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weather report

Kolkata Weather

30 ℃ | ℉

Precipitation 0%

Humidity 55%

Wind 10 km/h

Sunny

Indian Indices

NIFTY 50		
25492.30	-17.40	-0.07
SENSEX		
83216.28	-94.73	-0.11
NIFTY BANK		
57876.80	322.55	0.56
NIFTY IT		
35117.65	-219.95	-0.62
BSE SMALLCAP		
53052.16	-5.11	-0.01

Gold Rates

Today gold price in Kolkata

1,22,020 1,11,850

»

Today gold price in Bangalore

1,22,020 1,11,850

»

Today gold price in India

1,22,020 (₹000) 1,11,850 (₹000)

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A farmer burns crop stubble in a field, on the outskirts of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public rally amid the ongoing Bihar Assembly elections, in Sitamarhi, Bihar.

*Abhishek Banerjee Forms Special Leadership Team to Oversee Voter List Inclusion Under 'Sir' Initiative

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 8 November: Trinamool Congress (TMC) national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has formed a dedicated team of party leaders to supervise and assist citizens in the ongoing *Special Summary Revision* (commonly referred to as 'Sir') process across West Bengal. The move comes as part of the party's effort to ensure that no eligible voter, particularly migrant workers, students, and first-time voters, is left out of the electoral rolls ahead of the upcoming elections. According to party sources, Abhishek Banerjee personally reviewed the voter inclusion drive and directed district and block-level leaders to take an active role in assisting the public. He emphasized that the voter list is the foundation of democracy and that every eligible citizen must have the right to be represented. "Our aim is to ensure that every individual, whether residing in Bengal or working outside, is properly registered. No one should lose their democratic right due to negligence or procedural delay," Banerjee stated during an internal party meeting. The TMC leadership has created a multi-tier coordination committee to oversee the process, ensuring smooth communication between local units, the Election Commission offices, and citizens. Each district will have a designated leader responsible for verifying field-level activities, collecting grievances, and reporting directly to the central control room established at the party headquarters in Kolkata. The committee's formation, insiders said, reflects the party's commitment to transparency and proactive involvement in the electoral process. Abhishek Banerjee also instructed party workers to conduct door-to-door awareness drives, helping people understand the importance of voter registration and assisting those facing difficulties in updating their details. Special attention will be given to sections such as migrant laborers who often face challenges due to frequent movement between states. "We are not merely doing this as a political exercise; it is a democratic responsibility. Every vote counts, and every voice matters," Banerjee said. The initiative has received strong support from grassroots members, who have already begun holding voter assistance camps in different localities of Kolkata, Howrah, North and South 24 Parganas, and districts in North Bengal. Party functionaries are coordinating with local civic bodies to ensure proper documentation and timely submission of voter registration forms. Banerjee reportedly warned against any negligence, making it clear that accountability will be fixed if lapses occur. Senior leaders close to Abhishek Banerjee noted that this systematic approach to the *Sir* revision process is also a reflection of his organizational focus. Over the past year, he has emphasized discipline, decentralization, and data-driven political management within the party. His direction to maintain updated records of voter participation is seen as a step toward strengthening TMC's electoral machinery ahead of both panchayat and assembly elections. In his message to party workers, Banerjee urged them to rise above internal differences and work collectively in the public interest. He also reiterated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's call for ensuring fairness and inclusivity in all democratic processes. "This is not about politics alone; it is about safeguarding democracy and giving every individual the power to participate," he said. The move has drawn reactions from opposition parties, with BJP and Congress leaders claiming that the TMC's involvement in the voter list process may influence administrative neutrality.



Firhad Hakim Assures Simplified Birth Certificate Process, Says Accuracy of Information Key to Issuance

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 8 November: Kolkata Mayor and senior Trinamool Congress leader Firhad Hakim has assured citizens that there will be no unnecessary hurdles in obtaining birth certificates from the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) if the information provided in the application is accurate and verifiable. Addressing concerns raised by residents about alleged delays and complications in the civic documentation process, Hakim emphasized that the administration's primary objective is to make the procedure transparent, citizen-friendly, and free from bureaucratic obstruction. Speaking to reporters at the KMC headquarters, the Mayor stated that the civic body has already undertaken several reforms to streamline the issuance of birth and death certificates through digital platforms. "If the information is correct and matches the official records, no one will be denied a birth certificate. We have simplified the system so that people can easily access civic services without middlemen or delays," he said. Hakim added that in cases where discrepancies arise in submitted documents, the municipal authorities are instructed to help applicants rectify errors rather than reject applications outright.

The Mayor's statement comes amid rising public complaints over difficulties faced by residents in obtaining essential civic documents, including birth certificates, which are required for school admissions, government benefits, and other legal purposes. Several applicants had alleged that their requests were kept pending for months due to procedural complexities and lack of coordination among civic departments. Addressing these grievances, Hakim reiterated that genuine applicants will not face harassment. "The process has been made fully transparent. There is no room for irregularities or corruption.

Every citizen has the right to receive proper documentation if their records are genuine," he said. Officials from the KMC explained that the new measures include digitization of archives, linking hospital records with municipal databases, and introducing online verification systems. These reforms aim to eliminate duplication and ensure accuracy of personal details such as date of birth, parental information, and place of delivery.

*Rahul Gandhi Reaches Out to Gen Z Voters, Aims to Counter PM Modi's Influence Ahead of 2025 Elections



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has turned his focus towards India's Gen Z voters, unveiling a campaign aimed at connecting with the country's youngest electorate. Seeking to counter Prime Minister Narendra Modi's enduring popularity among first-time voters, Gandhi has launched a fresh outreach programme centered on digital engagement, youth participation, and policy promises addressing unemployment, education, and freedom of expression. At a recent event in Delhi, Rahul Gandhi emphasized that the nation's youth represent the true force for transformation and accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of manipulating young minds through propaganda rather than empowering them with opportunities. "India's young generation deserves jobs, quality education, and the right to dream freely — not slogans and social media narratives," Gandhi said, adding that the Congress is committed to building an inclusive economy that values innovation and fairness. The Congress leader's renewed youth-centric strategy comes at a time when the demographic landscape of Indian voters is undergoing a rapid shift. Nearly half of the electorate is under the age of 35, and millions of first-time voters are expected to participate in the next general elections. Gandhi's campaign, described by party insiders as "India's Youth First," focuses on harnessing this energy through social media dialogues, university interactions, and mentorship networks that connect young professionals and students with Congress leaders and policy experts. Gandhi, who has often accused the Modi government of failing to deliver on its promises of job creation, took a direct swipe at the Centre's economic policies. "The government talks about *Amrit Kaal*, but what kind of golden era is it when millions of educated youth are unemployed or forced to accept insecure gig work?" he questioned. He also criticized the growing culture of fear and conformity, alleging that young people were being silenced for expressing dissenting views. "The BJP wants obedient followers. We want critical thinkers," he said. The Congress has also unveiled a series of online campaigns and interactive digital platforms to appeal to Gen Z voters who are deeply connected through social media. Gandhi's team has been working to revamp the party's digital presence, using short videos, memes, and podcasts to engage audiences on Instagram, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter). Party sources indicated that this is part of a broader plan to bridge the gap between traditional political outreach and modern communication channels that resonate with young Indians. Political analysts view this move as an attempt by the Congress to rebuild its base among younger demographics, many of whom have grown up during Modi's tenure and have limited direct exposure to the Congress's governance legacy. The challenge, experts note, lies in converting digital popularity into actual votes, especially given the BJP's strong organizational machinery and extensive online ecosystem. During his address, Gandhi also promised that a future Congress government would prioritize youth employment schemes, skill development programs, and educational reforms to make higher learning more affordable. He highlighted the importance of mental health awareness and the need for a supportive environment where young Indians can thrive without political or ideological pressure. "Our goal is to create a country where every young person feels seen, heard, and valued," he said. As the Congress prepares for a high-stakes electoral contest, Gandhi's focus on Gen Z marks an effort to redefine his image from that of a conventional opposition leader to a mentor-like figure who understands the aspirations of modern India.

Prime Minister Modi Launches Scathing Attack on RJD During Bihar Election Rally

Staff Reporter, Patna, 8 November: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a fierce attack on the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) during an election rally in Bihar, accusing the party of corruption, nepotism, and misgovernance during its previous tenure. Addressing a large gathering ahead of the second phase of the state elections, the Prime Minister warned voters not to let Bihar fall back into what he described as the "dark days of lawlessness and chaos" under the RJD regime. Speaking at the rally, Modi said that the people of Bihar had already witnessed the consequences of the RJD's rule, which he termed as a period marked by widespread corruption, crime, and neglect of the poor. "Those who looted Bihar for decades are now coming again with folded hands, asking for another chance. But the people of Bihar have not forgotten the days when kidnapping and extortion ruled the streets," he declared. The Prime Minister urged voters to reject the politics of dynastic entitlement and choose development-oriented governance. Without naming RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav directly, Modi accused the party of being driven by the ambitions of a single family rather than the welfare of the state. He said that the RJD's model of politics thrived on fear and favoritism, which destroyed opportunities for the youth and pushed Bihar backward.

Prashant Kishor Launches Scathing Attack on BJP Ahead of Bihar's Second Phase of Polls



Staff Reporter, Patna, 8 November: As Bihar gears up for the second phase of the Assembly elections, political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor has unleashed a sharp critique of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing it of betraying the trust of the people and failing to deliver on the promises made during previous elections. Addressing a public gathering in his home state, Kishor alleged that the saffron party has prioritized its political interests over the welfare of the common citizens, and he urged voters to see through what he called a campaign of deceit and manipulation. Kishor, who has been conducting a state-wide outreach under his Jan Suraaj Yatra, minced no words in taking on both the ruling BJP and its allies. He argued that the state's development narrative, often highlighted by BJP leaders, was nothing more than a political illusion aimed at masking the deteriorating socio-economic realities of Bihar. "The people of Bihar are being told that there has been unprecedented progress, but step into the villages and you will see the truth," he said, adding that unemployment, poverty, and migration continue to plague the youth despite years of tall promises. The noted political strategist, once credited for shaping successful campaigns for multiple parties across India, including the BJP in 2014, used his platform to warn voters against being swayed by emotional or communal appeals. "Every election, new slogans are coined, new promises are made, but the ground situation remains unchanged. The BJP's biggest success has been in selling dreams without delivering results," Kishor said. His remarks come at a critical juncture, with the second phase of polling seen as a decisive contest that could shape the eventual outcome in Bihar's multi-phase election. In his fiery address, Kishor emphasized that political change in Bihar will not come merely through the replacement of leaders but through a change in governance culture and accountability. "The problem is not with one leader or one party alone. The system has become complacent and corrupt. The people must demand answers, not slogans," he declared. He further accused the BJP of centralizing power and neglecting the state's federal needs, pointing to what he called a lack of coordination between the Centre and the state government on crucial issues such as job creation, education, and rural infrastructure. While Kishor refrained from announcing any immediate political ambition, his sustained attacks on both the BJP and the current state administration have fueled speculation about his potential electoral plans in the future. His Jan Suraaj initiative, which has drawn significant attention over the past year, aims to build a citizen-driven movement focused on participatory governance, decentralization, and transparent policymaking. During his speech, Kishor underscored that his movement was not an electoral venture but a long-term campaign to transform Bihar's political culture. The BJP, however, dismissed Kishor's remarks as "political theatrics" and accused him of seeking relevance ahead of the elections. Party spokespersons argued that Kishor, having failed to find a place in mainstream politics, was now resorting to attacks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to stay in the headlines. They asserted that the people of Bihar were fully aware of the transformation brought about under BJP-led governments, citing improvements in infrastructure, electrification, and welfare schemes. Despite the BJP's counterattacks, Kishor's words appear to have resonated among sections of the youth and civil society groups disillusioned with traditional politics. His method of door-to-door interaction and open discussions has helped him connect with voters beyond partisan lines. Several observers believe that his critique could influence the political discourse in the ongoing election, particularly in districts where unemployment and migration are sensitive issues.

Prime Minister Inaugurates Four New Vande Bharat Express Trains in Uttar Pradesh, Boosting State's Rail Connectivity

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated four new Vande Bharat Express trains in Uttar Pradesh on Friday, marking a significant milestone in the state's ongoing railway modernization efforts. The inauguration, held in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and senior railway officials, underscores the government's focus on strengthening regional connectivity and enhancing passenger comfort through advanced, high-speed rail services. Addressing the gathering via video conference, Prime Minister Modi said the launch of these trains reflects India's growing technological capabilities and the government's commitment to providing world-class infrastructure to its citizens. He emphasized that the Vande Bharat Express represents a new era of efficiency, speed, and safety in India's railway network. "The Vande Bharat trains are not just a mode of transport but a symbol of the new India that is fast, futuristic, and self-reliant," he stated. The four newly launched trains will connect key destinations across Uttar Pradesh and neighboring states, improving both intercity travel and tourism potential. Among the routes inaugurated are Lucknow-Varanasi, Lucknow-Dehradun, Gorakhpur-Delhi, and Agra-Kanpur, providing faster alternatives for commuters and travelers. These trains are designed with upgraded safety features, modern interiors, and improved onboard amenities, including reclining seats, automatic doors, Wi-Fi connectivity, and advanced signaling systems. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath hailed the initiative as a major step in fulfilling the vision of a "developed Uttar Pradesh." He noted that the state, which once lagged behind in infrastructure development, is now becoming a model for modern connectivity under the leadership of the Prime Minister. "Today's inauguration will bring districts closer and strengthen economic and social ties across regions. This is a moment of pride for every citizen of Uttar Pradesh," the Chief Minister said. The introduction of the four new Vande Bharat Express services also aligns with the government's broader goal of upgrading the country's transport network under the *Amrit Bharat Station Scheme*. Railway officials highlighted that these new trains are equipped with improved energy efficiency and require less maintenance, thus ensuring sustainability and cost-effectiveness. The new rakes also feature enhanced passenger safety systems, including the Kavach technology, an indigenous automatic train protection mechanism developed to prevent collisions. The inauguration ceremony witnessed enthusiastic participation from the public, with thousands gathering at various railway stations to witness the arrival of the sleek blue-and-white trains. The new services are expected to reduce travel time between major cities by several hours, providing a comfortable and time-saving option for daily commuters, business travelers, and tourists. Officials from the Ministry of Railways also mentioned that the expansion of the Vande Bharat network will continue in the coming months, with more routes planned to connect tier-two and tier-three cities.



Kolkata Mayor Assures Birth Certificates for All Eligible Citizens, Slams 'Unnecessary Confusion' Over Records

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 8 November : Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim on Friday assured that every citizen born within the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) jurisdiction will receive their birth certificate, provided their documentation is correct and verifiable. The mayor made the remarks during his weekly public interaction session, "Talk to Mayor", held over the phone, where he addressed a range of civic queries directly from residents.

Clarifying the issue that has recently drawn political attention, Mayor Hakim said, "If the records are accurate and all documents are in order, there is no reason anyone born in Kolkata will be denied a birth certificate. The details are all available on the KMC's official website. It clearly shows up to which year birth certificates are being issued. There is no need to make this issue unnecessarily complicated."

The statement came amid an ongoing political spat triggered by Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, who had filed an RTI (Right to Information) query regarding the issuance of birth certificates by the KMC. In his response, Deputy Mayor Atin Ghosh had already provided an official clarification, stating that the process was transparent and data was



publicly accessible.

However, on Friday, Mayor Hakim took the counter-narrative a step further, taking a sharp dig at those questioning the transparency of KMC's record-keeping. "Just open the computer once — all the data is there," Hakim remarked pointedly. "It clearly shows where, when, and how many birth certificates have been issued. Everything is on record. Creating confusion out of nothing only misleads citizens."KMC officials have since reiterated that digitisation of records has made the birth certificate process more streamlined and accessible than ever. The municipal database, maintained under the state's e-governance framework, contains detailed information on births registered across different wards of Kolkata over the decades.

Municipal sources confirmed that the birth registration system is fully integrated with the state's online services, allowing citizens to apply, track, and download their certificates directly from the KMC's web portal. This, officials said, has helped curb middlemen and improved transparency.In the same interaction, the mayor also addressed questions about delays in municipal services, attributing part of the problem to the ongoing State Infrastructure Register (SIR) programme. "For the SIR programme, around 250 KMC employees have been temporarily assigned to assist with data collection and verification," Hakim said. "As a result, several departments are facing staff shortages. In some cases, one person is having to do the work of three."

The mayor acknowledged the strain on civic workers but maintained that essential public services are continuing without major disruption. "Despite the additional workload, our employees are working diligently to keep civic services running smoothly. It is not easy, but we are managing," he added.

Sources within the KMC confirmed that redeploying staff for the SIR initiative has temporarily affected certain sectors, such as property tax assessment, garbage collection supervision, and maintenance works. However, senior officials stressed that the situation is under control and that the temporary reassignment was necessary to meet state-level administrative targets.

Meanwhile, the political confrontation over the birth certificate issue appears to be escalating. While opposition leaders continue to allege irregularities and selective issuance, KMC authorities maintain that the process remains entirely rule-bound and data-driven.

Observers say the controversy has more to do with political optics ahead of the next civic elections than with any real administrative lapses. The mayor's remarks, therefore, serve both as a reassurance to citizens and as a rebuttal to critics attempting to question the KMC's functioning. Civic rights activists, however, have urged the municipal body to ensure greater public communication and clarity in digital record access, noting that even though the data is online, many citizens — especially senior residents — struggle with navigating the website or obtaining certified copies offline.

Salt Lake Gold Trader Murder: Two Arrested as Probe Closes in on BDO's Alleged Role

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 8 November : The murder of Salt Lake-based gold trader Swapan Kamila, aged 48, police from Bidhannagar South Police Station have arrested two suspects — Raju Dhali and Tufan Thapa — for their alleged involvement in the crime that has sent shockwaves across Kolkata's business community.According to police sources, Raju Dhali was the personal driver of Rajganj BDO Prashanta Burman, whose name has also surfaced in the case, while Tufan Thapa is reportedly a contractor by profession. Initial investigations suggest that Kamila was abducted in a premeditated manner, although police are yet to confirm whether the murder itself was planned in advance or the result of a subsequent altercation.

