

Myriad hurdles impede course of justice

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana was rather critical of our justice delivery system in his speech on a public platform last week. He is reported to have said that an average citizen is apprehensive about approaching courts, fearing the unknown. Concerns have been raised about delays, pendency, accessibility, deficient infrastructure, a large number of vacancies, (lack of) transparency in legal proceedings, an ill-equipped criminal justice system and an increasing count of false cases. That's quite a handful of problems faced by our justice delivery system. It begs the question: What is being done to tackle the citizen's apprehension about approaching courts and what is being done to address the problems pointed out by the ex-CJI? It is a matter of common knowledge, and this can easily be verified from the National Judicial Data Grid, that the number of cases pending in the district courts and high courts across the country has crossed a staggering 5.1 crore, with a few lakh cases pending for more than 20 years. This is shameful and was sarcastically described as inter-generational justice. There are several alternatives that are available for managing the caseload, but, unfortunately, there does not seem to be any will to do so. For example, petty criminal cases can be resolved through plea bargaining, a mechanism that is available in our criminal procedure. Civil cases, including some complicated ones, can be resolved through mediation, as recognised by our civil procedure. Parliament enacted the Mediation Act in 2023, but the Mediation Council has not yet been established. A law to establish Gram Nyayalayas was enacted in 2008, but 17 years down the line, it has not been fully implemented across the country. A few hundred Gram Nyayalayas have been established, but almost half of them are non-functional. Unless we implement the laws enacted by Parliament in their true spirit, the problem of a large number of pending cases will continue until the justice delivery system collapses under the weight of the caseload.

Judges' posts lying vacant is another perennial problem. It is estimated that the number of vacant positions in high courts is about 30 per cent, while the number in district courts is about 22 per cent. Why is it so difficult to fill these vacancies? It is not that there is a shortage of qualified lawyers, but again the will to fill vacant posts is missing. Anecdotal evidence suggests that lawyers are not inclined to become judges because the salary is somewhat inadequate and there are pressures such as the possibility of a sudden transfer from the place of work, frivolous complaints being filed against judges with a view to demoralise them and so on. These issues require serious consideration; otherwise, a time will come when it will be difficult to appoint qualified lawyers as judges. The large percentage of vacancies is not a new phenomenon — it has been continuing for several years and will persist unless the decision-makers get their act together and fill the vacancies with well-qualified lawyers by improving their service conditions. Infrastructure has always been a huge problem for the judiciary. In some states, if the full complement of judges is appointed, there will be no room for them to hold court or the space would be inadequate, adding to their inconvenience. Having visited district courts in several states across the country, I can confidently state that there is a lot that needs to be done to upgrade infrastructural facilities. While there is a massive move to improve infrastructure across the country in terms of roads, buildings and so on, there is hardly any movement to make courts better, except in large cities. This needs to change, and change urgently. One of the problems facing the justice delivery system, generally, is the absence of adequate budgetary allocation. A study conducted by the India Justice Report points out that the allocation is less than 1 per cent of the state's budget. It is well known that a large amount of the budgetary allocation goes on payment of salaries. There is hardly anything left for improving infrastructure, not only in terms of buildings but also in terms of facilities for the litigants such as chairs in the courtroom and provision of services related to litigation.

It's time natural and regenerative farm practices were revived

The government must mainstream natural, organic and regenerative farming to realise food and ecological security.

The National Food Security Act (NFSA) in India states that the right to food must be implemented to guarantee food to the needy people at affordable prices. Thus, food security is of great concern to India. With its population, currently at 143 crore, which is likely to expand to 160 crore by the 2060s, food security will remain the one of the top policy agendas. One way to fulfil this demand is to further intensify agriculture, which is already under pressure due to a substantial decline in fertiliser efficiency, deteriorating soil health, climate change and over-exploitation of water resources. According to a recent Food and Agriculture Organisation report, intensive agriculture is causing huge economic damage globally. The social, health and environmental cost of intensive agriculture and associated food systems in India is estimated to be a Rs 113 lakh crore (\$1.3 trillion) annually. The other approach is to examine alternative systems that have been part of the agriculture and farming communities since the pre-modern agricultural period, modify them using science-based agro-ecological principles, examine their feasibility and upscale them to secure the future of sustainable farming. This will ensure food and ecological security by improving farm productivity and farmers' profitability, protecting natural resources and improving soil health and biodiversity. Indian agriculture must widen its vision. It should not just rely on intensive agricultural practices through input subsidies, which started in the 1960s during the Green Revolution and are causing damage to society and planetary health. It must mainstream natural, organic and regenerative farming to realise food and ecological security. Currently, a fraction of the farmers practise natural, organic or regenerative farming. The time is right to understand and evaluate these different systems so that the agricultural landscape can be diversified, strengthened and made future-proof.

It is not widely recognised that natural farming originated in India. This was noted by Sir Albert Howard, an imperial economic botanist and director of the Institute of Plant Industry, Indore, during his service between 1905 and 1931 in India. It was also known as the Indore process. Sir Howard described natural farming as a system that follows the cycles of nature to produce food. It aims to produce food holistically by maintaining a balance between crop and soil health and focusses on the well-being of farmers and consumers. Sir Howard

formalised the principles of natural farming. Today, less than one million hectares are under natural farming, practised by about 2.2 million farmers, predominantly small farmers. Ironically, intensive farm practices were adopted in the 1960s, overlooking the sustainable practices that were locally developed and embedded for centuries. The principles of natural farming also inspired Lady Eve Balfour and Jerome Rodale as they pioneered organic farming movements in the UK and the USA respectively in the mid-20th century. The term natural farming 1979 onwards was re-popularised by Japanese farmer and philosopher Masanobu Fukuoka as the science of growing food naturally.

In India, with its centuries-old practice of natural farming



was popularised by Subhash Palekar, who initiated the movement for zero-budget natural farming around the turn of the century. Organic farming prohibits synthetic inputs, such as chemical fertilisers, genetically modified seeds, growth hormones and antibiotics. The organic movement began in the early 20th century. Organic food is grown using the principles primarily based on standards advocated by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). The IFOAM-Organics International works in over 100 countries. In India, about 2.7 million hectares are under certified organic farming. It is an extension of natural farming, but comes with a third-party certification of authenticity and, hence, a price premium in the market. Food produced using natural farming does not require certification. The term regenerative farming was coined

by the Rodale Institute, USA, in 1980 and has become popular during the last five years. However, the practices of regenerative farming existed long before, as Sir Howard founded them in the early 20th century in India. It is defined as the system of food production that promotes the judicious use of inputs, promotes farmers' well-being and focusses on improving human and soil health. It aims to conserve resources and provide a rehabilitation approach to producing food by improving soil, land, water and biodiversity. These farming systems originated in India when Sir Albert Howard described the local, sustainable farming systems as natural farming systems. Comparing and contrasting these systems allows us to conclude that regenerative and natural farming are highly productive systems, with better social and ecological outcomes.

These systems are being adopted in farms worldwide. They can offer millions of farmers in India an alternative to improving climate resilience and increasing their incomes while producing enough food required for the nation's food security. Organic farming, which is distinguishable from local inputs-based natural farming, is often co-related with high consumer prices. It has its place with conscious consumers who have the buying power and support a responsible food production system.

As much of the agricultural land in India is under intensive agricultural practices, there is a need to re-examine the role of natural, regenerative farming across all agro-climatic zones. An appropriately diversified approach can be adopted based on the geography and social and ecological conditions. This will help achieve a rapid uptake of natural or regenerative farming practices and enable agricultural diversification and adoption of sustainable and equitable farming systems.

The recently launched National Mission on Natural Farming by the Government of India is a step in this direction. The government has set the goal of adoption of natural farming by 10 million small farmers by 2026. Once it is achieved and replicated at scale, it will improve the livelihoods of millions of farmers and enhance the climate resilience of farms. Millions of consumers will have access to food grown responsibly and free from harmful chemicals. Following such policies, India must redesign its agriculture with a clear strategy to mainstream natural, organic and regenerative farming to secure its food and ecological and nutritional security.

Catching the rain

Bold steps needed for its enforcement

The relentless depletion of groundwater in Punjab and Haryana has reached alarming levels. Years of unchecked extraction, intensive irrigation for water-guzzling crops and inadequate conservation measures have left the water table in a free fall. The launch of Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain-2025 from Haryana on World Water Day underscores the urgency of reversing this crisis. While symbolic initiatives are welcome, firm and sustained policies are needed to integrate rainwater harvesting into its water management strategy. Punjab and Haryana have seen groundwater levels plummet due to over-reliance on borewells and canal irrigation. Studies indicate that wells in some parts of the region are witnessing an annual water table decline of over a metre, with desertification looming. Yet, rainwater harvesting adoption remains sluggish. It is plagued by financial constraints, bureaucratic red tape and a lack of awareness. Regulatory hurdles, complex approval processes and inconsistent enforcement of



rainwater harvesting mandates further deter its widespread implementation. To combat this, Haryana's Mukhyamantri Jal Sanchay Yojana and initiatives like

the Integrated Water Resource Action Plan (2025-27) must go beyond tokenism. A clear roadmap, backed by financial incentives and technological innovation, is crucial. Property tax rebates for households implementing rainwater harvesting, as seen in Indore, should be replicated across north India. Additionally, urban planning must integrate rainwater harvesting into building codes, ensuring that new developments contribute to groundwater recharge. Rural outreach is equally vital. Equip farmers with knowledge of efficient irrigation techniques to reduce their dependence on groundwater. Solar-powered micro-irrigation projects, as launched in Haryana, should be expanded to Punjab. Moreover, reviving traditional water bodies and desilting village ponds can aid in water retention and percolation. Water scarcity is no longer a distant threat — it is a present crisis.

IPKF martyrs must be properly honoured

Why are the IPKF martyrs not being officially recognised and properly honoured and its veterans only allowed a silent felicitation? The reason is politics.

