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EDITOR IN CHIEF : SANJAY M. BHAIRE

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West Bengal exit polls deliver mixed signals

POLL OF POLLS GIVES BJP EDGE OVER TMC

Kolkata

Exit poll projections for West Bengal 2026 present sharply divergent scenarios across agencies, underscoring a closely watched and highly contested political battle.

According to ABP's latest estimates, the contest appears tightly fought, with the TMC projected at 125-140 seats, while the BJP is placed slightly ahead at 146-161 seats, suggesting a narrow edge in a competitive race.

In contrast, Peoples Pulse projects a strong performance for the ruling party, estimating the TMC at 177-187 seats, while the BJP is placed at 95-110 seats, with Congress at 1-3 seats and Others at zero, indicating a decisive advantage for TMC in that assessment.

Meanwhile, Chanakya Strategies projects a BJP-led outcome, with the party expected to win 150-160 seats against TMC at 130-140 seats in the 294-seat Assembly, where the majority mark stands at 148.

Exit poll projections by Matrize also suggest a BJP advantage in West Bengal.

According to the agency, the BJP is projected to win 146-161 seats, placing it ahead in the race for power. The TMC is expected to secure 125-140 seats, indicating a strong but slightly trailing performance.

Meanwhile, Peoples Pulse projects TMC at 177-187 seats, standing in sharp contrast to other surveys.

Taken together, the contrasting projections highlight a fragmented exit poll landscape, with agencies sharply split on whether the BJP or TMC holds the upper hand in West Bengal.

Direct contest

The election has largely been a direct contest between Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, contesting from Bhabanipur, and a BJP campaign led aggressively by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Amit Shah.

The BJP's campaign centred on issues such as alleged corruption, political violence, infiltration from Bangladesh, unemployment, and a broader development pitch branded as "Viksit



Bangla." For the 2026 West Bengal elections, the BJP pitched "parivartan" (change) by targeting the Trinamool over corruption, "bhaipo raj" (nephew rule).

In contrast, TMC focused on welfare delivery, accusations of central interference, withholding of state funds, alleged bias by central agencies and security forces, and a strong regional identity plank built around Bengali pride.

What is at stake?

For Trinamool Congress, a victory would reinforce Mamata's dominance in Bengal and strengthen her national opposition profile. A Mamata Banerjee victory would indicate that she has managed to overcome the anti-incumbency factor, suggesting that voter fatigue with the ruling government has not translated into a decisive shift against her leadership.

For BJP, even if it falls short of power, maintaining or improving on its previous performance would help preserve its position as the principal challenger in eastern India and keep alive its long-term expansion strategy in the state.

Even if it does not secure a majority, crossing or nearing the 100-seat mark would signal consolidation and a durable presence for the BJP in the state.

How accurate were 2021 exit polls?

The 2021 West Bengal exit polls largely predicted a tight contest between the Trinamool and the BJP. For instance,

Axis My India projected a close race, while other surveys also suggested both parties were within striking distance of the majority mark.

However, the actual results told a very different story. The TMC registered a landslide victory with 215 seats, while the BJP finished with 77 seats.

What did opinion polls predict?

The VoteVibe opinion poll, released on CNN-News18 on April 6, pointed to a tight contest in West Bengal, with the TMC projected to win 159-169 seats and BJP estimated at 120-130 seats—both within striking distance in the 294-member Assembly, where the majority mark is 148.

Polls by agencies such as Matrize and Chanakya also indicated a narrow lead for the ruling TMC, suggesting the contest could go down to the wire in several constituencies.

At the same time, the Left Front led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) and its allies were projected to potentially influence outcomes in closely fought seats.

However, exit polls are not the final outcome. In India's complex multi-party system, small vote-share shifts can produce large seat swings under the first-past-the-post model, and past elections have shown that projections can diverge sharply from actual outcomes. The official verdict will be declared when the Election Commission of India begins counting votes on May 4.

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Maharashtra announces AI policy, envisages Rs 10,000 crore investment, excellence centres

Mumbai

The Maharashtra cabinet on Wednesday approved the Artificial Intelligence Policy 2026 which envisages an investment of Rs 10,000 crore in the sector and creation of 1.5 lakh employment opportunities.

The government proposes to establish six AI Excellence Centres and five AI Innovation Cities under the policy, said an official statement.

The policy puts emphasis on building AI infrastructure in the state, it said.

Electronics, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence Minister Ashish Shelar said the primary objective of the policy is large-scale employment generation.

Two lakh youth be trained in artificial intelligence technologies to build a skilled workforce aligned with emerging technological demands, he said in a statement.

The policy envisages development



of 50 AI tools and use-cases to increase adoption of AI across industries and businesses in the state, the minister said.

The state plans to provide 2,000 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) to build robust computing infrastructure required for implementation of the policy, and 5,000 MSMEs will receive financial support to adopt AI technologies.

The government will also set up a venture capital fund of Rs 500 crore to promote AI-based startups and

unicorns, of which Rs 250 crore will be contributed by the state. Subsidies will also be provided for machinery purchases for AI-driven industries, the minister said.

The policy includes incentives such as concessions in electricity tariffs, power subsidies and stamp duty to promote AI adoption in education, employment, innovation and industry.

AI-based agents will be developed to simplify interaction between citizens and the administration, the

minister said.

Financial support will also be extended to develop databases in Marathi and other local languages.

Maharashtra will become the first state in the country to create a separate framework for ethical AI, the minister said.

In other decisions, the cabinet decided to implement 'MAJESTIC' -- Maharashtra Accelerating Green Energy and Storage Technologies Integration in Connected Grid -- scheme for increased use of green energy. Loans will be obtained from the World Bank for the scheme and a preliminary report will be sent to the Centre, the official statement said.

The cabinet also approved establishment of the Green Maharashtra Commission to undertake an ambitious tree plantation campaign for planting 300 crore trees.

MLC polls: Shiv Sena (UBT) fields Ambadas Danve, not Uddhav Thackeray, raising questions over MVA unity

Mumbai

The Shiv Sena (UBT) on Wednesday announced Ambadas Danve, a former leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, as its candidate for the upcoming MLC elections—a move that has surprised political observers and raised questions over coordination within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray made the announcement, despite widespread speculation that the party's chief, Uddhav Thackeray, would be the Opposition alliance's nominee.

The party said in an official statement, "With the blessings of revered Hinduhriday Samrat Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray, and under the directions of party chief Uddhav Thackeray, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has announced Ambadas Danve as its candidate for the 2026 Maharashtra Legislative Council elections."

Senior Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut had repeatedly said that the

election could be unopposed if Uddhav Thackeray contested. A day earlier, party MLC Milind Narvekar said Uddhav Thackeray was "99 per cent" likely to be the MVA candidate.

On Wednesday morning, Raut said the MVA candidate would be announced at 11 am on Thursday, the last day for filing nominations,



but Aaditya announced Danve's candidature a day earlier.

The development comes amid indications of a rift within the Opposition alliance. The Congress had earlier conveyed that it would support Uddhav Thackeray as the joint MVA candidate and "nobody else". Congress leaders have indicated that if the Sena (UBT) fields a candidate other than Uddhav, the party will put up its own nominee.

BJP announces 5 candidates for council polls, party chooses loyalists

Mumbai

A senior vice-president of the BJP, Karjatkar has been entrusted with the task of field management. Similarly, Jathar, Naik and Bhende have played crucial roles in organisation.

The BJP on Tuesday announced five candidates for the Maharashtra Legislative Council elections scheduled for May 12.

Out of the total 14 shortlisted names sent by the state unit, the BJP central leadership approved party's general secretary Madhavi Naik, Sanjay Bhende, Sunil Karjatkar, Vivek Kolhe and Pramod Jathar as candidates.

While Karjatkar and Kolhe are from Ahmednagar district, Bhende hails from Nagpur. Naik is from Thane and Jathar from Konkan region.

The list reflects BJP's attempt to reward loyalists who have worked in the organisation for several decades.

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Kolhe, a young leader, is the son of former BJP (MLA) Snehalata Kolhe and grandson of Shankarrao Kolhe a well-known cooperative sugar baron.

The party has chosen Pradnya Satav as the candidate for the by-

polls for the council.

The elections were necessitated following Satav's resignation last year as she quit Congress to join BJP. In doing so she had relinquished her Congress membership (MLC). She is the wife of the late Congress MP Rajeev Satav.

Apart from the lone by-poll, five candidates from BJP are set to make it to the state council. Whereas, its alliance partner Shiv Sena will have two and NCP one. The Maha Vikas Aghadi will have one candidate.

The quota for the council elections, where the 288 MLAs will elect the MLCs, is 28 – least 28 MLAs must vote to elect a candidate to the Council.

The BJP has an upper hand with 137 MLAs, followed by the Shiv Sena with 57 and the NCP with 41. The Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) has 20, the Congress 16, and the NCP (SP) 10 MLAs.

As per the Election Commission schedule, the last date for filing nominations for the Council polls is April 30.

The scrutiny process will take place on May 2, followed by the last date for withdrawal on May 4. Results will be announced on the same day as the voting, May 12.

Marathi mandate: no immediate punitive action as Maharashtra gives autorickshaw, taxi drivers until August 15 to learn

Mumbai

The Maharashtra Government on Tuesday announced a 100-day verification and enforcement drive for its Marathi mandate for autorickshaw and taxi drivers, effectively giving operators time to comply before stricter measures are considered.

Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik said the campaign, to be carried out across all 59 Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) from May 1 to August 15, will combine checks on permits, licences, and illegal operations with an assessment of drivers' working knowledge of Marathi.

A committee headed by Additional Transport Commissioner Ravindra Gaikwad will oversee the drive, reviewing progress daily and weekly and issuing directions based on field reports.

Sarnaik said a comprehensive report will be submitted on August 16, which will determine the next course of policy action, including possible penalties for non-compliance, effectively making August 15 the cut-off for the current compliance window.

The announcement follows discussions with auto and taxi unions, which had sought more time to implement the requirement and opposed any move to introduce reading and writing tests. According to the minister, there was broad agreement on the need for "functional Marathi", with the Government adopting a phased approach centred on training.

"If you want to do business in Maharashtra, you must know Marathi. But this is not a punitive drive, we will teach those willing



to learn," he said, clarifying that licences will not be cancelled solely on the grounds of not knowing the language. "However, if there are violations of transport rules, illegal operations or passenger harassment, action will be taken under existing legal provisions," he said at a press conference.

As part of the rollout, the transport department will issue formal letters to 565 drivers identified during a recent inspection drive in Mira-Bhayander who were unable to demonstrate Marathi proficiency. The letters will inform them about the campaign and provide access to training. During that drive, 3,443 autorickshaws were checked, and penalties worth Rs 87,000 were collected for various violations.

Training in basic functional Marathi

To enable compliance, Marathi training facilities will be set up at RTO offices, where officials will also conduct sessions. The programme will be implemented in collaboration

with literary bodies such as the Konkan Marathi Sahitya Parishad and the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh. Study materials, including printed booklets, e-booklets and WhatsApp-based content, will be distributed. A new simplified learning module, described as "basic functional Marathi", is expected to be introduced to help drivers acquire conversational skills quickly.

"We are not asking anyone to have a degree in Marathi. Basic Marathi to communicate with passengers is sufficient," Sarnaik said.

Drivers who complete the training will be issued certificates, which are expected to be linked to licence renewal. The minister also described the certification as a form of formal recognition for those who adopt the language.

A headcount of non-Marathi-speaking drivers

Officials said the drive would also function as a data-gathering exercise to determine the actual number of non-Marathi-speaking drivers in

the sector, as current estimates vary significantly. The findings will be used to refine future regulatory measures.

Sarnaik said enforcement would extend across all categories of passenger transport, including two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and taxis. While the Government will provide time and support for learning during the campaign period, he indicated that a stricter framework could follow.

"If someone is willing to learn, we will support them fully. But after this process, compliance with rules will be enforced," he said.

Sarnaik added that the policy was rooted in administrative and cultural considerations rather than politics. "Marathi is part of Maharashtra's identity. Those who wish to work here must be able to communicate in the language," he said.

Transport Commissioner Rajesh Narvekar was also present at the minister's presser.

Union leader welcomes announcement

Reacting to the announcement, taxi union leader Shashank Rao said the unions would not proceed with their agitation for now. "We conveyed our position yesterday. The Government has maintained that there will be no written or oral test and has focused on functional Marathi. Given that, we are not going ahead with the agitation at this stage," he said.

Rao said unions would support the rollout of basic Marathi training. "Whatever curriculum is introduced, we will help reach out to autorickshaw and taxi drivers," he said, adding that the issue should not be politicised.

Maharashtra to take back Rs 91 crore from civic bodies over scrapped lake projects

Mumbai

Maharashtra's environment and climate change department, led by BJP minister Pankaja Munde cancelled administrative approval to 14 lake conservation projects cleared under previous governments, including 11 sanctioned when former Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, a senior official from the department said that the money disbursed for those projects will be sought back from local civic bodies.

Of the 14 projects scrapped, 11 were approved during Shinde's tenure, while three were cleared when the department

was headed by Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray during the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

"These projects were cancelled after a review by the department. Even as the money was released, no work was undertaken for two years or more. The money remained unspent with the local bodies. It will be returned to the department," said a senior official.

The 11 projects cleared under Shinde that have now been scrapped include Mukteshwar, Samatanagar

and Ausa lakes in Latur; Vadap lake in Karjat (Raigad); Parampok lake in Parli (Beed); Beloshi lake in Alibaug (Raigad); and Kalmadu, Visapur, Devli and Brahmanshevega lakes in Chalisgaon (Jalgaon). These projects were estimated to cost Rs 244.15 crore, of which Rs 73.31 crore had already been released.

The three projects cleared under Thackeray — Ozar lake in Lanja (Ratnagiri), Erangal lake in Mumbai and Khambale lake in Igatpuri (Nashik) — had a combined project cost

of Rs 35.99 crore, with Rs 18 crore already disbursed.

"Since the in-principle approval previously granted to a total of 14 lake conservation projects is being cancelled, and in order to avoid financial irregularities, the funds previously distributed by the state government for these projects — along with accrued interest — must be recovered," the order had stated.

The official claimed that the decision of cancellation is based on the review undertaken by the department

and not a political one as assembly constituencies like Ausa and Chalisgaon belong to BJP MLAs.

The decision follows a steering committee meeting on February 16, 2026, which found that five of these lake conservation proposals were not prepared in the prescribed format as per the guidelines of the State Lake Conservation Scheme. Nine other proposals had failed to submit revised project reports to the department, despite more than two years having passed since their first application.

