

EYE SECRETS

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Angry Speaker Ticks Off Harish for Double Speak

Rao.

During the back and forth, when Harish Rao was vociferously insisting that the Congress government apologise to BRS women MLAs for the way the police behaved with them, the Speaker, pointedly speaking with Harish Rao, said "Why are you getting worked up? I can also get angry. My mother was named. Listen to me. I have respect for women members. I have eight sisters, I have asked for a report on the incident involving Sabitha Indra Reddy, Sunitha Laxma Reddy and Kova Lakshmi and as soon as the report comes, action will be taken."

He then added in an angry tone: "What about me Harish? Your mother was not named, it was my mother."

This outburst from the Speaker came as the rul-

ing and Ipposition sides indulged in angry exchanges with the Congress demanding that BRS president and Leader of Opposition K. Chandrashekar Rao come to the Assembly and apologise to the Speaker for Madhusudhan's remarks on the Speaker. The BRS side, led by Harish Rao, on its part, insisted that the government apologise to the three BRS women MLAs who Harish Rao said, were manhandled roughly with the sari of one of them being pulled at by the police as the BRS MLAs were trying to enter the Assembly on Monday.

Amidst the heated exchanges, legislative affairs minister D Sridhar Babu said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and the Speaker sought reports from the police on BRS allegations and that action can be taken once the report is submitted by the police. As some Congress members, including ministers Adluri Laxman and Danasari 'Seethakka' Anasuya, questioned the BRS demands and insisted on an apology from the

opposition, Harish Rao explained that Madhusudhan had withdrawn his comments and expressed regret in the event of what he said causing any hurt to the Speaker.

However, this was not taken to kindly by Congress members who continued to attack the BRS and as Harish Rao entered the well of the House demanding that Sabitha Indra Reddy be allowed to speak, the Speaker adjourned the house for a break.

Balu Pulipaka

Balu Pulipaka is a journalist with over three decades of experience, and currently serves as the Political Editor at Deccan Chronicle. He has reported extensively on local, national, and international issues, earned a reputation for insightful reporting and in-depth analysis. Specializing in politics, environmental affairs, climate change, and irrigation projects, Balu's expertise lies in crafting compelling narratives that illuminate the intersection of policy and its impact on society.

Remarks Against Speaker: Two BRS MLCs Suspended for Remainder of Council Session

Hyderabad, Sept 8

BRS MLCs Tata Madhusudhan and N. Naveen Kumar Reddy were suspended from the Telangana Legislative Council on Tuesday for the remainder of the ongoing session for their derogatory and unparliamentary remarks against Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar and indecent behaviour during a protest in the Assembly precincts. Official sources said their expulsion would be referred to the ethics committee, which is expected to submit a report at the earliest. The two MLCs were arrested on

bers.

The situation turned tense when Madhusudhan and Naveen Kumar Reddy entered the Council while the resolution against them was being discussed. Congress members objected to their presence and demanded that they be immediately suspended. The House adopted the resolution and ordered their suspension under sub-clause 2 of sub-rule 2 of Rule 308 of the Telangana Legislative Council rules.

Following their suspension, the BRS MLCs staged a dharna outside Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy's chambers. Marshals later evacuated them from the area. They subsequently proceeded to the media point on the Assembly premises, but security personnel prevented them from speaking to the media and forcibly shifted them outside the Assembly premises.

The council's action was based on a resolution adopted by the Legislative Assembly earlier in the day. The Assembly resolved to forward all evidence relating to the alleged conduct of the two MLCs to the Council for further action. The resolution was moved by Health Minister Damodar Rajnarsimha.

The Assembly resolution also called upon Leader of the Opposition K. Chandrashekar Rao to take responsibility for the conduct of the two BRS MLCs and tender an unconditional apology to the Speaker in the interest of institutional integrity, decency and decorum.

Earlier in the day, the police arrested Madhusudhan and Naveen Kumar Reddy. Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court at Nampally rejected the police's request for their judicial remand and granted the MLCs.

In its remand report, police said the accused were influential persons and could potentially tamper with evidence. They alleged that the MLCs had abused the Speaker in filthy language despite being aware that he belonged to the Scheduled Caste community. Police also referred to protests by various caste organisations across Telangana and the prevailing political tension, arguing that judicial remand was necessary to maintain law and order.



Tuesday.

The action followed a resolution moved by legislative affairs minister D. Sridhar Babu, accusing the two MLCs of making "highly derogatory, insulting and unparliamentary utterances" against the Speaker near Gate No. 3 of the Assembly premises on Monday. The resolution also alleged that the MLCs had removed their T-shirts in public in the presence of women, describing the conduct as objectionable and an affront to the dignity of the women present.

The resolution said their conduct was "wholly unbecoming" of members of the Legislative Council and was prejudicial to the dignity, authority and constitutional position of the Speaker, besides undermining the dignity and institutional integrity of the Legislative Assembly.

The Council adopted the resolution by voice vote amid strong protests from the BRS. BRS members demanded a division of votes, but the treasury benches proceeded with the voice vote, triggering heated exchanges between BRS and Congress mem-

Sushmita Konidela Gets Key Role in Vijayawada Temple Development

VIJAYAWADA, sept 8

The Andhra Pradesh government has nominated Sushmita Konidela, daughter of actor-politician Chiranjeevi, as a special invitee to the trust board of the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam Durga Temple, Indrakeeladri, Vijayawada. The appointment was formalised through a memo from the Revenue (Vigilance-VII) department on September 7. Secretary to government, K Kanna Babu, issued the memo. Special Invitees are tasked with offering advice to the executive officer and the trust board, drawing on their experience, and assisting in temple administration during major festivals and fairs.



5.0 Earthquake Jolts Nepal Amid Flood Rescue Efforts

KATHMANDU, SEPT 8

A moderate earthquake of magnitude 5.0 jolted parts of Nepal late Tuesday evening.

According to official data from the National Centre of Seismology, the seismic activity occurred at 9:38 PM IST. The epicentre was recorded at latitude 29.022° N and longitude 83.978° E in north-



western Nepal. The earthquake occurred at a depth of 143 kilometres below the surface.

Due to the relatively deep focus of the earthquake, surface impact is expected to be limited. No immediate casualties or major structural damage have been reported as the situation is being assessed.

This comes as Nepal is confronting a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with search and rescue operations entering their fourteenth day following the devastating Bhoite Koshi River floods that hit the nation last month.

According to data compiled up to 8 PM, Nepal Police reported that 1,366 casualties have been recorded, while 4,077 individuals remain unaccounted for across the disaster zone.

The official breakdown of recovered victims in-

cludes 533 men, 339 women and 502 partial human remains. Of the total recoveries made so far, police authorities have successfully verified and handed over 102 bodies to their families for final rites.

To preserve unidentified remains safely, 1,147 bodies have been buried underground under strict forensic guidelines.

Police highlighted a staggering missing-person count of 4,077 individuals, comprising both domestic residents and foreign visitors. Missing Nepalese citizens account for 3,469 people, including 2,907 men and 562 women.

Foreign nationals account for 598 missing individuals, including 269 men and 329 women.

Rescue and medical response efforts led by Nepal Police personnel have accounted for 9,254 rescued or injured individuals, including 6,380 men, 2,824 women and 50 unidentified cases.

In addition, 3,030 displaced people are receiving shelter across designated holding centres managed by authorities.

To support victim identification, specialised teams have collected 2,698 DNA samples, comprising 1,286 samples from deceased victims and 1,412 samples from relatives searching for missing family members.

Profiles and photographs of 1,310 unidentified victims have also been uploaded to the official website to assist the public in matching missing relatives.

The operations have required massive logistical deployment, with 7,975 Nepal Police personnel actively mobilised on the ground.

During the disaster response, 65 police personnel were directly affected, while 25 officers remain out of contact.

Parallel to rescue duties, police teams have conducted 158 community awareness and disaster guidance programmes, reaching 43,943 local participants.

Supreme Court to take up Satya Niketan building collapse case on September 10

NEW DELHI, SEPT 8

Taking cognisance of the Satya Niketan building collapse in Delhi that has claimed seven lives and left several others injured, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will take up the matter on September 10.

A Bench led by Justice A. Mani Kumar turned down Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's request to allow the issue to be dealt with by the Delhi High Court which was seized of a PIL on the instant case. "We already have something in mind. It has to be on a pan-India basis. We may get it (PIL pending in Delhi HC) transferred here (to SC). We will take it up the day after tomorrow," the Bench said.

Terming the incident as "horrific", Mehta tried to convince the Bench that it needed to be handled independently and that the High Court had taken it up in right earnest. "It is a horrific incident. Our hearts go out to the children and parents. A PIL has been filed in the Delhi High Court. We can file a transfer petition, but I am pointing out the order that was passed," Mehta said and went on to read out the High Court's order.

The High Court had ordered the Municipal Cor-

poration of Delhi to conduct a high-level inquiry to find out if the building had valid construction permissions and to identify officials responsible for any lapses, he said.

However, the Bench, which also included Justice R. J. Lakshmanan, said it would get the PIL pending in the High Court transferred to it. "This has been taken in right earnest, but it is overlapping. We will take it the day after tomorrow and then probably we may make the transfer here. We already have something in mind. It will have to be pan-India basis", Justice Mani Kumar told Mehta.

The issue was brought to the notice of the Bench by senior advocate and court-appointed amicus curiae Ajit Kumar Sinha, who wanted the matter to be taken up urgently. "It's a very serious issue. We have inspected... and the last inspection is today at 2.30 pm," Sinha told the Bench.

In his report filed in the top court, Sinha referred to the September 6 building collapse and sought directions for a time-bound inspection and safety audit of paying guest (PG) accommodations, private hostels and other student housing facilities across the national capital.

2 Nepali women moved to Bengaluru to build a life: Days later, both die by suicide



The bodies of two women, who came to Bengaluru from Nepal in search of work barely 15 days ago, were found near Jakkur Main Road in the city on Thursday morning. The deceased have been identified as Sirjana, 22, and Rita, 23. The Bengaluru police have confirmed the two women died by suicide.

A relative of Rita, who works as a domestic help in Yelahanka, said he became concerned when she did not return home on Wednesday night. "I tried calling her, but her phone was switched off. I assumed that she stayed back at her friends or relatives; there was nothing suspi-

cious at the time," Rita's relative told The Indian Express.Police InvestigationAccording to the police investigation so far, Sirjana and Rita were childhood friends and also relatives. They had grown up together in Nepal and, over the years, their close friendship had reportedly developed into a relationship.

As their relationship became known, opposition reportedly came from their families and others in their hometown. Sources said the two women were also subjected to teasing and social pressure in Nepal. The police said they came to Bengaluru, hoping to find work as domestic helps and live together.However, the two women were living separately in Bengaluru. While Sirjana was staying in Fraser Town, Rita was living in Jakkur. Despite this, the police said, they met frequently."On Wednesday evening, the two had gone to a relative's house near Jakkur for dinner. During the gathering, the relatives reportedly discussed finding suitable men and arranging their marriages. We suspect that this conversation might have triggered them to take such an extreme step," the police said.The police are now examining their phone records, relatives' statements, and other evidence to establish the exact sequence of events leading to their deaths.

What is Saoji cuisine, the Nagpur legacy back in focus after FDA chief's remark?



Saoji cuisine, once the food of a weaving community before becoming a working-class meal and then the pride of the Saoji community and the city of Nagpur, has come under the spotlight after Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe told an audience in Amravati, "If I ate that, I would fall sick for a month"—referring to Saoji mutton.Although Nagpur and Saoji cuisine are now synonymous, the fiery Saoji masala and cuisine came from the Halba Koshti community. Originally from Madhya Pradesh, the community, known for its weaving skills, migrated to Nagpur in the late 19th century to work in Empress Mills and other textile industries being set up there.

But when the handloom industry declined, the community had to find new ways to sustain itself. The women turned to their culinary heritage, creating Saoji masala, made by blending 32 spices with jute or linseed oil. It became the soul of Saoji food, giving it its signature heat, depth, and boldness.The flavourful, spicy food once prepared only within the community was soon being sold to the city's working class as an affordable meal option for mill workers and labourers. Over time, Saoji bhojanalayas emerged, focusing purely on taste rather than presentation. Most offered simple arrangements, often limited to wooden benches and metal plates, with an emphasis on serving hot and freshly prepared meals. The cuisine eventually became a defining part of Nagpur's food culture.

