, however, might not hold true in reality.

The Hormuz Question

The ceasefire is conditional on Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz. This can be considered the primary point in Iran's proposal that incentivised the US to accept it as a framework for negotiations. Iran has agreed to allow passage, but emphasised that this will be under the supervision of its armed forces. This is not a full return to pre-war conditions. Iran's parliament has already passed legislation formally enshrining a toll system on Hormuz traffic. The

IRGC has been operating a de facto vetting and fee arrangement since mid-March. The ceasefire does not appear to resolve either of these developments.

Splitting this transit fee between Iran and Oman might also draw criticism from other Gulf nations like the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are key US allies in the region. The UAE has already expressed opposition, stating that the waterway cannot be held hostage by any single country and that free navigation must be part of any final settlement. Their exclusion from the transit arrangements is likely to be a source of friction in the weeks ahead. The broader stakes of Hormuz extend beyond the immediate conflict. Control and assured access to the sea lanes of communication has been a foundational pillar of US power projection for decades. Iran's ability to impose coordinated passage through the Strait represents a structural shift in the waterway's legal and strategic status. While the successful blockade has emerged as proof of Iran's dominance over the Strait of Hormuz at a military level, this transit fee is a step toward institutionalising control. Should that arrangement become codified,

India Sits Atop 500 Million Tons Of Gold Ore

Shashi Tharoor

We are a nation obsessed with gold, a civilisation that treats the yellow metal as both a spiritual necessity and the ultimate firewall against the vagaries of fortune. Yet, while we sit atop an estimated 500 million tons of unmined gold ore, our domestic production remains a rounding error on the global ledger. We mine a pittance - barely one and a half tons a year - while draining our foreign exchange reserves to import hundreds of tons annually from mines in Australia, Ghana, and Peru. This state of affairs is more than an irony; it is a self-inflicted wound that undermines our economic sov-



ereignty at a time when the world order is fracturing. The glittering paradox that sits at the heart of the Indian economy is not merely a curiosity for geologists; it is a profound indictment of national policy. For decades, the Indian state has approached gold mining

with a mindset of scarcity and suspicion rather than one of strategic abundance. The regulatory labyrinth that a prospective miner must navigate is so dense and archaic that it effectively functions as a prohibition. From the initial reconnaissance permit to the final mining

lease, the process is a gauntlet of overlapping jurisdictions, opaque environmental clearances, and a tax regime that punishes the very risk-taking it should be courting.

While other nations have streamlined their mining codes to attract the billions in capital required for deep-shaft exploration, India has remained trapped in a colonial-era bureaucratic inertia that treats every mineral deposit as a potential scandal rather than a potential asset. The cost of this inertia is staggering. In a world defined by geopolitical volatility and the weaponisation of currencies, gold has reaffirmed its status as the indispensable hedge.

Surprise Inspection of Ranipur Police Station

Bahraich

The District Superintendent of Police Vishwajeet Srivastava, conducted a surprise inspection of the Ranipur Police Station to assess the actual state of Police operations. During the inspection, he took a thorough review of every facility—ranging from the Women Help Desk to the Malkhana (Property Room), lock-up, barracks and the Mission Shakti Center—and issued several important Directives. While reviewing Pending applications at the Women Help Desk, the SP issued Clear instructions that all complaints must be duly recorded in the register and acted upon in a time-bound and lawful manner. Furthermore, the Station In-Charge was directed to Personally seek feedback from complainants after taking action on each application. During the inspection, special emphasis was Placed on ensuring courteous



behavior towards complainants and maintaining Proper arrangements for basic amenities such as seating, drinking water and restrooms. Instructions were issued to organize items stored in the Malkhana Chronologically (Year-Wise) and Sequentially, to ensure that records for any specific item could be easily Retrieved. Inspecting the Cleanliness of the mess and barracks, the SP emphasized the need to Provide high-quality food in accordance with the Prescribed menu and to maintain strict hygiene standards. Directives were also issued to further improve the Cleanliness and sanitary conditions of the

lock-up Area. Issuing orders to ensure the Proper functioning and Positioning of CCTV cameras installed within the Police Station Premises, he underscored the need to further strengthen the overall security infrastructure. Additionally, he inspected the Mission Shakti Center, reviewing its effective operation and the various activities being conducted under the ambit of the campaign. Furthermore, while reviewing the ongoing district-wide drive to apprehend individuals with outstanding warrants and wanted, the SP directed concerned officials to accelerate the Pace of these operations and the arrest of the maximum Possible.

UP will become the country's Deep Tech Capital: CM Yogi

Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in an important meeting on Friday, said that with the vision of 'Innovate in UP, Scale for the World', concrete, result-oriented and time-bound action should be ensured to make the state the country's 'Deep Tech Capital'. Emphasizing the need to make Uttar Pradesh a leader in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, drone technology, green hydrogen, cyber security and med-tech, he directed that strong coordination be established between research and industry so that innovations can be effectively implemented at scale and employment generation can be accelerated. In the meeting, a detailed presentation was made by IIT Kanpur Director Prof. Manindra Agrawal. It was informed that in the field of med-tech, innovative technological solutions for healthcare services are being



developed through the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology, and a proposal in this regard has already been sent to the Medical Education Department. The institute is proposed to commence in November. Describing the proposed Center of Excellence in the field of green hydrogen as extremely important for the state's energy future, the Chief Minister directed that work be expedited across all dimensions including production, storage, testing, safety standards and industrial applica-

tions. Discussions were also held about the establishment of the country's first institutional center for internationally recognized clinical validation in Ayurveda. The Chief Minister added, "This center would promote scientific validation of Ayurvedic medicines, development of a research base, laboratory advancement, and conservation and utilization of herbal resources, thereby giving India's traditional medical system a new global identity." Giving special to self-reliance in drone technology.