Today (March 24) is the 35th anniversary of the return of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) from its mission in Sri Lanka (Operation Pawan). It was India's first expeditionary force designed to end the ethnic conflict in the Emerald Isle, following the India-Sri Lanka Accord (ISLA) of July 29, 1987 — the date Op Pawan, the military component of the

ISLA, commenced.

Change of governments in both Sri Lanka and India resulted in double jeopardy: recall of the IPKF without being permitted to complete its mission. While the IPKF achieved a number of its military objectives in a brief 32 months, the political and diplomatic tracks failed to keep up. As many as 1,157 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives and 3,009 of all ranks were wounded to maintain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka built a memorial for the IPKF in Colombo; one was already there in Jaffna. At both memorials, on India's Republic and Independence Days, commemoration ceremonies are jointly held by Indian and Sri Lankan government officials. In January 2025, the Sri Lankan Army Chief, Lt Gen Lasantha Rodrigo, laid a wreath at the Jaffna memorial. Each time Indian dignitaries, including PM Narendra Modi, visit Colombo, they lay a wreath at the IPKF memorial.

But none of this happens at the National War Memorial (NWM), Delhi. Today, some 150 Op Pawan veterans and their families will gather at the NWM for an Army HQ-designated 'silent felicitation'. Silent means no playing of the Last Post and Rouse by bugles to honour the martyrs, making the ceremony incomplete. Adjutant General's letter of January 14, 2025, says: "No felicitation ceremony will be permitted during conduct of above event." This is, therefore, a private event organised by the IPKF veterans who have been fighting protracted battles with the military bureaucracy and the MoD for the last four years, involving three Army Chiefs — Generals Naravane, Pande and Dwivedi. The first two Generals are IPKF veterans. Letters written to the PM,



the Raksha Mantri and the Military Adviser to RM have elicited no joy. A typical bureaucratic reply from the Integrated Defence Staff of the MoD received on October 17, 2024 reads: "The IPKF's case for official recognition is under active consideration. The case for earmarking a day for commemoration of Op Pawan was deliberated by a tri-service committee in detail which decided to maintain status quo." The IPKF veterans saw a sliver of hope when the Army Chief, General Dwivedi, in an interview with ANI in February, mentioned with high emotion the LTTE ambush of 13 Sikh LI in Jaffna, when the company was wiped out; only one soldier was spared to tell the story.

Appeals made by the Indian Ex-servicemen Memorial League and senior officers for the official recognition of the IPKF have fallen on deaf ears. The NWM in Delhi is conspicuously incomplete in documenting the synopses of wars and skirmishes fought since 1947. Only two

actions — Kargil 1999 (Op Vijay) and India-China Border Conflict 1962 — are inscribed on Rajasthan stone markers. On top of the Op Vijay marker, Op Pawan is inscribed, with two arrows pointing in opposite directions. But there is no Op Pawan marker or any other marker. This lapse must be corrected.

Last year in Dehradun, CDS Gen Anil Chauhan told IPKF veterans: "We have fought hundreds of operations; Op Pawan was only a minor operation." By no stretch of imagination can Op Pawan be called 'minor'. It was the longest, intensely fought campaign, where the IPKF suffered heavy casualties. Equally, it won several gallantry awards — UYSM, one; PVC, one; MVC, three; VrC 98; and 250 other bravery medals. The last of the IPKF left Sri Lanka on board INS Magar from the Trincomalee harbour and arrived in Chennai (then Madras) on March 24, 1990. It was welcomed with banners bearing the ITKF (the Indian Tamil Killing

Force). As the then PM VP Singh could not come to Madras to welcome the IPKF, they were flown in IL76 to Palam to be felicitated by him.

Those were difficult days, with Kashmir and Khalistan uprisings at their peak. The IPKF was quickly sucked in to counter them. The official recognition of Op Pawan was put on the back burner; so also, the After Action Report and Lessons Learnt. The report has not been declassified.

Why are the IPKF martyrs not being officially recognised and properly honoured and its veterans only allowed a silent felicitation? The reason is politics. When the IPKF returned from Sri Lanka, a DMK government was in power in Tamil Nadu and a part of the coalition at the Centre. When the LTTE was defeated in 2009, the DMK was again in power. The domestic Tamil factor weighed heavily in India's Sri Lanka policy due to the DMK having 29 MPs in the UPA government. Today, the ruling BJP is desperate to breach the DMK's cordon sanitaire in the south and secure a toehold after the 2026 elections. It is doing everything to win over the Tamils, in Singapore, Jaffna and south India. In January, the Jaffna Cultural Centre was renamed Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre after the Tamil Nadu author of the legendary treatise, Kural. Jaffna Tamils objected to this. A compromise name was found: Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre Jaffna.

The DMK apparently has not softened towards the IPKF. On November 25, 2024, Lt Gen KS Brar, GOC Dakshin Bharat Area, organised a Bravery Day commemoration in Chennai to honour, among others, a PVC winner in Sri Lanka, Maj P Rameshwaran, from Tamil Nadu. Chief Minister Stalin, who was invited as chief guest, neither accepted nor declined the invitation but did a no-show. The DMK's hypocrisy during the last phase of the war in Sri Lanka is well known. For the time being, the IPKF will have to be content with a silent and unofficial commemoration. Abridging the commemoration protocol by not sounding the Last Post and Rouse is a big disservice to the IPKF martyrs.

Air India staff to fly economy as airline tackles passenger concerns: Report

New Delhi. Air India has mandated that all its staff, including senior management, will have to travel in economy class from April 1, reported The Times of India. The airline has made the decision to free up premium seats for paying customers. Employees will only be allowed to upgrade to premium economy or business class if those seats remain unsold 50 minutes before departure, added the report. The move is part of Air India's effort to improve its service and customer experience, following criticism over frequent flight delays. A spokesperson for Air India said the change was aimed at ensuring that premium seats, which are in high demand, are available for customers first. The airline wants to build a strong customer-first approach under its new management.

India's aviation market is one of the fastest-growing in the world, with domestic air travel increasing by 10-12% annually over the past decade, according to government data. With more people choosing to fly, airlines are under pressure to ensure better service and availability of seats. Air India, formerly a state-owned airline, was taken over by the Tata Group in 2022. Since then, the airline has been undergoing a major transformation. Last year, it merged with Vistara, a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

The airline has already spent billions of dollars on its turnaround plan. This includes ordering new aircraft, rebranding with a new logo, and upgrading interiors for over half of its fleet. The latest decision to keep premium seats available for paying passengers is another step in Air India's strategy to enhance its image and efficiency.

What is Google tax that India is likely to scrap from April 1

New Delhi. Donald Trump's tariff threats have forced many countries to rethink their policies, and India is no exception. The tariff threats have led to changes in policies, and the latest in line is the government's move to scrap the 6% 'Google Tax'. India is likely to remove the 6% equalisation levy, often called the "Google tax," on online advertising services provided by foreign tech companies like Google and Meta. The tax will be scrapped from April 1, 2025, as part of amendments to the Finance Bill, reported news agency Reuters. "This levy, introduced in 2016, was specifically designed to ensure that foreign digital service providers generating significant revenues from the Indian market contributed their fair share to the exchequer, despite not having a physical presence in India," said Tushar Kumar, Advocate, Supreme Court of India. He explained that its primary objective was to level the playing field between domestic entities, which were subject to income tax, and foreign technology conglomerates, which operated through digital platforms without a tax nexus under conventional international tax principles.

WHY IS INDIA REMOVING GOOGLE TAX?

"The removal of this levy marks a shift in India's digital taxation framework and is perceived as a strategic move to ease trade frictions with the United States, which had persistently objected to the tax as being discriminatory against American technology giants such as Google and Meta," said Kumar. In the past, this levy placed an additional financial burden on foreign digital companies by requiring them to withhold and remit a 6% tax on revenues earned from online advertising services provided to Indian businesses. "Consequently, these costs were often passed on to advertisers, thereby increasing digital marketing expenses for Indian enterprises.

Bank FD: These special schemes are set to end on March 31; suitable for you

Kolkata. Over the past few years, fixed tenure fixed deposits have been increasingly launched by banks with slightly higher rate of interest to attract depositors. About half a dozen such FD schemes are coming to an end at the end of FY25. Therefore, the deadline to take advantage of these higher rates of interest is March 31, 2025, which is only seven days away. Significantly, despite the much higher returns by equities and mutual fund and even precious metals such as gold and silver (especially as demonstrated in 2025 by the two metals), a large section of Indians repose a lot of trust on bank FDs. Personal investment strategists too recommend that a part of any portfolio should consist of fixed-income securities, a space in which FDs have prominent presence. All those who are risk-averse (such as retirees, senior citizens) park a large share of their funds into FDs. Let's have a look which are the bank FDs that are coming to a close on March 31, 2025. State Bank of India FD

Two of the FDs that are coming to a close on March 31, 2025 are from India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI). SBI Amrit Vrishti is an FD with a maturity period of 444 days and it pays 7.25% rate of interest for general customers and 7.75% for senior citizens. The other fixed tenure FD from SBI is Amrit Kalash, which has a maturity period of 400 days and offers 7.10% for general customers and 7.60% for senior citizens. This special FD scheme, too, in ending on March 31, 2025. HDFC Bank FD India's biggest private sector lender, HDFC Bank, has a special FD that offers a rate of 7.35% to general depositors and 7.85%. This special FD has a fixed tenure of 35 months. Indian Bank FDs PSU lender Indian Bank has special FD schemes that are called IND Supreme 300 Days and IND Super 400 Days. These schemes offer preferential interest rates — the peak rate being 8.05% for super senior citizens (those above 80 years). These schemes are also coming to an end on March 31, 2025. Punjab and Sindh Bank special FDPunjab and Sindh Bank's has a few FDs with fixed tenures. These come with maturity periods of 333 days (interest rate 7.20% for general customers, 7.70% for senior citizens), 444 days (7.30% and 7.80%), 555 days (7.45% and 7.95%), 777 days (7.20% and 7.70%) and 999 days (6.65% and 7.15%). These schemes will be available till March 31, 2025.

Govt proposes abolition of 6% equalisation levy

This is a significant move in the context of the ongoing Indo-US bilateral trade talks, and the imminent threat of reciprocal tax, which is likely to come into force from 2 April, 2025.

