







KISHANGANJ : जिले में नशे के खिलाफ चलाए जा रहे अभियान के तहत सदर थाना पुलिस ने बड़ी कार्रवाई करते हुए 8.67 ग्राम स्मैक के साथ एक महिला समेत चार तस्करों को गिरफ्तार किया है। पुलिस ने तस्करी में इस्तेमाल किए जा रहे एक ई-रिक्शा को भी जब्त किया है। सभी आरोपियों के खिलाफ एनडीपीएस एक्ट के तहत मामला दर्ज कर आगे की कानूनी कार्रवाई की जा रही है। जानकारी के अनुसार पुलिस अधीक्षक संतोष कुमार के निर्देश पर जिले में मादक पदार्थों की तस्करी के खिलाफ लगातार विशेष अभियान चलाया जा रहा है। इसी क्रम में सदर थाना पुलिस को गुप्त सूचना मिली थी कि पश्चिम बंगाल से एक ग्रे रंग का ई-रिक्शा (बीआर 37 ईआर 5216) स्मैक की खेप लेकर एमजीएम रोड के रास्ते किशनगंज शहर में प्रवेश करने वाला है। सूचना मिलते ही सदर थाना पुलिस ने कैलटेक्स चौक के समीप वाहन जांच अभियान शुरू किया। जांच के दौरान संदिग्ध ई-रिक्शा को रोकने का प्रयास किया गया, लेकिन चालक पुलिस को देखकर वाहन मोड़कर एमजीएम मेडिकल कॉलेज की ओर भागने लगा। इसके बाद पुलिस जवानों ने तत्परता दिखाते हुए पीछा कर ई-रिक्शा को पकड़ लिया। तलाशी के दौरान पुलिस ने एक महिला के अंतःवस्त्र में छिपाकर रखी गई 8.67 ग्राम स्मैक बरामद की। बरामदगी के बाद मौके से चारों आरोपियों को गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया।

सदर अस्पताल के पास हथियार संग दबोचा गया शातिर



SIWAN : सीवान नगर थाना पुलिस ने बुधवार की देर रात सदर अस्पताल के समीप कार्रवाई करते हुए अवैध हथियार के साथ एक युवक को गिरफ्तार किया है। गिरफ्तार युवक बाइक चोरी की घटना को अंजाम देने की फिराक में घूम रहा था।पुलिस ने उसके पास से एक देशी कट्टा, दो जिंदा कारतूस एवं एक मोबाइल फोन बरामद किया है। गिरफ्तार युवक की पहचान सनौी मांझी के रूप में हुई है जो महादेव थाना क्षेत्र के विजय हटा निवासी मनभरान मांझी का पुत्र है। जानकारी के अनुसार दिनांक 21 मई 2026 को रात्रि करीब 12:10 बजे नगर थाना को सूचना मिली कि नगर थाना कांड संख्या 530/26 का अप्राथमिकी अभिवुक्त सदर अस्पताल के आसपास अवैध हथियार लेकर संदिग्ध अवस्था में घूम रहा है। सूचना मिलते ही थानाध्यक्ष अविनाश कुमार के नेतृत्व में पुलिस टीम मौके पर पहुंची। पुलिस वाहन को देखते ही एक युवक भागने लगा, जिसे पुलिस बल के सहयोग से पकड़ लिया गया। तलाशी के दौरान युवक के पास से एक देशी कट्टा एवं दो कारतूस बरामद किए गए।इस संबंध में नगर थाना में आम्स एक्ट की धारा 25(1-बी) ए/26 के तहत प्राथमिकी दर्ज कर आगे की विधिस्ममत कार्रवाई की जा रही है।पुलिस के अनुसार गिरफ्तार अभियुक्त का पूर्व में भी आपराधिक इतिहास रहा है।इसके खिलाफ मुफरसिल थाना कांड संख्या 13/22 में धारा 394 भादवि तथा कांड संख्या 624/23 में धारा 413/414/34 भादवि के तहत मामला दर्ज है।

पिपरा एसबीआई शाखा में लगी भीषण आग दस्तावेज व कंप्यूटर सब जलकर हो गए राख

AGENCY SUPAUL :

जिले के पिपरा बाजार स्थित भारतीय स्टेट बैंक की शाखा में बुधवार देर रात अचानक भीषण आग लगने से भारी नुकसान हुआ। शुरुआती जानकारी के मुताबिक आग लगने की वजह बिजली का शॉर्ट सर्किट बताया जा रही है। घटना के बाद पूरे बाजार क्षेत्र में अफरा-तफरी मच गई और लोगों की भारी भीड़ बैंक परिसर के बाहर जुट गई। बताया जा रहा है कि रात के समय बैंक बंद था और अंदर लगी गैल व शटर के कारण आग तेजी से फैलती चली गई। देखते ही देखते लपटों ने बैंक के अंदर रखे फर्नीचर, महत्वपूर्ण कागजात, कंप्यूटर, एसी समेत अन्य उपकरणों को अपनी चपेट में ले लिया। स्थानीय लोगों ने तत्काल इसकी सूचना दमकल विभाग को दी।सूचना मिलते ही चार दमकल



बैंक में लगी आग को बुझाते दमकलकर्मी

गाड़ियां मौके पर पहुंचीं और घंटों की कड़ी मशक्कत के बाद आग पर काबू पाया जा सका। हालांकि तब तक बैंक के अंदर रखा अधिकांश सामान पूरी तरह जल चुका था। आग की भयावहता का अंदाजा इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि बैंक परिसर के अंदर का लगभग पूरा हिस्सा काले धुएँ और राख में तब्दील हो गया। घटना के बाद बैंक प्रबंधन ने ग्राहकों की सुविधा को देखते हुए

पिपरा शाखा का दैनिक कार्य फिलहाल त्रिवेणीगंज शाखा में स्थानांतरित कर दिया है। बैंक अधिकारियों ने बताया कि ग्राहकों को बैंकिंग सेवाओं में किसी तरह की परेशानी न हो, इसके लिए वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था की गई है। फिलहाल प्रशासन और बैंक प्रबंधन नुकसान का आकलन करने में जुटे हैं। वहीं आग लगने के वास्तविक कारणों की भी जांच की जा रही है।जा रही है।

पहल राष्ट्रीय बाल स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम के सहयोग से किया जा रहा उपचार

बाल हृदय योजना से बच्चों को मिल रही नई जिंदगी

AGENCY KISHANGANJ :

राष्ट्रीय बाल स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम (आरबीएसके) एवं बाल हृदय योजना के तहत जिले में जन्मजात हृदय रोग से पीड़ित बच्चों को निःशुल्क उपचार की सुविधा मिल रही है। आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर परिवारों के लिए यह योजना उम्मीद की किरण साबित हो रही है। इसी क्रम में गुरुवार को जन्मजात हृदय रोग से पीड़ित दो बच्चों अल्लफया नाज एवं योगेश कुमार गणेश, दोनों निवासी दिवलबैंक प्रखंड, को बेहतर इलाज के लिए सदर अस्पताल किशनगंज से आईजीआईएमएस पटना रेफर किया गया। दोनों बच्चों का उपचार आरबीएसके एवं बाल हृदय योजना के अंतर्गत पूरी तरह निःशुल्क कराया जाएगा। स्वास्थ्य विभाग की टीम ने बच्चों के सुश्रित रेफरल, आवश्यक चिकित्सकीय दस्तावेज तथा परिजनों को जरूरी सहयोग



एंजुलेंस से अस्पताल ले जाते संस्था के लोग

उपलब्ध कराया। विभागीय अधिकारियों के अनुसार आईजीआईएमएस पटना में विशेषज्ञ चिकित्सकों की देखरेख में बच्चों का इलाज किया जाएगा। स्वास्थ्य विभाग के अनुसार आरबीएसके के तहत जिले के स्कूलों, आंगनबाड़ी केंद्रों और स्वास्थ्य संस्थानों में बच्चों की

नियमित स्वास्थ्य जांच की जा रही है। जांच के दौरान जन्मजात हृदय रोग समेत अन्य गंभीर बीमारियों की पहचान कर बच्चों को उच्च चिकित्सा संस्थानों में रेफर किया जाता है। इससे गरीब एवं जरूरतमंद परिवारों को बड़ी राहत मिल रही है। सिविल सर्जन डॉ. राज कुमार चौधरी ने बताया कि

बाल हृदय योजना गरीब परिवारों के लिए काफी लाभकारी साबित हो रही है। पहले आर्थिक अभाव के कारण कई परिवार बच्चों का इलाज नहीं करा पाते थे, लेकिन अब सरकार की पहल से जांच, रेफरल, परिवहन और उपचार की पूरी सुविधा निःशुल्क उपलब्ध कराई जा रही है।

AGENCY SUPAUL :

जिले के रतनपुरा थाना क्षेत्र में गुरुवार सुबह एक सड़क हादसे ने पूरे इलाके को झकझोर कर रख दिया। नेपाल से अवैध शराब लेकर भाग रहे तस्करोँ की तेज रफ्तार कार ने जदयू नेता और किराना व्यवसायी मनोज कुमार को कुचल दिया, जिससे उनकी मौत हो गई।

घटना के बाद नई बाजार रतनपुर इलाके में अफरा-तफरी का माहौल बन गया, वहीं परिजनों का रो-रोकर बुरा हाल है। प्रत्यक्षदर्शियों के अनुसार पुलिस नेपाल से लाई जा रही शराब की बड़ी खेप का पीछा कर रही थी। इसी दौरान शराब तस्करोँ की होंडा सिटी कार अनियंत्रित हो गई। पहले कार सड़क पर जा रहे एक



पटनास्थल पर दुर्घटनाग्रस्त कार व अस्पताल में किराना व्यवसायी

ट्रैक्टर से जा भिड़ी और फिर सड़क किनारे पैदल जा रहे मनोज कुमार को अपनी चपेट में ले लिया। टक्कर इतनी जबरदस्त थी कि ट्रैक्टर का अगला चक्का टूटकर पूरी तरह क्षतिग्रस्त हो गया। बताया जा रहा है कि मनोज कुमार अपनी पोती को स्कूल