Father expresses gratitude to CM Yogi after safe rescue of kidnapped son

Basti

After the safe recovery of a kidnapped youth in Basti district, the victim's family expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Director General of Police, and the Basti police. Manoj Kumar Upadhyay, father of the victim Anay Upadhyay, said that his son had been abducted by some unidentified individuals. Upon receiving the information, he immediately filed a complaint at Lalganj police station. He stated that the police acted swiftly and took immediate action, successfully rescuing his son along with his friend. He said he is deeply grateful to Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and the Basti police for their timely intervention, which saved his son's life. According to the information received, on April 8, Anay Upadhyay had gone to Varanasi with his friend. On April 9, some unidentified persons allegedly held both of them hostage and began demanding ransom from their families. As soon as the information was received, Lalganj police registered the case and began swift action. Following instructions from senior officials, the police team reached Varanasi and, with the assistance of the local police, traced the suspects using mobile location tracking and CCTV footage. Both youths were safely rescued from a restaurant located at Goithaha Chauraha. During the operation, the police detained three accused and initiated further legal proceedings. The rescued youths include Anay Upadhyay (19) and his companion Divyanshu alias Rahul Upadhyay (17). The swift police action brought relief to the families, who praised the administration for its prompt response.

RTI System Faces Scrutiny, Commissioner Urges Reforms

Barabanki

During a review meeting and Press conference held at the Collectorate auditorium, State Information Commissioner Mohammad Nadeem highlighted the ground reality of the RTI (Right to Information) system in Barabanki and emphasized the urgent need for reforms. He stated that 129 Public Information Officers (PIO) in the district still need to develop a Proper understanding of their responsibilities and the Provisions of the RTI Act. Confusion between complaints and second appeals was identified as a major weakness in the system. The Commissioner informed that 96 second appeals under Section 19(3) and 31 complaints under Section 18 related to Barabanki are currently Pending before the Commission. Some cases have



been Pending since 2006, which is a matter of serious concern and highlights the need for timely Disposal. (Need for Departmental

Improvements) The Panchayati Raj and Rural Development departments reported the highest number of Pending cases. The situation in Revenue, Urban

Local Bodies, Electricity and Education departments was also found unsatisfactory.

The Commissioner expressed displeasure over the

absence of officials from the Industries, Transport, Judiciary and ITI departments during the Meeting.

Initiatives Along with Action.

Mohammad Nadeem Stated that Penalties have been imposed on 181 officials so far for failing to Provide information.

He also mentioned that the Commission has disposed of over 50,000 cases across the state, while around 20,000 cases are Still Pending. At the end of the meeting, ADM Nirankar Singh Proposed organizing a detailed workshop on RTI Provisions, which was seen as a significant step towards Improvement.

"Most Dull District" Remark. During the Press interaction, the Commissioner described Barabanki as the "most dull district," indicating the urgent need for responsible officials to be trained both Practically and legally to Strengthen transparency under the RTI Act.

Interaction with Teachers in Nawabganj: Appeal for Support

Bahraich

The Electoral atmosphere in the Gorakhpur-Faizabad Teachers and Graduates Constituency has now heated up completely. In this context, Kamlesh Yadav the official candidate of the Samajwadi Party, conducted an extensive Public outreach campaign in the Nawabganj block of Bahraich district, establishing direct dialogue with teachers and appealing for their Support. During the outreach drive, Yadav visited various Intermediate Colleges in the region, where he listened earnestly to the teachers grievances and assured them of their resolution. Accompanying him in this campaign were Ramesh Mishra (District President of the Secondary Teachers' Association), Principal Mahendra Yadav, Lecturer Rajiv Srivastava and teachers'



representative Saurabh Verma.

In his address, Kamlesh Yadav stated that the Samajwadi Party has always Championed the cause of education and the interests of teachers. Highlighting the Plight of teachers working in unaided (non-funded) Schools as a key issue, he noted that they receive neither a regular salary nor job security—a situation he described as deeply Concerning. He Pledged that if given the opportunity to enter the legislative house, he would Prioritize and raise Pending issues concerning teachers in unaided Schools—such as honorariums, job

security, Pensions and Promotions and would strive relentlessly to secure their Resolution. During this tour, he held meetings with teachers at several educational institutions, including Shri Ram Pyare Intermediate College (Babaganj) and Haji Mohammad Yusuf Intermediate College. The teachers openly articulated their grievances and Presented their long-Pending Demands. Yadav emphasized that teachers constitute the backbone of society. He argued that if the teachers themselves remain insecure, the education system cannot Possibly be Strengthened.

Red Cross Building Inaugurated in Fatehpur: Deputy CM Pathak Calls it a 'Center of Service'

Fatehpur

The Newly constructed Red Cross building at the TB Hospital Premises in Fatehpur was inaugurated on Thursday. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society, Brijesh Pathak, formally inaugurated the facility by cutting the ribbon. The Program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by floral tributes to Bharat Mata and Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross. Members of the executive body and life members welcomed the dignitaries with garlands. District Chairman Dr. Anurag honored the guests with Shawls and mementos, while the Chief guest was felicitated with a 51-kg garland. Students of Maharshi Vidya



Mandir added a cultural touch to the event by Presenting Saraswati Vandana and a welcome Song. Addressing the gathering, Deputy CM Brijesh Pathak stated that the Red Cross building is not merely a structure but a center dedicated to service, aimed at supporting the underprivileged, distressed and disaster-affected individuals. He highlighted that the Red Cross Society Plays a vital role in humanitarian efforts, including distribution of medicines, ambulance services and emergency assis-

ta nce. He also encouraged social workers to face Challenges with determination and not be discouraged, drawing inspiration from the life of Lord Rama. Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi and Chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti also addressed the gathering, expressing gratitude to all contributors involved in the construction of the building and emphasizing the importance of selfless service. During the event, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti

raised the demand for MRI and CT scan facilities in the district government medical college. Deputy CM Pathak assured that necessary action would be taken as Per norms to Provide these facilities. The Chief guest also felicitated Dr. Shyam Bihari, architect Shivkaran Singh, Painter Mahesh, Electrician Vikas and Program anchor Anurag Mishra for their contributions. Dr. Anurag Presented a detailed report on the humanitarian activities carried out by the Red Cross Society and expressed gratitude to all life members, executive members and the administration for their support in constructing the building. The event witnessed the Presence of several Public representatives, including District Panchayat Chairman

Abhay Pratap Singh, MLA Krishna Paswan and Rajendra Patel, MLC Subhash Yaduvanshi, former MLA Karan Singh Patel and Vikram Singh and BJP District President Annu Srivastava. Senior administrative officials, including District Magistrate Ravindra Singh, Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik, Chief Development Officer Pawan Kumar Meena, Additional District Magistrate Avinash Tripathi, Medical College Principal Dr. Rajesh Maurya and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ishtiyaq Ahmad were also Present. A large number of dignitaries, Citizens and Red Cross members attended the Event.

