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weather report

Kolkata Weather

37 °C | °F

Precipitation 20%

Humidity 68%

Wind 21km/h

Mostly cloudy with a t-storm

Indian Indices

NIFTY 50		
25019.80	-42.30	-0.17
SENSEX		
82330.59	-200.15	-0.24
NIFTY BANK		
55354.90	-0.70	0.00
NIFTY IT		
37972.35	-321.45	-0.84
BSE SMALLCAP		
51045.74	595.27	1.18

Gold Rates

Today gold price in Kolkata
87,200 95,130
»
Today gold price in Bangalore
87,200 95,130
»
Today gold price in India
87,200 (₹1,100) 95,130 (₹1,200)

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Girls cover themselves with scarves to shield from the scorching sun on a hot summer day in Jabalpur on Friday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Urges IMF to Reconsider $2.1 Billion Bailout to Pakistan Amid Terrorism Concerns



New Delhi, 16 May: Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has called upon the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reassess its recent decision to grant a $2.1 billion bailout package to Pakistan. Singh's appeal stems from apprehensions that the financial assistance might be diverted to bolster terrorist infrastructure, thereby exacerbating regional security challenges.

Addressing a gathering at the Bhuj Airbase in Gujarat, Singh emphasized that providing financial aid to Pakistan equates to indirectly supporting terrorism. He stated, "IMF's financial assistance to Pakistan essentially means funding terrorism. Any form of aid to Pakistan is tantamount to directly financing terrorist activities."

The IMF's decision, announced on May 9, 2025, includes a $1 billion disbursement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and an additional $1.3 billion through the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). This move has sparked concerns in India, given Pakistan's historical pattern of misusing international funds and its alleged support for cross-border terrorism.

India's reservations were evident during the IMF board meeting, where it abstained from voting on the bailout package. The Indian delegation highlighted Pakistan's poor track record in implementing IMF programs and raised concerns about the potential misuse of funds for state-sponsored terrorism.

Singh's remarks come in the wake of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, particularly after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians. In response, India launched "Operation Sindoor," targeting terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.

India has consistently expressed concerns over the Pakistani military's significant influence on the country's economy and governance. The military's involvement in economic decision-making processes raises questions about transparency and the effective utilization of international funds.

The IMF, while acknowledging India's concerns, has emphasized the importance of strong program implementation and financial discipline in Pakistan. However, critics argue that the IMF's continued financial support, despite Pakistan's track record, sets a concerning precedent and may undermine the institution's credibility.

Singh's appeal to the IMF underscores India's broader strategy to hold Pakistan accountable on international platforms and to prevent the misuse of global financial resources for activities that threaten regional stability. The call for reconsideration of the bailout package reflects India's commitment to combating terrorism and ensuring that international aid does not inadvertently support such activities.

As the situation unfolds, the international community will closely monitor the developments and the IMF's response to India's concerns. The efficacy of global financial institutions in addressing security-related apprehensions remains a topic of critical importance in the context of international diplomacy and regional peace.



Police personnel march as people participate in a "Tiranga Yatra" to commemorate the success of Operation Sindoor and pay tribute to the Indian Armed Forces in Moradabad on Friday.

Operation Sindoor Reflects PM Modi's Strong Political Will, Fire Power Of Armed Forces: Amit Shah

New Delhi, 16 May: Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that Operation Sindoor, India's counterstrike in response to the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives, is a reflection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political will, intelligence gathering by various agencies and fire power of Indian armed forces. Operation Sindoor is a unique symbol of PM Modi's strong political will, the accurate intelligence of our agencies, and the impeccable strike capability of our three armed forces, said Mr Shah, after inaugurating the new Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) at North Block in New Delhi.

The multi-agency centre, under the Intelligence Bureau, was created in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks with an aim to share timely inputs among various stakeholders involved in law enforcement. After four days of hostilities that alarmed the world, India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire, stopping all military action on May 10. Shortly before the breakthrough, India had warned that "any act of terror will be considered an act of war".Foreign Minister S Jaishankar, confirming that the two countries have "worked out an understanding", said India would continue its uncompromising stance against terrorism.

The killing of 31 Maoists at Karregutta Hill on the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border this week - the result of 'India's largest anti-Maoist operation', which sources said also recovered 450 IEDs and 40 weapons - has been hailed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah as an "historic" achievement.Source said a large quantity of ammunition, detonators, and explosive devices, besides 12,000kg of other materials, such as medicine and electric equipment was also seized.

And, in addition, four factories producing weapons, motors, and cutters were found. On Wednesday, Mr Shah said, "The hill, once ruled by red terror, now proudly waves the tricolour", and underlined the government's resolve to "eradicate Maoism" by March 2026. Karregutta Hill, he declared, was once the 'unified headquarters' of major Maoist groups, and where battle strategies were drawn up, weapons developed, and fighters trained. "This largest operation was completed by our security forces in just 21 days... and I am immensely delighted there was not a single casualty among forces in this operation."

Supreme Court Orders West Bengal to Pay 25% Dearness Allowance to State Employees Within Four Weeks

Kolkata, 16 May: In a landmark decision on May 16, 2025, the Supreme Court of India directed the West Bengal government to pay 25% of the pending Dearness Allowance (DA) to its state government employees within four weeks. The bench, comprising Justices Sanjay Karol and Manoj Misra, issued this interim order, emphasizing the necessity of fair compensation for public servants amidst rising inflation and cost-of-living challenges.

The directive stems from a prolonged legal battle initiated by state government employees seeking parity in DA with their central government counterparts. In May 2022, the Calcutta High Court had ruled in favor of the employees, instructing the state to align its DA payments with central rates. However, the West Bengal government challenged this decision in the Supreme Court in November 2022, citing financial constraints.

Currently, West Bengal state employees receive an 18% DA, following a 4% increase announced in the state budget effective April 1, 2025. In contrast, central government employees receive a 55% DA, highlighting a significant 37% disparity. The Supreme Court's order mandates the state to bridge part of this gap by disbursing 25% of the pending DA within the stipulated time frame.



During the proceedings, the state's legal representative, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, argued that paying 50% of the arrears immediately would be financially untenable for the state. Acknowledging this, the court adjusted its directive to a 25% payment, with the remaining dues to be addressed in subsequent hearings scheduled for August.

The decision has elicited mixed reactions. Opposition leaders, including BJP's Suvendu Adhikari, welcomed the ruling, viewing it as a victory for state employees' rights. Conversely, the state's Finance Minister, Chandrima Bhattacharya, refrained from immediate comment, stating that the government would respond after reviewing the court's order.

This ruling underscores the judiciary's role in ensuring equitable treatment of government employees and may set a precedent for similar disputes in other states. As the West Bengal government navigates the financial implications of this directive, the broader conversation about fair compensation and fiscal responsibility continues to evolve.

Jagannath Temple in Digha Collects Over ₹9 Lakh in Donations Within 15 Days; Plans Underway for Additional Donation Boxes



Kolkata, 16 May: The newly inaugurated Jagannath Temple in Digha, West Bengal, has witnessed an overwhelming influx of devotees since its opening on April 30, 2025. Within just 15 days, the temple has amassed over ₹9 lakh in donations, commonly referred to as 'pranami'. This significant collection has prompted temple authorities to consider installing additional donation boxes to accommodate the growing number of visitors and their offerings.

The temple, a replica of the iconic Jagannath Temple in Puri, Odisha, was inaugurated by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. Since then, it has become a major attraction, drawing thousands of devotees daily. The initial days saw an unprecedented footfall, with reports indicating that over 10 lakh pilgrims visited the temple within the first four days of its opening.

Currently, the temple has a single donation box placed near the main deity. However, due to the massive crowds, many devotees find it challenging to reach the box to make their offerings. Recognizing this issue, the temple's governing body, the Jagannath Dham Trust, has decided to install ten additional donation boxes at various locations within the temple premises. These boxes will be made of stainless steel and equipped with dual locks to ensure security.

Radharaman Das, Vice President of ISKCON Kolkata and a member of the Jagannath Dham Trust, stated that the decision to add more donation boxes was made after observing the difficulties faced by devotees. He emphasized the importance of facilitating the donation process to accommodate the large number of visitors

The process of counting the collected donations is meticulous and time-consuming. Every Tuesday, the temple authorities undertake the task of counting the offerings, which include a significant number of coins and currency notes of various denominations. For instance, on a recent Tuesday, the counting process began at 1 PM and concluded at 8 PM, totaling seven hours. During this session, it was noted that ₹1.25 lakh was collected solely in coins, with additional amounts in ₹10 and ₹20 notes.

To ensure transparency and security, the entire counting process is conducted under CCTV surveillance. The procedure is overseen by administrative officials, bank employees, ISKCON monks, and a select group of volunteers. This collaborative effort aims to maintain the integrity of the donation process and build trust among the devotees.

The temple's rapid rise in popularity has also had a positive impact on the local economy. Hoteliers and small traders in Digha have expressed optimism that the temple will transform the coastal town into a prominent religious tourism destination, thereby boosting business and employment opportunities in the region.

Despite its recent inauguration, the Jagannath Temple in Digha has already become a focal point for devotees and tourists alike. The temple's management is committed to enhancing the visitor experience by addressing logistical challenges and ensuring that all devotees can participate in the religious offerings without hindrance.

As the temple continues to attract large crowds, the implementation of additional donation boxes is a proactive step towards accommodating the spiritual and logistical needs of its visitors. The authorities remain vigilant and responsive to the evolving requirements of the temple's operations, ensuring that the sanctity and functionality of this sacred space are upheld.

"Blind Lust To...": Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti's Spat Over Pak Water Pact

New Delhi, 16 May: A public spat broke out between Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his predecessor Mehbooba Mufti on social media on Friday over calls for revival of the Tulbul Navigation project after the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. Ms Mufti accused Mr Abdullah of adopting "provocative" measures amid ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan. Mr Abdullah, however, alleged that the former Chief Minister was trying to score "cheap publicity points" and "please some people" in Pakistan by opposing the idea. The Tulbul Navigation project - that seeks to rejuvenate the Jhelum-fed Wular lake in Bandipora district - was launched in 1987 but paused in 2007 amid objections from Pakistan that it violated the Indus Waters Treaty. With India suspending the Treaty on April 23, a day after the Pahalgam terror attack, Mr Abdullah on Thursday called for resumption of work in the project on Wular Lake. In a post on X, the Chief Minister said that since the water pact with Pakistan has been kept in abeyance, "I wonder if we will be able to resume the project". "The Wular lake in North Kashmir. The civil works you see in the video is the Tulbul Navigation Barrage. It was started in the early 1980s but had to be abandoned under pressure from Pakistan citing the Indus Water Treaty," he wrote on the micro-blogging platform. The National Conference leader said that if completed, the Tulbul project can help in using the Jhelum river for navigation purposes.

Colonel Sofiya Qureshi's Family Urges PM Modi to Dismiss BJP Minister Over Offensive Remarks

New Delhi, 16 May: In a significant development that has stirred national discourse, the family of Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, a distinguished officer of the Indian Army, has appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove Madhya Pradesh's Minister of Tribal Affairs, Kunwar Vijay Shah, from his position. This plea follows Shah's controversial remark referring to Colonel Qureshi as the "sister of terrorists," a statement that has been widely condemned across political and social spectrums. Colonel Qureshi recently gained national prominence for her pivotal role in "Operation Sindoor," a strategic military initiative targeting terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Her leadership and articulate briefings during the operation were lauded as exemplary representations of the Indian Armed Forces' professionalism and commitment. However, Minister Shah's derogatory comment has overshadowed these achievements, prompting Colonel Qureshi's family to seek direct intervention from the Prime Minister. Her brother, Bunty Suleman, expressed deep anguish, stating, "Sofiya is a daughter of the nation. Such a comment is unforgivable." The family emphasized that the minister's statement not only insults Colonel Qureshi but also undermines the honor of the entire military establishment. The controversy has sparked widespread outrage. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) vehemently criticized Shah's remark, labeling it as misogynistic and communal. TMC MP Sagarika Ghose questioned the National Commission for Women's (NCW) response, urging the commission to explicitly condemn Shah's statement and highlighting the need for accountability. The TMC has demanded Shah's immediate dismissal from the state cabinet, asserting that his rhetoric reflects a dangerous conflation of patriotism with religious identity. In response to the backlash, Minister Shah claimed that his statement was misinterpreted and issued a public apology. He stated, "I am ready to apologize ten times; I have more respect for her than my sister." Despite this, the Madhya Pradesh High Court took suo motu cognizance of the matter, directing the state police to file a First Information Report (FIR) against Shah for his defamatory remarks. Shah challenged the FIR in the Supreme Court, which, while not granting immediate relief, emphasized the responsibility public figures have in their speech. The incident has reignited discussions about the treatment of military personnel, especially those from minority communities, and the responsibilities of elected officials in maintaining respectful discourse. Colonel Qureshi's exemplary service in Operation Sindoor, where she detailed the targeting of terrorist camps linked to major attacks like the 26/11 Mumbai incident, stands in stark contrast to the derogatory remarks made against her. As the nation grapples with the implications of this controversy, the call for Minister Shah's removal underscores a broader demand for accountability and respect for the armed forces. The Prime Minister's response to this appeal will be closely watched, as it holds significance not only for Colonel Qureshi and her family but also for the principles of dignity and honor that underpin India's democratic and military institutions.



West Bengal Police Defend Lathi Charge on Protesting Teachers at Bikash Bhawan

Kolkata, 16 May: The West Bengal Police have defended their use of force during a clash with protesting teachers outside Bikash Bhawan, the state education department headquarters in Salt Lake, Kolkata, on May 15. The police stated that the lathi charge was a necessary measure to evacuate government employees and officials who were reportedly detained inside the building by the demonstrators. They emphasized that "minimal force" was applied to ensure the safe exit of the personnel trapped due to the protest.

According to Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Jawed Shamim, the protesters had been blocking the gates of Bikash Bhawan, preventing around 500–600 employees from leaving after their work hours. Shamim stated that despite repeated requests from the police, the demonstrators refused to allow the employees to exit, leading to the decision to use force to clear the obstruction.

The protest was organized by teachers who had lost their jobs following a Supreme Court ruling that annulled over 25,000 appointments made by the



West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) due to irregularities in the recruitment process. The demonstrators were demanding reinstatement without the need for fresh examinations, citing that they had been unfairly affected by the alleged corruption.

The police's actions have been met with criticism from various quarters, including political leaders and civil rights organizations, who have condemned the use of force against the protesters. They argue that the demonstrators were exercising their democratic right to protest and that the police's response was disproportionate.

In response to the incident, the West Bengal Cabinet approved the West Bengal Livelihood and Social Security Interim Scheme on May 14, 2025. This scheme provides financial assistance to affected Group C and D staffers, offering monthly grants of ₹25,000 and ₹20,000 respectively, until the final verdict on their employment status is reached.

The situation remains tense, with the protesting teachers vowing to continue their demonstrations until their demands are met. They have called for a statewide rally to garner support for their cause and to protest against what they describe as police "excesses."

As the standoff continues, both the state government and the police are under increasing pressure to address the concerns of the protesting teachers and to find a resolution to the ongoing crisis.

Enhanced security measures by rpf in howrah division

Kolkata, 16 May: In view of the current national security environment, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Eastern Railway's Howrah Division has significantly intensified its security arrangements across the division. These measures aim to ensure the safety of passengers, safeguard railway personnel, and protect vital infrastructure from any potential threats. A series of proactive and preventive actions have been undertaken as part of this enhanced security strategy.



Key Measures Implemented:

Area Domination : Route marches are being carried out regularly at major railway stations. Public announcements are being made to discourage the spread of rumors and to encourage reliance on official government advisories and press releases.