New Delhi. The government has proposed the abolition of the 6% Equalisation Levy on online advertising in the Finance Bill 2025, reducing the tax burden on digital ad consumers and lowering costs on platforms like Google and Meta. If passed in parliament, the 6% Equalisation Levy would cease to exist from 1 April 2025.

This is a significant move in the context of the ongoing Indo-US bilateral trade talks, and the imminent threat of reciprocal tax, which is likely to come into force from 2nd April, 2025. The US government has

always termed the digital taxes levied by India as discriminatory, targeting mainly tech giants from the US. Last year, the government had scrapped a similar levy of 2% on digital e-commerce supplies and services. The latest announcement by the government is, therefore, construed as an attempt by the government to appease the Donald Trump administration. This change would now reduce the costs for digital ad consumers, while lowering tax costs for digital advertising platforms such as Google and Meta, says Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, M&A Tax Partner at Nangia Andersen. "Consequently, the corresponding income tax exemption under Section 10(50) has been withdrawn to maintain tax neutrality, meaning income previously exempt under the Equalisation Levy regime will now be taxed under regular income tax provisions," he added.

The government introduced the 6% Equalisation Levy in 2016. The removal of the levy is seen as a move

towards aligning with the uniform tax rules under two pillar solutions proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Currently, digital companies based outside the tax jurisdiction of a country escape paying taxes on revenue earned from that country. Pillar 1 of the OECD

undertaken by governments around the globe in last several years to deal with growing tax challenges of digitalisation of economies have to be steadily wound back, to make way for uniform tax rules under two pillar solutions espoused by OECD," says Sumit Singhanian, Partner, Deloitte India. The other major change proposed by the amendment in the Finance Bill is a clarification which says where 25% presumptive income regime for electronics manufacturing is available, exemptions under Sections 44DA and 115A will not apply in such cases.

An amendment now empowers the Centralised Processing Centre (CPC) to adjust income tax returns based on inconsistencies with prior-year filings, strengthening the compliance oversight. "By enabling automated checks for discrepancies, this measure is expected to enhance tax monitoring and reduce instances of tax evasion and misreporting," says Sandeep Jhunjhunwala of Nangia Andersen.



tax rules require multinationals including digital companies to pay at least some tax in the markets they interact with. "Even from an international tax policy standpoint, most of unilateral measures

Sensex, Nifty open in green as FIIs return on Dalal Street; IT stocks gain

New Delhi. Benchmark stock market indices opened on a positive note on Tuesday, extending their rally for the seventh consecutive session. At the opening bell, the S&P BSE Sensex gained 350 points to open over 78,000, while the NSE Nifty50 gained nearly 100 points to trade above 23,750.

At around 9:25 am, both the indices shed some early gains. The Sensex was trading 177.26 points higher at 78,161.64, while the Nifty50 was trading 55.20 points higher at 23,697.30. Broader market indices were also mixed in early trade, signalling that some investors may be booking profits after the recent rally.

Most of the Nifty sectoral indices came under pressure after opening higher, with the IT index being the only exception. The Nifty IT index was up 1.15%, with shares of TCS, Infosys, HCLTech and Wipro rising over 1%. The jump in IT stocks is one of the biggest factors behind the early morning gains on Dalal Street as all other sectors seem to be under pressure. On the other hand, the top

losers on the Nifty50 were Dr Reddy's, Hindalco, Shriram Finance, IndusInd Bank and Bajaj Auto. Given the early trends, the benchmark indices could witness volatility during intraday trade. However, analysts have turned bullish



about the stock market due to several positive factors, including optimism over strong earnings performance in Q4FY25. The only concern that remains is uncertainty over US reciprocal tariffs. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "The 5.6% rally in the Nifty from the recent lows

has been driven by a combination of factors like FIIs turning buyers (Rs 13,765 crores in the last three days), the consequent short-covering and improving macros of the Indian economy." "The surge in mid-and smallcaps has brought the retail investors aggressively back into the market. Even though the market momentum favours the bulls there is no fundamental support to take the market much higher from the present levels, particularly when President Trump's Damocles sword of reciprocal tariff is hanging over the head of markets," he added. "IT has been underperforming on fears of US growth slowdown impacting the Indian IT industry. The risk-reward in IT stocks is now favourable for buyers. Trump's latest message that he will be "flexible" on tariffs and will "give breaks to many countries" has aroused hopes on some softer treatment to India. But we will have to wait till April 2nd," Vijayakumar explained.

Advance Tax on Property Sale Before March 31, 2025: A Complete Guide

New Delhi. If you are selling a property, for example a residential flat before March 31, 2025, then you will have to pay capital gains tax in the form of advance tax by the last day of the current month. In this article, let's understand how the tax will be structured. If an individual sells property in the upcoming financial year, i.e., 2025-26, then let's see how the seller would pay the advance tax.

Capital gains tax and advance tax rules
If a person (below 60 years of age) is selling a flat in March 2025 and its payment will be made in installments – For example, the first installment will be received in March 2024-25, the second installment after the change of financial year i.e. in April 2025-26, then advance tax rules will be applicable on the individual.

Property sale: What is the rule for advance tax payment? If the tax liability in a financial year is more than Rs 10,000, then it is mandatory for the taxpayer to pay advance tax. Let's see when does it have to be paid: y 15 June: Up to 15% payment

By 15 September: Up to 45% payment
By 15 December: Up to 75% payment
By 15 March: 100% payment

Capital gains tax is required to be paid in the same financial year in which the property is transferred,



even if the payment is received later.
Date of property transfer
There is no clear rule as to when the property needs to be transferred when the selling is done. There are different rules in parts of the country related to the date of transfer – Some consider the date of agreement as the date of transfer, some record the date of sale deed, some consider the date of registration and some the date of handing over the actual possession of the property. Deadline for paying advance tax If the official date recorded for the transfer of property is March 15, 2025, then the advance tax will have to be paid by March 15 in 2024-25 itself. If the sale takes place between March 16 and March 31, 2025, then the entire advance tax will have to be paid by March 31, 2025. If the official records state that the property is transferred in FY 2025-26, then capital gains tax will also have to be paid as per the advance tax schedule of FY 2025-26.

INR vs Dollar: Rupee recovers 2025 losses; FIIs tiptoe back into Indian market

New Delhi. Rising for the seventh straight session, the rupee appreciated 37 paise to close at 85.61 against the US dollar on Monday, wiping off all its losses in 2025, supported by a positive trend in domestic equity markets and fresh foreign capital inflows. Besides, lower global crude price levels and continuing weakness in the greenback also bolstered sentiments, traders said. However, lurking risks — ranging from liquidity constraints to reciprocal tariff implementations — continue to pose challenges for the local unit, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.93, then touched an intraday high of 85.49 and a low of 86.01 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.61, registering a gain of 37 paise from its previous closing level. On Friday, the rupee appreciated 38 paise to close at 85.98 against the US dollar. This is the seventh straight session of gain for the rupee, during which it has

added 154 paise. The local unit has recovered all its losses for 2025. On December 31, 2024, the rupee closed at 85.64 against the greenback. The local currency hit its record low of 87.59 against the US dollar last month. "The Indian rupee recouped yearly losses as foreign banks and exporters sold the dollars ahead of the financial year-end adjustment, while state-level banks remained aside from buying amid the RBI's USD/INR swap," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said. Parmar further noted that the sentiments turned positive ahead of the US representative visiting India ahead of April 2, reciprocal tariff implementations. Moreover, the foreign funds buying in domestic equities also well supported the rupee. In the near term, the spot USD/INR is having support at 85.20 and resistance at 86.05, he noted. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket

of six currencies, was trading 0.09 per cent lower at 103.99. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.54 per cent to USD 72.55 per barrel in futures trade. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 1078.87 points, or 1.40 per cent, to settle at 77,984.38, while the Nifty advanced 307.95 points, or 1.32 per cent, to close at 23,658.35 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) purchased equities worth Rs 3,055.76 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves increased by USD 305 million to USD 654.271 billion during the week ended March 14, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves rose by USD 15,267 billion to USD 653,966 billion and registered the sharpest weekly rise in two years. The spike in foreign reserves was partly attributed to the USD 10 billion forex swap done by the Reserve Bank of India.

India likely to remove 6% Google tax from April 1, tech giants to benefit

NEW DELHI. India is likely to remove the 6% equalisation levy, often called the "Google tax," on online advertising services provided by foreign tech companies like Google and Meta. The tax will be scrapped from April 1, 2025, as part of amendments to the Finance Bill, reported news agency Reuters.

This move comes amid efforts to improve trade relations with the US, which had previously criticised the levy and threatened retaliatory tariffs. The removal of the tax is expected to benefit tech companies, advertisers, and India's digital economy.

WHAT IS THE GOOGLE TAX?

The Equalisation Levy was introduced in 2016 to tax payments made by Indian businesses to foreign companies for digital advertising services.

It was aimed at ensuring that global tech firms, which earn significant revenue from Indian users but do not have a physical presence in the country, contribute to India's tax system.

Initially set at 6% for online advertising services, the levy was later expanded in 2020 to include a 2% tax on all e-commerce companies with annual

business exceeding Rs 2 crore in India. The 2% levy was withdrawn last year following an agreement between India and the US. Now, the government plans to remove the original 6% tax as well.

WHY IS THE GOVERNMENT REMOVING IT?

The decision to remove the tax is part of India's negotiations with the US to avoid trade conflicts. In the past, the US had threatened to impose tariffs of up to 25% on Indian products such as shrimp, basmati rice, and jewellery in response to the equalisation levy. Experts believe the tax removal will help improve India-US relations and prevent any future trade disputes. Some countries, including the UK, are also considering withdrawing similar digital taxes to avoid tensions with the US. "Removal of the equalisation levy is a smart move by the government, as collections weren't very high, and it was a concern for the US administration," Sudhir Kapadia, senior advisor at EY told Reuters. **HOW WILL TECH GIANTS BENEFIT?**

The removal of the Google tax is expected to provide multiple advantages to global

tech firms operating in India: Lower advertising Costs – With the 6% tax gone, advertising on platforms like Google and Meta will become cheaper for Indian businesses, encouraging more digital ad



spending. Higher profit margins – Tech giants will no longer have to account for the levy in their pricing, improving their profitability. More advertisers on digital platforms – Lower costs could attract more advertisers, boosting revenues for digital platforms. Better trade relations – India's move may prevent the US from imposing retaliatory tariffs, ensuring a stable trade environment for multinational companies.