छोड़कर रतनपुरा चौक स्थित किराना दुकान खोलने जा रहे थे। तभी तेज रफ्तार कार ने उन्हें जोरदार टक्कर मार दी। हादसे के बाद स्थानीय लोगों ने तुरंत उन्हें गंभीर हालत में रेफरल अस्पताल राधोपुर पहुंचाया। डॉक्टरों ने प्राथमिक उपचार शुरू किया,

लेकिन हालत बिगड़ने पर हायर सेंटर रेफर करने की तैयारी के दौरान ही उनकी मौत हो गई। मृतक की पत्नी पुष्पा कुमारी रतनपुर वार्ड-5 में आंगनबाड़ी सेविका हैं। घटना की सूचना मिलते ही परिवार में मातम पसर गया। स्थानीय लोगों और समर्थकों

अपराधी को पकड़ने गई पुलिस टीम पर फायरिंग, बदमाश हुआ घायल

किशनगंज शहर के सदर थाना क्षेत्र में फरिगगोला रेलवे फाटक के पास हुई घटना



पटनास्थल पर पड़ी बाइक व पुलिस पदाधिकारी

इंस्पेक्टर मुश्ताक आलम को भी आंशिक चोटें आई हैं। घटना की सूचना मिलते ही जिलाधिकारी विशाल राज और पुलिस अधीक्षक संतोष कुमार पुलिस बल के साथ मौके पर पहुंचे और मामले की जांचकारी ली। इसके बाद घायल पुलिस अधिकारियों और अपराधी को इलाज के लिए

सदर अस्पताल भेजा गया। जानकारी के अनुसार पुलिस को सूचना मिली थी कि बाइक चोरी गिरोह के सदस्य चौहान बस्ती में जमा हुए हैं और किसी बड़ी घटना को अंजाम देने की योजना बना रहे हैं। तकनीकी जांच के बाद पुलिस टीम मौके पर पहुंची। पुलिस को देखते ही अपराधी

भागने लगे। इसी दौरान पुलिस और अपराधी पवन कुमार उर्फ चिंटू के बीच मुठभेड़ हो गई। बताया जाता है कि गिरफ्तारी के दौरान आरोपी ने पुलिस टीम पर हमला कर दिया, जिसके बाद आत्मरक्षा में पुलिस ने जवाबी फायरिंग की। इसमें आरोपी और पुलिस अधिकारी घायल हो गए। एसपी संतोष कुमार ने बताया कि पुलिस को अपराधियों के जमा होने की सूचना मिली थी। कार्रवाई के दौरान फायरिंग की घटना हुई, जिसमें दो पुलिस अधिकारी घायल हुए हैं। वहीं एक अपराधी भी घायल हुआ है। उन्होंने कहा कि पुलिस की ओर से की गई फायरिंग आत्मरक्षा में की गई। मामले की जांच जारी है।

आईआईटी रुड़की के छात्र की मौत को हत्या बता परिजनों ने किया सड़क जाम

पुलिस पर मामले को दबाने का लगाया आरोप, 36 घंटे बाद पहाड़ के नीचे से निकाला शव

AGENCY NAWADA :

जिले के ककोलत पहाड़ के ऊपर अवस्थित अमझौर कुंड में डूबने से आईआईटी छात्र की मौत को हत्या बताते हुए गुरुवार को परिजनों ने नवादा समाहरणालय तथा प्रजातंत्र चौक को जामकर पुलिस पर हत्या के मामले को दबाने का आरोप लगाते हुए दोषियों पर कार्रवाई की मांग की। मृतक छात्र धनराज के पिता सीआरपीएफ के जवान हेमंत राज ने बताया कि असम में ड्यूटी के दौरान उन्हें पुत्र के साथ घटित घटना की जानकारी मिली। इसके बाद भारी मशक्कत से नवादा पहुंचे। नवादा पहुंचे के बाद 36 घंटे बाद भारी मशक्कत के बाद उनके पुत्र की लाश ककोलत



प्रजातंत्र चौक जाम करते लोग

जलप्रपात पहाड़ के चार किलोमीटर अवस्थित कुंड से निकला गया। लाश देखने से साफ तौर पर जाहिर है कि उसकी मौत नहीं बल्कि हत्या हुई है।उन्होंने आरोप लगाया कि नवादा जिले के रजौली थाने के अंधरबारी गांव के निवासी अमित कुमार तथा अकबरपुर थाने के महानंदपुर गांव के आनंद कुमार नामक युवक ने

उसे मंगलवार को ही पहाड़ी पर ले गए। जहां डूबने की खबर देकर हत्या के मामले को दबाया गया। उन्होंने साफ तौर पर कहा कि उनके पुत्र की मौत डूबने से नहीं हुई है। अगर डूबता तो निश्चित तौर पर पेट में पानी होती। लेकिन उनके पुत्र के पेट में पानी नहीं निकला। जिससे साफ जाहिर है की ले जाने वाले दोनों युवकों ने

उनकी हत्या कर डूबने का नाटक किया। उन्होंने कहा की थाली थाना प्रभारी मुख्य आरोपी को सम्मान के साथ थाने में खाना खिला रहे हैं। जबकि पीड़ित परिजनों को गालियां दे रहे हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि पीड़ित परिजनों को थाने से गालियां देकर भगाई गई। गुरुवार को पोस्टमार्टम के बाद मृतक के पिता हेमंत राज सहित सैकड़ों ग्रामीणों ने नवादा के प्रजातंत्र चौक को जामकर पुलिस के वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों से उच्च स्तरीय जांच कर दोषियों के विरुद्ध कार्रवाई की मांग की है। उनका साफ मानना है की डूबने की घटना नहीं बल्कि उनके पुत्र की हत्या हुई है। हत्यारों के विरुद्ध कार्रवाई होनी चाहिए।

भागलपुर में 12 घंटे के अंदर लापता पांच बच्चियां बरामद

AGENCY BHAGALPUR :

भागलपुर पुलिस को बड़ी सफलता हाथ लगी है। जिले के नाथनगर थाना क्षेत्र के लालुचक से लापता हुई पांच बच्चियों को पुलिस ने महज 12 घंटे के भीतर सकुशल बरामद कर लिया है। उक्त आशय की जानकारी गुरुवार को सिटी एसपी शैलेंद्र सिंह ने एक प्रेस वार्ता के दौरान दी। सिटी एसपी ने बताया कि वरीय पुलिस अधीक्षक के निर्देश पर नगर पुलिस अधीक्षक और पुलिस उपाधीक्षक के नेतृत्व में छह विशेष टीमों का गठन किया गया। टीम में नाथनगर, मोजाहिदपुर, हबीबपुर, जीरोमाइल, विश्वविद्यालय और कोतवाली थाना की पुलिस के साथ तकनीकी शाखा की टीम को भी शामिल किया गया। पुलिस ने रेलवे स्टेशन, बस स्टैंड, बाजार और संभावित



मांगले की जानकारी देते पुलिस पदाधिकारी

ठिकानों पर लगातार छापेमारी और जांच अभियान चलाया। तकनीकी अनुसंधान और मोबाइल ट्रैकिंग के जरिए पुलिस को अहम सुराग मिले। जिसके बाद पटना जीआरपी की मदद से सभी लड़कियों को बरामद कर लिया गया। सिटी एसपी ने बताया कि सभी पांचों बच्चियों को

भागलपुर पुलिस के द्वारा सकुशल वापस लाने के लिए पुलिस उपाधीक्षक हेडक्वार्टर एवं केस के अनुसंधानकर्ता को पटना के लिए रवाना किया गया है। उन्होंने कहा कि समुचित प्रक्रिया पूरी करने के बाद सभी लड़कियों को उनके परिजनों को सुपुर्द किया जाएगा।

Mourning the decline of Election Commission

THE people of Bengal, those who were permitted to vote, recently discarded that old warhorse, Mamata Banerjee, and introduced Prime Minister Modi's "double engine" to its revered soil. How will that change affect the Bengalis? And how will it affect their fellow Indians living in the other states of the union?

First, let us consider the danger to democracy by the decline of an essential institution that is germane to the concept of democracy — the Election Commission of India. The ECI was a much-respected entity, not only in India but also admired by other great countries of the world. Observers from those countries used to wonder at the virtual miracle performed by the ECI which took immense pride in ensuring that even a remote hamlet in the mountains with a tiny population of less than a hundred souls was enabled to vote and that too, fearlessly.

All this elan has, alas vanished with the conduct of the Assembly elections in West Bengal! A comment I heard from a concerned citizen residing in my city of Mumbai said it all: "Two revered politicians — then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and then Home Minister Vallabhbhai Patel -- laid a solid foundation for democracy in our land. Now, the structures built by Nehru and Patel are being destroyed."

The alacrity with which the current government appointed the election commissioners attracted an adverse comment even from the Supreme Court. Tongue-in-cheek, the Bench remarked that the government should show similar haste and enthusiasm in the appointment of Supreme Court and high court judges!The Supreme Court had advised the government to expedite the passage of a law to replace the makeshift arrangement, wherein the Prime Minister, assisted by the LOP and the CJI, chose the election commissioners. The senior member of the chosen three was then designated CEC.

When the government enacted The CEC and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, it left out the Chief Justice of India from the appointments committee and substituted the CJI with a minister chosen by the Prime Minister from his own Cabinet, thus ensuring 2-1 majority for the candidates of their choice. Prime Minister Modi chose his right-hand man, Amit Shah, to join him and the LOP, Rahul Gandhi, in the selection process. Thus was the outcome of the process predetermined.Rahul objected to the choices made by the duo from Gujarat but was overruled by the two BJP heavyweights. The ground was set for the Bengal SIR with that one stroke of arrogant superiority. Lakhs of "infiltrators", overwhelmingly Muslim, were disenfranchised! This was a complete travesty of justice which our courts of law were reluctant to correct!A farce was enacted when 19 judges of some high courts were inducted to decide the validity of the exclusions ordered by the Election Commission with less than a month to dispose of lakhs of appeals.