Joint Patrolling : Coordinated patrolling is underway in sensitive zones such as railway yards, bridges, and vulnerable track sections to deter any unlawful activities.

Anti-Sabotage Measures : Security has been bolstered with intensified anti-sabotage checks, supported by dog squads and targeted inspections based on suspect profiling.

Access Control : Security protocols have been tightened at critical installations including control rooms, workshops, and zones with outsourced contractual activities.

Inter-Agency Coordination : Constant coordination and intelligence-sharing are being maintained with the Government Railway Police (GRP), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and other law enforcement agencies for seamless response and preventive action.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Passengers are being sensitized to remain alert and to report any suspicious objects or behavior to the nearest railway staff or security personnel.

Employee Sensitization : Railway staff are being regularly briefed to identify and report any unusual or suspicious activity, thereby strengthening internal vigilance.

Enhanced Briefings : RPF personnel are receiving regular briefings and debriefings focused on prevailing threats and effective response mechanisms.

CCTV Surveillance : Monitoring through the CCTV network has been intensified, especially at stations and other high-priority areas.

Baggage and Cargo Screening : Enhanced screening procedures have been implemented using advanced scanners to detect any prohibited or suspicious items.

The Howrah Division remains steadfast in its commitment to passenger safety and security. The RPF urges all passengers and stakeholders to cooperate with security personnel, remain vigilant, and immediately report any suspicious activity.

Malda Division Organizes Media Tour Showcasing Upgradation of Pirpainti and Rajmahal Stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

Kolkata, 16 May: In a significant step towards modernizing railway infrastructure and enhancing passenger amenities, *Malda Division of Eastern Railway* organized a *media tour* today to showcase the ongoing redevelopment works at *Pirpainti* and *Rajmahal* railway stations under the ambitious *Amrit Station Scheme*.

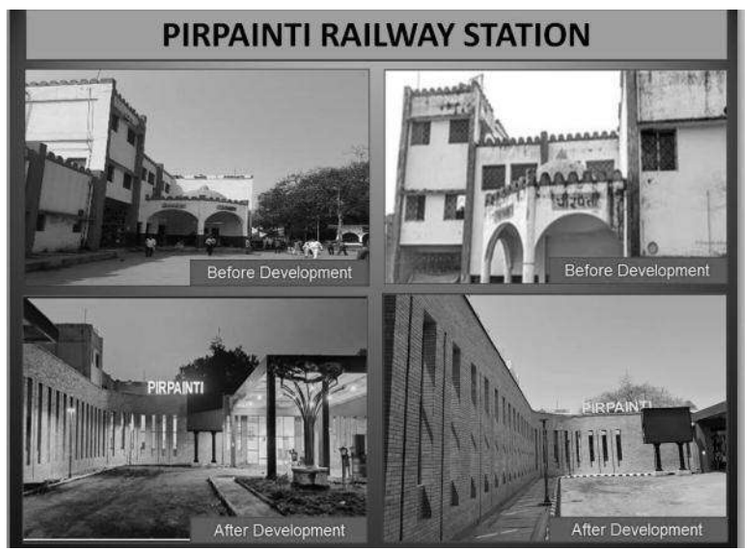
The media tour was led by *Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Malda, Shri Yatish Kumar*, accompanied by Senior Branch Officers of the division. The objective of the tour was to provide an overview of the transformation initiatives underway, and to brief the media on the scope, progress, and future vision of the redevelopment projects.

Pirpainti Railway Station Redevelopment Highlights

At *Pirpainti Station*, DRM/Malda reviewed the modernization efforts and provided a detailed briefing to media representatives. A walkthrough of the station was conducted, allowing the press to witness firsthand of the upgraded infrastructure and improved passenger-centric facilities.

It is noteworthy that the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of Pirpainti Station in August 2023.

Pirpainti Station, categorized as an *NSG-5 station*, is one of the busiest in the Eastern Railway zone, necessitating significant infrastructure enhancement. Under Phase 1 of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, redevelopment works worth *₹18.93 crore* have been sanctioned. The scope of work includes *Civil, Electrical, S&T, Signage, Lift, and 12m Foot Over Bridge (FOB)/Roof Plaza* development, Separate Arrival & Departure Blocks,Pedestrian Pathways, Eye-catching Sculptures, Standard Interiors, Modern Façade with Aesthetic Lighting etc



Key Works Completed under Phase 1 at Pirpainti Station:

• Construction of a *modern façade* with aesthetic lighting

• Development of *First Class and Second Class Waiting Halls, Reserved Lounge*, *Executive Lounge*, and *Ladies Waiting Hall*

• Completion of the *concourse area* and arrival block*

• Development of the *circulating area* for smoother passenger movement

• Installation of *Large-Size Indoor and Outdoor Video Walls* for dynamic passenger information

• Implementation of *Signage Work* to streamline station navigation

• Provision of *Fully Divyangjan-Compliant Infrastructure* to ensure universal accessibility

The *station's design and interiors* draw inspiration from *local art and nearby historical monuments*, combining modern architecture with the region's cultural heritage to give the station a distinct identity.As of now, Planed work has been completed.

Rajmahal Railway Station Redevelopment Highlights

A Similar media Tour also carried out at *Rajmahal Railway Station*, where members of the press were briefed on the significant progress made under the *Amrit Station Scheme*. This initiative is aimed at transforming Rajmahal Station into a state-of-the-art facility with world-class infrastructure and passenger amenities.

Classified as an *NSG-5 station*, Rajmahal is among the busiest and most important stations in the Eastern Railway zone. The redevelopment work is being carried out in phases, with *Phase 1 sanctioned at an estimated cost of ₹7.03 crore*, encompassing *Civil, Electrical, S&T works, Signage*.

Key works completeded under Phase 1 include:

• *Construction of a Modern Façade* with *Aesthetic Façade Lighting (completed)*

• *Development of Circulating Area* and *Pedestrian Pathways*

• *Platform Extension* to accommodate longer trains

• *Renovation and Construction of *First Class and Second Class Waiting Halls,* *Reserved Lounge*, *Executive Lounge* and *Ladies Waiting Hall*, including a *New Pay & Use Toilet Facility*

• Implementation of *Signage Work* to streamline station navigation

• Installation of Eye-Catching Sculptures* and *Standard Interiors*

• *Interior and Exterior Design Elements Inspired by Local Art and Historical Monuments*

• *Fully Divyangjan-Friendly Infrastructure* to ensure accessibility for all

• *Installation of a Large-Size indoor Video Wall* for dynamic passenger information

• *Signage Work to streamline navigation within the station premises

This holistic upgrade aims to enhance the overall passenger experience by combining modern amenities with a cultural touch that reflects the rich heritage of the Rajmahal region. As of now, Planed work has been completed.

Dilip Ghosh Excluded from BJP's Tiranga Yatra Amid Internal Tensions

Kolkata, 16 May: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former West Bengal state president Dilip Ghosh has publicly expressed his exclusion from the party's ongoing 'Tiranga Yatra' events, commemorating the success of Operation Sindoor. Despite his prominent role in the party, Ghosh stated he was not informed about the Kolkata leg of the yatra, highlighting potential internal rifts within the state BJP leadership.

The 'Tiranga Yatra' is a nationwide campaign initiated by the BJP to honor the Indian armed forces' achievements during Operation Sindoor, a military response to the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which claimed 26 lives. The campaign aims to evoke patriotism and unity, with rallies organized across various states, including West Bengal.

In Kolkata, the yatra commenced from College Square to Shyambazar, featuring key BJP figures such as state president Sukanta Majumdar and Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari. However, Ghosh's absence was notable.

Dilip Ghosh Expresses Concern Over John Barla's Exit from BJP

Kolkata, 16 May: Former Union Minister John Barla has resigned from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC), citing internal conflicts and obstruction in developmental initiatives. Barla accused BJP's Leader of the Opposition in West Bengal, Suvendu Adhikari, of hindering his efforts to promote development in North Bengal, including the establishment of a 1,000-bed hospital in the region. Dilip Ghosh, former state president of the BJP, acknowledged the gravity of the situation, stating, "It is a matter of concern when a leader of his stature leaves the party. The organization must introspect on why such a significant figure decided to part ways." Ghosh highlighted Barla's contributions to the party, noting that his trade union background and grassroots connections had been beneficial to the BJP. He emphasized that Barla's exit could have political repercussions, especially given his influence in the tea-producing regions of North Bengal.



Today's Horoscope

ARIES : Today you will have an eye for beautiful and outlandish things. There is a possibility that you may even contemplate starting a business related to these things.

TAURUS : This day is meant for taking some time out from your busy schedule, and seeking some fun and relaxation. So says Ganesha. It is possible that you will be getting together.

GEMINI : You face a hectic and demanding day today. You will spend your entire day wondering how best to channelise your energy and enthusiasm.

CANCER: Lack of support from family members will disable your efforts. Children also disappoint you. Discord or difference of opinion in family is indicated. Beware of neighbours.

LEO : You will be filled with extra-ordinary self-confidence and will be able to take on huge risks. Sportspersons will be able to make a lot of progress in their fields.

VIRGO : There will be dirt on your shoulder today, so dust it off, says Ganesha, because every time you fall you will get up stronger than before.

LIBRA : Ganesha says the inner artist in you will come to the surface today and you will showcase your imagination powers too. You will be able to focus on topics of interest today.

SCORPIO : You may be in a mood to build castles in the air today, says Ganesha. You may be caught up in a whirlpool of thoughts and nostalgia.

SAGITTARIUS : Suddenly, you discover that you are fully dedicated to your family. Kith and kins form the crux of your life, says Ganesha. Showing your love and affection to your kids.

CAPRICORN : You can't bear the weight of the heavy work load any more. Very cleverly, you will complete your tasks and slowly but steadily you take the load off your shoulders.

AQUARIUS : You are talented, hard working, confident and down to earth. These four characteristics are the pillars of success. Now, it is time build the building.

PIECES : The day will be exceptional for working people as the planets seemed to be aligned perfectly, portends Ganesha. You will achieve all the expected results in the office and/or at work today.

Sudip Bandyopadhyay Removed from Kolkata North Charge Amid Internal TMC Turmoil

Kolkata, 16 May: The All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) has removed veteran leader and Member of Parliament Sudip Bandyopadhyay from his role overseeing the party's affairs in the Kolkata North constituency. This move comes amid escalating internal tensions within the party, highlighting a growing rift between the old guard and emerging leadership.

Bandyopadhyay, a five-time Lok Sabha MP and the TMC's parliamentary leader in the lower house, has been a prominent figure in West Bengal politics. However, his leadership in Kolkata North has recently come under scrutiny. Party insiders suggest that his removal is part of a broader organizational restructuring aimed at rejuvenating the party's image and addressing internal dissent.

The decision follows a series of public criticisms from within the party. Notably, TMC spokesperson and state general secretary Kunal Ghosh openly questioned Bandyopadhyay's leadership, accusing him of being disconnected from grassroots workers and labeling him a "bigger Shahjahan"—a reference to the controversial TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan. Ghosh's remarks underscored the dissatisfaction among certain factions of the party with Bandyopadhyay's approach.



Further complicating matters, Tapas Roy, a former TMC MLA and once a close associate of Bandyopadhyay, defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Roy's departure was marked by sharp criticisms of Bandyopadhyay, whom he accused of corruption and detachment from party workers. This high-profile defection intensified the spotlight on the internal challenges facing the TMC in Kolkata North.

The TMC's decision to remove Bandyopadhyay from his organizational role is seen as an attempt to quell internal dissent and reposition the party ahead of upcoming elections. By addressing grievances and promoting new leadership, the party aims to strengthen its foothold in key constituencies.

While Bandyopadhyay remains a significant figure within the TMC, his recent sidelining indicates a shift in the party's internal dynamics. Observers note that the TMC is navigating a delicate balance between honoring its veteran leaders and embracing new voices to maintain its political dominance in West Bengal.

As the TMC continues to evolve, the developments in Kolkata North serve as a microcosm of the broader challenges and transformations within the party. How the leadership manages these internal shifts will be crucial in determining the party's future trajectory in the state's complex political landscape.

Zelensky Calls For Sanctions Against Moscow If Istanbul Peace Talks Fail

Kyiv, 16 May: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday said called for "strong" Western action against Moscow if peace talks that will be held in Istanbul fail.

"We had a real chance to take important steps toward ending this war if only Putin had not been afraid to come to Turkey," Zelensky told European leaders in Tirana.

"If it turns out that the Russian delegation really is just theatrical and can't deliver any results today... there needs to be a strong reaction, including sanctions against Russia's energy sector and banks," he said.

Negotiators from both the countries will meet today on Friday for the first peace talks after more than three years. However, expectations for a major announcement were dampened after US President Donald Trump said that there would be no movement without a meeting between himself and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Zelensky accused Putin of not agreeing with his meeting requests to "resolve all the important issues". He said, "I was ready for a direct meeting with Putin, whether in Ankara or in Istanbul, and not just for a meeting but to resolve all the important issues. But he didn't agree with anything I put to him."



He said that Ukraine's first priority is a "full, unconditional, and honest ceasefire", which he said "must happen immediately to stop the killing and create a solid basis for diplomacy".

"And if the Russian representatives in Istanbul today cannot even agree to that, to ceasefire, to this clearly necessary first step, then it will be 100 percent clear that Putin continues to undermine diplomacy," he added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday announced that a Ukrainian delegation will participate in talks with Russia in Istanbul, with the primary goal of achieving a ceasefire.The Istanbul delegation will be led by Defence Minister Rustem Umerov and will include military and intelligence officials.

Talks between Ukrainian and Russian diplomats are scheduled to take place in Istanbul today, according to a Turkish Foreign Ministry source quoted by the German news agency dpa, as reported by DW News.

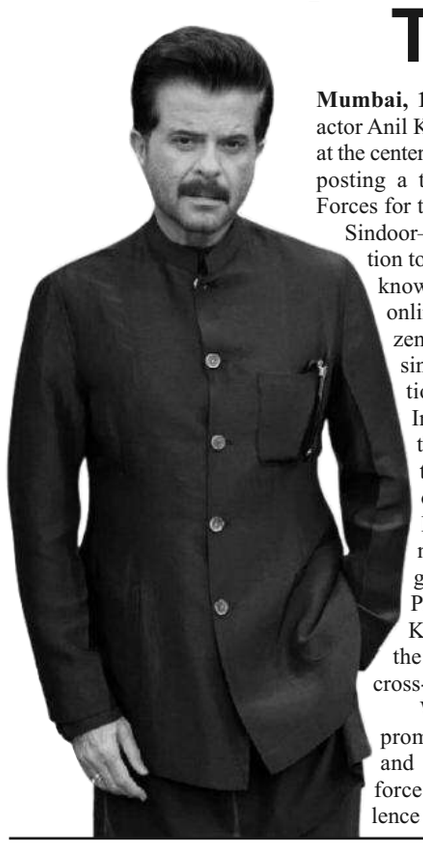
In a post on X, Zelenskyy wrote, "I want to sincerely thank President @RTErdogan, his team, and the people of Turkiye for their support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. President Erdogan reaffirmed during our meeting today that he supports Ukraine and recognises Crimea as part of Ukraine. We demonstrated the strength and seriousness of our delegation, which includes: the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Head of the Office of the President, the Minister of Defence, the Chief of the General Staff, the Head of the Security Service of Ukraine, and representatives of all our intelligence agencies."

"I want to emphasise that Turkiye has welcomed us with a delegation of equal standing -- at the highest level. Unfortunately, after learning the composition of the Russian delegation, it became clear that they are not approaching real talks seriously," the post added.