IMPACT ON INDIA'S DIGITAL ECONOMY

The decision to remove the tax is expected to encourage more foreign investment in India's digital sector. By lowering costs for advertisers, it could also lead to higher spending on online platforms, benefiting businesses that rely on digital marketing.

Additionally, the government proposed removing certain tax exemptions available to foreign tech companies in place of the equalisation levy. This means that while the levy will be scrapped, companies may still be taxed under other provisions. **CHANGES TO OFFSHORE FUNDS RULES**

Apart from scrapping the equalisation levy, the Finance Bill also proposes changes to offshore fund management rules. A key amendment removes the word "indirectly" from a provision that restricted Indian residents from participating in offshore funds. This change is aimed at making it easier for offshore funds to relocate to India.

Shiv Sena's Rahool Kanal hits back at Kunal Kamra, says try to be funny next time

Last week, Kamra referred to Shinde as a "gaddar" (traitor) while performing a parody of a song from the film Dil Toh Pagal Hai at the Habitat Comedy Club.

New Delhi. Hours after comedian Kunal Kamra's response defending his "traitor" jab at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Shiv Sena worker Rahool Kanal hit back, stating that freedom of speech does not mean talking "crap about a leader on a constitutional post." Taking a jibe at Kamra, the Shiv Sena sarcastically advised him to "try to be funny next time." In a post on X, Kanal wrote, "Come out and face the law. A Shivsainik is also a Mumbaier, and you very well know that.

When you slip or do a paid activity next time, try to be funny but don't crack bones. Jab substance se neend uthe toh voicemail aur bed se bahar aayege. Burnol bheju? Freedom of speech in the Constitution doesn't give you the freedom to talk crap about a leader or a respected individual on a constitutional post. Rise up and get constructive. Your statement itself says that you want to spoil law and order. The law is above all! Satyameva Jayate!" He concluded his post with the words "paid agent" along with a hashtag.

COMEDIAN REFUSES TO APOLOGIZE

Comedian Kunal Kamra has made it clear that he will not apologise for his remark on Eknath Shinde. He also condemned the "senseless" vandalism carried out by Shiv Sena workers at the venue where his show was held.

In a lengthy post on X, Kamra sarcastically stated that for his next show, he might choose a venue that requires urgent demolition. Last week, Kamra referred to Shinde as a "gaddar" (traitor) while



performing a parody of a song from the film Dil Toh Pagal Hai at the Habitat Comedy Club. The remark was a reference to Shinde's 2022 rebellion.

VANDALISM AND LEGAL ACTION
On Sunday night, Shiv Sena workers

vandalised the Habitat Comedy Club in Khar and a hotel where the club is located. Following the incident, Mumbai police have booked Kamra for defamation, further escalating tensions between the comedian and the political party.

38-year-old man shoots self dead with illegal pistol in Delhi

NEW DELHI. A 38-year-old lathe machine operator allegedly shot himself in the head on Monday morning in northwest Delhi's Prem Nagar area, police said. According to cops, Prem Nagar police station received information around 10 am on Monday regarding a probable suicide by a person with a gunshot injury to the head.

During the preliminary inquiry, it was revealed that deceased Prashant Kaushik shot himself on the right side of his head with an illegal country-made pistol. He was employed as a lathe machine operator, a senior officer said. His family, wife and two children were present in the home at the time of incident, the officer added.

The crime and forensic science laboratory teams have visited the scene. Evidence from the site were also collected. While no suicide note has been recovered, family members have not raised any suspicion till now, police said. The body was sent for post-mortem examination. A case of possession of illegal firearm under the Arms Act is being registered and further probe is on to ascertain the reason behind the incident, police added.

UP Man Takes Friend's Help To Run Over Wife, Wanted To Marry Her Sister

New Delhi. A man in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife with the help of his friend as he wanted to marry his sister-in-law, the police said Tuesday. The man, Ankit Kumar, conspired with his friend, Sachin Kumar, to get his wife run over by a car as the couple did not have a child, senior police officer Bharat Sonkar told reporters.

The victim, 30-year-old Kiran, who sustained "critical" injuries in the accident, was declared brought dead by the hospital. Both have been arrested and the car used in the accident has been seized.



Narrating the chain of events, Mr Sonkar said that Ankit filed a complaint on March 8 that his wife had died in a road accident when

he was taking her from his in-laws' house to his residence. He claimed that a car ran over Kiran and fled when he left her on the roadside to refuel his bike at a petrol pump.

Based on his complaint, a case was registered and a probe was ordered, Mr Sonkar said. Upon reviewing footage from CCTV cameras in the areas, the police identified the owner of the car as Sachin, a friend of Ankit. During interrogation, Ankit confessed to the crime and said he was married for five years but did not have any children, and wanted to marry his sister-in-law. He had also asked his sister-in-law to marry him, but she refused as he was married to Kiran, forcing him to hatch her murder plan, the police said.

Brace for ad-venture, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) to open a portal to past

NEW DELHI. "Many a small thing have been made large by the right kind of advertising," Mark Twain once said. Indeed this timeless wisdom has proved true, etched in the dazzling smiles of celebrities, bold taglines and eye-catching hues of iconic products. Yet, beyond the mere glitter of endorsements lies a trove of forgotten stories. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is about to open a portal to the past to transport people through decades of India's advertising heritage.

This special archive opens its doors on March 25 and will illuminate the evolution of Indian consumer culture from the 1950s to the present day. The inaugural compilation is a nostalgic hymn to brand heritage, with each name testifying to campaigns that were imprinted on the collective consciousness. Ashok Kumar's dignified endorsement, the graceful allure of Shashikala, Nimmi and Waheeda Rehman, the magnetic presence of Rajesh Khanna - all these are gateways to eras gone by. The launch event will be a confluence of industry stalwarts, media mavens and advertising aficionados, gathering to dissect and celebrate the transformative power of advertisements. Sachchidanand Joshi, member secretary, IGNCA, and the man behind the project, said, "Advertising deserves recognition as an artistic expression. Unlike cartoons where the artist's brushstrokes are evident, advertisements often mask the creators behind layers of brand narratives."

Kunal Kamra case is different, demolition of my home was illegal: Kangana Ranaut

Kangana Ranaut was referring to the demolition of her property in Pali Hill, Bandra, in September 2020, by the BMC on grounds of unauthorised construction.

New Delhi. BJP MP and actor Kangana Ranaut backed the demolition by the Mumbai civic body at the studio where comedian Kunal Kamra made controversial remarks against Eknath Shinde, while underscoring that it should not be compared to the "illegal" razing of her residence in 2020.

"What happened to me (demolition of her bungalow) was an illegal act, but the actions taken against Kunal Kamra are lawful. There is no comparison between my case and Kamra's case," Ranaut told reporters.

The Mandi MP was referring to the demolition of her property in Pali Hill, Bandra, in September 2020, by the BMC on grounds of unauthorised construction. She had not joined the BJP then and the incident came amid a conflict with the then undivided Shiv Sena.

'WHAT CREDENTIALS DOES KUNAL KAMRA HAVE?'

Kamra kicked up a row last week after he referred to Shinde as a "gaddar" (traitor) while performing a parody of a Bollywood song at the Habitat Comedy Club. The jab was a reference to Shinde's rebellion in 2022, which split the Shiv Sena.

On Sunday night, Shiv Sena workers damaged the Habitat Comedy Club in Khar as well as the Unicontinental Hotel, in whose premises the club is located. On Monday, officials from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) razed a temporary shed with hammers.

Ranaut stressed that criticising Shinde in the name of comedy was an insult to his work and struggles. The first-time BJP MP said Shinde, who once drove an auto for a living, rose to become the

Chief Minister through hard work and dedication. "What credentials does Kunal Kamra have? He hasn't achieved anything significant in life," she said. The 'Queen' star said a similar trend was being seen in Bollywood where people are insulting actors under the guise of humour and entertainment.

"These people call themselves influencers. Where is society headed for this 2-minute fame? We need to think about this. There could be repercussions. Would you stand by that when you are questioned legally?" she said.

Amid calls by BJP leaders to issue an apology, including by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Kamra said he won't be covered. He also slammed the "senseless" vandalism at the studio where his show was held.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta presents BJP government's maiden budget with 10 focus points

The CM, who also holds the portfolio of finance minister, said that capital expenditure has been increased to about Rs 28,000 crore this year, adding that it was around Rs 15,000 crore last year.



NEW DELHI. Presenting the maiden budget of the newly formed BJP government in Delhi, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the government has 10 focus areas, including infrastructure development, water,

electricity, and the development of roads. The budget session of the Delhi Assembly, which began on Monday, will see voting on the budget take place on March 27.

The CM, who also holds the portfolio of

finance minister, said that the capital expenditure has been increased to about Rs 28,000 crore this year, adding that the capital expenditure last year was around Rs 15,000 crore.

She said the budget for the financial year 2025-26 will be Rs 1 lakh crore, which is over 31.5 per cent higher than last year's. She called it "a historic budget". The Delhi government has allocated Rs 100 crore in the budget to establish 100 Atal Canteens across the city, and Rs 696 crore has been set aside for development in slum clusters. CM Rekha Gupta announced a Rs 1,000 crore allocation in the FY26 Budget to enhance Delhi-NCR connectivity. She also allocated Rs 5,100 crore for providing Rs 2,500 per month to eligible women and proposed Rs 2,144 crore for the PM Jan Arogya Yojana.

Delhi ramps up desilting efforts as monsoon draws near

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has launched a pilot project to use drones and robotic equipment to desilt a 200-metre covered drain near Dayal Singh College.