The soul of the cuisine: A 32-spice blend

The soul of the cuisine lies in its masala—a blend of 32 spices, slow-cooked using either linseed or jute oil. The cooking process involves the slow roasting of spices, allowing them to release their oils and intensify the overall flavour. The choice of oil plays a significant role in the

overall taste and texture of the dishes, giving them a distinct character that sets them apart from other regional cuisines."Some of the spices used in this blend include peppercorns, star anise, coriander, cardamom, coconut, poppy seeds, plenty of red chillies, cloves, bay leaf and nutmeg. In addition, there are a few whole spices that are also pounded and added to the dish," said Shilpi Gulati, a Punjabi who grew up in Nagpur and learnt this cuisine from her friends who hail from the Saoji community. She later started House of Saoji, a cloud kitchen, in Pune in 2021. "The coconut and other spices are roasted until they turn almost black, which adds a dark tone. It is a very different kala masala, used widely in Vidarbha," she explained.The meat, typically goat, is simmered in the spice blend for hours until it absorbs the essence of the masala, resulting in a dish that is rich, aromatic, and deeply satisfying. For those unfamiliar with Saoji food, the first taste can be overwhelming. The heat from the chillies, combined with the warmth of other spices, creates an experience that is intense yet addictive.

The food is unapologetically spicy and oily. Saoji curries, Gulati said, have a medium-thin body, are deep reddish-black in colour, and have a visible layer of oil on top—traditionally seen as a mark of a "proper" Saoji preparation. "It is very fiery or hot because it is very hot in Nagpur and the cuisine helps people regulate the temperature," she added.The food was originally cooked in earthen pots, and the community mostly cooked mutton. Over the years, chicken versions emerged, and today some restaurants even make Saoji paneer and jackfruit dishes. But the cuisine remains predominantly non-vegetarian. The cuisine has also outgrown its bhojanalaya origins—chefs across Mumbai and Pune are now recreating it for a wider audience, and diners from outside Maharashtra travel to Nagpur specifically to eat it."Back in the Nagpur/Vidarbha region, people love Saoji cuisine. Our founder Nitin Dhankute thought of bringing this food in a more family-style restaurant format to Mumbai. We opened our first outlet in Juhu to a great reception—so many cricketers and Marathi actors came and liked our food. A lot of our customers there came from Thane, so we opened another branch here," said Mohit Fune, 31, one of the owners of Orange City Saoji, adding, "If you see online, there are a few people who have written bad reviews saying our food is spicy, but that's the nature of this cuisine. It won't remain Saoji if we change the spice levels."

India exports over 7,000 tonnes of Makhana in FY26



EMS News Agency, Sept 7New Delhi: India exported more than 7,000 metric tonnes of Makhana and value-added Makhana products to over 20 international destinations, including the US, the Middle East and Africa, in last fiscal (FY26), the government informed on Saturday.Bihar accounts for nearly 85 per cent of India's Makhana production. To further strengthen the sector, a separate HS Code for Makhana came into effect from July last year under the Finance Bill, 2025.

In a new feat, APEDA facilitated first-ever commercial sea shipment of 18 metric tonnes of GI-tagged Mithila Makhana from the BIADA Industrial Area in Bihta, Bihar, to Australia.The consignment, sourced from Makhana

growers of Darbhanga district, is expected to strengthen the international presence of Bihar's flagship GI product while creating enhanced income opportunities for farmers through export-led market access, according to Commerce Ministry.

The initiative has enabled farmers to realise nearly 18 per cent higher returns than prevailing market rates, highlighting the benefits of export-oriented value chains and direct market linkages.The export is expected to strengthen the international presence of GI-tagged Mithila Makhana, create sustainable export opportunities for Bihar's Makhana sector and contribute to higher farmer incomes.State Agriculture Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha said Makhana is the identity of Bihar and greater participation of Bihar-based exporters in international trade would enable farmers to secure better price realisation.He emphasised the importance of maintaining quality standards to meet global market requirements and stated that the Government of Bihar is continuously working to strengthen the Makhana value chain by supporting growers, processors and exporters.The minister further said that all necessary support would continue to be extended to the Phori community, whose traditional skills are integral to Makhana processing.The first-ever sea shipment of GI-tagged Mithila Makhana to Australia reflects the growing global demand for Bihar's agricultural products and opens new opportunities for farmers and exporters, he added.

Court case backlog no longer what it was 10-20 years ago: CJI Surya Kant



Indore: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant said on Saturday that the backlog of court cases in the country is no longer what it was 10 or 20 years ago, and that various schemes designed through technology for speedy disposal of cases have yielded "very good results". There are many reasons for the backlog of cases and these are

being gradually resolved in a systematic manner, the CJI told reporters when asked about the long-pending cases in courts.

He said that the backlog of cases in the country is no longer what it was 10 or 20 years ago. "We have developed numerous schemes for speedy disposal of cases through technology, and these have yielded very good results," the CJI said.When asked that many harassment cases filed by women are proving to be fake, he said no general statement can be made on this matter and each case depends on its specific facts.Replying to a query about the central government's repeated return of names recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium for the appointment of judges, CJI Surya Kant said, "You will not talk about the Collegium here. This is a programme of the Legal Services Authority."The CJI earlier addressed the regional conference of the Western Zone of the National Legal Services Authority here. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, and judges from the Supreme Court and High Courts attended the inaugural session of the conference.

Embrace technology, ensure transparency: Shah's push to urban cooperative banks

Mumbai: Union minister Amit Shah on Saturday urged urban cooperative banks to embrace technology, ensure transparency and modernise customer services to remain competitive. Speaking at the inauguration of the new office of the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC) in Mumbai, he said ensuring the prosperity of customers will help the banks achieve growth.The Union Home and Cooperation Minister also urged all urban cooperative banks to join the NUCFDC, the apex umbrella organisation for the sector, within a year.The NUCFDC serves as the umbrella organisation and self-regulatory body for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) in India. Approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and headquartered in Mumbai, it provides capital, IT infrastructure

and liquidity support to strengthen the cooperative banking sector."Our responsibility is to ensure that all banks become members of this organisation (NUCFDC), introduce technology, bring transparency, train staff, provide modern services to customers and sustain in the competition," he said.Shah said that of the nearly 1,400 urban cooperative banks in the country, around 690 have already become members of the organisation, and added that the remaining UCBs should also become part of it within a year.Making India prosperous requires fostering prosperity among its people, the minister said, adding that the capital market alone cannot fulfil this objective. "We need to create a new system of self-employment simultaneously.

Case of the 'missing' paddy: How Telangana's hunt for missing stocks uncovered a multi-crore scam

It was based on a hunch that the Telangana Vigilance and Enforcement department began searching in Suryapet, Nalgonda, Medak and Warangal in connection with an unusual case – that of missing paddy. What it was unprepared for was the scale: over the next month, it uncovered an alleged multi-crore scam involving at least 2.7 lakh metric tonnes of missing paddy from the last three years.It allegedly began with the state government's paddy procurement in 2023. Typically, the state government procured paddy from farmers and routed it to millers, who would first safekeep and later mill the grain to produce rice.

Per 100 kg of paddy, 67 kg of milled rice would be the output. This would then be directed back to the state government's public distribution system (PDS) or ration shops.Here is what went wrong: at least 58 millers did not route rice back to the ration shops. Instead, they allegedly sold it in the open market for a profit. Officials estimate that the state lost 2.7 lakh metric tonnes of paddy worth Rs 680 crore between 2023 and 2026."The government had a doubt and ordered a probe, and we unearthed a multi-crore scam," Director of Vigilance and Enforcement AR Srinivas told The Indian Express.

The raids began on July 20, Srinivas added."The millers didn't possess the paddy stocks given to them and had also failed to return the corresponding quantity of custom-milled rice to the govt," Srinivas explained. The rice varieties that should have returned to the ration shops include fine rice and parboiled rice, he said.According to officials, the gaps surfaced when authorities tallied millers' records to their own.

The V&E department's preliminary findings allegedly unearthed a Rs 120 crore paddy deficit that they suspect ended up in the open market."We expanded the search and realised that this was happening across the state," said Srinivas. The inspections were conducted under the supervision of V&E DIG Abhishek Mohanty and



DS Chauhan, Director General of V&E.Those allegedly involved are "big millers who have the wherewithal to hoard and sell", Srinivas said."In Suryapet alone, eight millers were found to have diverted Rs 239 crore worth of paddy. In Jagtial, four millers were found to have diverted Rs 127 crore worth of paddy," he said.The department has started filing criminal cases against the millers.

"We issued notices to millers to either pay for the paddy which is not available with them or face jail," Srinivas said. Under Sections 316 and 318 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, as well as relevant sections of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, misappropriation of public assets allegedly carries a 10-year jail term.The recovery drive has already yielded significant results, officials say."At least Rs 300 crore of paddy has been recovered after notices were issued to mill owners," one official said. "While several millers have begun repaying the value of the missing stocks, others have approached courts challenging the action."Officials say the alleged scam has a direct bearing on the Public Distribution System."Lakhs of people are dependent on PDS for their daily rice needs," Srinivas said. "The extent of the scam is such that one miller from Jagtial owed Rs 90 crore to the government. Another miller owed Rs 50 crore. We will either get back the grain or the money."

Court issues notice to Meta on Khaira plea



The Chandigarh District court has issued notices to Meta Platforms Inc. (Facebook and Instagram) on a civil suit filed by Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira, who has sought removal of an allegedly AI-generated morphed video depicting him, besides permanent and mandatory injunctions, protection of his personality rights and damages.

In his complaint, Khaira through his counsel, Advocate Sarabjot Singh Cheema, submitted that the accompanying suit seeks "permanent and mandatory injunction, takedown/removal of false, fabricated, morphed and AI-generated content, protection of the plaintiff's reputation, dignity and personality rights and for damages."

The complaint states that Khaira, MLA from Bholath Assembly constituency, is "a well-known public and political personality" who enjoys "reputation and recognition amongst the people of Punjab as well as the Punjabi diaspora."According to the suit, the operators of the Facebook page "Charda Punjab" and Instagram account "chard_apunjab" are presently unknown, with disclosure of their identity also being sought from the intermediary.Khaira has alleged that the defendants "have published and circulated a highly objectionable, false, fabricated and AI-generated/morphed video" wherein his "face, beard and turbaned" Sikh appearance have been "digitally manipulated and superimposed upon an artificially generated body" of a woman."Referring to the circulation of the content, the suit claims that the impugned video had already received approximately 1.36 lakh views, 1,900 reactions and 443 shares on Facebook, while on Instagram it had received approximately 1.12 lakh views, 760 likes, 87 comments, 33 reposts and about 5,496 shares, adding that the figures were continuing to increase.The complaint also states that the content "has therefore caused and continues to cause humiliation, mental agony, reputational injury and loss of dignity" to Khaira. It adds that the continued availability of the content is particularly harmful because viewers encountering screenshots or reposts "may have no means whatsoever of knowing that the visual representation is artificial."Khaira further submitted that his "name, face, photograph, likeness, voice, appearance and other iden-

tifiable attributes constitute integral aspects of his personality and identity," and that unauthorised manipulation in a false and derogatory representation interferes with his right to control misuse of his identity.Calling the matter "a particularly serious issue concerning misuse of generative AI," the complaint adds that unlike ordinary written allegations, a fabricated photograph or video "purports to provide visual proof of something which never occurred and therefore possesses an enhanced capacity to mislead, humiliate and cause reputational injury."Khaira in his application has also relied upon the Bombay High Court judgment in Arijit Singh versus Codible Ventures LLP & Ors. concerning protection against misuse of personality attributes through artificial intelligence, deepfakes and face-morphing technology.

Civic volunteer arrested for rape in Bengal's Jalpaiguri, 2 others absconding

HandcuffsThe sources added that the three accused had been involved in several criminal acts before, but no one filed cases against them owing to the nature of their jobs.The West Bengal Police Thursday arrested a civic volunteer on charges of raping a woman in Jalpaiguri district.The arrestee, identified as Bulbul Alam, 30, is said to have raped the woman over three days. Two other civic volunteers have also been accused of the crime and are currently absconding. All three are posted at the same police station in Jalpaiguri.The gang rape survivor is a resident of the neighbouring Cooch Behar district.Speaking about the incident, a senior police officer in Jalpaiguri said, "Since the complaint has not been filed here, the investigation is being conducted by the Cooch Behar police. We joined the operation to nab the accused after the Cooch Behar police sought our help."According to police sources, the three civic volunteers allegedly lured the young woman to Jalpaiguri district last week, put her up in a rented accommodation, and raped her on several occasions.