Stabbing of Thane guards a 'lone wolf' attack: Police; self-radicalised, says CM Fadnavis

Mumbai

IN WHAT the police are calling a "lone wolf attack", a 31-year-old US-returned man was arrested for allegedly stabbing two security guards at an underconstruction site in Mira Road, a suburb north of Mumbai, early Monday, after asking them their religion.

Zaib Zubair Ansari was arrested by the Mira Road police Monday, with the case now transferred to the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) for further probe.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday called it a case of "self-radicalisation".

Speaking to reporters in Solapur, Fadnavis said, "From the preliminary reports that have emerged, it is evident that it is a case of self-radicalisation. In such cases, individuals are often influenced by books, the Internet, and literature, and they want to participate in jihad by killing people from different religions."

Ansari, whose parents and siblings live in the US, returned to the city in 2019 and has since been living in Mira Road.

The construction site where the alleged incident took place is close to his home. While a security supervisor has sustained serious injuries, the other guard was given treatment and discharged.

According to the complaint given by one of the guards, Subroto Sen, he and supervisor Rajkeshar Mishra, were on duty on the Asmita Grade Maison in the Naya Nagar area of Mira Road from Sunday night. Sen was standing on the roadside while Mishra was in his cabin. Sen told the police that around 3am on Monday, a man approached him and asked if



there was a mosque ahead, and when Sen gave the man directions to the mosque, he asked him the name of the mosque. "I told him that I do not know the name. He asked me 'Are you a Hindu?' I told him yes. After that, the man left," Sen's statement to the police says.

Sen went to have tea at a nearby stall around 4am, where he saw the same man again. Sen said that he returned to his duty around 4.30am, where the man again approached him and asked him if he was a Hindu. He said the man then grabbed his right hand and stabbed him with a knife on the hand. When he tried to dodge the attack, the knife hit him on the back, he told police.

Sen ran towards Mishra's cabin, where the man followed him, police said. The man then asked the same question to the supervisor, and asked him to recite the Kalma (declaration of faith in Islam), the FIR said. When the supervisor could not recite it, he was also attacked by the man, the FIR said. Sen said he got scared and ran,

and hid behind a building. When he came out after 5-7 minutes, he saw Mishra injured.

"Mishra was crying and telling me that I am going to die... one Nayab Shaikh, resident of a nearby building who was standing nearby, took me to the Naya Nagar police station where I informed the police about the attack," the FIR said. Sen was later taken to a government hospital where he was given basic treatment. He was then brought to the police station where his statement was recorded.

Based on his statement, an FIR was registered at Naya Nagar police station against the then unidentified person under sections of attempt to murder, voluntarily causing hurt using dangerous weapons and promoting enmity between different religions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The police teams then tracked down Ansari from a nearby building and he was identified as the attacker by Sen, an officer said. Later in the day some religious groups protested in Mira Road area. By evening, the probe was handed over to the state Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS).

Sources in the police said that they found "notes" from Ansari's Mira Road residence with words such as "ISIS", "lone wolf", and "Jihad". The officer said they found that Ansari had formatted his phone, which has now been seized. The case is being investigated as a "lone wolf attack", the officer said, adding that they suspect that Ansari was radicalised online.

"We have seized computers and other devices from his residence and they should give us some clarity. We suspect most of these devices, like his phone, may have been formatted, so

we will use forensic help to retrieve data," the officer said.

Ansari's parents, who were residents of Kurla, moved with him and their other children to the US over two decades ago and continue to live there. After a dispute with his family, Ansari returned to India in 2019 and has been living here since, sources said. His marriage with a US national ended in a divorce over two months ago. Ansari has been living on rent in a home in the Naya Nagar locality and gives tuitions online on science and maths, an official said.

"Prima facie, it appears that his father, who drives a cab in the US, sends him money to sustain himself," an officer said.

The Chief Minister said the family of the accused had lived in the US and that the individual himself lived there before moving to Kurla in Mumbai and then to Nayanagar in Thane's Mira-Bhayandar. "The investigating agencies will get to the root of the matter and find out whether he operated alone or was backed by other radical agencies," he added.

Ansari's lawyer Abdul Wahab Khan said that the allegations against him of acting as a "lone wolf attacker" are not substantiated with any corroborative evidence. "These allegations are sufficient to call someone for an inquiry but are not corroborated and sufficient in a court of law. We sought on his behalf that the interrogation be carried out in a room where there is CCTV coverage and the recording be preserved. We also sought for him to be referred for medical examination," Khan said. The magistrate court sent Ansari to the police custody until May 4.

Maharashtra completes 66% pre-SIR mapping work, urban areas lag behind

Mumbai

Maharashtra has completed 66.42 per cent of pre-SIR (Special Intensive Revision) mapping work, as per an official of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

While urban areas like Mumbai suburban, Pune and Thane lag behind with

less than 50 per cent work completed, Gadchiroli has completed 90.51 per cent work, topping the state.

According to the CEO official, 14 districts in Maharashtra have completed 80 to 90 per cent work of pre-SIR mapping while 13 districts have completed

the 70 to 80 per cent work. Among districts which are still lagging include Mumbai city (51.40), Nagpur (55.57), Raigad (57.80) and Palghar (59.28).

"The urban areas are lagging in the pre-SIR work for two reasons. One being the migration of the population

and second being the rise of number of booths due to increase of population," said an official.

The highest performing districts (80-90 per cent) include Washim (80.76), Latur (80.77), Sangli (81.65), Amaravati (81.90), Nandurbar (83.32),

Nanded (84.06), Gondia (84.32), Dharashiv (84.62), Parbhani (85.27), Beed (85.31), Buldhana (85.97), Sindhudurg (86.47), Ratnagiri (86.70) and Hingoli (89.08). As per the data, out of 9.88 crore voters around 6.56 crore voters have already been mapped.

Exit poll predicts winds of change in Kerala: UDF set to return to power, big setback for Vijayan-led LDF

New Delhi

A narrow vote share edge but a clearer lead in seats suggests Kerala could be on the cusp of a political shift, with the Congress-led UDF gaining momentum over the incumbent LDF.

According to exit poll predictions by VoteVibe, released exclusively on CNN-News18, the UDF is projected to win 70–80 seats (midpoint 75), comfortably crossing the majority mark of 71 in the 140-member assembly. Meanwhile, the LDF, led by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, is projected to get 58–68 seats (midpoint 63), falling short of the numbers required to form the government, as per the exit polls.

Meanwhile, BJP is expected to secure 0–4 seats with a vote share of 14%, signalling that the party may expand its footprint in the southern state, the VoteVibe poll predicted.

The exit poll predicted 42.6% vote share for the UDF, compared



to 39.5% for the CPM-led LDF, a gap of around 3 percentage points that sits within the margin of error, but still gives the opposition a slight advantage.

Demographically, the UDF's advantage is driven by strong support among men (44.8% vs 37% for LDF)

and young voters aged 18–24 (47% vs 36.8%), the exit poll showed.

The LDF retains an edge among women (41.8% vs 40.6%) and older voters, though these margins are much tighter, it further said.

Community-wise, the divides are stark. The LDF dominates among SC/

Dalits (52.8% vs 25.3%) and leads among OBCs (43.7% vs 34.2%).

In contrast, the UDF draws overwhelming support from Muslims (54.2%) and Christians (58.3%). Upper caste Hindus are split almost evenly, with LDF at 33.7%, UDF at 32.3%, and BJP at 30%, as per the exit polls.

Voting for the Kerala assembly election was held in a single phase across 140 constituencies on April 9.

In 2021, most exit polls predicted that the LDF would win 104-120 seats, whereas the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) was predicted to be reduced to 20-36 constituencies. The BJP was projected to end with 0-2 seats. The incumbent LDF, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), returned to power with a historic win, securing 99 of the 140 seats.

Assam elections 2026: BJP-led NDA set for landslide victory in Assam, predicts exit poll

New Delhi

BJP-led NDA is set to dominate the Assam assembly election with a decisive mandate, forming the government for a third straight term, according to an exit poll.

According to exit poll predictions by VoteVibe, released exclusively on CNN-News18, the BJP-led NDA is expected to secure between 90 and 100 seats (95 midpoint) in the 126-member assembly, while the Congress-led INDIA bloc is placed far behind at 23 to 33 seats.

The poll predicts a landslide scenario, with the NDA not only crossing the majority mark comfortably but potentially delivering its strongest-ever performance in the state.

The Congress alliance, despite a competitive vote share, is projected to lag significantly in seat conversion.

Within the NDA, the BJP alone is estimated to win 72-78 seats, indicating it could achieve a majority independently. Its allies, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), are each projected to add 9-11 seats.



On the opposition side, the Congress is expected to account for the bulk of its alliance tally with 22-30 seats, while Rajiv Dal may contribute marginally with 1-3 seats.

The AIUDF is forecast to be reduced to 0-6 seats.

Vote share and political trends

The exit poll indicates a relatively close vote share contest but one that tilts in favour of the NDA. The BJP-led alliance is estimated at 46.1 percent, compared to 41.2 percent for the Congress-led bloc.

AIUDF stands at 2.8 percent, while others account for 9.8 percent.

Regional breakdown
Region-wise projections reinforce the NDA's dominance across Assam. Upper Assam, with 35 seats, is expected to be a stronghold for the NDA with 29-31 seats, leaving only 4-6 for the Congress alliance, as per the projections.

Lower Assam, the largest region with 44 seats, is also projected to favour the NDA with 29-31 seats, though it remains relatively more competitive, the exit poll suggested.

In Central Assam, the NDA is forecast to win 13-15 seats out of 19, while in North Assam it could secure 12-14 out of 15, nearly sweeping the region, it said.

Barak Valley appears to be the most competitive zone proportionally, with the NDA projected at 7-9 seats and the Congress alliance at 4-6, as per the projections.

CM preference and voter mood

The exit poll findings also reflect a clear preference for incumbent leadership. The incumbent CM and BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma leads decisively at 51.2%, while state Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi is second at 37.2%. Other contenders remain marginal in comparison.

The findings highlight that the chief minister leads across all zones, both genders, and most age groups, suggesting a broad-based appeal. However, the data also points to sharp social divides, with Muslim voters (73.7%) overwhelmingly backing the Gogoi, while Scheduled Castes (SCs) (76.3%), Dalits, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) strongly backing Sarma (67.5%). Upper Caste Hindus are said to be heavily favouring Sarma with 73.8%.

On key issues,

unemployment emerges as the top concern at 24 percent, followed by illegal immigration at 17.8 percent and corruption at 17.4 percent, indicating the factors shaping voter preferences.

How exit polls compare with past results

A closer look at earlier elections shows that exit polls in Assam have generally been reliable in predicting the winner, though not always precise in estimating margins. In 2021, for instance, most agencies pointed towards a return of the NDA to power.

Surveys such as Axis My India projected 75-85 seats for the alliance, while Republic-CNX estimated 74-84. Even more conservative projections, like CVoter, placed the NDA in the 58-71 range.

When the votes were counted, the NDA secured 75 seats, comfortably within the upper band of several forecasts. On average, pollsters slightly underestimated the NDA by around four seats while overestimating the Congress-led alliance by a similar margin.

RTI reveals massive backlog in tiger death investigations, raising poaching, governance concerns



New Delhi

Documents obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act have exposed a serious systemic lapse within the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Records reveal that investigations into 88 tiger deaths in 2020 and 2021 remain either “pending” or “under scrutiny,” with the authority now signalling its intent to close these cases.

A January letter from the NTCA stated that if states fail to provide post-mortem, forensic, histopathology reports and colour photographs in tiger mortality cases, investigations will be formally closed.

The data highlights alarming gaps in Chhattisgarh, with unresolved cases in Bastar, Bhanupratap Pur and Kawardha. Several cases are marked as “seizures,” indicating that while tiger parts were recovered from suspected poachers, the legal and forensic closure required for prosecution has been neglected for years.

Madhya Pradesh leads the backlog, with 32 unresolved deaths in core breeding grounds such as Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Panna. Maharashtra has 20 pending cases, many occurring outside tiger reserves, pointing to high-risk zones for poaching.

Even Kaziranga in Assam, one of the world’s most strictly guarded tiger reserves, has eight unexplained deaths since 2020. Similarly, tiger reserves in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh—including Nagarhole, Dudhwa, Amargarh and Pilibhit-

show cases marked as “seizures” with no legal resolution.

Uttarakhand, home to one of the densest tiger populations globally, has a disturbing backlog. Cases in the Corbett Tiger Reserve, including Dhela and Kalagarh ranges, Ramnagar and Shyampur (Haridwar), remain unresolved, despite recent concerns over rising human-animal conflicts.

Wildlife activist Ajay Dubey criticised the delays, saying they allow foresters to avoid scrutiny for patrol lapses or habitat mismanagement, as official records remain perpetually “under scrutiny.”

“Without a finalised cause of death, criminal proceedings against poachers cannot be sustained. Delays in these reports are not merely administrative lapses; they actively facilitate wildlife crime. Forensic samples from 2020 are now scientifically unviable,” he said.

Reacting to the NTCA’s warning of case closures, Dubey termed it “administrative data laundering.”

“By force-closing these files, the NTCA is effectively erasing potential poaching incidents and management failures from the national record. We demand a high-level inquiry into why state chief wildlife wardens failed to submit mandatory reports for over five years. Strict action should be taken against field directors and forest officers who presided over these reserves during periods of undocumented tiger mortality,” he added.

Puducherry Exit Poll 2026: NDA leads in Puducherry exit poll, strong youth support for TVK+

New Delhi

According to the People’s Pulse exit poll, the BJP-led alliance is projected to secure 16–19 seats, while the Congress-led alliance is likely to win 10–12 seats. Other parties and independents are expected to account for 1–2 seats, indicating a clear edge for the BJP+ bloc in the contest.

The Puducherry Assembly, with its 30 elected members, has a majority mark of 16, making every seat crucial in determining the government. In such a small House, factors like defections, alliances, nominated members and influential individual candidates often play a decisive role, drawing attention to the territory’s elections beyond their size. The contest is primarily between the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the All India NR Congress (AINRC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the opposition bloc led by the Indian National Congress along with its regional partners. Adding a new dimension to the race is actor Vijay’s Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), which is making its electoral debut with the aim of disrupting established political equations. While the results are scheduled to be declared on May 4, exit polls are expected to provide the first indication of the direction in which this politically dynamic region may be headed.

An exit poll by Axis My India for the 2026 Assembly elections in Puducherry projects a lead for the NRC+ (NDA) alliance with a 40% vote share, followed by CONG+ (DMK) at 30%, TVK+ at 17%, and others at 13%.

The age-wise vote share data highlights distinct voting patterns across demographics. NRC+ (NDA) appears to have strong support among older voters, securing 52% in the 60 and above category and 45% among those aged 50–59. Its support remains steady across middle age groups, including 42% among voters aged 40–49.