Despite expressing doubts about Russia's commitment to negotiations, Zelenskyy emphasised that Ukraine is proceeding with the talks out of respect for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and US President Donald Trump.

Zelenskyy said, "Nevertheless, despite the extremely low level of the Russian delegation, out of respect -- for President Trump, for the high-level delegations present in Turkiye, and for President Erdogan, and out of a sincere desire to take at least the first steps toward de-escalation and ending the war, beginning with a ceasefire. I have decided to send a Ukrainian delegation to Istanbul.

Anil Kapoor Faces Backlash for Delayed Tribute to Operation Sindoor



Mumbai, 16 May: Veteran Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor recently found himself at the center of social media criticism after posting a tribute to the Indian Armed Forces for their actions during Operation Sindoor—a full week after the operation took place. The delay in his acknowledgment led to a flurry of online backlash, with many netizens questioning the timing and sincerity of his message. Operation Sindoor was launched by India on May 7 in response to the tragic Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed the lives of 26 individuals, including 25 Indian tourists and one Nepali national. The operation targeted nine terrorist bases in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, aiming to dismantle the infrastructure supporting cross-border terrorism.

While several celebrities promptly expressed their support and admiration for the armed forces' swift action, Kapoor's silence during the initial days did not go unnoticed. On May 16, he took to Instagram to share his sentiments, writing:

"What needed to be done—was done. Which family does not have differences within their members, but when it comes to the nation, we stand as one. Always have, always will. Grateful to our armed forces for standing tall and striking back with valor. India doesn't forget. India doesn't forgive. Jai Hind... Jai Hind ki Sena!"

Despite the patriotic tone of his message, the delayed response sparked criticism from various quarters. Social media platforms were abuzz with comments mocking the actor's late acknowledgment. One user sarcastically remarked, "Finally woke up after a week?" while another quipped, "Better late than never, I guess."

The criticism wasn't limited to Kapoor alone. Actor Kunal Kemmu also faced similar backlash for his delayed post praising the armed forces. Kemmu's heartfelt note on Instagram, which touched upon the nation's collective emotions during the crisis, was overshadowed by the timing of its release. Netizens questioned the sincerity of such posts when they come days after the events have unfolded.

This trend of delayed reactions among celebrities has ignited a broader discussion about the role and responsibility of public figures in times of national crisis. While some argue that it's better to speak up late than never, others believe that timely expressions of solidarity are crucial, especially when they can influence public sentiment and morale.

Several other celebrities, including Ranveer Singh, Rajinikanth, and Jr NTR, were quick to voice their support for Operation Sindoor. Their prompt responses were met with widespread appreciation, highlighting the public's expectation for immediate solidarity from influential figures during such events.

As the nation continues to grapple with the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack and the subsequent military operations, the reactions of its public figures remain under scrutiny. The episode serves as a reminder of the influential role celebrities play in shaping public discourse and the importance of timely and genuine expressions of support during national crises.



Actress Samantha Glam Stills From Subham Movie Success Meet.

Bollywood actress Ananya Panday Addresses Cosmetic Surgery Speculations Amidst Online Buzz

New Delhi, 16 May: Bollywood actress Ananya Panday has recently been at the center of online discussions following the circulation of photographs that led to speculations about her undergoing cosmetic procedures, particularly a butt lift. The actress, known for her roles in films like Student of the Year 2 and Gehraiyaan, has not publicly commented on these rumors. The speculation intensified after Panday shared a selfie wearing a figure-hugging grey dress, which some netizens interpreted as evidence of a possible butt lift surgery. While some attributed the appearance to camera angles or lighting, others speculated about the use of butt pads or rigorous fitness routines. A report by MensXP highlighted the buzz, noting that fans were surprised by the apparent change in her physique.



Further fueling the conversation, discussions on Reddit forums have debated whether the actress's appearance is due to natural body shape, cosmetic enhancements, or the use of padding. Some users suggested that Panday has been known to use butt pads, while others defended her, emphasizing her consistent physique and attributing changes to fitness efforts . In addition to the butt lift speculations, Panday's recent photos have also sparked rumors about possible lip fillers. A Times of India article reported that her latest selfies led to comparisons with other actresses and prompted questions from fans about changes in her facial features .

While Panday has not addressed these specific rumors, the broader conversation about cosmetic procedures in the entertainment industry continues. Actresses like Mouni Roy have recently spoken out against the scrutiny of their appearances, emphasizing the pressures faced by celebrities and the importance of focusing on talent and hard work . As discussions about beauty standards and body image persist in the public sphere, the experiences of actresses like Ananya Panday highlight the ongoing challenges faced by women in the spotlight. The actress's silence on the matter suggests a preference to let her work speak for itself amidst the noise of online speculation.

Bhumi Pednekar Silences Trolls with Graceful Response to Lip-Shaming

Mumbai, 16 May: Bollywood actress Bhumi Pednekar, known for her powerful performances and outspoken stance on body positivity, recently found herself at the center of an online controversy — this time, over the shape of her lips. A series of social media posts targeting the actress's appearance sparked a flurry of reactions, with trolls mocking her lips and speculating about cosmetic enhancements. However, Bhumi's poised and dignified response has not only shut down the hate but also ignited a larger conversation around online bullying, self-image, and the pressures faced by celebrities.

The incident began after Bhumi posted a set of photos from a recent fashion event, where she appeared in a high-glamour ensemble that drew admiration from fans and fashion critics alike. While many praised her bold style and confident presence, a section of the internet chose to focus on her lips — mocking them with memes, exaggerated comments, and comparisons that hinted at supposed cosmetic procedures. The negativity quickly spread across platforms like Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), revealing once again the dark side of celebrity culture in the digital age.

What could have been another instance of a star silently enduring online abuse turned into a moment of empowerment, thanks to Bhumi's calm but powerful clapback. Instead of ignoring the trolls or engaging in a back-and-forth, Bhumi addressed the issue through a heartfelt Instagram story and a brief interview during a recent promotional event."Why are we still fixated on how someone looks?" she wrote on Instagram. "I'm an actor. I express through my eyes, my voice, my body, and yes — my lips too. If I smile too wide or pout too much, that's my expression. You don't have to approve of it. I love my face the way it is — shaped by nature, emotions, and life."

Her message resonated widely. Fans flooded her comment sections with messages of support, and several fellow actors came forward to back her. Anushka Sharma commented, "You're beautiful — inside and out. Let no one dim your light," while Radhika Apte praised Bhumi for "speaking up for every woman who's ever been judged for her appearance." This isn't the first time Bhumi has spoken about body image and unrealistic beauty standards. Since her debut in Dum Laga Ke Haisha (2015), where she gained weight to authentically portray her character, she has continuously advocated for natural beauty and self-acceptance. Over the years, her roles have ranged from socially conscious dramas to mainstream entertainers, but her off-screen persona has consistently projected strength, individuality, and unfiltered truth.



In recent times, female celebrities across the world have been increasingly subjected to appearance-based trolling — from Kylie Jenner's alleged surgeries to Bollywood's own Janhvi Kapoor, who faced similar scrutiny. The obsession with facial features, skin tone, and body type seems to have only intensified in the age of filters, photo-editing, and unattainable beauty ideals. Social media experts point out that much of this trolling is driven by anonymity and voyeuristic expectations of perfection. "We live in a paradoxical space where people demand authenticity but punish imperfections," says Dr. Samaira Mehta, a Mumbai-based psychologist. "When celebrities like Bhumi challenge these perceptions, it causes discomfort — because it forces people to reflect on their own insecurities."

Indeed, Bhumi's statement did more than defend her own appearance — it challenged a system where a woman's worth is too often linked to her physical attributes. Her stance has sparked a broader conversation about how actresses are constantly scrutinized for every change in their appearance, whether real or imagined, and how this culture fosters body shaming under the guise of curiosity or concern.

Interestingly, Bhumi's fans have turned the tide by starting a small but vocal campaign called #LoveYourLips on X, encouraging people to post selfies and messages promoting self-love and appreciation for natural beauty. While it remains a grassroots effort, the movement underlines the deeper impact of Bhumi's words beyond celebrity circles.

In the entertainment industry, where cosmetic enhancements are often normalized — and even expected — Bhumi Pednekar's response stands out not because she denied or admitted anything about her appearance, but because she shifted the focus entirely. Her message wasn't about defending a choice, but about questioning why such choices — whether natural or cosmetic — should be subject to public ridicule at all.

Bhumi has struck a chord. Her refusal to be shamed or silenced has not only inspired many of her fans but also reaffirmed her position as a voice of reason in an industry often driven by superficial standards. Whether on screen or off it, Bhumi continues to lead with strength — and this time, she did it with nothing but a few words, a whole lot of grace, and yes — her lips, exactly as they are.

Raj Kapoor's Defense of 'Ram Teri Ganga Maili' Amid Controversy Over Mandakini's Scenes



Mumbai, 16 May: In 1985, Raj Kapoor's film Ram Teri Ganga Maili stirred significant controversy due to scenes featuring actress Mandakini, particularly those depicting her bathing in a transparent saree and a suggestive breastfeeding sequence. Critics accused Kapoor of objectifying women, but he staunchly defended his artistic choices, asserting that his portrayals were rooted in aesthetic expression and cultural commentary.

Kapoor, often referred to as the 'Showman' of Indian cinema, faced allegations of sexualizing women in his films, including Bobby, Mera Naam Joker, and Satyam Shivam Sundaram. In response, he drew parallels with international filmmakers, notably Federico Fellini, stating, "If a Fellini shows nude women, it's art; when I do it, it's vulgar?" . He emphasized that his intent was to celebrate beauty and challenge conservative norms, not to titillate audiences.

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) initially granted the film a 'U' (Universal) rating, which was later amended to 'U/A' due to public outcry over its content. Despite the backlash, Ram Teri Ganga Maili became the highest-grossing Indian film of the year and won five Filmfare Awards, including Best Film and Best Director for Kapoor.

Mandakini, who was launched by Kapoor in this film, later addressed the controversies surrounding her scenes. She clarified that the breastfeeding scene was shot in a way that suggested nudity without actual exposure, stating, "It was not a breastfeeding scene; it was shot in such a way that it could look like one." . She also remarked that the level of skin show in contemporary cinema far exceeds what was depicted in Kapoor's film.

Interestingly, several actresses were considered for Mandakini's role before her casting. Padmini Kolhapure declined the role due to a kissing scene, despite Kapoor's willingness to replace Mandakini even after 45 days of shooting. Dipika Chikhlia, who later gained fame as Sita in Ramayan, was also considered but was deemed too young at 17. Khushbu Sundar, another actress, was initially selected but replaced due to her age. Kapoor's commitment to his vision, despite societal norms and censorship challenges, underscores his role in pushing the boundaries of Indian cinema. His defense of Ram Teri Ganga Maili reflects a broader discourse on artistic freedom and the portrayal of women in film.

Darshana Banik Lands Lead Role in Vikram Bhatt's Period Thriller 'Virat'

Kolkata, 16 May: Bengali actress Darshana Banik is poised to make a significant leap in her career with her debut as the lead in a mainstream Bollywood film. She has been cast in Vikram Bhatt's upcoming thriller, Virat, marking her first major role in the Hindi film industry. This project also features Namashi Chakraborty, son of veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty, in a pivotal role.

Set against the backdrop of British colonial India, Virat delves into the tensions surrounding the construction of a railway line that threatens to demolish a revered Sherawali temple in North India. The narrative takes a mystical turn as supernatural forces intervene, halting the British endeavors. The film is expected to blend historical drama with elements of mysticism and environmental conservation, highlighting the clash between imperial ambitions and indigenous beliefs.

Production for Virat has commenced, with initial scenes already filmed on specially constructed sets in Mumbai. The crew plans to shoot additional sequences across various locations in North India to authentically capture the era's ambiance. Notably, the film will incorporate advanced visual effects to enhance its supernatural aspects.

Darshana Banik's involvement in Virat led her to forgo a role in Srijit Mukherji's upcoming Bengali film, Lah Gauranger Naam Re, where she was slated to portray the character Lakshmipriya. This decision underscores her commitment to establishing a presence in Bollywood.

Director Vikram Bhatt, renowned for his work in the thriller and horror genres with films like Raaz, 1920, and Hate Story, aims to revitalize his cinematic approach with Virat. The film is anticipated to resonate with audiences seeking a blend of suspense, history, and cultural depth.

Shreya Ghoshal Reschedules Mumbai Concert to May 24 Amid National Solidarity

Mumbai, 16 May: Renowned playback singer Shreya Ghoshal has officially announced the rescheduled date for her much-anticipated Mumbai concert, part of her ongoing 'All Hearts Tour'. Originally slated for May 10, the concert was postponed in light of the recent national events. The concert will now take place on May 24 at the Jio World Garden in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai.The decision to postpone the concert was made following India's military response to the Pahalgam terror attack, known as Operation Sindoor. In a heartfelt message shared on her social media platforms, Ghoshal expressed her solidarity with the nation during these challenging times. She emphasized that the postponement was a gesture of respect and unity, stating, "With a heavy heart, I want to share that my homecoming concert in Mumbai, part of the All Hearts Tour, scheduled for May 10, will be postponed due to the current events unfolding in our beloved country." Fans responded with overwhelming support, appreciating Ghoshal's sensitivity and commitment to national sentiments. Many took to social media to express their understanding and anticipation for the rescheduled event.On May 15, Ghoshal delighted her fans by announcing the new date for the concert. Sharing a poster of the event on Instagram, she wrote, "Mumbai!! New date alert: Thank you for your love, patience, and understanding. As promised, we are coming back stronger and here to heal All Hearts with love and music. See you in just a few days @jioworldgarden."

The 'All Hearts Tour' has been a significant endeavor for Ghoshal, showcasing her versatility across various languages and musical genres. Known for her soulful voice and emotive performances, she has captivated audiences nationwide. The Mumbai concert is expected to be a memorable evening, celebrating music and unity.

Tickets for the concert, ranging from ₹1,199 to ₹24,999, have seen a surge in demand following the announcement of the new date. Organizers have confirmed that all previously purchased tickets will remain valid for the rescheduled date.

Ghoshal's decision to postpone and subsequently reschedule her concert aligns with similar actions taken by other artists in the industry. Singers like Arijit Singh, Papon, and Kailash Kher also postponed their performances in solidarity with the nation's sentiments during the recent tensions. As the nation moves towards normalcy, events like Ghoshal's concert symbolize resilience and the unifying power of music. Fans eagerly await the opportunity to experience her live performance, celebrating not just her musical prowess but also the spirit of togetherness.



Editorial

Bihar's High Replacement Rate: A Symptom of Poverty or a Deeper Socioeconomic Malaise?