The sources added that the three accused had been involved in several criminal acts before, but no one filed cases against them owing to the nature of their jobs.

After this complaint was filed, All India Trinamool Congress took to X and posted, "Another day, another horrific incident under the @BJP4Bengal government... a woman was allegedly raped repeatedly by three civic volunteers – an incident that has once again raised serious questions about women's safety across the state. What happened to all the tall promises made by BJP leaders?

Last buses between Kolkata’s key hospitals, railway stations now leave at 10 pm



The West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC) has extended the operating hours of several key bus routes in Kolkata, changing their last departure time from 8 pm to 10 pm to help late-night commuters, patients, and their families. The new schedule introduced additional late-night services between Kolkata’s major hospital hubs and railway stations like Howrah and Sealdah, effective August 1. VS-2 (West Bengal Surface Transport Corporation): Operates from Howrah station to the Airport, leaving the Howrah railway station at 10 pm (three trips). It travels via MG Road, CR Avenue, Girish Park, Kankurgachi, HIDCO, and VIP Road, passing important landmarks like Medical College and Central Blood Bank.

E-32 (Calcutta State Transport Corporation): Runs from the Howrah station to Barrackpore. The last departure was at 9.45 pm, and an additional service is scheduled at 10 pm (two trips). The route alignment includes MG Road, Shyambazar, and BT Road, covering landmarks such as Medical College and RG Kar Hospital. S-7 (CSTC): Connects the Howrah station to Garia. The regular departure is at 8 pm, with an extra service at 10 pm (two trips). It runs through Esplanade, Park Street, Exide, Rashbehari, Gariahat, and Jadavpur, serving key destinations like SSKM Hospital, Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital, Keoratala Burning Ghat, Private Hospital, Panchanantala, and JU Hostel. S-5 (CSTC): Connects the Howrah station to Garia, leaving at 8.45 pm with an additional service at 10 pm (two trips). Its route covers Espla-

nade, Park Street, Exide, Rashbehari, Bansdroni, and Naktala, reaching landmarks such as SSKM, Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital, Keoratala Burning Ghat, and Bangur Super Speciality Hospital. S-10A (CSTC): Travels from the Howrah station to Ballygunge at 10 pm in three trips via Esplanade, Park Street, Exide, Rashbehari, and Gariahat. Key landmarks on this route include Belle Vue, RKM Seva Pratishthan, and other private hospitals.

S-9A (CSTC): Operates from Dunlop to Ballygunge, departing at 8 pm with an additional service scheduled at 10 pm (two trips). Travelling via BT Road, Shyambazar, Khanna, Sealdah, Moulali, Minto Park, and Deshapriya Park, it serves major healthcare centres including RG Kar Hospital, Nilratan Sircar (NRS) Hospital, BR Singh Hospital, IINS, Belle Vue, and RKM Seva Pratishthan. T-16 (WBTC): Operates from Rajabazar to Andul Road (Mourigram). The regular schedule is 7.15 pm, now supplemented by a 10 pm service (two trips). The bus travels via Sealdah, Moulali, Esplanade, Rabindra Sadan, 2nd Hooghly Bridge, and Andul Road, catering to commuters heading towards NRS, PG, and Narayana (Andul Road). S-30 (CSTC): Runs between Ultadanga Gate No. 15 and Eco Space. With regular timing at 7.30 pm, an additional service goes out at 10 pm (three trips) via HIDCO, Apollo, Chingrighata Crossing, College More, and New Town, passing Near Apollo, Tata Medical Centre, and OHIO Hospital. S-24 (CSTC): Operates from the Howrah station to Kamalgazi, departing at 9.45 pm, along with a new 10 pm service with two trips. Its path runs via Esplanade, Moulali, Park Circus, Science City, Ruby, and Ajoy Nagar, providing access to NRS, National Medical College, INK, Fortis, Desun, Ruby, RN Tagore, Peerless, and Medica. AC-37 (CSTC): Serves the route from Barasat to Garia. Leaves at 4.35 pm with an additional 10 pm service with two trips. The alignment goes through Madhyangram, Airport, Ultadanga, Ruby, and Ajoynagar, connecting travellers to Narayana, Apollo, Fortis, Desun, Ruby, RN Tagore, Peerless, and Medica.

Court issues order to attach Pune MC chief property

pmcPMC legal officer Nisha Chavan said she had apprised the concerned civic department to execute the order in time, but it failed to do so, due to which court officers had to visit the municipal chief’s office to attach the movable property. In a major embarrassment to the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), a laptop and chair of the municipal commissioner were set to be attached on Monday, following an order issued by Pune’s Small Cause Court over the civic body’s failure to pay the difference in compensation to a plot owner for the acquisition of land in Uruli Devachi.

Second Additional Judge of the Small Causes Court, Pune, Nikhil Gosavi, on June 29 issued a warrant to attach movable property of the Pune civic chief over failure to pay the difference in compensation despite the court order passed. “The Pune civic body has given a bond in writing to pay the difference in compensation by August 11 to owners of property acquired by PMC. Thus, the attachment of the laptop and chair of the municipal chief has been avoided,” said Nihil More, deputy municipal commissioner, PMC. PMC legal officer Nisha Chavan said she had apprised the concerned civic department to ex-

ecute the order in time, but it failed to do so, due to which court officers had to visit the municipal chief’s office to attach the movable property. The application to attach movable property of the municipal chief was filed by one Harishchandra Harpale. The applicant had informed the court that the PMC failed to pay the compensation despite an order passed by the court. The applicant had contended that a substantial amount was due and payable by the PMC but had not been satisfied to date. Despite granting sufficient opportunity, the PMC has failed to pay compensation, the applicant said, adding the PMC has neither appeared in court nor filed any say. According to the court, PMC has to pay Rs. 4.14 crore to the applicant as a difference in the compensation amount. The PMC had acquired around 25 acres from three owners to set up a waste processing plant in 2007 and had fixed the compensation amount to be paid to the property owners. However, the owners challenged the amount, seeking more compensation by approaching the court. The court passed an order in favour of the property owners and directed PMC to pay the difference in an increased amount, but PMC instead approached the High Court, where the plea was still pending.

At Mumbai University, over 80% flunk BCom, BA exams; varsity says results consistent

More than 80 per cent of students enrolled in Mumbai University’s distance education programmes have failed the first-year examinations, with the university finally declaring the results over four months after the exams. The unusually poor outcome has triggered questions over the quality of academic support at the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), prompting students and Senate members to demand a review of the results. The Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) declared the first semester results of the first-year Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) course on Monday. Of the 2,543 students who appeared, only 457 passed while 2,086 were declared unsuccessful. A similar trend was seen in the first-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme, where only 460 of the 2,224 students have cleared the examination, leaving 1,764 students unsuccessful.

The results have renewed criticism of the CDOE, which has repeatedly come under scrutiny over delays in admissions, non-availability of study material, paper leak allegations and delays in declaring results. Senate members have questioned whether delays in supplying study

material, administrative lapses and inadequate academic support affected students’ performance. A delegation from Yuva Sena, the youth wing of Shiv Sena (UBT), including current and former Senate members, met Mumbai University Registrar Dr Prasad Karande on Monday, seeking a review of the results. “If so many students have failed, the issue lies with the system. The university cannot blame students,” said Pradeep Sawant, a Senate member from Yuva Sena. The Mumbai University, however, defended the results, saying the figures do not indicate that students had failed in every subject. “BA and BCom students appear for multiple internal and external examinations every semester. A student is counted among the unsuccessful candidates even if they fail in one or more papers,” the university said in a written response. It also argued that the results were in line with previous years. According to the university, the FY BA pass percentage stood at 20.68 per cent this year as compared to 23.35 per cent last year, while the FY B Com pass percentage improved from 13 per cent last year to 18 per cent this year.

Media facing biggest crisis of credibility, says Nitin Gadkari

Nagpur: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday stressed the importance of independent judiciary and media for the progress of a democracy, and said that among all institutions, the media suffered the biggest problem of crisis of credibility.

The Road Transport and Highways Minister was addressing a gathering at IIM Nagpur Media Conclave 2026 on the theme of ‘Media, Leadership and the New World Order’. Chief Executive Officer and Editor-in-Chief of the Press Trust of India (PTI) Vijay Joshi, Editorial Director at Business Standard A K Bhattacharya, and Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Blitz India Media Group Deepak Dwivedi were among those present at the event. “India is the mother of democracy and it is the largest democracy in the world,” Gadkari said. Seeking a qualitative transformation in democracy, he said, “The Constitution has very clearly specified the responsibilities of the four pillars of democracy, that is legislature, executive, judiciary and media. Independent, impartial and fair judiciary and media are very important for the progress and development of a democracy. “Politics and political parties are the biggest strength of a democracy, he said. “There can be differences of opinion or ideological differences, but there should be commitment towards one’s ideology,” the veteran politician said. He also made a pitch for raising public awareness on social, economic, educational issues in order to strengthen democracy. “Awareness among

people about democracy and democratic values, and commitment of people with democratic values and ideology are very important,” he said. Credibility, goodwill and honesty are the biggest capitals of the 21st century for all sectors, Gadkari noted. “Credibility has deteriorated in all sectors, but credibility in media has gone down very badly,” he said, while also noting that not all media houses have lost their credibility. Sharing his experiences, he said, “Newspapers and media houses used to say that they will decide who will win the elections, but now social media has changed that trajectory.” “Crisis of credibility is there in all sectors, including politics, but crisis of credibility is the biggest problem in the media sector,” he said, and urged media to think about restoring credibility. Gadkari said those who have credibility do not need to market themselves. The minister advised journalists to write in the interest of people, society and country, and said they should reach out to the common man with qualitative transformation. Like any good work, good journalism is also recognised, he said. In the coming times, those who safeguard their credibility as well as basic values of the profession will survive, according to him. He urged the media to work towards strengthening democracy, protecting social and national interests and transforming knowledge, and said these things will also help in making India a “vishwa guru” (world leader).

Retired Army Captain’s wife strangled to death by domestic help in Haryana



A search for missing jewellery ended in tragedy in Haryana’s Panchkula when a retired Army Captain’s wife was found dead on the rooftop of a house in Sector 21 on Monday evening, allegedly murdered by her domestic help. According to the police, 70-year-old Neera Mehta, the wife of Chandramohan, a retired Indian Army Captain, went to her domestic help’s house on Monday to question her about some missing jewellery. During the conversation, an argument allegedly broke out between the two, leading to Mehta being strangled to death. After the murder, the domestic help and her son allegedly car-

ried Mehta’s body to the rooftop of a neighbouring house and hid it behind roof tiles. A murder case has been lodged against the domestic help and her son at the Sector 21 police station. Both have been arrested and are being questioned, the police said.

According to the police, Mehta and Chandramohan stayed at House No 366 in Sector 21. Their two sons live in the United States. “The woman had been working as their domestic help for nearly 10 years, and they trusted her completely. She lived in the same sector. The owner of that house had employed her family as caretakers,” one of the investigating police officers said. On Monday Mehta discovered that some jewellery was missing from her house. Suspecting her domestic help, she decided to question her. After Chandramohan left home to play golf, Mehta told him that she was going to her help’s house to ask her about the missing jewellery, the police said. However, she never returned home. Around 3 pm, Chandramohan returned from playing golf and found that Mehta was not at home. He first searched the neighbourhood and checked with relatives and acquaintances, but she was nowhere to be found. He then informed the Sector 21 police post, after which the police began an investigation and found her body late in the evening.

Over 31k teachers posts vacant in Punjab government schools, says Bains

Punjab education minister Harjot Singh Bains said in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha on Monday that 31,370 posts of teachers, across various cadres, were lying vacant in government schools. Bains presented the data in the House replying to the question asked by Congress MLA and leader of opposition Partap Singh Bajwa. Bains said that the majority posts (20378) were lying vacant in master cadre (for class 6 to 10). The minister, however, clarified that the vacancy was due to court stay on promotions in master cadre, which has now been cleared. He claimed that posts would be filled soon both through promotions and new recruitments following which 90% will be filled.