CONG+ (DMK) trails across all age segments, with its highest support at 38% among voters aged 60 and above, while drawing relatively lower backing among younger voters.

TVK+ emerges as a key player among younger demographics, commanding a significant 51% vote share among first-time voters aged 18–19 and 34% among those aged

20–29. However, its support declines sharply with age, dropping to just 4% among voters aged 60 and above.

The “Others” category maintains a relatively even but modest presence across age groups, with vote shares ranging between 6% and 17%.

The data also indicates notable shifts compared to the 2021 Assembly elections, with TVK+ gaining substantial ground among younger voters, while both NRC+ and CONG+ witness declines in this segment.

The poll underscores a generational



divide in voting preferences, with younger voters leaning towards newer political formations, while older voters continue to favour established alliances.

According to the People’s Pulse exit poll, the BJP-led alliance is projected to secure 16–19 seats, while the Congress-led alliance is likely to win 10–12 seats. Other parties and independents are expected to account for 1–2 seats, indicating a clear edge for the BJP+ bloc in the contest.

According to Chanakya Strategies, the BJP-led alliance is projected to win between 17 and 20 seats in the Puducherry Assembly, putting it ahead of the Congress-led bloc, which is estimated to secure 9 to 13 seats. Other parties and independents are likely to remain marginal, with a possible tally of 0 to 1 seat, indicating a clear advantage for the BJP+ alliance in the contest.

PM Modi holds 14-km roadshow in Varanasi, offers prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple

Varanasi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a roadshow in Varanasi on Wednesday morning, the second day of his two-day visit, drawing large crowds along the route, party leaders said.

The roadshow commenced from Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and passed through Lahartara, Kachahri, Ambedkar Chauraha, Chaukaghat, Teliyabag, Lahurabir and Maidagin before culminating at the Kashi Vishwanath Dham.

At the temple, the Prime Minister offered prayers and performed rituals amid Vedic chants. After completing the prayers, Modi was welcomed by local representatives, who presented him with a trishul, damru and a traditional stole. The Prime Minister acknowledged the gesture and greeted the gathering.

As he emerged from the temple complex, devotees raised slogans of



“Har Har Mahadev”, to which Modi responded by waving and folding his hands.

He also briefly interacted with children present at the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.

Devotees and supporters were seen raising slogans such as “Har Har Mahadev” and “Jai Shri Ram” to welcome the Prime Minister, who greeted them by waving and folding his hands.

Mishra said multiple welcome points had been set up along the route, where party workers and locals welcomed the Prime Minister with rose petals, drum beats and conch shells.

The roadshow, stretching around 14 kilometres, is being described by party leaders as one of the largest ever in the city.

Heavy crowds were seen on both sides of the roads throughout the route, officials said.

After the visit to Varanasi, his Lok Sabha constituency, the PM is scheduled to inaugurate the Ganga Expressway in Uttar Pradesh later on Wednesday.

BJP media in-charge Arvind Mishra said people in Varanasi were eager to catch a glimpse of the prime minister, with a large number of party workers, office-bearers and local residents lining the entire route.

594-km, 6-lane Ganga Expressway opens: Reach Meerut to Prayagraj in 6-8 hours

Varanasi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the ambitious 594-km Ganga Expressway project on Wednesday, with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in attendance.

The expressway promises to be a test case of how road infrastructure can boost manufacturing, reduce logistics cost as a percentage of GDP, and power tourism and industrial growth.

Travel time cut

The six-lane, access-controlled expressway—expandable to eight lanes—connects Meerut to Prayagraj and the 12 districts that fall on the way. Travel time between the two cities will now be down from 10 to 12 hours to about six to eight hours.

Cost

Built at a cost of Rs 36,230 crore, the expressway



is the longest in Uttar Pradesh and one of India’s largest greenfield projects. It is also designed to serve as an industrial corridor.

Industrial boost

The Uttar Pradesh government says it will develop 12 integrated

manufacturing and logistics clusters along the expressway and has acquired 6,507 acres of land for the purpose. The state has already received more than 900 proposals worth Rs 47,000 crore.

Top speed

The expressway has a maximum design speed of 120 kmph. It passes through the districts of Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahar, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shajahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj.

Strategic pitch

There is a 3.5 km airstrip in Shahjahanpur which can support any emergency fighter aircraft landings so the Ganga Expressway can serve a purpose beyond civil and road infrastructure.

Tamil Nadu Exit Polls 2026: AIADMK holds narrow edge in tough fight with DMK; Vijay's star power falls short of big gains, predicts survey

New Delhi

For nearly four decades, Tamil Nadu's politics has been shaped by the dominance of the DMK and AIADMK, with power alternating between the two Dravidian majors.

The AIADMK appears to hold a slight edge in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election after single-phase polling concluded on April 23.

According to exit poll projections by VoteVibe, released exclusively on CNN-News18, the AIADMK-led alliance is projected to secure 114-124 seats in the 234-member Assembly, while the DMK front is expected to bag 103-113 seats. Despite strong public turnout and visible enthusiasm at actor-turned-politician Vijay's campaign events across several constituencies, TVK is projected to win only 4-10 seats, suggesting limited conversion of star power into votes.

Key contenders in the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls



The 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election has emerged as a rare three-cornered contest, breaking from the state's traditional DMK-versus-AIADMK bipolar politics.

The ruling DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA), headed by chief minister MK Stalin, faces a stiff challenge from the AIADMK-led NDA under Edappadi K Palaniswami, while actor-turned-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has entered the fray as a new third

force after contesting all 234 seats independently.

Naam Tamilar Katchi, led by Seeman, remains a notable spoiler in several constituencies.

Key campaign themes include welfare, corruption, unemployment, Tamil identity, and youth aspirations, with Vijay's entry adding a fresh layer of unpredictability to the contest. Polling was held on April 23, and results will be declared on May 4.

Past trends

For nearly four decades, Tamil Nadu's politics has been shaped by the dominance of the DMK and AIADMK, with power alternating between the two Dravidian majors. The arrival of actor-turned-politician Vijay and his TVK has injected fresh momentum into the state's political scene.

Looking back at 2021 results

Elections to the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly was last held on April 6, 2021 in a single phase with a voter turnout of 73.63%. Votes were counted on May 2, 2021.

The DMK ended the decade-long rule of the AIADMK, and MK Stalin was sworn in as the 12th chief minister of Tamil Nadu. The DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) secured 159 seats, including 133 for the DMK, marking an absolute majority for the first time in 25 years. The NDA won 75 seats, with 66 for AIADMK.

India calls Pakistan's US-Iran peace push a 'self-goal', rejects Islamabad's mediator claim

Government aims to achieve USD 2 trillion exports by 2031: Commerce Ministry

New Delhi

Top Indian intelligence sources have dismissed Pakistan's assertions of playing a peace-making role in US-Iran negotiations as a "self-goal," accusing Islamabad of attempting to deflect attention from its alleged role in regional instability.

Responding to remarks by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the sources said Islamabad lacks credibility as a "peace broker", a view they claim is also shared by Iran.

They added that India believes lasting regional stability depends on tangible action against terror networks, rather than "shuttle diplomacy" or efforts to leverage negotiations for strategic gain.

Pakistan defends its role

Sharif, however, maintained that Pakistan played a proactive role in encouraging a ceasefire during the Iran-US talks, pointing to the involvement of senior military leadership and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

"We made sincere efforts for the establishment of peace in the region, and this process continues," Sharif said. "On the



night of April 11, negotiations between Iran and the United States went on for 21 hours. Pakistan made full efforts towards a ceasefire, with key figures, including the Field Marshal and Ishaq Dar, playing a significant role. The Field Marshal remained resolute, and the ceasefire continues to hold," he added.

He also thanked Saudi Arabia for backing Pakistan during challenging periods.

Talks stall amid rising pressure

The United States and Iran agreed to a ceasefire nearly a month after hostilities began, but diplomatic progress remains limited. The first round of talks

in Islamabad ended without a breakthrough, and uncertainty persists over a second round after US President Donald Trump cancelled a planned visit by American officials.

Trump has since issued a renewed warning to Tehran, urging it to "get smart soon" and comply with Washington's demands for strict curbs on its nuclear programme, even as a US naval blockade continues to exert pressure on Iran's economy.

According to The Wall Street Journal, the United States intends to maintain the blockade on Iranian ports until Tehran agrees to dismantle key components of its nuclear programme.

New Delhi

The government is targeting USD 2 trillion in total exports by 2030-31, comprising USD 1 trillion in merchandise exports and USD 1 trillion in services exports, according to the statement issued by Commerce Ministry, on Wednesday.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal chaired a high-level review meeting to deliberate on the Plan of Action for achieving India's USD 2 trillion export target by 2030-31 and to review the implementation of the Export Promotion Mission (EPM). Goyal said achievement of the target will be based on three key pillars. These include clearly defined and actionable points with timelines, where each sectoral action is assigned to a Nodal Joint Secretary, classified as supply-side or demand-side, linked to key performance indicators and aligned with short, medium and long-term timelines. He noted the importance of inter-departmental coordination, with supporting ministries and departments identified for each task to ensure effective resolution of exporter-related issues. In addition, Goyal highlighted the need for an IT-enabled monitoring platform to facilitate regular tracking of progress, with an automated escalation mechanism for review at the levels of secretary and minister. Goyal also said in consultation with the concerned line Ministries, priority sectors be identified where a clearly defined import substitution strategy can be pursued alongside efforts to boost exports.

He reviewed the implementation of the Export Promotion Mission (EPM), a flagship MSME-focused initiative aimed at addressing key bottlenecks faced by exporters and enabling broad-based, inclusive and sustainable export growth. Emphasising effective implementation, the Goyal said the benefits of all schemes must reach exporters at the ground level, particularly genuine and first-time exporters and MSMEs.

'Just give us a ring': King Charles III's gifts to Trump strike friendly chord

Washington

The original bell from a UK-made Second World War submarine named HMS Trump was the centrepiece of a set of gifts presented by King Charles III to US President Donald Trump during the State Visit this week.

The "personal gift" was unveiled at the White House state dinner on Tuesday as the 77-year-old monarch delivered his address, striking a friendly and light-hearted note to his formal speech.

Trump looked visibly impressed by the gift and praised "fantastic" Charles at the white-tie event.

"Today, our partnerships in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and AUKUS (Australia-UK-US alliance) deepen our technological and military cooperation and ensure that, together, we can meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and contested world," the king said in his address.

"And speaking of submarine alliances, there was one particular AUKUS predecessor, launched from a UK shipyard in 1944, that served for the majority of her life attached to the 4th Submarine Squadron in Australia, playing a critical role during the war in the Pacific. Her name? HMS Trump."

"So tonight, Mr President, I am delighted to present to you as a personal gift the original bell which hung on



the Conning Tower of your valiant namesake. May it stand as a testimony to our nations' shared history and shining future. And should you ever need to get hold of us, well, just give us a ring," he said, evoking laughter and applause.

The more public gift presentation followed an earlier closed-door exchange, when Buckingham Palace said the British monarch presented the American president with a framed facsimile of the 1879 design plans for the iconic desk in the Oval Office at White House, the originals of which are held by the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London.

"These drawings show the front elevation, top and projection of the President's Desk, currently located in the Oval Office of the White House," the palace stated.

According to the accompanying historic details released in London, the "Resolute Desk" was

created from the timbers of the British exploration ship HMS Resolute.

The US government recovered and refitted the ship before sending it back to England where it was presented to Queen Victoria on December 17, 1856, as a "gesture of goodwill and friendship between the United States and the United Kingdom".

HMS Resolute went on to serve in the Royal Navy until 1879, when it was decommissioned. Three desks were then made from the ship's timber by master carpenter William Evenden, at the Royal Navy Dockyard in Chatham, Kent.

On November 23, 1880, the finished Resolute Desk was presented to President Rutherford B. Hayes by Queen Victoria.

As is customary, Queen Camilla also presented a brooch by a British designer as her royal gift to First Lady Melania Trump.

"British jewellery

designer Fiona Rae has been designing and making jewellery for over 34 years. After graduating from Central Saint Martins, Fiona, a member of the British Society of Enamellers, received advice and a loan from the Prince's Trust (now The King's Trust) and is today one of the UK's few enamel specialists," Buckingham Palace stated, with reference to the brooch.

Granted the Royal Warrant by the king in 2024, Rae's work focusses on a fusion of traditional craft skills alongside the latest developments in technology and computer-aided design.

The palace also revealed details of the gifts received by the senior royals from the American president and first lady in exchange.

While Trump presented Charles with a custom facsimile of a letter written from John Adams to John Jay in 1785, Melania gifted Camilla six Tiffany's English King Sterling Silver Teaspoons and White House Honey.

On June 2, 1785, in a letter from John Adams to John Jay, Adams describes His Majesty King George III receiving Adams as the first US Ambassador to Great Britain at St. James' Palace in London.

According to Adams, the meeting was marked by the pomp and ceremony required by the occasion of a royal audience. But beneath the pageantry, Adams described

a strong undercurrent of emotion as the King and his former subject, once bitter enemies, met face to face, as statesmen.

Adams quoted his speech to the King promising to restore friendship between the two nations and the King's response saying that although he was "the last to consent to the separation", he would be the first to meet US friendship.

Adams notes in the letter that this experience might prove useful to later diplomats. The gift is seen as a nod to the so-called UK-US special relationship of later years and symbolic of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which is the theme of the State Visit.

Melania Trump's teaspoons are described as Tiffany's interpretation of the "King" designs, which were very popular in England and America in the late 19th century.

Each teaspoon is hand engraved with Queen Camilla's cypher and the White House honey jar nods to the Queen's interest in beekeeping and reflects a shared appreciation for sustainability, craftsmanship and the natural world, the palace noted.

From Washington DC, the royal tour will also take in New York to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

India seeks accountability for attacks on UN peacekeepers, flags West Asia concerns

New Delhi

India on Wednesday called for strict accountability for attacks on UN peacekeepers and raised concerns over escalating instability in the West Asia, warning of its wider implications for global security and economic stability.

"There must be accountability for crimes against these peacekeepers," India told the United Nations Security Council, as it strongly condemned recent attacks on UN personnel and demanded swift investigation and justice.

