THE INSIDES SPEAK

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India, US Sign Framework On Securing Supply Of Critical Minerals

Rare Earths: How It Could Benefit New Delhi

India and the United States on Tuesday signed a bilateral framework aimed at securing the supply, mining, and processing of critical minerals and rare earth elements. The announcement was made by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. "We are today signing a bilateral India-US framework on securing supplies of mining and processing of critical minerals and rare earths," he said.



Commenting on this, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he's glad both countries were able to sign this, as it provides a tangible example of the strategic partnership between the United States and India.

"I have spoken often during my time here over the last few days about the strategic alliance between the United States and India and how important that is for our national interest in the United States. And today is a tangible example of it. We are two countries that have strategic interests in ensuring reliable long-term access to critical minerals and supply chains that are important for our innovation economy... The groundwork was laid for this on the 4th of February when you joined us at the Critical Minerals Forum that we hosted in Washington, D.C. It gained momentum later that month when India signed on to Paxilla... and now today, because we both have a strategic and shared interest in the fact that vibrant innovation economies such as ours cannot afford to leave the foundational materials of these industries vulnerable to single source monopolies that could deny us these things, not just in a time of conflict, but as a leverage point contrary to our sovereign national interests," Rubio said.

Quad Grouping Unveils New Measures To Boost Maritime Surveillance

Meanwhile, the Quad grouping has unveiled new measures to boost maritime surveillance and port infrastructure across the Indo-Pacific against the backdrop of China's growing military posturing in the region. The new measures were announced following a meeting of the grouping's foreign ministers in New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and attended by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi. "Much of the discussions and indeed the bilateral exchanges were devoted to the current state of the world," Jaishankar said at the end of the meeting.

Relevance to Indo-Pacific

Naturally, the focus of the deliberations was on issues of relevance to the Indo-Pacific, he said. "Because we are four maritime democracies located at different ends of the Indo-Pacific, the exchange of perspectives was an exercise of considerable value. We spent some time on the question of safe and unimpeded maritime commerce and reaffirmed the significance of scrupulously observing international law," the minister said. Jaishankar said a free and open Indo-Pacific has many dimensions and facets and the Quad meeting took stock of the progress in many of them.

Bombay HC Grants Interim Protection Against Demolition At Mulund Sports Complex

Pulls Up BMC Over Due Process



Mumbai: The Bombay High Court has granted interim protection to a private company operating parts of the Kalidas Sports Complex/Priyadarshini Indira Gandhi Sports Complex in Mulund after the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) allegedly began demolition work without issuing prior notice. The court noted that the civic body had not issued any notice to the petitioner and that it "cannot take law in its own hands".

The vacation bench of the High Court was hearing a petition filed by Dhanraj Hospitality & Services Pvt Ltd against the BMC and other respondents. The company sought directions restraining the civic body from carrying out demolition, sealing or any coercive action at the premises.

According to the petition, the company was awarded the contract in 2021 through a public tender floated by a trust formed by the BMC for operating and modernising designated areas of the Kalidas Sports Complex and Priyadarshini Indira Gandhi Sports Complex. The petitioner claimed it invested heavily in structural repairs, beautification and landscaping work at the site.

The company alleged that demolition activities began on May 16 without any valid notice or opportunity for a hearing.

Mumbai Crime Branch Arrests Main Accused In Byculla Firing Case Linked To D-Company Aide's Son



Mumbai: The Mumbai Crime Branch has arrested the main accused in the Byculla firing case linked to the attack on Sameer Mohammad Asif Khan alias Sameer Sheikh, the son of alleged D-Company gangster Asif Sheikh alias Asif Dadi. According to an IANS report, the main accused has been identified as Saif Mastan. He was arrested in West Bengal after remaining absconding for several days. The firing targeted Sameer Sheikh over an alleged financial dispute.

Earlier, on May 13, within 24 hours of the firing, the Mumbai Crime Branch had arrested two other accused from Mahim. Two suspects were arrested in connection with the firing case. The suspects, identified as Zeeshan Anwar Sheikh (30) and Sadik Sheikh Liyakat Sheikh (30), were arrested by Crime Branch officials from the Mahim Dargah area.

Court Allows Police Interrogation of Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad Over Threat to Publisher

Mumbai: The Kolhapur court has permitted the police to question Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad in connection with a threat issued to publisher Prashant Ambi over the title of the late Govind Pansare's book 'Who was Shivaji?'. The police had earlier refused to register a case; the court's order now paves the way for further action. The Rajarampuri police station in Kolhapur is expected to issue a notice to Mr. Gaikwad, directing him to appear for questioning or submit his response in writing. The MLA has said he will cooperate with the police. Mr. Ambi, meanwhile, has claimed that he continues to receive threatening calls from supporters of Mr. Gaikwad and will file a fresh complaint.

The incident dates back to the book 'Shivaji Kon Hota' (Who was Shivaji?), written by Govind Pansare 37 years ago. Mr. Gaikwad objected to the use of the single word 'Shivaji' for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. He called Mr. Ambi, abused him, and threatened to kill him if the book was printed. A clip of the conversation went viral. Mr. Ambi tried to protest outside Mr. Gaikwad's house



in Buldhana but was detained by the police.

In the phone conversation, Mr. Gaikwad said, "I will enter your house and kill you, crush you, cut out your tongue." When Mr. Ambi explained that the book was written by Professor Pansare and published in 1988 without any intention to insult Shivaji Maharaj, Mr. Gaikwad continued the abuse. After the court's permission, Mr. Gaikwad expressed regret for the abusive language he used. He said that if the issue of insulting Shivaji arises in the future, he will maintain his stand. He added that he will urge the Chief Minister to ban the books 'Dagalbaj Shivaji' and 'Shivaji: Who was Shivaji?' in the upcoming assembly session.

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Chandra Pawar) MLA Rohit Pawar targeted Mr. Gaikwad. Mr. Pawar questioned why the police administration, which acted promptly in the Vikas Lawande case, is delaying the Prashant Ambi case despite having evidence. He said the Kolhapur court has permitted the investigation of a people's representative who insulted Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, supported the murder of Govind Pansare, abused Mr. Ambi, and insulted women. He also noted that the High Court has accepted a petition in the matter and the hearing will begin soon. Lawyer Asim Sarode has demanded that a cognisable case be registered against Mr. Gaikwad. Mr. Sarode said a petition has been filed in the Kolhapur High Court on behalf of Mr. Ambi seeking the same.

EDITORIAL

MARCO RUBIO, US SECRETARY OF STATE IN INDIA...