Bihar, one of India's most populous and historically underdeveloped states, continues to face an uphill demographic and economic challenge as its Total Fertility Rate (TFR)—the average number of children born per woman—remains higher than the national average. While India has officially reached replacement-level fertility (around 2.1), Bihar's TFR stands significantly higher, estimated to be around 2.9 as per the latest available data. This gap has reignited debates among policymakers, economists, and sociologists: is Bihar's high fertility rate merely a consequence of poverty, or is it the result of more intricate and overlapping structural issues? At the heart of the argument lies a well-documented pattern—regions that lag behind in socioeconomic development often exhibit higher fertility rates. Bihar exemplifies this trend. With one of the highest poverty rates in India, the state consistently ranks at the bottom in terms of per capita income, female literacy, healthcare access, and employment opportunities. Experts argue that in such a context, large family sizes are not only a cultural norm but also an economic strategy. "In many rural households, children—especially sons—are seen as assets," says Dr. Alok Kumar, a development economist at Patna University. "They contribute to agriculture, take care of parents in old age, and provide a sense of security in the absence of institutional support systems like pensions or health insurance." This belief, however, is compounded by a lack of access to quality education and reproductive healthcare. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), Bihar lags behind the national average in contraceptive usage, antenatal care, and institutional deliveries. In many districts, myths about contraceptives and limited awareness about reproductive rights continue to affect family planning efforts. Moreover, Bihar's high rate of early marriages—especially among women—further exacerbates the situation. NFHS-5 data revealed that nearly 40% of women aged 20–24 in Bihar were married before the legal age of 18, a statistic that directly contributes to a longer reproductive window and more childbirths. "In Bihar, a girl married at 16 could easily bear four or five children by the time she turns 30," says Dr. Shalini Mishra, a reproductive health specialist working with a Patna-based NGO. "The issue is not just poverty; it's gender inequality, lack of education, and the failure of the state to provide empowerment tools." That said, there is no denying that poverty plays a foundational role. For many families living on the brink, children are a source of labor and survival. In agricultural communities, more children mean more hands to work the fields. In urban slums, where formal employment is elusive, children help supplement household incomes through informal jobs. This leads to a vicious cycle—poverty fuels high fertility, which in turn strains resources and prevents upward mobility. Adding to the complexity is the state's deeply rooted social structure. Caste-based inequalities, patriarchal norms, and resistance to modern practices in health and education create systemic barriers to change. While the government has implemented programs like Mission Parivar Vikas, aiming to bring down fertility in high-focus states, results have been patchy and often met with resistance. Political leaders, too, tread carefully around the issue. Discussions around fertility and population control can easily become politically charged, especially in a state where identity politics, religion, and caste dynamics are deeply intertwined. Any aggressive population policy risks being perceived as discriminatory or intrusive. Despite these challenges, there are glimmers of hope. A gradual decline in fertility has already been observed over the past two decades. In 1992-93, Bihar's TFR was above 4.0. While still high, the current rate indicates progress. This decline correlates with increased female literacy rates and urban migration—two factors known to reduce fertility over time. Migration, in particular, is playing a subtle yet important role. A large portion of Bihar's working-age population migrates to other states in search of better jobs. Exposure to urban lifestyles and greater economic opportunities often leads to smaller family aspirations and different value systems. These returning migrants bring back not just remittances but new ideas, influencing social behavior in their home communities.

America's Shifting Shadow

The Varied Role of the U.S. in India-Pakistan Conflicts Over the Decades



The India-Pakistan rivalry, one of South Asia's most enduring geopolitical fault lines, has often seen the United States play the role of a shadow actor—sometimes a mediator, occasionally a silent spectator, and at times a strategic influencer with clear preferences. As tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors continue to simmer intermittently, Washington's role remains complex, shaped by its evolving global interests, regional alliances, and domestic political imperatives. Since the Partition in 1947, India and Pakistan have fought four wars and engaged in numerous military standoffs and diplomatic hostilities. Throughout this turbulent history, the United States has maintained a shifting presence—its influence rising and falling in response to broader Cold War dynamics, post-9/11 counterterrorism strategies, and the current strategic competition with China. In the early years post-independence, the U.S. leaned toward Pakistan, which readily joined American-led military alliances like SEATO and CENTO during the Cold War. For Washington, Pakistan was a convenient ally positioned strategically near the Soviet Union and the Middle East. India, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, pursued non-alignment and cultivated closer ties with the USSR—making New Delhi a less attractive partner in the binary ideological battle of the time.

This preference became clear during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars, when U.S. arms supplied to Pakistan were used against India. While officially neutral, Washington's tilt toward Islamabad was evident, particularly during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. Then-U.S. President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger not only backed Pakistan militarily but also infamously dismissed India's strategic concerns, deepening mistrust between Washington and New Delhi. However, the end of the Cold War and especially the collapse of the Soviet Union marked a dramatic shift. With the ideological divide gone, Washington began warming up to India, especially in the economic and technological spheres, following India's economic liberalization in the 1990s. Yet, the shadow of nuclear rivalry grew larger. After both India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, the U.S. imposed sanctions on both countries, but behind the scenes, American diplomats scrambled to avoid an arms race. It was during the 1999 Kargil War that America played one of its most visible diplomatic roles in de-escalating direct conflict. Then-U.S. President Bill Clinton pressured Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to pull back troops infiltrating Indian territory in Kargil, helping to avoid a potentially catastrophic escalation between two nuclear-armed nations. The intervention was widely credited for reinforcing U.S.-India ties, even as it exposed the growing gap between U.S.-Pakistan expectations. Post-9/11, the global war on terror saw the U.S. once again tighten its embrace with Pakistan, given its geographical proximity to Afghanistan and its role in supporting U.S. military operations. Billions of dollars in military and economic aid flowed to Islamabad, but tensions soon emerged as Washington began accusing Pakistan of harboring terrorist groups while simultaneously projecting itself as an ally against extremism. India, on the other hand, continued to cultivate deeper defense and trade relations with the U.S. Through civil nuclear deals, defense cooperation agreements, and growing alignment on Indo-Pacific strategy, India and the U.S. developed an unprecedented level of strategic trust, despite the historical baggage. American presidents, from George W. Bush to Joe Biden, have viewed India as a democratic counterweight to China's rise—further redefining Washington's role in South Asia. Still, the U.S. continues to walk a diplomatic tightrope. It has condemned cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan, especially after attacks like the 2008 Mumbai siege and the 2019 Pulwama bombing, but has stopped short of directly blaming the Pakistani state. Washington often calls for restraint on both sides, promoting backchannel diplomacy during crises—such as the Balakot airstrikes in 2019 and subsequent aerial skirmishes. More recently, U.S. policy in the region appears guided less by crisis mediation and more by great power competition. The strategic partnership with India, now codified through defense pacts and joint military exercises, is at its strongest in history. Yet, Washington cannot entirely ignore Islamabad, particularly with Pakistan's strategic proximity to China, its influence over the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and its continued role in regional security equations. Experts say America's role is increasingly transactional—balancing counterterrorism interests with broader strategic goals. "Washington is no longer trying to play peacemaker as it once did," says Dr. Tanvi Madan, a foreign policy scholar. "It's now more about managing escalation and preventing a crisis from spiraling out of control while pursuing deeper ties with India to counterbalance China." In India, U.S. statements during crises are watched closely. There remains skepticism about whether Washington would truly back India in a prolonged conflict with Pakistan, especially one that threatens to destabilize the region or draw in China. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, there's growing resentment over perceived abandonment, with many in Islamabad's strategic circles accusing the U.S. of siding with India at the cost of regional balance. Looking ahead, the U.S. role in future India-Pakistan crises may not mirror past interventions. With America's focus shifting toward the Indo-Pacific and its growing alignment with India, its ability—and willingness—to mediate between the two archrivals is narrowing. For South Asia, this means the burden of peace may increasingly rest on bilateral mechanisms—or third-party actors like the United Nations or Middle Eastern partners—rather than on a historically engaged Washington. Yet, in times of heightened tension, the U.S. still holds sway as a powerful voice capable of urging caution and backchannel diplomacy, even if it no longer wishes to stand in the middle of the stage.

Fragile Calm in Kashmir Shaken by Ongoing Violence and Security Concerns



Kashmir's tenuous peace remains under constant threat, as a spate of recent incidents has once again thrown the region into uncertainty. While the government touts improved security conditions and greater integration with the rest of India following the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, ground realities suggest that the region is still far from attaining lasting peace.In recent weeks, several incidents have jolted the fragile calm in the Valley. The most alarming was the ambush of an army convoy in the Poonch sector, where two soldiers were killed and three injured after militants opened fire on their vehicle. The attack bore the hallmark of Pakistan-backed terror outfits, with officials suspecting the involvement of Jaish-e-Mohammed operatives who have been active in the Pir Panjal range for months. This attack was closely followed by another incident in Anantnag district, where a grenade was hurled at a security post near Lal Chowk, injuring a policeman and a civilian. Though the injuries were not life-threatening, the brazenness of the attack in a high-security zone has raised fresh questions about intelligence gaps and the preparedness of local security forces. The security forces, in response, have intensified counter-insurgency operations across south Kashmir. In the past fortnight alone, at least five militants have been killed in multiple encounters in Shopian and Pulwama districts. However, these operations have not come without a price. Civilian life has once again been disrupted by curfews, internet shutdowns, and increasing surveillance — bringing back memories of the post-2019 lockdown.For ordinary Kashmiris, the situation has created an air of unease. Though tourist arrivals have seen a boost this year, driven by government campaigns to promote the Valley's scenic beauty, locals say the undercurrent of fear never really goes away. "We want peace, but how can there be peace when violence can erupt any day, anywhere?" said Bilal Ahmad, a shopkeeper in Srinagar. "They say Kashmir is normal now, but we live with checkpoints, raids, and fear of gunfire." Adding to the tension are political developments that many locals see as exclusionary. With the state assembly yet to be restored and local elections still not scheduled, a sense of political disenfranchisement persists.

Leaders from traditional parties like the National Conference and PDP have repeatedly urged the Centre to restart the democratic process, warning that prolonged silence could further alienate the youth.The separatist sentiment, though weakened compared to earlier years, is not entirely extinguished. Security agencies have flagged concerns about renewed attempts by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to revive sleeper cells and radicalize vulnerable youth through online propaganda. Intelligence sources also point to increased use of drones along the border to drop weapons and explosives into Indian territory.

In parallel, there has been a noticeable rise in targeted attacks on minorities and migrant workers in the region. Last month, two non-local labourers from Bihar were gunned down in Pulwama by suspected militants, triggering widespread condemnation and prompting hundreds of migrant workers to flee the Valley. The attack underscored the persisting threat to those perceived as symbols of changing demographics in Kashmir. Despite these challenges, the government maintains that the overall security situation has improved, citing data on reduced levels of stone-pelting incidents and a decline in organized protests. Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently stated in Parliament that "Kashmir is on the path to development and peace," emphasizing infrastructure growth, tourism revival, and better law-and-order mechanisms. But experts argue that statistics alone cannot capture the complexity of Kashmir's socio-political landscape.

"Peace is not just the absence of violence; it is the presence of justice, dignity, and rights," said political analyst Dr. Sameer Kaul. "Without engaging with the people, without restoring political representation, and without addressing the psychological trauma of years of conflict, Kashmir will remain a volcano beneath a calm surface." The return of Kashmiri Pandits remains a distant goal. The much-publicized government initiative to resettle Pandits in secure colonies has met with little success. Several families who briefly returned to the Valley under the Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package have since moved out again, citing lack of safety and social integration. The coming months are likely to be crucial for Kashmir. With the Amarnath Yatra scheduled to begin in June and security forces gearing up for the pilgrimage, the Valley is expected to witness an increased military presence.

The annual pilgrimage often becomes a flashpoint for militant threats, and this year is no exception. The administration has already begun laying out elaborate security arrangements to prevent any untoward incidents. The need for a comprehensive, people-centric peace process becomes more urgent than ever.

The silence of the gun, however fleeting, must be replaced with the voice of dialogue — a dialogue that respects the aspirations of Kashmir's people and provides a sustainable roadmap to peace.

The Paradox of the Manipur Approach

Peace Promises Amid Prolonged Chaos



Imphal, May 16, 2025 – The state continues to grapple with a profound humanitarian and political crisis, even as official narratives promote a picture of gradual normalization. The Centre and the state government insist that calm is returning to the northeastern border state, but for thousands of displaced people, ethnic divides, and victims of lawlessness, peace remains a distant hope. The contradiction between declarations of stability and the grim realities on the ground lies at the heart of what many now call the paradox of the Manipur approach.

What began in May 2023 as an ethnic clash between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities has snowballed into one of the worst internal conflicts India has seen in recent years. Over 200 people have been killed, thousands have been displaced, and deep fault lines now run across society, politics, and the state's security apparatus. Despite multiple assurances, reconciliation efforts have struggled to take root, and the region remains starkly divided—geographically, socially, and emotionally. The contradiction in the government's approach is visible in its two-track narrative: one of decisive action and the other of denial. While the government claims it has deployed adequate security forces, restored order, and facilitated relief camps, independent reports and ground-level observations paint a different picture. Internally displaced people continue to live in makeshift shelters with inadequate food, healthcare, and education access. Children have lost years of schooling, and women and girls in relief camps remain vulnerable to exploitation and trauma.

"The government says we are safe now, but how can we go back home when our houses are burned and our neighbors see us as enemies?" asks Lhingneivah, a 36-year-old Kuki woman living in a camp near Kangpokpi. "Peace on paper does not mean peace in our hearts."Meanwhile, the internet has become both a tool of state control and resistance. Prolonged internet shutdowns in the name of maintaining law and order have choked communication, impeded access to essential services, and created a blackout that allowed unchecked violence in many cases. At the same time, social media has become a potent space for misinformation and hate speech, often fueling further communal animosity.

At the political level, the approach to the Manipur issue has raised serious questions about transparency, accountability, and empathy. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, widely seen as representing the Meitei majority, has faced repeated calls to step down from various civil society groups and opposition leaders who accuse him of bias and failure to control the spiraling violence. Yet, despite the growing demands for his removal, the BJP-led central government has stood firmly behind him—another element of the paradox that leaves many in the hill districts disillusioned. "The Centre talks about unity, but unity cannot come without justice," says Reverend Zakhum, a Kuki community leader from Churachandpur. "The state leadership has lost credibility. A neutral approach is impossible if the accused also plays the judge."

Q4 FY25 Earnings

BHEL, Hyundai Motor India, and Emami Showcase Varied Financial Outcomes



Major corporations like Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL), Hyundai Motor India, and Emami Ltd have released their financial results, reflecting diverse performances across sectors. BHEL reported a 4% year-on-year increase in standalone net profit, reaching ₹504 crore for Q4 FY25, up from ₹484 crore in the same quarter the previous year. Revenue from operations also rose by 9% to ₹8,993 crore, compared to ₹8,260 crore in Q4 FY24. The company declared a final dividend of ₹0.50 per share for FY25, signaling confidence in its financial stability.

Hyundai Motor India experienced a 4% decline in consolidated profit after tax, amounting to ₹1,614 crore for Q4 FY25, down from ₹1,677 crore in the corresponding period last year. The decrease was primarily due to a 4% drop in domestic sales, attributed to weaker demand for models like the 'Grand i10 Nios' and 'Venue' SUV. However, a 14% growth in exports helped offset some of the domestic downturn, with exports now constituting about 20% of the company's total sales volume. Revenue saw a marginal increase of 1.5% year-on-year, totaling ₹17,940 crore for the quarter. Despite the profit dip, Hyundai's stock responded positively, rising nearly 2% following the earnings announcement. The company also unveiled plans to launch 26 new vehicles, including 20 internal combustion engine models and six electric vehicles, by 2030, aiming to reclaim its position as the second-largest player in India's passenger vehicle market. Emami Ltd posted a 10.5% increase in consolidated profit after tax for Q4 FY25, reaching ₹162.17 crore, up from ₹146.75 crore in the same quarter the previous year. Revenue from operations grew by 8.06% year-on-year to ₹963.05 crore. The company's EBITDA rose by 4.1% to ₹219.4 crore, with gross margins improving by 10 basis points to 65.9%, reflecting efficient cost management. For the full fiscal year, Emami's profit after tax increased by 10.85% to ₹802.74 crore, while total income rose by 6.9% to ₹3,877.30 crore. In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the board approved a special interim dividend of ₹2 per equity share for FY25. The Q4 FY25 earnings reports highlight the varied financial landscapes across different sectors. While BHEL and Emami have demonstrated solid growth and profitability, Hyundai Motor India faces challenges due to domestic market fluctuations, despite its strategic plans for expansion and diversification. These results underscore the dynamic nature of the Indian economy and the importance of adaptability and strategic planning for sustained success.