Speaking at the UNSC's quarterly open debate,

India's Charge d'Affaires Yojna Patel said recent developments in the region have had serious implications across domains, including international peace and security, energy supplies, food security and global trade. Describing West Asia as India's "proximate neighbourhood", she highlighted the country's deep stakes in regional stability, noting that trade and energy supply chains are closely tied to the region and that nearly 10 million Indians live and work in the Gulf. Reiterating its consistent position since the outbreak of the latest conflict on February 28, India called for dialogue, diplomacy

and de-escalation, while stressing the need to respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. It also urged all parties to prioritise civilian safety and avoid further escalation. Raising concerns over maritime security, Patel cautioned against targeting commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, terming such actions unacceptable and in violation of international law. She noted with concern the loss of Indian seafarers' lives and called for the early restoration of safe and unimpeded navigation, recalling India's support for a UNSC resolution on the issue.

AAP jolted: Split wide open as seven MPs quit party

SEVEN Rajya Sabha MPs have jumped the AAP ship, leaving the party in dire straits barely 10 months before the Punjab Assembly elections. Three of them — Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal — announced a split in the party and said that two-thirds (7/10) of the AAP members in the Upper House had decided to “merge with the BJP” as a faction. The writing was on the wall ever since Chadha upped the ante against the party top brass over his removal from the post of AAP’s Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha. Ironically, Mittal, who replaced Chadha, has also joined hands with him.

This is undoubtedly the biggest setback for the Aam Aadmi Party after it was defeated by the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections last year. Chadha, once seen as a prominent face of AAP’s next-generation leadership, has justified the drastic step by accusing the young party of abandoning its foundational ideals. He and other MPs have



claimed that the party is giving precedence to “personal benefits” over public service. Their salvos are primarily aimed at AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, who is perceived to be pulling the strings of the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab.

Kejriwal, who is fighting a court battle in

the Delhi excise policy case, has framed the “exodus” as a betrayal of the trust reposed in these MPs by the party as well as Punjab’s people. Mann has branded them as “traitors” and accused the BJP of blatantly executing an operation to weaken AAP. The saffron party, which has already poached several Punjab Congress leaders in recent years, is looking to boost its poll prospects in the border state. The challenge for AAP is to quickly regroup after this huge jolt and regain lost ground in Punjab. The possibility of more party leaders switching over to the BJP is not ruled out. The developments have set the alarm bells ringing for Opposition parties in other states too. The INDIA bloc faces the tough task of keeping its flock together.

// sātyāsya pārāmām nidhānām //

“INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.”
- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Malegaon dead end: Discharge of accused lays bare probe lapses

THE 2006 Malegaon blasts case has reached a dead end, less than a year after the 2008 Malegaon blast case fell flat. In both instances, probe agencies have failed to answer the all-important question: who was responsible for the killings in Muslim-dominated areas? On September 8, 2006, four bombs exploded in this town in Maharashtra’s Nashik district, killing 31 people and injuring over 300. The investigation witnessed many

twists and turns: it was initially conducted by the state Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), later by the CBI and finally by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The ATS named nine Muslim men as the accused; the CBI agreed with these findings, but the NIA alleged that Hindu right-wing extremists

were involved in the blasts. Finally, the Bombay High Court has discharged four persons, citing insufficient evidence. The verdict



is a huge setback to the victims’ families, who have been awaiting justice for the past two decades.

The HC has pulled up the NIA for “completely ignoring” the ATS chargesheet. The deeply flawed probe trajectory has exposed a lack of accountability that goes far beyond an isolated case. The

two agencies drew diametrically opposite conclusions, each naming different sets of accused. Terror cases demand procedural rigour by investigators. The credibility of probe agencies takes a big hit when they lower the bar.

Last year, the Mumbai NIA court acquitted former BJP MP Sadhvi Pragya Thakur and six others in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, observing that the prosecution failed to establish the charges “beyond a reasonable doubt”. Elusive convictions mean that there is no closure for the grieving families. Justice delayed is often described as justice denied, but in such cases, the entire justice delivery system appears to have been subverted. The lesson is obvious: investigative agencies must operate with greater coordination, transparency and adherence to due process. Judicial oversight should ensure that lapses are addressed early, not decades later.

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A World Struggling with an Energy Crisis

The manner in which President Trump suddenly extended the ceasefire between the United States, Israel, and Iran—ongoing for the past two weeks—for an indefinite period suggests that he appears to be stepping back from confrontation. He announced the extension at a time when uncertainty prevailed over the second round of peace talks scheduled in Islamabad. Those doubts cleared somewhat yesterday, as reports emerged that representatives of both countries had departed for Islamabad, increasing hopes for the next round of negotiations.

After the failure of the first round of talks, Iran had refused to engage with the United States, leading many to believe that it would neither reopen the Strait of Hormuz nor agree to negotiations unless the American blockade of its ports was lifted. If Iran is now willing to return to the table, it is likely because the blockade is causing serious difficulties. Whatever the reason, until the second round of talks takes place and reaches a conclusion, there is little chance of an end to the West Asian crisis—or the accompanying global energy crisis.

The first round of talks between Washington and Tehran failed because Iran was unwilling to retreat from its uranium enrichment program or relinquish its



hold over Hormuz. It is important to note that despite the ceasefire extension, the Strait remains closed. Even the few vessels that had been passing through before the blockade are no longer able to do so.

Iran insists not only on the removal of the American blockade but also on supervising ships passing through Hormuz and charging them fees. This is unacceptable to both the United States and the Gulf nations, since Hormuz is an internationally recognized free waterway. Nearly 20 percent of the world's oil and gas supplies pass through the Strait.

Its disruption is not affecting only India and other Asian nations. The impact is being felt across the globe, including in the United States. Although America possesses its own oil and gas reserves, the

shutdown of Hormuz has driven up energy prices there as well. Other countries, however, are facing an even more severe crisis.

Iran appears to believe that by obstructing Hormuz, it can pressure countries around the world to force the United States to back down. This is why Tehran has adopted a hardline stance. Such rigidity could also derail the second round of talks. Iran is capable of targeting American bases in Gulf countries in retaliation for U.S. strikes. The problem for Washington is that it does not seem fully capable of neutralizing such attacks. This has created anxiety among Gulf states hosting American military bases.

It is clear that the longer Hormuz remains closed, the deeper the energy crisis will become. This situation may compel the United States to consider renewed

action against Iran, but it will not be easy for Trump to do so. Perhaps that is why he alternates between threatening to destroy Iran and expressing hope for a negotiated settlement. Over the past ten to twelve days, he has changed his statements multiple times. His repeated contradictions are sending a message to the world that he is not in a position to resolve the crisis in West Asia.

Meanwhile, Iran has begun claiming that it has started collecting fees from ships attempting to pass through Hormuz. It is difficult to verify the truth of these claims, but the continued obstruction of the Strait is worsening the global energy crisis. If the United States retreats under these circumstances, it will face humiliation, and Iran may be able to justify collecting transit charges as compensation for wartime losses. That would further increase oil and gas prices.

Iran's growing influence over Hormuz is also certain to intensify tensions with Gulf countries. Whatever reasons Trump may have had for extending the ceasefire indefinitely, it appears to reflect compulsion more than strategy. One major constraint is the need for approval from the U.S. Congress to wage war against Iran. Under American law, if a president initiates military action against another country,

congressional authorization must be obtained within 60 days. That deadline ends on May 1. The challenge is that securing approval appears difficult. Even many Trump supporters, along with a large section of the political establishment, do not favor war.

It is widely believed that this is why Trump used the reported request of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir to continue the ceasefire as political cover. Pakistan is also eager for an agreement between the United States and Iran. If talks fail and war resumes, Islamabad may be compelled—under its agreement with Saudi Arabia—to support Riyadh against Iran. Pakistan would prefer to avoid such a scenario, as it would damage relations with Tehran.

Whatever the outcome of the second round of U.S.-Iran talks, reopening Hormuz is essential, because Gulf nations have no other easy route for exporting their oil and gas. Alternative overland routes are being explored, but developing them could take years. Still, work on such alternatives should begin immediately, because there is no guarantee when the next crisis may erupt in West Asia. Iran, in any case, seems determined to secure some form of control over Hormuz.

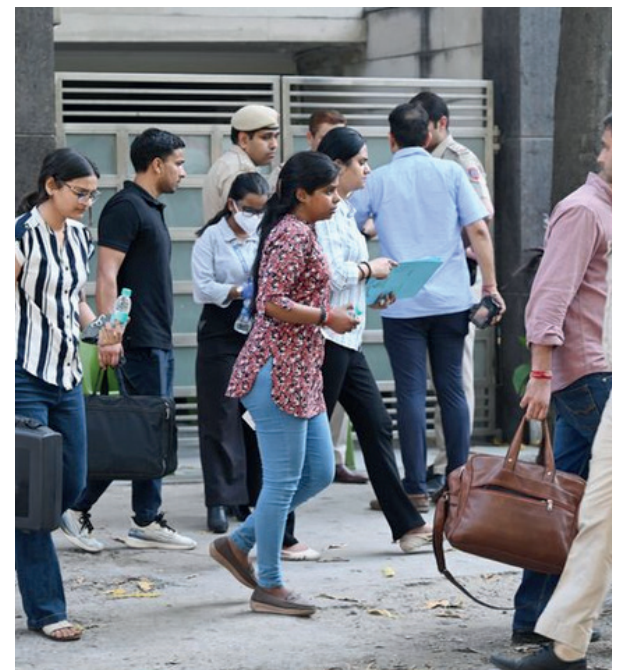
Familiar danger: Women's safety demands more than outrage

THE rape and murder of a young UPSC aspirant in New Delhi is not merely another horrifying crime; it is a reminder that in Delhi, violence against women often comes not from strangers, but from familiarity. The victim, daughter of an IRS officer, was allegedly assaulted and killed by a domestic help who once worked in the household. He knew the house, the family's routine, and the vulnerabilities within the home. Police investigations suggest that the accused, Rahul Meena, had earlier been removed from the job after complaints about borrowing money and suspicious conduct. Yet he allegedly returned, used his knowledge of the house, committed the crime and fled with cash and valuables. Reports indicate that mounting online gambling debts may have deepened his desperation. His alleged lack of remorse, reportedly saying "it just happened," adds another layer of horror.

Delhi has seen this pattern too often. From the 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder to repeated

assaults inside homes, gated colonies and workplaces, the city continues to prove that women are unsafe not only in public spaces but within private ones as well. Crimes committed by drivers, domestic help, acquaintances and even family members underline a harsher truth: familiarity is not always safety. This tragedy exposes a dangerous urban complacency. Domestic workers are often hired through informal references without proper police verification or institutional safeguards. Convenience replaces caution.

Police verification must become mandatory, not optional. Resident welfare associations and housing societies must maintain stronger records and accountability. At the same time, gambling addiction, financial distress and violent misogyny cannot be ignored as private matters. Privilege, CCTV cameras and gated colonies create only an illusion of safety. Women's safety in Delhi demands more than outrage.



Bengal Appears Ready for Change

Bengal is not merely casting votes. It also seems to be determining a new direction for its democratic future. The Election Commission's intensive revision of the voter list has led to the removal of a large number of suspicious, deceased, and relocated voters across the state. A strict and transparent electoral process is not limited only to polling day. It represents the return of the formal state, which for a long time had remained hidden behind local power structures. The voter now wants to determine the legitimacy of power on the basis of results and good governance.

A basic principle of political science is that where informal power structures and syndicates dominate, the formal capacity of the state becomes severely weakened. This has become the biggest obstacle to investment and development in Bengal. A state that was once a major center of industrial production has now fallen far behind in generating employment. Whenever a new factory or enterprise is proposed, local strongmen interfere. As a result, investors are forced to withdraw. The people now want a system that is transparent and strengthens the formal economy.

This election is also becoming a witness to a deep social and generational shift. The new generation is deciding its priorities on the basis of opportunities rather than political loyalties. Today's young voter is no longer dependent on traditional flags and slogans. They want a system they can trust. They want to see the kind of facilities and opportunities available in Bengaluru, Pune, or Delhi within their own state. When these aspirations remain unfulfilled, their anger turns openly against those in power. The new political alternative based on nationalism, transparency, and development that is emerging in the state appears to be giving voice to the aspirations of this young generation. The meaning of the relationship between citizens and

government is also changing rapidly.

Government schemes such as free ration and cash assistance have certainly provided immediate relief to the lower sections of society. However, both economics and politics show that after a certain point, the political impact of welfare schemes begins to decline—especially when they fail to satisfy the people's new aspirations. When



a government starts seeing citizens permanently only as "beneficiaries," basic development gets left behind. Such dependence prevents society from standing on its own feet economically. Bengal's voters now want more than a few hundred rupees in monthly assistance—they want stable jobs and respectable returns for their hard work. This model of empowerment now seems to be gaining space in Bengal's public discourse.

Demography and national security have become concerns that can no longer be ignored at any cost. Allegations of infiltration in border districts and the concerns linked to them have sparked a major debate over the social identity of the state. Unfortunate incidents like Sandeshkhali drew nationwide attention. The way local strongmen, considered close to those in power, allegedly

violated the dignity of women deeply hurt both the Bengali middle class and rural society. This is being seen as a direct result of a particular kind of appeasement politics. A section of the state believes that such policies completely ignore the equal rule of law.

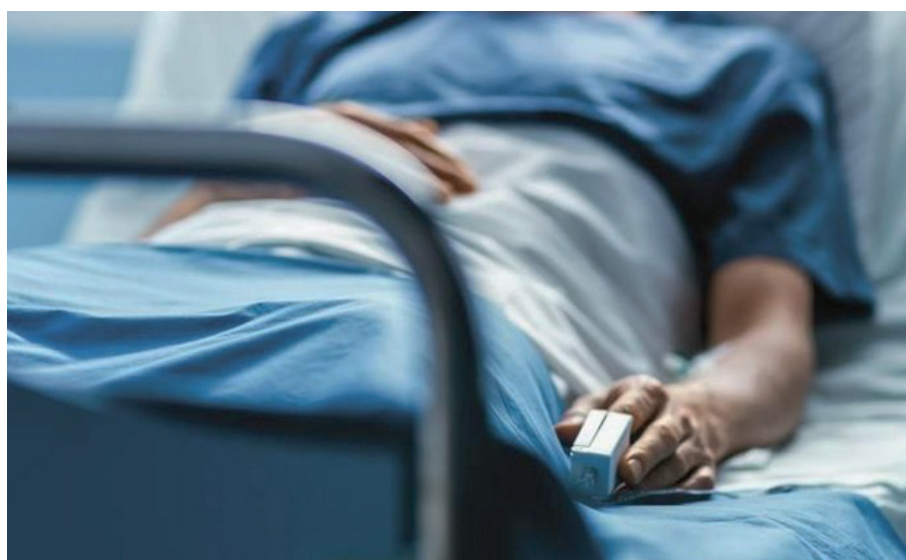
From the Rajbanshi community in North Bengal to the Matua community, all want to protect their identity and rights. For a long time, political violence has been used in Bengal as a weapon to maintain dominance. Intimidating people before elections and targeting opponents has been a bitter reality here. But this time, the heavy deployment of central armed police forces and the strict stance of the Election Commission have significantly reduced that atmosphere of fear.