According to the data tabled by Bains in the House on the day 1 of the monsoon session, 7259 posts are vacant in primary cadre including 4627 ETT, 657 head teacher, 221 central head teacher and 1754 special educators. In master cadre, 20378 posts are lying vacant out of 59513 sanctioned. In lecturers category (class 11

and 12), 3733 are lying vacant of 14130 sanctioned. The Democratic Teachers Front (DTF) in a statement said that minister’s own statement has brought to light the truth of the so-called “Sikhya Kranti” (education revolution) of the AAP-led Punjab government. DTF state president Vikramdev Singh and General Secretary Mahinder Kaurwali said that the vacant posts of more than 1100 principals in 1927 secondary schools are also a mockery of Sikhya Kranti. “The 20378 vacant posts of Master Cadre also show the sincerity of the Punjab government. Despite these vacancies, about 30,000 teachers are engaged in non-academic work. Students who came to government schools from private schools are going back to private schools due to shortage of teachers. The Punjab government is encouraging privatization of education by keeping posts vacant in government schools. The Punjab government should launch a recruitment drive to fill all the vacant posts of teaching and non-teaching staff in the education department,” said the DTF.

Oil-mud slick on key road causes 25 vehicles to skid; 6 injured

Amid incessant rainfall, at least 25 vehicles skidded, and six commuters sustained minor injuries in Pune on Tuesday morning after oil from vehicles leaked onto the road, mixing with mud and rainwater. On receiving alerts about vehicles losing traction in the slippery stretch between RTO Chowk and Naidu Hospital Road, the Pune Fire Brigade launched an emergency clean-up operation to prevent further accidents. The work was completed in an hour, after which normal traffic resumed. “Using high-pressure water jets, firefighters washed away the oil and mud deposits before traffic police regulated vehicular movement through the affected stretch,” said an officer.

Authorities urged motorists to exercise caution while driving during the monsoon, particularly on stretches where oil residue and mud can accumulate on the carriageway. “Primary inquiry suggested that a significant

number of dumpers transporting construction material use this stretch during the late-night and early-morning hours. We believe that mud carried on the wheels of these vehicles is deposited on the road as they exit construction sites. When this mud mixes with oil leaking from heavy vehicles and other passing traffic, particularly during heavy rains, it creates an extremely slippery surface,” said a police officer. “Continuous rainfall further spreads the oil-mud mixture across the carriageway, making it hazardous even for vehicles travelling at moderate speeds.

We will be examining nearby construction sites, the movement of heavy vehicles in the area and whether adequate measures are being taken to prevent mud from being carried onto public roads,” said the officer.

Man sets himself on fire outside police station in Punjab, dies

A man allegedly set himself on fire in the public washroom outside Khanna City-1 police station Monday, and died on the spot. He was identified as Gobind Singh, a resident of Ishar Nagar, Ludhiana city. Khanna SSP Darpan Ahluwalia said that Gobind had submitted a complaint to the police against a self-styled Godman Charan Das and his three accomplices, for allegedly duping him of Rs 73,000. Minutes after submitting the complaint, he took the extreme step in the public washroom, said the SSP.

According to the complaint, Das of Lalheri road Khanna had promised him a solution to his financial woes and said that performing a “hawan” will solve everything. Gobind stated in his complaint that he had paid Rs 73,000 to Das for performing the rituals but his woes never ended. When he demanded his money back, Das refunded Rs 20,000 but the rest was still pending. Gobind said in his complaint that the accused were harassing him, threat-

ening him with dire consequences and because of the financial loss, he was unable to pay his children’s school fee. The SSP said that earlier too Gobind had filed a complaint against the accused and he was called to the police station on May 7, 2026. “However, according to his own statement, written in today’s fresh complaint, he could not come that time as he was unwell. So he had come today to file a fresh complaint,” said the SSP. A forensic probe has been initiated and a judicial probe has been marked by the executive magistrate into the self-immolation incident. The SSP said that a matchstick and an empty bottle containing inflammable material has been recovered from the spot. “An FIR for abetment to suicide has been registered against Charan Das and his three accomplices- Makhn Singh, Jugraj Singh and Inderpreet Singh, on the basis of the deceased’s complaint in which he clearly stated that if anything happens to him, the four persons named will be responsible,” said the SSP.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta orders immediate action on waterlogging after heavy rains



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta inspected waterlogged areas near Sadbhavna Park following heavy rains and directed officials to deploy pumps, clear stagnant water and strengthen drainage. Officials also reviewed the Bharat Mandapam-IGI Airport route ahead of the upcoming BRICS summit

New Delhi: As heavy rains hit the city, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta conducted a surprise inspection of wa-

terlogged areas near Sadbhavna Park in East Delhi on Saturday. During the inspection, she assessed areas prone to waterlogging, reviewed the cleanliness of major roads, and received updates on the water drainage system and the challenges posed by the ongoing rains.

“She directed officials to immediately deploy pumps and other necessary resources in waterlogged areas and ensure swift clearance of accumulated water,” the Chief Minister’s Office said in a statement. Gupta also instructed officials to strengthen the drainage system further during the monsoon season and ensure that no area experiences waterlogging, the statement added. The chief minister emphasised that all concerned departments must work with complete preparedness, promptness and co-ordination to ensure that Delhi residents do not face inconvenience due to rainfall. The inspection comes a day after several parts of the city were waterlogged, particularly areas around Indira Gandhi International Airport. In light of the upcoming international BRICS summit next week on September 12 and 13, senior officials from the Delhi government also inspected the route from Bharat Mandapam to IGI Airport to identify any potential issues.

EDITORIAL

Question mark over ISRO's future

Over the decades, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has earned a global reputation for a series of successful missions. However, the recent policy shift to involve the private sector in many operations has raised concerns among its employees. The exodus of senior scientists and engineers has further raised questions over the future of the premier organisation. The private sector is no longer restricted to supplying components to ISRO. Under the new framework, private companies can potentially participate across the entire space value chain. They can design, develop and launch rockets.

The most dramatic recent development was the July 2026 launch of Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1, described as India's first private orbital rocket. Private companies can now establish launch facilities and use ISRO infrastructure subject to authorisation and safety requirements. For example, Agnikul Cosmos has established a private launchpad and mission-control facility at Sriharikota. For nearly six decades, the space sector was entirely in the hands of the government. Every celebrated milestone, from Aryabhata to Chandrayaan-3, every Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) that became the workhorse of global commercial launches, every Mars and Moon mission, bore the unmistakable signature of the Indian state. That monopoly is now a thing of the past. Understandably, ISRO employees have voiced concerns over the push for privatisation and its impact on their jobs. Nine employee bodies, comprising over 5,000 members, recently wrote to ISRO chairman V Narayanan, seeking clarification about the organisation's future role.

The major concern is whether ISRO itself is gradually being reduced from an organisation that designs, builds and launches spacecraft and rockets to primarily an R&D agency. The Indian Space Policy 2023 clearly states that ISRO should "transition out" of manufacturing mature operational space systems and transfer them to industry for commercial exploitation, while concentrating on advanced R&D and new systems. There is no clarity on what this transition would mean for sanctioned posts, recruitment over the next 5-10 years and promotion prospects for the serving staff. The employees have demanded that the Department of Space define where private participation ends and what would happen to ISRO's own capabilities.

ISRO has also transferred SSLV (Small Satellite Launch Vehicle) technology to Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), while technology-transfer processes involving other launch vehicles are in progress. The government says private entities are now permitted to undertake end-to-end space activities. Technology transfer is perhaps the most consequential element for the employees. ISRO develops a technology, and once it becomes mature, NSIL (New Space India Limited), its commercial arm, can transfer it to industry for commercial production. It has so far signed 100 technology-transfer agreements with Indian industry, including the transfer of SSLV technology to HAL. Employees fear that if ISRO stops routinely designing and manufacturing launch vehicles, it could eventually lose precisely the engineering expertise that made it capable of developing the next generation of launchers.

Pune woman dies after temporary structure at Dahi Handi event collapses



A 45-year-old woman died after a part of a temporary metallic structure constructed for a Dahi Handi celebration as part of Janmashtami collapsed on her in Pune's Pimpri Chinchwad Friday night.According to the police, Salma Salauddin Pathan, a resident of Juni Sangvi, who was standing next to the structure, sustained critical injuries to her head.

Sandeep Atole, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 1) for Pimpri Chinchwad, said, "Some people were taking down the temporary metal structure constructed for Dahi Handi celebrations around 10 pm when a part of its truss suddenly collapsed."Pathan was rushed to a nearby hospital but was pronounced dead by doctors.

DCP Atole said the Sangvi police have registered a case of accidental death report and a probe has been launched into possible negligence.Dahi Handi is celebrated across various parts of India, particularly in Maharashtra, which mark the birth of Lord Krishna. A key tradition of the festival involves hanging clay pots, or handis, filled with milk, butter, curd, sweets, and other offerings at considerable heights. Teams of participants form human pyramids to reach and break the pots, recreating the playful childhood exploits of Lord Krishna.As part of the celebrations, groups compete to break handis suspended at designated locations, turning the tradition into lively public events that draw large crowds. Given the scale and enthusiasm surrounding these festivities, local police authorities and civic bodies have issued safety guidelines to help ensure that the celebrations are conducted safely and responsibly.

Bengal CM Adhikari calls for restrictions on phone use in schools, cites Gujarat model



EMS News Agency, Sept 7West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari Saturday advocated for restrictions on the use of mobile phones in schools.Addressing a Teachers' Day program in Newtown, CM Adhikari said, "My votes may perhaps decrease. But I will still say that the use of phones in schools needs to be regulated. In Gujarat, phones are not used in schools from Class I to Class XII."On Saturday, the chief minister also inaugurated the 'Swami Vivekananda Merit Scheme' in higher education and launched a new transfer management policy for college teachers.

During the event, Adhikari announced that two 'CM Shri' schools, modeled after PM Shri schools, will be opened in each district. "In these schools, admission will be given from Class VI based on merit. Like the Central Model School, the schools will have all modern facilities, including smart boards. Large sports-related institutions

Bihar widens CBI investigative powers, retains state nod for probes against its officials



The Bihar government's Home Department under Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary has issued a notification expanding the CBI's standing consent to investigate a broader set of offences involving Central government employees, Central PSUs and private persons, while requiring prior state permission for probes involving Bihar government employees and state-controlled or aided bodies.Under the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, such state consent determines the CBI's power to exercise its investigative jurisdiction within a state. The notification changes the categories of cases the CBI can investigate in Bihar without seeking fresh state permission, and gives the agency standing consent for a wider range of offences involving Central government employees, Central PSUs and private persons. It does this while retaining case-by-case state consent for investigations involving Bihar government employees and state-controlled or aided bodies.

Under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, the CBI cannot ordinarily exercise its powers and jurisdiction in a state without the state government's consent. That consent can be general, allowing the agency to investigate specified offences or categories of cases without seeking permission each time, or specific to an individual case.The order creates a two-tier consent regime. The CBI retains automatic authority to investigate cases involving employees of the Government of India, Central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private individuals implicated alongside them in Bihar. However, a proviso removes this automatic authority over public servants appointed by or working for the Bihar government, state-owned corporations, companies, state-aided banks and institutions receiving financial assistance from the state.

Jantar Mantar assault accused Swatantra Bhardwaj arrested in Delhi



Self-styled 'influencer' and activist, Swatantra Bhardwaj, has been arrested and remanded to police custody for one day for the alleged attack on a Delhi protester's father. Bhardwaj had bragged that he had "cracked opened the skull" of a student protester's father at Jantar Mantar during the July protests.Bharadwaj was detained on Friday at around 2 pm from his house by a team of Crime Branch officials in his native town, Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh. Police officers said Bharadwaj had reached Bulandshahr on Friday morning, fearing an escalation of the backlash over his purported comments on a video podcast.

The police action comes a day after the Cockroach Janta Party staged a protest in Delhi outside the Parliament Street Police Station. CJP leaders Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das negotiated with the police for hours to press more charges and demand Bhardwaj's arrest.An FIR had been registered in the assault case earlier. However, the CJP claimed that the sections mentioned in the FIR were minor. After several hours of negotiation with the police on Friday, relevant sections pertaining to the SC/ ST Act were added to the FIR in the case of attack on Sanjay, Nishu Azad's father.Additionally, Nishu also submitted a complaint over the rape threats she was

will be set up in the western and northern regions."The chief minister assured that the School Service Commission (SSC) teacher recruitment process will be completed within the time given by the Supreme Court. He added that greater emphasis will be given to the written test in teacher recruitment, and the marks for the oral examination should be reduced.