Reception for the student of ranked secondary and higher secondary

Mathurapur: Trinamool Congress's Sundarban Organizational District organized a reception for the students who passed the Secondary and Higher Secondary exams in 2025 at Mathurapur Arya Vidyapeeth in Devipur Gram Panchayat of Mathurapur 1 Block of South 24 Parganas district this morning. After the welcoming ceremony, Mathurapur Lok Sabha MP Bapi Halder inaugurated the event by watering the saplings. Among them, Souvik Dinda, a student of Sundarban Adarsh Vidya Mandir in Kakdwip, who was ranked 10th in the merit list of this year's Secondary Examination, and Rahul Rikatiaj, a student of Jaynagar J, M Training School, who was ranked 10th in the merit list, were awarded. Both of them obtained 686 marks.Today, Pavitra Mandal, a student of Sundarban Adarsh Vidya Mandir in Kakdwip, who was ranked 9th in the merit list of this year's Higher Secondary Examination, was awarded. His number is 489. After receiving their batch and Uttariya on this day, they were given wreaths, books and packets of sweets.

The award was given by Mathurapur Lok Sabha MP Bapi Halder. Trinamool Secondary Teachers' Association State President Bijan Sarkar, Trinamool Congress Sundarbans Organizational District President and Mandirbazar MLA Joydev Halder, Raydighi MLA Dr. Alok Jaldata, Madhurapur No. 1 Block Trinamool Congress President Manabendra Halder and others were present.



Capital Market Stocks Surge as Nifty Sustains Above 25,000 Mark

On May 16, 2025, India's capital market stocks experienced significant gains, with key players like Angel One and Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL) leading the rally. This surge coincided with the Nifty 50 index maintaining its position above the psychological 25,000 mark, signaling robust investor confidence in the financial sector.

Angel One's shares soared by approximately 9%, closing at ₹2,800.60. This uptick is notable, especially considering the company's recent Q4 FY25 results, which showed a 48.7% year-on-year decline in net profit to ₹174.5 crore and a 22.2% drop in revenue to ₹1,056 crore. Despite these figures, the announcement of a ₹26 per share dividend for FY25 appears to have bolstered investor sentiment, reflecting confidence in the company's long-term prospects. CDSL also witnessed a substantial rise, with its stock climbing nearly 7.3% to reach ₹1,435 per share. This increase came despite the company's Q4 FY25 results indicating a 22% year-on-year decrease in net profit to ₹100 crore and a 6.7% drop in revenue to ₹224.45 crore. Analysts attribute the stock's performance to investor optimism about the company's future growth potential and its pivotal role in India's expanding capital markets.

Other capital market entities, including Computer Age Management Services (CAMS), Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, and Motilal Oswal Financial Services, reported gains exceeding 4%. The Nifty Capital Markets index rose over 2.5% to close at 4,055, underscoring the sector's positive momentum.The broader market context also played a role in these developments. While the Sensex closed over 200 points lower at 82,330, and the Nifty dipped by 0.17% to end at 25,019.80, the Nifty maintained its position above the crucial 25,000 level. This resilience is further highlighted by a decline in the India VIX, a measure of market volatility, which fell over 2% to 16.55, indicating reduced investor anxiety. The capital markets sector demonstrated robust performance on May 16, 2025, with key stocks like Angel One and CDSL leading the charge. Despite mixed quarterly earnings, investor confidence remains strong, buoyed by strategic corporate actions and a stable macroeconomic environment. As the Nifty sustains levels above 25,000, the outlook for capital market stocks appears optimistic.

Infosys Employees Receive Lower Q4 Bonuses Amid Profit Decline and Market Uncertainty



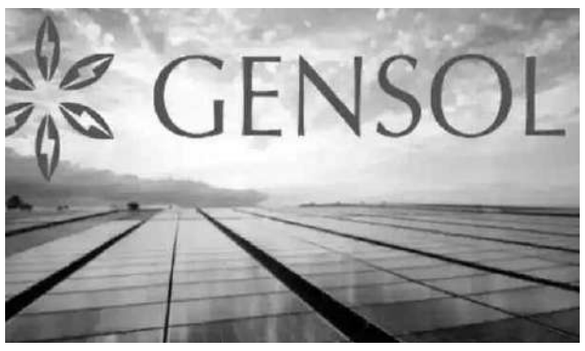
On May 15, 2025, Infosys, India's second-largest IT services company, distributed performance bonus letters for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2024–25. The payouts were notably lower than in previous quarters, reflecting the company's recent financial challenges and a cautious outlook for the upcoming fiscal year. According to internal communications, the average bonus payout for eligible employees stood at approximately 65%. Most employees received 50% of their targeted bonuses, while some received up to 70%, and a few exceptional performers were awarded higher percentages. This marks a significant reduction from the December 2024 quarter, where the average bonus payout was around 80% .The bonus reductions are attributed to a decline in Infosys's financial performance. In the fourth quarter, the company reported an 11.7% year-on-year decrease in consolidated net profit, totaling ₹7,033 crore. Despite an 8% increase in revenue to ₹40,925 crore, the company has provided a conservative revenue growth guidance of 0–3% for the current fiscal year, indicating a cautious approach amid global economic uncertainties . Employees were informed of the anticipated lower bonuses during internal meetings and conference calls held earlier in May. Human Resources executives and delivery managers cited the company's decreased profits and challenging market conditions as reasons for the reduced payouts. They assured staff that high-performing employees would be considered for enhanced bonuses in future cycles as business conditions improve . Notably, the company deviated from its usual practice of accompanying bonus communications with messages outlining business outlooks and expressing appreciation for employees. This omission has been perceived by some staff members as a lack of transparency and recognition during a period of financial tightening . The bonus payouts apply to employees at Job Levels 5 and 6, encompassing team leaders, managers, and senior managers. Entry-level employees, such as software engineers and consultants, are not eligible for these performance bonuses . In February, prior to the bonus announcements, Infosys had issued salary revision letters, granting most employees a hike of 5–8%. This move was seen as a positive step; however, the subsequent lower bonus payouts have tempered employee sentiment.

The company's leadership has emphasized that the current financial constraints are a temporary phase. They have expressed confidence in the company's strategic focus on areas such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital transformation, which are expected to drive future growth and potentially lead to improved employee compensation in subsequent quarters. As Infosys navigates these challenges, employee morale and retention remain critical factors.

The company's ability to balance financial prudence with employee satisfaction will be pivotal in maintaining its position in the competitive IT services sector.

Gensol Engineering Shares Rally for Fourth Consecutive Day Despite Regulatory and Financial Turmoil

On May 16, 2025, Gensol Engineering Ltd.'s shares hit the 5% upper circuit limit for the fourth consecutive trading session, closing at ₹65.56 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). This marks a remarkable turnaround for the stock, which had plummeted over 90% earlier this year, reaching a 52-week low of ₹51.25. Over the past four sessions, the stock has gained approximately 21.5%, signaling renewed investor interest amid ongoing challenges.



The recent surge in Gensol's share price comes against a backdrop of significant regulatory and financial issues. On April 15, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued an interim order barring the company's promoters, Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi, from accessing the securities market. The order alleged that the Jaggi brothers diverted funds from Gensol for personal use, including luxury purchases and real estate investments. In compliance with SEBI's directive, both Anmol and Puneet Singh Jaggi resigned from their positions as Managing Director and Whole-time Director, respectively, effective May 12. Compounding the company's woes, the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) filed an insolvency petition against Gensol Engineering on May 14, citing a loan default of ₹510 crore. The petition was filed under Section 7 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, and adds to the financial strain on the company. Despite these challenges, Gensol Engineering has reported robust financial performance in recent quarters. In the nine months ending December 31, 2024, the company achieved net sales of ₹1,056 crore, marking a 42% year-on-year increase. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) rose by 89% to ₹246 crore, while net profit increased by 34% to ₹67 crore. The company's order book stood at ₹7,000 crore as of December 2024, reflecting strong demand for its renewable energy solutions. Analysts suggest that the recent rally in Gensol's stock may be driven by investor optimism about the company's underlying business prospects and the potential for a turnaround under new leadership. However, they caution that the ongoing regulatory investigations and insolvency proceedings pose significant risks. Investors are advised to monitor developments closely and exercise due diligence.

While Gensol Engineering's recent stock performance indicates a positive shift in market sentiment, the company faces substantial regulatory and financial hurdles.

The outcome of SEBI's investigation and the insolvency proceedings initiated by IREDA will be critical in determining the company's future trajectory.

Defence Stocks Surge Amid Indigenisation Push; Analysts Set Bullish Targets for Key PSUs



India's defence sector stocks have witnessed a significant rally, driven by the government's emphasis on indigenisation and increased capital allocation. Public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as Cochin Shipyard, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) have been at the forefront of this surge.On May 16, 2025, the Nifty India Defence index reached a fresh 52-week high, with all 18 constituents trading in the green. Shares of Cochin Shipyard, Mazagon Dock, and BEL extended gains amid heavy buying, reflecting investor confidence in the sector's growth prospects.Analysts at Antique Stock Broking have set optimistic price targets for these defence PSUs, citing robust order pipelines and the government's focus on domestic defence manufacturing. The brokerage has assigned a target price of ₹3,433 for Mazagon Dock, ₹2,024 for GRSE, and ₹1,481 for Cochin Shipyard. It maintains 'Buy' ratings on Mazagon Dock and GRSE, while suggesting a 'Hold' rating on Cochin Shipyard. The anticipated growth in order books is substantial. According to Antique Stock Broking, Mazagon Dock, GRSE, and Cochin Shipyard are projected to experience a significant surge in orders, potentially tripling their combined order books by FY27. This expected boom is attributed to increased government defence spending and modernization initiatives. Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) have also seen their shares rally. The surge follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for 'Made in India' defence equipment, which has bolstered investor sentiment towards domestic defence manufacturers. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has not been left behind in this rally. The company's shares have gained significantly, reflecting the market's positive outlook on its role in India's defence sector. HAL's involvement in various indigenous defence projects positions it well to benefit from the government's push for self-reliance in defence manufacturing. The increased trading activity in these stocks underscores the market's enthusiasm. On May 16, 2025, Cochin Shipyard recorded a traded value of ₹6,719.94 crore, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders ₹5,692.06 crore, GRSE ₹3,556.22 crore, HAL ₹3,422.20 crore, BEL ₹2,498.51 crore, and BDL ₹1,912.37 crore. These figures highlight the significant investor interest in the defence sector. India's defence PSUs are experiencing a robust rally, fueled by government initiatives promoting indigenisation and increased defence spending. Analysts remain optimistic about the sector's growth prospects, with substantial order inflows expected in the coming years. Investors are closely monitoring these developments, as the defence sector continues to be a focal point in India's economic and strategic landscape.

Cochin Shipyard, Mazagon Dock, and Rail Vikas Nigam Lead Midcap Rally with Gains Up to 13%

On May 16, 2025, India's midcap segment witnessed a robust rally, spearheaded by notable gains in defence and railway public sector undertakings (PSUs). Cochin Shipyard, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, and Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) emerged as top performers, with their shares surging up to 13% during the trading session.Cochin Shipyard's stock climbed over 13%, reaching an intraday high of ₹2,057.50, marking its first breach of the ₹2,000 mark since August 2024. This surge follows the company's impressive Q4 FY25 results, where it reported a net profit of ₹287.19 crore, reflecting a 10.8% year-on-year increase. The company's revenue for the quarter stood at ₹1,757.65 crore, showcasing strong operational performance. Analysts attribute the stock's rally to the company's robust earnings and the broader optimism in the defence sector. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders also experienced a significant uptick, with its shares rising by 9.72% to touch a new 52-week high of ₹3,491.90. The company's performance is buoyed by expectations of a substantial increase in defence orders, with projections suggesting a potential tripling of orders by FY27. This anticipated growth is seen as a testament to the government's push for indigenization and strengthening of domestic defence capabilities. RVNL's shares surged by over 10%, closing at ₹415.60. The rally was fueled by the company's announcement of securing a ₹115.79 crore contract from the Central Railway. The project involves the upgradation of the existing 1x25 KV electric traction system to a 2x25 KV system in the Itarsi-Amla section of the Nagpur Division, aiming to meet a 3,000 MT loading target.

Name Change
I, Panchu Naskar S/o Ananta Naskar residing at Vill-Sahebpur, P.O. Champahati, P.S. Sonarpur, Dist. South 24 Parganas, Pin-743330 WEST BENGAL, shall henceforth be known as Panchanan Naskar as declared before the First class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore Court, South 24 Parganas, vide Affidavit No. 28250 dated 07.05.2025. Panchu Naskar and Panchanan Naskar both are the same and one identical person.

Notice Inviting E-Tender
Tender Ref: AMTA-I/AGP/E-NIT/01/25-26 DATE: 15-05-2025 BID SUB. CLOSING DT: 24-05-2025 AT 11 AM Technical bid opening DT 26-05-2025 AT 11 AM **tender ID- 2025_ZPHD_847767_1, 2025_ZPHD_847767_2, 2025_ZPHD_847767_3, 2025_ZPHD_847767_4** Electronic Tenders are hereby invited by the Prodhan, Anulia Gram Panchayat, Amta-I Block for implementation of Four (04) No. work within Anulia Gram Panchayat, Howrah. Details are available in **(http://wbtenders.gov.in & http://etender.wb.nic.in)** and Office Notice Board.
Sd/-
Prodhan
Anulia Gram Panchayat

e-Tender Notice
eTender Notice No.– **SGP/01/15th CFC/2025-26, ID No.-2025_ZPHD_846444_1 Dated 15/05/2025** e-Tender is hereby invited by the Prodhan, Sribati Gram Panchayat from bonafied contractors to participate in the e-Tender from **15/05/2025 to 23/05/2025**, For further details visit the website **http://wbtenders.gov.in**
Sd/-Pradhan
Sribati Gram Panchayat

Name Change
I, Sajjat Ali Molla (old name) son of Aminadhi Molla, residing at Vill: Uttar Amratala, P.O – Haranandapur, Mograhat, Dist: South 24 Parganas, Pin: 743503, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Sajjat Molla (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 15/05/2025. Sajjat Ali Molla (old name) and Sajjat Molla (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, Feroja Bibi (old name) wife of Sajjat Molla, residing at Vill: Uttar Amratala, P.O – Haranandapur, Mograhat, Dist: South 24 Parganas, Pin: 743503, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Feroja Molla (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 15/05/2025. Feroja Bibi (old name) and Feroja Molla (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change
I, VISHAL KUMAR SINGH (Old Name) S/O KAPIL DEV SINGH Residing at 432, G.T Road, Shibpur, District - Howrah, Pin - 711102, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as VISHAL SINGH (New Name) as declared before the Notary public govt of India at Kolkata vide affidavit dated 16-05-2025. VISHAL KUMAR SINGH (Old Name) and VISHAL SINGH (New Name) both are same and identical person.

Name Change
I, PALLABI GHOSH (Old Name) W/O SHUVAMAY GHOSH Residing at 68 Sonali Park, P.O - Garia, P.S - Bahsdroni, District - Kolkata, Pin - 700084 West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as PALLABI MAJUMDER GHOSH (New Name) as declared before the Notary public govt of India at Kolkata vide affidavit dated 16-05-2025. PALLABI GHOSH (Old Name) and PALLABI MAJUMDER GHOSH (New Name) both are same and identical person.