Janhvi recalls mother's loss

Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor recalls Sridevi being called 'homewrecker' after marrying Boney Kapoor

Actress Janhvi Kapoor recently opened up about the trauma of losing her mother, legendary actress Sridevi, who died in 2018 due to accidental drowning in a bathtub at a Dubai hotel. Speaking about her emotional struggle, Janhvi said that she tried to escape her inner turmoil and unresolved feelings, adding that the biggest trauma was not just losing her mother but also coping with the loss in the public eye.

On Raj Shamani's podcast, she said she deeply misses Sridevi's warmth and humour and credited her for shaping her, her sister Khushi Kapoor, and her father Boney Kapoor.

"I didn't lose one parent, I lost my father also that day, the version of

'I made some bad decisions'

Janhvi Kapoor added, "I made some bad decisions and let some people into my life that had no business being anywhere near me and taking advantage of me the way that they did. I was not putting myself in a safe space. I was compromising my mental and physical safety constantly."

him that existed when she was around. They called her a homewrecker and all the cruel things. It played on her mind and made her feel a certain way, but history is kind to people who have passed," said Janhvi.

Janhvi added that she was a 'dependent' daughter when Sridevi died and didn't make her own decisions, relying on her mother for everything, from what she should wear and think to understanding what was right or wrong. She said that suddenly having to make her own decisions while the world was judging her and making accusations about her family dynamics was extremely difficult.



Photo: Instagram_@janhvikapoor



Boney Kapoor with Sridevi and Janhvi

Photos: X



As per reports, Shah Rukh Khan opts out of Rajinikanth's *Jailer 2* cameo to focus on his upcoming film *King*

SRK declines *Jailer 2* cameo



Superstar Shah Rukh Khan will reportedly not be making a cameo appearance in *Jailer 2*, the upcoming sequel starring Rajinikanth. The actor has decided to focus entirely on his next film *King*.

According to reports, the makers had approached Shah Rukh Khan for a brief cameo requiring a five-day shoot

schedule. While he was initially open to the idea, the actor later chose to step away as he wanted his on-screen appearance to remain exclusive ahead of *King*'s release.

Reports further suggest that *King* is a significant project for Shah Rukh as it will mark the big-screen debut of his daughter Suhana Khan. The actor reportedly did not want to appear in another film with a similar look before its release.

Despite declining the cameo, Shah Rukh is said to share a warm equation with Rajinikanth and remains open to future collaborations.

Directed by Siddharth Anand, *King* also stars Deepika Padukone, Abhishek Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff and Arshad Warsi. The film is expected to release in December 2026.

Chand Mera Dil teaser out

Ananya Panday, Lakshya promise a passionate and intense love story

The makers of *Chand Mera Dil*, starring Ananya Panday and Lakshya, unveiled the teaser of the upcoming romantic drama on Tuesday after the film's posters created buzz online. The teaser introduces Lakshya as Aarav and Ananya as Chandni, offering a glimpse into an emotionally intense and youthful love story. Set in a contemporary backdrop, it hints at a relationship marked by passion, conflict and vulnerability.

At a time when action spectacles dominate the box office, *Chand Mera Dil* appears to bring

the focus back to romance-driven storytelling. The teaser uses dramatic visuals and emotional moments to establish the tone of the narrative.

The film's tagline, "*Pyaar mein thoda paagal hona hi padta hai*," suggests a story rooted in intense emotions. The teaser was shared with the caption, "Not every first love gets a second chance."

Backed by Dharma Productions and directed by Vivek Soni, the film is set to release on May 22, 2026.



Photo: X

KJo's fanboy moment

Karan Johar meets *The Devil Wears Prada 2* stars Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway



Photo: Instagram_@karanjohar

One of the most-awaited Hollywood films of the year is *The Devil Wears Prada 2*. The trailer of the film was released on Monday, and Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, and Stanley Tucci are all set to return to the big screens reprising their respective roles from part 1. Well, Karan met Meryl and Anne at the film's event in Tokyo, Japan, and he took to Instagram to share pictures with both actresses.

Karan wrote a long caption, which read, "This is not a caption. This is a confession. I am singularly obsessed and inspired by the unmatched brilliance of Meryl Streep. In many ways, she has been my guru in the art of acting & portraying characters across cinema! I have watched *The Devil Wears Prada* no less than 47 times. I have quoted it at dinner tables, in edit suites and in board meetings (no kidding!) So when I tell you that standing next to HER & them today, I felt the ground shift, please believe me. I tried very hard to be calm and composed but here's another confession - my knees were RATTLING! (sic)."

The filmmaker further wrote, "They were both so warm and welcoming. This image is going in my will. Stay tuned, there's so much more...because I had a chat with the favourites of the season. OH and one more thing...that's all (sic)."

Photos: X



Rapper Offset shot in Florida

Rapper Offset was shot in Hollywood, Florida, on Monday evening and is currently in stable condition, according to his representative. As per Variety, the incident has prompted an ongoing police investigation, with authorities confirming that the injuries sustained were non-life-threatening. A spokesperson for the artist confirmed the development in a statement, saying, "We can confirm Offset was shot and is currently at the hospital receiving medical care. He is stable and being closely monitored." The rapper is undergoing treatment and remains under observation.

TMKOC fame Disha Vakani's father no more



Actress Disha Vakani, best known for her role as Dayaben in the hit sitcom *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah*, lost her father and veteran actor Bhim Vakani, who passed away in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. The news was confirmed by the show's producer, Asit Kumarr Modi, who shares a close bond with the Vakani family. His cremation will be held in Ahmedabad. Bhim had also appeared in an episode of *Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah* as Mavji Chheda, where he played a close friend of Dayaben's father-in-law, Champaklal Gada.