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who is in India to attend the Quad Foreign Ministers Meet, on Tuesday said that a deal with Iran was still possible despite new American strikes that cast doubt on their fragile ceasefire. He said there were some talks going on in Qatar today, so we'll see if we can make progress. The US military on Monday said that it carried out "self-defence" strikes in southern Iran, including on missile launch sites and boats placing mines, even as President Donald Trump said on social media that negotiations with Tehran were "proceeding nicely." The strikes comes as top Iranian negotiators arrived in Doha for the latest round of talks to end the months-long conflict, which had prompted Iran to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for global energy exports. The strikes were done "to protect our troops from threats posed by Iranian forces," but the military was "using restraint during the ongoing ceasefire," Capt Tim Hawkins, the spokesman for the US military's Central Command, said in a statement. Further details were not immediately available, including more specifics on the threats from Iran and what this means for negotiations. There was no official response from Iran, which had sent its parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf to Qatar for negotiations over the possible deal with the US Qatar, which faced intense attacks from Iran during the war, holds billions of dollars in frozen Iranian funds.In Iran, the news website Tabnak, believed to be close to former Revolutionary Guard chief Mohsen Rezaei, identified four dead Guard troops it said had been killed in American strikes on boats. Iranian state television separately reported blasts around Bandar Abbas, a city on the Strait of Hormuz home to a military port and a dual-use airport. The strikes were the latest attacks to shake the weekslong ceasefire in the war. The Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of all crude oil and natural gas traded once passed, remains effectively in Iran's chokehold, disrupting global energy markets. Earlier in the day, Trump said any agreement to end the Iran war should include a requirement for several additional countries, including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, to join the Abraham Accords, the US-brokered agreements from Trump's first term aimed at normalizing relations with Israel. The proposal came as the emerging Iran deal faced criticism from fellow Republicans who favour a harder line on Iran, and it could add new diplomatic complications to the negotiations.

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Bombay High Court Stays Census Duty Requisition For Private Unaided School Staff



Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on May 22, 2026 granted interim protection to associations representing over 500 private unaided and minority schools in Maharashtra, staying all notices, appointment orders, and coercive steps such as First Information Reports issued against their teaching and non-teaching staff for failing to report for census duties.

A Division Bench of Justices Gautam Ankhad and Sandesh Patil, hearing Writ Petition (L) No. 15009 of 2026, held prima facie that the Census Act, 1948 and the Census Rules, 1990 do not impose any statutory obligation on private unaided schools to provide their staff as Enumerators or Supervisors. The petitioners were represented by Mr. Venkatesh Dhond, Senior Advocate, along with Mr. Tejas Popat, Mr. Priyansh R. Jain, Mr. Shamant Satiya and Mr. Sahil Panjwani, Advocates. The Court observed that Section 4A of the Census Act applies only to "local authorities" as defined in the General Clauses Act, 1897, a category that does not include private unaided schools. Sections 6 and 7 of the Census Act, the Bench noted, contemplate assistance only in respect of persons physically present on the premises of an institution, and do not authorise compulsory requisition of employees.

The Court rejected the State's reliance on Section 27 of the Right to Education Act, 2009, stating that the provision is merely an exception to the general prohibition on deploying teachers for non-educational purposes and does not serve as an independent source of power. Interpreting Rule 3 of the Census Rules, the Bench applied the ejusdem generis rule to hold that the term "Teachers" in Serial No. 5 of the Table refers only to teachers employed in Government or aided institutions, and not to those in private unaided schools.

The interim order specifically stayed appointment orders dated February 27, 2026, and March 4, 2026, issued by the Assistant Commissioner and Charge Officer of the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (Exhibits F-1 and F-2 to the petition). The Court also restrained the Respondents from issuing further notices, taking coercive steps, or initiating criminal action against the staff of the petitioner schools for non-compliance with census duties.

Mumbai Weather Update: Hot & Humid Conditions To Prevail In City & MMR;

Light Rain Likely In Evening; Andheri Records BEST AQI At 3



Mumbai: Mumbai and areas of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) woke up to warm weather and a sticky morning on Tuesday, May 26, as the early morning temperature was recorded at 32 degrees Celsius. According to the Regional Meteorological Centre, hot and humid conditions will prevail in the city today, causing discomfort to daily commuters. Though the weather remained hot, the air quality was recorded in the "good" category, with an AQI of 21.

Mumbai Weather Today

According to the RMC, Mumbai and Thane will experience hot and humid conditions. However, there is a possibility of light rain or thundershowers towards the afternoon and evening. The minimum and maximum temperatures in Mumbai, Thane, and Navi Mumbai are expected to range between 28 degrees Celsius and 37 degrees Celsius.

AQI in Mumbai Today

Mumbai's overall air quality continued to remain in the 'good' category on Tuesday morning. Air quality data recorded the city's overall AQI at 21 during the early hours, according to data from aqi.in. Despite the overall improvement, several areas recorded moderate to poor air quality. The worst air quality was recorded at Khandelwal Extension Layout, with an AQI of 388, placing it in the 'severe' category.

Western Railway Demolishes 26 Permanent Structures On Railway Land Between Goregaon And Malad For Harbour Line Expansion



Mumbai: In a major anti-encroachment operation, Western Railway on Monday launched a large-scale demolition drive on railway land between Goregaon and Malad stations. The action, being carried out following directions from the Bombay High Court, aims to clear encroachments from nearly 1,500 square metres of railway property on the eastern side of the corridor.

Scale of encroachment & future use of land

According to railway officials, a total of 36 permanent and 24 temporary structures had come up illegally on the land. So far, 26 permanent structures have been demolished using bulldozers and heavy machinery. Authorities said the cleared land will be used for the proposed Harbour Line expansion project, which is considered crucial for improving Mumbai's suburban railway infrastructure and increasing passenger capacity in the future. A massive security arrangement was made to avoid any law and order issues during the operation. Around 168 city police personnel, 25 Railway Protection Force (RPF) staff, 65 Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel and nearly 80 railway employees were deployed at the site. Three JCB machines and dumpers were also pressed into service to remove debris and clear the area. Officials said the demolition was being monitored closely by senior railway authorities and the operation was progressing under tight security. The drive comes days after Western Railway carried out a similar large-scale anti-encroachment action in the Garib Nagar area of Bandra East. Railway officials indicated that such operations will continue as part of infrastructure expansion and safety measures across the suburban network.

Backlogs, H-1B Rules Disrupt Dream

Severe green card delays and tightening H-1B rules disrupt long-term pathways for skilled immigrants in United States



For international professionals pursuing long-term careers in the United States, the immigration landscape has suddenly grown much steeper. A dramatic shift in visa availability, combined with stricter regulatory scrutiny on temporary work permits, is creating a double-bind for highly skilled workers. From massive backward movements in permanent residency timelines to intensified administrative hurdles for corporate sponsors, the pathway to settling in the U.S. is undergoing a significant tightening.