Kolkata Recognized for Significant Improvement in Air Quality by Central Government

Kolkata, 16 May: The central government has awarded Kolkata for its substantial progress in reducing air pollution and enhancing air quality. The recognition comes as part of the government's ongoing efforts to address urban air pollution challenges and promote cleaner air initiatives across the country.The award highlights the city's successful implementation of various measures aimed at improving air quality, including stricter emission norms, promotion of cleaner fuels, and increased green cover. These initiatives have contributed to a significant reduction in particulate matter levels, leading to improved air quality indices in several areas of the city.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed gratitude to the residents of Kolkata for their support and participation in the city's environmental initiatives. She emphasized the importance of collective efforts in achieving sustainable urban development and pledged continued commitment to further enhancing the city's environmental standards.

The central government's recognition of Kolkata's efforts serves as a model for other metropolitan cities grappling with air pollution issues. It underscores the effectiveness of coordinated actions between government authorities, local bodies, and citizens in creating a healthier urban environment.

As Kolkata continues to advance its environmental agenda, the city remains focused on implementing innovative solutions to combat air pollution and ensure a cleaner, healthier future for its residents.

Tragic End for West Bengal Teacher Subrata Ghosh on Mount Everest

Kolkata, 16 May: Subrata Ghosh, a 45-year-old teacher from Ranaghat, West Bengal, tragically passed away on Mount Everest during his descent after successfully reaching the summit. He was part of the Krishnanagar–Snowy Everest Expedition 2025, organized by the Mountaineering Association of Krishnanagar and Snowy Horizon Treks. Ghosh reached the summit of Everest at approximately 2:00 PM local time on May 15. However, during his descent, he began to show signs of severe exhaustion and altitude sickness below the Hillary Step, a critical section of the mountain just before the summit. Despite efforts by his Sherpa guide, Champal Tamang, to encourage him to continue the descent, Ghosh refused to proceed and became immobile. Tamang managed to return to Camp IV late that night and reported the incident to the team on the morning of May 16.

PM Modi to Inaugurate First Amrit Bharat Station in West Bengal at Kalyani Ghoshpara

Kalyani, 16 May: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate Kalyani Ghoshpara railway station in Nadia district as the first Amrit Bharat Station in West Bengal on May 22, 2025. This marks a significant milestone in the central government's ambitious Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, aiming to modernize 1,275 railway stations across the country.

The inauguration will be conducted virtually by the Prime Minister from Delhi, joining the simultaneous launch of upgraded facilities at 104 stations nationwide. The redevelopment of Kalyani Ghoshpara station includes the construction of modern waiting rooms, covered sheds, improved toilet facilities, seating arrangements, and enhanced drinking water supply systems. These upgrades are designed to provide passengers with a more comfortable and convenient travel experience.

Located in close proximity to Kalyani University, the station serves a significant number of daily commuters, including students, faculty, and visitors attending local events such as the Sati Mayer Mela. The



modernization efforts are expected to facilitate smoother and more efficient travel for these regular users.

The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is a part of the government's broader initiative to enhance railway infrastructure and passenger amenities. Under this scheme, selected stations across the country are being redeveloped to include features such as rooftop plazas, city center integration, and improved accessibility for differently-abled passengers. The scheme is also aligned with other key government programs like BharatNet and Make in India.

The completion of Kalyani Ghoshpara station's modernization sets a precedent for other stations in the state and demonstrates the government's commitment to improving railway facilities for the public. As the first station in West Bengal to undergo redevelopment under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, Kalyani Ghoshpara stands as a model for future projects aimed at enhancing the travel experience for millions of passengers across the country.



People participate in the 'Tiranga Yatra' to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor and pay tribute to the Indian Armed Forces, in Kolkata on Friday, May 16, 2025.

TMC's Saugata Roy Faces Backlash Over Remarks on Operation Sindoor; Party Distances Itself

Kolkata, 16 May: Senior Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader and Member of Parliament Saugata Roy has come under intense criticism following his controversial remarks on Operation Sindoor, India's recent military operation targeting terrorist camps across the border. Roy's comments, which questioned the efficacy and authenticity of the operation, have sparked protests from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and prompted his own party to publicly distance itself from his statements.

In an interview with ABP Ananda, Roy described the military engagement as "almost comical," suggesting that the operation involved merely "some aerial vehicles, drones went from here to there, missiles went from here to there," and questioned the government's claims of destroying terrorist bases. He further stated, "Where were the terrorist bases destroyed? The Central government should put the proof before the people."

These remarks have been met with strong condemnation from various quarters. The BJP organized protests in West Bengal, accusing Roy of undermining the Indian Army and disrespecting national security efforts. Demonstrations were reported in areas like Murlidhar Sen Lane, where BJP workers demanded accountability for Roy's statements.

In response to the growing controversy, the TMC issued an official statement on



social media platform X, clarifying that Roy's comments do not reflect the party's stance. "Let us emphatically state that the statement made by Prof Saugata Roy, MP, is not the opinion of the All India Trinamool Congress," the party declared.

Further emphasizing the party's position, a TMC state cabinet member, speaking on condition of anonymity, expressed disappointment over Roy's remarks, stating, "Such unwarranted comments are not expected from a veteran leader and politician like him." The party has advised all its members to refrain from making public comments on Operation Sindoor, highlighting the sensitivity of national security issues.

This incident has reignited memories of a similar controversy in 2019 when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sought evidence from the Union government regarding the Indian Air Force strike at Balakot in Pakistan. At that time, Banerjee faced significant backlash for her comments. Learning from that experience, the TMC leadership has adopted a more cautious approach in the current scenario, with the Chief Minister herself avoiding public statements on Operation Sindoor.

As the political landscape in West Bengal continues to evolve, Roy's remarks have added to the complexities faced by the TMC, especially with the upcoming Assembly elections. The party's swift distancing from Roy's statements underscores its intent to maintain a clear stance on national security matters and avoid internal dissent that could impact its electoral prospects.

The controversy surrounding Roy's comments serves as a reminder of the delicate balance political leaders must maintain when addressing issues of national security, where public sentiment and patriotic fervor run high. It also highlights the challenges parties face in managing individual expressions that may conflict with official positions, especially in the age of instant communication and heightened political sensitivities.

Indian Army's 'Teesta Prahar' Exercise Demonstrates Enhanced Combat Synergy and Operational Readiness

Kolkata, 16 May: The Indian Army successfully conducted the integrated field exercise 'Teesta Prahar' at the Teesta Field Firing Range in North Bengal. The exercise, held on May 15, 2025, showcased the Army's operational preparedness, joint force integration, and adaptability in challenging riverine terrains.

The exercise involved coordinated maneuvers by various combat and support arms, including Infantry, Artillery, Armoured Corps, Mechanised Infantry, Para Special Forces, Army Aviation, Engineers, and Signals. This multi-faceted approach aimed to validate the Army's ability to execute complex operations swiftly and effectively across diverse terrains and adverse weather conditions.

A key highlight of 'Teesta Prahar' was the deployment and validation of newly inducted next-generation weapon systems and advanced battlefield technologies. These included high-mobility platforms, precision strike capabilities, and enhanced surveillance systems, reflecting the Army's continued emphasis on modernization and technological advancement.

The exercise featured tactical drills, battle rehearsals, and adaptive maneuvers designed to refine



responses to dynamic combat scenarios. These activities tested the Army's ability to maintain jointness and synergy among different units, reinforcing its commitment to integrated warfighting capabilities.

The 'Teesta Prahar' exercise also underscored the strategic importance of the region, particularly the 'Chicken's Neck' area, which serves as a critical land corridor connecting India's northeastern states with the rest of the country. The successful execution of the exercise in this strategically vital zone demonstrates the Army's readiness to address potential security challenges in the region.

Senior military officials overseeing the exercise lauded the troops for their high state of morale, professionalism, and adaptability. One senior officer remarked, "Teesta Prahar stands as a testimony to the Indian Army's sharpened edge, strategic depth, and relentless pursuit of operational excellence."

In conclusion, 'Teesta Prahar' reaffirmed the Indian Army's commitment to combat excellence, technological advancement, and all-terrain operational readiness. The exercise served as a testament to the Army's unwavering focus on mission preparedness and integrated warfighting capability.

Howrah Division Continues 100 Glorious Years Celebrations with Prabhat Pheri, Tree Plantation and Cleanliness Drives at Bandel and Barddhaman Stations

Kolkata, 16 May: As part of the ongoing celebration of *100 Glorious Years of Howrah Division*, a series of impactful events — including *Prabhat Pheri*, *Tree Plantation*, and *Cleanliness Drives* — were successfully conducted at *Bandel Station and its surroundings on 15th May 2025*, and at Barddhaman Station and its surroundings on 16th May 2025 under the direction of Divisional Railway Manager, Shri Sanjeev Kumar. These events reflected the division's continued commitment to community engagement, environmental awareness, and public service.



The celebrations began at Bandel with a vibrant *Prabhat Pheri*, where railway staff, officers, and local volunteers marched together, raising slogans and carrying banners highlighting the division's century-long legacy. The event was followed by a *Tree Plantation* drive in the station area, promoting green practices and sustainability. A *Cleanliness Drive* was also carried out, focusing on improving hygiene and cleanliness across platforms and surrounding areas, aligned with the goals of the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*.

On the following day, similar activities were organized at Barddhaman Station. The *Prabhat Pheri* once again brought together the railway fraternity in a show of pride and unity, spreading awareness about the 100-year journey of Howrah Division. The *Tree Plantation* and *Cleanliness Drive* further strengthened the division's message of environmental responsibility and civic consciousness.

These events served not only to commemorate the illustrious history of Howrah Division but also to reinforce its dedication to sustainable development, community well-being, and cleanliness. The centenary celebrations continue to inspire collective action and pride among railway personnel and the public.

Eastern Railway Holds 'PREM' Meeting



Kolkata, 16 May: In an endeavour to bring a participative environment in management and decision making, Eastern Railway holds PREM (Participation of Railway Employees Management) meeting at Eastern Railway's Headquarter, Fairlie Place today in the presence of Shri Milind Deouskar, General Manager, Eastern Railway & all Principal Officers of Eastern Railway. Representatives/office bearers of different Trade Unions and representatives of different Employees Organisation of Eastern Railways took part in this meeting. Eastern Railway holds this PREM meeting to provide a constructive dialogue between management and employees representative to resolve disputes and improve the overall functioning of the Railway.

While addressing this in the meeting, General Manager, Eastern Railway advised the representatives of different trade unions and employees organisation to uphold specific demands or requirement which will be very useful for immediate mitigation for employee satisfaction and improvement in work environment rather than a generalised statement which requires long time to decipher the target area. General Manager, Eastern Railway also uphold various employee centric initiatives taken over Eastern Railway for providing additional amenities and facilities and system improvement to reduce the work load as well as safety.

Discussions were hold on 3 broad segments, (i) Accident prevention strategies (ii)Skill development and training programme (iii) Improvement in staff amenities, in respect of which exchange of ideas and suggestions took place between the Principal Officers of Eastern Railway and Trade Unions/Employees Representatives. The discussion will have various fruitful outcomes which will be gradually implemented over Eastern Railway for improvement of working system and working environment as well.

In the meeting Shri Sumit Sarkar, Additional General Manager, Eastern Railway and other Principal Head of various Departments of Eastern Railway viz. Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Principal Chief Engineer, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, Chief Administrative Officer (Con), Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer, Principal Chief Medical Director, Principal Chief Personnel Officer, Principal Chief Security Commissioner, Principal Chief Signal & Telecommmunication Engineer, Principal Chief Material Manager, Principal Chief Safety Officer, Principal Financial Advisor were also present to interact in the meeting. The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Shri Ved Prakash, Deputy General Manager (G), Eastern Railway.

A Bangladeshi citizen who has been living in Murshidabad for a long time was arrested from the India-Bangladesh border in Cooch Behar

Shilpi Dutta

Cooch Behar , 16 May: There is a wide part of the India-Bangladesh international border in Cooch Behar. There is still no barbed wire fence on the border for more than forty kilometers. These open borders are the best place for smugglers with constant infiltration. Although there is strict vigilance on the part of the BSF along the border. Amid the tense situation between India and Pakistan, the number of BSF jawans has increased on the border and alerts have been issued at various borders. Yesterday, the duty officers of the 6th battalion of the BSF arrested a Bangladeshi from the BSF's Arjun Camp area adjacent to three bighas in the Mekhliganje area of Cooch Behar district. According to the source, the arrested person worked as a tailor in Murshidabad for 4 years and was the imam of a mosque. He lived in Murshidabad for four years. He was arrested by the BSF while illegally crossing the border yesterday. The name of the person is Salim Uddin father (deceased) Mohammad Abul Bashar. According to BSF sources, he is a resident of Majher Para area of Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh. It is noteworthy that Indian Aadhaar card and PAN card were found from him, but Indian voter card was not found. According to sources, he also taught in a madrasa in Murshidabad and was the imam of a mosque. That imam's allowance was in the name of someone else and he used to get money from there. In addition, a Bangladeshi birth certificate was recovered from him. It is noteworthy that he entered India by infiltration about four years ago, according to the source. According to BSF sources, an investigation is underway into why he was in Murshidabad for four years and why he was suddenly trying to go to Bangladesh. Usually, at different times, the BSF arrests those who cross the international border without valid documents and later hands them over to the local police. However, after questioning the person arrested yesterday, he was handed over to Kuchlibari police station on Friday evening. There is no statement yet on why the detainee has been interrogated for so long. Also, no response was received from the BSF to journalists till the time of writing this news.

Rajnath Singh: "Just 23 Minutes Enough to Teach Pakistan a Lesson" – A Defining Moment at Bhuj Air Force Station



New Delhi, 16 May: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh lauded the Indian Air Force (IAF) for its swift and decisive action during Operation Sindoor, stating that "just 23 minutes were enough for the Indian Air Force to crush terrorism being nurtured in Pakistan." This operation, launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, showcased India's military precision and resolve.

Singh emphasized that the operation was not merely a tactical strike but a strategic message to Pakistan. He remarked, "Even Pakistan has accepted the power of BrahMos missile. There is an old saying in our country, 'Din mein taare dekhna.' Made in India BrahMos missile showed 'raat ke andhere mein din ... ," highlighting the effectiveness of India's indigenous missile technology.

Addressing the air warriors, Singh expressed immense pride in their performance, stating, "Whatever you did during Operation Sindoor has made all Indians proud – whether they are in India or abroad." He further added, "The whole world is in awe of what our Air Warriors did. You didn't just strike at terror camps; you sent a clear message — India will not tolerate terrorism and will hit back with precision and force."

Singh also issued a stern warning to Pakistan, stating, "We have kept Pakistan on probation. If its behavior improves, then okay; otherwise, it will be given the strictest punishment." He reiterated that Operation Sindoor was ongoing, describing the initial strikes as "just a trailer" and promising a more comprehensive response if necessary.

In a broader geopolitical context, Singh criticized the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its financial assistance to Pakistan, suggesting that such aid could indirectly fund terrorism. He urged the IMF to reconsider its support, emphasizing the need for international scrutiny of Pakistan's actions.

The Bhuj Air Force Station, a historic site that witnessed India's victories in 1965 and 1971, once again stood as a symbol of India's military strength and strategic acumen. Singh's visit underscored the nation's commitment to defending its sovereignty and sending a clear message to adversaries. As tensions in the region continue, India's resolve, as articulated by its Defence Minister, remains unwavering.



Maharashtra Congress state president Harshvardhan Sakpal meets Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray at Matoshree, Mumbai, on Friday, May 16, 2025.