Raj Kundra breaks silence

As legal troubles continue, businessman Raj Kundra shares cryptic post demanding justice, says he will accept verdict of court

Businessman Raj Kundra has broken his silence amid his ongoing legal troubles. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Kundra shared a strong message stating that he has respected the legal system despite facing media scrutiny and online speculation.

In his post, he wrote that he had remained silent while enduring media trials, speculation and trolling, but now wants the truth to emerge through a fair and final verdict. He also stated that he is ready to face consequences if proven guilty in a court of law.

Kundra further added that until a legal decision is made, he should not be judged by public opinion but by justice.

The businessman, who is married to actress Shilpa Shetty, has often maintained a low profile amid controversies. However, his latest statement signals a more assertive stance as legal proceedings continue.



Photo: Instagram_@onlyrajkundra

WAR INTENSIFIES | Israel, US hit Tehran as war nears end of its fifth week

IRAN STRIKES GULF TARGETS

1st French-linked container ship transits Strait of Hormuz

DUBAI: The CMA CGM Kribi, sailing under a Malta flag and operated by French shipping company CMA CGM, became possibly the first vessel with links to France to pass through the Strait of Hormuz since Iran effectively closed it, according to the MarineTraffic website. The ship departed waters off Dubai on Thursday and arrived Friday off Muscat, Oman, MarineTraffic data showed.

CMA CGM, the world's third-largest container shipping company, declined to comment when contacted by AP.

DUBAI

Iran fired on targets Friday across the Middle East, damaging a desalination plant and setting a refinery ablaze in Kuwait, while American and Israeli airstrikes hit the Islamic Republic as the war neared the end of its fifth week.

Tehran has kept the pressure on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbour, despite US and Israeli insistence that Iran's military capabilities have been all but destroyed.

In a sign that part of Iran's theocracy could be willing to negotiate, the country's former top diplomat published a proposal for ending the conflict in an influential American magazine.

Iran's attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and its tight grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the



A bridge struck by US airstrikes on Thursday is seen in the town of Karaj, west of Tehran, Iran on Friday

world's oil and natural gas transits in peacetime, have rolled stock markets, sent oil prices skyrocketing, and threatened to

raise the cost of many basic goods, including food.

Iran's ability to wreak havoc in the global economy has

proved a major strategic advantage, and world leaders have struggled to figure out how to reopen the waterway.

Pak FM discusses 5-point peace plan with Saudi counterpart

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday spoke with Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and discussed the five-point peace plan proposed by Islamabad and Beijing to end the conflict in West Asia. The peace proposal was put forward on Tuesday after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with Dar, who undertook a one-day visit to Beijing to discuss regional developments. Dar, also the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan, called the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia on the phone to discuss the regional situation, according to a statement by the Foreign Office.

Karachi receives heaviest 24-hr rain

BREAKS 41-YEAR-OLD RECORD



Parts of road submerged after rainfall in Karachi

KARACHI

Pakistan's financial capital Karachi recorded its heaviest 24-hour rainfall starting from Thursday morning, breaking a 41-year-old record, the Pakistan Meteorological Department said Friday.

The biggest city in the country and the capital of the Sindh province, Karachi received 38.6 mm rainfall during the 24 hours from Thursday 10 am, surpassing the previous record of 37.0 millimetres from 1985, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) confirmed.

The current spell of rainfall, under the influence of Western Disturbance weather system, killed at least six people in rain related incidents and left

many others injured.

Most of the deaths were caused by electrocution and walls collapsing in low-lying areas, officials said. The victims included a 12-year-old girl, who was electrocuted inside her home in Surjani Town.

Police and rescue teams reported additional electrocution incidents in PIB Colony, SITE Superhighway, and MA Jinnah Road.

The latest rain spell saw a drop in temperature and led to cooler weather in the city and surrounding areas.

As the authorities tried to restore normalcy on Friday, many areas of Karachi remained deluged and many streets and roads were water logged in the aftermath of the heavy rains and thunderstorms.

Five Indians injured by debris of missiles in Abu Dhabi

Five Indian nationals were injured in Abu Dhabi on Friday by the debris of missiles intercepted by the country's air defence system, local media reported. The authorities confirmed that the incident has resulted in minor to

moderate injuries sustained by six individuals of Nepali nationality and five individuals of Indian nationality, UAE's official news agency, WAM, reported. A Nepali national has also sustained a severe injury, taking the total number of injured to 12, ac-

ording to the Abu Dhabi Media Office.

The UAE air defences on Friday engaged 18 Ballistic missiles, 4 cruise missiles and 47 UAVs launched from Iran, according to the Ministry of Defence of the United Arab Emirates.

WAR SNIPPETS

MINA AL-AHMADI OIL REFINERY HIT BY IRAN

DROKES: Iranian drones struck Kuwait's Mina al-Ahmadi oil refinery on Friday, sparking fires at the facility. The state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corp. issued a statement on the attack and said firefighters were working to control the blazes. There were no injuries reported, the company said. Kuwait operates three oil refineries. Mina al-Ahmadi has come under attack multiple times in the war.

FRANCE, S KOREA AGREE TO COOPERATE ON SAFE

PASSAGE THROUGH HORMUZ: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said Friday he and French President Emmanuel Macron agreed to work together to secure the safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz and mitigate the broad impact from the war in the Middle East. Lee addressed concerns over uncertainties in global energy supply chains following summit talks with Macron.

Russia kills 5 in daytime strikes on Ukraine



Russian soldiers fire a grenade launcher towards Ukrainian positions on an undisclosed location in Ukraine (AP FILE PIC)

KYIV

Russian strikes killed at least five people across Ukraine on Friday, including in a "massive" missile and drone attack near the capital, local authorities reported.