Swapan Kamila, a resident of Dillamatia in West Midnapore district, owned a popular gold jewellery shop in Dattabad, Salt Lake. His family members told police that he went missing on October 28, after being forcibly taken away from his shop. A missing person's diary was filed the same day at Bidhannagar South Police Station. Days later, Kamila's body was recovered from the banks of the Bagjola canal near Jatragachhi in New Town, wrapped and hidden among bushes — confirming the family's worst fears.The Kamila family has directly accused BDO Prashanta Burman of orchestrating the abduction and murder. The family claims that a few days before the incident, a significant quantity of gold ornaments had gone missing from the BDO's residence. Burman allegedly suspected that the stolen jewellery had been sold at Kamila's shop. Following this, the BDO reportedly confronted the trader, initiating a dispute that may have escalated into the fatal crime.According to the family's complaint, on the evening of October 28, Burman allegedly arrived in a blue beacon car in Dattabad and forcibly took Kamila away in that very vehicle. CCTV footage collected from Salt Lake and New Town areas appears to corroborate this — showing that Burman was indeed present in New Town on that date. Police sources have also confirmed that the BDO's vehicle was spotted in Action Area I, AB Block, where he was seen entering building number 67 along with Kamila and another man, Ashok Kar, who had earlier been accused in the gold theft case.

A senior investigating officer said, "We have verified multiple leads and cross-referenced digital evidence, including CCTV footage, to establish the sequence of events. The two arrested individuals were initially detained for questioning but have now been formally arrested after key evidence pointed to their involvement." Police are currently interrogating both Raju and Tufan to determine the exact chain of command — particularly whether they acted under the BDO's instructions or were independently complicit in the crime.Meanwhile, BDO Prashanta Burman has vehemently denied all allegations. Speaking to media outlets earlier this week, Burman said, "I was not in Kolkata in the last week of October, and I have no house in New Town. The claims being made against me are fabricated and politically motivated. Someone is trying to tarnish my image."

However, sources within the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate have hinted that the CCTV footage is conclusive enough to place the BDO at the scene on the day of Kamila's disappearance. Investigators are also examining call records, vehicle GPS data, and statements from building residents in AB Block to piece together the timeline.

SSC Launches New Website After Server Crash Halts Teacher Recruitment Results

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 8 November : The West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) was forced to take emergency measures late Friday night after its official website crashed, leaving thousands of anxious teacher recruitment candidates unable to check their results. In response, the commission swiftly launched a new website — wbsschelpdesk.com — to ensure that candidates could access their scores without further delay.

The results in question pertain to the Class XI-XII teacher recruitment examination, which was held in September as part of the state's massive effort to fill long-pending vacancies following the Supreme Court's cancellation of the 2016 recruitment panel. The results were released on Friday night, about two and a half months after the examination, but soon after publication, the primary SSC website went down due to an overwhelming surge in traffic.

According to candidates, the official website was only opening intermittently for brief moments, preventing most from viewing their results. "The site crashed almost immediately after the results were uploaded. It was opening for a few seconds and then going blank again," said one candidate from Howrah who had appeared for the Geography teacher post. Many expressed frustration on social media, fearing that a technical glitch might delay further recruitment steps.

Recognising the scale of the problem, the School Service Commission moved quickly to create an alternative platform. Officials confirmed that the new site, wbsschelpdesk.com, mirrors the original system and follows the same login procedure.



Candidates can now enter their registration number and date of birth to view their marks and download their scorecards.

"The commission has launched a new web portal to ensure smooth access to results for all applicants. The technical issue on the main server was caused by extremely high traffic volume, and we are working to restore it as soon as possible," said an SSC official on Saturday morning.This recruitment drive covers a total of 12,514 vacancies for teachers across various higher secondary subjects in government and government-aided schools across West Bengal. The response from job seekers has been massive, with 2,46,543 candidates applying for these posts. The exam was conducted for a total of 60 marks, and according to officials, results are based strictly on merit and adherence to the Supreme Court's guidelines for fair and transparent recruitment.

Following the publication of written exam results, candidates shortlisted on the basis of merit will now be called for the interview round. "The answer sheets for all 36 subjects will be uploaded on the official website for transparency," said the official. The document verification of successful candidates will take place at the SSC's headquarters, while interviews will be held at various regional SSC offices across the state.

Once the interview process is completed, recommendation letters will be sent to the West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE) for final appointment procedures.

The SSC's announcement comes at a crucial time for the state's education sector, which has been struggling with teacher shortages since the Supreme Court order in May that annulled the jobs of 25,752 teachers and non-teaching staff recruited through the controversial 2016 panel. The apex court directed the state to conduct a fresh examination, allowing only eligible and qualified candidates to participate.

Following the court's directive, the SSC conducted two major examinations this year — on September 7 for Classes IX-X and September 14 for Classes XI-XII — both of which were held smoothly under strict supervision. The commission stated that once the higher secondary teacher recruitment process concludes, results for the secondary-level (Classes IX-X) recruitment will also be released.Meanwhile, candidates have welcomed the commission's prompt decision to launch an alternative website but have urged the authorities to ensure better technical preparedness in the future. "Every time results are declared, the server crashes. It adds unnecessary stress. The SSC should anticipate the high traffic and strengthen their systems in advance," said a candidate from North 24 Parganas.

Technical experts have also suggested that the commission consider using cloud-based hosting services to manage high user loads during peak result publication hours. The newly launched wbsschelpdesk.com was functioning smoothly, allowing thousands of candidates to access their results. However, the main SSC website was still under maintenance. Officials assured that it would be restored soon and that no data had been compromised during the crash.

Typhoon Kalmegi Devastates Vietnam After Ravaging Philippines, Leaves Nearly 200 Dead

Staff reporter, Vietnam, 8 November : A deadly trail of destruction continues across Southeast Asia as Typhoon Kalmegi—one of the most powerful tropical storms of the year—battered Vietnam on Thursday after wreaking havoc in the Philippines earlier in the week. Packing winds of up to 149 km per hour, the typhoon slammed into central Vietnam, killing at least five people and injuring several others. The storm, which originated in the western Pacific, has so far claimed nearly 200 lives across both nations, according to early estimates.

In Vietnam, the hardest-hit areas include the provinces of Dak Lak and Gia Lai, where torrential rain and fierce winds caused widespread damage to homes, government buildings, and infrastructure. The country's disaster management authorities have issued urgent warnings for flooding and landslides across seven provinces and cities, including Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, and Khanh Hoa. Thousands of homes have been submerged or destroyed, while roads and bridges have been cut off due to flash floods and debris.

The Vietnamese government has declared a state of emergency nationwide as rescue and relief operations intensify. Over 8,000 residents were evacuated ahead of the storm's landfall in an attempt to minimize casualties. However, the aftermath has left several towns isolated, with power and communication networks severely disrupted. Schools and offices across central Vietnam remain closed as the military and emergency workers continue large-scale rescue efforts.

"Typhoon Kalmegi has caused catastrophic damage in multiple provinces," said a



spokesperson for Vietnam's National Committee for Disaster Response. "We are focusing on restoring essential services and locating missing persons as quickly as possible."

Meteorologists warn that heavy rains are expected to persist through the weekend, raising fears of further flooding and landslides. In Dak Lak, local authorities reported river levels rising to their highest point in a decade, while in Gia Lai, entire villages have been cut off due to submerged roads.

Before striking Vietnam, Typhoon Kalmegi unleashed its fury on the Philippines earlier in the week, killing at least 188 people and leaving hundreds injured or missing. The storm struck the central region of the archipelago, including Cebu City—the country's second-largest urban center—where continuous downpours triggered flash floods and widespread devastation.

According to the Philippine Weather Bureau, the storm dumped more than 180 millimeters of rain over Cebu and nearby provinces in just a few hours, causing massive flooding and displacing thousands. Videos circulating on social media showed roofs being torn off buildings, vehicles being swept away, and entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble.

In one of the most tragic incidents, a military rescue helicopter crashed in southern Cebu during a relief operation, killing all six soldiers on board. Authorities said the helicopter went down due to extreme weather conditions and poor visibility.The Philippine government has mobilized the army, police, and coast guard to lead rescue efforts, while shelters have been set up in schools and community centers for displaced families. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has pledged emergency funds and promised long-term rehabilitation for affected regions.

In both countries, the storm's impact has highlighted the growing vulnerability of coastal regions to increasingly intense tropical cyclones, which experts attribute to the effects of climate change. "Typhoon Kalmegi is another reminder that climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent and more devastating," said a spokesperson from the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). "Improving early warning systems and investing in climate-resilient infrastructure are critical for reducing loss of life." As Kalmegi weakens and moves further inland, both Vietnam and the Philippines are bracing for the long and arduous task of rebuilding.

Turkey Issues Arrest Warrant Against Netanyahu Over Gaza Genocide Allegations

Staff reporter, Ankara, 8 November : The Turkish government on Saturday issued an international arrest warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accusing him of involvement in genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza. The move, announced by Turkey's Ministry of Justice, also includes 36 other senior Israeli officials, marking one of the most serious legal actions taken by a national government against Israel since the Gaza conflict began in 2023.

The warrant, issued by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, names several top-ranking members of the Israeli administration and military, including Defence Minister Israel Katz, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, and Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Ayal Zamir. Turkish authorities allege that the named individuals played direct roles in orchestrating and executing military operations that resulted in the large-scale killing of civilians, the destruction of hospitals, and the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid.

According to the statement released by Istanbul's Justice Department, "On October 17, 2023, an attack on the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital killed nearly 500 people. On February 29, 2024, Israeli forces deliberately destroyed medical facilities and supplies, and by imposing a blockade on Gaza, they deprived victims of essential humanitarian assistance."

The document further accuses Israel of engaging in "systematic ethnic cleansing" and "ongoing crimes against humanity" since the escalation of the conflict following the October 2023 Hamas-led attacks. "The Israeli state, under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu, has continued to perpetrate genocide in Gaza by targeting civilians, hospi-



tals, and humanitarian infrastructures," the Turkish prosecutor's statement added.

Turkey also cited the bombing of the Palestine-Turkey Friendship Hospital—a facility built and funded by Ankara—as a major factor in its decision to pursue legal action. The hospital, considered Gaza's most important cancer treatment center, was severely damaged in an Israeli airstrike in March 2024, an attack that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the time described as "a war crime against humanity and medicine."

While it remains unclear how Turkey plans to enforce the warrant—given that Israel is unlikely to cooperate—the announcement marks a significant diplomatic rupture. Observers warn that the move could further strain already fragile relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv, as well as complicate Israel's ties with other Muslim-majority nations sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

The Erdoğan government has positioned itself as one of the most vocal critics of Israel's military actions in Gaza. Since the beginning of the conflict, Ankara has expelled several Israeli diplomats, suspended trade relations, and lobbied international bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the United Nations to open formal investigations into alleged Israeli war crimes.

Speaking in a televised address earlier this week, President Erdoğan accused Israel of "behaving like a terrorist state under the guise of self-defense," and vowed that his country "will not remain silent in the face of genocide." He further stated, "Those responsible for the murder of innocent civilians, for the starvation of a people, and for the destruction of hospitals will face justice—no matter how powerful they are."

Internationally, the Turkish move is likely to deepen polarization over the Gaza conflict. While Western allies of Israel, including the United States and several European Union countries, are expected to reject the warrant as politically motivated, Arab and Muslim-majority nations may see Ankara's decision as a bold and symbolic stand against impunity.

Legal experts note, however, that Turkey's unilateral arrest warrants carry limited enforceability outside its own jurisdiction. Unless supported by an Interpol Red Notice or endorsed by an international tribunal such as the ICC, the warrants may remain largely symbolic. Yet, they could have diplomatic repercussions for the named individuals, potentially limiting their ability to travel to countries friendly with Turkey or those recognizing universal jurisdiction for war crimes.



Today's Horoscope



ARIES : You are an imaginative and enterprising person, and today you may taste success. Ganesha says that you are ambitious but warns you not to take on more work than you can handle.



TAURUS : Today, you are likely to be more reckless than ever in splurging your hard earned money. Ganesha strongly advises you to leave your credit card at home today.



GEMINI : Today will be a day filled with energy and enthusiasm. You will have an optimistic view of life and this will help you attain success. You will be able to exercise your free will and take up tasks.



CANCER: A restless or irritating mood is indicated. Keep you cool and be calm even in adverse circumstances, suggests Ganesha. If you do so, you will always succeed in life.



LEO : You will be filled with extraordinary self-confidence today. You will be able to take firm decisions when it comes to work related issues. You will not face any difficulties in completing.



VIRGO : It is quite possible that you will love financial challenges that are thrown at you, as they whet your appetite for success. You will come up with innovative ideas and improved methods.



LIBRA : Ganesha says you will showcase your ability and skills today in your work field and impress people. You will develop and express your inner love for art and artistic things and you.



SCORPIO : According to Ganesha, you will be soaked in your work today. During the day, you may be loaded with duties and responsibilities, however, evening has a different story to reveal.



SAGITTARIUS : Take it as a piece of advice: tough times don't last; tough people do. The day has a lot of ups and downs in store for you. However, you are the sailor of stormy seas and would sail through all.



CAPRICORN : Take it as a piece of advice: tough times don't last; tough people do. The day has a lot of ups and downs in store for you. However, you are the sailor of stormy seas.

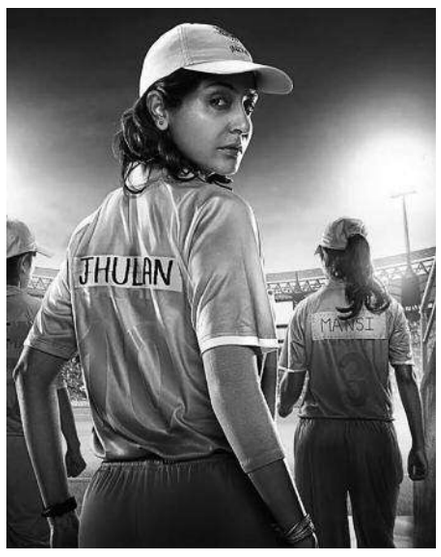


AQUARIUS : You may receive some good news from the foreign shores today. The day will bring on a positive note and it will remain like that for the whole twenty-four hours.



PIECES : Those who work hard to move towards their goals will do well today. It is a good day for business. You will be able to do a lot of new things in your job-business today.

Anushka Sharma Set for Big-Screen Comeback After 7 Years with Jhulan Goswami Biopic 'Chakda 'Xpress'



Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 8 November: Anushka Sharma is finally making her much-awaited return to the silver screen with Chakda 'Xpress, a biographical sports drama based on the life of Indian cricket legend Jhulan Goswami. The film, produced by Clean Slate Filmz, marks Anushka's first major role in nearly seven years, rekindling excitement among fans and cinephiles who have been eagerly awaiting her comeback.

The last time audiences saw Anushka Sharma in a leading role was in 2018's Zero, opposite Shah Rukh Khan and Katrina Kaif. Since then, she has taken a step back from acting, focusing instead on her production ventures and personal life, including motherhood. Her decision to return with a powerful, real-life story like Chakda 'Xpress reflects her continued commitment to meaningful cinema and her enduring passion for performance.

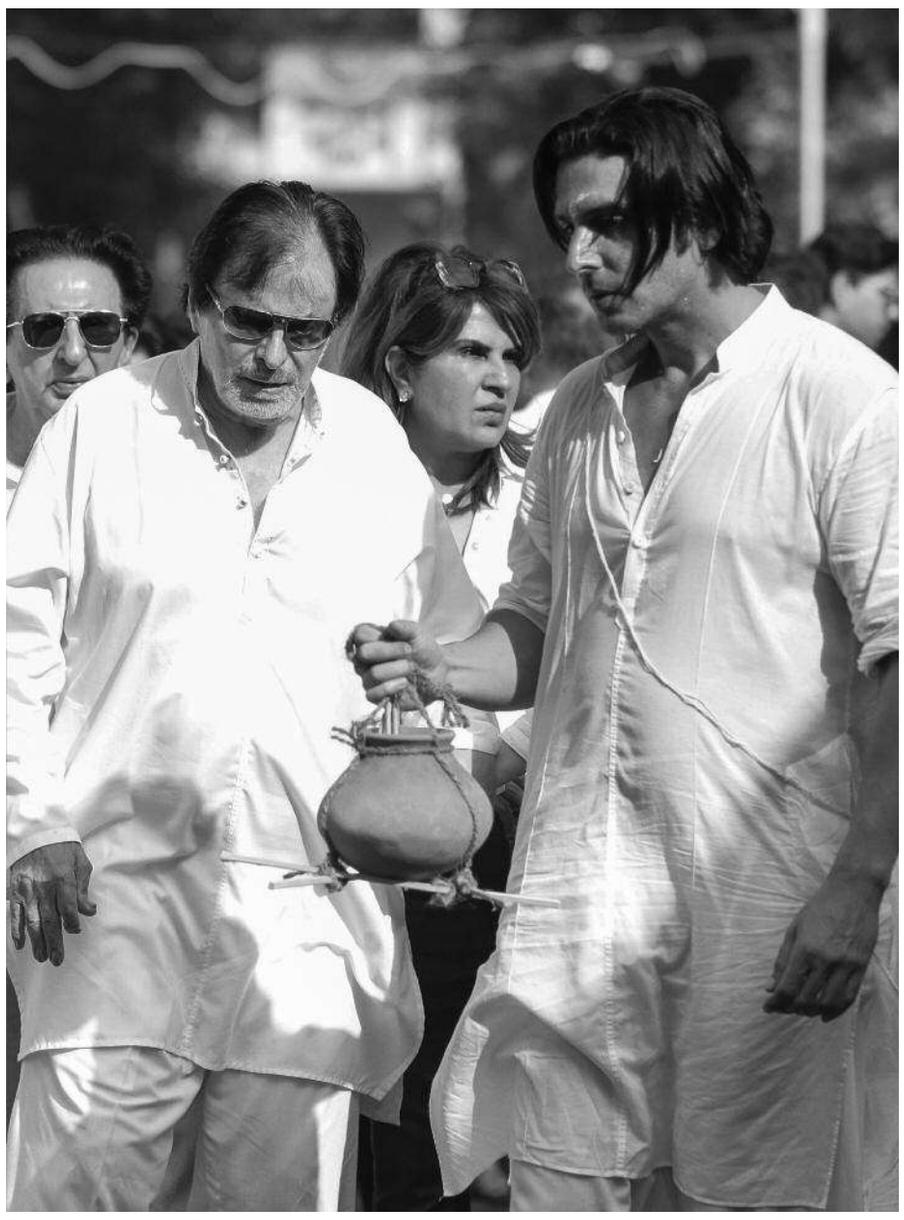
The upcoming film chronicles the inspiring journey of Jhulan Goswami, one of the fastest bowlers in women's cricket history, who rose from humble beginnings in Bengal to become the captain of the Indian women's national cricket team. Over her illustrious two-decade career, Goswami became a symbol of perseverance and excellence, breaking barriers in a sport long dominated by men.