From the stage of the Teachers' Day event, Adhikari called for an overall reform of Bengal's education system and the restoration of its 'long-lost' educational heritage.Exhorting the academia to promote patriotism, the Bengal chief minister said, "One thing should not be compromised. Those who harm the country from within, who raise questions about patriotism, who have a problem with the full Vande Mataram song, who do not protest when there is an attack in Pahalgam but raise questions when there is an attack in Pakistan – against them, the education community and nationalist citizens must remain united."Referring to the new National Education Policy, Adhikari placed special emphasis on infrastructural development in the education sector. He claimed that nearly 19,000 schools in the state lack even basic infrastructure after nearly eight decades of Independence.Describing the recent snakebite incident in Kolkata's famed Mitra Institution school as symptomatic of the neglect that the education sector faced during the previous regime, the chief minister said, "At Mitra Institution, a child was taken to SSKM hospital after a snakebite... They (the school) have not received the composite grant for three years. It is from this that carbolic acid is bought. There was certainly no shortage of money. There was no shortage of money for sports, fairs, or for giving money during Durga Puja."

The Home Department notification, issued by Principal Secretary Pankaj Kumar on September 3, reads: "The Governor of Bihar, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, and in supersession of all previous notifications on this subject, hereby accords consent for the extension of powers and jurisdiction of the members of the Delhi Special Police Establishment for cases involving offenses under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, offenses under the Information Technology Act, 2000, cybercrime, and the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended), notified under Section 3 of the Act as amended from time to time, allegedly committed by employees of the Government of India or Public Sector Undertakings under the Government of India, and private persons".

The notification regulates the CBI's jurisdiction in Bihar under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, while expanding the range of offences covered by its standing consent.The order further stated: "Provided that when the offense related to the above pertains to public servants appointed in connection with the affairs of the State Government of Bihar, or persons appointed in connection with the affairs of any corporation, company, bank owned by, controlled by, or receiving financial assistance from the Bihar Government, it shall be mandatory to obtain the prior consent of the State Government of Bihar for the investigation of any such offense by the Delhi Special Police Establishment. Additionally, upon receiving a proposal from the Delhi Special Police Establishment, the State Government will consider and take a decision on granting powers of investigation on a case-by-case basis."It is a two-pronged order, an officer in the police headquarters told

"The first part of it allows the CBI to investigate cases which were the prerogative of the state. The second part of the order tries to balance it out by saying that the state's permission would be required," the officer said.A CBI officer added: "Bihar might well have set a precedent for other states to follow and allow CBI a bigger scope of investigation. The order, if read between the lines, would tell that it is more about giving CBI more powers and less about restricting them."A Patna High Court advocate added that the requirement of state consent applies only to executive actions by the CBI."It does not restrict the high courts or the Supreme Court from ordering a CBI investigation within a state without state government consent," the advocate said.

receiving.What Swatantra Bhardwaj 'confessed' in podcast

Bhardwaj purportedly confessed during a podcast that he had cracked the skull of a protester. The claim relate to an incident at Jantar Mantar, when Ghaziabad resident Sanjay Kumar (38) sustained a head injury during a scuffle.In the video, Bhardwaj is seen claiming that he attacked the father of a CJP protester and avoided jail due to the intervention by a politician. He also is heard saying that the person he allegedly attacked suffered 60 stitches and was on the verge of death, and that a case under Section 307 of the IPC, relating to attempt to murder, should have been registered against him.Bhardwaj said another accused in the case was released from jail the following day and that he himself did not have to go to prison. He is heard boasting that police personnel received a call from a Delhi-based politician, whom he compared to an "elder brother".In another video, Bhardwaj is seen boasting about how he attacked protesters with a kada (a thick bangle worn for religious reasons) that he has the "guts" to admit his crime after committing it. He is also seen boasting how he "drenched a blue pigeon in blood", seemingly a reference to the ASP's choice of blue colour. "

Four burglars involved in 25 offences arrested in Nirmal

Nirmal: Four notorious burglars allegedly involved in 25 offences were arrested by a task force team here on Saturday. Police recovered 12 kgs of silver, cash Rs 67,000, a car and melting machines from the four.

Briefing details of the arrest to media persons, SP Dr Janaki Sharmila said that Marepeddi Rajashekhar

Heavy rainfall triggers another round of waterlogging, Gurgaon residents asked to "avoid non-essential travel"



Another spell of waterlogging after heavy rainfall on Saturday in the Capital region has led the Gurgaon district administration to direct citizens to avoid "non-essential travel" and stay clear of waterlogged roads, underpasses, and low-lying sectors.

The city saw heavy waterlogging at Sector 51 of Mayfield Gardens and several trees falling in the industrial hub of Udyog Vihar Phase IV after a spell of afternoon rains. Delhi also experienced waterlogging at several locations such as Dwarka and Najafgarh-Nangloi, affecting traffic movement.The Gurgaon advisory, released by the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA, followed an IMD bulletin projecting heavy downpours exceeding 15 mm per hour over a two-to-three-hour window, accompanied by moderate thunderstorms and gusty winds.

Commuters were strictly warned against attempting to cross waterlogged stretches on foot or in vehicles, with the administration highlighting the difficulty of assessing water depth and hidden road hazards beneath the surface. Citizens were also advised to keep a safe distance from trees, electricity poles, and overhead power cables vulnerable to snapping in squally winds.In Delhi, the traffic police have cautioned motorists against stopping or parking under bridges, underpasses and on waterlogged stretches. Traffic movement at various locations may also be affected due to arrangements and rehearsals linked to the upcoming BRICS Summit, police said.The inner streets of residential neighbourhoods in Gurgaon like C Block of Palam Vihar experienced ankle-deep water.In response, GMDA officials say they mobilised quick-response field teams, mobile suction tankers, and high-discharge dewatering pumps across chronic inundation points. Field personnel were deployed along critical arterial stretches, including the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway service roads at Narsinghpur, Hero Honda Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Sheela Mata Road, and sections of the Golf Course Extension Road.

"Teams are on the ground clearing fallen trees and branches along the roads in Sectors 18-19, Udyog Vihar, following the rain. Swift clearance is underway to restore safe and smooth movement and keep the road corridors clear. Pumping machinery has been deployed at Sector 51, near Mayfield Garden, as part of ongoing flood relief measures. Field teams are on the ground to facilitate the quick discharge of rainwater and minimise disruption", a GMDA spokesperson said.Crews worked to clear storm-water grates of debris and operated auxiliary diesel pump sets to accelerate runoff discharge into primary channels, including the Badshahpur drain.The heightened vigilance comes on the heels of severe weather across the National Capital Region on Friday. On September 4, the IMD placed parts of Delhi-NCR under an orange alert—briefly escalating to red for the capital—following cloudburst-like spells that swamped major transit arteries and disrupted flight operations at Indira Gandhi International Airport. While Gurugram saw comparatively lighter rain on Friday, it saw sudden cloud build up on Saturday.Traffic marshals and police teams were placed at vulnerable underpasses and major junctions to redirect motorists in case of rapid water accumulation, while educational institutions were instructed to account for the weather advisory for scheduled weekend activities, officials said.

Mohanlal unveils title of Vishnu Mohan directorial 'Operation Ganga'



New Delhi: Actor Mohanlal's film "L367", directed by Vishnu Mohan, has been titled "Operation Ganga". The film also features Arjun Rampal, Bhagyashree Borse, and Adil Hussain, among others, according to a press release."Operation Ganga" refers to India's evacuation mission launched to bring back Indian citizens, including thousands of students, who were stranded in Ukraine following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. The actor shared the announcement with a post on his Instagram handle on Saturday, which featured the film's poster. "Operation Ganga", read the caption.It is produced by Gokulam Gopalan under the banner of Sree Gokulam Movies.

HC bars Punjab government from large-scale ad campaigns till pending DA paid to employees



The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Monday directed the Punjab government to release the pending Dearness Allowance (DA) to its employees and pensioners within 15 days and barred it from issuing any large-scale advertisement campaigns until the dues are paid.Rejecting appeals by the State and Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) challenging a single-judge verdict, a division bench of Acting Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor also made it clear that if the payment is not made by the end of the deadline, the government will have to pay six per cent simple interest on the outstanding amount.“The State of Punjab and PSPCL are directed to grant and release all up-to-date pending installments of Dearness Allowance/Dearness Relief (DA/DR) to all its employees and pensioners, respectively, at the same rates as has been paid to the members of the All India Services (IAS/IPS/IFS) serving within the State of Punjab, in accordance with the Central Government pattern, within a fortnight,” the bench ruled.

“Till all such dues are cleared, the State of Punjab shall not resort to any unproductive expenditures such as large-scale advertising campaigns in print or social media as these expenses cannot justify the denial of dues admissible to State employees”, the Bench ordered.The bench also directed the Punjab chief secretary to to ensure “scrupulous compliance of the directions” and “file a compliance report by way of affidavit” by August 31, 2026.The State government had earlier submitted that it was not in a position to comply with the single bench directions to release arrears amounting to more than Rs 15,000 crore.Delivering the order, the division bench laid emphasis on “unproductive expenditures”,...the issue of financial constraints is being raised as a ground for withholding the legitimate dues of the State’s own employees. However, as per the information available in the public domain, the State is expending large amounts of money on grant of freebies, doles, advertorial campaigns, and other expenditure, which would not strictly fall within the domain of essential expenditure by a welfare State, cannot be brushed aside, lightly,” the bench said.

The bench further held that State cannot withhold the legitimate dues payable to the employees. “Viewed in any manner, large scale advertising campaigns in print or social media and other unproductive expenses can-

‘Vicky aaya hai’: Faridabad teacher’s killer used husband’s name to trap her

Sandhya, a 30-year-old English teacher at Saraswati Senior Secondary School in Faridabad’s Sikrona, was at work when she was informed that “Vicky” was waiting for her. Her husband, Vikas, often went by ‘Vicky’. She did not know then what awaited her.CCTV footage from the school shows a man waiting at the school entrance, his face covered with a cloth. As soon as Sandhya stepped out, hoping to find her husband, the man pulled her by the hand and stabbed her at least 20 times. The footage shows Sandhya falling to the ground, screaming, but the stabs didn’t stop. A colleague, Tejpal, tried to save her, but the attacker threatened him with a knife. Sandhya succumbed to her injuries soon after. The attacker fled the scene on a bike without a number plate, the school staff said. However, police identified and caught the accused, Amit (21), within two hours.According to the police, Sandhya earlier worked at a school in Faridabad’s Kot village. Amit’s family owned the school building, and that’s how he first spoke to her. Subsequently, Amit started harassing Sandhya. She left the job and moved to the Sikrona-based school, but the stalking continued. Sandhya also registered a police complaint against Amit, following which he apologised. Police said he nursed a grudge.“The victim explicitly asked the accused to stop following her and warned him of legal action if he continued to harass her. Agitated by her refusal to talk to him, the accused planned the attack,” a police officer said.Following the murder, Sandhya’s husband Vikas registered a complaint at the Sector 58 police station, and a murder case was registered. “Our team acted swiftly on technical inputs and human intelligence. The suspect was traced and nabbed from the area within two

not justify denial of dues admissible to the State employees,” it added.If implemented, close to 8 lakh employees and pensioners will benefit from the order. The salary of certain employees could increase by approximately Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per month.The State government had challenged the order submitting that it was not in a position to comply with the single bench directions to release arrears that amount to more than Rs 15,000 crore.Rejecting Punjab’s submission, a single bench of Justice Harpreet Singh Brar on April 8 had directed the state government and PSPCL to grant 58 per cent DA alongwith arrears to all employees and pensioners at par with officers from the IAS, IPS, IFS and judicial services. The court had given the State to comply with the order by June 30.The petitioners had earlier submitted that DA instalments with effect from July 1, 2023 have not been released to serving employees and pensioners. They had also challenged a liquidation plan submitted by the Punjab government proposing to pay the pending pension and DA to employees over five financial years and for pensioners below the age of 75 years over 42 instalments without interest.

The division bench, however, termed the proposal a “discriminatory approach” and held that the state government was bound by its policy decision of adopting the central government pattern for payment of DA.The then Congress led dispensation in Punjab had in June 2021 approved the recommendation of the 6th Pay Commission to grant DA to the state employees on the patter of central government. It, however, failed to release the money following which employees moved the court.In the high court, the Punjab government had argued that it had not accepted the June 2021 report. It had submitted that a new plan had been introduced on February 18, 2025. The government had further contended that Punjab already provides its employees with higher pay scales than many other states (“high pay master”), and therefore there was no need to grant additional DA.However, Advocate Sunny Singla, appearing for the employee organizations, argued that the Punjab government is legally bound to provide DA to its employees and pensioners in accordance with the central government pattern. He pointed out that IAS, IPS, IFS, and judicial officers were already receiving DA at central government rates, while other employees and pensioners were being unfairly denied the same benefit.According to Singla, the court also directed the government to release the DA pending from January 1, 2016.