Ukrainian officials claim the Kremlin is changing its tactics to increase civilian suffering, shifting to daytime barrages and preparing to target more key infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signalled Kyiv's openness to a potential Easter truce. The holiday is celebrated on April

12 in both Ukraine and Russia. Zelenskyy also said that Ukraine is preparing for a shift in Russian aerial tactics, with intelligence indicating that future attacks will move beyond energy infrastructure.

In Russia, 192 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight over Russia and occupied Crimea, the Russian Defence Ministry reported on Friday morning.

"The Kyiv region is once again under a massive Russian missile and drone attack," said Mykola Kalashnyk, head of the regional military administration, in a Telegram post on Friday morning.

Russian SU-30 crashes in Crimea, pilots safe

MOSCOW

A Su-30 fighter jet of the Russian Aerospace Force crashed in Crimea on Friday during a routine training flight, according to media reports.

Both pilots ejected safely from the jet, which was unarmed.

"The crew safely bailed out and were evacuated by the ground search and rescue team. There is no threat to the pilots' lives," the RBC business portal reported, quoting a press release issued by the defence ministry.

The Su-30, a highly potent multi-role fighter, was unarmed during the training flight and was flying without ammunition.

The defence ministry, however, did not provide a possible cause or other circumstances of the crash.

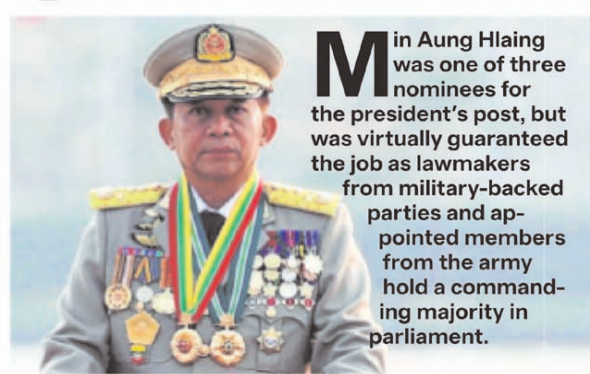
On the evening of March 31, an An-26 military transport plane crashed in Crimea, killing seven crew members and 22 passengers on board.

Myanmar's parliament elects ruling general as Prez

BANGKOK

Myanmar's parliament on Friday elected Min Aung Hlaing, a general who ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government in 2021 and kept an iron grip on power for the past five years, as the country's new president.

The move marks a nominal return to an elected government but is widely considered to be an effort to keep the army in power after an election organised by the military



that opponents and independent observers deemed neither free nor fair. Aung Lin Dwe, speaker of

parliament's combined upper and lower house, announced that Min Aung Hlaing won 429 out of the 584 votes. The two runners-up became vice presidents.

Min Aung Hlaing, who holds the rank of senior general, had earlier relinquished his post of the commander-in-chief because the constitution prohibits the president from simultaneously holding the top military position. A close aide, Gen. Ye Win Oo, took over the powerful job.

The 69-year-old Min Aung

Hlaing had been the military chief since 2011. Under a military-imposed constitution, he held major power even before overthrowing Suu Kyi's government.

Parliament members were elected in three phases in December and January. Major opposition parties, including Suu Kyi's former ruling National League for Democracy, were either blocked from running or refused to compete under conditions they deemed unfair. Suu Kyi has been held in prison.

Five killed after suicide bombing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABAD

At least five people were killed and 13 others, including one police personnel, were injured after a suicide car bomb attack at the Domel Police Station in Bannu district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, local media reported on Friday.

The explosion took place when a vehicle laden with explosives rammed into the rear side of the police station, causing a blast followed by an exchange of gunfire. As per the initial reports, the sentry post of the police station was completely destroyed while a large portion of the building was reduced to rubble due to the blast, daily Dawn reported.

Multiple houses collapsed, and several people were trapped under the debris as the explosion caused severe damage to nearby residential areas. According to Rescue 1122, the injured people were taken to the hospital, where some are reported to be in critical condition.

District Emergency Officer Bakhtullah Wazir said that five people were killed while 13 others were injured, including one police officer. The deceased includes a husband, wife, daughter, and son from the same family.

China investigates former Xinjiang chief

BEIJING

The ruling Communist Party of China's former Xinjiang chief, who is also a member of the influential Politburo, is under investigation over suspected violations of discipline and law, the latest senior official to face scrutiny by the anti-corruption watchdog.

Ma Xingrui has been placed under disciplinary and supervisory investiga-

tion, an official statement said on Friday.

Ma, also deputy head of the Leading Group for Rural Affairs of the CPC, is being investigated by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, an anti-corruption watchdog, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

He is part of the 24-member Politburo, a top decision-making body of the party headed by President Xi Jinping.

Over 9,000 families displaced in Kunar due to Pakistani rocket attacks

KABUL

Over 9,000 families have been forced to leave their homes due to the rocket attacks conducted by Pakistani forces on areas near the Durand Line in Afghanistan's Kunar province, local media reported.

Officials from Kunar's Directorate of Information and Culture said that the survey

process of impacted families is being conducted, with approximately 3,500 families registered so far. Afghanistan-based news outlet Atlas Press reported.

Kunar's Information and Culture Department head Najeebullah Hanif said that clashes continue and several families have been forced to abandon their areas due to security concerns.

Sweden stops sanctioned tanker suspected of causing Baltic oil spill

AP / FRANKFURT (GERMANY)

The Swedish Coast Guard said Friday it has boarded a tanker suspected of causing a 12-kilometre oil spill on the Baltic Sea, adding that the vessel is under European Union sanctions aimed at the "shadow fleet" transporting Russian oil.

The spill was detected early Thursday east of Gotland island, and investigators identified the Flora 1 as the suspected source. The Coast Guard boarded the vessel early Friday and took it and its 24-member crew to anchorage near Ysted in southern Sweden.

"We act when we detect emissions. This is a result of our enhanced maritime surveillance that we are conducting as a result of the deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea region," Daniel Stenling, deputy chief of operations, said in a statement. There were no immediate details on what caused the spill.

It was unclear under what country's flag the vessel was travelling and its destination was unclear, the Coast Guard said. It departed the Russian port of Primorsk, where a major Russian oil export terminal is located, on Tuesday, according to the MarineTraffic maritime data company.