Green card squeeze

The biggest setback for employment-based applicants is a sharp backward movement—or "retrogression"—in final action dates for the first (EB-1) and second (EB-2) preference categories. Driven by an unprecedented surge in demand that threatens to exhaust annual limits well before the end of the fiscal year, wait times have expanded significantly:

Advanced Degree Backlogs (EB-2): The cutoff date has retrogressed by over 10 months, rolling back to September 1, 2013. This massive delay stalls the final approval phase for thousands of specialized professionals already deep in the immigration pipeline.

Priority Workers (EB-1): Even the historically faster track for individuals with extraordinary ability or multinational executive roles has faced a rollback, retrogressing by more than three months to December 15, 2022.

Compounding the pressure, official projections warn that further retrogressions—or even a temporary freeze making these categories entirely unavailable—could occur before the fiscal year concludes on September 30.

RFE surge under new H-1B rules

As the timeline for permanent residency stretches into decades, maintaining a valid temporary work visa is vital. However, securing or extending H-1B status has become far more complex due to a major overhaul of the application process.

Employers must now use a heavily redesigned version of Form I-129. This updated framework demands highly granular data regarding the offered position, including explicit justifications for required education levels, precise fields of study, and exact job duties.

The primary goal of this change is to enable intense scrutiny of the alignment between a position's technical complexity and its designated wage level. For companies and foreign professionals, this translates to stricter employer attestations and a projected spike in Requests for Evidence (RFEs). Any ambiguity between internal job descriptions and corporate filings will likely trigger delays, making flawless administrative precision mandatory for maintaining legal status.

Investor loophole

With traditional, employer-sponsored routes bogged down by decades of backlogs and administrative friction, the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program has emerged as a critical workaround for those with the financial means to pivot.

Importantly, the specialized EB-5 set-aside categories—which reserve visas specifically for investments in Rural areas, High Unemployment zones, and Infrastructure projects—remain completely "Current." This means there is no backlog or waiting list, making it one of the only immediately available pathways to a green card.

For a minimum investment of $800,000 in a Targeted Employment Area (TEA), applicants can entirely bypass both the H-1B lottery and the crippling EB-2 backlogs. Furthermore, professionals already residing in the U.S. on temporary visas (such as an H-1B or F-1) can utilize concurrent filing. This allows them to apply for permanent residency, an open-market employment authorization document (EAD), and a travel permit simultaneously—instantly removing their dependency on an employer's sponsorship while their green card is processed.

Strategic shift ahead

The current U.S. immigration climate demands a major pivot in strategy. The classic pipeline of moving from a student visa to an H-1B, and eventually to an employer-sponsored green card, is facing unprecedented operational gridlock. Moving forward, success will depend on rigorous compliance to survive heightened H-1B audits, or for those with capital, looking toward alternative self-funded investor tracks to secure their future.

UK Migration Costs Surge

Rising visa fees and health surcharges significantly increase the cost of UK relocation for global professionals in 2026



For international professionals and students eyeing the United Kingdom, the immigration hurdles are no longer just about quotas and paperwork—they are increasingly about capital. In a strategic shift implemented in April 2026, the UK government has significantly tightened its immigration policies. Rather than imposing hard caps on the number of immigrants, the Home Office has erected steep financial barriers, turning the British dream into a major financial investment. Here is a breakdown of the escalating costs of UK relocation and what they mean for skilled workers.

Costlier baseline

The latest round of Home Office updates has pushed the baseline cost of entering the UK noticeably higher.

Skilled worker visas: The cost to secure overseas work authorization has jumped. While the previous baseline fee for a standard three-year Skilled Worker visa was £769, the April 2026 adjustments pushed this to £819. For visas extending beyond three years, the base fee now sits at a hefty £1,618.

Student visas: International education is also feeling the pinch. The application fee for a standard UK Student visa has risen to £558, adding another layer of expense to the already high tuition and living costs.

Health surcharge

The most significant financial barrier to entering the UK isn't the visa application fee itself—it is the mandatory Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). This surcharge grants immigrants access to the National Health Service (NHS) and must be paid upfront for the entire duration of the visa at the time of application.

Currently pegged at £1,035 per year for adults, the IHS dramatically inflates the initial capital required to move. For a standard three-year Skilled Worker visa, an individual must pay £3,105 in health surcharges before they even book a flight.

Total burden

When these compounding fees are calculated for a family, the upfront financial burden becomes staggering.

Consider a professional relocating to the UK with a spouse and two children on a three-year assignment.

When combining the new visa application fees, the massive upfront IHS payments for four people, and mandatory biometrics, the initial capital required to process the move easily shatters the ₹9 lakh mark—and can often climb significantly higher depending on the children's ages and exact visa sub-categories.

This creates a formidable cash-flow challenge. Unlike relocation expenses that can be paid over time, these Home Office fees must be cleared in full before an application is even reviewed.

Bakri Eid 2026: Tensions Flare In Mira Road After Goat Row Turns Violent, BJP Flags 'Illegal Sacrifice' Concerns In Mumbai Societies...



Mumbai: Mumbai's neighbouring Mira Road area witnessed high tension on Monday ahead of Bakri Eid after a dispute over goats being housed inside a residential complex allegedly turned violent, while the BJP simultaneously escalated pressure on Mumbai authorities over concerns of 'illegal sacrifice' inside housing societies across the city.

Tensions In Mira Road Society Ahead Of Bakri Eid

The controversy erupted at the Poonam Estate Cluster-1 complex in Mira Road, where nearly 25 goats were reportedly brought into a society premises and kept inside a temporary shed ahead of Bakri Eid celebrations. The issue triggered protests from several residents, who alleged that the shed had been permitted without any official society meeting or wider consent from residents. According to an ABP Majha report quoting residents, the presence of the goats was causing inconvenience inside the housing complex. Following complaints by local BJP leaders, Hindu organisation members and residents, officials from the civic body reportedly demolished the temporary shed after intervention from Kashimira Police and municipal authorities.

However, tensions escalated late at night, even after the structure was removed, as the goats allegedly remained inside the society's premises. Amid heated arguments and chaos, an unidentified person allegedly attacked a youth with a blade, leaving him injured. Police later registered a case in connection with the incident and security was tightened in the area to prevent further escalation. Society office-bearers clarified that permission had not been granted for qurbani inside the premises and claimed the arrangement was only meant for temporarily keeping the goats till Eid. Meanwhile, the issue has now spilled into Mumbai's political arena, with BJP leaders demanding strict action against any alleged illegal animal sacrifice inside residential complexes during Bakri Eid. Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde, along with several BJP MLAs and senior leaders, has written to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Mumbai Police demanding strict monitoring and action against any rule violations related to sacrifice inside housing societies. The letter has reportedly been signed by multiple BJP leaders, including MLAs Mihir Kotecha, Atul Bhatkhalkar, Manisha Chaudhari, Parag Shah and Sanjay Upadhyay, among others.