The Punjab government is currently paying 42% DA to its employees. However, compared to central government staff, 18 per cent DA remains unpaid. Employee organizations had long been demanding that this gap be eliminated and the outstanding amount be released.Employee organisations also relied on a judgment of the Supreme Court, which held that DA is not a bonus or an ex gratia payment but an integral component of an employee’s salary. On this basis, they argued that the pending DA and arrears should be released without further delay.



hours of the crime being reported,” the officer said, adding that the knife used in the crime had been recovered.

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cially, he further said, “This is a paid campaign. He is paying celebrities to attend the protest... I received all this information from Mumbai.”He further claimed that Dipke’s alleged activities could pose a threat to social harmony and public order, urging the authorities to conduct an impartial probe and take strict legal action if any wrongdoing is established.“These people (CJP members) support the person who had once said, ‘Bharat tere tukde honge’. I would like to tell Dipke that India will not be broken into pieces; we won’t let that happen; however, your party surely will be broken. I will fight this till my last breath.

Construction of highway spur connecting NH-205A to Zirakpur bypass to begin in Dec



The construction of the 10.30-km spur (PR-07) — connecting the Ambala-Chandigarh section of the National Highway (NH) 205A to Zirakpur bypass — is set to begin in December this year, with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) targeting completion within two years.A spur is a small section that splits off from a main highway to connect commuters to a particular destination.The six-lane greenfield corridor, whose foundation was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July, is being developed under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM). According to the details, the project has been awarded to M/s Ceigall Infra Ltd for its execution.

HAM is a public-private partnership model used by the government, especially for highway projects, to reduce financial risk for private developers while ensuring timely construction.The government (through the NHAI) will give 40 per cent of the project cost to the developer during the construction period in stages while the private developer will finance the remaining 60 per cent, construct the highway, and is responsible for its maintenance for a specified period.After the road is completed, the NHAI repays the developer’s investment through fixed semi-annual annuity payments, along with interest, over

the concession period.This stretch is expected to become a key missing link in the proposed Tricity Ring Road and aims to provide a seamless bypass for long-distance traffic around Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali.

While speaking to The Indian Express, NHAI project director Aashim Bansal said that the project would allow long-distance traffic travelling from Ambala towards Chandigarh and beyond to bypass the congestion-prone urban stretches of Dera Bassi and Zirakpur.“Vehicles will be routed directly to the Zirakpur bypass and Aerocity without entering these towns, significantly reducing travel time and vehicle operating costs while improving road safety,” he said, adding that nearly 20,000 vehicles will be diverted daily away from the congestion-prone urban stretches of Dera Bassi and Zirakpur.By providing a direct, access-controlled connection to the Zirakpur bypass and Aerocity, the corridor will enable through traffic and freight vehicles to avoid entering densely populated areas, reducing travel time, fuel consumption and vehicular emissions while improving road safety and traffic flow.“The 10.30-km corridor has been designed as a fully access-controlled six-lane greenfield highway with grade-separated interchanges, eliminating at-grade intersections and separating through traffic from local urban traffic. This is expected to improve the operational efficiency of the Zirakpur bypass while easing congestion across the Tricity road network,” Bansal added.Officials said the PR-07 Spur is an integral component of the planned Tricity Ring Road, which aims to provide uninterrupted, high-capacity movement around the Chandigarh urban agglomeration. Once completed, the link will enable through traffic and freight vehicles to bypass Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali entirely, reducing pressure on city roads.Apart from improving regional connectivity, the project is also expected to boost logistics efficiency, attract investment and support economic growth in the surrounding areas by strengthening the highway infrastructure network.

57 booked as trading platform probed for forex investment scam

EMS News Agency, Sept 7Pune Rural police launched a probe into the operations of TP Global FX, a multi-asset trading platform that has been the subject of major criminal investigations — including by the Enforcement Directorate — for allegedly running a massive illegal forex trading and investment scam across India. In a case registered, 57 people linked to the entity including its key officials and local agents were booked.A First Information Report (FIR) was registered at Narayangaon police station under Pune Rural police last week based on the complaint filed by a 50-year-old businessman from Junnar taluka who was duped of over Rs one crore by the company and its representatives.

“Multiple cases have till now been registered in West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra against the company and its representatives. Based on the case registered at Narayangaon, we will investigate the footprint of the company in Pune district.” said an officer.The officer added, “The complainant had approached Kolkata police with the complainant. A Zero FIR was registered at Hare Street Police station in Kolkata which was transferred to Pune Rural police. The case was registered at Narayangaon police station as the complainant is a resident of the jurisdiction.”Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Kolkata Zonal Office has filed multiple prosecution complaints in connection with the ongoing investigation under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The ED said TP Global Forex trading illegally collected over Rs 2,000 crore from the public in the name of forex trading. The amount was collected in dummy bank accounts opened with the assistance of associates.ED



initiated investigation based on FIRs registered by police in Kolkata, Maharashtra and Gujarat. “As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the website of TP Global FX is neither registered with RBI nor does it have any authorisation from RBI for forex trading. The RBI issued an alert list including the name of TP Global FX vide a press release in September 2022, which was published to caution the public against unauthorised trading platforms,” the ED has said.“ED investigation revealed a sophisticated deception was orchestrated by individuals by utilising numerous dummy companies to entice investors/general public into a fraudulent scheme promising high returns on forex trading investments through TP Global FX. The total amount of seized/frozen/attached assets in the case stands at approximately Rs 291 crores, in the form of cash, gold, real estate, hospitality establishments, office spaces, agricultural land, vehicles, cryptocurrencies, and bank balances,” the ED has said.

An exhibition with a political edge, open to all – to see, interpret and buy

There’s a fire extinguisher covered by typography print, a graffiti-painted toilet bowl with illustrated toilet paper rolling out of it, and blue and orange crates with zines, stickers, matchboxes, and puzzles in them.There are no “Do not touch” signs; everything in the exhibition is meant to be picked up, flipped through, bought, and taken home.Advertising professional Priyanshi said she admired the “smaller tangibles like postcards, comics, and clay miniatures” “because these days people like to have art that they can use”. Vasudha, a lawyer, said she wanted the art around her to remind her of a place, an experience or a particular moment.Organisers of the ‘Paper and Play’ exhibition, ongoing at Gallery XXL in Defence Colony until August 22, said it was important to ensure that interest in the exhibits was not limited to art collectors alone.So the least expensive exhibit costs only Rs 100, Sarah Malik, who has curated the show with Giulia Ambrogi and Priyanshi S., said. “And the most expensive is a hand-painted work by (the Japanese-American graffiti artist) AIKO which costs Rs 2 lakh.”

An exhibition with a political edge, open to all – to see, interpret and buy A fire extinguisher artwork. (Express Photo)More than 200 artworks are stickers, prints, and matchboxes; around 500 are publications. “We want the exhibition to be for students, culture workers, and anyone who is interested in art,” Malik said.AIKO, who is a co-founder of the artists’ collective FAILE, which came to be known for wheatpasting and stenciling images around New York City, said street graffiti offered her a language that was “immediate, free, and alive”.

“A mural isn’t experienced in isolation, it is shaped by the neighbourhood, the architecture, the people passing by, and even the time of day. Viewers often discover the work unexpectedly, which creates a more direct and spontaneous connection. You don’t need a ticket or an invitation to experience it. For me, it’s about creating something that captures attention while also encouraging people to pause, reflect, and maybe see their surroundings a little differently,” she told over the phone from New York City.Khatra, the artist who created the fire extinguisher artwork as part of a 2022-23 series on the emotional weight of safety in the post-pandemic period, said he wanted to “turn a familiar emergency object into something that invites attention and reflection, rather than disappearing into the background until it is needed”.Khatra uses retroreflective vinyl which is used in street signs and on trucks and taxis, along with spray paint and paint



markers, which are staples of street art.’Zines’ – short for magazine or fanzine; self-published booklets that are usually made by hand or photocopied in small numbers, with a focus on creative freedom rather than profit – are an important part of the ‘Paper and Play’ exhibition.Debashish, an artist from Bangladesh, said the nature of the exhibition allowed artists to choose those for whom their art was intended. “These formats, posters, zines, matchbox labels, packaging design...are not exclusively designed for gallery walls or artistic establishments... When I work with these forms, I’m making a decision about who the work is for and how it should travel,” he said.

Co-curator Malik pointed out that posters, zines and similar forms of visual communication were able to reach people who may never enter a gallery in the normal course. The language of visuals – brash and eye-catching – has increasingly become part of protests, memes and political culture online; it was a very prominent part, for example, of last month’s GenZ and student protests at Jantar Mantar. The political context of art stands out in the Paper and Play exhibition. The names of the zines – ‘How To Write (Not another hero) Journey’, ‘KNAP’, ‘Sports Sucks’ – the text on exhibits such as matchboxes (‘Caution: May ignite conversation’), and publications such as ‘Modernism/Murderism’ and ‘Blaff’s Anthology of Gujarati Pulp Fiction’, make a series of statements on caste discrimination, queer identity, political resistance, and feminism.None of the works carry description tags, and the name of the artist is taped on the floor, so only those who seek them see them. “I think it prods the viewer to question or think a little bit more about the art in front of them,” Malik said.

Hardik seeks return to Gujarat Titans, with captaincy rider; franchise says no



Mumbai Indians' captain Hardik Pandya held talks with Gujarat Titans over a possible return to the franchise but was rejected after he made it conditional on being reinstated as captain.

According to sources, Gujarat Titans, where Pandya won the Indian Premier League (IPL) as captain in their inaugural campaign in 2022 before moving back to Mumbai Indians in 2024, had been open to bringing him back. They had already discussed the prospect with current captain Shubman Gill, but Pandya's captaincy condition was a deal-breaker. The franchise was fine with him making a return. They had even discussed the same with its captain Shubman Gill, and he, too, had agreed that the franchise could trade him back. But when his condition of captaincy was put up, everyone said no to it," said a source. Gill is the India captain for both Tests and One-Day Internationals.

Hardik Pandya had a rather below par campaign individually as well in the 2026 IPL. (BCCI/Creimas Photo) Hardik Pandya had a rather below par campaign indi-

Sri Lanka squad for first India Test: de Silva leads; Nissanka, Mendis ruled out

Sri Lanka on Wednesday named their 16-member squad for the first Test against India, starting Saturday in Galle. Dhananjaya de Silva will lead the side while all-rounder Kamindu Mendis has been named his deputy. Senior batters Kusal Mendis and Pathum Nissanka have been ruled out of the opening Test of the series that will form a crucial part of the World Test Championship cycle for both India and Sri Lanka. In Kusal's absence, Sri Lanka have recalled 33-year-old Niroshan Dickwella as wicket-keeper into the Test team after three years. Ramesh Mendis and Prabath Jayasuriya form the spin options alongside Keshara Nuwantha. The 25-year-old off-spinner picked up three wickets during the Sri Lanka Cricket XI's three-day practice game against the Indians in Colombo last week. He also registered a five-for against India A in Galle last month.