One retired Chief Justice of the Kolkata High Court, Justice Sivagnanam decided 1,717 appeals against exclusion in the 20 days available to him. Every appeal heard by him resulted in the voting right being restored, testifying to the bias and partiality displayed in deciding the citizenship of those termed as 'ghuspathias' (infiltrators) who he says are infiltrators from Bangladesh.

Hosabale opens a window

Pakistan has to be acknowledged as a neighbour that India should have a means to deal with

THERE is an ancient and reassuring saying that when God closes a door, He opens a window. Dattatreya Hosabale, a senior functionary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), has opened that proverbial window for a dialogue between India and Pakistan. All doors in this relationship between neighbours have remained shut since the Pulwama terror attack in 2019.Hosabale has now said that India should keep a window open for dialogue with Pakistan while firmly tackling cross-border terrorism. There is nothing new about this formulation. This has been said before by many. What is new is that this time the call has come from a member of the so-called 'Sangh Parivar'.

When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh sought to engage President Pervez Musharraf in a composite dialogue seeking resolution of several outstanding issues that bedevilled the bilateral relationship, the mantra chanted by the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), several retired diplomats, police officers and armed forces' brass used to be that "talks and terrorism cannot go hand in hand".Hosabale's observation, since endorsed by the Narendra Modi government, amounts to an acknowledgment of Manmohan Singh's view that even while Indian security forces deal with cross-border terrorism, the two governments should remain in diplomatic contact and facilitate civil society interaction.After the November 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, the Manmohan Singh government succeeded in establishing Pakistan's direct involvement by capturing a terrorist alive, subjecting him to a fair trial and then sentencing him to death. Many in the present RSS-BJP dispensation have repeatedly mocked Dr Singh for his handling of the Mumbai attacks. The fact is neither in Pulwama nor in Pahalgam has the Modi government convincingly established Pakistan's official culpability. The party's support base may have been convinced but not the international community.Yet, there has been much grandstanding after 2019. The Modi government imagined that the termination of Article 370 of the Constitution, an altered status for Jammu and Kashmir and a 'muscular response' to Pakistani perfidy was all that was needed. The Union Home Minister and the External Affairs Minister declared that the only remaining item on India's agenda was to reclaim Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Talk is easy.



From Pulwama in 2019 till after Pahalgam in 2025, there was virtually no contact at any level between the two governments and the people. It was left to the Americans and Europeans to fund what are termed 'Track-2' dialogues. However, till recently, Indian participation in these Track-2 dialogues was neither officially authorised nor welcomed.

In 2019, I was invited to an India-Pakistan Track-2 that met in Bangkok and was funded by a Canadian outfit. When I discovered that the Indian participants included the late SK Lambah, a retired diplomat and Manmohan Singh's 'back channel' to Musharraf, the Congressman Mani Shankar Aiyar and the academic Happyymon Jacob, I suggested to the hosts that they should have someone from the Sangh Parivar to make any such dialogue meaningful. At our host's request, I reached out to a senior RSS functionary. The Modi government did not encourage his participation. That dialogue achieved nothing.Last year, after the Pahalgam attack and US President Donald Trump's activism in South Asia, there was a sudden revival of India-Pakistan Track-2 in which retired diplomats and others known to be close to the BJP participated. These were funded by US and British organisations. This was the first signal of a change in approach. Clearly, Prime Minister Modi has been under

considerable pressure to change the Indian approach to Pakistan after the sensational diplomatic goals that the latter scored in the United States and around the world. Once referred to as a 'failed state', a 'pariah', a 'dalal' and so on, Pakistan has to be acknowledged as a neighbour that one should have a means to deal with. Hit them hard when necessary but keep a range of channels open to facilitate not just a dialogue but a change in behaviour.

It is against this background that one must view Hosabale's intervention suggesting resumption of people-to-people contact. The hope clearly is that they can help reduce tensions and improve relations. Interestingly, his remarks were soon echoed by the former Chief of the Army Staff, Gen MM Naravane, a distinguished and wise soldier, suggesting that even the armed forces would like to see that diplomacy and civil society play their part in maintaining balance in the bilateral relationship.

The Indian armed forces view kinetic action as the last resort. They are not trigger-happy adventurers. It is only when diplomatic and other forms of contact fail that military solutions should be resorted to. A very different approach from the one that Prime Minister Modi has followed since 2019. To be fair to Mr Modi, he did try his hand at diplomacy with Pakistan but was unable to establish trust with his interlocutors.

What are the compulsions — diplomatic, economic and political — that have now forced the RSS and BJP to retreat from their earlier stand and advocate restoration of people-to-people contact, signalling a willingness to move to diplomatic contact? Various theories are being aired in the media, ranging from India's need to seek restoration of overflight rights for Indian airlines that are losing business to foreign competitors, to a recognition that if the world and India's neighbours are doing business with Pakistan how can India shut its doors?

Hosabale's remarks are wide-ranging and define a new approach to Pakistan from a government that has not only claimed to have made Pakistan a marginal player in world affairs, but also bad-mouthed its diplomacy and promoted movies that demonise the neighbour and promote malicious lies about the Manmohan Singh government, its senior ministers and security administrators. Political grandstanding at home will never deliver the results India needs from its relations with Pakistan. Civilised people-to-people contact and mature diplomacy have a better chance.

Primacy of bail: Supreme Court rightly questions its own verdict

The apex court's introspection and self-correction that serve the interests of justice are welcome

THE Supreme Court's reiteration that "bail is the rule and jail the exception" even in cases under UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) has again turned the spotlight on the prolonged pre-trial detention of activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam. Granting bail to an accused in a narco-terror case, the Bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan has disapproved of the judgment delivered by another two-judge SC Bench in the Gulfisha Fatima case pertaining to the 2020 Delhi riots. In that case, several accused got bail in January this year, but Umar and Sharjeel were denied relief. The Court had made a distinction on the basis of a "hierarchy of participation," holding that the duo stood on a "qualitatively different footing" from the co-accused.It's not common for the apex court to question its own verdicts. Introspection and self-correction that serve the interests of justice are welcome. The landmark judgment in the KA Najeeb



case (2021), which recognised long delay in trial as a ground for bail in cases under UAPA, should be followed in letter and in spirit by Supreme Court and

high court judges across the board. The grant of bail to Syed Iftikhar Andrabi in the narco-terror case drives home the Court's point that national security concerns cannot eclipse the fundamental right to personal liberty. The judgment aims to restore the balance between state power and individual rights. Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution guarantee protection against arbitrary detention, and these safeguards remain valid even if the allegations are grave. Thousands have been arrested under UAPA over the years, yet the conviction rate remains dismally low (around 5 per cent). Umar and Sharjeel are among those who have spent years behind bars before trial, effectively serving punishment without conviction. It's vital to ensure speedy trials and consistency in bail decisions under anti-terror laws. Failure to do so can undermine the presumption of innocence — the bedrock of any democratic legal system.

Hantavirus episode is a warning about future pandemics

Preparedness requires vigilance without panic, investment without delay and cooperation without reservation

Recent reports of a cruise ship carrying patients with the hantavirus pulmonary syndrome have sent ripples across global public health systems. With passengers dispersing to countries/regions across the world — from Australia to Europe and the US — the possibility of silent transmission has once again brought the world to a familiar edge of uncertainty. Contact tracing, isolation and surveillance efforts are underway, but the episode underscores a sobering truth: the next pandemic threat may already be in motion, quietly and unpredictably.Hantavirus is not new. It has long been known to circulate among rodents — creatures that live in close proximity to human settlements worldwide. What is new, and concerning, is the possibility — still under scientific scrutiny — that certain strains may be evolving towards limited human-to-human transmission. If such a shift becomes epidemiologically significant, what are today sporadic outbreaks could transform into tomorrow's global crisis.

Hantavirus is only one among several looming threats. The world has already witnessed Nipah and Ebola virus outbreaks, both with high fatality rates and limited therapeutic options. India, in particular, has experienced repeated Nipah outbreaks in states like Kerala and West Bengal, demonstrating how zoonotic viruses can emerge abruptly and challenge even well-prepared health systems.What is striking, in hindsight, is that the global scientific community had anticipated such threats. In 2018, the World Health Organisation (WHO) identified a list of pathogens with pandemic potential. Interestingly, it did not name the virus that would soon bring the world to a standstill — the SARS-CoV-2 virus responsible for Covid-19. Instead, it referred to a hypothetical "Disease X," representing an unknown pathogen capable of causing a serious international

epidemic. Covid-19 was, in essence, Disease X realised. The lesson is clear: the next pandemic may not come from a known virus but from one that currently exists in wildlife reservoirs, largely undetected. Thousands of coronaviruses, for example, circulate among bats and other species. Only a handful (only seven at the last count) have so far crossed the species barrier to infect humans. The rest remain latent threats, awaiting ecological or behavioural triggers — deforestation, climate change, urbanisation or intensification of livestock farming — to spill directly into human populations or through livestock and omnipresent bats.

This is where the concept of "One Health" becomes indispensable. The One Health approach recognises the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and the environment. It is not merely a theoretical framework but a practical necessity in a world where zoonotic spillovers are becoming more frequent. Surveillance systems must therefore extend beyond hospitals and laboratories into forests, farms and wildlife ecosystems. Veterinary sciences, environmental monitoring and human medicine must converge into a coordinated, real-time intelligence network.