In this safer environment, a silent voter is emerging in Bengal. This is the voter who says nothing publicly, but records an independent choice at the polling booth. The courage to vote freely, without fear or pressure, is a very positive sign of a maturing democracy. What is unfolding on Bengal's soil is not merely an assessment of one government's performance, but the footsteps of transformation.

The large-scale removal of suspicious voters, judicial strictness, action against corruption, and a strong demand for good governance all indicate that the state is passing through a period of major change. The people have two paths before them. One seeks to maintain dependence by offering short-term benefits. The other represents a clear commitment to good governance, transparency, national security, and long-term development. Bengal stands today at a crossroads where one correct democratic step can shape the future of many generations. The decision now lies in Bengal's hands—whether to live with fear or stand with dignity.

Critical care- Uniform ICU guidelines are the way forward

THE Supreme Court's endorsement of uniform ICU (intensive care unit) guidelines offers a ray of hope for India's fragmented critical care ecosystem. The norms specify that clinically stabilised patients requiring no further organ support or physiological monitoring should be discharged or moved to hospital wards. The court's insistence on this course of action addresses an issue that is medical as well as ethical: the prolongation of ICU stay. The absence of standardised ICU protocols has created a grey zone where vital decisions are often mired in uncertainty. Overwhelmed and unfamiliar with critical care, patients' families tend to rely solely on doctors' advice, which sometimes results in extended ICU admission that provides little medical benefit. The guidelines attempt to correct this imbalance by reinforcing a simple principle — ICUs are not meant for



indefinite care.

Importantly, the court has laid stress on clinical judgment, preserving the autonomy of doctors while nudging institutions towards accountability. The focus on systemic issues — nurse-to-

patient ratio, specialist supervision, infrastructure standards and training — is also laudable. In a country where the quality of healthcare is uneven, these minimum benchmarks could serve as a foundation for more equitable care. The directive to states

and union territories to identify priority areas and frame time-bound action plans injects a sense of urgency often missing in policy implementation.

However, even a well-intentioned roadmap falters when enforcement is half-hearted. The court's emphasis on monitoring frameworks and coordinated national action is a step in the right direction, but compliance will depend on political will, funding and administrative capacity. Beyond efficiency, the human dimension cannot be ignored. Prolonged ICU stay is traumatic both for the patients and their families. Shifting stable patients to lower levels of care is not just cost-effective; it reflects a humane approach. The push for uniform ICU norms can spur transparency and rational decision-making in India's healthcare system.

Mythos alarm: Banks need smarter shields & monitoring

New Delhi

BANKS have always faced the threat of cybercrime, but artificial intelligence has raised the danger to a new level. The recent concern over Anthropic's AI model, Mythos, has shown why banks and financial institutions are deeply worried. Mythos is not an ordinary chatbot. It is described as a powerful "cyber genius" that can independently search for weaknesses in software systems and even suggest ways to exploit them. In simple terms, it can do in hours what human hackers might take weeks to achieve. That is what makes it so



alarming. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has rightly called the threat "unprecedented." She warned that such advanced AI requires greater vigilance and better coordination among banks. The Finance

Ministry has also asked banks to work closely with agencies like CERT-In so that risks can be identified and tackled without delay.

The fear is real because India's banking system still depends heavily on old technology. Many banks run on legacy software, delayed updates and complicated vendor networks. If an AI tool like Mythos finds a weak point, it could trigger data theft, payment failures, ATM disruptions or even panic among customers. A cyberattack on one major bank can quickly shake confidence in the entire financial system. This is not

just India's concern. Even at the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, global leaders discussed whether cyber risks are now becoming too big for humans alone to manage.

Yet AI can also be a shield. The same technology can help banks detect fraud, identify weak spots and strengthen security faster. The need is to prepare for AI. Banks must update old systems, improve real-time monitoring and share threat information quickly. Today, cybersecurity is no longer just an IT issue. It is essential for economic stability and public trust.

Impact of UAE exit from OPEC uncertain, India should focus on energy resilience: Sagar Adani

New Delhi

The impact of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) exiting OPEC on global energy markets remains uncertain as of now, but in these times, India's key priority should be building energy resilience, highlighted Sagar Adani, Executive Director, Adani Green Energy



Speaking on the sidelines of The Economist Impact Resilient Futures Summit in New Delhi on Thursday, Adani said "time will tell" whether the move by the UAE will disrupt or stabilise global oil markets.

He said, "I think time will tell in terms of whether this move will either disrupt or, in my opinion, stabilise the world energy markets. Obviously, India and the UAE enjoy an exceptional country-to-country geopolitical relationship. The countries are very close, the leaderships are very close, and they enjoy a lot of trust and confidence with each other. So we think that from an India point of view, it will be a net-net positive in a way".

He also shared, "Whatever has happened with OPEC yesterday, the answer to all of this for India is energy resilience".

On the broader energy

situation, including disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, Adani described it as a difficult and unfortunate situation globally. However, he said India has managed the crisis effectively and ensured that its impact has not translated into significant hardship for people.

He emphasised that the long-term solution for India lies in strengthening its energy resilience. He said the Adani Group has committed USD 100 billion towards energy transformation in the country, focusing on investments across renewable energy, transmission infrastructure, thermal power and other energy sources.

The aim, he said, is to build a strong and resilient energy backbone for the Indian economy.

Adani also highlighted the

role of government policies in supporting the sector. He said more than 50 gigawatts of manufacturing capacity has been added in the country over the past couple of years, driven by policy support. In addition, India crossed 55 gigawatts of renewable energy installations last year for the first time.

He said both manufacturing capacity and project deployment in the energy sector are accelerating at a significant pace and are expected to continue.

On his company's projects, Adani said Adani Green Energy is developing the world's largest single-location renewable energy project in Khavda, Gujarat. The project will have a capacity of 30,000 megawatts spread across 580 square kilometres.

He added that the company currently has 20,000 megawatts of installed green energy capacity and aims to scale it up to 50 gigawatts by 2030, with annual capacity additions aligned to this target.

Adani further said India has played a strong role in navigating the global crisis and continues to manage the situation effectively amid ongoing geopolitical tensions.

Tula's Institute Hosts Uttarakhand's Largest Youth Conclave - Chhatra Sansad 2026; 7,000 Students Attend

Dehradun

Tula's Institute, Dehradun, hosted the Uttarakhand Chhatra Sansad 2026 -- themed Voices of Bharat -- bringing together over 7,000 students alongside eminent leaders from governance, spirituality, journalism, arts, and civil society.

Organised by Chhatra Sansad in collaboration with Tula's Institute and the Ruskin Bond Foundation, the conclave served as a dynamic platform for youth engagement, leadership, and nation-building.

The program commenced with a musical performance, followed by the inaugural session featuring a formal introduction, a cultural Ganesh Vandana, and a skit dedicated to Acharya Balkrishna.

The ceremonial lamp lighting marked the official opening, followed by the

welcome and felicitation of distinguished guests including spiritual leader Acharya Balkrishna, senior journalist Anand Narasimhan, Social Reformer Dr. Kalbe Rushaid



Rizvi. Chairman of the All India Anti-Terrorist Front M.S. Bitta, entrepreneur Prafull Billlore, social entrepreneur & Actress Aarushi Nishank, Swami Darshan Bharti, Founder President of Chhatra Sansad Adv. Kunal Sharma, Vice Chairman of Tula's Group and National Convenor of Chhatra Sansad Raunak Jain, and social leader Charu Pragma.

SBI calls for structural measures to manage rupee depreciation, inflation risks and BoP deficit

New Delhi

India needs a comprehensive and structural policy response to manage rising risks from rupee depreciation, imported inflation and a widening balance of payments (BoP) deficit, according to a report by the State Bank of India.

The report highlighted that the key concern at present is the "second-round effect" of external shocks, particularly through the exchange rate channel. It noted that depreciation in the rupee leads to higher imported inflation, while continued capital outflows further put pressure on the currency.

It stated, "The current Rupee depreciation is not in line with India's macro fundamentals! It is therefore imperative to control the second-round effects... hence ensuring that inflationary expectations does not get de anchored..we need a structural solution to India's BOP deficit".

Second-round effects refer to the indirect impact of an initial economic shock spreading through the wider economy. In this context, a depreciation of the rupee increases the cost of imports like oil and raw materials (first-round effect). Over time, businesses pass on these higher costs to consumers, leading to a broader rise in prices and inflation (second-round effect). This can also push up inflation expectations, making it harder for policymakers to control price stability.

Data in the report showed that the rupee has depreciated 6.39 per cent between April 2025 and February 2026, with an additional 3.63 per cent depreciation observed post the West Asia conflict. At the same time, cumulative foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows of USD 6.4 billion have added to pressure on the currency.



The report cautioned that exchange rate depreciation cannot act as a shock absorber indefinitely. Instead, it may turn into a channel for transmitting inflation into the domestic economy, especially through higher import costs.

This could lead to inflation expectations becoming unanchored, thereby complicating monetary policy.

On the external sector, the report projected that India's overall balance of payments could remain in deficit in FY27 at USD 28 billion, with the trade balance also expected to stay negative. The current account deficit is projected at USD 54.1 billion in FY27, compared with USD 31.5 billion in FY26.

Although the capital account is expected to show a surplus of USD 26.5 billion, supported by positive capital flows, it may not be sufficient to fully offset the current account gap.

The report also warned that the BoP could remain negative for the third consecutive year, underlining the need for urgent policy action.

It stressed that relying solely on exchange rate movements is not a sustainable solution in a period of high global uncertainty and volatility. Instead, a broader set of measures is required to manage external imbalances and inflation risks.

Downside to growth bigger concern than upside risk to inflation, RBI to maintain rates this fiscal: Crisis

New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is likely to maintain current policy rates through the fiscal year as concerns over economic growth outweigh risks from inflation, according to a report by Crisil Intelligence.

The report stated that the downside to growth is a bigger concern than upside risks to inflation in the current environment.

It noted that producers are bearing the brunt of higher energy and input costs, while the government has limited the increase in retail energy prices, thereby containing inflation at the consumer level.

"Our base case expectation is the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) would maintain the policy rates this fiscal," the report said, adding that the central bank is likely to continue its cautious approach.

The MPC had kept policy rates unchanged at its April meeting and maintained a neutral stance, providing flexibility for future policy actions. However, the report cautioned that a prolonged geopolitical conflict could reduce the available monetary space for the central bank.

On fiscal health, the report highlighted that the government has targeted a reduction in the Centre's fiscal deficit to 4.3 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2027, down from 4.4 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2026 (revised estimates). It also noted that the government met its fiscal deficit target for fiscal 2026.

Gross market borrowing is projected to increase to Rs 16.1 lakh crore in fiscal 2027 from Rs 14.6 lakh crore in fiscal 2026 (revised estimates). Around 51 per cent of



the borrowing is expected to be undertaken in the first half of the fiscal year.

The report also provided an outlook on the external sector, stating that the current account deficit (CAD) is expected to widen to 1.5 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2027 under the base case, compared with a projected 0.8 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2026. In an alternative scenario, the CAD could widen further to 2.0 per cent of GDP.

The widening of the CAD is likely to be driven by a higher import bill due to elevated crude oil prices, as well as gas and fertiliser imports in the alternative case. Additionally, disruptions caused by the ongoing conflict could impact exports, leading to a rise in the goods trade deficit.

However, the report noted that a healthy services trade surplus is expected to limit the extent of the widening in the current account deficit. It also pointed out that the current account deficit had narrowed to 1.0 per cent of GDP in the third quarter of fiscal 2026, compared with 1.3 per cent in the corresponding quarter of fiscal 2025.

India prepares Cabinet note for new urea investment policy to bridge 100 lakh tonne supply gap

New Delhi

The government has prepared a Cabinet note for a fresh investment policy in the urea sector aimed at incentivising new plant capacity to bridge a supply gap of nearly 100 lakh metric tonnes, a senior government official said.

"The proposal is currently

under inter-ministerial consultation and is expected to define a subsidy framework with floor and ceiling rates for up to eight years, and the levels will be decided based on prevailing conditions," the official said. 1

The policy is aimed at providing clarity to investors in a price-controlled regime

where the urea maximum retail price remains fixed.

"Some urea producers are keen to set up new plants, but that requires a clear investment policy because they are seeking some level of protection. Producers want assurance regarding the level of subsidy they will receive if their production costs are

higher than the MRP," the official said.

The move comes as India continues to face a structural demand-supply gap, with domestic production of around 300 lakh metric tonnes against demand of nearly 380-400 lakh metric tonnes, implying import dependence of about 20-25

percent. "Currently, there is a demand of about 400 lakh metric tonnes in the country, whereas domestic production capacity is around 300 lakh metric tonnes. This leaves a gap of nearly 100 lakh metric tonnes, or about 25 percent of total demand, which is met through imports," the official said.

SIP in Balanced Advantage Funds for Market Discipline

New Delhi

Staying disciplined through different market phases is often one of the biggest challenges for investors. Markets move in cycles, sometimes rising steadily and at other times becoming volatile or uncertain. During such phases, it is easy to get influenced by short term movements and make changes to long term plans. A structured approach like investing through a Systematic Investment Plan in a Balanced Advantage Fund can help bring consistency to this journey. By combining regular investing with a flexible asset allocation strategy, it allows investors to stay invested across market cycles without needing to constantly react to market changes.

Does a SIP in a Balanced Advantage Fund Help Manage Market Swings?

Market volatility is a natural part of investing, but it is not always easy to deal with. There are times when markets move up steadily and there are phases when they correct or remain uncertain for a while. In such situations, what often matters more than the movement itself is how investors react to it. Many long term investment plans get affected not because of market changes, but because of decisions made during these uncertain periods. This is where a structured approach can make a difference. Investing through a Systematic Investment Plan in a Balanced Advantage Fund brings together regular investing and dynamic asset allocation. It helps reduce the need to take frequent decisions and allows investors to stay focused on their long term approach, even when markets are unpredictable.

Why Volatility Feels Difficult to Handle

Market volatility is not just about numbers moving on a screen, it often affects how investors feel and act. When markets fall or become uncertain, hesitation is common. Investors may delay investments, pause their plans or exit at the wrong time. On the other hand, when markets rise sharply, there is often a tendency to invest more aggressively. These reactions, though natural can lead to inconsistency. Over time, such inconsistency can impact how a portfolio grows. This



is why managing behaviour during different market phases becomes just as important as selecting the right investment.