India's Akashteer Air Defence System: A Game-Changer in Modern Warfare



New Delhi, 16 May: The indigenous Akashteer air defence system has emerged as a formidable force, effectively neutralizing aerial threats during Operation Sindoor. This AI-powered system, developed collaboratively by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), has been lauded for its unprecedented efficiency and precision.

During the recent four-day conflict between India and Pakistan, Akashteer played a pivotal role in safeguarding Indian airspace. The system successfully intercepted and neutralized a barrage of Pakistani drones, missiles, and other aerial threats, preventing any significant damage to military and civilian infrastructure .

What sets Akashteer apart is its advanced integration of multiple data feeds, including weather, terrain, and radar intercepts, enabling real-time decision-making and autonomous threat neutralization. This level of automation and intelligence in air defence is a first for the region, prompting Pakistani defence experts to acknowledge the system as a "never seen before" disruptive technology .

The system's architecture allows for seamless coordination among various ground-based defence units, ensuring rapid response to incoming threats. Its deployment across six nodes on the western front during Operation Sindoor exemplified its operational readiness and strategic importance .

Akashteer's success underscores India's commitment to self-reliance in defence technology, aligning with the nation's broader 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. The system's performance has not only enhanced India's defensive posture but also set a new benchmark in modern warfare, demonstrating the critical role of indigenous innovation in national security.

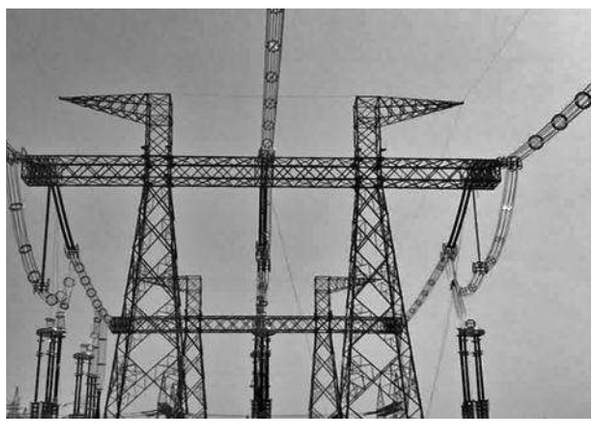
The deployment of advanced systems like Akashteer signifies a transformative shift in India's defence strategy, emphasizing agility, precision, and technological superiority. The system's effectiveness during Operation Sindoor serves as a testament to India's growing prowess in developing cutting-edge defence solutions capable of addressing contemporary security challenges.

Seventeen Remote Naxal-Hit Villages in Chhattisgarh Receive Electricity for the First Time

Raipur, 16 May: Chhattisgarh's Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki district, seventeen remote villages that have long been affected by Naxalite insurgency have been connected to the national electricity grid for the first time. This milestone, achieved under the state's Mukhyamantri Majratola Vidyutikaran Yojana, marks a pivotal shift from decades of isolation to integration into the mainstream.

Approximately 540 families residing in these villages, nestled among dense forests and challenging terrains, are now beneficiaries of this electrification project. The initiative, which cost around ₹3 crore, faced numerous challenges, including difficult access routes and security concerns due to the Naxalite presence. Despite these obstacles, the project was successfully completed, bringing grid electricity to areas that previously relied on unreliable solar power systems and kerosene lamps. In many instances, solar panels were either stolen or damaged, forcing residents, including children, to study under dim kerosene lamps.

The electrification of these villages is part of the Chhattisgarh government's broader strategy to enhance infrastructure and improve the quality of life in Naxal-affected regions. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has emphasized the importance of such initiatives in fostering development and reducing the influence of insurgent groups. He noted that the establishment of security camps in these areas has not only improved safety but has also facilitated the delivery of essential services like healthcare, education, and electricity. The first such camp was set up in Muler, and similar facilities are being planned for other remote areas.



Residents of the newly electrified villages have expressed their joy and relief. Access to electricity is expected to transform daily life, enabling children to study after sunset, improving healthcare facilities, and providing opportunities for small-scale industries to thrive. The move is also seen as a step towards integrating these communities into the state's economic and social fabric.

The successful implementation of this electrification project underscores the government's commitment to addressing the needs of underserved populations, even in the most challenging and conflict-prone areas. It also reflects a growing recognition that development and security are intertwined, and that providing basic services can play a crucial role in countering insurgency and fostering peace.

As Chhattisgarh continues its efforts to bring development to its Naxal-affected regions, the electrification of these seventeen villages stands as a testament to the resilience of both the state's administration and its people. It also serves as a hopeful example for other regions facing similar challenges.

India's First Mahout Village Inaugurated in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

New Delhi, 16 May: India's commitment to wildlife conservation and the welfare of indigenous communities, the state of Tamil Nadu has inaugurated the country's first dedicated Mahout Village at the Theppakadu Elephant Camp in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. This initiative aims to honor the selfless service of mahouts and cavadis—tribal caretakers who have long been the silent custodians of India's captive elephants.

On May 13, 2025, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin officially opened the Mahout Village, a project that has been in the making since 2023. The village comprises 44 eco-friendly houses, each allocated to a mahout and their assistant, the kavadi. Constructed at a cost of ₹5.06 crore by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, the homes are situated within the Theppakadu Elephant Camp, providing the caretakers with proximity to the elephants they tend to daily. The design of the houses was developed in consultation with the mahouts themselves, ensuring that their needs and preferences were prioritized.

The Mahout Village is not just a residential area but a community space that reflects the harmony between humans and nature. The village features solar-powered lighting, a solar fence for security, a children's playground, and a basketball court, all designed to enhance the quality of life for the residents. The lanes within the village are named after the elephants housed at the camp, symbolizing the deep bond between the caretakers and the animals. This thoughtful integration of amenities underscores the government's recognition of the mahouts' vital role in elephant conservation.

The inauguration ceremony was marked by a heartwarming reunion between IAS officer and environmentalist Supriya Sahu and the elephants featured in the Oscar-winning documentary The Elephant Whisperers. Supriya Sahu, who has been instrumental in the development of the Mahout Village, took the opportunity to feed sugarcane to Raghu, the orphaned elephant calf, and interacted with Bommi, another elephant from the film. This gesture highlighted the continuity of care and affection that the mahouts provide to the elephants, reinforcing the themes of compassion and coexistence depicted in the documentary.

The Mahout Village initiative is part of a broader commitment to improve the living conditions of tribal communities and enhance wildlife conservation efforts. A similar project was previously completed at the Kozhikamuthi Elephant Camp, where 47 greenhouses were constructed for the mahouts and cavadis. These projects are a testament to the government's dedication to supporting the unsung heroes of wildlife conservation—the mahouts and cavadis—who often work in challenging conditions to ensure the well-being of elephants.

The establishment of the Mahout Village also serves to spotlight the rich cultural heritage of the Kattunayakan tribe, to which many of the mahouts belong. The Kattunayakans have a long-standing tradition of working with elephants, and their intimate knowledge of elephant behavior and needs has been crucial in the rehabilitation and care of these majestic animals. By providing the mahouts with dedicated housing and facilities, the government acknowledges their invaluable contribution to wildlife conservation and ensures that they can continue their work with the necessary support and respect.

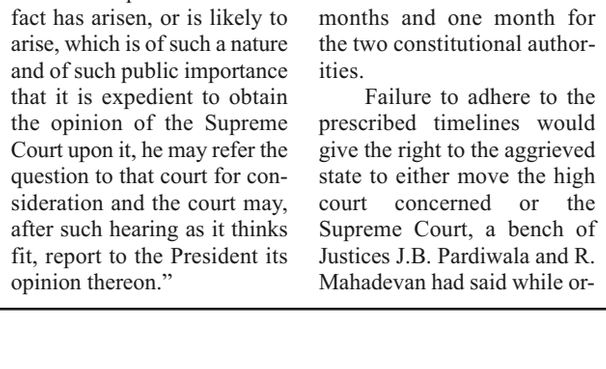
The inauguration of India's first Mahout Village is a significant milestone in the journey towards sustainable wildlife conservation and the empowerment of indigenous communities. It sets a precedent for integrating human welfare with environmental stewardship, demonstrating that the well-being of both people and wildlife are interconnected. As the Mahout Village stands as a beacon of this harmonious coexistence, it invites others to recognize and honor the profound bond between humans and the natural world.

India Launches Diplomatic Offensive: MPs to Brief Global Leaders on Pakistan-Sponsored Terrorism

New Delhi, 16 May: India is dispatching multi-party parliamentary delegations to key global capitals. The initiative follows the deadly Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, which resulted in the deaths of 26 Indian tourists, and the subsequent Operation Sindoor, India's retaliatory military action against Pakistan-based terrorist infrastructure.

The delegations, coordinated by Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, are scheduled to commence their outreach tours after May 22. Each delegation will comprise 5–6 Members of Parliament (MPs) from various political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), Trinamool Congress (TMC), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Janata Dal (United) [JDU], Biju Janata Dal (BJD), and Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], among others. The MPs will visit countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates to present India's stance on the conflict and highlight the threat posed by Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is set to brief the MPs on the tour's agenda, ensuring a unified and coherent message during their engagements. The primary objective is to expose Pakistan's role in harboring and supporting terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, which have been implicated in attacks on Indian soil. The delegations aim to strengthen India's diplomatic ties with these nations and seek their support in isolating Pakistan on the global stage.



The Congress party has expressed its commitment to participating in the diplomatic mission. General Secretary Jairam Ramesh confirmed that the party would be part of the outreach, following consultations with Union Minister Kiren Rijiju. However, the Congress also criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi for missing crucial meetings related to this initiative, reflecting ongoing political tensions within the country.

This diplomatic offensive comes amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, following the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty by India in April 2025. The treaty, which governs the shared use of the Indus River basin, was suspended by India in response to the Pahalgam attack, which it attributes to Pakistan-based militants. Pakistan has condemned India's actions, warning that any interference with the treaty would be considered an act of war.

The international community has largely welcomed the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan, brokered by the United States on May 10, 2025. Nations such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have praised the move as a critical step toward de-escalation. However, they have also emphasized the need for sustained efforts to combat terrorism and ensure lasting peace in the region.

As the diplomatic delegations prepare for their missions, India aims to present a unified national front, demonstrating bipartisan support for its position on cross-border terrorism. The success of this outreach will depend on the ability of these MPs to effectively communicate India's concerns and garner international backing to hold Pakistan accountable for its role in supporting terrorist activities.

'Everyone wants name in newspapers': Supreme Court says no to fresh pleas against Waqf law

New Delhi, 16 May: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to examine a couple of fresh pleas challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, saying everybody wants name in newspapers.A bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih said it would decide the pending matter scheduled to come up on May 20.The apex court would then hear the point of interim relief in the case.

As soon as one of the pleas came up for hearing on Friday, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, objected and said there can't be an "endless" filing of pleas challenging the Act.The counsel appearing for the petitioner said he had filed the petition on April 8 and removed the defects pointed out by the apex court registry on April 15 but his plea was not listed for hearing.

"Everybody wants his name to be in the newspapers," the CJI observed.When the lawyer urged the bench his plea should be tagged with the pending petitions, the bench said, "We will decide that matter." The bench then dismissed it.When another similar plea came up for hearing, the bench said, "Dismissed".

When the counsel for the petitioner urged that he be allowed to intervene in the pending pleas, the CJI said, "We already have too many intervenors." On April 17, the apex court decided to hear only five of the total number of pleas before it. The pleas challenging the Act came up for hearing before a bench comprising the CJI and Justice Masih on May 15.

President poses questions to Supreme Court on bill consent clock for governors and self

New Delhi, 16 May: President Droupadi Murmu has posed crucial questions to the Supreme Court over its April 8 verdict that fixed timelines for governors and the President to act on bills passed by Assemblies.

Exercising her power under the rarely used Article 143 (1), Murmu said that in the present circumstances, it appeared that questions of law had arisen and they were of such nature and public importance that it was expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court. The President acts on the advice of the council of ministers.

Article 143 (1) of the Constitution deals with the power of the President to consult the Supreme Court.

The provision says: "If at any time it appears to the President that a question of law or fact has arisen, or is likely to arise, which is of such a nature and of such public importance that it is expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court upon it, he may refer the question to that court for consideration and the court may, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report to the President its opinion thereon."

In its April 8 judgment, the Supreme Court had said that neither the President nor the governor had any "pocket veto power" to indefinitely withhold bills passed by a state legislature, as it prescribed timelines of three months and one month for the two constitutional authorities.

Failure to adhere to the prescribed timelines would give the right to the aggrieved state to either move the high court concerned or the Supreme Court, a bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan had said while ordering "deemed" assent to 10 bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly with effect from November 18, 2023, when they had been presented to governor R.N. Ravi again after his fiat for reconsideration.



Though Supreme Court judgments are challenged by way of review petitions, the NDA government chose to adopt the legal strategy of seeking a presidential reference in the wake of similar cases of non-assent to bills, particularly in the non-BJP-ruled states of Kerala, Punjab and Bengal, that are pending at different stages in the apex court.

Tamil Nadu on Thursday condemned the move to seek a presidential reference, saying it "attempts to subvert the constitutional position already settled" by the Supreme Court in Ravi's case and other precedents.

The following are some of the key queries raised by Murmu, reproduced verbatim:

• What are the constitutional options before a governor when a bill is presented to him under Article 200 of the Constitution of India?

• Is the governor bound by the aid and advice tendered by the council of ministers while exercising all the options available with him when a bill is presented before him under Article 200 of the Constitution of India?

• Is the exercise of constitutional discretion by the governor under Article 200 of the Constitution justiciable?

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Bruce Arena Intervenes to Prevent Messi's Red Card After Heated Draw

New Delhi, 16 May: Inter Miami's 3-3 draw against the San Jose Earthquakes on May 15, 2025, Lionel Messi narrowly avoided a red card following a heated exchange with referee Joe Dickerson. The situation was defused by an unexpected peacemaker: San Jose's head coach, Bruce Arena.

The match, held at San Jose's PayPal Park, was marked by high tensions and a flurry of goals. Inter Miami, struggling with form, managed to salvage a point thanks to Tadeo Allende's second-half strike. However, the draw did little to alleviate the team's recent woes, having secured only one win in their last six matches across all competitions.

The flashpoint occurred immediately after the final whistle. Messi, visibly frustrated by what he perceived as a missed foul in the dying moments of the game, confronted referee Dickerson. The Argentine forward's protests earned him a yellow card, but his continued dissent threatened



to escalate the situation. Dickerson reportedly warned Messi, "Do you want me to send you off? Walk away."

Recognizing the potential fallout, Bruce Arena stepped in to calm the situation. He guided Messi away from the confrontation, preventing further escalation. In the post-match press conference, Arena explained his actions: "He was obviously not happy, and I wanted to make sure he wasn't going to get a red card. I just tried to move him out of the way because for him to get a red card at the end of the game would have been ridiculous."

Arena's intervention was not only a gesture of sportsmanship but also a pragmatic move to ensure that Messi would be available for Inter Miami's upcoming fixtures. The team is set to face state rivals Orlando City on May 18 at Chase Stadium, a crucial match as they aim to climb the Eastern Conference standings.

Inter Miami's head coach, Javier Mascherano, expressed his dismay over the team's defensive lapses, particularly in the first half where they conceded all three goals. "We are making a lot of mistakes that sometimes finish with goals," ... noted. "We have to focus on the positive ... Then we have to improve a lot ... We have to take a step forward."

Despite the team's struggles, Messi continues to be a standout performer, with ten goals and three assists in 15 MLS appearances this season.