Encouragingly, the global community has begun to respond. The WHO Pandemic Agreement, adopted in 2025, represents a landmark effort to institutionalise preparedness. Designed as a legally binding pandemic treaty, it seeks to strengthen global surveillance, ensure equitable access to vaccines and treatments, and improve coordinated responses during health emergencies. While negotiations on certain aspects — particularly pathogen-sharing mechanisms — are ongoing, the intent signals a shift toward collective

responsibility.However, global agreements alone cannot substitute for national readiness. India, with its vast population, ecological diversity, and varying health infrastructure across states, must prioritise pandemic preparedness as a continuous, not episodic, effort. The next pandemic will not announce itself politely; it will emerge unexpectedly, compressing response timelines



and testing systemic resilience. Covid-19 offered invaluable lessons, some of which remain insufficiently internalised. First, the pandemic response cannot focus solely on the disease at hand. Essential health services must continue. During the Covid pandemic, disruptions in maternal care, tuberculosis treatment, cancer management and immunisation programmes resulted in collateral damage that will take years to fully quantify. A resilient system must be able to "walk and chew gum at the same

time" — to fight the pandemic while sustaining routine healthcare.Second, infrastructure and capacity cannot be built overnight. Intensive care units, trained manpower, diagnostic networks and supply chains require sustained investment and periodic stress-testing. Simulation exercises, akin to military drills, should become standard practice for health systems. These drills not only identify gaps but also build institutional confidence.Third, mental health must be recognised as an integral component of pandemic response. The psychological toll of prolonged uncertainty, isolation and economic disruption is profound, particularly among vulnerable populations. Integrating mental health services into primary healthcare and emergency preparedness plans is no longer optional.

Finally, preparedness demands resources — and political will. In an era marked by geopolitical tensions and competing priorities, there is always a temptation to defer investments in public health infrastructure. Yet the cost of inaction far exceeds the cost of preparedness. The economic and social devastation wrought by the Covid pandemic stands as a stark reminder. Investing in pandemic readiness is not an expenditure; it is an insurance policy for national stability.

The world today stands better equipped than it did in 2019 — but not yet adequately prepared. Surveillance gaps persist. Health inequities remain stark. Coordination, both within and between countries, is still evolving. The next pandemic threat — whether from hantavirus, Nipah, an unknown coronavirus or an entirely new pathogen — will test not just our scientific capabilities but our collective resolve guided by One Health approach.

TSF Group announces JV with Bosch to make air suspension systems in India

New Delhi,.(Agency) TS Santhanam family-owned TSF Group, a branch of the TVS Group, on Wednesday announced a proposed joint venture with Bosch to manufacture next-generation electronically controlled air system products for trucks and buses in India.

The joint venture will have a 50:50 shareholding between TSF Group companies Wheels India and Brakes India.Globally, OEMs are increasingly shifting towards modular, electronically controlled air and braking platforms and suspension systems — segments that will form the core product portfolio of the joint venture.The JV will focus on the engineering, manufacturing and sale of electronically controlled and software-driven modules for air compression, air processing, air suspension and air parking brakes.The proposed venture seeks to combine Bosch's strengths in electronics, software, sensing and control systems with the mechanical system design, pneumatic management architecture and manufacturing capabilities of Brakes India and Wheels India.

“As part of the TSF Group, Wheels India has been a pioneer in air suspension systems for buses in India for over three decades. Over this period, we have built strong relationships with both OEMs and end users through consistent product quality and service. We are pleased to collaborate with Bosch on this development initiative to advance electronic air suspension systems for global customers,” said Srivats Ram, chairman and managing director of Wheels India.Wheels India is a leading manufacturer of wheels for trucks, agricultural tractors, passenger vehicles and construction equipment, apart from air suspension systems for trucks and buses and industrial components for the construction and windmill industries. The company has manufacturing plants across Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh.

Instant home services startups burn cash as competition intensifies

Kolkata .(Agency) India’s instant home services market is rapidly emerging as the next major battleground in the country’s consumer internet sector, with companies including Urban Company, Pronto and Snabbit pouring millions of dollars into ultra-fast domestic labour delivery even as losses mount and profitability remains uncertain.

The shift marks the latest evolution of India’s quick-commerce boom, where the promise of 10-minute grocery deliveries is now extending to household chores such as cleaning, dishwashing, laundry and meal preparation.Urban Company said its rapid-response home services platform InstaHelp, launched only this financial year, delivered 2.7 million orders and a net transaction value of Rs 40 crore in the March quarter, with March alone crossing 1.1 million orders. The business reported an adjusted EBITDA loss of Rs 119 crore during the quarter as the company sharply increased spending on customer acquisition, supply onboarding and micro-market expansion.“We are investing to win, and we intend to stay ahead,” cofounder and chief executive Abhiraj Singh Bhal said during the company’s earnings call.The company’s aggressive push comes amid a surge of investor interest in instant home services startups. Earlier this month, Pronto raised \$20 million in fresh funding from venture capitalist Lachy Groom, doubling its valuation to \$200 million within two months. The company said its daily bookings had jumped from 3,000 in December to more than 26,000 currently.Snabbit, another fast-growing player in the segment, raised \$56 million in April in a funding round led by Susquehanna Venture Capital, Mirae Asset Venture Investments and Bertelsmann India Investments. The company said it crossed one million monthly jobs in March.Recently, in a report, Morgan Stanley said combined monthly active users across Urban Company, Pronto and Snabbit reached 10.4 million in March, underlining the rapid adoption of app-based home services.

Adani Power to acquire 24% stake in JJPVL, key thermal assets for ₹4,194 cr

New Delhi.(Agency) Adani Power on Thursday said it has entered into definitive agreements to acquire a 24 per cent stake in Jaiprakash Power Ventures and other thermal assets from Jaiprakash Associates for about ₹4,193.59 crore.According to a regulatory filing, the company has also inked a Share Purchase Agreement for the acquisition of 24 per cent shares of Jaiprakash Power Ventures Ltd, held by Jaiprakash Associates.Further, Adani Power has ined a Business Transfer Agreement for the acquisition of the 180 MW thermal power plant of Jaiprakash Associates located in Churk and other related assets, including 11.49 per cent shares of Prayagraj Power Generation Company Ltd, held by Jaiprakash Associates.It stated that the consideration for 24 per cent of the shareholding of JPVL, held by JAL, stood at ₹2,993.60 crore and for the 180 MW thermal power plant of JAL located in Churk and other related assets, including 11.49 per cent shares of Prayagraj Power Generation Company Ltd, held by JAL, is ₹1,200 crore.On March 19, 2026, the company had intimated bourses that it had expressed its in-principle interest in becoming one of the "Implementing Entities" under the NCLT-approved resolution plan for Jaiprakash Associates Ltd.The company stated that as part of the implementation of the Approved Resolution Plan, the company has entered into these definitive agreements with JAL.

Can the rupee really crash to 150 against the US dollar?

Most economists will still rule out the viral prediction about the rupee hitting 150 against the US dollar. But in a world shaped by wars, oil shocks and volatile capital flows, is the debate really that absurd anymore?

New Delhi,.(Agency) Rs 150 for one US dollar sounds less like an exchange rate and more like the kind of number associated with an economy in deep trouble.Which is precisely why a recent prediction by finance commentator and Biz News+ founder Jayant Mundhra exploded across social media this week, triggering disbelief, panic, memes and a surprisingly serious debate about how vulnerable the rupee really is if the global energy crisis deepens further.Oil prices are climbing

again amid escalating geopolitical tensions. The US dollar is strengthening. American bond yields are surging. Foreign investors are turning cautious on emerging markets. And the rupee itself is already under pressure as fears of imported inflation and rising energy costs return to the centre of market conversations.Under normal circumstances, a prediction like “Rs 150 per dollar” may have been dismissed as internet sensationalism. But these are not normal market conditions.India imports the bulk of its crude oil requirements, making the rupee especially vulnerable whenever energy prices spiral higher. Every sustained jump in crude widens the country’s import bill, increases demand for dollars, and puts fresh pressure on the currency.That vulnerability is exactly what Mundhra tapped into during his now-viral podcast appearance.His broader argument was that India’s dependence on imported energy, electronics, technology infrastructure



and foreign capital leaves the rupee structurally exposed to external shocks. If oil prices remain elevated for a prolonged period while global investors continue rushing toward dollar assets, sustained rupee weakness could become difficult to avoid.

MAKING SENSE OF THE RUPEE'S FALL

The conversation around the rupee has already shifted noticeably in recent weeks.As India Today Digital noted in an analysis, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

appears increasingly comfortable allowing gradual depreciation rather than aggressively defending psychological currency levels through large-scale intervention. Economists tracking the currency market believe the RBI is now focused more on preventing disorderly volatility than defending specific exchange-rate levels.That shift matters because it hanges how markets think about rupee weakness.Not very long ago, even discussing a three-digit rupee-dollar exchange rate sounded catastrophic. But former IMF Deputy Managing Director and Harvard professor Gita Gopinath recently argued that a rupee touching 100 against the dollar should not automatically be viewed as a crisis.Her point was not that a weakening rupee is harmless. Rather, it was that exchange rates alone do not determine economic strength, especially during periods of global dollar dominance and elevated oil prices.But Rs 150 is an entirely different conversation.

Silent listings? Why companies are going for confidential IPO filings

New Delhi.(Agency) Rising tensions in West Asia are now beginning to reshape India’s IPO market, with more companies reportedly considering confidential filings for their stock market debut as uncertainty grips global financial markets.Investment bankers and legal experts have said that a growing number of IPO-bound firms are now exploring the confidential filing route with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) instead of going through the traditional public filing process.

The shift comes at a time when crude oil prices remain elevated, the rupee is hitting record lows, foreign investor sentiment remains weak and stock markets continue to see volatility due to the prolonged conflict in West Asia.

WHY COMPANIES ARE TURNING CAUTIOUS

Companies planning IPOs usually prefer stable market conditions because uncertain markets can impact valuations, investor demand and listing performance.But the ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia have created fears around inflation, higher

energy prices, rising bond yields and weaker capital flows into emerging markets like India.