How SIP Brings Consistency to Investing

A Systematic Investment Plan brings a sense of discipline to investing by taking away the need to constantly decide the right time to enter the market. Instead, a fixed amount is invested at regular intervals, no matter how markets are behaving.

This method works in a simple yet effective way. It spreads your investments over time rather than putting everything in at once, and at the same time, it helps build a steady investing habit. When markets dip, the same amount buys more units, and when markets are higher, it buys fewer. Over a period of time, this helps smooth out the overall cost of investing. More importantly, it keeps you invested consistently, without getting influenced by short term market ups and downs.

What Balanced Advantage Funds Add to the Equation

Balanced Advantage Funds introduce flexibility through dynamic asset allocation. Instead of maintaining a fixed split between equity and debt, they adjust this mix based on market conditions and valuations. For instance, when equity markets appear expensive, the fund may gradually reduce equity

exposure and increase allocation to debt or similar strategies. When valuations become more reasonable, equity exposure may be increased. This ability to adjust helps the fund respond to changing market conditions without requiring any action from the investor. It brings a layer of balance by aiming to manage risk while still participating in growth opportunities.

Combining SIP and Balanced Advantage Funds

When you invest in a Balanced Advantage Fund through a SIP, the overall process becomes simpler and more structured. You do not have to worry about when to invest or how much to allocate to different asset classes. The SIP takes care of regular investing by putting in a fixed amount at set intervals, without trying to predict market movements. At the same time, the fund itself decides how to split that money between equity and debt, based on its internal approach and market conditions. In a way, both key decisions, when to invest and how to allocate are handled systematically. This can make the investment journey feel more manageable, while also helping maintain consistency over time.

How This Combination Helps During Volatility

Market ups and downs are a normal part of investing, but they can feel uncomfortable, especially when prices move sharply. In such

phases, pure equity investments may see higher fluctuations. Balanced Advantage Funds, with their mix of equity and debt can help soften these swings to some extent. At the same time, a SIP keeps running as planned. There is no need to pause, increase or reduce investments based on market conditions. This removes the pressure of making decisions during uncertain times and helps keep the investment journey steady.

Supporting Long Term Discipline

A major advantage of this approach is the discipline it brings over time. Since both investing and allocation are handled in a structured way, there is less need to frequently review or change strategy. This can help investors avoid common emotional reactions, such as stopping investments when markets fall or investing more when markets are at higher levels. Staying consistent over the long term often plays an important role in building outcomes.

Market volatility cannot be avoided, but it does not have to derail long term plans. Investing in a Balanced Advantage Fund through a SIP brings together regular investing and a flexible allocation strategy. While the SIP ensures consistency, the fund adjusts to changing market conditions. Together, they offer a more balanced way to invest, helping investors stay focused on long term goals instead of short term market movements.

The Creative Machine: AI and India's AVGC Industry

In April 2026, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting confirmed an INR 250 crore allocation under the Union Budget 2026-27 to establish AVGC Content Creator Labs in 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges. The Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) in Mumbai, operational since July 2025, has launched 18 courses through the Train-the-Trainer programme. These mark the state's most direct intervention yet in building a creative workforce for an industry whose scale demands it. The sector currently employs roughly 2.6 lakh professionals and could generate over 23 lakh direct and indirect jobs by 2032.

The Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC) sector, spanning animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, and extended reality, is among India's fastest-growing industries. The AVGC Promotion Task Force, constituted in April 2022, projected a requirement of close to two million skilled professionals by 2030. AI has entered the production pipeline not as a prospect but as a present reality, accelerating timelines, reshaping workflows, and compressing content creation costs. The structural gaps that could constrain it are equally real.

India's AVGC Landscape and the AI Inflection

The global AVGC-XR[1] market is valued at approximately US\$ 800 billion. India's share, US\$ 2.3 billion in 2019, could grow 2.2 times to constitute 1.5 percent of that total. A CII GT report projects Animation and VFX rising from \$1.3 billion in 2023 to US\$ 2.2 billion by 2026, with online gaming reaching US\$ 4.6 billion by the same year. The generative AI animation segment is projected to grow from US\$ 61.6 million in 2023 to US\$ 931.5 million by 2033, at a CAGR of 47.9 percent. Studios are deploying these tools to automate repetitive tasks such as rigging[2] and in-betweening[3], freeing artists for higher-order creative work.

The credibility of India's AVGC ambition rests not on the number of Content Creator Labs it establishes but on whether the professionals and studios that emerge from them operate in a governance environment that enables sustainable competition.

When Netflix launched Eycline Studios in Hyderabad, the fifth location in a global network covering Los Angeles, Vancouver, Seoul, and London, it signalled that global studios regard India not as a low-cost outsourcing base but as a contributor to high-end digital storytelling pipelines. WAVES 2025 reinforced this shift, convening technology leaders from over 100 countries under the "Create in India, Create for the World" initiative, with the Create in India Challenge drawing over one lakh creators across Tier-II and Tier-III cities. The institutional architecture for a creative economy of scale is being built. The governance architecture has yet to catch up.

Three Structural Gaps in the AVGC Ecosystem

The credibility of India's AVGC ambition rests not on the number of Content Creator Labs it establishes but on whether the professionals and studios that emerge from them operate in a governance environment that enables sustainable competition. Three structural gaps risk



undermining this outcome.

1. The Infrastructure Gap

High-performance computing, including GPU clusters, low-latency networks, and specialised rendering infrastructure, remains concentrated in metropolitan facilities. By May 2025, the IndiaAI Mission's national compute capacity had crossed 34,000 GPUs, yet deployment to Tier-II and Tier-III cities, where creative talent is being directed, is not matched by investment in production infrastructure. Though the 'India AI infrastructure market' is expanding rapidly, AVGC-XR workflows are compute-intensive in ways that general-purpose infrastructure does not address. Maharashtra's AVGC-XR Policy 2025 identifies Nagpur, Nashik, and Kolhapur as potential regional clusters. Rising AVGC demand, driven by compute-intensive rendering, simulation, and generative workflows, will require substantially more distributed GPU access than current deployments provide. For these clusters to function as production hubs rather than training outposts, compute access must follow the geography of creative talent, not precede it.

The challenge is less institutional absence than alignment: existing programmes have not kept pace with AI-augmented workflows, leaving a gap between foundational training and industry-current competencies.

2. The Skill Gap

India hosts the world's largest base of AI learners at 1.3 million, yet a 50-55 percent gap persists between projected demand and qualified supply. In AVGC, the gap is compounded by the sector's specificity: it needs professionals combining creative and technical competencies, artists who understand machine learning pipelines, engineers who understand narrative form, producers who understand generative workflow economics. India does not lack institutional presence here. The country has over 1,450 animation colleges, including 900-plus private institutes such as Arena Animation, MAAC, and Toonz Academy, alongside public institutions like the National Institute of Design (NID), the Film

and Television Institute of India (FTII), and the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute. Industry bodies such as FICCI, CII, ABAI, and SAIK have long contributed to capacity building. The challenge is less institutional absence than alignment: existing programmes have not kept pace with AI-augmented workflows, leaving a gap between foundational training and industry-current competencies. The IICT's 136 students are orders of magnitude below what the two-million-professional target by 2030 requires. Content Creator Labs in 15,000 schools can build foundational literacy, but do not yet constitute a full pipeline from creative exposure to industry-ready talent.

3. The Intellectual Property Gap

India's Copyright Act 1957 does not address AI-generated works, assign authorship to AI systems, or guide the use of copyrighted material in AI model training. In December 2025, DPIIT published a Working Paper on Generative AI and Copyright proposing a hybrid licensing model, but foundational questions on authorship and ownership remain unresolved. The Delhi High Court admitted ANI Media v. OpenAI (2024), the country's first significant generative AI copyright case, without providing definitive guidance. For an industry where IP is the primary export commodity, this ambiguity is not merely a legal inconvenience. It is a structural disincentive to original IP creation and a vulnerability in every co-production negotiation with studios in more settled regimes.

Framework of Priorities

The following three recommendations provide a framework:

1. Build a distributed compute infrastructure for AVGC clusters:

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the IndiaAI Mission, could designate AVGC-XR as a priority sector for distributed compute access. A portion of the shared compute infrastructure being developed by IndiaAI Mission's infrastructure could be allocated to designated AVGC production nodes and regional clusters identified

under state AVGC-XR policies, providing GPU-as-a-service access that lets studios compete on global pipelines without the capital cost of proprietary compute.

2. Modernise existing institutions while scaling the IICT and Content Creator Labs network:

The Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) and Content Creator Labs offer a promising template for a sector-specific AI talent pipeline. That template must extend to the modernisation of India's existing public and private AVGC training infrastructure, so that a democratised pipeline emerges across both streams rather than a parallel system operating apart from them. Bringing public and private institutions onto a common standard is essential for scaling the workforce the sector requires. The IICT could develop a modular curriculum sequencing foundational creative skills with AI-augmented production competencies, covering generative design, virtual production workflows, AI-assisted editing, and prompt engineering. The Train-the-Trainer programme, currently at 15 participants, could scale into a national faculty development scheme, with IICT partnering with leading public and private institutions to accredit AI-AVGC instructors across both public and private institutions. Industry partnerships on the WaveX Startup Accelerator model could ensure curriculum development is paced to the sector's workflow evolution rather than academic cycles.

3. Legislate clarity on AI-generated IP before the ambiguity compounds:

India could operationalise the DPIIT working paper's central proposal: a single-window system that abstracts the negotiation between copyright holders and AI model trainers, securing fair compensation for creators while granting developers a collective licence to use lawfully accessed material without negotiating with individual rightsholders. Unlike an absolute exemption, this approach is creator-compensating by design, balancing creator autonomy with the imperatives of innovation. India could also institutionalise the paper's AI Training Data Disclosure requirement, so AVGC studios can track when their work enters training datasets, and build out the centralised royalty collection mechanism it envisages. Asian peers offer reference points: Japan's Article 30-4 grounds its AI-training exception in "non-enjoyment use", a human-centric standard rather than a technical carve-out, while Singapore's Section 244 permits computational data analysis on lawfully accessed works.

India's AVGC sector is at an inflection point. The institutional groundwork, encompassing IICT, the AVGC Task Force, WAVES, and the Content Creator Labs initiative, is stronger than at any previous moment. What remains to be built is the governance layer that converts creative capacity into a durable competitive advantage: compute infrastructure that follows creative geography, a talent pipeline calibrated to AI-augmented workflows, and an IP framework that gives Indian studios the confidence to own what they create.

From Deposits to Derivatives: The Unfinished Financialisation of Indian Households

Every previous episode of sustained foreign selling in Indian equities ended the same way. In 2008, 2013, and 2018, when foreign portfolio investors headed for the exits, markets fell hard because there was no domestic counterweight of sufficient scale. In FY25-26, FPIs withdrew a record INR 1.81 lakh crore from Indian equities — surpassing even the previous year's outflow of INR 1.27 lakh crore. Two consecutive years of the heaviest foreign selling in the market's history. The Nifty 50 ended the fiscal year down 3.6 percent. Yet there was no crisis, no liquidity freeze, no policy rescue. There was no government intervention or central bank support. The reason was a structural change in who owns Indian equities and how household savings flow into them.

The numbers are stark. Total mutual fund assets under management rose from INR 65.7 lakh crore in March 2025 to INR 80.2 lakh crore by December — a 22 percent increase in nine months. Open-ended equity schemes alone held INR 35.7 lakh crore, accounting for nearly 45 percent of total industry AUM. Equity folios, individual investor accounts, grew from roughly 16.4 crore in March to 17.8 crore by December 2025, adding over a million new accounts every month through a period of acute market stress. Total mutual fund folios crossed 26.1 crore. The NSE's registered investor base reached 11.9 crore by August 2025, exhibiting a near-fourfold increase since March 2020.

This was not speculative hot money chasing returns but a monthly, automatic, behaviourally sticky flow from salaried households, largely indifferent to headline volatility.

The engine behind these numbers was the Systematic Investment Plan. Monthly SIP contributions climbed from INR 25,926 crore in March 2025 to INR 29,529 crore by October, a record. SIP assets reached INR 16.25 lakh crore, accounting for over 20 percent of total industry AUM. Contributing SIP accounts crossed 9.45 crore. For the full nine months of April to December, net inflows into open-ended equity schemes totalled INR 2.56 lakh crore. This was not speculative hot money chasing returns but a monthly, automatic, behaviourally sticky flow from salaried households, largely indifferent to headline volatility.

That stickiness was tested. FPI equity outflows totalled INR 1.81 lakh crore in FY26, with selling concentrated in financials and IT. The Nifty IT index fell 19.2 percent in the fiscal year, while the FMCG index fell 14.2 percent. Mid- and small-caps corrected sharply from their peaks. But domestic institutional investors, principally mutual funds flush with SIP inflows, absorbed this selling. Equity funds recorded positive



net inflows for 56 consecutive months through October 2025. In July, equity fund inflows hit a record INR 42,703 crore, which was the same month the Nifty fell nearly 3 percent. The flow was counter-cyclical: retail money entered faster precisely when foreign money was leaving.

The sectoral divergence, where IT and FMCG were punished while Auto and banking were supported, reflected an equity market increasingly priced by domestic flows responding to domestic fundamentals rather than by foreign allocators responding to global risk appetite.

The market did not emerge unscathed. Export-facing sectors bore genuine damage, and the Nifty's FY26 return was negative. But the domestic-demand sectors told a different story: Nifty Auto rose 11.9 percent, buoyed by consumption resilience and rate cuts. The sectoral divergence, where IT and FMCG were punished while Auto and banking were supported, reflected an equity market increasingly priced by domestic flows responding to domestic fundamentals rather than by foreign allocators responding to global risk appetite. That is a qualitative shift in market microstructure.

Three institutional developments underpinned the transformation. First, it is the SIP mechanism itself that automatically makes monthly deductions, converting volatile retail sentiment into a steady, predictable flow. The average monthly SIP contribution rose from INR 16,602 crore in FY24 to INR 24,113 crore in FY25, and then past INR 29,000 crore in late 2025. The behavioural architecture is crucial here. Once set up, SIPs run on inertia, insulating the flow from day-to-

day sentiment.

Second, the digital onboarding infrastructure. Aadhaar-linked e-KYC, fintech distribution platforms, and SEBI's expansion of the mutual fund distribution network compressed the friction between savings intention and market participation. The fourfold increase in NSE-registered investors since 2020 would not have been possible without this plumbing. Third, the channelling of retirement savings. The National Pension System and EPFO's equity ETF allocations, while still a small share of total corpus, introduced a cohort of salaried workers to equity exposure through institutional intermediaries. This normalises equity as a savings vehicle rather than a speculative one.