The incident underscores the high stakes and emotional intensity of professional football, where tempers can flare, and the importance of leadership and composure becomes paramount. Arena's timely intervention not only prevented a potential suspension for one of the league's marquee players but also highlighted the mutual respect and camaraderie that can exist even among rivals.

As Inter Miami prepares for their next challenge against Orlando City, the team will look to regroup and address their defensive vulnerabilities. With Messi available and motivated, they aim to turn the tide and reassert themselves in the league standings.



Borussia Dortmund can take the "final step" in their miraculous run to the Bundesliga top four with a big win at home against Holstein Kiel on Saturday.

Anil Kumble Endorses Karun Nair as Successor to Virat Kohli's No. 4 Spot in India's Test Lineup

New Delhi, 16 May: Former Indian captain and legendary spinner Anil Kumble has identified Karun Nair as the ideal candidate to fill the pivotal No. 4 position in India's Test batting order. Kohli's departure, following Rohit Sharma's exit, marks a significant transition for the Indian Test team, which is set to face England in a five-match series starting June 20. Kumble's recommendation is rooted in Nair's impressive domestic performance and his experience in English conditions. "Karun deserves to come back into the Indian team with the kind of domestic run he has had," Kumble stated. "He has played County cricket, so he knows the conditions. Karun may be on the other side of 30, but he is still young." Nair, 33, has been a consistent performer in domestic cricket. In the 2024–25 Ranji Trophy season, he amassed 863 runs in nine matches at an average of 53.93, including four centuries.

The No. 4 position in India's Test lineup has historically been occupied by cricketing legends like Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli. Kumble emphasized the importance of experience in this role, especially given the challenging English conditions. "You need someone in England who has been there and done that," he noted.Nair's previous experience in England, including his stint with Northamptonshire in County Cricket, adds to his suitability for the role. His familiarity with English pitches and conditions could prove advantageous for India in the upcoming series. While other contenders like Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, and Cheteshwar Pujara are also in the fray, Kumble's endorsement of Nair brings attention to the latter's recent form and experience. The selection committee faces a crucial decision in finalizing the squad for the England tour, with the No. 4 spot being a focal point.

Mohun Bagan's Executive Committee Yet to Accept Tutu Bose's Resignation as President

Kolkata, 16 May: The resignation of Swapan Sadhan Bose, affectionately known as Tutu Bose, from the presidency of Mohun Bagan Athletic Club has stirred discussions within the club's executive circles. Despite his formal submission of a resignation letter on April 28, citing personal reasons and health concerns, the club's executive committee has not officially accepted his departure.

In his heartfelt letter addressed to the club's secretary and executive committee members, Bose emphasized his deep emotional connection with the institution. He stated, "Mohun Bagan Club has been like family to me. I have always tried to serve the club to the best of my abilities." He further elaborated that with the upcoming elections and the formation of a new board under the leadership of retired Justice Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya, it was an appropriate time for him to step aside, ensuring a neutral environment for the electoral process.

However, the executive committee's delay in accepting his resignation has led to speculation about the club's internal dynamics. Some members believe that Bose's longstanding contributions and leadership are invaluable, making it challenging to envision the club's future without his guidance. Others argue that a formal acceptance is necessary to facilitate a smooth transition and uphold the club's democratic processes.

Bose's tenure has been marked by significant achievements, including the modernization of club facilities and the strengthening of its football team. His decision to step down is seen by many as a move to prevent any potential conflicts of interest, especially with his son, Srinjoy Bose, being an active member of the club's administration. In previous statements, Tutu Bose has endorsed his son's involvement, expressing confidence in his capabilities to lead and serve the club effectively.

The club's constitution mandates that any resignation from a key position like the presidency must be deliberated upon and accepted by the executive committee. Until such formal acceptance is documented, Bose technically remains the president, leading to a state of administrative ambiguity.

This isn't the first time Mohun Bagan has faced such a situation. In 2018, the club took three months to accept the resignation of Srinjoy Bose from the Assistant General Secretary position, highlighting the complexities involved in leadership transitions within the organization.

As the club approaches its elections, members and fans alike await clarity on the leadership structure. The executive committee's decision on Bose's resignation will not only impact the upcoming electoral process but also set a precedent for future administrative protocols.

The legacy of Tutu Bose as a dedicated leader and his unwavering commitment to Mohun Bagan remains undisputed. Whether he continues in an official capacity or steps aside, his influence on the club's history and future direction is indelible.

Kolkata Fans Rally to Retain IPL 2025 Final at Eden Gardens Amid Venue Shift Concerns

Kolkata, 16 May: The cricketing community in Kolkata is fervently appealing to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to retain Eden Gardens as the venue for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 final. This comes in response to reports suggesting a potential shift of the final to Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium due to weather and logistical concerns.

The IPL 2025 final was initially scheduled to take place at Eden Gardens on May 25. However, the tournament faced a nine-day suspension starting May 8 due to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. Following a ceasefire agreement, the BCCI announced the resumption of the league on May 17, with the final now slated for June 3. In light of these changes, the BCCI is reconsidering the final's venue, citing potential weather disruptions in Kolkata during early June .

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) has expressed its dissatisfaction with the BCCI's stance, labeling the potential relocation as "unfair." In an effort to retain hosting rights, the CAB submitted a meteorological report indicating favorable weather conditions in Kolkata on June 3 . The association emphasized Eden Gardens' historical significance and its readiness to host the final.

Local fans have taken to the streets, organizing peaceful demonstrations and prayer gatherings outside Eden Gardens, urging the BCCI to reconsider its decision. The sentiment among supporters is that Eden Gardens, with its rich cricketing legacy, deserves to host the season's climax, especially given the city's passionate fan base and the stadium's state-of-the-art facilities. The BCCI has yet to make an official announcement regarding the final's venue. As discussions continue, stakeholders and fans alike await a decision that balances logistical considerations with the cultural and emotional significance of the venue.

IFA Implements 'Son of Soil' Rule to Boost Local Talent in Calcutta Football League

Kolkata, 16 May: The Indian Football Association (IFA) has introduced the 'Son of Soil' rule in the Calcutta Football League (CFL) Premier Division. This regulation mandates that each team must field a minimum of four players born in West Bengal in their starting eleven at all times during matches.

The 'Son of Soil' rule aims to provide more opportunities for local players, ensuring their active participation in the league. By enforcing this rule, the IFA seeks to nurture and develop football talent within the state, fostering a stronger connection between the teams and the local communities they represent.

This initiative is part of a broader effort by the IFA to revitalize the CFL and reinforce its status as a breeding ground for Indian footballers. The league, established in 1898, is the oldest football league in Asia and has a rich history of contributing to the nation's football landscape.

In addition to the 'Son of Soil' rule, the IFA has also implemented a 'no-foreigner' policy in the CFL Premier Division. This decision prohibits foreign players from participating in the league, further emphasizing the focus on domestic talent development. The policy is designed to provide more playing time and exposure to Indian players, allowing them to gain valuable experience and showcase their skills on a competitive platform.

The introduction of these regulations has been met with a mix of support and criticism. Proponents argue that prioritizing local players will strengthen the grassroots football infrastructure and create a sustainable pipeline of talent for higher levels of competition. They believe that increased opportunities for homegrown players will lead to the overall growth and success of Indian football.

On the other hand, some critics express concerns that the restrictions may limit the diversity and competitiveness of the league. They argue that exposure to international players and playing styles can be beneficial for the development of domestic talent. However, the IFA maintains that the current focus is on building a robust foundation for local players, which will ultimately contribute to the long-term success of Indian football.

The 2024–25 CFL Premier Division season has already witnessed the impact of these new rules. Teams have adjusted their strategies to comply with the regulations, providing more opportunities for West Bengal-born players to take center stage. This shift has led to increased enthusiasm among local fans, who are eager to support and celebrate their homegrown heroes.

As the CFL continues to evolve under these new guidelines, the IFA remains committed to monitoring the outcomes and making necessary adjustments to ensure the league's success. The focus on nurturing local talent is a testament to the association's dedication to the growth and development of football in West Bengal and India as a whole.

The implementation of the 'Son of Soil' rule and the 'no-foreigner' policy in the Calcutta Football League represents a strategic effort by the IFA to prioritize local talent and strengthen the foundation of Indian football. By providing increased opportunities for West Bengal-born players, the league aims to foster a new generation of footballers who can contribute significantly to the sport's growth at both the state and national levels.



Triumph and Tragedy: Ranaghat Teachers' Mount Everest Expedition Ends in Mixed Fortunes

Mumbai, 16 May: Two schoolteachers from Ranaghat, West Bengal, embarked on a journey to conquer Mount Everest. While one achieved the dream and returned safely, the other tragically lost his life during the descent.

On May 15, 2025, Subrata Ghosh, 45, and Rumpa Das, 44, both educators from Ranaghat, reached the summit of Mount Everest. Their ascent was delayed due to inclement weather, leading them to commence their final push to the summit later than planned. Despite the challenges, they achieved their goal, standing atop the world's highest peak.

Subrata Ghosh, a teacher at Kapasati Milonbithi High School, had long harbored the dream of summiting Everest. To fund his expedition, he made significant personal sacrifices, including mortgaging his home. Similarly, Rumpa Das, an English teacher at Coopers Camp School, overcame financial hurdles to join the expedition. Their determination exemplified the spirit of perseverance.

However, the descent proved perilous. Subrata began exhibiting signs of exhaustion and altitude sickness near the Hillary Step, a treacherous section close to the summit. Despite efforts to assist him, he succumbed to the harsh conditions, becoming the second reported fatality on Everest during the current climbing season.

Rumpa Das, though facing her own challenges during the descent, managed to reach Camp 4 safely with the assistance of Sherpa guides. Her successful return marks her as the fifth Bengali woman to summit Everest, joining the ranks of pioneers like Shipra Mazumdar and Chhanda Gayen.

The contrasting outcomes of their expedition have cast a somber mood over their community in Ranaghat. While celebrating Rumpa's achievement, residents mourn the loss of Subrata, whose dedication to his students and passion for mountaineering left an indelible mark.

Their story serves as a poignant reminder of the triumphs and perils associated with high-altitude mountaineering. It underscores the importance of meticulous planning, awareness of one's physical limits, and the unpredictable nature of such endeavors.

As the community grapples with this bittersweet outcome, tributes pour in for both educators. Their journey to Everest, marked by courage and determination, will inspire future generations to pursue their dreams, no matter the obstacles.

Barcelona Clinches 28th La Liga Title with Lamine Yamal's Spectacular Goal

Barcelona, 16 May: FC Barcelona secured their 28th La Liga title with a 2-0 victory over city rivals Espanyol. The match's highlight was a stunning goal by 17-year-old prodigy Lamine Yamal, who also assisted in the second goal, underscoring his pivotal role in the team's success.

The derby began with Espanyol displaying early aggression, but Barcelona's defense, anchored by veteran goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny, held firm. The breakthrough came in the 53rd minute when Yamal unleashed a curling shot from outside the



box, leaving Espanyol's goalkeeper with no chance. This goal not only gave Barcelona the lead but also showcased Yamal's exceptional talent.

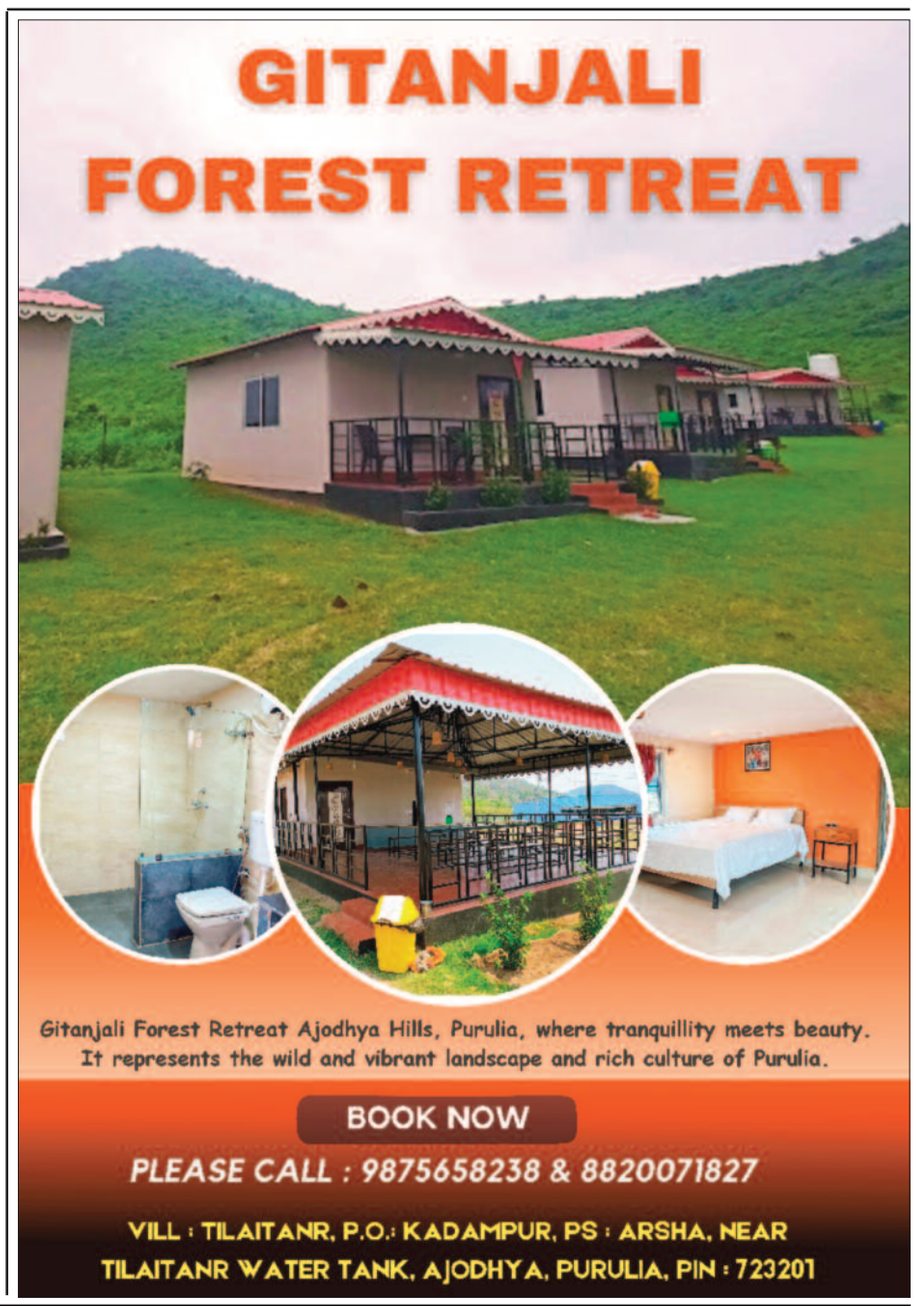
Espanyol's hopes dimmed further when Leandro Cabrera received a red card for an altercation with Yamal. Capitalizing on the numerical advantage, Barcelona sealed the win in stoppage time as Yamal set up Fermín López for the second goal.

The victory marked a triumphant season for Barcelona under new manager Hansi Flick, who achieved a domestic double in his debut year, having already secured the Copa del Rey. Flick praised the team's unity and resilience, stating, "This title belongs to the entire team."

Post-match celebrations were subdued due to tensions with Espanyol players and attempts by the home team to disrupt festivities, including turning on pitch sprinklers. Flick guided his players off the field to avoid further confrontations.

Yamal's performance has drawn widespread acclaim, with commentators hailing him as a generational talent poised to define an era in football.

Barcelona's triumph not only dethroned arch-rivals Real Madrid but also highlighted the club's successful integration of young talent, setting a promising foundation for future campaigns.



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