This has made several companies cautious about publicly revealing sensitive financial and business details



too early in the IPO process.

"Given that there is a lot of business uncertainty arising from the West Asia crisis, this additional time is an important benefit for IPO bound companies," Pracheta Bhattacharya, partner, JSA Advocates & Solicitors told The Economic Times (ET).

"Additionally, companies in niche sectors or the technology-led businesses do not want to reveal confidential performance metrics at the DRHP stage, with limited deal certainty. For them, it's making perfect sense to go for

the confidential route," he added.Under Sebi's confidential filing mechanism, companies can privately submit their draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) to the regulator without immediately making business and financial information public.The route gives firms greater flexibility to assess market conditions before formally launching their IPOs.

HOW CONFIDENTIAL IPO FILINGS WORK

Sebi introduced the confidential filing route in November 2022, bringing India closer to IPO practices followed in markets such as the United States, United Kingdom and Canada.

Under this mechanism, companies first file documents privately with SEBI and engage with the regulator confidentially during the review process.

The draft papers are eventually made public later in the IPO timeline before the issue opens for investors.

One major advantage is the timeline flexibility.Companies opting for the confidential route get an 18-month window from SEBI's final observations to launch their IPO, compared to 12 months under the traditional filing route.

BPCL raises spot crude purchases to 60% amid West Asia conflict

New Delhi.(Agency) State-owned oil marketing company Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited on Wednesday said it has increased its spot purchase of crude oil to 60% due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

The company, during its investor call for the fourth-quarter results, said it had initially planned to procure 45% of its crude requirement through spot purchases. However, disruptions in crude supply through the Strait of Hormuz — a key waterway that handles nearly 20% of global crude supply and around 40% of India's crude imports — forced the company to raise spot purchases to 60%.

“At the beginning of the year, we had allocated around 55% of our requirement through term contracts.

But we are not getting the full term quantities. We are getting around 45–46% of our term requirement because there are constraints in the Strait of Hormuz. The roughly 10% shortfall is being met through spot purchases. Initially, we had planned for 45% spot procurement, but now it is around 60%,” said the company in an investor call.BPCL further said that several grades of crude are available in the spot market, but Russia continues to remain the major source of procurement. The company increased its Russian crude procurement from 25% in Q3 to 31% in Q4 and said it continues to rise to bridge supply gaps arising from the current geopolitical situation.The company also outlined a capital expenditure plan of Rs25,000

crore for FY27, with major investments focused on the Bina petrochemical project. According to the company, around Rs11,000 crore has been allocated towards refinery and petrochemical projects, including the Polypropylene project at Kochi, the PRFCC project at Mumbai Refinery and the Bina project.For marketing initiatives, including expansion of retail outlets, infrastructure and supply logistics, BPCL has earmarked around Rs10,000 crore. The company has also planned an equity infusion of around Rs2,250 crore into BPRL for ongoing upstream projects, while around Rs1,700 crore has been allocated towards CGD network expansion. Overall, the total capital allocation for FY27 stands at Rs25,000 crore.

Nvidia's AI gold rush continues: Posts record revenue, announces \$80 billion buyback

Nvidia Q1 results: The chip giant reported another blockbuster quarter, posting record revenue and profit numbers as global technology companies continue spending heavily on AI infrastructure, data centres and advanced computing systems.

New Delhi.(Agency) The artificial intelligence boom continues to mint money for the world's most valuable company, Nvidia.The chip giant on Wednesday reported another blockbuster quarter, posting record revenue and profit numbers as global technology companies continue spending heavily on AI infrastructure, data centres and advanced computing systems. Nvidia also announced a massive USD 80 billion share buyback programme, underlining the company’s confidence in

future growth even as competition in the AI chip market intensifies.The results once again highlighted how Nvidia has become the biggest beneficiary of the global AI race.

RECORD REVENUE DRIVEN BY AIDEMAND

Nvidia forecast second-quarter revenue of around USD 91 billion, above Wall Street estimates of USD 86.84 billion.

The company’s earnings continue to be closely watched globally because Nvidia’s chips power most of the world’s leading artificial intelligence models and large data centres.From ChatGPT-style AI tools to cloud computing and enterprise AI systems, Nvidia processors have become central to the current AI expansion.Demand for AI infrastructure has surged sharply over the past two years, with major technology companies including Alphabet, Amazon and Microsoft continuing to pour massive investments into AI.According to estimates, Big Tech

firms are expected to spend more than USD 700 billion on AI this year, up sharply from around USD 400 billion in 2025.

That spending wave has directly boosted



Nvidia’s business, making it one of the world’s most valuable companies. Alongside strong earnings, Nvidia announced an USD 80 billion share repurchase programme.A buyback allows companies to purchase their own shares

from the market, often helping improve shareholder returns and signalling management confidence in long-term growth.The move comes at a time when Nvidia’s market value has already surged dramatically due to investor optimism around artificial intelligence.

The company also raised its dividend, adding to positive sentiment among investors.

JENSEN HUANG’S BIG AI BET CONTINUES TO PAY OFF

Under CEO Jensen Huang, Nvidia has transformed from a gaming-focused chipmaker into the backbone of the global AI industry.Its high-performance GPUs are now used across cloud platforms, AI research labs, autonomous systems and advanced enterprise computing.Nvidia’s results are increasingly being viewed as a health check for the broader AI economy itself.Strong numbers from the company often indicate that spending on AI infrastructure remains strong across the technology sector.

Cockroach Janta Party beats BJP on Instagram, crosses 10 million followers in 5 days

A satirical political campaign, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), born online after the Chief Justice of India's remarks on unemployed youth, has crossed 10 million Instagram followers in five days. The Abhijeet Dipke-founded CJP has managed to surpass the ruling BJP's follower count.

New Delhi.(Agency)
What started as a satirical campaign is now overtaking India's most powerful political parties in online battles. The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a meme-fuelled satirical political movement born out of outrage, irony, and online humour in response to the Chief Justice of India's remarks on youth, has crossed 10 million followers in just five days, overtaking the BJP on the platform. In a country where political dominance has been carefully cultivated over decades, the online party has managed to outpace the ruling party armed with nothing more than sarcasm, reels, and viral rage. The account, operating under the handle @cockroachjantaparty, crossed the 10-million mark on Thursday. In contrast, the BJP's official Instagram account

@bjp4india currently has around 8.7 million followers, while the Congress's account @incindia remains ahead with roughly 13.2 million followers. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), founded in 2012, has approximately 1.9 million followers. Both politicians and vocal non-politician backers or sympathisers of the Cockroach Janta Party include prominent YouTubers and social media influencers like Dhruv Rathee, veteran activist-lawyer Prashant Bhusan. TMC leaders Mahua Moitra and Kirti Azad have also expressed their willingness to join the Cockroach Janta Party. Senior advocate and activist Prashant Bhusan called for the CJP to use its followers' surge to raise the issue of the NEET paper leak. "The Cockroach Janta Party has acquired 10.3M followers on



Instagram in 4 days, more than the BJP. It has promise if steered wisely & imaginatively. It must, of course, raise NEET paper leak & seek accountability of Dharmendra Pradhan", Bhusan posted on X. He also asked the CJP to voice the need for the right to employment. "Time to demand a right to Employment law. All people

between 21 and 60 must have the right to be employed at least the minimum wage, failing which they must receive unemployment allowance," he added on Thursday. There is a health warning here. Getting online followers is very different from getting people to join as members of a political party. Membership indicates on-ground presence. **WHO IS ABHIJEET DIPKE, FOUNDER OF COCKROACH JANATA PARTY?** The CJP's campaign first surfaced online on May 16 as a satirical youth movement responding to the controversial remarks of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant regarding sections of Indian youth. During a hearing on May 15, the CJI referred to a lawyer's social media conduct, saying,

"There are youngsters, like cockroaches, who don't get any employment or have any place in the profession. Some of them become media, some of them become social media, RTI activists, and other activists, and they start attacking everyone." These remarks sparked massive outrage on social media and gave birth to the CJP, a campaign headed by its founder Abhijeet Dipke. "I think the remarks were more triggering because they came from the Chief Justice of India, who is the custodian of the Constitution, which grants us freedom of expression. Someone who is there to safeguard our freedom of expression is comparing us to cockroaches and parasites just for putting forward our opinions. That was the more hurtful part," Dipke said in an interview.

Pharmacists' strike disrupts medicine supply

New Delhi.(Agency)
Delhi residents faced mounting inconvenience on Wednesday as a nationwide chemist strike disrupted access to medicines, while an upcoming strike by auto and cab drivers threatened to affect daily commuting across the national capital. The nationwide protest, called by the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD), led to the closure of several retail medical stores across Delhi. Chemist shops in areas such as Palam, Mayur Vihar, Shahdara, Rohini, Yusuf Sarai, Daryaganj and Malviya Nagar remained shut throughout the day. Shops outside Sir Ganga Ram Hospital were also largely closed, causing inconvenience to patients and attendants seeking medicines. The strike was organised against the rapid expansion of online pharmacies, which traditional chemists claim are hurting their businesses through steep discounts and aggressive pricing. Retail pharmacy owners said small offline stores were unable to compete with e-commerce platforms offering medicines at significantly lower prices. Chemist associations also expressed concern over alleged weak prescription verification systems followed by some online pharmacies. According to them, the sale of regulated medicines without proper checks could compromise patient safety, while offline stores continue to follow strict documentation and regulatory norms. The impact of the shutdown was visible on the ground. Vanij, a 19-year-old resident, said he had gone to buy medicines for his grandmother but found nearby medical stores closed due to the strike.

Another resident, Kuljeet Kaur, criticised the protest, saying people could require medicines during emergencies at any time. "Ultimately, these pharmacists encouraged many people to order medicines online. Ironically, they are protesting against that fact," she said.