NEW DELHI. With just three months to go before the onset of monsoon, civic authorities in the capital are ramping up efforts to desilt the city's drains in order to mitigate urban flooding. Authorities plan on using advanced technology, enforcing stricter accountability measures and introducing long-term strategies for effective drainage maintenance. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has launched a pilot

project to desilt a 200-metre covered drain near Dayal Singh College using drones and robotic equipment. The site is inaccessible to traditional machinery, making it difficult to assess silt buildup. The Rs 1.7 crore project's tender will open on March 24, with work set for completion by June 30. NDMC has also identified 27 flood-prone areas, including Connaught Place, AIIMS flyover, and Lodhi Colony, where rainwater harvesting systems will be installed.

Meanwhile, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Verma has cracked down on officials failing to maintain drainage systems, suspending an engineer over poor desilting near Akshardham Temple. "Officials have become thick-skinned over the past 10 years. They will be made to sweat in the field to do their jobs," Verma said. He mandated daily road and drainage inspections by PWD engineers, with reports submitted via the PWD e-



monitoring app. The PWD has also issued fresh guidelines requiring long-term contracts for drain desilting to ensure biannual cleaning. Several measures include levelling and numbering manhole covers, monitoring inter-mixing points where sewage enters storm water drains, and ensuring that desilted waste does not re-enter drains. Contractors will now bear compensation costs for accidents caused by desilting negligence. Last week, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena

inspected desilting work at the Sunehri Pul drain after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) flagged delays. The NGT has been hearing multiple pleas from residents across Delhi regarding stormwater drains contaminated with sewage, contributing to foul smells, waterlogging, and Yamuna pollution. To address this, PWD is strengthening coordination with agencies like CPWD and NBCC.

The Irrigation and Flood Control (I&F) Department of the Delhi government has assured the tribunal that 23 of Delhi's 24 major drains would be desilted by May 31, 2025. However, the Najafgarh drain, the city's largest, will take longer, with a deadline of June 2027.

Various measures taken for desilting purpose

Measures include levelling and numbering manhole covers, monitoring inter-mixing points where sewage enters storm water drains, and ensuring that desilted waste does not re-enter drains.

'Brella Was Physically Abused, Financially Drained'

New Delhi. "We urged her to return after the incidents of extreme domestic violence, but she told us she couldn't return as she had filed a complaint and there were rules," recalls Satbir Singh, father of 24-year-old Harshita Brella, who was murdered in Corby, UK, recently. The grieving father is fighting for justice from his humble residence in Sadh Nagar, Palam, southwest Delhi, hoping that Harshita's husband, Pankaj Lamba, is given the harshest punishment he deserves.

"She was as innocent as a kid," says her elder sister, Sonia Dabas, as her voice quivers in sorrow. "She always thought if she was good to others, others would be good to her." Recalling how they were inseparable as siblings, Sonia says, "We never needed a third person. We were engrossed in each other's company." She remembers Harshita as a person 'full of life', enjoying food to shopping on the streets of GK and Sarojini Nagar.

Born and raised in Delhi, Harshita attended Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya in Dwarka and later pursued Hindi (Hons) at Venkateswara College in Delhi University. After completing her B Ed, she began tutoring students. "Parents often said they won't ever find a teacher like her," Sonia remembers.

Despite her wish to pursue teaching, Harshita eventually agreed to marry after a proposal came through relatives. The family agreed too. "We were told Pankaj worked for a good company," her sister recalls. "But later, we discovered he was a security guard, a job he was forced to leave. Then he took up a pizza delivery job," says Sonia. The wedding in Hindu rituals took place on March 21, 2024, at a farmhouse in Bijwasan. A few days later, Pankaj left for the UK, and Harshita joined him a month later in April.

"Initially, Harshita faced some challenges adjusting to the new life but continued to stay positive," recalls her sister. It wasn't until domestic abuse began that she reached out to her family for help. Harshita confided in them, revealing the hardships she was facing.

Singh recalls the call he received from Harshita while she was running on the streets of an unfamiliar country in the middle of the night. "She called me and told me what had happened. She then called one of her colleagues, also an Indian. I asked her to run towards her colleague," he shares, adding, "That night Harshita was thrashed by Pankaj, and when she tried to escape, he chased her down the street, assaulting her and hurling abusive words at her."

It was then that Harshita approached the authorities for help. She stayed at the colleague's house for a couple of days and then under police protection, as per family members. "She suffered a miscarriage during this time. Harshita was not only physically abused but financially drained. Pankaj regularly took money from her, using various excuses—whether for groceries or friends. When they lived together, he used to make her work extra hours for more money, even on her days off. When she came home, she had to do all the housework. She wasn't even allowed to talk to anyone," recalls Sonia.

After her complaint, Harshita got some relief through a Domestic Violence Protection Order, says Singh, adding in the same breath, "but she couldn't return." The last time Harshita called her family, it was around midnight in India. "She told my mother that she should sleep as they had to attend a wedding the next day," Sonia recalls. Days passed, but Harshita's family could not reach her. Then, on Nov 15, 2024, her father received the news that shattered their world. He recalls: "I got a call from one of the Dwarka police stations and the person said, 'Your daughter has been murdered'. I was alone at home when I came to know of this."

Harshita would have turned 25 on Christmas Day, a date that also marked her birthday, but tragically, she never lived to see it. Her body was found in the boot of a car in East London, four days after her death.

Investigators believe she was strangled by Pankaj on Nov 10, 2024, in Corby, Northamptonshire. The family claims they were being pressured for dowry. "On Sep 14, Pankaj's relatives came to our house and threatened us, demanding more dowry."

NEWS BOX

Attacker rams car into soldier and stabs him, kills elderly man in Israel

Yokneam Illit, Israel. One man was killed and another wounded in a combined ramming, stabbing and shooting attack by a lone assailant at a bus stop in northern Israel on Monday, emergency services said. Police said that the assailant was a 25-year-old Israeli citizen from the country's Arab minority. He rammed his car into an Israeli soldier standing at the bus stop, then got out of his car, stabbed him and seized his weapon. After that, the assailant started shooting at motorists driving past. An 85-year-old man was killed by the gunfire at his car, police said. Israel's ambulance service pronounced him dead at the scene. The soldier was badly wounded and taken to hospital, it said. Police officers shot the assailant dead, a spokesperson said. He resided in a town near the site of the attack, police said in a statement.

US accuses Palestinian student of hiding UN aid agency work on visa application

world. The US government has alleged that Columbia University student and pro-Palestinian demonstrator Mahmoud Khalil withheld that he worked for a United Nations Palestinian relief agency in his visa application, saying that should be grounds for deportation. The UN agency known as UNRWA provides food and healthcare to Palestinian refugees and has become a flashpoint in the Israeli war in Gaza. Israel contends that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, leading the US to halt funding of the group. The administration of US President Donald Trump on March 8 detained Khalil, a prominent figure in the pro-Palestinian protests that rocked Columbia's New York City campus last year, and sent him to Louisiana in an attempt to remove him from the country.

The case has drawn attention as a test of free speech rights, with supporters of Khalil saying he was targeted for publicly disagreeing with US policy on Israel and its occupation of Gaza. Khalil has called himself a political prisoner. The US alleges Khalil's presence or activities in the country would have serious foreign policy consequences. A judge has ordered Khalil not to be deported while his lawsuit challenging his detention, known as a habeas petition, is heard in another federal court. Khalil, a native of Syria and citizen of Algeria, entered the US on a student visa in 2022 and later filed to become a permanent resident in 2024. In a court brief dated Sunday, the US government outlined its arguments for keeping Khalil in custody while his removal



proceedings continue, arguing first that the US District Court in New Jersey, where the habeas case is being heard, lacks jurisdiction. The brief also says Khalil "withheld membership in certain organisations" which should be grounds for his deportation.

UN to reduce staff in Gaza after Israeli strike kills employee

DEIR AL-BALAH. The United Nations said Monday it will "reduce its footprint" in the Gaza Strip after an Israeli tank strike hit one of its compounds last week, killing one staffer from Bulgaria and wounding five other employees. The world body will temporarily remove about a third of its approximately 100 international staffers working in Gaza, UN Secretary-General spokesman Stéphane Dujarric.

He pointed to the increased danger after Israel relaunched its military campaign last week with bombardment that has since killed hundreds of Palestinians. Israel has also cut off all food, medicine, aid and other supplies to Gaza's population for the past three weeks. Dujarric's statement was the UN's first to point the finger at Israel in the March 19 explosion at the UN guesthouse in central Gaza. He said that "based on the information currently available," the strikes on the site "were caused by an Israeli tank." The Israeli military repeated its denial that it was responsible for the strike, which took place a day after Israel shattered Gaza's 2-month-old ceasefire with a surprise bombardment across the Gaza Strip. Dujarric said the UN "has made taken the difficult decision to reduce the Organization's footprint in Gaza, even as humanitarian needs soar."

He said the UN "is not leaving Gaza," pointing out that it still has about 13,000 national staff in Gaza, mainly working for UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. The UN reduction comes as aid workers and medical staff have come under fire. The International Committee of the Red Cross said its office in the southern city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip was damaged by an explosive projectile Monday. It said no staff were hurt but the damage has a direct impact on its ability to operate. It did not specify who was behind the explosion. ICRC also said that on Sunday, contact was lost with emergency medical technicians from the Palestine Red Crescent Society and their whereabouts remain unknown. Last week, humanitarian workers in Gaza were killed and injured, it said.

US, Russia discuss proposed Black Sea ceasefire: Positive announcement likely

Riyadh. US and Russian officials wrapped up day-long talks on Monday focused on a narrow proposal for a ceasefire at sea between Kyiv and Moscow, part of a diplomatic effort that Washington hopes will help pave the way for broader peace negotiations.