According to insiders, Chakda 'Xpress will trace Goswami's early struggles in Chakdaha, a small town in West Bengal, where she faced societal and infrastructural challenges before making her mark on the international stage. The film also aims to spotlight the evolution of women's cricket in India and the relentless spirit of the players who fought for recognition. Anushka, who reportedly underwent intensive physical training and bowling practice to authentically portray Goswami, said in an earlier statement that the film is "a story of sacrifice, determination, and undying passion." She added, "It's not just a sports film — it's a story about the human spirit. Jhulan's journey inspired me deeply, and I hope it inspires young girls everywhere to dream fearlessly."

The actress's transformation for the role — from her athletic build to her bowling action — has already drawn praise from industry watchers who have seen glimpses of the teaser and promotional stills. "Anushka has put in serious effort to embody Jhulan's personality. She trained with real cricketers to get her body language right," said a production insider.

The film is directed by Prosit Roy, known for his work in Pari and Paatal Lok, and will premiere directly on Netflix. Sources reveal that the streaming giant is planning a massive global release for the film, betting on Anushka's international fan following and the growing appeal of sports biopics.

Chakda 'Xpress also comes at a time when women's cricket in India is gaining unprecedented visibility and respect. With the Women's Premier League (WPL) and India's growing success on the global stage, the timing of the film feels particularly apt. "Jhulan Goswami's story couldn't have found a better time to be told," said sports journalist Boria Majumdar. "She represents an era of change for Indian women's cricket — from anonymity to heroism. And having Anushka Sharma play her is a perfect casting choice."



Bollywood actor Zayed Khan with his father and veteran actor Sanjay Khan during the funeral of his mother Zarine Khan, in Mumbai.

Malaika Arora Faces Backlash for Twerking in Yo Yo Honey Singh's 'Chill Gum' Music Video

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 8 November: Bollywood star and fitness icon Malaika Arora has once again found herself at the center of online controversy after her latest appearance in rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh's new music video, Chill Gum. The glamorous video, which dropped earlier this week, has quickly gone viral — but not for all the right reasons. While fans praised Malaika's stunning looks and ageless energy, a section of netizens harshly criticized her twerking sequence, calling it "inappropriate" and "forced."

The Chill Gum music video marks another high-profile collaboration between Honey Singh and Malaika Arora, who is often hailed as one of Bollywood's most stylish and bold performers. The video features the duo dancing to upbeat party music in a neon-lit nightclub setting. Malaika, dressed in a shimmery silver outfit, showcases her signature sultry moves alongside Honey Singh. However, it was one particular segment — where she is seen twerking to the beat — that ignited a firestorm of comments on social media.Within hours of the video's release, hashtags like #MalaikaArora, #ChillGum, and #HoneySingh began trending on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. While some fans lauded her confidence and dancing skills, others mocked the choreography, calling it "unnecessary" and "out of sync with the song's vibe."

A section of users on social media criticized the move as "attention-seeking," questioning why a seasoned artist like Malaika would resort to what they deemed as "cringeworthy dance steps." One user commented, "Malaika is a great dancer, but this looked forced. She doesn't need to do this to prove her relevance." Another wrote, "She's 50 and still killing it, but some moves should be left to the younger generation."

On the other hand, many fans rushed to her defense, calling the trolling "ageist" and "unfair." Supporters pointed out that Malaika has every right to express herself through dance, regardless of her age or social perceptions. "If a male performer dances however he wants, nobody says a word. But when Malaika does



it, suddenly everyone has an opinion. That's hypocrisy," a fan wrote.

Malaika Arora, who has built a reputation for being unapologetically bold and confident, has not directly responded to the criticism. However, sources close to the actress revealed that she is unfazed by the trolling and prefers to focus on her work rather than online negativity. "Malaika has always believed in self-expression and body positivity. She doesn't let social media dictate what she should or shouldn't do," said a person close to the production team.The controversy also reignites a larger conversation about double standards in the entertainment industry, especially concerning female performers. While male actors and singers often face little scrutiny for provocative or edgy performances, women in similar roles continue to be subjected to moral policing and personal attacks.

Film and culture critic Meera Menon weighed in on the issue, saying, "Malaika Arora has been a trendsetter since the days of Chaiyya Chaiyya and Munni Badnaam Hui. Her dancing style has always been bold and dynamic. The outrage over this video is less about the choreography and more about people's discomfort with women who age on their own terms and still own their sensuality."

Meanwhile, Yo Yo Honey Singh, who is known for his flamboyant and party-themed music videos, has stood by the creative choices in Chill Gum. In a promotional interview, he said, "Malaika is a rockstar. She brought glamour, energy, and elegance to the video. The track is about confidence and fun — and she represents both perfectly."

Despite the backlash, Chill Gum continues to dominate streaming platforms, racking up millions of views within days of release. The song's catchy beat and vibrant visuals have ensured its place on party playlists, even as debates about the video's choreography rage online.This is not the first time Malaika Arora has faced online trolling. The actress and television personality has often been targeted for her fashion choices, relationships, and career decisions. Yet, she has consistently maintained her grace under fire, choosing to respond through her work rather than words.

As the Chill Gum controversy simmers, it raises questions about society's perceptions of women, age, and sensuality in entertainment. Whether one views Malaika's dance as bold artistry or unnecessary flamboyance, one thing remains clear — the actress continues to command attention and spark conversations nearly three decades into her career.

Are They Teaming Up Again?" Samantha Ruth Prabhu's Adorable Moment with Raj Nidimoru Sparks Buzz About New Project

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 8 November: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu was spotted sharing a warm and candid moment with filmmaker Raj Nidimoru of the acclaimed director duo Raj & DK. A recent viral photo and video clip of the two have sent fans into a frenzy, sparking rumors that the actress and the creators of The Family Man may be reuniting for a new project. Samantha, who is known for her strong performances across South Indian cinema and digital platforms, was seen smiling and chatting with Raj at a private gathering reportedly held in Hyderabad earlier this week. The brief interaction, captured on camera by attendees, quickly spread across social media platforms, with fans interpreting the chemistry and camaraderie as a hint of a possible collaboration in the making.

The viral moment comes more than two years after Samantha's unforgettable digital debut in The Family Man 2, the Amazon Prime Video series created by Raj & DK. Her portrayal of Raji, a fearless Sri Lankan Tamil rebel fighter, earned her widespread critical acclaim and introduced her to a pan-India audience. The performance not only solidified her position as a versatile artist but also showcased her ability to take on bold, unconventional roles in Hindi-language projects.

Following the viral clip, hashtags such as #SamanthaRuthPrabhu and #RajandDK began trending on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. Excited fans flooded the comments section, speculating whether this meeting could signal a reunion for another Raj & DK series or film. "If this means The Family Man 3 or something new with Raj & DK, we are ready!" wrote one enthusiastic fan. Another user commented, "Their creative synergy was electric last time. Can't wait to see what they're planning next."

While neither Samantha nor Raj Nidimoru has officially commented on the speculation, industry insiders suggest that discussions may indeed be underway for a fresh collaboration. A source close to the filmmakers reportedly hinted that Raj & DK are developing multiple projects under their production banner D2R Films, and Samantha's name has come up in connection with at least one of them.



Samantha, who took a break from work last year to focus on her health, recently returned to the spotlight with renewed energy and optimism. Her fans have been eagerly awaiting her next major screen appearance. She was last seen in Kushi opposite Vijay Deverakonda and has been preparing for her international debut in the upcoming project Chennai Stories, co-produced by England's Rainbow Films and co-starring Varun Dhawan.

The actress has also been active on social media, sharing glimpses of her fitness routines, travels, and personal reflections. Her positive posts about "new beginnings" and "exciting journeys ahead" have further fueled curiosity about whether she is gearing up for a high-profile collaboration.

Raj Nidimoru, along with his creative partner Krishna D.K., has been one of the most innovative forces in Indian entertainment in recent years. Their unique storytelling style — blending humor, realism, and suspense — has made hits like The Family Man, Farzi, and Guns & Gulaabs resonate with audiences across demographics. If Samantha joins hands with the duo again, fans can expect another powerful performance that balances emotion with intensity.

Film trade analysts believe that a Raj & DK–Samantha reunion could be a major boost for both streaming platforms and theatrical ventures. "Their combination is a proven success," said entertainment journalist Anupama Rao. "Samantha brings depth and emotional authenticity to every role, while Raj & DK's writing thrives on strong, layered characters. A project featuring them again would be one of the most anticipated releases of the year."

Rift in Cultural Circles: Swarup Biswas and His Federation Skip Mamata Banerjee's 31st Kolkata International Film Festival

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 8 November: Swarup Biswas, a prominent figure in Bengal's cultural fraternity and the president of the West Bengal Motion Picture Technicians' and Workers' Union, along with members of his federation, has decided to boycott the 31st Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF). The festival, inaugurated by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, is one of the state's most prestigious cultural events — making the absence of Biswas and his team both symbolic and politically charged.

The decision comes amid growing friction between the technicians' federation and the state government over a series of unaddressed grievances concerning the welfare of film and television industry workers. Sources close to the federation have indicated that the boycott is a mark of protest against what they perceive as neglect and lack of dialogue from the authorities. According to insiders, the union — representing thousands of workers and technical staff across Bengal's film and television sector — has been raising issues related to unpaid dues, irregular contracts, and inadequate safety measures on sets. Repeated appeals for government intervention, the federation claims, have gone unanswered.

Speaking to reporters, a senior member of the technicians' union said, "We respect the Chief Minister and the importance of KIFF, but our concerns have been ignored for too long. The glamour of the film festival cannot hide the reality that hundreds of technicians are struggling to make ends meet. We need action, not ceremony."

The Kolkata International Film Festival, inaugurated this year at Netaji Indoor Stadium, saw the presence of top Bollywood stars, including Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, and several Bengali film personalities. While the event was celebrated as a showcase of Bengal's cultural pride, the absence of the technicians' federation — traditionally a major participant in organizing and supporting festival logistics — did not go unnoticed.

Political analysts see the boycott as a rare public display of discontent within Bengal's cultural ecosystem, which has long shared close ties with the state government. Swarup Biswas, who is also known for his proximity to several ruling party leaders, has so far refrained from making any overtly political statements, but his silence on the matter is being widely interpreted as a sign of deep frustration.According to reports, tensions began escalating earlier this year when the federation submitted a memorandum to the state's Information and Cultural Affairs Department outlining a list of demands. Among them were calls for better pension schemes for retired workers, fixed daily wages, and an official grievance redressal mechanism. Despite multiple meetings, the union claims there has been little tangible progress.

"Every year, the government spends crores on film festivals and award ceremonies," said another federation member. "But the people who actually make films possible — the camera operators, makeup artists, electricians, and spot boys — are barely surviving. This boycott is not against KIFF; it's a plea for recognition."

Meanwhile, sources within Nabanna (the state secretariat) have downplayed the controversy, suggesting that the Chief Minister remains open to dialogue. "Mamata Banerjee has always stood by artists and workers," said an official. "If there are issues, the government will certainly look into them. The film festival should not be politicized."

However, the federation's absence has sparked discussions across Bengal's film community about the growing disconnect between government-sponsored cultural celebrations and the ground realities of the industry. While the KIFF has gained international acclaim for its grandeur and global outreach, local stakeholders argue that more attention must be given to the financial and structural health of the Bengali film sector.

Film critic and cultural commentator Shantanu Ghosh noted, "The technicians' boycott sends a strong message — that the sheen of cultural prestige cannot overshadow the day-to-day struggles of the industry's backbone. Without addressing these concerns, the government risks alienating a vital section of Bengal's creative workforce."

The controversy also raises uncomfortable questions about representation and inclusivity in state-sponsored events. Many in the fraternity feel that technicians and behind-the-scenes workers have gradually been sidelined from key cultural platforms in favor of celebrity-centric programming. Despite the boycott, the 31st KIFF continues to run as scheduled, featuring a line-up of over 200 films from 70 countries, with retrospectives on legendary filmmakers like Satyajit Ray and Federico Fellini.

"They Said My Voice Was Too Deep": Deepika Padukone Opens Up on Being Mocked in Early Bollywood Days

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 8 November: Bollywood superstar Deepika Padukone has opened up about the ridicule and criticism she faced for her voice when she first entered the Hindi film industry. Known today as one of India's most influential and bankable actors, Deepika said that her deep and distinctive voice — now considered one of her trademarks — was once mocked by many in the industry. Speaking in a recent interview, the 'Pathaan' actress reflected on her early years in Bollywood, recalling how some filmmakers and critics questioned whether her voice suited the image of a leading lady. "When I started out, I was told my voice was not feminine enough," Deepika said. "People would imitate me, make fun of how I spoke. It was disheartening, especially when you're new and trying to find your place."

Deepika made her sensational debut in 2007 opposite Shah Rukh Khan in Om Shanti Om, a film that catapulted her to overnight fame. Despite the massive success of her first film, she said the initial years were marked by self-doubt and a struggle to fit into the expectations of what a "Bollywood heroine" should sound and look like.

"I was told to make my voice softer, to sound more delicate," she added. "But that was never me. Over time, I realized that my uniqueness was my strength."Today, Deepika Padukone is celebrated not just for her acting prowess but also for her commanding screen presence and the depth she brings to her characters. From Chennai Express and Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani to Padmaavat and Gehraiyaan, her performances have consistently showcased emotional range and maturity — qualities that her deep voice often enhances rather than diminishes.

Industry experts now agree that Deepika's voice adds to her distinct identity in an industry



known for conventional standards of beauty and femininity. Veteran film critic Rajeev Masand noted, "Deepika's voice carries strength and dignity. It has become one of her biggest assets — it gives her characters gravity and emotional realism." The actor's comments also highlight a broader issue that persists in Bollywood — the rigid and sometimes outdated notions of what defines a "perfect heroine." For decades, actresses were expected to have soft, high-pitched voices, fair complexions, and traditionally delicate features. Deepika's experience underscores how even successful newcomers face pressure to conform to these stereotypes.

In recent years, however, the tide appears to be shifting. With more inclusive storytelling and a focus on authenticity, audiences are embracing individuality and natural expression. Deepika, along with contemporaries like Vidya Balan and Taapsee Pannu, has played a crucial role in redefining what it means to be a leading lady in modern Hindi cinema.Beyond her acting career, Deepika Padukone has also been a vocal advocate for mental health awareness and authenticity in public life. Her openness about battling depression and her emphasis on self-acceptance have made her an influential voice beyond the silver screen. Her latest remarks about being mocked for her voice seem to echo her broader philosophy — that embracing one's uniqueness is the key to confidence and success.

"Over the years, I've learned to love my voice," Deepika said with a smile. "It's who I am. I wouldn't change it for anything."

Fans flooded social media with messages of support, praising her honesty and resilience. Many called her a "true inspiration" for young women struggling with self-image and societal expectations. One user wrote on X (formerly Twitter), "Deepika Padukone proves that what makes you different can become your greatest strength." As Deepika continues to scale new heights — with upcoming international projects and her next Hindi release generating high anticipation — her story serves as a reminder of how perseverance and authenticity can turn early criticism into lasting admiration.