Mumbai Sessions Court Denies Interim Protection To Suraksha ARC Director Sudhir Valia In 1,000 Crore Fraud Case



Mumbai, May 25: The Sessions Court on Monday refused interim protection from arrest to Suraksha ARC director Sudhir Valia, an accused in an alleged Rs 1,000-crore financial fraud case also involving former Yes Bank chief Rana Kapoor. Valia had approached the Sessions Court seeking anticipatory bail in the case registered at the Worli Police Station. His lawyer, Vibhav Krishna, sought interim relief from arrest. Rejecting the plea, the court observed, "I have gone through allegations made in FIR. The allegations are serious. I have considered the say (of the prosecution)." The matter is now scheduled for hearing on June 1.

Valia and Kapoor have been booked over the alleged transfer of mortgaged properties worth around Rs 1,000 crore. Seeking anticipatory bail, Valia claimed he was merely one of six directors of Suraksha ARC and had been falsely implicated in the case. The FIR was lodged on the complaint of Lakhminder Singh, associated with Sapphire Land Development Pvt Ltd, a firm linked to Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL). According to the complaint, Sapphire Land Development availed a Rs 150-crore credit facility from Yes Bank in September 2016 after HDIL faced financial stress. To secure the loan, properties worth nearly Rs 1,000 crore belonging to HDIL and its group companies were mortgaged. These included Dreams Mall in Bhandup, Harmony Mall in Goregaon, Annex Mall in Kandivali, Kulraj Broadway in Vasai, and development rights over land parcels in Virar and Nahur.

CNG Prices Hiked Again By ₹2



Mumbai: Mumbai's CNG consumers have received temporary relief as Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) prices in the city have not been increased despite another fuel hike announced in Delhi and the NCR on Tuesday. While Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) raised CNG prices in Delhi by Rs 2 per kg, taking rates to Rs 83.09 per kg from May 26, Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL) has kept CNG prices unchanged across Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). This means CNG in Mumbai continues to remain priced at Rs 84 per kg, following the earlier hike implemented by MGL earlier this month. The latest Delhi revision marks the fourth CNG price increase in less than two weeks amid rising global energy prices and pressure on domestic fuel retailers.

Although there has been no fresh hike in Mumbai today, auto-rickshaw unions in the city have already renewed their demand for a fare revision after the previous Rs 2 per kg increase announced by MGL on May 14.

Mumbai's auto unions have argued that rising fuel costs and inflation have increased operating expenses for drivers. Union representatives recently met transport department officials and submitted revised fare calculations based on recommendations of the B Khatua Committee. At present, the minimum auto-rickshaw fare in Mumbai stands at Rs 26, while passengers are charged Rs 17.14 per kilometre after the base fare. According to union calculations, the per-kilometre fare should now increase to Rs 18.17. "The expenses on fuel have increased substantially for auto-rickshaw drivers. Inflation and higher Consumer Price Index levels have also affected daily running costs," Mumbai Rickshawmen's Union General Secretary Thampi Kurien had said while demanding a fare hike.

Delhi Customs Seize 17.7 Kg Hydroponic Weed at IGI Airport; 2 Passengers Under Scanner"

New Delhi (Agency): Customs officials at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport have booked a case of drug smuggling after seizing 17.720 kilograms of hydroponic weed (ganja), including packing material, during an operation carried out by the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU).

According to Customs officials, one passenger travelling from Bangkok to Delhi on May 12, had been discreetly kept under surveillance by officers at IGI Airport, New Delhi.

"Simultaneously, another passenger arriving from Sharjah was spot profiled while crossing the Green Channel with a bag having no baggage tag. During X-ray screening, suspicious images were noticed."

Officials said that during detailed enquiry and personal search, baggage tags were recovered from the passenger. The passenger allegedly admitted that he had been instructed to collect the bag booked in the name of the Bangkok passenger.

"Further examination of the baggage resulted in recovery of Hydroponic Weed (Ganja) weighing 17.720 kg (including packing material)," the statement added.

Customs officials said that further investigation in the matter is currently under way.

3 AIADMK Rebel MLAs Tender Resignation, Meet TVK's Aadhav Arjuna



Chennai (Agency): Three AIADMK legislators who were part of the rebel group led by C V Shanmugam and S P Velumani, met Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker J C D Prabhakar on Monday and tendered their resignation.

The three legislators — Maragatham Kumaravel, who won from Maduranthakam, Sathyabama from Dharapuram, and Jayakumar, who got elected from Perundurai Assembly constituency — on AIADMK tickets, called on the Speaker at the Secretariat here and submitted their resignations.

Shortly thereafter, they met TVK Minister Aadhav Arjuna at his chamber. They are likely to join the Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay-led Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam. The three were among the 25 legislators who voted in support of the TVK government during the floor test, defying the party diktat.

1.75 Lakh Indians Embark On Haj As Pilgrimage Begins

The Ministry of Minority Affairs has launched a dedicated Haj Suvidha app to provide digital services, flight confirmations, and emergency tracking for pilgrims

New Delhi (Agency): The annual five-day Haj pilgrimage began on Monday amid regional tensions in West Asia, as more than 1.6 million Muslims from around the world commenced their journey from the holy city of Mecca to the tent city of Mina in Saudi Arabia.

Pilgrims will spend the night there before moving to the plains of Arafat at dawn on Tuesday for the main ritual of Haj prayers.

Around 1.75 lakh pilgrims from India are participating in this year's pilgrimage.

The faithful have been arriving in Saudi Arabia for the Haj against the backdrop of a fragile ceasefire in the Iran war and broader regional tensions and uncertainty.

On the first day, many pilgrims in Mecca converge at a vast tent camp in the nearby desert. Prior to that, they circle the cube-shaped Kaaba at the Grand Mosque in sweltering temperatures.

For pilgrims, Haj is a deeply moving spiritual experience and an opportunity to seek forgiveness from God and the remission of past sins.

In India, home to a large Muslim minority, pilgrimage preparations have largely proceeded as normal. However, high fuel prices have pushed up travel costs for pilgrims.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) has launched a dedicated "Haj Suvidha" app to provide digital services, flight confirmations, and emergency tracking for pilgrims.

Twisha Sharma Death: Husband Sent To 7-Day Police Custody...”

Twisha Sharma, 33, was found hanging at her matrimonial home in Bhopal’s Katara Hills area on May 12

Bhopal (Agency): A local court on Saturday remanded Samarth Singh, husband of former actor-model Twisha Sharma and an accused in her alleged dowry death case, in police custody for seven days, while his mother and co-accused Giribala Singh said the police were yet to contact her for recording her statement in the high-profile case.

A four-member team of doctors from AIIMS Delhi was slated to fly to Bhopal in the evening to conduct a second



autopsy of Twisha Sharma following the Madhya Pradesh High Court’s order.

Samarth Singh, who had been absconding for ten days after an FIR was registered against him and his mother following Twisha’s death by hanging, was arrested on Friday evening after he reached the Jabalpur district court premises to surrender. He had withdrawn his pre-arrest bail petition filed in the Madhya Pradesh High Court earlier.