Even as the meeting was under way in Saudi Arabia, where a Ukrainian delegation was present on the sidelines, a Russian missile strike damaged a school and a hospital in Ukraine, wounding at least 88 people. The talks, which focused, amongst other issues, on trying to reach a Black Sea maritime ceasefire deal, were portrayed by Washington as a step in President Donald Trump's effort to end the three-year-old war. A White House source said progress was being made in the Riyadh talks and that a "positive announcement" was expected "in the near future." Russia's RIA news agency said the Russian delegation, when asked about their mood after the end of the talks, replied: "It's good." A Russian source told Reuters that the talks had concluded late on Monday and a draft joint statement

had been sent to Moscow and Washington for approval, with the parties aiming to release it on Tuesday. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said earlier that no documents would be signed, the TASS agency reported. Earlier on Monday, Trump listed other issues he said were on the table: "We're talking about territory right now. We're talking about lines of demarcation, talking about power, power plant ownership." Last week, Russia rejected a proposal by Trump for a full 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, and it has so far agreed only to a moratorium on attacking energy infrastructure. As Monday's talks were being held in Riyadh, Russian missiles struck the city of Sumy in northeastern Ukraine. Several high-rise residential blocks were damaged along with a school and hospital, regional governor Volodymyr Artiukh said in a video filmed in front of a blaze producing a column of smoke. The schoolchildren were in a shelter at the time, averting worse casualties, he

added. "Moscow speaks of peace while carrying out brutal strikes on densely populated residential areas in major Ukrainian cities," Ukrainian foreign minister Andrii Sybiha said. "Instead of



making hollow statements about peace, Russia must stop bombing our cities and end its war on civilians."

MARITIME TRUCE?

The talks in Saudi Arabia follow phone calls last week between Trump and the two

presidents, Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine and Vladimir Putin of Russia. Ukrainian officials met the Americans in Saudi Arabia on Sunday. Trump, who has scaled back US diplomatic backing for Ukraine and shifted publicly to a stance far less critical of Russia than that of his predecessor Joe Biden, says he aims to bring a quick end to the war.

The White House says the initial aim of the Saudi talks is to secure a maritime truce in the Black Sea, allowing the free flow of shipping. But maritime battles have been a comparatively limited facet of the war since 2023, after Ukrainian attacks drove Moscow to move its navy far from contested waters, making it possible for Ukraine to reopen ports and resume exports.

"This is primarily about the safety of navigation," Kremlin spokesperson Peskov said. He said a previous U.N.-backed agreement on Black Sea shipping had failed to deliver some of Moscow's demands.

I know nothing: Trump on US officials mistakenly sharing war plan with journalist

War plan had details on weapons, targets, and timing

Group chat included The Atlantic's editor, who disclosed incident

White House confirmed the misstep, reviewing how it happened

world. US President Donald Trump's top national security officials, including his Defence Secretary, mistakenly shared war plans for upcoming military strikes in Yemen in a group chat on a secure messaging app that included the editor-in-chief of The Atlantic magazine, the White House said on Monday after the magazine disclosed the incident.

According to The Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg, the plan, which included precise information about weapons packages, targets, and timing, was

shared in the group chat two hours before the US launched an attack in Yemen on March 15. The world found out shortly before 2 pm Eastern Time on March 15 that the United States was bombing Houthi targets across Yemen. However, I knew two hours before the first bombs exploded that the attack might be coming. The



reason I knew this is that Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of Defence, had texted me the war plan at 11.44 am. The plan included precise information about weapons packages, targets, and timing," the first-hand report by the magazine said. The US National Security Council spokesperson, Brian Hughes, acknowledged the misstep and said the chat group appeared to be authentic. Accounts belong to Vice

President JD Vance, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, and senior National Security Council officials were also part of the chat group, according to Goldberg. At this time, the message thread that was reported appears to be authentic, and we are reviewing how an inadvertent number was added to the chain. The thread is a demonstration of the deep and thoughtful policy coordination between senior officials. The ongoing success of the Houthi operation demonstrates that there were no threats to our service members or our national security," the National Security Council spokesperson's statement said.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth denied the texts to reporters, "You're talking about a deceitful and highly discredited so-called journalist who's made a profession of peddling hoaxes time and time again... This is a guy who peddles in garbage... Nobody was texting war plans and that's all I have to say."

US airstrikes targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels kill at least two people, group says

The American strikes on the rebels, who threaten maritime trade and Israel, entered their 10th day without any sign of stopping.

DUBAI. U.S. airstrikes targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels pounded sites across the country into early Tuesday, with the group saying one attack in the capital killed at least two people and wounded more than a dozen others.

The American strikes on the rebels, who threaten maritime trade and Israel, entered their 10th day without any sign of stopping. They are part of a campaign by U.S. President Donald



Trump targeting the rebel group while also trying to pressure Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor. So far, the U.S. has not offered any specifics on the sites it is striking, though Trump's national security adviser Mike Waltz claimed the attacks have "taken out key Houthi leadership, including their head missileer." That's something so far that's not been acknowledged by the Houthis, though the rebels have downplayed their losses in the past and

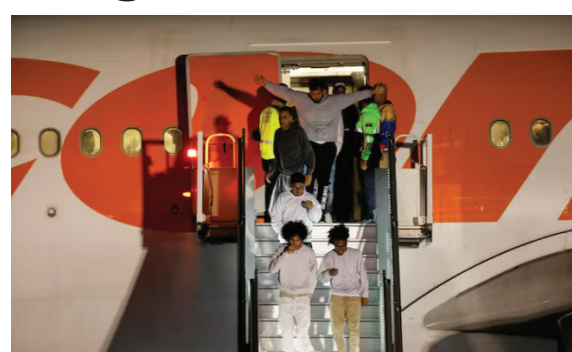
exaggerated their attacks attempting to target American warships. "We've hit their headquarters," Waltz told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "We've hit communications nodes, weapons factories and even some of their over-the-water drone production facilities." An apparent U.S. strike Sunday hit a building in a western neighborhood of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, killing at least two people and wounding 13 others, the rebel-controlled SABA news agency said, citing health officials. Footage released by the rebels showed the rubble of a collapsed building and pools of blood staining the gray dust covering the ground. A building next to the collapsed structure still stood, suggesting American forces likely used a lower-yield warhead in the strike.

Nazis had more rights to contest deportation than Venezuelan migrants: US Judge

Washington. A US appeals court judge said on Monday that Nazis were given more rights to contest their removal from the United States during World War Two than Venezuelan migrants deported by the Trump administration.

In a contentious hearing, US Circuit Judge Patricia Millett questioned government lawyer Drew Ensign on whether Venezuelans targeted for removal under a little-used 18th-century law had time to contest the Trump administration's assertion that they were members of the Tren de Aragua gang before they were put on planes and deported to El Salvador. "Nazis got better treatment under the Alien Enemies Act than has happened here," Millett said, to which Ensign responded, "We certainly dispute the Nazi analogy." Prior to the Trump administration's invocation of the 1798 Alien Enemies Act, the law had been used three times in US history, most recently to

intern and remove Japanese, German and Italian immigrants during World War Two. The Trump administration was asking the appeals court to halt Washington-based US District Judge James Boasberg's two-week ban, imposed on March 15, on the use of the law to justify deportation of alleged Tren de Aragua members without final removal orders from immigration judges. Family members of many of the deported Venezuelan migrants deny the alleged gang ties. Lawyers for one of the deportees, a Venezuelan professional soccer player and youth coach, said US officials had wrongly labelled him a gang member based on a tattoo of a crown meant to reference his favourite team, Real Madrid. Millett, an appointee of Democratic President Barack Obama, is one of three judges on a panel of the US Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit hearing the government's challenge to



Boasberg's order. US Circuit Judge Justin Walker, who was appointed by Republican Donald Trump during his first term as president, appeared more supportive of the government's arguments. The third judge on the panel, Karen Henderson, was appointed by Republican President George H.W. Bush. The court did not say when it would rule. The case has emerged as a major test of Trump's sweeping assertion of

executive power. With Republicans holding a majority in both the House of Representatives and Senate and largely falling in line behind the president's agenda, federal judges have often emerged as the only constraint on Trump's wave of executive actions. In a Monday court filing, government lawyers told Boasberg that they would not be providing any more information about the deportation flights, invoking the state secrets privilege. That legal doctrine allows the government to withhold information that might endanger national security during court proceedings. After Boasberg temporarily halted the deportations, Trump called for the judge's impeachment in a process that could lead to his removal. In response, US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts issued a rare statement rebuking Trump and stating that appeals.



capability to interfere in Canadian communities and democratic processes". An official probe report released in January claimed that Canada was slow to respond to interference attempts by China and India during the 2019 and 2021 elections, although the meddling did not affect the outcomes.

Relations between Canada and India have witnessed an unprecedented diplomatic standoff in recent months, with both countries expelling multiple diplomats, including the respective heads of mission, following allegations of India's involvement in a plot against Sikh separatists on Canadian soil. The Chinese and Indian diplomatic missions in Ottawa have not yet responded to Canada's allegations. Canada is set to hold its general election on April 28 after newly appointed Prime Minister Mark Carney called a snap poll, citing the need for a strong mandate to address the challenges posed by US President Donald Trump.

NEWS BOX

GT vs PBKS, pitch, weather report IPL 2025: Rain expected in Ahmedabad

New Delhi. Ahmedabad is all set to host its first fixture of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 season as Gujarat Titans (GT) take on a revamped Punjab Kings (PBKS) led by Shreyas Iyer on March 25. While GT aim to put their disappointing 2024 campaign behind them, PBKS will look to kickstart a new era under the guidance of head coach Ricky Ponting and Iyer's leadership.

GT have the home advantage at the Narendra Modi Stadium, but PBKS enter the contest with a wave of excitement surrounding their fresh squad. With ideal weather conditions predicted, fans can expect an uninterrupted contest, where the pitch will play a decisive role in determining the outcome.

GT, captained by Shubman Gill, boast a strong squad featuring the explosive Jos Buttler, Rashid Khan, Glenn Phillips, and a formidable pace attack comprising Mohammed Siraj and Gerald Coetzee. However, they face a formidable PBKS unit,



stacked with match-winners like Glenn Maxwell, Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen, and Yuzvendra Chahal. This sets up a thrilling contest between two sides eager to make their mark early in the season.