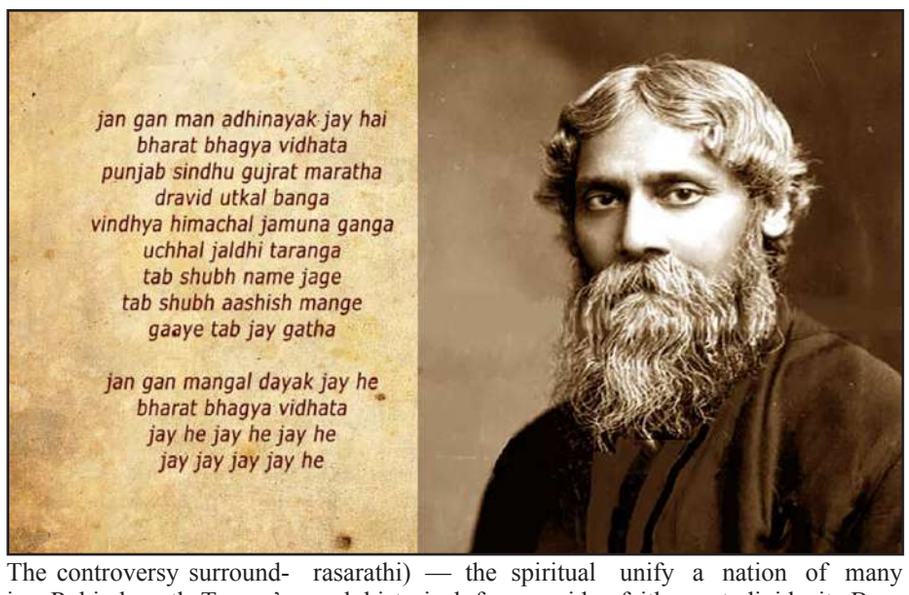
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EDITORIAL

"Papers, Please: Bengal's SIR and the Shadow of a Divided Citizenship"

The story begins, as all great tragedies do, in the most ordinary of ways — a phone call from a worried old friend. "Amare kagoj diba?" — Give me my papers, says a sixty-year-old man, anxious, trembling, unsure if his right to belong will soon be questioned. The words echo like a haunting refrain across Bengal today, as the state begins its Special Intensive Review (SIR) — an ostensibly bureaucratic exercise to "verify" voter lists but one that carries within it the same ghosts that once stalked Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC). The official purpose sounds simple: to identify "illegal immigrants," primarily from Bangladesh, who have allegedly infiltrated Bengal's electoral rolls. The political subtext, however, is far more sinister. In a state where migration, cultural mingling, and borderland histories are centuries old, who decides who belongs and who does not? What paper can prove ancestry, belonging, or love for the land one calls home? The anxiety now creeping through Bengal's lanes and bylanes is palpable. People like Rivu-da — elderly, poor, and digitally illiterate — are terrified. They have never navigated government portals or voter data websites. They do not know OTPs or digital forms. They only know the fear that if they fail to produce the right document at the right time, they may be declared foreigners. The panic is compounded by sensationalist news coverage, by rumors spread in tea stalls and WhatsApp groups, and by the memory of what happened next door in Assam. For those who have forgotten: in Assam, the NRC was launched as a citizenship verification drive. It ended up excluding nearly two million people — among them war veterans, daily laborers, widows, and even the descendants of India's former President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Families that had lived in India for generations suddenly found themselves branded "D-voters" (doubtful voters). Many were thrown into detention camps, their lives reduced to endless court appeals and humiliation. It was not a bureaucratic exercise; it was a humanitarian disaster. And now, Bengal stands at the edge of the same precipice. To be clear, illegal migration from Bangladesh is not a fiction. It has existed in waves since Partition, shaped by famine, political violence, and the porous geography of Bengal's shared border. National security concerns are legitimate. The rise of extremist networks like JMB and ISIS-linked groups in Bangladesh's chaos after Sheikh Hasina's fall is cause for vigilance. But vigilance must not morph into vengeance. The state's job is to protect its citizens, not to terrorize them into proving that they are citizens. What is happening instead is a slow erosion of trust — a civic rupture. In small towns and urban slums, ordinary people are turning into suspects. The line between "Indian Bengali" and "Bangladeshi Bengali" — once a fragile fiction — is being weaponized. The BJP, which has long sought to polarize Bengal along communal and linguistic lines, sees in SIR another opportunity. Wrapped in the rhetoric of nationalism, the project is less about illegal migrants and more about constructing a new hierarchy of belonging — where citizenship itself becomes conditional on conformity to an ideology. The irony is bitter. Bengal has always been a land of migrants, a mosaic of histories. The city of Kolkata — the supposed epicenter of this "infiltration panic" — was built by settlers from across India and beyond: Marwaris, Punjabis, Tamils, Chinese, Armenians, Jews, and yes, East Bengalis who fled famine and war. They built the city's railways, its jute mills, its literature, and its politics. Today, their descendants — the same people who built this state — are being asked to prove their right to exist within it. The old man's plea — "Amare kagoj diba?" — is therefore not just personal; it is emblematic. It captures the absurdity of a system that demands papers from those who were born, raised, and will likely die on this soil. It reveals how easily the machinery of bureaucracy can be turned into an instrument of exclusion. It also exposes how the politics of fear can manipulate memory — making neighbors doubt neighbors, citizens doubt themselves. The parallels with Assam are chilling. There, too, the process began with talk of "updating records" and "reviewing lists." It ended with broken families and burnt homes. The NRC became not a list of citizens but a ledger of pain. Bengal must not walk the same path. The tragedy is that the SIR process, instead of being used to strengthen democracy by cleaning up voter rolls, risks undermining democracy itself. When the act of proving citizenship becomes more important than exercising it, the very foundation of representative governance begins to crack.

"The Eternal Charioteer and the Politics of Ignorance: Why Rabindranath Tagore's Jana Gana Mana Still Stands Tall"



The controversy surrounding Rabindranath Tagore's Jana Gana Mana has resurfaced yet again — not because new historical evidence has emerged, but because political convenience demands the revival of old myths. More than a century after the song was written, it continues to be misrepresented and weaponized by those who refuse to understand, or deliberately distort, its meaning. The current wave of attempts to undermine or "revise" the national anthem reveals less about the song itself and more about the ideological discomfort that certain political forces feel toward Tagore — a poet-philosopher whose vision of India transcended religious, regional, and political boundaries. The story begins in 1911, a time when India was still under British rule. The Delhi Durbar was to be held in 1912 to celebrate the coronation of King George V. Around that time, a high-ranking official friend of Tagore — accounts differ whether it was Ashutosh Chaudhuri or Pradyot Narayan Tagore — approached him with a request: to compose a song in honor of the visiting Emperor. The very suggestion, Tagore later admitted, filled him with both disbelief and indignation. That emotional upheaval gave birth to Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaka Jay He — a song that would eventually become India's national anthem. Contrary to the persistent myth propagated by colonial-era newspapers and, later, political opportunists, the "Ruler of the Minds of All People" (Adhinayaka) in the song was never George V. It was not a monarch of flesh and blood, but the eternal "Charioteer" (Chirasarathi) — the spiritual and historical force guiding India through epochs of rise and decline, creation and destruction. Tagore's words — "Patana-abhudaya-bandhura pantha, yuga-yuga dhavita yatri / he chirasarathi, taba rathachakre mukharita patha dinarati" — refer to that timeless power, which he would later equate with the Brahman itself. To correct the deliberate misunderstanding spread by British newspapers such as The Englishman and The Statesman, which had described Jana Gana Mana as a song in praise of the King, Tagore later presented it as a Brahma Sangeet at the Brahmo Samaj's Maghotsav festival. In fact, the song had already been performed at the 1911 Congress session in Calcutta, led by Dinendranath Tagore. However, since another song by Dakshina Charan Sen was sung in direct praise of the Emperor during the same event, confusion was inevitable. That confusion would later be exploited — first by colonial sympathizers and, much later, by ideological opportunists within India itself. The debate over India's national anthem resurfaced in 1937 at the Indian National Congress session, where the question arose whether the anthem should be Vande Mataram or Jana Gana Mana. Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mahatma Gandhi each voiced their preference for Jana Gana Mana, not because they dismissed Vande Mataram, but because the latter's invocation of the goddess Durga was perceived as potentially exclusionary to India's non-Hindu citizens. The leaders sought an anthem that could unify a nation of many faiths, not divide it. Bose himself would later adopt Jana Gana Mana as the anthem of the Azad Hind Fauj in 1941, commissioning its Hindustani translation — "Shubh sukh chain barsha barse, Bharat bhag hai jaga" — to be broadcast on the Azad Hind Radio. When India became a republic in 1950, the Constituent Assembly formally recognized Jana Gana Mana as the National Anthem and Vande Mataram as the National Song — a compromise that respected both artistic and spiritual traditions. Yet, even today, some political voices remain dissatisfied. They question why "Sindh" is mentioned but not "Kashmir," why "Assam" is included but not "Chhattisgarh" or "Uttarakhand." Such objections betray an alarming lack of understanding about what a national anthem is — a poetic and symbolic invocation, not a census of geography. Those who seek to "revise" the anthem fail to grasp its timelessness. A masterpiece of musical and poetic composition, it is one of the most singable and rhythmically perfect national anthems in the world — a truth acknowledged even by foreign scholars. Its cadence, its universal spirit, and its invocation of India's moral and spiritual unity make it incomparable. Yet, the urge to tamper with it is not rooted in musical criticism; it is rooted in discomfort with Tagore himself. For the ideological architects of a narrowly defined "Hindu Rashtra," Tagore represents an insurmountable contradiction. His advocacy for Hindu-Muslim unity, his humanism beyond caste and creed, his rejection of religious dogma — all run counter to the exclusivist, majoritarian vision they promote. They cannot celebrate Tagore's genius without confronting his universalism. Hence, they resort to selective misinterpretation: they revere him in name, chant "Gurudev" in rhetoric, but remain uneasy with his thought. The recent attempts to impose Vande Mataram compulsorily, even in places like Kashmir where such enforcement carries deep political implications, illustrate a troubling trend — a fascist impulse to dictate patriotism rather than inspire it. National symbols must unite; coercion only alienates. The greatness of Jana Gana Mana lies precisely in its inclusivity: it does not worship a god of one religion, nor a ruler of one dynasty, but the collective spirit of India itself — its destiny, its diversity, its eternal endurance. Tagore himself anticipated these misunderstandings. In a letter written in the late 1930s to his Santiniketan disciple Pulin Bihari Sen, he clarified that his "eternal charioteer" was not the British monarch but India's "Lord of Ages" — the divinity that transcends empires and epochs. "I have worshipped the eternal spirit of India," he wrote, "and that is whom I have praised." His words, written nearly ninety years ago, remain the most decisive rebuttal to the distortions of today. The controversy, therefore, is not about a song but about a struggle for India's soul. Jana Gana Mana embodies the spirit of a nation that sees divinity not in domination but in destiny — not in a crown, but in conscience. To challenge it is to deny the very pluralism that India stands for. Those who attempt to rewrite or replace it reveal not patriotism, but a deep poverty of imagination. Tagore's anthem is not merely a song; it is an idea — an idea of India that embraces all its children, regardless of faith or region. And as long as India remains true to that idea, the voice of Jana Gana Mana will continue to resound — above noise, above politics, above prejudice — as the hymn of an eternal nation guided, as ever, by its "Chirasarathi."

"A Victory Beyond New York: Zohran Mamdani and the Global Reawakening Against the Far Right"

Religious majoritarianism, and corporate authoritarianism have crept into the mainstream of global politics, Zohran Mamdani's victory in the New York mayoral election is far more than a local political upset. It is, in essence, a moral and ideological statement — a declaration that compassion, inclusivity, and democratic socialism can still triumph over fear, hate, and billionaire-backed populism. Across continents, the political tide has been steadily moving toward extremism. From Europe to Asia, from the United States to Latin America, the rhetoric of division has replaced the language of dialogue. The new breed of right-wing leaders — often cloaked in the garb of nationalism or religious revival — thrive on fear. They divide citizens by faith, race, or language, seeking control not through persuasion but through polarization. Their methods are unmistakably authoritarian: vilify minorities, delegitimize dissent, and destroy the moral fabric of democracy. It is against this grim backdrop that Mamdani's victory assumes profound significance. A man of Indian descent and Muslim faith, a self-declared Democratic Socialist, he was up against not just the institutional power of the political right but also the deep prejudices embedded in America's political psyche. Yet, in the heart of the nation's largest and most complex metropolis, New Yorkers chose hope over hatred, empathy over elitism, and solidarity over cynicism. The symbolism of this victory is immense. For one, Mamdani represents a generation of leaders who reject the false binary of "liberal versus conservative," choosing instead a politics rooted in equality and everyday justice. Though he ran as a Democrat, his ideological home lies with the Democratic Socialists of America — a group often derided by both mainstream Democrats and Republicans as "radical." But to millions struggling with housing insecurity, unaffordable healthcare, and exploitative wages, Mamdani's policies spoke to reality, not ideology. His campaign was not built on grandstanding, but on granular, humane promises: stabilizing rent, expanding free childcare, making public transport accessible to all. These are not utopian ideas — they are the foundation of a dignified urban life. In a city as expensive and unequal as New York, these issues cut across class, race, and religion. That is why his support came not from one community but from many: workers, students, immigrants, progressives, and even a significant section of reform-minded Jewish voters who saw in Mamdani's message an echo of their own historical struggles for justice. It is worth recalling that New York has long been described as "the city of the Jews," home to some of the world's most influential and affluent Jewish citizens. Yet, many within this community, especially the younger and more progressive segments, stood firmly behind Mamdani — not because of identity politics, but because of ideals. They saw in him a reflection of a broader movement that seeks to restore morality to politics, to make governance about people rather than profit. The opposition to Mamdani's candidacy was as fierce as it was predictable. From Donald Trump's direct attacks and threats to cut federal funding to New York, to billionaires like Elon Musk and Bill Ackman publicly denouncing him, the campaign turned into a referendum on America's soul. The old order of privilege and profit was visibly threatened. Yet, the city refused to bow to fearmongering. In choosing Mamdani, New Yorkers effectively repudiated the toxic collusion of power, prejudice, and plutocracy. This victory, then, is not simply about one man or one city. It is about a shift in political consciousness that is slowly taking shape across the world. In the face of authoritarianism and the moral decay of neoliberal politics, people are searching for authenticity — for leaders who speak with conviction, not calculation. Mamdani's success is part of the same awakening that has fueled movements for climate justice, labor rights, and racial equality across continents. The far-right's greatest weapon has always been fear — fear of the "other," fear of scarcity, fear of change. But fear only thrives when hope is absent. Mamdani's campaign restored that hope by speaking the language of empathy. His Indian heritage and Muslim identity, once seen as liabilities in the harsh landscape of American politics, became symbols of resilience and plurality. His victory asserts that identity need not be a barrier; it can be a bridge. Of course, one must not romanticize this moment. The global far-right remains powerful, organized, and well-funded. The machinery of disinformation and hatred continues to churn. Yet, moments like Mamdani's win serve as reminders that democratic resistance is not dead — it merely needs courage and clarity to revive. His election provides precisely that: a model of what principled politics can look like in a time of cynicism. For India, too, the symbolism is striking. Here is a politician of Indian origin, shaped by values of equality and secularism, standing firm in the global North against the same ideologies that are eating away at the democratic heart of his ancestral homeland. At a time when the Indian diaspora is often co-opted into narratives of religious nationalism abroad, Mamdani's rise presents an alternate image — one of inclusivity, solidarity, and moral strength. The world today stands at a crossroads. On one side lies the path of exclusion, fear, and authoritarian control; on the other, a fragile but vital path toward equality, justice, and shared humanity. It is a reminder that even in the citadel of capitalism, the human spirit's yearning for fairness and dignity still burns bright. History teaches us that every great movement begins with small but significant victories. Mamdani's is one such moment — a flicker of light in the global gloom of intolerance. The challenge now is to nurture that light, to turn it into a flame that rekindles faith in democracy itself. For if the far right feeds on despair, then the surest way to defeat it is through hope — a hope grounded not in rhetoric, but in action. New York, the city that never sleeps, has once again awakened — this time, to a new kind of politics. And in that awakening lies a message for the entire world: the era of fear is not inevitable. Humanity still has a choice.

"When Machines Begin to Dream in Color: The Rise of Synthetic Synesthesia"

Can a sound have color? Can a melody shimmer in shades of gold, blue, and silver? For centuries, the answer lay hidden in the rare phenomenon of synesthesia—a neurological wonder where the senses overlap, and sound becomes sight, color becomes taste, and touch becomes emotion. A few gifted individuals—poets, painters, musicians—claimed to "see" music or "taste" words. Their minds were living rainbows of perception, where every sound birthed a hue. Now, in the 21st century, that miracle is no longer confined to human imagination. It has entered the circuitry of machines. Artificial intelligence is beginning to hear—and to paint what it hears. This new frontier, aptly called synthetic synesthesia, is not a biological marvel but a computational creation, where an algorithm listens to music and translates it into a pulsating world of color and light. It is as if machines have begun to dream in color. At first glance, the idea seems magical: a piano note unfolding as a beam of turquoise, or a cello's resonance blooming into deep violet. But beneath this poetry lies mathematics. Artificial intelligence does not feel in the human sense; it computes. It learns to associate frequencies with colors, rhythms with motion, and emotional tone with luminance. By training on thousands of examples, it discovers a statistical relationship between sound and sight—a kind of emotional geometry. Projects like Google's Magenta and MIT's Media Lab have been leading this digital renaissance. Beethoven's symphonies, once heard in concert halls, are now being seen—transformed by AI into flowing abstract visuals, each note generating a ripple of color, each crescendo bursting into light. Turkish artist Refik Anadol uses similar technology to convert urban sounds into vast moving tapestries of light, turning data into living art. In his installations, the hum of the city breathes through a screen of shimmering pixels—an urban heartbeat rendered visible. And yet, behind this beauty lies a deeper question: can a machine truly feel the rhythm it renders? Synesthesia in humans is an accident of the brain—a cross-wiring of senses that defies logic but deepens perception. Synthetic synesthesia, by contrast, is deliberate. It is coded, not born. AI systems do not see colors when they hear a note; they calculate them. But perhaps that is where the fascination lies. These systems reveal that emotions themselves can have mathematical patterns. Sadness, for instance, often manifests in lower frequencies, slower tempos, and cooler tones. Joy, by contrast, pulses in higher frequencies and warmer hues. When an AI learns these patterns and recreates them visually, it is not mimicking feeling—it is modeling it. It becomes a mirror to our own sensory architecture, showing us how emotion can be reduced, recombined, and reimagined. In doing so, it blurs the boundaries between art and science, between creator and creation. For centuries, artists have sought to merge senses—to "paint music" or "compose colors." Kandinsky saw his paintings as symphonies. Debussy's melodies were often described as visual landscapes. Now AI fulfills that dream with precision impossible for human hands. It listens and paints at once, composing what one might call the geometry of emotion. Humans have always connected feelings with color: blue for melancholy, red for passion, yellow for joy. AI extends this intuitive symbolism into a new form of translation. A musical note has pitch and frequency; a color has hue and saturation. When mapped together, they create a shared language between light and sound. This technology is already finding profound uses beyond art. In classrooms, students might soon see the anatomy of music—how scales spiral into colors, how rhythm pulses in visual waves. In therapy, "color music" could help ease anxiety or lift depression, offering a new sensory path to calm. For the hearing-impaired, synthetic synesthesia opens an entirely new way to experience sound—through vibrant, responsive visuals that transform silence into sight.