He was taken to Bhopal in the wee hours of Saturday and produced before Judicial Magistrate First Class Anudita Gupta who sent him in police custody for seven days. His lawyer also handed over his passport to the court.

Twisha Sharma, 33, was found hanging at her matrimonial home in Bhopal’s Katara Hills area on May 12, following which an FIR was registered against her husband Samarth Singh who is a lawyer, and her mother-in-law and former district judge Giribala Singh for alleged harassment for dowry.

Giribala Singh, who is currently the chairperson of the Bhopal District Consumer Court, on Saturday said she would be happy to record her statement, but Bhopal Police had not reached out to her so far. She could not step out of her house owing to the chaotic situation outside, she said, apparently referring to the presence of mediapersons. A day earlier, the High Court issued a notice to her on pleas seeking cancellation of her anticipatory bail, and sought her response by May 25. Two days ago, Bhopal Police had issued a third and final notice to her after she allegedly failed to appear for recording her statement. The High Court on Friday also ordered a second autopsy for Twisha by a specialised team from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, in response to a petition filed by her parents.

Accordingly, AIIMS Delhi constituted a medical board comprising four senior doctors to conduct a second autopsy. Chief of Forensic Medicine at AIIMS Delhi, Dr Sudhir Gupta, who set up the board, said it would fly to Bhopal by a state chartered plane at 6 pm.

Raghav Chadha appointed chairman of Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions

New Delhi (Agency): Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha, who recently switched loyalty to the BJP from AAP, has been appointed as the new chairman of the Committee on Petitions of the Upper House. Newly elected Rajya Sabha MP from TMC Menaka Guruswamy too has been appointed as a member of the Joint Committee on the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026. After reconstituting the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan nominated 10 members of the house to the panel. "Raghav Chadha has been appointed chairman of the committee," a Rajya Sabha notification said. The panel has been reconstituted by the Rajya Sabha chairman with effect from May 20, it said. The members of the panel, besides Chadha, are: Harsh Mahajan, Gulam Ali, Shambhu Sharan Patel, Mayankkumar Nayak, Masthan Rao Yadav Beedha, Jebi Mather Hisham, Subhasish Khuntia, Rwngwra Narzary and Sandosh Kumar P.



Mumbai Airport Customs Arrests 23-Year-Old Coffee Shop Staffer

Shop Staffer With 2.15 Crore Gold Dust; Probes Smuggling Syndicate Links



Mumbai: A 23-year-old man working in a coffee shop at the international airport has been arrested by Airport Customs officials for allegedly being part of a gold smuggling syndicate. The accused was caught while allegedly trying to deliver a consignment of smuggled gold to someone outside the airport premises. Customs officials stated that smugglers could exploit this modus operandi on a larger scale, which may be detrimental to national security. The arrested person has been identified as Ashish Yadav, a resident of Goregaon East.

Gold dust worth Rs 2.15 crore seized

According to Customs sources, during Sunday night duty, based on spot profiling that a coffee shop staff member was allegedly involved in gold smuggling and could hand over the contraband to someone outside the airport premises, Ashish Yadav was apprehended during the examination of staff working at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), Mumbai, at the airport exit gates situated at Level P-10. “During the personal search of the said staff person, he was found to be in possession of one white-coloured sock containing four brown-coloured oval-shaped capsules purportedly containing gold dust in the right pocket of the trousers worn by him. Twenty-four carat gold dust having a net weight of 1,470 grams, valued at Rs 2.15 crore, was recovered and seized,” said a Customs source.

The voluntary statement of the accused, Ashish Yadav, was recorded on Monday, wherein he allegedly admitted the possession, carriage, recovery, smuggling and handling of the gold. The passenger allegedly admitted that the gold dust did not belong to him and that he carried it at the behest of another person. Yadav allegedly admitted to receiving the gold from a transit passenger for monetary consideration of Rs 5,000. “If left unchecked, this modus operandi is likely to be exploited by smugglers on a large scale, even to smuggle other contraband items which might be detrimental to national security. This modus operandi is required to be nipped in the bud to avoid huge financial loss to the exchequer.

Bombay HC Judge Recuses From Hearing ED Plea Against Jet Airways Founder Naresh Goyal’s London Travel Permission



Mumbai: Justice Shreeram Shirsat on Monday recused himself from hearing a plea filed by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) challenging permission granted by the special PMLA court to Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal, who is facing money laundering charges, to travel to London for medical consultations.

Special court had permitted London visit

On May 12, the special court allowed Goyal to travel to London after noting that a letter issued by HCA Healthcare/Wellington Hospital, London, United Kingdom, showed that the applicant’s appointment had been confirmed for May 27 at 4 p.m. The ED has challenged the order before the High Court through advocate Ashish Mehta, claiming that if Goyal is allowed to travel to London for medical treatment, there is a possibility that he may abscond.

The agency contended that it had recently learnt that the businessman possesses two passports and that information regarding the second passport was allegedly concealed from both the investigating agencies and the court. Pending hearing of the plea, the ED has sought an interim stay on the order permitting Goyal to travel.

After Justice Shirsat recused himself, Mehta said the agency would mention the plea before another vacation bench headed by Justice Shyam Chandak on Thursday, May 28.

Allegations of financial fraud

The ED has alleged that Goyal is the prime orchestrator, ultimate controlling party and primary beneficiary of a colossal financial fraud involving the systematic siphoning, diversion and laundering of public funds obtained as loans by Jet Airways (India) Limited (JIL) from Canara Bank. The total outstanding exposure of the consortium of banks, in respect of their admitted claim, stands at Rs 5,716.34 crore. The CBI, based on a complaint by Canara Bank, assessed a wrongful loss of Rs 538.62 crore.

Medical bail history

The ED submitted that the magnitude of the alleged offence inherently and significantly escalates the flight risk.

Bhiwandi Activists Protest Outside Tehsildar Office Demanding Aadhaar, Ration Cards And Caste Certificates For Tribal Families

Bhiwandi: Alleging prolonged administrative negligence and denial of basic civic rights to members of the tribal community, activists of the Shramjeevi Sanghatana staged a protest outside the Tehsildar office in Bhiwandi on Monday, demanding immediate issuance of Aadhaar cards, ration cards and caste certificates to deprived families. Led by district vice-president Sagar Desak, the protesters sat on a dharna outside the cabin of Tehsildar Abhijeet Khole under the scorching sun, raising slogans against what they termed as the administration’s “continued apathy” towards the Katkari and other tribal communities. Several demonstrators declared that they would not leave the premises until the affected families receive the required documents. The agitation witnessed participation from office-bearers and activists including Prakash Raut, Jaya Pardhi, Gulab Mhaskar, Jayesh Patil, Vishwanath Pasari and Tanaji Lahange, along with a large number of Shramjeevi workers.