Sri Lanka have included five pacers in the squad, including two left-arm quicks in Vishwa Fernando and Dilshan Madushanka. Meanwhile, visitors India have been hit with multiple injury setbacks ahead of the first match on tour. Shubman Gill's side have lost pace ace Jasprit Bumrah and batter Sai Sudharsan to injuries, with Aaquib Nabi and Sarfaraz Khan named as their replacements. Spin all-rounder Washington Sundar is also in a race against time to be deemed fit for the second Test that begins in Colombo on August 23. India are ranked fifth in the WTC standings after nine games this cycle,

‘One should know about one’s own body...’: Kapil Dev on injuries



The Indian players getting injured regularly have raised a few questions. For the upcoming series against Sri Lanka, which starts on Saturday, India will miss their regular starters in the format: Jasprit Bumrah, Sai Sudharsan, and Washington Sundar. Both Bumrah and Sudharsan had been named in the squad but were subsequently withdrawn from what is a crucial two-Test series. While the BCCI had revealed that their availability was subject to fitness, their extended absence has raised questions over whether the right protocols are being followed at the CoE. "Playing domestic cricket is very important," said Kapil Dev at the launch event of the inaugural

After coaching Belgium and Portugal, Roberto Martinez could take over Dutch side

After helming Belgium and Portugal at successive FIFA World Cups, Spanish coach Roberto Martinez could be in line for another high-profile managerial assignment as he is in talks to take over the Dutch side. The Orange are without a manager after Ronald Koeman stepped down in the wake of the Netherlands' ouster at the hands of Morocco in the Round of 32 at the recent World Cup. Nigel de Long, the former defensive midfielder who is now the technical director of the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB), has held talks with the 53-year-old Martinez in Malaga, De Telegraaf reported. Prospects like former Liverpool manager Arne Slot, ex-Manchester United handler Erik ten Hag and current PSV Eindhoven coach Peter Bosz have dropped out of the race. Others said to be in contention were Michael Reiziger, the handler of the Dutch junior team, and Louis van Gaal, who had already taken charge of the national side on three previous occasions. Martinez's Portugal side bowed out of the 2026 World Cup to a late Mikel Merino goal in the Round of 16 game against eventual champions Spain, after which he stepped down. He had earlier guided them to the title in the 2025 UEFA Nations League. Martinez took Belgium to at third-place finish at the 2018 World

vidually as well in the 2026 IPL. (BCCI/Creimas Photo) When contacted, a Gujarat Titans representative refused to comment on the matter. "Hardik Pandya had no direct conversation with any franchise whatsoever regarding transfer trade, or otherwise. If any approach has been made to him, that has been directed to the MI franchise," Pandya's spokesperson said. The development follows weeks of uncertainty over Pandya's position at Mumbai Indians. The Indian Express had reported earlier that MI's team management was not keen to retain him as captain and was even evaluating his role in the squad, after a season in which the team lost 10 of their 14 games, finished ninth, and extended the franchise's title drought to six years. The unravelling was laid bare in a team talk by the coaching staff after MI's final game of the season, against Rajasthan Royals. "The coaching staff was very clear in their message to the senior players that wherever they play, they need to be coachable. There were many instances where the coaching staff recommended something which was backed by data but players didn't follow it," a source had told

Mumbai Indians, with among the biggest names in the IPL, have looked out of step with the T20 format of late. None of their players featured in the race for the Orange (most runs) or Purple (most wickets) Caps; their best batsman, Ryan Rickelton, finished 17th among the season's run-getters, while leg-spinner Allah Ghazanfar was 14th among wicket-takers. Pandya's relationship with the MI fanbase has also been complicated since he was released by the franchise in 2022, joined Gujarat Titans and won the title as their captain, then returned to MI in 2024 to replace Rohit Sharma, days after the latter had led India to the 2023 50-over World Cup final. Fans booed Pandya through his first season back, when MI finished bottom of the table.



while Sri Lanka are ranked sixth after four matches.

Sri Lanka squad for first Test: Dhananjaya de Silva (c), Kamindu Mendis (vc), Lahiru Udara, Nishan Madushka, Dinesh Chandimal, Pasindu Sooriyabandara, Sonal Dinusha, Niroshan Dickwella (wk), Ramesh Mendis, Prabath Jayasuriya, Keshara Nuwantha, Milan Rathnayake, Asitha Fernando, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, and Dilshan Madushanka. India squad for first Test: Shubman Gill (Captain), KL Rahul (Vice-Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Manav Suthar, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Gurnoor Brar, Devdutt Padikkal, Saransh Jain, Aaquib Nabi, Sarfaraz Khan.

JITO Premier League.

"One should know about one's own body. There is too much T20 cricket happening, so you have to be careful about the toll it takes on the body. Our body is actually not tuned to being a fast bowler. Our body is more tuned to being a batter. The BCCI should look into how much workload can be given to a fast bowler," said Kapil Dev. Beyond the two, there are also growing concerns around all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy, who has had a series of injury setbacks. After adding 10 yards of extra pace during the IPL, he broke down with a quadriceps injury.

India's game against spin in recent times has been under the scanner after whitewashes against New Zealand and South Africa in home conditions. "The reason why Indian teams struggle against spin is that the top players don't play enough domestic cricket. That's where the BCCI should put its foot down and make everyone play multi-day matches. The other aspect is that the younger generation will get to learn from the top players," Kapil Dev observed. "In recent times, India has not been the best against spin bowling. They play too many T20Is and ODIs. Test matches are a different ball game. I hope they can put their heads together."



Cup but failed to take them out of their group at Qatar 2022, after which he resigned. However, he had the distinction of taking the team to the top spot in the FIFA world rankings. At the club level, his most high-profile stint was at Everton before being fired in 2016. Before that, he won the 2013 FA Cup with Wigan Athletic and League One with Swansea City in 2008. If Martinez does get the Dutch job, it would be the first time since Austrian Ernst Happel took the team to the 1978 World Cup final that the Netherlands would have a foreign coach.

‘We have so much money’: Kaif asks why experts are declining BCCI CoE contracts



Former India batter Mohammed Kaif questioned why the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the world's richest cricket body, has failed to appoint a head for sports science at the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for over a year amid the national side's current injury crisis.

India's fitness situation has unravelled over the last fortnight, with several key international stars out injured ahead of the two-match Test tour to Sri Lanka. In a major blow to the side, India lost pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah to injury despite the 32-year-old initially being named in the squad. Subsequently, batter Sai Sudharsan was also ruled out of the tour. All-rounders Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar and Harshit Rana are also contending with injury concerns alongside white-ball stars Hardik Pandya and Varun Chakaravarty.

"There was a statement from VVS Laxman [CoE head] that they had approached several people. Those things were being worked out, but at the last minute, they

Afghanistan to host India in three-match T20I series in Delhi, confirms BCCI

In a first, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) will host India in a three-match T20I series in India in September. The Afghans, who toured the country for a one-off Test and three ODIs in June, will return to New Delhi next month to take on Shreyas Iyer's side, shortly before the Asian Games campaign. The teams will play three games between September 13 and 17, all set to be played at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in the national capital.

"The BCCI is pleased to support the Afghanistan Cricket Board in hosting this T20I series in India. The India-Afghanistan cricketing rivalry has produced some thrilling encounters over the years, with both teams boasting quality cricketers. Afghanistan's players are also quite popular among fans in India, which is a reflection of the strong bond that has developed between the two cricketing nations. India hosting Afghanistan for their historic first Test in 2018 was another significant milestone in this journey, and since then, we have continued to see regular bilateral engagements between the two teams," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement. Over the years, Afghanistan have adopted India as one of their secondary home venues after playing their first-ever Test in the country in 2018. In June, India hosted the Afghans in the first-ever Test at the New Chandigarh Stadium. They recorded their biggest-ever Test win by an innings



inside three days. The teams then met in a three-match ODI series, the first bi-lateral 50-over series between the sides that India won 3-0. "We have hosted our home fixtures in both India and the UAE in recent years, and given the importance and scale of this series, we believe India provides an excellent setting for the event. We are confident that the series will create valuable opportunities across commercial, technical, and cricketing areas, while adding a new dimension to our bilateral engagement. We look forward to a successful series and to further strengthening our partnership with the BCCI," ACB chief Mirwais Ashraf said.

‘Uska waqt aagaya’: Inside Kuldeep Yadav’s race against time before Sri Lanka



After India's white-ball tour of Ireland and England this July, during which Kuldeep Yadav spent nearly all his time on the bench, the opportunity to play the One-Day Cup for Yorkshire came around and he didn't have any second thoughts. The plan had been Kanpur, then Sri Lanka, working under his childhood coach Kapil Dev Pandey ahead of what was a make-or-break series for the 31-year-old wrist-spinner.

After India's white-ball tour of Ireland and England this July, during which Kuldeep Yadav spent nearly all his time on the bench, the opportunity to play the One-Day Cup for Yorkshire came around and he didn't have any second thoughts. The plan had been Kanpur, then Sri Lanka, working under his childhood coach Kapil Dev Pandey ahead of what was a make-or-break series for the 31-year-old wrist-spinner. Instead, from London, Kuldeep changed course and headed north to Leeds, in search of game time that had been badly missing.

As India head into the series against Sri Lanka, Kuldeep finds himself in a precarious situation. Understudy to R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja as a third spinner, kept out by team combinations, his Test appearances stand at 18 in nine years. Even after Ashwin retired, he has played only five Tests, with Washington Sundar preferred ahead of him, and now faces a fresh challenger in Sri Lanka in Manav Suthar. "This series is made for Kuldeep," Pandey tells The Indian Express. "Uska waqt aagaya. He has to believe it and show it to the world that he is a match winner. Of course, the pressure is definitely on him, but at this level it is all about handling that. He has been playing for years now, so this is the time to pull all that experience together and show who he is and what he can capable of when he plays."

In the one-off Test against Afghanistan, Kuldeep showed signs of rustiness, inevitable given the time he has spent warming the bench across formats. That is why he turned out for Yorkshire, even if it meant it was one-day cricket. "Before he landed in Sri Lanka, I wanted him to be in the rhythm," Pandey says. "No matter how many overs you bowl in the nets, in a match when the batsman is trying to put you off, you have to find that rhythm. If you

can keep hitting the right line and length when batsmen are after you, then you are in the game. So that's what he did in England," Pandey says, pointing to the five matches he played in ten days. Pandey doesn't hide that the noise around Kuldeep since Suthar's arrival hasn't made things easy for the 31-year-old. If anything, he calls it a glorious opportunity for Kuldeep to take his game to another level. "In early years, even when Ashwin and Jadeja were there, he has played ahead of them," Pandey says. "So why can't he do it now?" Kuldeep Yadav in action during India's warm-up match against SLC XI in Colombo. (CREIMAS) Kuldeep Yadav in action during India's warm-up match against SLC XI in Colombo. (CREIMAS)

In subcontinent teams, a third-choice spinner losing his way isn't new. But in most cases, the opportunities rarely opened back up, as with Murali Kartik or Venkatapathy Raju. With Kuldeep, the story is different: a left-arm wrist-spinner is a unique breed, with enough variation up his sleeve that, played regularly, he has produced performances of real note. His well-disguised variations have left batsmen struggling to read him out of the hand. Since Ashwin's retirement, Kuldeep has one five-wicket haul in five Tests, a return that isn't bad but has been viewed through the harsh lens of a spinner not stepping up. Raju, who played much of his career in a three-pronged spin attack himself, says Kuldeep should by now be carrying the weight of expectation. "It is an international level. You can't think about all that. We have to be ready for it. But in Kuldeep's case it is unfortunate that he doesn't get to play enough matches. That's why it makes it more difficult for him. The trust is very important. It takes a different skill to bowl longer spells," Raju says.

Raju doesn't hide his disappointment that India didn't make Kuldeep the second spinner the moment Ashwin retired. "Somebody like Kuldeep shouldn't be warming the bench. Once Ashwin retired, he should have always been second choice. As long as Jadeja is there, he will play as an all-rounder. But Kuldeep being a wrist-spinner should be a straightforward choice. Whether the pitch is helpful or not, he will get you those wickets. You can't leave such bowlers outside," Raju says. The importance of the series isn't lost on Kuldeep either. Before leaving for the UK, he had a few sessions with Pandey in Kanpur, who made him bowl with every kind of ball. "I gave him old ball, ones that don't turn, ones which seam had worn off and even the new ball and Kookaburra," Pandey says. "What he bowls with shouldn't be a concern. If he gets the basics right, he can work magic with any ball."

In the warm-up fixture, Kuldeep showed encouraging signs, but once India head to Galle, they confront a key question. Whether the opportunity opens up for Kuldeep or not, one thing is clear for Pandey: a promise made and heard decades apart. "This series is important for him and me personally.

Ranbir Kapoor reveals why he initially rejected playing Lord Ram in Ramayana: ‘I felt I wasn’t good enough’; says fatherhood changed everything



Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana has been the talk of the town ever since Adipurush released in 2023. Soon after, reports emerged that Ranbir Kapoor would step into the role of Lord Ram. This was followed by a wave of speculation, viral videos of the actor preparing for the part, and reports about the ensemble cast. The project was eventually made official by producers Namit Malhotra and KFG star Yash, who will also be playing the role of Ravana in the film. While several actors associated with the film have often spoken about Ranbir’s dedication, this marks the first time the actor himself has opened up about being offered the role, his initial fears, and how the film has been a life-changing experience. Speaking at a Q&A during the New York special IMAX trailer screening, Ranbir recalled his first reaction when Namit approached him. “Coming to play Lord Ram, I remember when Namit offered me this part around four years back, my instant reaction was: ‘I am not fit enough, good enough.’ I felt I wouldn’t be able to do full justice. But that fear quickly turned into gratitude because opportunities like this were something I truly needed in my life,” he said. He added that the timing of the role coincided with a deeply personal phase. “There was a period when I needed to

change my lifestyle. I had just become a father for the first time. The sweet coincidence of playing Lord Ram and becoming a father became a turning point in my life.” “For me, the preparation began the day I watched Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayana. It is so deeply etched in our subconscious and rooted in us that we feel immense pride in Lord Rama’s journey. When I got the opportunity to portray him, I knew the preparation had to go beyond the physical—it had to be emotional and spiritual. One has to be truthful to the character, because he is loved by billions across centuries and will continue to be long after we are gone,” he said.