The transformation is real. It is also incomplete, and the risks are underexamined. The most consequential risk is distributional. As of March 2023, bank deposits accounted for 46 percent of household financial wealth, mutual funds for 9 percent, and currency for 11 percent. By March 2025, the share of mutual funds had climbed to 12 percent. The shift toward equity is overwhelmingly urban and upper-middle-class. For rural and lower-income India, savings continue to flow into gold, real estate, and bank deposits. The INR 80 lakh crore mutual fund industry is impressive in aggregate, but its social base is narrow. Extending that base into smaller towns, rural households, and lower-income savers is a regulatory priority, as is containing the speculative fringe that has grown alongside it.

Second, the SIP flywheel has never been tested under a domestic recession. The 2025 stress test was externally driven — FPI selling amid strong GDP

growth and rate cuts. SIP discontinuation rates tend to rise when NAVs decline for sustained periods. The behavioural stickiness that held through an export-sector correction may not hold through an earnings collapse that touches the domestic economy.

Financialisation and speculation are not the same thing, but in a rapid adoption phase, they coexist, and the regulatory architecture is still catching up.

Third, not all the new participation is healthy. Around 89 percent of retail traders in the equity derivatives segment lost money between 2018-19 and 2023-24, with aggregate losses surging 41 percent to INR 1.06 lakh crore. The average loss per person was INR 1.1 lakh. Financialisation and speculation are not the same thing, but in a rapid adoption phase, they coexist, and the regulatory architecture is still catching up. SEBI has mandated risk disclosures and tightened F&O contract sizes, but the scale of retail derivative losses suggests that a significant fraction of the new market participation is wealth-destroying rather than wealth-creating.

Tying the Threads

This series has traced three dimensions of India's economic story in 2025. Part 1 showed what the macro framework could achieve under favourable conditions — near-zero inflation, aggressive monetary easing, and a credibility dividend in the form of three sovereign upgrades. Part 2 showed what happened when those conditions were withdrawn — tariff shocks, oil volatility, and a currency under pressure, with classical adjustment mechanisms working only partially. This final piece examines the domestic financial architecture that held the system together through both.

The common thread is conditionality. The disinflation rested on a good monsoon and soft oil conditions that the Iran crisis has already reversed. The trade resilience rested on services exports and remittances — buffers that are structural but not inexhaustible.

The common thread is conditionality. The disinflation rested on a good monsoon and soft oil conditions that the Iran crisis has already reversed. The trade resilience rested on services exports and remittances — buffers that are structural but not inexhaustible. And the market's ability to absorb record foreign selling rested on a genuine but socially narrow savings revolution, behaviourally untested under domestic stress, and a speculative fringe that regulators are still working to contain. India's institutions have demonstrated capacity. The question that 2026 and beyond will answer is whether that capacity translates into durability.

A Naxal-Free India - Between Operational Success and Strategic Vigilance

“Their (Maoists’) Politburo and central structure have been almost completely dismantled. Our goal was a Naxal-free India by 31 March. The country will be informed once the entire process is formally completed, but I can say that we have become Naxal-free”, declared Home Minister Amit Shah in his address to Parliament on the state of the Maoist insurgency in India on 30 March 2026 — a day before the deadline he had announced in August 2024 for making the country Naxal-free. “As of today,” the Minister added, “barring one, the entire Maoist leadership has been eliminated.” Shah did not specify which leader he was referring to, but he was most likely alluding to Misir Besra, an influential operative active in the Jharkhand region and secretary of the Eastern Regional Bureau. Reportedly, Besra escaped a clash with security forces in the Saranda forest in January this year. His potential surrender could bring the Centre closer to fulfilling its commitment to eradicate Maoism completely — at least in its organisational form across forested areas.

This temporal marker provides a useful point to assess the Indian state’s efforts to combat an insurgency once described by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as the “biggest threat to internal security” in India. The shrinking “Red Corridor,” the sharp fall in LWE violence, the neutralisation of key Maoist leaders, and rising surrenders indicate a shift in the balance of power in favour of the Indian state. Yet, beyond statistical success lies the challenge of converting operational gains into lasting peace. This article examines India’s counter-insurgency experience, arguing that it offers a democratic template for tackling ideological insurgencies while also identifying emerging challenges.

Democratic

Counter-insurgency in Practice

The CPI (Maoist) operationalised Mao’s doctrine of protracted people’s war, which in the Indian context meant establishing strongholds in forested peripheries, exploiting governance deficits to consolidate control, and ultimately seeking to encircle urban centres for a final assault. This strategy yielded significant gains in the 1990s and 2000s, reflected in the expansion of the “Red Corridor” and the emergence of “liberated zones,” where parallel administrative and judicial systems undermined state authority.



What is to the credit of the Indian state is that the response to these provocations largely remained within a democratic-constitutional framework. Governments refrained from suspending electoral politics or adopting extraordinary measures, instead focusing on strengthening institutional capacity and governance in LWE-affected regions. While states initially were the primary responders to the LWE challenge, the Union gradually assumed a stronger coordinating role. The creation of the MHA’s LWE Division in 2006 marked a turning point, improving intelligence collation and inter-agency coordination, and reframing LWE as a national security challenge rather than a fragmented law-and-order concern.

This shift culminated in the National Policy and Action Plan (2015), which articulated an integrated counter-insurgency strategy. Its ‘hard’ dimension focused on intelligence-led operations, expansion of forward bases, and disruption of Maoist leadership and logistics through the integration of technology. Its ‘soft’ dimension prioritised development and governance through targeted funding, infrastructure expansion, and welfare delivery mechanisms such as direct benefit transfers. Together, these measures combined coercive capacity with developmental outreach to reassert state legitimacy in affected regions.

Integration of Operational and Developmental Strategies

Shah, in his address to Parliament, quantified the decline, which presents an encouraging picture in India’s fight against LWE. Shah noted that in the past three years alone, “706 Maoists were killed, 2,218 were arrested, and more than 4,800 cadres have surrendered”. Territorially, the Red Corridor has contracted substantially, with just two districts — Bijapur in Chhattisgarh and West Singhbhum in Jharkhand — now notified

by the government in its latest assessment. In 2005, the same number stood at around 200. Organisationally, the CPI-Maoist has suffered both fragmentation and attrition. The number of those who have surrendered over the decades has been the biggest blow to the movement. This decline is a consequence of the integration of kinetic operations with sustained developmental outreach in LWE-affected districts. Targeted financial measures such as Special Central Assistance funded critical infrastructure—including roads, telecom, schools, healthcare, banking, and livelihoods—while direct benefit transfers and improved monitoring undercut insurgent extortion and reinforced the state’s credibility as a welfare provider.

A key turning point has been large-scale surrenders, facilitated by structured rehabilitation schemes offering financial incentives, education, and livelihoods. Former cadres also contributed valuable intelligence on logistics and networks.

A key turning point has been large-scale surrenders, facilitated by structured rehabilitation schemes offering financial incentives, education, and livelihoods. Former cadres also contributed valuable intelligence on logistics and networks. Combined with leadership decapitation through targeted operations, these measures have significantly weakened the insurgency’s organisational capacity. The resulting gains underpin official confidence in its decline, achieved within India’s democratic-constitutional framework.

A Democratic Template against Protracted People’s War

The Indian experience thus offers an emerging template for democracies confronting ideologically inspired armed insurgencies. First, it validates a core proposition in contemporary counter-insurgency thought: that coercive superiority must be paired with a credible governance and development presence if

the state is to durably reclaim contested spaces. Second, it highlights the strategic utility of institutionalised exit options such as amnesties, rehabilitation packages, and pathways to reintegrate into society, in fracturing militant unity and reframing the conflict as one in which defection is rational and dignified rather than a shameful capitulation. Surrendering cadres are not simply removed from the battlefield; they become a major source of intelligence, a fact acknowledged by the Home Minister in his address.

The formal architecture of Indian democracy, including free and fair elections, a diverse media, a robust judiciary, and strong Union-federal dynamics, remained in place, even if localised abuses may have occurred. The democratic polity thus has not prevented but has been central in addressing a long-standing Maoist insurgency.

And third, in contrast to more authoritarian victories such as Peru’s dismantling of Sendero Luminoso under Alberto Fujimori or Sri Lanka’s defeat of the LTTE, India’s approach suggests that insurgencies can be tackled without suspension of democratic electoral politics or emergency or military rule. The formal architecture of Indian democracy, including free and fair elections, a diverse media, a robust judiciary, and strong Union-federal dynamics, remained in place, even if localised abuses may have occurred. The democratic polity thus has not prevented but has been central in addressing a long-standing Maoist insurgency.

Maoist Strategic Reorientation and the Urban Front

Even as strategic success in forested areas presents an encouraging scenario, the question of whether the decline in forests has shifted the movement to a more complex phase, in which the lines between insurgency, radical politics, and legitimate dissent are increasingly difficult to define, needs to be addressed as well. Maoist strategic literature and evolving patterns of mobilisation indicate a shift towards urban fronts, civil-society penetration, and discursive battles over dispossession and state violence.

The CPI (Maoist) increasingly accepts that an exclusive focus on tribal, forested regions is not in tune with India’s evolving socio-economic and geographical realities. The rural-urban dialectic necessitates a stronger urban focus, leading Maoists to prioritise work in cities through

revolutionary united fronts and sustained ideological engagement within civil society and public discourse, efforts that could indirectly reinforce the armed movement over time. Although the dismantling of their armed structure makes a full-scale revival unlikely in the short term, the consequences of ideological and strategic investment by the Maoists in urban spaces cannot be ignored.

Expanding legal frameworks and state powers are often debated as necessary tools to counter covert facilitation of violence below the threshold of armed action, but the central challenge remains maintaining a clear distinction—targeting clandestine support for violence while safeguarding legitimate democratic contestation.

Politics apart, the fact that there is a conscious and strategic reorientation by the Maoists is attested in their own party documents. Analytically, this marks a shift in the Maoists’ approach, in which the project becomes less about the immediate seizure of power than about contesting the very edifice of Indian democracy to lend legitimacy to armed struggle.

Legislating Security while Preserving Liberty

The Maoist shift toward urban spaces and civil society foregrounds an established dilemma in democratic security governance: how to strike a balance in designing national security legislation that is robust enough to address emerging forms of conflict without disturbing the moral and legal distinction between dissent and insurgency. Expanding legal frameworks and state powers are often debated as necessary tools to counter covert facilitation of violence below the threshold of armed action, but the central challenge remains maintaining a clear distinction—targeting clandestine support for violence while safeguarding legitimate democratic contestation.

While the Maoist insurgency appears territorially and operationally exhausted, its residual ideological networks may still exploit emerging spaces of conflict. The task ahead for the Indian state is twofold: to consolidate its gains in former conflict zones through rights-respecting governance, and to address the urban dimension of Maoism without undermining civil liberties, particularly the balance between security and freedom of expression.

Commercialisation, Not Merely Privatisation: INDIA'S SPACE REFORM STRATEGY

Since 2020, the Indian government has enacted space reforms, supplemented by the geospatial policy, the space policy, the streamlining of non-governmental financing mechanisms, and a wide range of support and encouragement for space-domain innovation. The sentiment within the innovation ecosystem has remained optimistic, with little to no awareness of the tribulations the reforms overcame.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was, for an extended period, unable to delegate its outputs and thus became the comprehensive assembler of launch vehicles, satellites, and spacecraft. This occurred at a time when the majority of leading spacefaring nations, such as China and the United States (US), had transitioned to full-scale commercialisation. The reforms introduced through the 2023 National Space Policy explicitly appointed ISRO to focus "...research and development of new space technologies and applications, and for expanding the human understanding of outer space." Few within the ecosystem may have been aware of the increasing political pressures exerted on ISRO and the Department of Space to desist from implementing reforms other than the one attempted, the disruptive rechartering of ISRO.

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Understanding the timeline concerning the space reforms is of paramount importance. First announced in May 2020 as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package, these reforms encountered resistance from some workers who sought to classify ISRO as an 'industry' under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947. However, this intent is contradictory since ISRO is known worldwide as a space agency led by space-domain scientific and technological experts and operates as a strategic scientific R&D institution under the central government's jurisdiction; its employees are governed by the Central Civil Services Rules, which prohibit union-like activities, and it is not a public-sector enterprise. When the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, received presidential assent on 28 September 2020, the government designated the sovereign activities of the space, atomic energy, and defence sectors as non-industry sovereign pursuits. However, some workers opposed this move too and launched an anti-privatisation drive as the Industrial Relations Code legislatively prevented ISRO from being deemed an industry. The agenda has been reinforced



from the portrayal of the space reforms as 'privatisation' in the media, which has often been used interchangeably with 'commercialisation', even though they have different meanings. The vision of the Indian Space Policy 2023 clearly states the following:

"To augment space capabilities; enable, encourage and develop a flourishing commercial presence in space; use space as a driver of technology development and derived benefits in allied areas; pursue international relations, and create an ecosystem for effective implementation of space applications among all stakeholders; for, the nation's socio-economic development and security, protection of environment and lives, pursuing peaceful exploration of outer space, stimulation of public awareness and scientific quest."

The policy document explicitly emphasises the equal importance of endeavours undertaken by both the public and private sectors, advocating increased private-sector participation and contributions through commercial space innovation compared with the period before 2020. It further underscores that ISRO should concentrate on high-end R&D activities, which are difficult for the private sector, and on the transfer of mature technologies and innovations for subsequent commercialisation. Furthermore, the award of the contract for the commercial construction of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, coupled with its superior performance against competing entities—Adani Aerospace and Defence and Bharat Dynamics Limited—demonstrates the government's unwavering commitment to the commercialisation of the space sector rather than privatisation, contrary to under-evaluated perceptions. These perceptions add fuel to the goals of such

quarters.

The policy document explicitly emphasises the equal importance of endeavours undertaken by both the public and private sectors, advocating increased private-sector participation and contributions through commercial space innovation compared with the period before 2020.

The government's endeavour to commercialise the space sector aims to establish contingency measures to address India's continually expanding space requirements. In light of supply chain constraints, the government has sought to develop options to ensure the successful delivery of mission-critical products. ISRO remains committed to its fundamental objective as a space agency despite efforts to deem it as an industry; however, the responsibility for safeguarding R&D activities does not end here.

Indian space startups will remain Indian, and their intellectual property will stay in the national interest only if domestic patient capital is mobilised in their support across stages—from pre-seed to later-stage funding rounds. The INR 10,000 crore Startup India 2.0 Fund of Funds, the INR 1,00,000 crore Research, Development, and Innovation Fund (RDI), and the INR 1,000 crore Antariksh Venture Capital Fund for space-tech promotion all testify to the central government's financial commitment to innovation. The focus should be on providing anchor and patient capital that attracts reluctant private capital of Indian origin to invest equally or more. However, mere commitment is not enough; investing wisely and quickly is necessary. It has been one year since the Antariksh Venture Capital Fund, managed by SIDBI, commenced operations, and its first investments are scheduled for 2027, a two-year delay.