Nirmala Sitharaman Defends PM Modi's Austerity Call
Hits out at critics for 'peddling pessimism'

Speaking at the 37th foundation day event of the Small Industries Development Bank of India, she also hits out against naysayers who have built a cynical and pessimistic narrative after the Prime Minister's appeal and underlines that India cannot afford fearmongering at this stage



Mumbai (Agency): Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday defended Prime Minister Narendra Modi's austerity call, stressing the need to focus on the "3Fs" -- fuel, fertiliser and forex -- amid the West Asia crisis.

Speaking at the 37th foundation day event of the Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) here, she also hit out against naysayers who have built a cynical and pessimistic narrative after the Prime Minister's appeal and underlined that India cannot afford fearmongering at this stage.

The crisis is borne by external events, and the domestic economy continues to be positive and resilient, the finance minister said. Naysayers have created a "cynical and pessimistic narrative" after the Prime Minister's appeal for austerity, she said, stressing that such observations are factually incorrect.

"It (the narrative) is wrong because it is fear-mongering. India cannot afford fear-mongering. We need to give confidence to the people with our words and with our actions," she said. Fuel prices are high, gold prices have climbed to elevated levels, creating concerns on the external front, and there is an "unimaginable increase" in the fertiliser prices, she said, contextualising the call made by the Prime Minister.

Therefore, there is a need to look at conserving the forex, she said, adding that there is a need to focus on the 3Fs of fuel, fertilisers and forex in the current context. Stating that India's policy response has been calibrated to preserve domestic growth, Sitharaman said the cut in diesel and petrol excise duties will lead to a revenue impact of Rs 1 lakh crore.

Some "naysayers" have jumped into the debate following the Prime Minister's appeal, claiming that everything is "crumbling", which is factually incorrect, she said, listing out a slew of indicators showing buoyancy in the economy, including GST collections and automobile sales.

"All the good that is being done by the common people themselves is forgotten. And a pessimistic, cynical narrative is generated, which is just not right," she said.

"We should appreciate that the challenges are more externally driven. We must also recognise that India's domestic economic situation remains positive and resilient even today," the finance minister said.

She also highlighted that the issue of Rs 8.1 lakh crore locked in delayed payments for MSMEs is impacting their working capital and growth, and urged public sector undertakings not to exceed the 45-day window to make payments to them.

Meanwhile, Sitharaman also asked lenders to relook at the design of loans to tailor-make products, where repayments happen when an entity gets its revenues.

"My message to Sidbi and every banker here is that standard products cannot serve non-standard businesses," she said, citing examples of how the income generations of businesses vary across multiple activities.

STRAY DOGS CASE

Supreme Court Refuses To Entertain NGO's Plea Over Punjab CM Mann's Statement

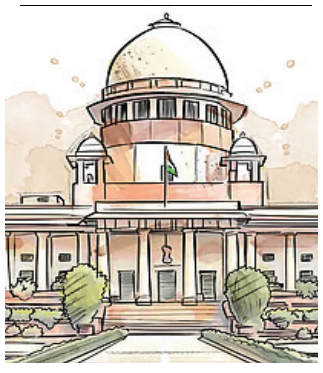
New Delhi (Agency): The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain an NGO's petition flagging Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's alleged statement that the court has given a "free hand" to eliminate stray dogs.

"Just because a Chief Minister makes a statement, does that mean we have to change our order...," a Bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta told advocate Anil Kumar Mishra after he mentioned the matter on behalf of NGO 'Animals are People Too' for urgent hearing.

It asked the petitioner to move the Punjab and Haryana High Court. "Strict compliance of the order is to be done by high courts. We told you the matter is assigned to the High Court. Go and make a request to the High Court," the Bench told Mishra who alleged that stray dogs were being killed after the top court's order.

Following the top court's May 19 order in the stray dogs case, Mann had allegedly tweeted that the Supreme Court "has given a free hand to kill stray dogs", the counsel alleged.

"Following the Honourable Supreme Court's decision, the Punjab government will launch a massive campaign starting tomorrow to eliminate stray and killer dogs that endanger the



lives of children and pedestrians…Thanks to the Supreme Court," Mann had reportedly said.

However, taking strong exception to Mann's alleged statement, the NGO urged the top court to clarify that euthanasia of dogs can be carried out only in narrowly defined circumstances and strictly in accordance with the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, after due verification by qualified experts and that its directions were never intended to authorise blanket culling of stray dogs or extra-judicial killing through poisoning or other means.

The NGO also wanted the Bench to direct all state Directors-General of Police to ensure that no dogs were unlawfully killed, poisoned, or otherwise harmed in the name of implementing the top court's order.

As incidents of stray dog bites/attacks continue to occur across India with "alarming frequency and severity", the Supreme Court on May 19 for the first time allowed euthanasia for rabid, incurably ill, or demonstrably dangerous stray dogs to curb the threat to human life.

However, it had made it clear that such action may be taken only after an assessment by veterinary experts and in strict accordance with the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, the Animal Birth Control Rules 2023 and other applicable statutory protocols.

The Bench had refused to recall its November 7, 2025, directions that stray dogs picked up from public places like hospitals, bus stands, schools, railway stations, etc., must not be released to the same place after vaccination/sterilisation.

"This court cannot remain oblivious to the deeply disturbing ground realities emerging from various parts of the country where young children and elderly persons have been attacked, ordinary citizens have been left vulnerable in public places, and even international travellers have fallen to such incidents," it said.

It had dismissed applications seeking modifications of its directions issued in November last year in a suo motu case over stray dog menace.

Holding that stray dogs did not possess an "indefeasible or absolute right" to occupy all categories of spaces irrespective of their nature and use, the top court clarified that the statutory framework for humane management of stray dogs cannot be interpreted as conferring a perpetual right of occupation in sensitive institutional spaces.

Ordering states and UTs to take steps to enhance the Animal Birth Control framework, it said that erring officials, who fail to carry out the directions, will be liable to contempt and disciplinary action.

"Article 21 necessarily encompasses the right of every citizen to move and access public places without living under a constant apprehension of physical attack or exposure to life-threatening events such as dog bites in public areas.

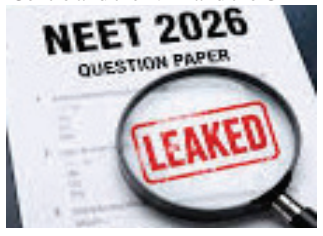
The state cannot remain a passive spectator where preventable threats to human life continue to proliferate in the face of statutory mechanisms specifically designed to address them," it said.

"The Constitution of India does not envisage a society where children, elderly persons and vulnerable citizens are compelled to survive at the mercy of physical strength, chance or circumstance due to failure of the state machinery...," it said.