Almawakeing Foundation and Dr Shroff Hospital empower visually impaired

New Delhi.(Agency)
Aimed at supporting people with disabilities through technology-based assistive solutions, Almawakeing Foundation, in collaboration with Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, has organised a special empowerment programme at Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital. As part of the foundation's 'Enable Program', 26 visually impaired beneficiaries have received AI-enabled smart vision glasses that assist with mobility, reading support, object recognition, navigation, and independent living through



advanced assistive technology. The event was attended by Dr Alma Chopra-Founder, Almawakeing Foundation, motivational speaker and life coach & Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital officials-and other distinguished guests. According to representatives from the Almawakeing Foundation, the initiative aligns with the foundation's vision of creating meaningful social impact through its five pillars and ensuring that no individual is left behind due to physical limitations. Dr Alma Chopra said, "This programme is to build accessibility, inclusion & innovation."

Delhi records warmest May night in 14 years; IMD forecasts heatwave conditions, issues orange alert

New Delhi.(Agency)
Delhi reeled under intense heat on Thursday as the minimum temperature settled at 31.9 degrees Celsius, 5.2 notches above normal, making it the warmest May night in the national capital in nearly 14 years. The last time the minimum temperature was higher than this was on May 26, 2012, when the minimum temperature settled at 32.5 degrees Celsius. The India Meteorological Department has predicted a heat wave for the day and the maximum temperature is expected to settle at 46 degrees Celsius. Safdarjung and Lodi Road were among the stations that recorded warm night conditions, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). A warm night is declared when the

maximum temperature remains 40 degrees Celsius or more and the minimum temperature departure is between 4.5 degrees Celsius and 6.4



degrees Celsius above normal, according to the IMD. Among the weather stations, Safdarjung recorded a minimum temperature of 31.9 degrees Celsius, 5.2 notches above the season's normal, followed by Ridge at 30.6 degrees Celsius, 4.4 notches above normal. Palam stood at 30.5 degrees Celsius,

3.4 notches above normal, Lodi Road at 29.6 degrees Celsius, 4.6 notches above normal, and Ayanagar at 27.4 degrees Celsius, 0.7 notch above normal. The city has been placed under an orange alert as the maximum temperature is expected to touch 46 degrees Celsius, with the IMD forecasting heatwave conditions during the day. The air quality was recorded in the 'moderate' category at 9 am on Thursday, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 153, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data showed. According to the CPCB, an AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe'.

Sweltering summer heat pushes pets, stray animals to the brink

New Delhi.(Agency)
As Delhi continues to battle an intense heatwave, another crisis is unfolding quietly on the streets, in homes, and inside veterinary clinics, animals are struggling to survive the brutal summer heat. According to veterinarians in the city, every year, the number of heat-related illnesses among pets and stray animals rises sharply as temperatures climb. From dehydration and heat strokes to burnt paws, skin infections, exhaustion, and loss of appetite, animals are increasingly becoming vulnerable victims of extreme weather conditions. Dr Ashwini Verma from CP Vet said veterinary clinics witness a noticeable spike in such cases



temperatures. Pets that spend time outdoors often arrive at clinics dehydrated and visibly distressed," he added. The heat does not only affect larger animals. Rabbits, cats, and other

smaller pets are equally vulnerable. Namika Yadav, owner of two rabbits, said, "Summers leave them weak, lethargic, and dehydrated." Pet owners are also witnessing major behavioural changes in their animals. Saif Anwar, who owns three cats, including a Siberian breed with thick fur, said the scorching weather becomes unbearable for them. Maintaining a cool environment throughout the day is a challenge but necessary to ensure their comfort and health. For stray animals, however, survival is far more difficult. Animal welfare worker Xia Anwar says dehydration among stray animals frequently leads to exhaustion, illness, and critical medical emergencies.

96,000 street lights in Delhi to be converted into smart LEDs

The project, estimated to cost around Rs 473.24 crore, will be implemented in phases on roads maintained by the public works department (PWD).

New Delhi.(Agency)
Delhi's roads are set for a major lighting overhaul, with the city government approving an ambitious plan to replace nearly 96,000 street lights with advanced smart LED systems across the Capital. The decision was taken on Wednesday during a hybrid meeting of the expenditure finance committee (EFC) chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. The project, estimated to cost around Rs 473.24 crore, will be implemented in phases on roads maintained by the public works department (PWD). The government aims to complete the transformation before Diwali so that Delhi's



major roads are fully illuminated with the new smart lighting system. The project is part of the announcement made by the Chief Minister in the 2026-27 Budget, where she had proposed replacing conventional street lighting with energy-efficient smart LED systems. At present, PWD roads have nearly 45,000 old high-pressure sodium vapour (HPSV) lights and around 51,000 HPSV LED lights. Altogether, the network includes close to 96,000 lights and 51,160 poles. Explaining the need for the project, the Chief Minister said the existing system had several shortcomings. Since there was no real-time monitoring mechanism, faulty street lights were often identified only after complaints were received. The Chief Minister said the initiative would help make Delhi's roads free of dark spots.

Supreme Court 'inclined' to bail for two Delhi riots accused

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it would hear on May 22 the pleas of two 2020 Delhi riots accused, Abdul Khalid Saifi and Tasleem Ahmed, challenging the high court order denying them bail. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P B Varale said that even though it was inclined to grant bail to them, it would first hear the Delhi Police's submissions regarding a recent judgment by a coordinate bench on the grant of bail. The court deferred the hearing after ASG SV Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police, sought time to make submissions. The petitions challenged the September 2, 2025, order of the Delhi High Court denying them bail. Raju said he would like to make a submission while taking into account a recent judgment by another bench,

comprising Justice B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, where it has questioned the verdict denying bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case. Earlier, on Tuesday, Raju had told the SC bench that the question of whether long jail time and delay in trial can outweigh statutory bars on bails under stringent laws like the UAPA may need to be decided by a larger bench of judges. He pointed out that two coordinate benches of the apex court had delivered conflicting decisions. While referring to a judgment delivered on Monday by the bench headed by Justice B V Nagarathna which emphatically held that "bail is the rule and jail is an exception" even in prosecutions under the UAPA, Raju

submitted that the ruling may not have laid down the correct position in law. The bench posted the matter for hearing on May 22 and asked Raju to make



submissions on that date. Senior advocate Rebecca John appeared for Saifi while advocates Mehmood Pracha and RHS Sikander appeared for Ahmed. **'Act against fake higher edu institutes'**

The Delhi HC on Wednesday called upon the Centre to act against the mushrooming of fake higher education institutions. A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said that students attracted to such institutions usually belong to small towns, who but end up with degrees that don't make them employable. **Chadha moves HC for personality rights** BJP MP Raghav Chadha on Wednesday moved the Delhi HC seeking protection of his personality rights, including his name, picture, and voice, from unauthorised use. The petition is likely to come up for hearing before Justice Subramonium Prasad on Thursday. Chadha has sought an injunction against.

NEWS BOX

Pakistan commits to fiscal targets as IMF reviews reforms, budget

World.(Agency)

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has concluded its latest round of discussions with Pakistan, focusing on the country's economic outlook, upcoming budget plans and the implementation of reforms linked to its ongoing IMF-supported financial programmes.In a statement released on Wednesday, the IMF said Pakistani authorities had committed to achieving a primary budget surplus target of 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the 2027 fiscal year as part of efforts to stabilise the economy and maintain fiscal discipline.

The IMF delegation, led by adviser Iva Petrova, visited Islamabad from May 13 to May 20 for detailed consultations with Pakistani officials. The discussions covered recent economic developments, reform progress and the possible impact of growing instability in the Middle East on Pakistan's economy.The latest talks come shortly after the IMF approved around \$1.32 billion in additional funding for Pakistan earlier this month under the country's broader \$7 billion financial assistance programme.

According to the IMF, Pakistan's central bank reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a tight monetary policy stance to control inflation and stabilise economic expectations. The fund noted that authorities would continue closely monitoring the possible spillover effects of rising global energy prices, particularly amid tensions in the Middle East that have increased volatility in oil markets.

Pakistan has been battling persistent inflation, external financing pressures and weakening foreign exchange reserves in recent years, making IMF support crucial for economic stability and investor confidence.

Israeli minister makes Gaza flotilla activists kneel with hands tied, sparks row

World.(Agency)

Israeli police forced activists from a Gaza-bound aid flotilla to kneel with their hands tied behind their backs on Wednesday. The action sparked outrage from foreign leaders and members of Israel's own government. The activists had been aboard a flotilla carrying humanitarian aid toward Gaza, as aid groups continue to warn of deep shortages despite a ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States in October 2025. Organisers said the mission sought to challenge Israel's blockade and draw global attention to conditions inside the enclave. Israel, meanwhile, said that the naval blockade remains legal under international law.The video was posted online by far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, which showed detained activists kneeling on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs as armed personnel guarded the area nearby. In one moment from the footage, officers push an activist to the ground after she shouts, "Free, free Palestine," while others remain lined up beside her.

"They came as big heroes," Ben-Gvir says while walking past detainees with an Israeli flag in hand. "Look at them now. See how they look now, not heroes and not anything."Instead of strengthening Israel's position internationally, the video opened cracks within the government itself. Foreign Minister Gideon Saar rebuked Ben-Gvir accused him of damaging the country's image after what he described as careful diplomatic efforts by soldiers and officials.Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also appeared uneasy with the optics. While defending Israel's right to stop the flotilla, Netanyahu said the treatment shown in the footage was "not in line with Israel's values and norms".

PRESSURE BUILDS ON ISRAEL

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni described Ben-Gvir's conduct as "inadmissible" after reports confirmed Italian citizens, including a lawmaker and a journalist, were among those detained. Rome demanded explanations from Israel and summoned the Israeli ambassador.

India slams Pakistan at UN, says 'heinous acts' no surprise from country bombing its own people

World.(Agency)

India on Wednesday slammed Pakistan at the United Nations Security Council, accusing it of carrying out cross-border attacks on Afghan civilians and describing such actions as consistent with a country that "bombs its own people" and engages in "systematic genocide".