GT vs PBKS, IPL 2025: Narendra Modi Stadium Pitch Report

The Narendra Modi Stadium is known for its batting-friendly conditions, often producing high-scoring games. The pitch offers reliable bounce, allowing batters to play their shots freely. With an average first-innings score of around 200, the venue has favoured aggressive strokeplay. Fast bowlers can generate movement early on, but as the match progresses, the surface slows down, bringing spinners into play. The dry and hard nature of the pitch ensures a balanced contest, with both batters and bowlers getting opportunities to shine.

GT vs PBKS, IPL 2025: Ahmedabad Weather Report

The much-anticipated GT vs PBKS clash will commence at 7:30 PM IST. As per AccuWeather, Ahmedabad is expected to witness clear skies throughout the match, ensuring no rain interruptions.

IPL 2025: Captaincy skills on test as GT host PBKS in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad. Two franchises with refreshed squads, Gujarat Titans and Punjab Kings, aim to start the 18th Indian Premier League (IPL) season positively at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Tuesday, following their disappointing performances last season.

The contest will also showcase a leadership battle between Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer, both established Indian ODI players but with uncertain T20 spots. With the Men in Blue eyeing a potential successor to Rohit Sharma, Iyer—having led KKR to IPL glory last year and Mumbai to the Syed Mushtaq Ali title last December—could be a candidate. Go Beyond The Boundary with our YouTube channel. SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Gill, meanwhile, has already been anointed as Rohit's successor, having served as vice-captain in both Tests and ODIs. However, his T20I credentials are under the scanner. His



IPL record with the Titans has been modest. He replaced Hardik Pandya as skipper last year but managed to win just five games out of 12. Both teams struggled last season, with the Titans finishing eighth and the Kings ninth in the ten-team competition. The Kings are now coached by Aussie great Ricky Ponting, who has already vowed to make the franchise one of the "greatest teams" in the competition. They have a balanced squad to begin with. Their batting lineup is explosive, featuring Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh, Vishnu Vinod, and Josh Inglis. However, it is their all-round strength that gives the franchise more depth. The Titans will welcome the return of solid left-hander Sai Sudharsan, who is back from surgery.

Sunil Chhetri, Hamza Choudhury in focus as India face Bangladesh

Shillong. How much can one footballer influence the fate of a team or the course of its history? Sunil Chhetri made some good points on that with a strike in his comeback for India vs Maldives in the friendly last week as the hosts returned to winning ways after over a year of winless results.

And while he and coach Manolo Marquez will look to carry that momentum into the crucial AFC Asian Cup Qualifier against Bangladesh here on Tuesday, their opponents on the day will be eager for the trump card up their sleeve, Hamza Choudhury, to earn their first win against India since 2003. Go Beyond The Boundary with our YouTube channel. SUBSCRIBE NOW! The lead-up to the teams' opening Group C match at JN Stadium here may have been dominated by the hype surrounding two footballers—one, the third highest active scorer in international football after Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, and the other, a veteran of 57 Premier League matches for Leicester City. But all 22 players on the pitch will have to play their roles well to churn out three points and take a positive step towards qualification for Saudi Arabia 2027. "I think it's exciting having Hamza and having Sunil back. It's going to be really

competitive. But it's not going to be only about them," Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera said on Monday. "If we win tomorrow, it will not only be for Hamza."

His fellow Spaniard and Indian counterpart Marquez echoed the same feelings for a Chhetri-inspired India while also acknowledging the importance of starting the qualifiers on a winning note, with matches against Hong Kong and Singapore to follow thereafter. "The first game is obviously very important. It's a short competition, only the top team qualifies for the tournament. There are six games and we need to finish first. We want to get the maximum points possible to qualify for Saudi Arabia," he said on match eve on Monday. Already laden with injury woes, the latest being in-form Brandon Fernandes against Maldives, it will be interesting to see if Marquez utilises the pace of the young Macarthon Nickson or the experience of Udanta Singh—the new inductees into the squad—to make up for Fernandes' absence on Tuesday. He will, however, have been



impressed by performances of Hmingthanmawia Ralte at right-back and, going forward, goalscorer Liston Colaco down the left, debutant Ayush Dev Chhetri in midfield, and the aerial prowess of Rahul Bheke, and will hope for them to carry the show vs Bangladesh.

However, India have drawn two of their last three matches against Bangladesh, all of which came in the Igor Stimac era, and were lucky to get away with a point through Adil Khan's late equaliser in their last clash.

While the hosts will be wary of a motivated Bangladesh having Sheffield United's Choudhury making his debut for his national team, it wouldn't be a surprise if Choudhury is pushed further upfield, unlike the deeper midfield role he occupies for his clubs in England, to make a difference with his quality higher up. Also, the partnership that he scripts with skipper and veteran Jamal Bhuyan in the middle could well decide Bangladesh's fortunes in this match and throughout the qualifying campaign.

"We know it's not only Hamza, they have other good players. (And) the same coach for the last three years with the same philosophy. Continuity is obviously important in any team," acknowledged the Indian coach, adding, "But I feel that if we play a good game, we will win this one. But obviously, if you ask Javi Cabrera the same, he will say the opposite."

Tuesday will reveal which Spaniard emerges on top in the South Asian derby or if the cycle of draws between them continues.

Sanjiv Goenka engages in long discussion with Pant after Lucknow's loss

New Delhi. Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) owner Sanjiv Goenka had a long discussion with captain Rishabh Pant following their loss against Delhi Capitals (DC) on Monday, March 24 at Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium, Visakhapatnam. Delhi beat Lucknow by one wicket in a thrilling encounter as they chased down the target of 210 and 19.3 overs. Hence, the Axar Patel-led side managed to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat and got their campaign off to a winning start. Following Lucknow's loss, owner Sanjiv Goenka had a long discussion with Rishabh Pant and head coach Justin Langer in the team's dugout. The video of the incident has been gaining traction on social media as fans were reminded of Goenka's heated chat with LSG's former captain KL Rahul in the previous season. However, on this occasion, he was having a healthy



discussion with his captain and the coach. Ashutosh Sharma takes Delhi over the line. Rishabh Pant had a horrible outing on his debut for Lucknow as he got dismissed for a six-ball duck by Kuldeep Yadav. The 27-year-old also didn't have a memorable day behind the stumps as he missed the match-defining stumping opportunity of Mohit Sharma in the last over which could've sealed the win for his team. In the

first innings, Lucknow were well-placed to reach a total in excess of 240 as they were 161/2 after 13.2 overs. However, following Pant's dismissal, a well-set Nicholas Pooran (75 off 30) also got dismissed quickly, which triggered a batting collapse for LSG. As a result, they had to settle for a score of 209/8 in their 20 overs. In reply, Delhi got off to a miserable start to their chase, being at 65/5 in 6.4 overs.

However, Ashutosh Sharma walked in at number seven and showed great intent to keep his team in the chase. He got involved in crucial partnerships with Tristan Stubbs (34 off 22) and Vipraj Nigam (39 off 15) and eventually took the team over the finishing line with his match-winning knock of 66* (31). As a result, he was deservedly adjudged Player of the Match in Delhi's thrilling victory.

It was good score, we could have done basics right: LSG skipper Rishabh Pant

VISAKHAPATNAM. Lucknow Super Giants skipper Rishabh Pant felt his bowlers could have done the basics better at the back end as the target of 210 was defendable against a marauding Delhi Capitals who won by one wicket with three balls to spare in their IPL match on Monday. Ashutosh Sharma's unbeaten 66 off 31 balls and Vipraj Nigam's blistering 39 off 15 deliveries orchestrated an improbable comeback for Delhi Capitals as they secured a stunning one-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants with three balls to spare in their IPL clash on Monday. At one stage, DC were struggling at 113 for 6 in pursuit of a daunting 210-run target, but Ashutosh and Vipraj turned the game on its head with their fearless hitting. Reflecting on the loss, LSG skipper Rishabh Pant felt his bowlers could have executed the basics better in the crucial moments. "I think our top-order batters played really well, and it was a pretty good score on this wicket. We got early wickets, but we knew it was a good pitch to bat on. We

had to keep doing the basics right more often. I think they had a couple of good partnerships," Pant said at the post-match presentation. He credited DC's middle-order resurgence, particularly Tristan Stubbs, who



laid the foundation for the late assault. "One with Stubbs, with Ashutosh, and one with one other guy (Vipraj Nigam). I think he (Nigam) did a pretty good job and took the game away from us. There was enough for the bowlers, but I think we could have done the basics right." "We felt the pressure, we are still settling in, but there are a lot of positives

to take from this match."

An ecstatic DC skipper Axar Patel, revelling in his leadership style, said his tenure would be a rollercoaster ride. "Be prepared for it now. It's going to be like this only under my captaincy.

Things will be up and down a little. Now that we have won, people won't complain about why I gave that over to Stubbs (28 runs). "With batters increasingly dominating the format, Axar pointed out that this trend began last year. Don't remember the last time I saw something like this. The way they played in the first six overs, we felt we gave a few too many early on. We dropped some catches as well. It looked like they could score 240, but we pulled things back." "Player of the Match Ashutosh dedicated his award to his mentor Shikhar Dhawan and credited Vipraj for keeping the momentum alive. "Well played to Vipraj. I asked him to keep hitting. He was very calm under pressure. Want to dedicate this award to my mentor Shikhar paaji.



was when LSG lost control, allowing Ashutosh and the debutant Vipraj to take the game away.

LSG's BOWLING WOES EXPOSED

The fears regarding LSG's bowling composition turned into reality. The franchise had placed its faith in an Indian core for their pace attack, picking last season's sensation Mayank Yadav alongside Avesh Khan and Mohsin Khan at the mega auction. However, injuries derailed their plans, ruling Mayank and Avesh out of the start of the season while Mohsin was replaced by Shardul Thakur, who had gone unsold in the auction. Ironically, in their first game, it was Thakur-roped in as a last-minute replacement who led a two-man pace attack alongside rookie Prince Yadav. LSG bolstered their bowling unit with spin, entrusting Ravi Bishnoi to spearhead a group that included M Siddharth and Digvesh Rathi, a bowler reminiscent of Sunil Narine. Shahbaz Ahmed was picked as the sixth bowling option.