3 Greek ministers quit as EU probes alleged farm subsidy fraud

ATHENS

Three government ministers resigned in Greece on Friday amid a European investigation into alleged European Union farm subsidy fraud.

Agriculture Minister Kostas Tsiras stepped down along with Civil Protection Minister Yiannis Kefalogiannis and Deputy Health Minister Dimitris Vartzopoulos. All denied wrongdoing, saying their resignations were intended to facilitate the investigation.

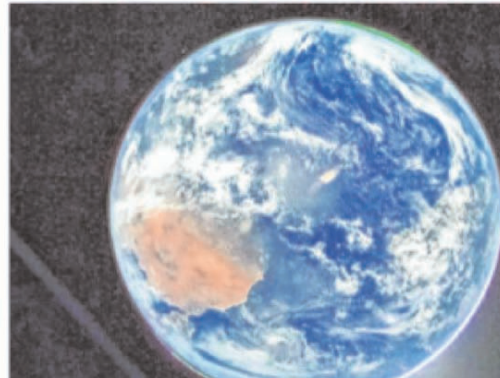
The European Public Prosecutor's Office is seeking immunity waivers for 11

lawmakers in a case that has fuelled public anger in Greece and raised concerns in the farming sector.

The centre-right government quickly reshuffled the Cabinet, appointing former European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas as agriculture minister.

The investigation is led by European chief prosecutor Laura Codruta Kovesi, who visited Athens for talks with government officials last year.

The alleged fraud centres on a Greek state agency that failed to prevent the misuse of EU funds through false claims for land and livestock.



This image provided by NASA shows a view of Earth taken by NASA astronaut and Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman from the Orion spacecraft's window after completing the translunar injection burn on April 2, 2026

Artemis II's stunning Earth view

CAPE CANAVERAL (US)

The Artemis II astronauts have captured our blue planet's brilliant beauty as they zoom ever closer to the moon.

NASA released the crew's first downlinked images Friday, 1 1/2 days into the first astronaut moonshot in more

The second pic shows the entire globe with the oceans topped by swirling white tendrils of clouds

than half a century. The first photo taken by commander Reid Wiseman

shows a curved slice of Earth in one of the capsule's windows.

As of midmorning Friday, Wiseman and his crew were 90,000 miles (145,000 kilometres) from Earth and were quickly gaining on the moon with another 168,000 miles (270,000 kilometres) to go. They should reach their destination on Monday.

The three Americans and one Canadian will swing around the moon in their Orion capsule, hang a U-turn and then head straight back home without stopping.

They fired Orion's main engine Thursday night that set them on their course.

They're the first lunar travellers since Apollo 17 in 1972.

Rain, flash floods ravage Balochistan, seven dead

QUETTA

As many as seven people were killed, and four others injured after rains and flash floods caused widespread devastation in Pakistan's Balochistan, destroying hundreds of homes, livestock and crops, local media reported on Friday.

The floods have severely impacted districts, including Kachhi, Nasirabad, Jhal Magsi, Dera Bugri, Sibi, Harnai, Kohlu, Turbat, Jaffarabad, Loralai, and Bolan.

According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), over 100 houses were destroyed, more than 50 livestock killed, and approximately 400 acres of agricultural land inundated, daily Dawn reported. Around 100 houses were damaged in Harnai and Qila Abdullah, while flood surges blocked the Gandawah-Notal road in Jhal Magsi.

Two people were killed due to lightning strikes in Loralai and Kachhi, while one person died in Kohlu due to a roof collapse, another died due to a wall collapse in Loralai, a child drowned in Jaffarabad, and two people were swept away in Kech.



Game On, India!



Briefs

COLOMBO

Thushara apologises to SLC



In a stunning climbdown, Sri Lankan pacer **Nuwan Thushara** has extended an apology to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) and is considering withdrawing his legal case. Thushara had previously taken the board to court for denying him a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to participate in the IPL. SLC sources said Thushara apologised via email, stating it was not his intention to cause inconvenience. He had initially sought court intervention, claiming unfair treatment after the board declined his request due to failed fitness tests.

NEW DELHI

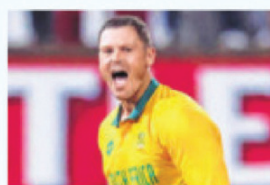
Easy wins for Zeel, Sahaja as India win



India enjoyed a dominant day at the office as **Zeel Desai** secured a straight-sets victory on her Billie Jean King Cup debut against 15-year-old Anuvjin Gantor while Sahaja Yamalappalli followed suit, winning without dropping a game to seal the tie against Mongolia in the Asia/Oceania Group I on Friday. Zeel drubbed her rival 6-0 6-0 in mere 37 minutes before Sahaja Yamalappalli trounced 32-year-old Jargal Altansarai by an identical scoreline in 42 minutes at DLTA Complex.

NEW DELHI

LSG sign Linde as replacement



Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) have signed South Africa all-rounder **George Linde** as a replacement for Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga, who has been ruled out of the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) due to injury. Hasaranga, who was picked up by LSG for Rs 2 crore, has been sidelined with a hamstring injury sustained during Sri Lanka's opening match of the T20 World Cup earlier this year. Linde, a left-handed batting all-rounder who bowls slow left-arm orthodox, brings significant experience in the shortest format.

JUMBO VIEW | Ex-India captain feels the 15-year-old is on the selectors' radar

Kumble backs Sooryavanshi's promotion based on exploits

MUMBAI

Former India captain Anil Kumble has lauded the talent of young batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, suggesting the 15-year-old could represent the national side in the near future. Speaking at a panel discussion organised by Barclays at the Cricket Club of India (CCI), Kumble addressed the critical phase of a player's journey, particularly when they are fast-tracked into elite competition at a tender age.

"I am sure the way he is batting, yes, he will be someone who I am sure the selectors will be watching closely," Kumble said.

He noted that while there is pressure on a young player when people suggest they could play for India within months, Sooryavanshi has time on his side. "Even 10 years later, he will still be 25. That is the best part about someone who is doing so well as a 15-year-old," he added.