U.S. Warns of Up to 20 Flight Cuts as Government Shutdown Threat Looms Over Aviation Sector

The United States aviation industry is bracing for turbulence as the federal government warns that up to 20 flight operations across major routes could be slashed if the ongoing partial government shutdown continues. The Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have both issued stark warnings about the potential disruption, which could impact airlines, passengers, and the broader economy at a time when air travel demand remains near record highs.According to officials familiar with the matter, a prolonged shutdown could force the FAA to scale back its oversight and staffing levels, particularly among air traffic controllers, safety inspectors, and operational personnel responsible for managing flight schedules and approvals. These cutbacks, they caution, may compel airlines to trim up to 20 flights per day on key domestic and international routes in order to maintain safety and operational efficiency. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, speaking in Washington on Friday, said the government is "doing everything possible" to keep the aviation system running smoothly, but acknowledged that the shutdown's impact on personnel and regulatory functions is "already being felt." He emphasized that if funding isn't restored soon, "we could be forced to take steps that would affect flight operations, passenger convenience, and airline revenues." The FAA's administrative and safety divisions rely heavily on federal funding to manage training, certification, and maintenance of critical infrastructure. During the current shutdown, thousands of FAA employees, including safety inspectors and administrative staff, have



been either furloughed or required to work without pay. While essential personnel such as air traffic controllers continue to work, officials warn that fatigue, understaffing, and resource constraints could soon affect performance. Industry analysts note that any mandated reduction in flight operations would send shockwaves through the already stretched U.S. aviation network. "Even a cut of 20 flights a day can have a ripple effect," said Michael Boyd, president of aviation consultancy Boyd Group International. "It's not just the flights themselves—it's the connectivity they provide, the airport operations they influence, and the economic activity they sustain."
Airlines have so far remained publicly cautious but privately concerned. Major carriers like Delta, United, and American Airlines have reportedly reached out to the Department of Transportation for clarity on potential scheduling adjustments. A senior executive at one major airline, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "We can't plan flight schedules week to week under these conditions. A prolonged shutdown would force us to ground planes, disrupt passenger itineraries, and potentially cut back staff hours." The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) have also issued strong statements urging Congress to restore funding immediately. "Every day this shutdown continues, aviation safety is being jeopardized," NATCA President Rich Santa said. "Controllers are overworked and underpaid during this crisis, and the system cannot sustain this indefinitely."
Beyond the immediate operational concerns, the economic consequences could be severe. The U.S. Travel Association estimates that aviation delays and cancellations related to a government shutdown could cost the economy over $140 million per day, factoring in lost productivity, missed business connections, and reduced tourism. The timing of the shutdown is particularly concerning for the travel sector, which is entering the busy holiday season. With passenger volumes expected to rise sharply in November and December, even minor disruptions could cascade into widespread delays and cancellations nationwide. Economists warn that the situation underscores the fragile balance between government stability and private-sector performance. "This is a clear example of how political dysfunction can translate directly into economic inefficiency," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG. "Air travel is not just a consumer issue—it's a supply chain and productivity issue that touches every corner of the economy."
Meanwhile, Congress remains deadlocked over the federal budget, with partisan divisions showing little sign of narrowing. House and Senate leaders continue to negotiate a funding compromise, but insiders say progress has been slow. Without a resolution, federal agencies will continue operating in a limited capacity, putting critical sectors like aviation, transportation, and border control under mounting strain. In the event that the shutdown extends into the coming weeks, experts predict the FAA may need to prioritize essential routes—those critical for medical, cargo, and national security reasons—while scaling back commercial services. Such a move would likely trigger fare increases as airlines grapple with reduced capacity and shifting demand. For now, travelers are being advised to monitor airline communications and allow for flexibility in their schedules. The White House has yet to issue a formal directive on flight reductions but acknowledged that "all options are on the table" should the shutdown continue.

Bajaj Auto's Q2 Profit Surges 53% to 2,122 Crore on Strong Exports and Premium Bike Sales

Bajaj Auto Ltd., one of India's leading two- and three-wheeler manufacturers, reported a sharp 53% year-on-year rise in consolidated net profit to □2,122 crore for the quarter ended September 2025 (Q2 FY26). The stellar performance was driven by robust demand for premium motorcycles, sustained export recovery, and improved operating margins amid a favourable product mix and efficient cost management.According to a regulatory filing with the stock exchanges, Bajaj Auto's revenue from operations jumped 25% year-on-year to □12,040 crore, compared to □9,638 crore in the same period last year. The company's strong double-digit revenue growth reflects its steady domestic sales momentum and the gradual revival of international markets, particularly in Latin America and Africa, where foreign exchange challenges had earlier weighed on performance.The Pune-based automaker said that its earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) rose 40% to □2,750 crore, while the EBITDA margin expanded to 22.8%, up from 20.5% a year ago. The improvement in margins was attributed to a higher share of premium models such as Pulsar N250, Dominar 400, and Triumph Speed 400, along with a favourable product and market mix."Our performance this quarter reflects the strength of our brand portfolio and the resilience of our global operations. We have seen strong growth in premium motorcycles and a steady recovery in exports," said Rajiv Bajaj, Managing Director of Bajaj Auto. "We continue to focus on technology-driven innovation and global market expansion."Domestic motorcycle sales remained strong, growing 18% year-on-year to around 6.5 lakh units, driven by sustained demand across both entry-level and premium categories. The Pulsar and Platina series remained key contributors to overall volumes, while the new Triumph partnership significantly boosted Bajaj's presence in the mid-capacity performance segment.Exports, which account for nearly 40% of Bajaj Auto's total volumes, showed a meaningful recovery with shipments crossing 4.2 lakh units in Q2, compared to 3.5 lakh units in the previous quarter. Key export markets such as Nigeria, Egypt, and the Philippines witnessed gradual normalization of foreign currency availability, aiding sales growth.The company said it expects exports to improve further in the second half of FY26, supported by currency stabilization and the success of new model introductions."Export markets have started showing early signs of recovery. While challenges remain, particularly in Africa, our diversified geographical footprint and strong dealer network give us a strategic advantage," said Rakesh Sharma, Executive Director at Bajaj Auto.Bajaj Auto's three-wheeler business also delivered solid performance, with volumes increasing 30% year-on-year. The company benefited from strong demand for compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric three-wheelers amid rising urban transport needs.The electric vehicle (EV) portfolio, led by the Chetak electric scooter, saw continued traction in metro and tier-1 markets. Bajaj Auto expanded its Chetak dealership network to over 200 cities and launched new variants with improved range and performance. The EV business now contributes around 6% of total two-wheeler sales, and the company has outlined plans to increase capacity at its Pune and Aurangabad facilities.Cost optimization and operational efficiency were central to Bajaj Auto's strong quarterly results. The company managed to offset inflationary pressures through strategic sourcing, improved localization, and better foreign exchange management. Analysts also noted that higher realization per vehicle, driven by premium model sales, supported profitability.Market analysts remain optimistic about Bajaj Auto's near-term outlook. "Bajaj Auto's Q2 results underline its ability to navigate challenging market conditions with agility," said Amisha Vora, Chairperson of Prabhudas Lilladher. "Strong export recovery and expanding premium product portfolio are likely to sustain earnings momentum in the coming quarters."The company continues to maintain a strong balance sheet with a cash surplus exceeding □21,000 crore, providing ample flexibility for future investments in electric mobility, product development, and global expansion. Bajaj Auto reaffirmed its commitment to innovation-led growth, including plans to introduce new EV models and expand its collaboration with Triumph and KTM. Following the results, Bajaj Auto's stock rose nearly 3.5% on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), closing at □9,460 on Friday. The scrip has gained over 40% in the past six months, outperforming the benchmark Nifty Auto index. Investors welcomed the strong profit growth and management's confident guidance for the rest of the financial year. With a combination of resilient domestic demand, recovering exports, and a focused EV roadmap, Bajaj Auto appears well-positioned to sustain its growth trajectory. As India's mobility sector undergoes a rapid transformation, the company's blend of innovation, affordability, and global reach continues to drive its leadership in the competitive two-wheeler market.

Fact Check: Tata Motors'59,000 Motorcycle Claim Goes Viral — But It's a Complete Hoax

Social media platforms in India have been buzzing this week with viral posts claiming that Tata Motors is set to launch a new motorcycle priced at just □59,000. The supposed "revolutionary" two-wheeler, according to several widely circulated posts, was said to be India's most affordable and fuel-efficient bike, allegedly named "Tata Nano Bike." However, a detailed fact-check reveals that the claim is entirely false — a product of misinformation that has spread rapidly across Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp groups. According to the official statement issued by Tata Motors, the company has no plans to enter the motorcycle or two-wheeler market. The automobile giant, known for its cars, commercial vehicles, and electric mobility solutions, clarified that the viral claim has no factual basis and urged consumers to verify information only through the company's official channels. "The news circulating about a Tata Motors motorcycle priced at □59,000 is completely baseless. Tata Motors does not produce or market two-wheelers," the company stated in its press release. The misinformation appears to have originated from several social media pages and YouTube channels that shared manipulated images and videos depicting a futuristic-looking bike with Tata branding. Some of these clips falsely featured the company's chairman, N. Chandrasekaran, and former chairman Ratan Tata, praising the supposed innovation. The visuals, however, were either digitally edited or AI-generated — designed to mislead potential buyers and attract online traffic. Fact-checking agencies including PIB Fact Check, Alt News, and Boom Live have confirmed that the viral story is a hoax. PIB Fact Check, in a post on X, wrote: "A fake message claims that Tata Motors has launched a □59,000 motorcycle. This is #Fake. Tata Motors has not made any such announcement." Industry analysts say this is not the first time Tata Motors has been dragged into viral misinformation campaigns. In the past, similar false claims have circulated about "Tata Nano Electric Cars" or "Tata Flying Cars," none of which had any connection to the company's official projects. Experts warn that such rumors can damage brand credibility and mislead consumers, especially in markets where affordable mobility options are highly sought after. Automotive analyst Hormazd Sorabjee commented, "Tata Motors has built its identity as a leader in the four-wheeler and commercial vehicle segment. The company's focus right now is on electric vehicles and sustainable mobility, not motorcycles. This viral post exploits public trust in the Tata brand to generate clicks and online engagement."

Elon Musk's $1 Trillion Pay Package: Inside the World's Most Expensive Salary and How He Plans to Spend It

Elon Musk, the world's most talked-about billionaire, has once again shattered financial records. The Tesla and SpaceX chief executive is poised to receive what is being described as the largest compensation package in corporate history — a staggering $1 trillion pay deal. This development has sent shockwaves through global business circles, sparking both admiration and criticism, as analysts debate what the payout means for corporate governance, wealth inequality, and Musk's own spending habits. The package, which is performance-linked, ties Musk's earnings to Tesla's long-term growth and profitability milestones. Approved by Tesla's board and pending shareholder review, the deal dwarfs every known executive compensation plan to date. While some market experts argue that Musk's visionary leadership has created trillions in shareholder value, others are calling the deal "excessive," pointing out that it far surpasses the GDP of most nations.
Under the terms of the agreement, Musk's compensation will come in the form of stock options, vesting over several years based on market capitalization and operational goals. Should Tesla's market value continue its upward trajectory — potentially surpassing $15 trillion over the next decade — Musk's holdings could cross into territory previously unimagined in modern finance.
So, how will the world's richest man, already known for his lavish lifestyle and unorthodox decisions, spend such an astronomical sum? Those close to Musk suggest that the entrepreneur's spending is less about personal luxury and more about ambition-driven investment. Much of his wealth, they point out, is already committed to bold ventures — from colonizing Mars through SpaceX to revolutionizing transportation with The Boring Company and expanding the reach of Neuralink and xAI, his artificial intelligence startup. Still, Musk's personal life is far from modest. His collection of high-end vehicles includes not only the full Tesla lineup — from the Roadster to the Cybertruck — but also rare classics such as a McLaren F1, a Lotus Esprit submarine car used in a James Bond film, and a Porsche 911 Turbo. Insiders claim Musk has a special passion for cars that represent engineering breakthroughs, often describing them as "rolling art pieces." Equally extravagant is his private jet collection. Musk reportedly owns several aircraft, including the Gulfstream G650ER, valued at over $70 million, known for its unmatched speed and range. A new addition, the Gulfstream G700, is said to be under customization to include Tesla-inspired interiors and AI-powered flight assistance. Musk has often defended his use of private jets, citing the immense time pressures of managing multiple global companies. Real estate, once a hallmark of Musk's wealth, is no longer a major focus. In 2021, he sold most of his California properties after publicly declaring his intention to "own no house," choosing instead to live in a modest prefab unit near SpaceX's Texas launch site. "Possessions weigh you down," Musk had said in a viral tweet. However, sources close to him indicate that he retains access to luxury accommodations worldwide, often owned through company entities or leased for privacy reasons.
Beyond luxury, Musk's investment priorities remain clear: technology, energy, and space exploration. He has poured billions into R&D for reusable rockets, autonomous vehicles, and sustainable energy solutions. Insiders believe that a significant portion of his new pay windfall will fund SpaceX's Mars colonization program, estimated to cost over $100 billion by 2040. Musk has often said that ensuring humanity's survival beyond Earth is his life's mission, not a vanity project.However, critics argue that such immense compensation reinforces global wealth disparity and corporate imbalance. Advocacy groups have already called for stricter regulations on executive pay, labeling the trillion-dollar package "a failure of corporate restraint." Shareholder rights organizations are also pressing for greater transparency, questioning whether Tesla's board — heavily influenced by Musk's charisma and dominance — acted independently in approving the deal.

Pfizer Clinches $10 Billion Deal to Acquire Metsera, Outbidding Novo Nordisk in Fierce Pharma Race

Pfizer Inc. has announced the acquisition of biotechnology firm Metsera in a $10 billion all-cash deal, marking one of the largest biotech takeovers of 2025. The deal, finalized after a competitive bidding war with Danish drugmaker Novo Nordisk, underscores



Pfizer's strategic push to rebuild its drug pipeline and regain momentum after the post-COVID sales slowdown. The acquisition gives Pfizer full control of Metsera's groundbreaking obesity and metabolic disorder therapies — a portfolio widely regarded as one of the most promising in the biotech space. Analysts say the move positions Pfizer squarely against Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly in the fast-growing global market for weight-loss and metabolic health drugs, projected to exceed $150 billion annually by 2030. Pfizer, best known for its COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty and antiviral drug Paxlovid, has faced declining revenues as pandemic-era sales taper off. In response, the company has been actively pursuing acquisitions to replenish its late-stage pipeline and diversify into high-demand therapeutic categories. Metsera, a Boston-based biotech startup founded in 2018, specializes in hormone-based metabolic treatments and next-generation peptide therapies. Its lead candidate, MS-112, has shown remarkable efficacy in early-stage clinical trials for obesity and type-2 diabetes management, achieving significant weight loss results with a superior safety profile compared to existing drugs in the same category. Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said in a statement, "Metsera's innovative science perfectly aligns with Pfizer's long-term strategy to address chronic diseases with global health impact. This acquisition strengthens our leadership in metabolic and hormonal therapies, an area we believe will define the next decade of medicine." The deal followed weeks of intense negotiations and a highly publicized bidding contest between Pfizer and Novo Nordisk, the maker of blockbuster weight-loss drugs Wegovy and Ozempic. Novo Nordisk had been seen as the frontrunner in the race, given its dominance in the metabolic health sector and a strong balance sheet supported by soaring GLP-1 drug revenues. However, sources familiar with the matter said Pfizer's decisive offer — a $10 billion all-cash bid, exceeding Novo Nordisk's proposed $8.7 billion — sealed the deal. Pfizer also promised to retain Metsera's Boston research hub and its 400-member scientific team, a commitment that reportedly weighed heavily in the final decision. Metsera CEO Dr. Emily Hargrove expressed confidence in the new partnership, saying, "Pfizer's scale, scientific expertise, and global commercial reach will accelerate our mission of bringing life-changing metabolic therapies to patients worldwide. This partnership enables Metsera's discoveries to reach full potential." The acquisition marks Pfizer's third major biotech purchase in the last two years, following its acquisitions of Seagen for $43 billion in 2023 and Biohaven Pharmaceuticals for $11.6 billion in 2022. With Metsera, Pfizer gains entry into one of the hottest segments of the pharmaceutical market — obesity and metabolic disease treatments — a field that has transformed the fortunes of its competitors. Shares of Pfizer rose 4.2% in early trading on the New York Stock Exchange following the announcement, signaling investor confidence in the strategic move. Metsera's valuation surged nearly 60% in the private market ahead of the deal's official confirmation, reflecting heightened expectations for its lead product's potential.
"This is a bold and necessary step for Pfizer," said Neil Shah, senior analyst at Bernstein Research. "The obesity drug market is expanding at unprecedented speed, and Pfizer could not afford to sit on the sidelines while Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly captured global share." Pfizer plans to integrate Metsera into its Internal Medicine and Metabolic Disease division, with full operational alignment expected by mid-2026. The company said it would prioritize advancing Metsera's MS-112 candidate into Phase 3 clinical trials next year and accelerate regulatory submissions across key global markets. The acquisition is expected to be EPS-accretive by 2027, according to Pfizer's projections,

Delhi Engineer's 2,000 DIY Air Purifier Turns Heads -Brings AQI Down from 400 to 50 in Minutes

A local engineer's innovative low-cost invention is offering a surprising ray of hope. A Delhi-based resident has reportedly developed a homemade air purifier costing just □2,000, which he claims can reduce indoor Air Quality Index (AQI) levels from over 400 to as low as 50 within minutes. The device, which combines basic hardware-store components with smart engineering, is now going viral across social media and has sparked national curiosity about do-it-yourself (DIY) solutions to India's worsening air crisis. The inventor, identified as Ankit Sharma, a 29-year-old mechanical engineer from South Delhi, says he built the purifier using easily available materials: a HEPA-grade air filter, a regular table fan, and a few pieces of cardboard and adhesive tape. Sharma's model uses the principle of forced air circulation — channeling polluted air through the filter at high speed — effectively trapping particulate matter such as PM2.5 and PM10. "It's not rocket science," Sharma said in a recent interview. "You don't need to spend □20,000 or more on branded purifiers. The air we breathe is toxic, and innovation has to be accessible. I just used basic physics and a little common sense." Sharma's demonstration video, shared on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram, quickly went viral, amassing millions of views. The clip shows him measuring indoor air quality with a digital monitor — starting at an AQI of 410, considered "severe" — and watching it drop below 60 ("moderate") within 15 minutes of operating his makeshift purifier. The results have left netizens astonished, with many users praising Sharma's ingenuity amid Delhi's grim environmental conditions. Some even called for the Delhi government and civic bodies to promote such affordable innovations at the community level. Delhi's air pollution levels have hit hazardous levels this winter, with the city recording AQI readings above 450 in several areas. Stubble burning in neighbouring states, vehicular emissions, and construction dust continue to be major contributors. Schools have been forced to shut down temporarily, and health experts warn of long-term respiratory damage. Against this backdrop, Sharma's low-cost innovation stands out as a symbol of citizen-driven problem-solving. Environmental researchers, while cautiously optimistic, have praised the initiative for its potential in raising public awareness about air purification technology.
Dr. Randeep Guleria, former director of AIIMS, said, "While DIY purifiers can't fully replace certified air cleaning systems, they can significantly reduce particulate matter indoors, especially for low-income households. It's an impressive example of how local innovation can bridge affordability gaps." The commercial air purifier market in India has been booming, with demand rising more than 50% annually in northern states. Prices for branded purifiers typically range from □10,000 to □60,000, making them inaccessible to a large segment of the population. Experts say innovations like Sharma's □2,000 prototype could democratize access to cleaner indoor air, especially in schools, clinics, and low-income homes.
According to TechSci Research, India's air purifier market is projected to cross □4,500 crore by 2030, driven by urban demand and health concerns. However, as Dr. Guleria points out, "affordability remains the biggest barrier."