He concluded by expressing gratitude for the opportunity. “The responsibility is something I take very seriously. I have immense love and respect for this part and for the story of Ramayana. When that conviction is in place, everything else falls into place.”

Previously, speaking on Ranveer Allahbadia’s podcast, actor Ravi Dubey, who plays Laxman in the film, had shared his excitement about being part of the project. “I am just very grateful. This was never even in my foresight. The collaboration itself felt impossible—Ranbir as Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravan, Sunny Deol as Hanuman, A. R. Rahman composing the music, and Nitesh Tiwari directing it. It’s incredible. Something like this only happens in dreams,” he said, adding that he would remain forever indebted to the makers. Praising Ranbir, Ravi added, “Ranbir has an incredible aura. He’s quiet, graceful, and deeply committed. He carries a very soft energy, and that’s something everyone who meets him can feel.” Ramayana made on a Rs 4000 crore budget The film is mounted on an unprecedented scale. Speaking to Prakhar Gupta, producer Namit Malhotra revealed, “When we set out to make this six or seven years ago, people thought I was a lunatic because no Indian film comes close to this scale. Put simply, the budget will be around \$500 million for both parts combined, which is over Rs 4,000 crore.” He added, “We’re making the largest film in the world for the greatest epic that deserves to be seen globally.

Mahima Chaudhry was ‘reluctant’ to work in Baghban with Salman Khan: ‘I had no intention of doing it, went to say no’

Some movies stand the test of time and age well, while others don’t. And then there are a few that tear the audience base in two with highly polarised reviews, even years or decades after their release. Some love the movie, while others hate it. Director Ravi Chopra’s Baghban (2003) — starring a large ensemble including Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Salman Khan, and Mahima Chaudhry — is one such film. Although it opened to critical and commercial success and still enjoys a solid fan base, the “family drama” has earned significant backlash over the years for gaslighting youngsters into believing that prioritising their parents over their own lives was of utmost importance and then guilt-tripping them if they don’t. Nonetheless, it provided a major break for its cast and crew and remains one of the most celebrated works for many of them. While Salman and Mahima’s presence is felt throughout the movie, they technically had only extended cameos as Raj (Amitabh Bachchan) and Pooja Malhotra’s (Hema Malini) adopted son, Alok, and his wife, Arpita, respectively. In fact, since it was yet another guest appearance, Mahima had even considered turning down the offer initially. “When Ravi ji called me for Baghban, I had no intention of doing the movie because he said Salman and I had guest appearances,” she shared during a recent conversation with Bollywood Hungama. During that period, Mahima mentioned, she had done so many cameos that it almost felt like that was all people called her for. “People started feeling that if they included me in one of their songs, the movie would become a hit. It was very nice to be considered a lucky mascot, but all I was getting were two-four scenes or a song. I was very reluctant.” However, since the call came from Ravi Chopra, Mahima decided to pay him a visit — as she



had immense respect for him and his father, legendary director-producer BR Chopra — and politely decline the offer. “When he suggested coming and meeting me, I immediately told him that I would come over. I went to say no to him, but I couldn’t. My secretary at that time even stepped in, saying he would do it. But I stopped him, saying, ‘I will do this one more movie. It’s okay,’” the actor noted. But that, she explained, turned out to be one of the best decisions she ever made, as she continues to receive immense love and respect for the film. “I am so happy today. Not just that I got to work with Amitabh Bachchan, but the movie continues to have very good shelf-life. Even now, people come up to me saying they love the film and its songs. Good came out of it.” Baghban also featured Aman Verma, Samir Soni, Saahil Chadha, Nasir Khan, Suman Ranganathan, Divya Dutta, Arzoo Govitrikar, and Rimi Sen in key roles.

Rishi Kapoor was always ‘irritated’ with son Ranbir Kapoor, Ramayana actor used to ‘laugh’, says Viveck Vaswani: ‘He was used to it’



Actor Ranbir Kapoor has always been vocal about his complex relationship with late dad, actor Rishi Kapoor. The father-son duo went through a phase where they could not see eye to eye. Now, in a recent interview, actor-writer Viveck Vaswani opened up about Ranbir and Rishi’s

personal relationship. He revealed that the late actor was usually irritated with his son. During a conversation with Vicky Lalwani, he opened up about Rishi Kapoor’s “moody” behaviour and shared, “He was born like that, he was moody. Once you accept

that he is moody, you can get along with him perfectly. But, with the good people, he was very good. Be was excellent with me. He was fond of most people. He was very fond of Vinod Khanna.” He further added, “He was continuously aggravated with Ranbir. He felt that because he is his son,

he had to be aggravated with him. Never angry, only aggravated, very irritated. He was like that with everybody.” When asked if Ranbir ever got upset with the way Rishi spoke to him, he replied, “No, no. He was used to it since he was born. He used to laugh. He used to say, ‘See, he is going to shout at me again. Just let me stand here.’” Earlier, in a video shared by the YouTube channel of PNG Jewels, the Animal actor had opened up about how his approach towards fatherhood differed from his father Rishi’s parenting style. “My father’s relationship with me had a little bit of distance; it was not like a friendship, because that’s how that generation was; there was a glass wall. But now, differently with my child, I want to break that glass wall. I want to be a friend to her, give her the wings to fly in whichever direction she wants,” he expressed.

Megan Thee Stallion rushed to hospital mid-performance after health scare; suffers from extreme exhaustion: ‘A real wake-up call for me’



Rapper and songwriter Megan Thee Stallion had to leave her Moulin Rouge! The Musical Broadway performance mid-way after she reportedly experienced breathing difficulties during the show on Tuesday. Following the sudden health scare, she was rushed to the hospital. However, Megan is now reported to be recovering and resting. According to Variety, Megan’s representative shared a statement about her health following her hospitalisation and also revealed the cause of the issue. “On Tuesday evening, Megan was transported to a local hospital to undergo a medical evaluation after experiencing concerning symptoms. Doctors ultimately identified

extreme exhaustion, dehydration, vasoconstriction and low metabolic levels as the cause of her symptoms. Megan has since been treated, discharged and is now resting,” the statement read. The statement also confirmed that the rapper will return to the Broadway show on Thursday. It went on to read, “Megan is incredibly grateful for the prayers and well-wishes from her supporters and is looking forward to resuming her role as Zidler on ‘Moulin Rouge’ on Thursday.”

Megan herself took to social media to speak about the health incident and described it as a ‘wake-up call’ to prioritise her well-being. “Last night was a real wake-up call for me. I’ve been pushing myself past my limits lately, running on empty, and my body finally said enough. It honestly scared me. I thought I was gonna faint on stage, I really tried to push through my performance but I just couldn’t. Hotties I wanna be real with y’all because you mean everything to me and I hate letting y’all down ??” She added, “I just need one day to rest, reset, and take care of myself the way I should have been..I’ll be right back on that stage Thursday, stronger, clearer, and ready to give you 100% the way you deserve. Thank you for always riding with me and loving me through everything. Earlier, Megan had spoken about how her mother had manifested her being a part of Broadway one day. “I guess that manifested into me being who I am today, but going back to her putting me in plays when I was young, when I got the opportunity to be a part of Broadway, I was like, ‘Wow. I feel like this is something that my mom would’ve really wanted me to do,” Megan told USA Today.

Alia Bhatt calls husband Ranbir Kapoor ‘fabulous’ in Ramayana teaser, says he has ‘done a beautiful job’

The makers of Ranbir Kapoor’s upcoming epic Ramayana, are set to reveal the first glimpse of the film on Thursday. Fans have been excited about the big reveal scheduled to unveil on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti. Now, ahead of its release, Ranbir’s wife and actor Alia Bhatt recently opened up about the highly-anticipated glimpse. She also praised her husband on social media, saying that he has done a “beautiful job.”

“Ranbir Kapoor has just done a beautiful job” During a virtual interaction with fans, Alia was seen expressing her excitement about the Rama glimpse from Ramayana. “Ramayana unit is going to be out tomorrow. It is the unit called the Rama unit. I’m going to be posting it on my social media, so again, please go out there and support it,” she said.

The actor also talked about Ranbir’s performance and further added, “It’s absolutely fabulous. I think Ranbir has just done such a beautiful job and I just can’t wait for you guys to see it. It’s just out of this world.” Several fans appreciated Alia for supporting her husband and dropped delightful comments in the live session. Meanwhile, during a recent Q&A New York special IMAX trailer screening, Ranbir Kapoor recalled being approached for the movie. He shared, “Coming to play Lord Ram, I remember when Namit offered me this part around four years back, my instant reaction was: ‘I am not fit enough, good enough.’ I felt I wouldn’t be able to do full justice. But that fear quickly turned into gratitude because opportunities like this were something I truly needed in my life.” He added,



“There was a period when I needed to change my lifestyle. I had just become a father for the first time. The sweet coincidence of playing Lord Ram and becoming a father became a turning point in my life.” Helmed by Nitesh Tiwari, Ramayana: The Introduction is the first part of the mythological franchise and is set to hit the theatres on Diwali, this year. The second part will release on Diwali 2027. Besides Ranbir Kapoor, the film also features Yash as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Ravi Dubey as Lakshman and Sunny Deol as Lord Hanuman. Music composer Hans Zimmer has also joined AR Rahman for the composition. The film has been produced by Namit Malhotra who had previously said that the film’s budget is around Rs 4,000 crore.

Jaya Bachchan gets ‘aggravated’ by paparazzi when they ‘push her buttons’, says Viveck Vaswani: ‘It’s a game between them’



Viveck, who has worked with Jaya Bachchan in the past, shared that the veteran actor was never rude and was always sweet with people around her. He said, “She was a superstar. She has only given hits. She worked with Randhir Kapoor, Manoj Kumar... she was phenomenal. She was very sweet.” When asked the reason behind her losing her cool at photographers, Viveck said, “I don’t know. Maybe over time. Maybe she wasn’t acting too much, so she had more time.” But Viveck argued that Jaya remains cordial and warm towards her close friends. “With her close friends like Dimple and Abu Jani, Sandeep Khosla, she’s very charming,” he said.

Blaming the paparazzi, Vaswani said, “I think what has happened is that she is continuously aggravated by the paparazzi. Now once or twice, she got aggravated. So they started understanding how to press her buttons. So they do that and she gets aggravated. It’s now become a game between them. I don’t think it’s serious,” he said. He also pointed out that Jaya raises valid points in Parliament, but the way she presents them sometimes gets in the way of conveying the message and rubs people the wrong way. “I also think that in Parliament, the points she makes are very valid, but she puts them across like a school teacher. Half of them get aggravated. So I think there is a way to say things,” he added. Earlier, Jaya was criticised for her remark against the paparazzi. While speaking to Barkha Dutt on Mojo Story, Jaya Bachchan had said, “My relationship with the media is fantastic. I am a product of the media. My father was a journalist, and I have immense respect for them. But my relationship with paparazzi is zero. Who are these people? Are they trained to represent the people of this country?” She added, “Yeh jo bahar gande, tight pant pehnke, haath mein mobile leke ghoomte hain (These people who walk around in dirty clothes, tight pants, with phones in their hands), they think that just because they have a mobile phone, they can take your picture and say whatever they want. The kind of comments they pass — kahan se aate hain, kis tarah ka education hai, kya background hai? (Where are they from? What is their education? What is their background?)

Actor and producer Viveck Vaswani blamed the paparazzi for aggravating Jaya Bachchan and called her ‘very sweet’.

There have been a few instances in the recent past when veteran actor Jaya Bachchan lost her cool with the paparazzi. While many photographers have spoken about her conduct, actor and producer Viveck Vaswani recently came to her defence. In a recent interaction, Viveck blamed the paparazzi for “pushing her buttons” and “aggravating” her.