The remarks came after Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir during the annual open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, held under China's presidency of the Council for May.

Responding strongly, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Harish Parvathaneni, said it was "ironic" that Pakistan, with long-tainted record of genocidal acts", had sought to comment on matters that were internal to India.

Parvathaneni referred to estimates by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which documented around 750 civilian deaths and injuries in Afghanistan during the first three months of 2026 due to cross-border violence allegedly involving Pakistani military forces.According to UNAMA estimates cited by India, 94 of 95 civilian casualty incidents were attributed to Pakistani security personnel.

How China built world's largest train station in just 38 months with robot army

In just 38 months, China built the world's largest railway station in Chongqing, a sprawling megacity strategically developed under Mao Zedong's Third Front campaign. Beijing could make the unthinkable possible due to a robot revolution.

World.(Agency)

While visiting China as part of US President Donald Trump's high-profile billionaire entourage last week, Elon Musk took to X to repost a video of the construction journey of the Chongqing East Railway Station, which is the world's largest. While Musk didn't write anything in the post, it remains a subject of curiosity about why he made the post. That's because he has

previously expressed scepticism about public transport. Curiosity aside, the real story of Chongqing East Railway Station is more interesting. The story of how it was constructed in 38 months using an army of robots. The Chongqing East Railway Station is a gigantic multi-modal transit complex. It is the world's largest railway station by floor area, which was opened to the public in May 2025.

Located deep inland in Southwestern China, Chongqing, where the station is located, is the country's largest city by both population and administrative area. A major economic powerhouse today, Chongqing was dramatically transformed starting in the 1960s under Mao Zedong's Third Front Campaign. It was a massive effort that redirected huge national resources to rapidly industrialise China's historically neglected interior regions. As a result, industries spread westwards from the Pacific coast to the

east. Today, Chongqing, and its new station, stand as a striking display of China's formidable engineering prowess, and its massive economic heft. It's the same Chinese city



where one would see metro trains passing through apartment blocks. While many countries struggle for decades to deliver large-scale projects, China built this colossal 1.22-million-square-meter

station in just 38 months. Here's how the station was built by an army of robots.

HOW CHONGQING BECAME CHINA'S INLAND MEGACITY

Before diving into the station itself, it is essential to first understand the city behind it. Chongqing is one of China's most important and dynamic megacities. Like many other Chinese urban centres like Shanghai and Beijing, Chongqing is an ancient city dating back nearly 3,000 years. During World War II, it served as the capital of the Chinese Nationalist (KMT) Government after the fall of the erstwhile capital, Nanking, to Japanese forces in 1937. It was during the 1960s that Chongqing truly rose as one of China's most important urban centres. The city became a major beneficiary of the Third Front Campaign, a massive industrialisation campaign directed by Mao Zedong.

Xi Jinping could mediate Trump-Kim talks during North Korea visit

World.(Agency)

Chinese President Xi Jinping is reportedly preparing for a possible visit to North Korea in the coming days as Beijing and Pyongyang move to strengthen ties. Reports suggest Xi could also seek to play a mediating role between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un amid renewed diplomatic activity surrounding Pyongyang. According to a report by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, citing senior government officials, Xi could travel to Pyongyang as early as next week. Another source familiar with the matter reportedly said Chinese security and protocol teams had recently visited North Korea, signalling that preparations for

a high-level visit were already underway.

If confirmed, the trip would underline



China's efforts to strengthen ties with North Korea at a time of rising geopolitical uncertainty in the region. Reports suggest Xi may also seek to position himself as a mediator between Trump and Kim Jong Un amid

renewed discussions surrounding Pyongyang's nuclear programme. Trump, who recently met Xi, has repeatedly signalled openness to re-engaging diplomatically with Kim. During his first presidential term, Trump and Kim held three high-profile meetings aimed at reducing tensions over North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Although those negotiations eventually stalled, Trump has continued to describe his relationship with Kim as positive and has indicated he would be willing to meet him again.

China remains North Korea's most important economic and political ally, with Beijing serving as a crucial source of trade, diplomatic support and economic assistance for the isolated country.

Iran builds new system of control in Hormuz with island checkpoints, fees: Report

World.(Agency)

The tanker crew gathered their courage and carefully navigated along a route designated by Iran, hugging the coastline and maneuvering their hulking vessel between island checkpoints through the Strait of Hormuz.

The 330-metre-long Agios Fanourios I, laden with Iraqi crude oil and bound for Vietnam, had been bottled up off the coast of Dubai since late April. But on May 10 it set off for the strait after a direct deal with Iran overseen by Iraq's prime minister.

Iran's orders to the tanker were part of a complex, multi-tiered mechanism that the country has deployed for clearing vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. With Iran now in de facto control of the strait, the system can involve government-to-government arrangements, intense vetting by the

Iranian government and sometimes fees in exchange for safe passage, Reuters has found. In Vietnam, Iraq, Greece and beyond, the ship's progress was monitored closely, including by two people interviewed by Reuters.



Periodically, the transponder went dark but the Agios Fanourios I sailed on. Not far away that same day, another ship was hit with a projectile, causing a small fire, according to a British maritime safety agency.

Later on May 10, screens lit up with the

icon for the Agios Fanourios I. But as the tanker passed Hormuz Island, it was stopped by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps speedboats, according to an Iranian official. The IRGC fighters patrolling the strait, who had initially let the vessel through, now ordered the ship to halt. The Iranian official said there was a suspicion of smuggled cargo and they wanted to inspect the ship. Several hours later, the vessel received Iranian authorisation to continue, turning what is typically a five-hour transit through the strait into a two-day ordeal. "Once we were informed Agios passed Hormuz, we breathed a sigh of relief," said one of the people monitoring the journey. No payments were made, said the ship's manager, Eastern Mediterranean Shipping and six people with knowledge of the passage.

US can wait a few days for right answers from Iran, says Trump

World.(Agency)

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said the United States was prepared to wait "a few days" for the "right answers" from Iran as negotiations between Washington and Tehran entered what he described as a decisive phase. Speaking to reporters after stepping off Air Force One, Trump said the talks were "right on the borderline" and warned that the situation could escalate rapidly if diplomacy failed.

"If we don't get the right answers, it goes very quickly," Trump said. "We're all ready to go." The US president stressed that Washington expected "complete, 100% good answers" from Tehran and argued that a successful agreement could save "a lot of time, energy and lives." Trump also indicated that the current Iranian representatives involved in the negotiations appeared "far more reasonable" than previous officials and expressed hope that a deal beneficial to both sides could still be reached.

"We're dealing with people that are, I think, far more reasonable than the people that are really no longer with us," he said, adding that he hoped "those people will make a deal that's going to be great for everyone."

At the same time, Trump cautioned that the diplomatic window remained narrow. "It could be a few days, but it could go very quickly," he added. Earlier in the day, Trump reiterated that the US would not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon and said negotiations had entered the final phase.

"We're in the final stages of Iran. We'll see what happens. Either have a deal or we're going to do some things that are a little bit nasty, but hopefully that won't happen," Trump said. "Ideally I'd like to see few people killed, as opposed to a lot. We can do it either way."

Trump also spoke with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoan, who welcomed the extension of the ceasefire and reportedly told the US president that a "reasonable solution" to the crisis remained possible. The remarks briefly eased concerns in global energy markets, with oil prices falling nearly six percent on hopes that negotiations were nearing a breakthrough and that wider disruption in the Middle East could be avoided.

IRAN WARNS AGAINST ANY RENEWED MILITARY ACTION

Iran, however, warned against any renewed military action by Washington. "If aggression against Iran is repeated, the promised regional war will extend beyond the region this time," Iran's Revolutionary Guards said in a statement. Tehran also announced the launch of a new "Persian Gulf Strait Authority" aimed at controlling maritime traffic through the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz waterway.

Americans brace for costly summer travel as Iran crisis drives fuel prices higher

World.(Agency)

Americans heading out for the Memorial Day holiday weekend are facing a sharp rise in fuel costs as the ongoing conflict involving Iran continues to disrupt global oil supplies, setting the stage for what analysts warn could become one of the most expensive summer travel seasons in recent years.

Despite soaring gasoline prices, travel demand across the United States remains strong. According to projections from the American Automobile Association (AAA), nearly 39.1 million people are expected to travel by car during the long weekend, while another 3.66 million are likely to fly. The holiday traditionally marks the beginning of the summer travel season in the US. However, the enthusiasm for road trips is increasingly being overshadowed by growing costs at the pump.

Retail gasoline prices in the US have climbed by more than \$1.50 per gallon since late February, when military tensions in the Middle East escalated following strikes involving the United States and Israel

against Iran. The conflict has severely disrupted shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most critical oil transit corridors, through which nearly one-fifth of global oil supplies pass.

The resulting supply uncertainty has pushed crude oil prices sharply higher, feeding into rising fuel and transportation costs across the American economy.

The surge in energy prices is also creating political pressure for Donald Trump, as households across the country struggle with the increasing burden of fuel expenses. Several US states are already considering temporary suspensions of gasoline taxes to provide relief to consumers, while discussions have also intensified around reducing the federal fuel tax.

Industry analysts warn that the pressure on consumers may only grow worse in the coming months. Speaking to Reuters,

Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, described the current market as one of the most volatile fuel environments in years, saying the



disruption in the Strait of Hormuz was now at the center of global energy concerns. He warned that even if shipping through the waterway resumes normally, fuel prices may take months — or even longer — to stabilise completely. The impact is already changing travel behaviour among

Americans.

According to Reuters, a recent GasBuddy survey found that fewer Americans are planning long-distance summer road trips this year. Only 56 percent of respondents said they intended to drive more than two hours during the summer, compared to 69 percent last year. Rising fuel prices have emerged as the biggest factor influencing travel plans, with many travellers cutting back on vacation distances and frequency.