Name Change

I, TAHER ALI MOLLA (OLD NAME) S/O MAOLA BOKSH MOLLA, RESIDING AT, VILL – GHUNIMEGHI , P.O – B.NARAYANPUR , P.S – BHANGAR , S.24.PGS. - 743502, W. B, INDIA , HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HENCEFORTH BE KNOWN AS TAHER MOLLA (NEW NAME) , AS DECLARED BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KOLKATA , DATED 7/11/2025 , TAHER MOLLA (NEW NAME) AND TAHER ALI MOLLA (OLD NAME) BOTH ARE SAME AND IDENTICAL PERSON,

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Drunk Ambulance Driver Rams into Shop in Burdwan, Several Pedestrians Injured

Staff reporter, Howrah, 8 November: An ambulance speeding down National Highway 114 in East Burdwan lost control and crashed into a roadside shop late on Friday night. Several pedestrians were injured in the crash, and police have detained four individuals, including the driver and the vehicle's owner.The accident took place at Mahinagar Mor, a busy intersection along the Burdwan–Rampurhat route. Eyewitnesses claim the ambulance driver was heavily intoxicated and driving recklessly at high speed when he lost control of the vehicle. What makes the incident even more disturbing is the allegation that the driver and his companions were drinking inside the ambulance while returning from a hospital trip.

According to local sources, the ambulance had earlier dropped off a patient at a hospital in Burdwan and was on its way back to Rampurhat in Birbhum district. Around midnight, as the vehicle approached Mahinagar Mor, the driver reportedly tried to overtake a motorcycle but failed to control the vehicle. The ambulance veered off the road, smashed into a small shop, and injured several people who were either walking or standing nearby.

Eyewitnesses described the scene as chaotic. "The driver and the two men with him were clearly drunk," said local resident Jaydeb Mondal, who witnessed the crash. "They were shouting and laughing inside the ambulance. When they tried to overtake a bike, the driver lost control, and the vehicle crashed straight into the shop. People screamed and ran for safety."

Another witness, Sanjib Mondal, added, "After the collision, the driver tried to escape. He started the ambulance again and hit several bicycles and motorbikes while attempting to flee. Finally, the vehicle came to a stop after ramming into another roadside stall."

The impact of the crash left the front portion of the ambulance mangled, while debris from the damaged shop littered the road. The shop owner, Uday Ghosh, who narrowly escaped injury, expressed outrage and disbelief. "All three men were drunk beyond control," he said. "When the police arrived, they found liquor bottles inside the ambulance itself. It's horrifying to think that a vehicle meant to save lives was being used for drinking and reckless driving."

Upon receiving word of the incident, officers from Dewandighi police station rushed to the spot. They arrested the driver, the ambulance owner, and two others who were inside the vehicle. The ambulance has been seized, and an investigation is underway to determine the exact circumstances leading up to the crash. A police officer investigating the case said preliminary breathalyzer tests confirmed that the driver and his companions were intoxicated.

"This is a serious offense. The driver not only endangered lives but also abused an emergency vehicle meant for public service. Strict action will be taken under the Motor Vehicles Act and relevant criminal laws," the officer said.Several pedestrians injured in the accident were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. Doctors have stated that none of them are in critical condition, though a few sustained fractures and deep cuts. "It's a miracle that no one was killed," said a hospital official.

The incident has sparked anger among local residents, who gathered at the scene demanding stern punishment for the offenders. Many pointed out that reckless driving by ambulance operators has become a growing menace on highways and city roads. "We often see ambulances speeding unnecessarily even without patients inside," said one local. "They misuse the siren and drive as if traffic rules don't apply to them."



A visitor undergoes security check at the 31st Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF), in Kolkata, Saturday.

Slow Response to Bengal's E-Rickshaw Registration Drive as Drivers Raise Concerns Over Fees and Lack of Awareness

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 8 November: West Bengal Transport Department's attempt to bring order to the state's unregulated e-rickshaw and Toto sector, the government's latest registration drive has been met with sluggish response and widespread confusion. Nearly a month after the initiative began, officials admit that the process is moving at a slow pace, with many operators still reluctant or unaware of how to register their vehicles.

On October 9, just after the Durga Puja festivities, the Transport Department issued an official notification to regulate Toto and e-rickshaw operations, which have proliferated across Bengal's towns and villages in recent years. The announcement emphasized that the move was aimed at maintaining efficient public transport while curbing the growing number of illegal vehicles operating without registration or safety compliance.

Following the order, the department rolled out an online registration system for the entire month of November, allowing Toto and e-rickshaw owners to officially register their vehicles. However, the effort appears to have hit a roadblock. In several districts, particularly across Hooghly's four sub-divisions, unregistered vehicles continue to ply freely, while registration numbers remain low. Union leaders and drivers claim that the government has failed to adequately publicize the initiative, leaving many unaware of the registration procedures.

"There is no proper awareness campaign. Most Toto and e-rickshaw drivers in rural areas either don't know about the registration process or have no idea how to apply online," said Binod Harijan, leader of the Chinsurah Toto Drivers' Union.

Harijan added that the registration fee of ₹1,740 is another obstacle for many low-income drivers. "There are around 2,500 Totos in Chinsurah alone. For several of these drivers, ₹1,740 is a big amount to pay upfront. This has slowed down the registration process," he said.

The government has clarified that once the registration is completed, no additional payments will be required for the next year. But uncertainty over other aspects — such as which routes Totos will be legally allowed to operate on — has further contributed to hesitation among drivers.

While many drivers remain skeptical, some union leaders have welcomed the move as a necessary step toward formalizing the sector. "The Transport Department has taken an important step to protect the livelihood of Toto drivers by offering legal recognition," said Soumen Das, a leader of the Shrirampur Toto and E-Rickshaw Workers' Association. "We are actively working to raise awareness among our members so that more drivers come forward to register."

Similarly, Manoj Chakraborty, president of the Trinamool Congress Labour Union for the Shrirampur Organizational District, said the party has been mobilizing local units to spread the word. "The registration process will continue through November. Our teams in Shrirampur, Chinsurah, Chandannagar, Polba, and Pandua are engaging with drivers and owners to highlight the benefits of registration. The response is positive, but the district transport office needs to intensify efforts," Chakraborty said.District Transport Officer Subhasish Ghosh said the department is conducting daily awareness campaigns using mobile tabloids to inform drivers about the registration drive. "Toto and e-rickshaw are not the same — they are distinct in design and regulation. We are making continuous efforts to reach out to both categories," Ghosh said.



According to Ghosh, applications have been received for around 3,500 e-rickshaws and 950 Totos so far in the Hooghly district. "We still have sufficient time left in the registration window," he added, expressing optimism that the numbers will improve in the coming weeks. However, many local associations argue that without on-the-ground guidance or physical registration camps, the online process remains inaccessible to thousands of drivers who lack digital literacy.

Richa gets Royal welcome from CAB and State Government

Sumit Palit

Kolkata, 8 November: Richa Ghosh, one of the members of the World Cup-winning Indian women's cricket team, was given a royal welcome by the Cricket Association of Bengal and the state government at the Eden Gardens on November 8. On this day, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself felicitated Richa and handed over the appointment letter as the Deputy Superintendent of Police of the state police. She also presented Richa with the Banga Bhushan Award for outstanding achievement for becoming the first Bengali to win a World Cup. A cheque of Rs 34 lakh was presented by the CAB. Incidentally, this amount of money has been fixed in line with the number of runs that Richa scored in the final.

In addition, a golden cricket bat and ball were handed over to Richa by CAB President Sourav Ganguly and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also gifted Richa a gold chain on behalf of the administration. In addition to Richa's father and mother, Sports Minister Arup Biswas, all members of CAB and many dignitaries were present at this colorful event.

National Elector Shyama Saw and many former and present Bengali male and female cricketers were present. Jhulan Goswami spoke about Richa. The entire event was conducted by cricket expert Gautam Bhattacharya. The CAB President also expressed his hope to see Richa as the captain of the Indian women's cricket team in the future.

Rebel Trinamool MLA Humayun Kabir to Launch New Political Party, Announces Grand Rally in Behrampore on December 22

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 8 November: Trinamool Congress MLA from Bharatpur, Humayun Kabir, has announced the formal introduction of his new political party on December 22. The announcement, made during a press conference on Saturday, marks the latest in a series of confrontations between Kabir and the Trinamool leadership, signaling his full-fledged breakaway from the ruling party ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

Kabir, who has already declared himself the chairman of the new party, said that the official launch will take place through a massive public rally at Behrampore's Textile More, which he claims will be attended by over 50,000 people from across Bengal. "People from districts like Howrah, Hooghly, and Murshidabad will join us. Many of them will also be given organizational responsibilities," Kabir announced confidently.

The MLA, known for his fiery speeches and frequent criticism of his own party, said he was preparing for an intense political battle. "I have been in politics for a long time," he told reporters. "When I play, I play to win the trophy. To win, sometimes you have to bring in Nigerian players.

I'm doing the same in politics," he quipped, using a football metaphor that drew attention and amusement. Kabir also made it clear that he intends to contest the 2026 Assembly elections from Raninagar, a constituency in Murshidabad district. "I will contest from Raninagar and defeat Rabiul Alam by more than 30,000 votes," he declared.

Behind this dramatic political move lies months of simmering tension between Kabir and the Trinamool leadership. The Bharatpur MLA alleged that he had been repeatedly humiliated within the party despite maintaining restraint in public. "I was told by the top leadership not to speak publicly about internal matters discussed in closed-door meetings," Kabir said. "I followed that instruction, but even then, false stories and propaganda were spread against me by some local leaders. I reported the matter to the party, but no one listened. That's when I realized I needed to make a big decision."

Sources within the Trinamool Congress, however, describe Kabir's exit as "long expected." His repeated controversial remarks, often critical of the party and its leadership, had placed him at odds with senior leaders for months. His conduct had also embarrassed the party's top brass, who had earlier tried to rein him in.

During a crucial meeting at the party's Camac Street headquarters, Trinamool Congress's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee had reportedly given Kabir a stern warning. According to party insiders, Banerjee told him in no uncertain terms that disciplinary norms must be respected, and that any publicly anti-party statement would result in strict action. "The party has rules, and no one is above them," Banerjee had warned.

Despite the warning, Kabir continued making controversial remarks, including questioning internal decisions and criticizing local party functionaries. His open defiance had become a source of discomfort for Trinamool, particularly in the Murshidabad region where factional rivalries are already intense. Kabir's announcement of a new party comes at a sensitive time for Trinamool, which is gearing up for both panchayat elections in several regions and the 2026 state polls.

Two Months After Grand Inauguration, Durgapur's 'Ahari Matsya Bahari Market' Remains Non-Functional Due to Lack of Water and Power

Staff reporter, Durgapur, 8 November: A much-hyped modern market in Durgapur — meant to provide hygienic and organized space for local fish and meat vendors — lies largely defunct. The "Ahari Matsya Bahari Market," built near the Daily Market in the City Centre area by the Durgapur Municipal Corporation (DMC), is yet to receive water and electricity connections, leaving the vendors with no choice but to return to selling their goods along the roadside.

The state-of-the-art facility was inaugurated on August 2 this year with much fanfare by State Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Pradip Majumdar and DMC Chairperson Anindita Mukherjee. The project was introduced as part of the civic body's initiative to improve the city's hygiene standards and ease the difficulties faced by small traders.At the inauguration, Mukherjee had said, "Vendors were facing immense difficulty selling fish and meat in open areas by the roadside. This new market has been constructed to provide them with a proper space to operate hygienically."

However, despite the promises, vendors claim that the facility remains non-operational due to the lack of basic utilities. "During the inauguration, temporary power connections were arranged for a few hours for the ceremony," said a fish vendor who has been selling in the area for more than a decade. "But since that day, there has been no permanent electricity connection. Without power and water, how can we possibly run our business here?"

Fish and meat sellers say that the absence of water makes it impossible to maintain hygiene and store products safely, while the lack of power renders the facility unusable during early morning hours and late evenings. Most have returned to setting up makeshift stalls along the roadside, recreating the very situation the civic body had promised to eliminate.

Ganesh Bauri, a local chicken seller, voiced the frustration shared by many. "The market was supposedly built for our convenience," he said. "But without water and power, it's completely useless. Until those connections are provided, we will continue to sell along the road. We have families to feed — we can't just sit and wait for the municipality."

Residents and local traders also expressed concern over the delay, saying the empty market building stands as a symbol of poor planning and inefficiency. They point out that the continued roadside vending has made the area congested, unhygienic, and unsafe for pedestrians. "We were told this market would clean up the area and improve conditions," said a shopkeeper nearby. "But nothing has changed. In fact, it's even worse now — the vendors are back on the street, and the new market is just gathering dust."

Durgapur Municipal Corporation officials acknowledge the issue but attribute the delay to "administrative procedures." Chairperson Anindita Mukherjee assured that steps are being taken to resolve the problem. "The process to install permanent electricity and water connections is already underway," she said. "We are aware of the vendors' concerns, and we are working to ensure that the market becomes fully functional soon."

However, critics argue that the delay highlights a broader issue of bureaucratic inefficiency and political tokenism. Many allege that such projects are inaugurated prematurely for publicity, without ensuring that essential infrastructure is in place. Civic activists in Durgapur say the situation reflects a recurring pattern in urban projects across the state, where ribbon-cutting ceremonies are prioritized over actual service delivery. Meanwhile, the prolonged closure of the market is not just a logistical issue — it has social and economic implications. The vendors, mostly from low-income backgrounds, are struggling to sustain their livelihoods in the absence of stable selling spaces. "Every day we are harassed by police and civic officials for occupying the roadside," said another vendor.

Tragedy in Chennai: Two Migrant Workers from Bengal Killed in Gas Cylinder Explosion

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 8 November: Two young workers from West Bengal lost their lives following a devastating gas cylinder explosion in Chennai. The victims, identified as Babu Sheikh (25) and Yusuf Sheikh (26), were residents of Patnil village under the Daskolgram-Kareya II gram panchayat in the Nanur constituency of Birbhum district. Both men had moved to Tamil Nadu barely a month ago in search of work to support their impoverished families.

According to reports, the explosion occurred on October 31 at a paper factory located in Thiruvallur district, on the outskirts of Chennai, where the two were employed. Preliminary investigations suggest that a leak in an industrial gas cylinder led to the powerful blast that shook the factory premises early in the morning. The workers sustained severe burn injuries and were immediately rushed to a nearby government hospital by fellow labourers and local authorities. Despite days of critical treatment, both succumbed to their injuries this week, leaving behind grieving families and a distraught community in their native village.

The tragic news reached Patnil village early in the morning, plunging the entire area into mourning. The deceased men, both married and fathers to young children, were the primary breadwinners of their families. Their deaths have left their dependents in a state of despair, struggling to comprehend how they will now sustain themselves.

"The families were already living hand-to-mouth. With the deaths of Babu and Yusuf, two homes have been shattered forever," said a local villager, wiping away tears. "They went so far away only to earn enough to feed their children. And now, their bodies are returning home instead."

Upon receiving news of the tragedy, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee directed the Birbhum district administration to ensure that the bodies of the two victims were brought back to Bengal at the earliest. Local authorities, in coordination with their counterparts in Tamil Nadu, have arranged for the repatriation of the bodies to their home village. Officials confirmed that the mortal remains are expected to reach the victims' families within a day.



Local Trinamool Congress leader Kajal Sheikh visited the bereaved families soon after the news broke. Expressing deep sorrow, he assured the families that the state government would extend every possible help to them. "This is an unimaginable tragedy for these families. Both men went to Chennai just to earn a living and now they are gone. We will ensure that they receive financial assistance and all necessary support from the administration," Sheikh said.

Residents of Patnil and nearby villages have gathered around the two homes since the news broke, offering condolences and moral support. Many expressed outrage over the lack of safety measures in factories where migrant labourers are employed under harsh and risky conditions. "Our boys go to other states because there is no work here," said an elderly villager. "But even when they find jobs, the conditions are so unsafe that their lives are always at risk."

The tragedy has once again drawn attention to the hazardous environments in which many migrant workers from Bengal toil across the country. Labour rights activists have long argued for stronger safety standards and better welfare mechanisms for workers employed outside their home states. They also point to the need for improved job opportunities within Bengal to reduce the exodus of workers forced to migrate for survival.

Officials from the Tamil Nadu police and labour department have reportedly launched an inquiry into the incident to determine whether the factory management followed proper safety protocols. Meanwhile, the families in Birbhum wait for the return of their loved ones, their grief mingled with anger and helplessness.

The wails of mourning women echo through the narrow lanes — a grim reminder of how far Bengal's workers travel for a better life, only to meet tragedy in distant lands.

Winter Session of Parliament to Begin on December 1, Conclude on December 19: Kiren Rijiju Confirms

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: The Winter Session of Parliament will begin on December 1 and continue until December 19, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju announced on Friday. The schedule was approved by President Droupadi Murmu following the government's proposal, marking the last major parliamentary session of the year.