GT vs PBKS Match Preview, IPL 2025: Gill, Gujarat look to take shine off new Punjab

IPL 2025, Gujarat Titans vs Punjab Kings Match Preview: Shubman Gill and his rejuvenated Gujarat Titans side will be aiming to take the shine of the new-look Punjab Kings side as they face off at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

New Delhi. Gujarat Titans are all set to start their IPL 2025 campaign and welcome a new-look Punjab Kings side to the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday, March 25. PBKS have been the underperformers in IPL for a long period of

time and the start of a new season always feel like the dawn of a new era at the franchise. This time, at least for the sake of the fans, many are hoping it is true. Shreyas Iyer was roped in for big money and so were Yuzvendra Chahal and Arshdeep Singh. Punjab only retained two uncapped players in Shashank Singh and Prabhsimran Singh and this allowed them to splash the cash on stars like Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen and Glenn Maxwell and some top young talent. For Gujarat, it was also a reset of sorts while their nucleus remained the same. They went all in for a new-look pace attack as Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj and Prasad Krishna but the big signing was that of Jos Buttler. Both teams traded wins last season, with GT winning in Mullanpur and PBKS securing a thriller in Ahmedabad.

How will the new GT fit in? One of the greatest things Titans as a franchise has been known for is how seamlessly their squad members would gel. A Wriddhiman

Saha at the top would allow Gill to go and construct his innings, while David Miller and insurance policy, Rahul Tewatia, were always there to finish the innings. They had



Rashid Khan as their main weapon in bowling, but the likes of Mohammed Shami, Mohit Sharma and Noor Ahmad were key components. Many of those names are now gone and Buttler, Siraj and Krishna have lot to prove after not being retained by their former franchises. The likes of Glenn Phillips and Sherfane Rutherford have been

big performers in white-ball cricket in recent times and Washington Sundar also has a new home. Captain Gill was welcoming towards Buttler and Siraj and showed his support for both men. It now remains to be seen how the new GT works.

What's Punjab's combination?

Punjab have so many stars amongst them as Ricky Ponting wants to create the greatest PBKS side ever. Well, the names are there but how do they all fit in to the side? Shreyas Iyer has revealed that he plans to play at No.3, something that's justified given his recent exploits.

The opening combination is something that PBKS is yet to reveal or even provide a hint about. Assistant coach Brad Haddin said there are still some talks to be made on who opens. "We are not sure who opens yet. We have got guys like Marcus Stoinis and Josh Inglis who have done it well in the past as well. So we have to make sure that we get the right combination.

Sushant Singh Rajput Case:

Dia Mirza

Asks For 'Written Apology' For Rhea Chakraborty As CBI Rules Out Foul Play



Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik Chakraborty, and their family have been officially cleared by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the death case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. After years of speculation and intense scrutiny, the agency concluded there was no evidence of foul play in Rajput's tragic death at the age of 34 in his Mumbai apartment in 2020. Back in September 2020, Rhea and Showik were arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) over a drug-related case linked to the late actor's death.

Meanwhile, actress Dia Mirza has reacted to the CBI's closure report and said that the media owes Rhea an apology. Taking to Instagram Stories, she wrote, "Who in the media will have the grace to put out a written apology to Rhea Chakraborty and her family? You went on a witch hunt. You caused deep anguish and harassment just for TRP's. Apologise. That's the very least you can do. Rhea's legal counsel, Satish Maneshinde, also weighed in on the development, shedding light on the hardships Rhea and her family endured throughout the investigation. He emphasized that despite no wrongdoing, Rhea spent 27 days in jail before being granted bail. "I salute her and her family for having kept silent and yet suffered the inhuman treatment they were meted," Maneshinde stated. He revealed that Rhea's family had approached him through close friends and defense personnel known from his Sainik School days. He further disclosed how his legal team, alongside Rhea's family, faced relentless threats and harassment but remained steadfast in their pursuit of justice. Maneshinde also strongly opposed the media frenzy around the case. He criticized the false stories spread on social media and news platforms, saying that the lockdown caused more misinformation as people spent more time on their screens with fewer events happening.



Yash Arrives In Mumbai To Complete 'Toxic' Shoot, Waves To Fans Calling Him 'Rocky Bhai'



Two days after announcing the release date of his most-anticipated film Toxic, Yash arrived in Mumbai to complete a schedule of the film. Accompanied by wife Radhika Pandit, the Kannada superstar received a warm welcome from his sea of fans upon arrival in the bay. Yash sported a sharp look with a crisp haircut and well-trimmed beard as he waved at his fans. He wore a comfy co-ord set and sunnies for his airport look. As fans cheered for him and called him Rocky Bhai (his character from KGF), Yash waved and greeted them with folded hands. Take a look at the video here:

On Saturday, March 22, the 'Rocking Star' announced the release date of his upcoming film, Toxic – March 19, 2026. He also treated fans to a brand-new poster from the film. Toxic releases on the Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, and Eid weekend next year. In the poster, the actor wore a black leather jacket and a hat, and carried a gun in his hand. Behind him, was a photo of a whole town burning down and the actor walking away from the site unaffected. Reportedly, the film might face a major clash from Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal-starrer Love & War. An official confirmation from filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's team is awaited. Meanwhile, Yash recently surprised fans by making an appearance at Yo Yo Honey Singh's Millionaire India Tour concert in Bengaluru. In a video going viral, Honey introduced Yash, saying, "We have a common story.

When we were sharing with each other, it felt like a true brotherly moment. I have found my moment in Karnataka. Brothers for life, everybody!" Reacting to it, Yash replied, "So inspiring, his story is inspiring, we were discussing, the way he has come up in his life and the place he is today. Everybody goes through struggles and fame, but what matters is the love. People love and respect you. Keep flying."

As for Toxic, the Yash-starrer is directed by Geetu Mohandas. The film also stars Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Tovino Thomas, Huma Qureshi, Akshay Oberoi, Tara Sutaria, and Darrell D'Silva in strong supporting roles.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu's Latest Video Is Reminder That Women 'Are Stronger Together'



Samantha Ruth Prabhu continues to inspire, this time through a powerful three-part campaign titled She Is. Known for her openness about wellness and women's empowerment, the actress uses this series to encourage women to embrace their worth unapologetically.

In the latest installment, Samantha is seen pushing her limits — lifting weights, exercising, and radiating strength. But it's not just about physical power. The video carries a deeper message, reminding women to own every part of themselves — their beauty, flaws, victories, and scars.

Her voiceover resonates with raw emotion: "She writes not with ink, but with the fire of her will, the power of her heart, and the lessons of her past. With each step, she creates a story — one crafted from strength. She owns her beauty and flaws, her triumphs and scars, knowing her worth, a truth no one can diminish." Sharing the video on Instagram, Samantha wrote, "She Is Strength. Really enjoyed this 3 part series, She Is. We are stronger together. Just a reminder."

It's a bold, heartfelt tribute to the resilience and power that women carry within them — a call to embrace every part of their journey with pride.

In a past interview with GQ India, Samantha Ruth Prabhu spoke about her strong determination to push limits and do things differently. She said, "I think every woman out there is kicking ass with a certain sense of vulnerability, no? No woman is just pretty or just ambitious or just self-sacrificial. She's a combination of several contradictions and complications. Those are the kind of characters I like, the ones that have a little bit of everything. Because I am like that. A lot of people relate to my characters because they see a part of themselves in me."

The actress shared that she has worked hard to feel good about herself and stopped trying to be perfect. In the beginning, she felt a lot of pressure to fit in and get liked by others. She also mentioned that working in the film industry makes it even harder to deal with these feelings. Constantly travelling, staying in different hotels and being away from home can feel very lonely. Through her experiences, the actress has learnt a lot. After appearing in Raj and DK's Citadel: Honey Bunny, Samantha Ruth Prabhu will be seen in Maa Inti Bangaram.

BRB, Busy Taking Notes From

Shalini Pandey

On How To Make Black Look Classy

Fresh off the success of Dabba Cartel, Shalini Pandey recently delighted fans through a post online. Striking some stellar looks, she exuded beauty in the photos included in the post, leaving fans delighted. A vision in black, Shalini gave a closer view of her looks for an awards night, which was held in Mumbai on March 22. For the star-studded event, she slipped into a breathtaking black outfit, comprising a corset-style top with a long mermaid-style skirt for a look



worth taking notes from. Keeping it minimal, Shalini styled the outfit with silver accessories and sealed the deal with glam makeup and open tresses cascading down her back.

Shalini Pandey has carved a niche for herself in the OTT space with her back-to-back power-packed performances in Maharaj and Dabba Cartel. As proof, she recently won the Breakthrough Performance (Female) OTT play award for Maharaj. In the period drama, she essayed Kishori, the love interest of Junaid Khan and a naive follower of a corrupt

religious leader. The film also featured Jaideep Ahlawat and Sharvari in the lead roles. Around a fight for justice against a powerful godman.

Following her victory at the awards ceremony, Shalini, in her winning speech, expressed her gratitude and said, "Good evening, everyone. Thankyou OTTplay and HT. This film is a very special project for me. I would like to thank YRF for believing in me that I could be Kishori. Thank you Sneha for writing Kishori so well. Thank you to my co-stars."

Recently, Shalini delivered another commendable performance in Dabba Cartel. The show, streaming on Netflix, revolves around the journey of five middle-class women whose business leads them to the dangerous world of drug cartels. It features an ensemble cast of Shabana Azmi, Jyotika, Anjali Anand, Nimisha Sajayan and others. Talking about her experience of working with Azmi in the show, Shalini told Hindustan Times, "My mum has kind of manifested Shabana (Azmi) ma'am in my life. I remember when I got into the film industry, she would keep saying that she wishes I get to work with Mr. Amitabh Bachchan and Mrs. Shabana Azmi." Concluding, Shalini said that working on Dabba Cartel was a liberating experience.