NEET PAPER LEAK

NTA Has Not Learnt Lessons, Says Supreme Court; Issues Notices On Pleas

New Delhi (Agency): Noting that the National Testing Agency (NTA) has not learnt any lessons from earlier NEET paper leaks, the Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre and the NTA and the CBI



on petitions seeking dissolution of NTA following cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 over allegations of widespread paper leak.

"It is sad that they have not learnt their lessons. The matter travelled to this court earlier also. We passed an order, a committee was formed… a monitoring committee which made some recommendations and they were accepted but…" a Bench led by Justice PS Narasimha said, directing the NTA and the Centre to respond to petitions filed by Federation of All India Medical Association and United Doctor's Front.

The top court directed that copies of petitions be given to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta besides other parties. The Bench – which also included Justice Alok Aradhe asked the NTA to spell out the steps taken for compliance of recommendations suggested by the committee. It also asked the NTA—which conducts the NEET examination—to file an affidavit by Thursday on compliance of its directions issued in 2024.

"We direct NTA to file an affidavit indicating the position as regards the monitoring committee constituted on November 14. We direct K Radhakrishnan (former ISRO chief), chairman of the committee, to file an affidavit with the steps taken to ensure compliance with the directions of the high-powered committee. List on Friday," the Bench said, posting the matter for further hearing on May 29.

As the petitioners talked about re-examination, the Bench said, "We are not so much on the re-examination." On May 12, the Centre and the NTA cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 held on May 3 and the NEET paper leak case has since been handed over to the CBI which has arrested at least 11 accused from Delhi, Gurugram, Jaipur, Nasik, Pune and some other places. The exam has been rescheduled to June 21.

Alleging a "systemic failure", petitioners Federation of All India Medical Association and United Doctor's Front have sought replacement of the testing agency with a robust and autonomous body to conduct the medical entrance exam.

Divyanka Tripathi And Vivek Dahiya Welcome Twin Boys

'Mere Karan Arjun aa gaye'





Divyanka Tripathi and Vivek Dahiya have welcomed twin boys after 10 years of marriage. In March, the couple had announced their pregnancy. The couple have been sharing beautiful pregnancy photos and videos with their fans throughout their pregnancy journey.

They announced the same via a heartfelt post on Instagram. It had a picture of two baby boys dressed in blue sitting on clouds. The picture had the words: "We asked for happiness... God said, "Take double" Blessed with twin baby boys." The caption read: "The wait is finally over "The Boys" are here and life already feels more beautiful than we ever imagined. Mere Karan Arjun aa gaye! Need all your love and blessings as Div and I begin this incredible new chapter of parenthood." Take a look:

In March, Divyanka confirmed her pregnancy by sharing photos on her Instagram account. Her caption read, "Plot twist after 10 years. Some journeys are not about rushing They're about becoming ready-together. And just when you think your story is complete life adds the most beautiful chapter. Still soaking it in still smiling for no reason With our hearts full of gratitude. We are expecting #DivekLoveUpgraded #10saalBaad."

Last year, Divyanka and Vivek had opened up about the constant questions around starting a family. During one of their vlogs, a fan asked the couple about having kids, and Vivek responded with honesty and humour. "Iska jawab mere pass nahi hai. Iska jawab khuda ke pass hai. Bhagwan, Allah, unke pass hai. Unse jaake pucho. Jab hoga tab pata chal jayega," he said, adding that only God knows when the right time would come.

Reacting to this, Divyanka jokingly said, "Kon hi rok sakega iss information ko?" Vivek then added, "Hum chah kar bhi nahi rok sakenge," hinting that whenever the news arrives, it would naturally reach everyone. Divyanka and Vivek's story began on the sets of Yeh Hai Mohabbatein, where the two first became friends. Over time, that bond turned into love, making them one of television's most loved couples. The duo tied the knot on July 8, 2016, in Bhopal in the presence of family members, close friends, and several celebrities from the television industry.

Esha Deol Remembers Dharmendra After posthumous Padma Honour





Esha Deol penned a heartfelt note while posting photos of her mother, Hema Malini, receiving Dharmendra's Padma Vibhushan award. Sharing the same, she wrote, "A moment of pride A moment of emotion, How we so deeply wished he was present today dressed in a crisp white shirt and blue suit looking as handsome as always with excitement of a young boy going to receive the prestigious award. Yesterday as my mother represented our family and received the award . And the youngest of us Ahana represented all the 6 of us his children & shed tears & clapped in honour of our father A man who we love , who we cherish, who we miss & who we proudly call our papa. Forever in our hearts." The comment section of her post was turned off. Take a look: Earlier this year, in January 2026, Hema Malini had penned an emotional note after the government announced Dharmendra's Padma Vibhushan honour. Sharing her happiness and pride on Instagram, she wrote, "So so proud that the govt has recognised Dharam ji's immense contribution to the film industry by bestowing on him the prestigious Padma Vibhushan award."

I won't marry secretly, I promise, says Kangana

Bollywood actress and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut breaks silence on 'secret wedding' buzz after *mangalsutra* and *sindoor* ppearance in Mumbai



Photos: Instagram

Actress and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut took fans by surprise after she was spotted wearing a *mangalsutra* and *sindoor* in Mumbai on Thursday evening. Soon after, speculation began that the actress might have tied the knot secretly away from the spotlight. She was also seen sporting a *bindi,* green bangles, and sunglasses as she made her way from the building to her car with her security personnel.



Amid the growing speculation, Kangana finally addressed the buzz around her 'secret wedding' rumours, clarifying that she has not gotten married and that the look was for a shoot. Taking to her Instagram Story on Friday, Kangana stated that she has been receiving phone calls ever since her 'secret wedding' rumours started making headlines.

She wrote, "I am filming in and around the city every single day, some one clicked this random picture with character make up and now I am getting so many phone calls, but what is the big deal about the married woman look? Actors play all kinds of roles, I won't marry secretly I promise."

Are Khloé, Michael B. Jordan dating?

Viral AI photos of Khloé Kardashian and Michael B. Jordan spark dating rumours



Khloé Kardashian has become the latest Kardashian-Jenner sister to fuel romance rumours after viral photos showed her walking hand-in-hand with American actor Michael B. Jordan outside a restaurant.

The pictures quickly sent social media into a frenzy, with fans speculating whether the duo were secretly dating. The buzz comes at a time when the Kardashian-Jenner family's love lives continue to dominate headlines, with Kim Kardashian linked to Lewis Hamilton, while Kylie Jenner continues to make headlines for her romance with Timothée Chalamet. In the viral images shared on X, Khloé appeared in a black mini bodycon dress paired with a leather jacket, while Michael wore an animal-print shirt over a white tank top. The duo were seen holding hands as they stepped out after their alleged date night.



Real truth: Despite looking convincing at first glance, the photos were later confirmed to be AI-generated. Fans quickly pointed out visual inconsistencies, including Khloé appearing with a noticeably different hairstyle. The AI label attached to the image further exposed the photos as fake, putting an end to the dating rumours surrounding the duo.