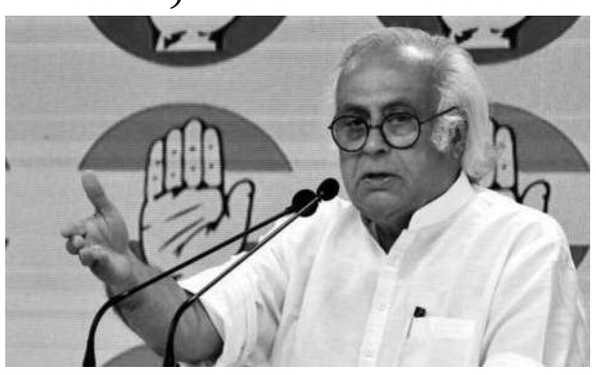
Taking to social media, Minister Rijiju stated that President Murmu had given her consent to the proposed dates and expressed optimism that the session would be "constructive and meaningful," contributing to the strengthening of India's democratic framework. "The Winter Session of Parliament will commence on December 1 and continue till December 19, 2025. I look forward to a constructive session that will further strengthen our democracy," Rijiju posted on X (formerly Twitter).

The announcement comes just a few months after the Monsoon Session, which ran from July 21 and turned out to be one of the more contentious sittings in recent times. The Monsoon Session, or the "Badal Adhibeshan" as it is known in Hindi, witnessed several heated debates and frequent disruptions led by the Opposition, though it was also productive in terms of legislative business.

During that session, the Lok Sabha passed 12 bills, while the Rajya Sabha cleared 15. Among the most notable pieces of legislation were the Online Gaming Bill, 2025, the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025, among others. Each of these bills drew significant attention and debate, particularly over their implications for digital regulation, taxation policy, and sports administration in India.Despite frequent protests, walkouts, and interruptions by Opposition parties, the government managed to push through several of its legislative priorities. Rijiju later described the Monsoon Session as "fruitful and successful" from the government's perspective, while characterizing it as "disruptive and counterproductive" from the Opposition's standpoint.

The Monsoon Session also saw heated discussions around politically sensitive issues such as the Sindoor Campaign and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists, both of which triggered intense exchanges between treasury and opposition benches. The session recorded over 84 hours of adjournments across both Houses — the highest in the 18th Lok Sabha so far — largely due to Opposition-led disruptions over governance and policy issues.

Congress Taunts PM Modi Over Avoiding Trump: 'Sooner or Later, You'll Have to Face Him'



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: U.S. President Donald Trump once again claimed credit for "stopping a war" between India and Pakistan — a statement that New Delhi has consistently dismissed as exaggerated and untrue. Yet, what has drawn sharper attention this time is the Congress party's biting sarcasm aimed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of deliberately avoiding Trump on the global stage.

The controversy reignited after Trump reiterated in a recent interaction that he had personally intervened to halt a major escalation between the two South Asian nuclear-armed nations. "I stopped that war," Trump said, referring to past tensions between India and Pakistan. "There was going to be a big problem. They were ready to fight, and I got them to stand down."

While the Indian government has rejected such claims multiple times, stating that "no such mediation ever took place," Trump has continued to make the assertion, often citing his "close relationship" with both Modi and former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan.Political analysts say Modi's government has maintained a careful silence on Trump's repeated remarks to avoid unnecessary diplomatic strain. However, opposition leaders argue that Modi's silence is not just diplomacy — it's avoidance.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh took to social media platform X (formerly Twitter) to deliver a sharp jab at the Prime Minister. Referring to Modi as the "self-proclaimed Vishwaguru," Ramesh wrote, "Since Trump will not be attending the G20 summit in South Africa, we are sure the self-proclaimed Vishwaguru will be there in person."

With a touch of irony, he added, "Sooner or later, somewhere, sometime, you will have to face Trump."

Ramesh's remarks have rekindled an ongoing narrative within political circles — that Prime Minister Modi has been avoiding direct encounters with Trump since the latter's repeated "war-mediation" comments.In October, Modi was scheduled to attend the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, but reports suggest he canceled his participation shortly after Trump announced his presence at the same event. This, political analysts say, was an unusual move given that Modi had attended almost every ASEAN summit since taking office in 2014.

Officially, the Prime Minister's Office cited Diwali celebrations and the ongoing Bihar election campaign as reasons for skipping the ASEAN meet. Modi at the time was leading a series of rallies and roadshows in Bihar, where the Assembly elections were underway. However, opposition leaders and some diplomatic observers claimed that Modi's withdrawal was strategic — a move to avoid being placed in an awkward position in front of Trump."Imagine if Trump repeated his 'I stopped your war' line in front of Modi during a global event," said a Delhi-based foreign policy expert.

Air India Flight Faces Six-Hour Delay After Mechanical Glitch at Mumbai Airport, Passengers Stranded Inside Plane



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: A London-bound flight from Mumbai was delayed for over six hours on Saturday morning after developing a mechanical snag just before takeoff, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded inside the aircraft for over an hour before being asked to disembark.

The flight, Air India AI 129, was scheduled to depart Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport for London Heathrow at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday. Boarding was initially planned for 5:20 a.m., but passengers were soon informed that the process would begin later, around 6:00 a.m. citing a minor delay. However, what was first described as a short wait gradually escalated into a long morning of uncertainty and frustration for travelers.

According to multiple passengers, boarding was eventually completed, but the aircraft remained stationary on the runway for nearly 90 minutes without any clear communication. "We boarded thinking it would take off shortly. But we sat there for more than an hour, and then the crew announced there was a technical issue," said one traveler, recounting the ordeal.

The announcement confirmed that the aircraft had developed a mechanical fault, rendering it unfit for immediate takeoff. All passengers were subsequently asked to deboard while engineers worked to repair the snag.

Ground staff and maintenance teams were immediately called to inspect the issue. Air India engineers reportedly carried out several safety and performance checks before the flight could be cleared for departure. The airline later confirmed that the problem had been rectified and that the aircraft eventually departed for London — more than six hours behind schedule.

An Air India spokesperson acknowledged the incident, stating that passenger safety was the top priority. "Flight AI 129 from Mumbai to London experienced a technical issue prior to departure. Our engineering teams worked to resolve the matter, and the flight departed safely after thorough checks. We regret the inconvenience caused to our guests," the spokesperson said.

Though the airline did not disclose specific details about the nature of the mechanical fault, sources indicated that the issue was related to the aircraft's engine monitoring system, which required mandatory diagnostic verification before flight clearance could be granted.

Passengers expressed frustration over the delay, with some taking to social media to share their experiences. Several users posted photos and videos from the airport, complaining about the lack of timely updates from the airline. "We were told repeatedly that the issue would be fixed soon, but it took hours. No refreshments were offered while we waited inside the plane," one passenger tweeted.

Luxury Behind Bars: Bengaluru Prison Scandal Exposes VIP Treatment for Convicted Killers and Rapists

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: The Parappana Agrahara Central Jail, one of Karnataka's most secure correctional facilities. A viral video has revealed that several notorious convicts, including serial rapist and murderer Umesh Reddy, are allegedly living in comfort inside the high-security prison, enjoying privileges such as mobile phones, television sets, and home-cooked food.

The footage, which has sparked outrage across political and social circles, appears to show inmates casually using smartphones, keypad mobiles, and watching television from within their barracks. The revelations have raised serious concerns about corruption, security lapses, and preferential treatment inside one of the state's most tightly monitored jails.

According to reports, the video shows Umesh Reddy — one of India's most notorious serial offenders — using two Android smartphones and a keypad phone while relaxing in his cell. The footage also displays a television set installed inside his barrack, suggesting that the convict enjoys personal entertainment facilities unavailable to ordinary prisoners.

Reddy, convicted for 20 counts of rape and 18 murders committed between 1996 and 2022, has long been one of the most feared criminals in Karnataka's history. In 2022, his death sentence was commuted to 30 years of imprisonment on grounds of mental instability. Despite his conviction, the new video paints a disturbing picture of his privileged life behind bars.

Another inmate identified in the footage is Tarun Raju, arrested in connection with the Ranaya Rao gold smuggling case. The video reportedly shows him using a mobile phone and cooking inside the prison, raising questions about the lack of surveillance and the role of prison staff in allowing such liberties. Tarun, accused of attempting to flee to Geneva, was earlier identified as a key operative in an international gold smuggling syndicate.The emergence of the footage has triggered massive backlash. Citizens and political leaders alike have demanded strict action against the prison officials allegedly complicit in the misconduct. Allegations have also surfaced that certain prison guards have been accepting bribes to provide convicted criminals with restricted items like mobile phones and food ingredients.In response to the scandal, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has promised a comprehensive inquiry into the matter. "We will take all necessary measures to ensure accountability. Those responsible for the security lapses will face strict action," he assured, addressing reporters in Bengaluru on Friday.The Chief Minister has directed the Home Department and the Jail Administration to immediately investigate how such breaches were allowed in a facility that is supposed to maintain one of the highest levels of vigilance in the state.

The Parappana Agrahara Central Jail has faced similar controversies in the past. In 2017, an internal probe revealed that AIADMK leader V.K. Sasikala had allegedly been given preferential treatment, including access to a private kitchen and unrestricted movement within the compound. The latest revelations suggest that systemic corruption and negligence continue to plague the institution. Security experts have pointed out that such incidents compromise not only the integrity of the correctional system but also public trust in law enforcement. "When convicted murderers and rapists enjoy luxuries behind bars, it sends a dangerous message about the state's justice system," said a retired IPS officer familiar with Karnataka's prison operations. Opposition parties have demanded an independent inquiry, with some leaders calling for the suspension of the jail superintendent and staff pending investigation.



Jan Suraaj chief Prashant Kishor during a roadshow for Bihar Assembly elections, in Madhubani, Saturday.

"Not 'Katta', Bihar Will Produce Missiles Now": Rajnath Singh Targets RJD

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday that the era of "katta" and "laltane" is over in Bihar, and the state is poised to produce missiles and cannons in place of country-made guns.Addressing a rally in Ramgarh Assembly seat, Rajnath Singh announced plans to open a defence corridor in the state, saying, "I want to tell RJD people that Ab Katta Nahin, Tope banegi... Missile banegi (Instead of country-made guns, Bihar will produce cannons and missiles".

Describing the NDA manifesto as "Atal Pratigya" or "Bhishm Pratigya", Rajnath Singh said the era of "katta" and "laltane" is over. "We will not make a false promise that we will give government jobs to every household in Bihar. It is not possible financially. We have promised to create job opportunities, and for this, we have announced to set up MSME corridors and a defence corridor in Bihar," he said.

Addressing another rally in Bihar's Karakat Assembly, Rajnath Singh accused the Congress of trying to divide the country in the name of caste and religion and resorting to appeasement to gain votes. He said, "Telangana's Chief Minister and Congress leader Revanth Reddy said that 'Congress means Muslims and Muslims mean Congress'. This is an example of how far these people can go to gain votes."

He said the BJP has never indulged in politics of religion. "We have never engaged in the politics of caste or religion. If we have engaged in politics, then it has been the politics of justice and humanity," he said.

Training his guns on the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, the Defence Minister said, "Wherever Rahul Gandhi goes, he says that the Election Commission has stolen the votes of the people of Bihar. I want to ask him, is it necessary to lie to achieve political success? If one wants to do meaningful politics, one will have to do politics that builds the nation."

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is very particular about not making any promise that is difficult to accomplish," he said, adding that the practice is healthy as it retains public trust in the parties.

"We pursue politics to build society and not form government. Parties like RJD and Congress are so desperate that they lie and even 'buy' votes," he said.

Sharad Pawar Breaks Silence On Grandnephew's Land Deal Amid Row

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: Two days after the Pune land-grab allegations involving his grandnephew set off a political storm, NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar broke his silence, saying the matter should be investigated fully and the results of the inquiry should be made public. "The Chief Minister has publicly said that the matter is serious. So he must conduct an inquiry and place the facts before the people," Pawar said on Saturday.

Pawar, whose nephew and current Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar split the NCP and joined the Eknath Shinde-led government in 2023, also clarified the position of the Pawar family amid the controversy, stating that they hold different ideological positions but remain one as a family. Pawar pointed out that his grandson contested against Ajit Pawar and Ajit Pawar's wife contested against his daughter Supriya Sule, highlighting that political battles do not affect personal relationships within the family.

Ajit Pawar's son, Parth, has been accused of involvement in a land scam. The allegation is that Amadea Enterprises LLP, in which Parth is a partner, was sold 43 acres of government land in Pune worth over Rs 1,800 crore for just Rs 300 crore.

The land allegedly fell under the 'Watan' category awarded to the Mahar community and, under the Bombay Inferior Village Watans Abolition Act, 1958, it could not be sold without government permission. A stamp duty waiver was also reportedly ordered two days after the deal, with Parth Pawar's firm paying just Rs 500 as stamp duty on the Rs 300 crore transaction.

On Sule's earlier defence of Parth, Sharad Pawar distanced himself, saying that was her personal opinion. Asked whether he felt Ajit Pawar was being targeted within the ruling Mahayuti, he said he did not know.Two cases have been filed in connection with the land deal, but Parth Pawar has not been named, triggering criticism from the Opposition.

Ambadas Danve from the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and Congress leaders Vijay Wadettiwar and Harshwardan Sapkal have questioned why Pawar's name is absent. Sharad Pawar's other grandnephew, Rohit Pawar, who has been one of the sharpest critics of the government over the past year, on issues ranging from Minister Manikrao Kokate playing rummy in the Assembly to alleged PWD irregularities, has so far remained silent. His silence has been noted by the ruling side, with minister Sanjay Shirsat taunting him on X, asking why the "dear parrot" had gone silent, referring to Rohit's previous aggressive stance on corruption.

CRPF Jawan Found Dead in Maoist-Hit Jharkhand Forest: Probe Launched Amid Rising Tensions in Saranda

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November: The body of a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan was recovered from a remote jungle outpost on Saturday morning, prompting an immediate investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.The deceased has been identified as Rajesh Kumar, a member of the 193rd Battalion of the CRPF, deployed in one of the most sensitive Maoist strongholds of eastern India. According to official sources, Rajesh was on duty at a surveillance camp inside the dense Saranda forest — once considered a "liberated zone" of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist).

Authorities said the incident came to light during a routine change of duty. Another CRPF jawan arriving to take over the post reportedly found Rajesh lying unconscious inside the camp premises. Despite immediate medical assistance and evacuation to a nearby health centre, doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Officials said the cause of Rajesh Kumar's death remains unclear. Preliminary reports from the site indicate that there were no signs of an armed encounter or external injuries, ruling out an immediate possibility of a Maoist attack.

The police have launched an investigation, and the jawan's body has been sent to Jamshedpur for post-mortem examination. "We are awaiting the autopsy report to ascertain the exact cause of death," said a senior officer from the West Singhbhum district administration. "It could be a medical emergency, such as a cardiac arrest, but we are not ruling out any possibilities at this stage."

A source close to the investigation told PTI that officials are also examining whether Rajesh suffered from any pre-existing health conditions. "There were no gunshots or explosive remnants found near the site. However, considering the terrain and operational stress in Maoist-affected areas, such incidents are taken very seriously," the source said.

Saranda forest, spread across the West Singhbhum district, has long been infamous as a hotbed of Maoist activity. Once serving as the headquarters of the CPI (Maoist)'s armed wing, the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), the region was declared a "liberated zone" in the early 2000s. Over the past few years, however, coordinated operations by the CRPF, Jharkhand Police, and intelligence agencies have gradually pushed Maoist groups deeper into the interiors.

Despite significant progress, occasional clashes and ambushes continue to claim the lives of security personnel. Just last month, a CRPF head constable, Mahendra Laskar (45), was killed in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast planted by Maoists during a combing operation in the same forest range. Another jawan later succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment in Delhi.

These recurring incidents have exposed the enduring risks faced by security forces operating in the area, where IED traps, sniper attacks, and ambushes remain common tactics employed by the insurgents.

The Saranda region's dense terrain, crisscrossed by rivers and rugged hills, has made it a natural fortress for Maoist rebels. Security forces have conducted multiple large-scale operations over the years, including Operation Monsoon, Operation Anaconda, and Operation Octopus, to reclaim territory and restore governance.

However, intelligence agencies continue to warn that pockets of the forest remain under the influence of PLGA leaders. In September, a major encounter in the same district led to the death of Amit Hansda alias Aptan, a top area commander of the PLGA, who carried a reward of ₹10 lakh on his head. His death was hailed by security officials as a "major blow" to the Maoist network in Jharkhand.

Even so, recent incidents suggest that the Maoist presence — though diminished — has not been completely eradicated. Officials believe that sleeper cells and small armed groups are still active in remote pockets, posing sporadic threats to security patrols and camps.

Following Rajesh Kumar's death, the CRPF has tightened internal protocols in its forward camps. Senior officers have instructed all units stationed in the Saranda forest to conduct health check-ups for personnel deployed in high-stress conditions and to increase night patrols around camp perimeters.

"The loss of any soldier is deeply tragic, whether due to combat or health-related causes," said a CRPF spokesperson. "We are cooperating fully with the district authorities to determine the cause of death and will extend all support to the bereaved family."The state police, meanwhile, continue to coordinate with central forces to sustain pressure on remaining Maoist elements in the region. Officials confirmed that joint search operations would continue in the western and southern sectors of the forest over the coming weeks.

For now, the mystery surrounding Rajesh Kumar's death remains unsolved. Was it a natural tragedy brought on by the harsh conditions of jungle duty, or an unreported security lapse in a volatile red zone? The upcoming post-mortem report is expected to shed light on the truth.

The death of yet another CRPF jawan in Jharkhand's insurgency belt serves as a somber reminder of the human cost of India's long and complex battle against left-wing extremism — a conflict that continues to simmer beneath the canopy of Saranda's ancient forests.