At the same time, experts are increasingly concerned about shrinking gasoline inventories in the US. Energy analysts point out that gasoline storage levels have been falling steadily for weeks, even as demand remains relatively strong heading into peak driving season. Additional risks — including refinery outages, tightening global fuel supplies and the approaching Atlantic hurricane season — could put even more upward pressure on prices.

Europe, Emery has built an unparalleled legacy in the competition. He first dominated the tournament with Sevilla, winning three consecutive titles between 2014 and 2016, before guiding Villarreal to glory in 2021. Aston Villa have now become the latest club to benefit from his remarkable European touch. The triumph also marked Villa's first major trophy since the League Cup in 1996, underlining just how dramatically the club has risen under the Spaniard. Emery said after the game that he was proud to have elevated Aston Villa's standing in Europe and insisted that the ambition now was to establish the club among the Premier League elite while competing strongly in the Champions League next season. Villa captain John McGinn dedicated the victory to supporters who stood by the club through some of the darkest moments in recent history, including their three-year spell in the Championship between 2016 and 2019.



Rakul Preet Singh

Weighs In On 'One-Time Cheating' In Relationships: 'Life Is Too Long To Not Forgive'

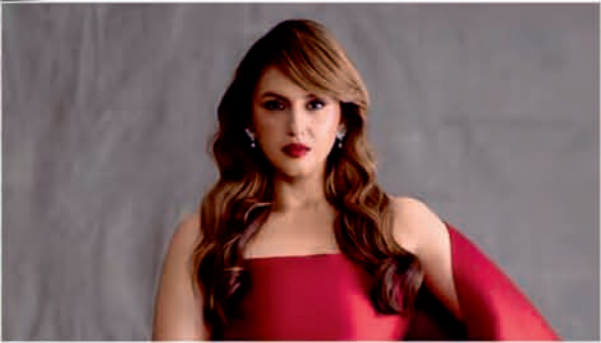
Rakul Preet Singh is currently enjoying love and appreciation coming her way for her performance in the film Pati, Patni Aur Woh Do. Directed by Mudassar Aziz, the film also stars Ayushmann Khurrana, Sara Ali Khan and Wamiqa Gabbi in key roles. Amid the positive reactions from the audience, Rakul recently spoke about cheating and forgiveness in relationships. Her comment came days after her husband, Jackky Bhagnani, jokingly described his marriage to her as a "situationship." In a recent interview, Rakul admitted that "one-time cheating" could, in some cases, be forgiven, but she also made it clear that cheating is ultimately "not okay." While speaking to Mashable India, the cast of Pati Patni Aur Woh Do was asked if cheating can ever be acceptable in a relationship. Rakul Preet Singh was quick to respond with a firm "no." Sara Ali Khan said, "I mean the least you can do is say sorry, but it is definitely not okay." Ayushmann Khurrana added, "Marriage has its own rules. At the same time, if sorry has been said genuinely, then why not?" A visibly shocked Rakul reacted and asked, "Cheating kar ke?" Ayushmann clarified his point and said, "People make mistakes. It may be genuine." Rakul went on to add, "It also depends on what is the extent... What is the extent? If cheating is a habit..." Before Rakul Preet Singh could finish her point, Sara jumped in and asked, "One-time cheating is okay?" Rakul quickly clarified her stance, saying, "I am not okay." She and Ayushmann Khurrana then reiterated together that cheating is "not okay," with Ayushmann further emphasizing, "Primarily, it is not okay." The De De Pyaar De actress further elaborated, "But if somebody can have a slip, life is too long to not forgive for one mistake." She quickly clarified that the statement had nothing to do with her own marriage, adding, "This doesn't apply to my personal relationship. Please note." Ayushmann supported her stance and said, "Humans make mistakes. But if they are genuinely apologetic about it, and if you feel for that person... life is too long." Sara, meanwhile, admitted, "I might forgive but not forget." Rakul responded, "But I think if you forgive then you will have to forget," to which Sara concluded: "That's where it gets tricky." Earlier, in an interview, Jackky's "situationship" comment took social media by storm. He said, "Rakul and I are married, but we are like in a situationship, which is, of course, we are exclusive to each other because that's why we are married. But the most important thing is that I can talk to her about anything." Social media was surprised with his comment, and it led to many thinking if things are not well between them. However, Rakul posted a playful video later, making Jackky hold his ears. In the video she was heard saying, "Kitne baar bola hai isko, that we are millennials... Gen Z banne ki zarurat nahi hain! Bola tha na."



Huma Qureshi

On Bias In Bollywood: 'Female-Led Films Still Don't Get Budgets Male Stars Do'

Huma Qureshi, who is currently at Cannes, spoke candidly about the challenges faced by women-led films in Bollywood, saying that despite changing times, female-oriented projects still struggle to receive the same budgets and backing as films headlined by male stars. Talking about India's cultural diversity and mythology, she said that there is a lot of potential in India to have stories with female-forward narratives. However, she said that female-led movies don't get the kind of budgets that films with male stars get. Despite the challenges, Huma said female actors across the industry are continuously pushing boundaries and working to change the landscape for future generations.



Huma Qureshi On Female-Oriented Films
During an interaction with Brut India at the Cannes Film Festival, Huma Qureshi was asked whether audiences have become more accepting of women-centric cinema and if more Hindi adaptations of female-led films are on the horizon. The actress replied, "I hope we don't do any remakes. I hope we do more original content. We have so much potential in our country to have our own kind of female forward narrative. We have such a diverse country. Look at our mythology, culture. Look at the stories that come from our country. I feel like the focus should be on that constantly."

Huma also reflected on the industry's long-standing perception that women-led films have limited box office potential. "Honestly, if you ask me, it's something that I am also going through or struggling with right now. Where we don't get the kind of budgets that male movie stars get. There's always that bias that female films have a certain box office potential." When asked whether such bias still exists in the industry today, the actor replied, "Yes, definitely. Maybe people wouldn't say it as much, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. And that's something you have to constantly navigate. But the only way to break that is to keep going through and just constantly keep working. And not just me, I feel so many of my female colleagues are constantly pushing that envelope and pushing hard to change the reality for not just themselves in their careers, but also for many others that will follow through."

Amaal Mallik Accuses 'Mixed Syndicate Of Egoistic Humans' Of Choking His Growth In Industry



Music composer Amaal Mallik has levelled serious allegations of lobbying against him by "a mixed syndicate of egoistic humans" in the industry. The music composer recently took to his X, formerly Twitter, and shared a long note in which he spoke about tough working conditions and hostility towards him by certain professionals in the industry. He wrote, "My Dear #AMAALIANS 2019 to 2026 The big boys in powerful positions have got me out of more than 60 odd projects. 20 films toh maine khud hi mana kar diye as it was beneath me to work in those setups.. The musician in me wouldn't be able to respect himself. I still did my bit, and will always do my best to put music and shoot videos whenever possible for my fans, with or without the movies.. No regrets at all, it's their loss. But somehow it becomes a loss to my listeners & fans, and I'm sorry for that but I need to make it clear to all of you". He further mentioned that he has been trying his best for the last 8 years, with utmost sincerity & obviously some respectful terms & conditions of working but sadly it doesn't work for this place. He also shared that his inability to hide the truth about the industry and its workings has irked them even more, leading to pointless threats to him and his family. He shared, "There are some very powerful set of people that don't want me to be part of their films or any film for a matter of fact, and it's not just labels, it's beyond that NOW, it's a mixed syndicate of egoistic humans. I will not name them today but their time will come someday and the lord above will show them their place. All of them are playing award worthy politics for almost 8 years now and that's why you hear less of my music in films". "I can't be part of a clout, a power setup, or be part of petty groupism. Even the NEPOTISM isn't working. So mujhe maaf karo..... Mera indie music suno (So forgive me..... Listen to my indie music). If a film song comes great, if not then don't fret", he added.

Celina Jaitley Gets Emotional During Visit To Maa Baglamukhi Temple, Prays To Reunite With Her Kids



Actress Celina Jaitley has been dealing with personal turmoil as she is fighting a divorce battle with her Austrian husband, Peter Haag. Amid the ongoing battle, she visited the Maa Baglamukhi Temple and prayed for a reunion with her kids and brother. In the video, a visibly emotional Celina was seen praying to Maa Baglamukhi. While sharing the video, Celina Jaitley wrote a long caption and said, "#maabaglamukhi: In the Garbhagriha of Maa Baglamukhi, I placed my prayers at the feet of the Divine Mother for reunion with my brother, for reunion with my children, and for the restoration of what love and destiny should never separate (sic)." "I share this sacred puja with every soul seeking Maa Baglamukhi's blessings, protection, justice, and the strength to bring their loved ones home (sic)," she further added. Earlier, Celina had shared another set of pictures from the temple and wrote, "A month ago... Maa Baglamukhi entered my life through a well-wisher and friend, Hiten. As a lifelong Devi Bhakt, I humbly admit... I knew very little about the Divine Mother, Maa Baglamukhi. And then... she began appearing everywhere. Through people... Through signs... Through random pop-up mantras. Through divine synchronicities, I simply could not ignore. And within just four weeks of first appearing in my life... my Mother called me to her." "Not by road. Not by chance. But in a way only the Divine could orchestrate... she brought me to her sacred temple in the most unexpected, beautiful, and luxurious way possible... on my friend's private jet... I still cannot fully comprehend it. And perhaps it was always written... as some of my own roots trace back to Kotgarh, in the beautiful mountains of Himachal Pradesh. My deepest gratitude to my dearest friend @realpz for flying me here," she added. For the unversed, in November 2025, Celina filed a case against Peter, accusing him of domestic violence, cruelty, and manipulation. She sought ₹50 crore and other sums in compensation. The case is currently in court. Celina Jaitley has been away from films for over a decade. She was last seen in a lead role in the 2011 romantic comedy Thank You.