Photos: Instagram

Eight Killed As Scorpio SUV Plunges 1,200 Feet Into Ambenali Ghat Gorge In Raigad, Massive 20-Hour Rescue Operation Launched

Navi Mumbai: Eight persons, including a driver, were killed after a Scorpio SUV plunged nearly 1,000 to 1,200 feet into a deep gorge in the Ambenali Ghat section on the Poladpur-Mahabaleshwar highway in Maharashtra's Raigad district, triggering a massive rescue operation that continued for more than 20 hours, police said on Monday.

Accident discovered & police response

According to police, the accident came to light at around 11.30 pm on May 24, when Poladpur Police Station received information about a horrific accident in the Ambenali Ghat section. A police team immediately rushed to the spot and coordinated in advance to keep rescue machinery, ambulances, ropes, stretchers and other emergency equipment ready before reaching the scene.

The accident vehicle, a Scorpio SUV bearing registration number MH 11 DN 2340, had travelled from Satara to the Harnai Port area in Dapoli for tourism. The group of eight, including the driver, had reportedly left Harnai for Satara at around 2 am on Sunday when the accident occurred at approximately 5.30 am near a sharp turn within the limits of Dabhil village in the Ambenali Ghat section.





Police said the SUV plunged into a deep valley adjacent to the ghat road, making the rescue operation extremely difficult and risky. The bodies of the victims were found scattered at different locations deep inside the gorge. A joint rescue operation involving the police and several rescue teams, including Pratapgad Rescue Trekkers, Mahad Siscamp Rescue Team, Roha Rescue Team, Narveer Rescue Team, Kalbhairavnath Rescue Team, Mahabaleshwar Trekkers and villagers from Devale, Haldule and Lahulse, was launched to retrieve the victims.

Raigad Superintendent of Police Anchal Dalal supervised the operation. "The rescue operation was extremely challenging due to the steep terrain, dense vegetation and scattered locations of the bodies. Despite the difficult conditions, all agencies and volunteers worked in coordination for more than 20 hours to complete the operation," Dalal said. Additional Superintendent of Police Abhijit Shivthare, Mahad Sub-Divisional Police Officer Shankar Kale and Poladpur Police Station in-charge Anand Rawde, along with other police personnel, remained present at the site and actively participated in the rescue work.

By Monday evening, all eight bodies were recovered from the valley and shifted to the Rural Hospital in Poladpur. Officials said rescuers faced major challenges due to the steep terrain, dense vegetation and inaccessible locations where the bodies were trapped. Despite the difficulties, rescue teams continued the operation relentlessly for over 20 hours.

Kalyan Crime: Family Attacked With Sharp Weapons For Opposing Alleged Drug Trade; Several Injured

Kalyan: A shocking incident of violence has surfaced from the Fish Market area in Kalyan West, where a family that had allegedly been opposing illegal drug activities in the locality was brutally attacked by a group of assailants armed with sharp weapons. Several members of the family sustained injuries in the assault and are currently undergoing treatment, triggering tension in the area and raising serious questions over law and order.



According to information received, the victim family had been repeatedly voicing concerns against the alleged drug menace and anti-social activities prevailing in the locality. The family members had also lodged multiple complaints with the police against local drug peddlers and addicts operating in the area.

Attack allegedly linked to earlier dispute

The situation escalated when a woman from the family was allegedly assaulted by the accused. As other family members rushed to her rescue, the attackers allegedly launched a violent assault using sharp weapons and other objects, leaving several persons seriously injured.

Residents report panic after assault

Eyewitnesses claimed chaos erupted in the locality following the attack, creating panic among residents. The injured were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where they are receiving medical treatment. The victim family has alleged that despite repeated complaints regarding illegal drug activities and anti-social elements, strict preventive action was not taken by the authorities. They claimed that had timely action been initiated earlier, the attack could have been prevented. Meanwhile, the Bazarpeth Police Station has registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident. Police officials are reportedly examining CCTV footage and recording statements of witnesses to identify all those involved in the assault. The incident

Maharashtra Revenue Department Ranked Number One In State For Governance Process Re-engineering Phase-2 Implementation

Mumbai: In a major boost to administrative efficiency, the Maharashtra Revenue Department has been ranked number one in the state for its outstanding performance in implementing the Governance Processing Re-engineering (GPR) Phase-2 initiative. The achievement was announced during a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who lauded Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule and his department for making public services faster, more transparent, and citizen-friendly.



Under the Right to Services Act, the Revenue Department provides a total of 54 essential services, which includes 20 core revenue services, 20 services from the Inspector General of Registration, and 14 under the Commissioner of Land Records. Through the GPR initiative, the state government launched a massive overhaul to eliminate bureaucratic delays. During the first phase of this campaign, application formats were heavily streamlined, the mountain of unnecessary paperwork required from citizens was drastically reduced, and the multiple layers of official approvals a file had to pass through were cut down.

As a direct result of these administrative reforms, ordinary citizens can now obtain crucial documents in record time. The fast-tracked services include income certificates, age, nationality, and domicile certificates, non-creamy layer certificates, senior citizen certificates, and temporary residence certificates. Additionally, critical documentation for rural populations, such as certified copies of land records and certificates for small farmers or landless laborers, has also been simplified.

Mumbai Monsoon Preparedness: BMC's Standing Committee Finds Clogged Nullahs, Sets June 3 Deadline For Desilting Work

Mumbai: Even as the monsoon looms, the BMC continues to claim that nearly 85% of Mumbai's nullah desilting work has been completed. However, the reality on the ground told a different story, as major drains in Kurla, Mankhurd and Govandi were found heavily clogged during an inspection by BMC's Standing Committee Chairman Prabhakar Shinde and committee members.

The inspection exposed glaring gaps in the civic body's preparedness ahead of the monsoon, triggering sharp criticism and strong dissatisfaction from the committee. Shinde pulled up officials over the slow pace of work and directed them to clear the pending desilting within five days, warning that the committee would conduct a fresh inspection to review the situation.

Following complaints over poor desilting works, the Standing Committee conducted an inspection tour across Mumbai on Monday. During a visit to the Mithi River stretches at Kurla and BKC, members found inadequate machinery deployed for desilting operations.





Shinde questioned officials, who admitted that a shortage of machines was slowing the pace of work ahead of the monsoon. During the inspection at the Subhash Nagar nullah near Govandi and Chembur railway stations, corporators also found garbage and silt accumulated in the drain. When pulled up by Shinde, civic officials claimed the nullah had been cleaned only a few days earlier and blamed the fresh accumulation on garbage being dumped again into the drain. After the inspection, Congress leader Ashraf Azmi alleged that this year's desilting plan exists only on paper, with contracts awarded to inexperienced contractors for nullah cleaning. He further claimed that Zone-5 works were allotted to a blacklisted contractor.

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