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INDIAN INFO EXCHANGE

Rain and Thunder Strike Brisbane, But India Clinch T20 Series 2–1 Over Australia

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November : Brisbane witnessed a rare sight on Sunday night — not just the clash of cricketing titans, but the rumble of thunder and flashes of lightning that eventually forced the abandonment of the fifth and final T20I between India and Australia at the Gabba. The weather gods had the final say, but it was India who walked away smiling, sealing the five-match series 2–1 and avenging their earlier ODI series defeat.



The series, marred by unpredictable weather, began and ended in rain. The first T20I was washed out, and now, fittingly, the finale suffered the same fate. What made the evening even more unusual was the nature of the weather itself — something rarely seen in Australian cricketing conditions. Brisbane, more accustomed to clear skies during this time of year, was hit by repeated showers accompanied by thunder and lightning, reminiscent of an English summer rather than an Australian one.

Despite the interruptions, the match did begin on schedule, with India losing the toss yet again. Australia opted to bowl first, hoping to capitalize on any assistance from the damp conditions. The Indian team made a single change from the previous match, resting young left-hander Tilak Varma and bringing in Rinku Singh — a move that reflected the team management's desire to test bench strength ahead of a busy international calendar.

India's innings got off to a flying start, with the openers showing no signs of caution despite the looming clouds. In just 4.5 overs, the visitors raced to 52 without losing a wicket, setting the tone for what promised to be another explosive display.

First came the thunder — loud, cracking bolts that echoed around the Gabba. Although rain was still holding off, match officials decided to halt play in the interest of player safety. Lightning strikes in the vicinity made conditions too dangerous for the players and officials to remain on the field. The stadium authorities, prioritizing the safety of everyone present, took swift action. Fans seated in the lower, uncovered tiers of the stadium were immediately escorted to the upper covered stands. Security staff ensured no one remained in exposed areas, and an emergency message flashed across the giant screen: "We are experiencing dangerous weather. Please seek shelter in a safe area."

Abhishek Sharma Breaks Record for Fastest 1,000 T20 Runs, Surpasses Tim David as India's New Batting Sensation Rises

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November : Abhishek Sharma's meteoric rise in Indian cricket continued on Sunday night as the young left-handed batter etched his name in the record books by becoming the fastest cricketer in the world to reach 1,000 runs in T20 cricket in terms of balls faced. The 24-year-old, already hailed as one of the brightest stars of India's next generation, achieved the milestone in just 528 deliveries — breaking the previous record held by Australia's Tim David, who had taken 569 balls to reach the same landmark.

In doing so, Abhishek also joined an elite list of Indian T20 performers, climbing to second place among Indian batters in terms of innings taken to reach the 1,000-run mark. He reached the milestone in 28 innings — just one behind Virat Kohli, who remains the quickest Indian to achieve it in 27 innings. Abhishek's record-breaking feat saw him leapfrog past KL Rahul (29 innings) and Suryakumar Yadav (31 innings), further cementing his reputation as India's most promising young T20 batter.

The milestone came during the fifth and final T20I between India and Australia at the Gabba, a match that was eventually disrupted by rain and lightning. Before the interruption, Abhishek was unbeaten on 23 off 13 deliveries, including one boundary and one towering six. His partner, Shubman Gill, was also in fluent form, batting on 29 off 16 balls with six crisp boundaries to his name as India reached 52 without loss in 4.5 overs when play was halted.Abhishek's latest achievement adds another glittering chapter to his remarkable T20 journey, which has been characterized by explosive batting, consistency, and a fearless approach against both pace and spin. Since his debut, he has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to dominate attacks in the powerplay, setting the tone for India's innings with aggressive yet calculated shot-making.

His journey to this record-breaking moment has been as impressive as it has been swift. Abhishek's performances in the domestic circuit and the Indian Premier League (IPL) had already marked him as a special talent, but it was his consistency at the international level that has elevated his stature. His stunning form during the Asia Cup earlier this year, where he played a series of match-winning knocks, made him one of India's key assets in the shortest format.

Cricket experts have been quick to draw comparisons between Abhishek's batting style and that of some of India's most celebrated stroke players. His quick bat speed, composure under pressure, and natural ability to find gaps have made him a nightmare for bowlers in the first six overs. What truly stands out, however, is his maturity — a rare quality in a young cricketer who has already seen the highs and lows of professional sport.



In T20 cricket, where impact is often measured by strike rate and intent, Abhishek's numbers tell a story of dominance. Reaching 1,000 runs in just 528 balls underlines his ability to score at a blistering pace — averaging nearly two runs per ball throughout his T20 career. His strike rate, hovering well above 180 in recent matches, is among the highest for any top-order batter in international cricket.

Former cricketers and analysts were quick to laud the young star's feat. "Abhishek Sharma is redefining India's T20 approach," said former India captain Sourav Ganguly. "He brings fearless energy to the crease but also understands the game situation beautifully. Breaking a world record this early in his career shows how special he is."Abhishek's record came at a time when India has been in the process of rebuilding its T20 core. With seasoned players like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli gradually stepping back from the shortest format, the team has looked toward youth — and Abhishek has answered that call in style. His partnerships with Shubman Gill and Rinku Singh have given India a fresh, dynamic top order capable of taking on any bowling attack in the world. Beyond the numbers, however, Abhishek's journey is one of perseverance and quiet determination. Having honed his skills through years of domestic cricket for Punjab and standout performances in the IPL for Sunrisers Hyderabad, he has evolved into a player who thrives under pressure.



India A's captain Rishabh Pant plays a shot on day three of the second unofficial four-day Test cricket match of a series between India A and South Africa A, at BCCI Centre of Excellence, in Bengaluru, Karnataka, Saturday.

Rishabh Pant's Fighting Spirit Shines Again: Injured Star Scores Gritty Half-Century Against South Africa A

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November : Rishabh Pant once again proved why he is one of Indian cricket's most fearless warriors. Battling pain, bruises, and fatigue, the wicketkeeper-batter showcased his trademark resilience by scoring a determined half-century for India A against South Africa A in the ongoing second unofficial Test. Pant, who had only recently recovered from a series of injuries, defied all odds to return to the crease and play a crucial innings that underlined his never-say-die attitude.

The incident unfolded on the third day of the match when Pant, batting in the second innings, suffered three separate injuries in quick succession. First, a delivery struck his helmet, followed by a painful blow to his left elbow, and finally, another hit on his abdomen. At that stage, Pant was on 17 off 22 balls and visibly in discomfort. The team's physiotherapist and medical staff rushed onto the field to assess his condition. Though Pant initially wanted to continue batting, head coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar decided against taking risks and asked him to retire hurt.

For most players, that might have been the end of their innings. But Pant, known for his fighting spirit and love for challenges, had other plans. After receiving treatment and resting briefly in the dressing room, the left-hander decided to return to the crease — a move that not only surprised teammates but also earned him widespread admiration. What followed was a breathtaking display of courage and flair, reminding fans of the same aggressive instinct that once defined his heroics in Sydney and Brisbane.

Upon his return, Pant batted with controlled aggression, mixing caution with counter-attack. Despite clearly struggling with discomfort, he launched into the South African bowlers with characteristic power, smashing boundaries and sixes at will. His fifty came off just 54 balls and included five fours and four towering sixes. It was an innings that wasn't merely about runs — it was about resilience, pride, and the undying will to fight for the team.

Pant's 65-run knock played a crucial role in India A's commanding position in the match. Alongside wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel, he stitched a vital 82-run partnership that steadied the innings and ensured India's dominance. Jurel, too, was in sublime touch, scoring an unbeaten 127 off 110 deliveries — a brilliant knock that demonstrated maturity and skill beyond his years.

When Pant was eventually dismissed, the Indian team declared their innings at 382 for 7, setting South Africa A a formidable target of 406 runs to win. Harsh Dubey also impressed with a fluent 84 off 116 balls, further strengthening India's grip on the match.For Pant, this innings was not just another entry on the scorecard — it was a statement of intent. Since his return to professional cricket after a horrific car accident in late 2022, every appearance has carried immense emotional weight. His remarkable comeback has been marked by determination and courage, as he continues to rebuild his form and fitness with the aim of reclaiming his spot in the senior national team.

Earlier in the series, Pant had already signaled his return to form with a dazzling 90 in the first Test. His latest half-century only reinforces his readiness for top-level competition. For fans and selectors alike, these performances offer reassurance that the flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter is steadily approaching his best again. Pant's fearless approach and ability to perform under pressure have long made him a fan favorite.

Shivam Dube Emerging as India's Next Big All-Rounder, Says Former Coach Abhishek

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 8 November : Hardik Pandya in Shivam Dube. That's the strong indication coming from former Team India batting coach Abhishek Nayar, who has lavished praise on Dube's recent performances with both bat and ball, particularly in the ongoing T20 series against Australia.



Hardik Pandya, India's star all-rounder, has been out of action since sustaining an injury during the Asia Cup earlier this year. His absence was initially seen as a major setback for India's limited-overs setup, given his ability to contribute in all departments — power-hitting in the middle order, crucial breakthroughs with the ball, and sharp fielding. However, Shivam Dube's performances over the past few matches have ensured that the void left by Hardik has not been deeply felt.

Speaking to the official broadcaster during the India-Australia T20 series, Abhishek Nayar, who served as India's batting coach and is known for mentoring several of India's emerging stars, heaped praise on Dube's all-round capabilities. "Hardik is a phenomenal all-rounder. There's no denying that India needs him. But over the last few matches, Shivam Dube has shown that he has all the ingredients to be a complete all-rounder," Nayar said. "He can play a crucial role with the ball and pick up wickets, while also contributing with the bat in various situations. He's proving to be a dependable asset for India."

Dube, who was promoted to No. 3 in the batting order during the fourth T20I at Gold Coast, showcased his adaptability and composure. The 31-year-old southpaw scored 22 runs off 18 deliveries and later delivered a crucial spell with the ball, taking two key wickets for just 20 runs. His victims included Australian captain Mitchell Marsh and the hard-hitting Tim David — both known for their ability to change the course of a game. Nayar particularly highlighted Dube's bowling effort during a crucial phase of the match. "When Australia were scoring freely, Shivam stepped up and picked up two big wickets. That turned the momentum back in India's favor. Add to that his contribution with the bat — he's ticking every box you want from a seam-bowling all-rounder," he said.

The comparison with Hardik Pandya, though inevitable, is not misplaced. Over the years, India has relied heavily on Hardik's balance in the playing XI — someone who can bowl consistently at 135 km/h, provide power-hitting depth at No. 6, and bring energy on the field. Dube, however, appears to be evolving into a similar mold. His recent performances have been marked by confidence, calmness, and a clear understanding of his role in the team setup.

During the T20 series against Australia, Dube has consistently provided breakthroughs when needed, and his improved fitness and control over his bowling have drawn attention. While earlier in his career he was often seen as primarily a batting all-rounder, recent months have seen him refine his seam bowling, particularly his ability to hit the right lengths and vary pace effectively in T20 conditions.

Nayar believes Dube's growing maturity and tactical awareness make him a strong contender for a long-term all-rounder role in the Indian setup. "The kind of balance Hardik brings to the side — a seam-bowling all-rounder who can finish games — is exactly what Dube is now bringing to the table. The management will have to think carefully before overlooking him when Hardik returns," Nayar added. Indeed, Dube's resurgence could not have come at a better time for India. With the T20 World Cup approaching next year, the selectors and team management are exploring depth and flexibility in the squad. Hardik's repeated injury concerns have been a matter of worry, and having a ready backup who can deliver across departments is a major positive for Indian cricket.

Ronaldo and Messi Lock Horns Over World Cup Glory: A War of Words Between Football's Greatest Rivals

Staff Reporter, Riyadh, 8 November : Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi — this time not on the field, but through words. The two football legends, who have defined an era with their brilliance, have found themselves in the middle of a verbal duel over the value and meaning of winning the FIFA World Cup.It all began when Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo took a subtle but pointed jab at Messi's World Cup triumph during an interview with British journalist Piers Morgan. When asked about his own dream of winning the coveted trophy, Ronaldo's response appeared to question whether lifting the World Cup truly defines a player's greatness.

"Winning the World Cup is not a dream for me," Ronaldo said. "What does that define? Does winning a tournament determine if I'm the best in history? Can someone play six or seven matches and suddenly become the greatest? Is that how it works?" His rhetorical questions immediately sent shockwaves through the football world, sparking heated debates among fans and pundits.

Many interpreted Ronaldo's comments as a veiled criticism of Lionel Messi's World Cup win with Argentina in 2022. For years, comparisons between the two icons have revolved around club achievements, individual accolades, and international success. Messi's crowning moment in Qatar — lifting the one trophy that had eluded him — was widely seen as the final argument in favor of his claim to

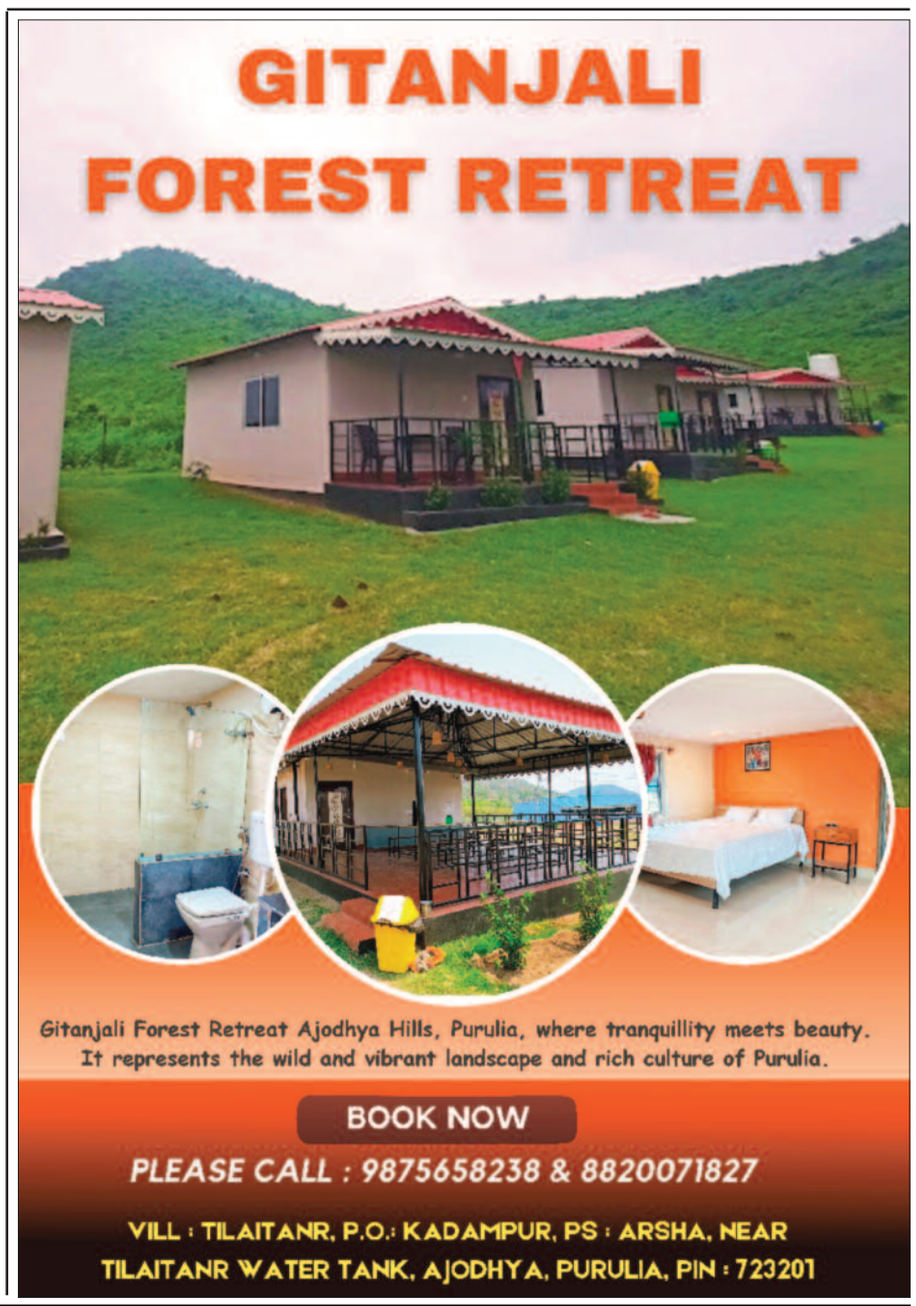


football's throne. Ronaldo's remarks, therefore, were seen as an attempt to downplay that accomplishment.

Social media quickly erupted. While Ronaldo loyalists backed their hero, arguing that individual skill and longevity outweigh the outcome of a short tournament, Messi's supporters viewed the comments as an act of bitterness. Football journalists and analysts too weighed in, calling the episode another reminder of how even legends struggle to escape the shadow of comparison. But Messi, known for his composed and humble demeanor, did not let the comments go unanswered. In a separate interview given just hours later, the Argentine captain delivered a calm yet powerful response. "To be honest, it's impossible to describe what winning the World Cup feels like," Messi said. "For me, the World Cup holds a special place. For any player, winning it is the highest point of their career — the ultimate achievement. What can possibly come after that? Once you've done it, there's nothing more to ask for."

Messi continued, reflecting on the completeness of his football journey. "I consider myself very lucky. I've achieved everything — at the club level, individually, and internationally. We won the Copa América, and then the World Cup. That felt like the perfect moment to end my journey," he said.

However, to the delight of fans worldwide, Messi hinted that his story might not be over yet. The 37-year-old forward revealed that he could still play in the 2026 World Cup if his fitness allows. "I haven't decided yet. It depends on how I feel. If I can maintain my level and my health, maybe I'll be there for one last time," he added, leaving supporters hopeful for another glimpse of his magic on football's biggest stage.The exchange has reignited the age-old debate: who is truly the greatest of all time? While Ronaldo boasts a staggering goal-scoring record, five Ballon d'Ors, and continental success with Portugal, Messi's list includes a record eight Ballon d'Ors, Champions League glory, and, crucially, the World Cup — a trophy that has historically served as the ultimate yardstick of greatness. Rivalries in sport often fuel excellence, and perhaps none has done so more than this one. For nearly two decades, Ronaldo and Messi have pushed each other to unimaginable heights — rewriting records, redefining consistency, and captivating millions.



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