Kumble compared the situation to the emergence of Sachin Tendulkar, noting that players often answer the "fast-track" question themselves through their performance. He remarked that every player follows a unique path, with some starting at 15 and others at 28. For Sooryavanshi, Kumble believes the transition could happen as early as this year or within a couple of years.

The legendary leg-spinner also touched upon the decline of inter-university sports, which was once a major stepping stone. He identified the difficulty of balancing education with elite sports when a teenager is already competing at a world-class level.



(R to L) Praveen Kumar, CEO, Barclays Global Services; Robert Lawson, CEO, Marylebone Cricket Club; Anil Kumble, former India captain and coach; Hrishikesh Shende, Managing Director, Premier League India; Suneeta Shetty, COO, Barclays Bank, India during the interaction at the CCI.

"If a 15-year-old is smashing every bowler in the world, it is very difficult to get him to a university saying, 'come on, you need to go there and study' before we put together a team," Kumble said.

He suggested that age-group cricket, particularly the under-19 level and A-tours, has now taken the place of university tournaments as the primary pathway for talent in countries like India, Australia and England.

Kumble also expressed hope for the 2036 Olympics potentially being hosted in India, stating it would provide a massive fillip to non-cricketing sports. He emphasised that the creation of national icons is essential for the younger generation to look up to, similar to how local success stories drive participation in cricket.

Barclays brings global sports partnerships to India

MUMBAI: Barclays reaffirmed its long-term commitment to community development in India by bringing together its global sports partnerships for a leadership discussion and a Grand Showcase tour at the Cricket Club of India (CCI) today.

The discussion brought together Anil Kumble, former India cricketer, Praveen Kumar, CEO, Barclays Global Services, Hrishikesh Shende, Managing Director, Premier League India, and Robert Lawson, CEO, Marylebone

Cricket Club. The conversation explored the power of sport to drive inclusion, social mobility and long-term community impact, while balancing heritage with the responsibility to widen access globally.

The event highlighted how Barclays' long-standing partnerships with global sporting institutions, are helping unlock opportunities, inspiring aspiration and expanding access to sport for young people and communities across key markets such as India.

Speaking at the event,

Praveen Kumar, CEO, Barclays Global Services, said, "Sport is a powerful enabler of aspiration and opportunity. Our partnership with MCC reflects Barclays' belief that access to sport can help build confidence, resilience, and pathways for young people, while strengthening the communities around us. Through our global sports partnerships, we are proud to invest not just in iconic institutions, but in the next generation of talent and in experiences that bring our colleagues closer."

Samson, Gaikwad in focus as CSK seek first win

Five-time champions lock horns with Delhi Capitals at the Chepauk

CHENNAI

The seasoned opening duo of **Sanju Samson** and Rituraj Gaikwad will be under immense pressure to perform as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) extend the search for their first win of the season against Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League (IPL) here on Saturday.

With three losses across three different venues, CSK have begun the season on an uninspiring note. Whether in batting or bowling, significant improvement is needed if they are to compete. The absence of Dewald Brevis has also impacted the balance of the side. The explosive South African batter is expected to make a comeback from injury against Delhi, but there is no clarity over the return of MS Dhoni, who is yet to play this season due to a calf strain.

The opening combination of Samson and Gaikwad needs to come good before the season slips out of reach. In the middle order, Kartik Sharma needs to step up, while Prashant Veer has shown promise in the lower order. The only batter displaying consistency is Sarfaraz Khan, who has a point to prove this year.

The CSK bowlers struggled in their previous outing, leaking 250 runs against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). Barring Khaleel Ahmed, all bowlers conceded 12 runs or more per over.

This will be the second game of the season at Chepauk; earlier on April 3, Punjab Kings chased down 210 comfortably against the hosts.



Squads:

CSK: Rituraj Gaikwad (c), Dewald Brevis, MS Dhoni, Urvil Patel, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ayush Mhatre, Khaleel Ahmed, Nathan Ellis, Gurjapneet Singh, Noor Ahmad, Akeal Hosein, Prashant Veer, Sarfaraz Khan, Matt Henry, Rahul Chahar, Zakary Foulkes, Ramakrishna Ghosh, Mukesh Choudhary, Matthew Short, Aman Khan, Kartik Sharma, Jamie Overton, Shreyas Gopal, Anshul Kamboj

Delhi Capitals: Abhishek Porel, Karun Nair, KL Rahul, Nitish Rana, Sameer Rizvi, Tristan Stubbs, Axar Patel, Ashutosh Sharma, Dushmantha Chameera, Kuldeep Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Tripurana Vijay, David Miller, Ben Duckett, Auqib Nabi Dar, Pathum Nissanka, Lungi Ngidi, Prithvi Shaw, Kyle Jamieson, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Madhav Tiwari, T Natarajan, Sahil Parakh.

CSK take on a Delhi Capitals side hurting from a narrow one-run loss against Gujarat Titans. The Axar Patel-led side knows the importance of momentum in a highly competitive tournament and will be determined to compound CSK's woes.

Sooryavanshi special in the offing as RCB set stiff chase

Rajasthan Royals were 73/1 in five overs, at the time of going to press, after Vaibhav scored another 15-ball 50

GUWAHATI

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi proved once again that he's one for the big league keeping Rajasthan Royals well in the hunt of a stiff 202 blazing his way to a scintillating fifty in just 15 balls against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, here on Friday.

Royals were 73/1 in five overs, at the time of going to press, with Sooryavanshi on a ridiculous 57 off 18 balls with eight fours and four sixes. Dhruv Jurel was on seven batting alongside him while Yashvini Jaiswal was the only wicket to fall for 13.

Earlier, Rajat Patidar delivered a masterclass in calculated counter-offensive even as wickets fell regularly at the other end, guiding Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to 201 for eight against Rajasthan Royals.

Patidar hit four sixes and as many boundaries in his 40-ball 63, which was largely responsible for RCB reaching a challenging score after



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's captain Rajat Patidar plays a shot against Rajasthan Royals. PTI

Scoreboard:

RCB: P Salt c D Jurel b J Archer 0, V Kohli b R Bishnoi 32, D Padikkal c S Hetmyer b J Archer 14, R Patidar c D Ferreira b S Sharma 63, K Pandya c S Hetmyer b R Bishnoi 1, J Sharma lbw b B Sharma 5, T David c S Hetmyer b B Sharma 13, R Shepherd c B Sharma b R Jadeja 22, V Iyer (not out) 29, B Kumar (not out) 9. **Extras** (B-4, LB-2, W-7) 13. **Total** (For 8 wks, 20 overs) 201.

Fall of wickets: 0-1, 45-2, 58-3, 62-4, 76-5, 94-6, 125-7, 166-8. **Bowling:** J Archer 3-0-33-2, N Burger 3-0-32-0, S Sharma 4-0-47-1, R Bishnoi 4-0-32-2, R Jadeja 2-0-14-1, B Sharma 4-0-37-2.

being down and out at 94 for six at one stage.

Patidar nudged and pushed while keeping the scoreboard moving even as several RCB

batters, including Virat Kohli, got out while trying to force the pace. Kohli made 32 off 16 balls before getting out.

Punjab face star-studded yet inconsistent Sunrisers

Shreyas Iyer-led PBKS seek to maintain winning momentum

MULLANPUR

A resilient Punjab Kings (PBKS) will back themselves against a star-studded yet inconsistent Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) here on Saturday. Considering how they have started the season, PBKS must be disappointed about sharing a point with Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in their last game due to rain.

Led by Shreyas Iyer, PBKS have come to symbolise what a winning unit should look like. They have already chased down a 200-plus total with ease against Chennai Super Kings and overcome former champions Gujarat Titans on a tricky Mullanpur surface.

They appeared on course for a third successive win at the Eden Gardens, with Australian quick Xavier Bartlett wreaking havoc, before heavy rain and a thunderstorm forced a points split. **O p e n e r k e e p e r** Prabhsimran Singh, fresh off a 500-plus run breakout season,



Punjab Kings' Marcus Stoinis (right) during training. PTI

said the team is focused on collective success over individual pursuits. This mindset is reflected in Cooper Connolly's unbeaten 72 against Gujarat Titans and Vijaykumar Vyshak's growing impact with the ball.

In contrast, Sunrisers Hyderabad have faltered this season despite their reputation for explosive batting. Top-order collapses have haunted them, notably against RCB and LSG, where the dangerous opening pair of Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma fell cheaply. Adding to their

woes, SRH have seen little impact from the likes of Harshal Patel and Jaydev Unadkat. The batting efforts of Nitish Kumar Reddy and Heinrich Klaasen were among the few positives for SRH against LSG.

Spinner Harsh Dubey has shown glimpses of brilliance in the powerplay and will be expected to carry his form forward. Unadkat, who conceded 50 runs in 23 balls in the last game, will be itching to make amends. The left-arm pacer had the tough task of defending nine runs.

Teams (from):

Punjab Kings: Shreyas Iyer (c), Arshdeep Singh, Priyansh Arya, Pyla Avinash, Azmatullah Omarzai, Xavier Bartlett, Yuzvendra Chahal, Cooper Connolly, Praveen Dube, Ben Dwarshuis, Lockie Ferguson, Harnoor Singh, Harpreet Brar, Marco Jansen, Musheer Khan, Vishal Nishad, Mitchell Owen, Prabhsimran Singh (wk), Shashank Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Suryansh Shedge, Vishnu Vinod, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Nehal Wadhwa, Yash Thakur.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Ishan Kishan (c & wk), Abhishek Sharma, Amit Kumar, Sali Arora, Brydon Carse, Pat Cummins, Harsh Dubey, Kraigs Fuleira, Travis Head, Praful Hinge, Heinrich Klaasen, Liam Livingstone, Eshan Malinga, Kamindu Mendis, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harshal Patel, David Payne, Sakib Hussain, Shivam Mavi, Shivang Kumar, Ravichandran Smaran, Onkar Tarmale, Jaydev Unadkat, Aniket Verma, Zeeshan Ansari.

luck stops here

Pant must take responsibility to help LSG win: Kaif

NEW DELHI

Former India cricketer Mohammed Kaif has criticised Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) captain Rishabh Pant despite the team's win over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), stating the keeper-batter must improve his game awareness and take more responsibility for consistent results.

Despite Pant's underwhelming knock of 10 runs and a poor top-order performance, LSG managed to win a

last-ball thriller by three wickets in Kolkata on Thursday, thanks to Mukul Choudhary's six-filled half-century from a difficult situation. Pant has been patchy, scoring two below-par scores on either side of a half-century in his three games so far.

Kaif pointed out the inconsistency, noting that an experienced player should strive to bat through the chase. "...the team needed him to stay till the end," Kaif said on Star Sports. "He is an experienced player, having

been in the IPL since 2016. The situation when he came out to bat was not particularly difficult. LSG had already scored 41 in the first five overs. One batter needed to take responsibility and bat through the chase. That role was meant for Pant."

Kaif added that as captain, failing to take responsibility hinders the team's prospects. "Yes, he did well against SRH, but he needs to find consistency. He has to read the match situation better and learn when to shift

gears," he said. India legend Sunil Gavaskar observed that LSG are winning this season despite underwhelming performances from their main players. "They were in a tough spot, but sealed a miraculous win with the help of their youngsters. Mitchell Marsh didn't score many runs, Aiden Markram made only 22, Pant and Pooran also failed to get going," Gavaskar said.

He expressed concern over Nicholas Pooran's form, noting the West Indian

cricketer "looked lost" and out of touch against KKR. However, Gavaskar highlighted the positive side, noting that LSG now know their young players, like Choudhary, are capable of pulling off a heist.

"Unbelievable innings by this fearless prodigy, Mukul Choudhary. This guy is a young kid who bats at number five for Rajasthan in domestic T20 cricket. He just comes into the IPL, plays an unbelievable innings and makes everyone talk about him," Gavaskar added.



Lucknow Super Giants' skipper Rishabh Pant walks back to the pavilion after losing his wicket. —ANI