Such investment sluggishness does not help the national space programme.

The global geopolitical landscape and the escalating civil-military integration within the international space sector constrain India's capacity to remain indifferent to foreign capital and to the potential for foreign expropriation of intellectual property developed in India by Indians. In April 2026, Ray Dalio, the founder of the renowned hedge fund Bridgewater Associates, predicted in his Time Magazine opinion piece that the world would enter a perilous phase of capital warfare, resulting from the collapse of the global monetary order. As these conflicts over capital intensify, debt ownership will be amplified, monetary flows will be stringently regulated, and innovation will be excessively safeguarded. The Indian government is the primary provider of the significant financial support required for ISRO-led R&D at low technology readiness levels, a critical source of capital for mid- and high-TRL R&D conducted by private startups, and the procurer of space-defence innovations for the armed forces.

The benefits of commercialisation substantially exceed those of privatisation, a fact that the architects of space reforms must communicate effectively through various channels.

The government's role in space R&D remains unwavering. It continues to serve as the primary supporter of the civilian, commercial, and defence space sectors. It is unwise to assume that India's space sector has been fully privatised, and it would be equally incorrect to allow such an assumption to dominate biased political discourse or to hinder progress through physical obstruction as was seen in the case of an ISRO cargo being blocked by workers over 'growing wages' in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, in September 2021. Indeed, concerns regarding external influence are legitimate and must be addressed cautiously by the government as it advances the commercialisation of space R&D in the national interest, fostering a sense of national, societal, and Indian civilisational trusteeship in space enterprises. The benefits of commercialisation substantially exceed those of privatisation, a fact that the architects of space reforms must communicate effectively through various channels. It is also vital to emphasise the importance of fostering a strong awareness of sovereignty within the startup ecosystem, as these entities are the agile alter ego of ISRO, which navigates internal constraints while focusing on high-end R&D pursuits in the national interest.

Neetu Kapoor and Ranbir Kapoor share heartwarming mother-son moment; dance to 'Senti' song from Daadi Ki Shaadi

Veteran actor Neetu Kapoor, who will soon be seen on the big screen in *Daadi Ki Shaadi*, alongside her daughter Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, was recently spotted sharing a heartwarming moment with her son Ranbir Kapoor. The mother-son duo grabbed attention after videos of them dancing together surfaced online.

On Wednesday, several paparazzi clips circulating on social media captured Neetu and Ranbir in Mumbai's Andheri area. The two were seen posing together, smiling for the cameras, and clearly enjoying each other's company.

In one particularly sweet moment caught on camera, Neetu was seen planting a kiss on Ranbir's cheek, followed by a warm embrace. This gave a glimpse into their close bond that fans have often admired.

Ranbir is believed to be



extremely close to her mother, Neetu, who will soon be a part of the upcoming family entertainer, *Daadi Ki Shaadi*.

Adding to the charm of the outing, the duo broke into a spontaneous dance, effortlessly syncing their moves. They recreated the hookstep from the 'Senti' track from Neetu's upcoming film, *Daadi Ki Shaadi*, delighting fans with their playful energy and

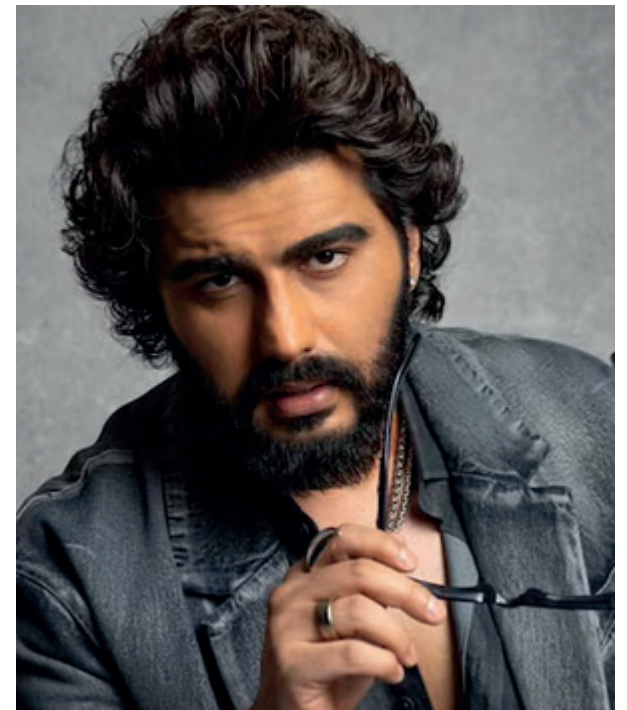
coordination.

The film itself brings together an interesting cast. Headlined by Kapil Sharma, *Daadi Ki Shaadi* will also mark the Bollywood debut of Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, making it a special project for the Kapoor family.

The recently released trailer offers a quirky premise — Kapil Sharma's wedding plans take an unexpected turn when his bride's grandmother decides to get married herself to a mysterious man. As Kapil attempts to disrupt this unusual situation and restore order, he stumbles upon secrets surrounding the man, who may not be who he claims to be.

Written and directed by Ashish R Mohan, the film is backed by Rtake Studios in collaboration with BeingU Studios and Shimla Talkies. *Daadi Ki Shaadi* is slated to hit theatres on May 8.

Delhi HC reserves order on Arjun Kapoor's plea over misuse of identity online



The Delhi High Court on Wednesday reserved its interim order on a plea filed by Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor, who has approached the court seeking protection of his personality rights against alleged misuse of his identity across digital platforms.

The matter was heard by Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, who indicated that a detailed interim order will be passed after considering submissions from all parties involved. Representing Arjun Kapoor, senior advocate Pravin Anand argued that multiple entities were exploiting the actor's name, image, and likeness without authorization.

According to the plea, several defendants were involved in activities ranging from unauthorised bookings to the sale of merchandise using Kapoor's identity.

The petition also names major tech platforms and companies, including Google LLC and Meta Platforms, along with social media platforms such as YouTube

and Facebook. Arjun Kapoor's counsel further submitted that a significant portion of the content in question includes morphed images, AI-generated visuals, fake news, and even sexually explicit or pornographic material falsely linked to the actor. Some of these depictions, he argued, go far beyond parody or satire, citing examples where Kapoor's face was superimposed onto unrelated visuals, including animals or fictional scenarios like selling street food. To strengthen the argument, Anand referred to precedents where courts granted protection to celebrities in similar cases, including singer Jubin Nautiyal, actor Vivek Oberoi, and yoga guru Acharya Balakrishnan. On the other hand, counsel for Google pointed to an existing grievance redressal mechanism, citing a similar framework followed in a case involving actor Hrithik Roshan. Under this system, individuals can flag objectionable content, which is then reviewed and acted upon by the platform.

Australian Minister Tony Burke reveals he is a 'massive Shah Rukh Khan fan', Chak De India, Om Shanti Om are his favourite movies

Australian Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke has surprised many by openly expressing his admiration for Indian cinema, particularly for Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan. In a recent conversation on the Indian Link podcast with Pawan Luthra, Burke revealed that he is a "massive fan" of the actor and has closely followed his films over the years.

Speaking with genuine enthusiasm, Burke highlighted how Shah Rukh Khan's films have managed to connect with audiences far beyond India. He pointed out that the actor's storytelling, screen presence, and emotional depth make his work universally relatable. For Burke, this connection is what sets Indian cinema apart and gives it a global appeal.

Beyond Shah Rukh Khan, Burke also shared his appreciation for the music of A. R. Rahman, whose compositions he described as memorable and impactful. He noted that Rahman's music adds a distinct layer of emotion to films, making the overall

cinematic experience richer and more immersive.

When it comes to his favourite films, Burke didn't hesitate to name *Om Shanti Om* as his all-time favourite.



Directed by Farah Khan, the film left a lasting impression on him with its blend of drama, romance, and entertainment. He especially recalled one of its most iconic lines: "If it's not happy, it's not the end. The story is not over yet," calling it deeply meaningful and universally resonant.

Burke also spoke fondly of *Chak De! India*, another Shah Rukh Khan starrer that holds a special place in his heart. Interestingly, part of his connection to the film comes from its links to Australia, as portions were filmed across cities like Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. However, he

admitted with a smile that while watching the film, he still found himself rooting for Australia despite being moved by the story of the Indian women's hockey team.

Another film that stood out for him was *Jodhaa Akbar*, starring Hrithik Roshan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Burke described it as a "phenomenal film," praising its scale, storytelling, and visual grandeur. He noted that Bollywood's ability to combine history, emotion, and spectacle is something that continues to draw global audiences.

Burke's comments reflect a broader trend of international appreciation for Indian cinema. His admiration for Shah Rukh Khan and Bollywood films highlights how storytelling can transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. It also underscores the growing influence of Indian films and music on a global stage, reaching audiences in places where such enthusiasm might once have seemed unlikely.

Ranveer Singh-starrer 'Dhurandhar' heads to Japan after strong India run



After enthralling moviegoers and storming the box office in India, Ranveer Singh-starrer 'Dhurandhar' is now heading to Japan for its next big release.

The film is set to arrive in Japanese theatres in July, following its successful run in the domestic market.

The makers, on Wednesday, took to Instagram to confirm the overseas release along with a new poster.

Sharing the update on social media, the makers wrote, "It's time for Japan to experience the Dhurandhar energy! Arriving in theatres across Japan on 10.7.2026."

Directed by Aditya Dhar and backed by Jio Studios and B62 Studios, the film features a strong cast including Akshaye Khanna, R

Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal and Sara Arjun. The music by Shashwat Sachdev has also received a strong response on digital platforms.

Meanwhile, 'Dhurandhar 2' is continuing its successful box office journey in India. The film has remained steady in its sixth week.

The sequel stars Ranveer Singh in the lead role along with Sara Arjun, Gaurav Gera, Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, Rakesh Bedi and Arjun Rampal.

The franchise recently crossed the Rs 3000 crore mark worldwide, becoming the first Indian film series to achieve the feat.

The films are produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Aditya Dhar and Lokesh Dhar under the banners of Jio Studios and B62 Studios.

Sohum Shah starrer 'Tumbbad 2' sets December 2027 release date

The makers have finally announced the release date for the much-awaited 'Tumbbad 2', setting the stage for December 3, 2027.

The reveal comes after weeks of intrigue, with the team teasing audiences through motion poster and subtle updates around the film's return. Dropping the poster on Instagram, Shah wrote, "A sinful past, an ominous future. The hunger rises, the legacy of greed continues."

Talking about the sequel, Sohum Shah said, "Tumbbad has always been very special to me, and with Tumbbad 2, the idea is to take that world forward in a way that feels deeper and more expansive. We are building on the mythology and the atmosphere that audiences connected with, while exploring new layers within the story. It's something that will feel familiar



in its essence, but also new in the way it unfolds," as per a press release.

Jayantilal Gada of Pen Studios added, "Tumbbad 2 is envisioned as a grander cinematic experience, with a story that deepens the universe while keeping audiences thoroughly engaged. The film reflects the kind of immersive and high-quality storytelling that Pen Studios is committed

to bringing to viewers." Director Adesh Prasad explained how the sequel aims to push the narrative and the visual world further, while remaining rooted in the original.

"Taking this story forward has been both exciting and challenging, especially because the first film has such a strong identity. Our focus has been on retaining that soul while pushing the narrative and visual world further. We're trying to create something that feels rooted in the original, but at the same time offers audiences a fresh and immersive experience," he shared.

Directed by Adesh Prasad and spearheaded by actor-producer Sohum Shah under his banner Sohum Shah Films, with Pen Studios, the distribution for 'Tumbbad 2' will be done by Pen Marudhar.

Preity Zinta slams intrusive paparazzi culture, calls it 'scary'

Actor Preity Zinta says she is a "private person" and finds the intrusive paparazzi culture scary.

Zinta conducted an AMA session on her X handle on Monday, where she answered the questions of her fans and followers. One user went on to ask the actor what she would choose between fame, privacy and peace of mind, and if she had to sacrifice any of them.

Replying to the question, Zinta shared a lengthy note and said despite wanting to interact with her fans, there have to be certain boundaries. "Nothing is a sacrifice. I have learnt to accept things the way they are & manage expectations. Now life is a big balancing act for me because I'm a very private person. I do love interacting with my fans & not disappointing anyone by giving them pictures but at the same time one has to set boundaries with people & the media," she wrote.

The actor noted she doesn't like it when photographers try to capture pictures of her children without permission.

"I don't like it when people or media try to take photographs of my children (that's non negotiable) & take pictures of me without asking cuz when anyone asks, I always say yes unless I'm in a rush to catch a plane or when I'm in a temple. I also don't like paparazzi following me around & jumping at me out of nowhere. Sometimes it's scary. I know a lot of the current crop of actors invite the paparazzi to come & photograph them and I do understand their need



to constantly be in the news, but it's not how I operate, so it is a bit unnerving," she said.

"I'm absolutely ok with them at events (cuz it their job) but when they show up outside my gym or hide outside my building it's a bit too much. I'm also human & I need to stay grounded and have my downtime ! Having said that I am extremely grateful for all the opportunities I have and the fact that people love me so I'm not complaining, just being honest about how I feel," she added.

Zinta will next feature alongside Sunny Deol in "Lahore 1947". The film is directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and is produced by Aamir Khan under his production banner Aamir Khan Productions.

Lakshya loses three-game thriller as India trail China 0-1 in Thomas Cup Finals

Lakshya Sen fought hard but went down in a three games to world No. 7 Li Shi Feng to leave India trail 0-1 against China in their final Group A tie of the Thomas Cup Finals here on Wednesday.

Lakshya, who had beaten Li en route to a runner-up finish at the All England Championships last month, could not replicate that form in the decider, going down 19-21 21-8 12-21.

India will now look to level the tie through the world No. 4 pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who face world No. 5 duo Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang.



In the remaining matches, Amsakarunan and MR Arjun Ayush Shetty will take on Weng Hong Yang, while the doubles pair of Hariharan will meet He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu.

Lakshya vs Li

Lagging behind 3-6, Lakshya mixed his attack with a cross-court slice and a sharp smash before clawing back as Li went wide. The two traded steep smashes before Li capitalised on a series of weak lifts to move ahead 10-8 and carry a slender advantage into the break.

Lakshya erased the deficit after the interval and edged ahead 14-13, but the contest turned into a tight slugfest with both players locked at 19-19 before Li produced two decisive points to take the opening game.

The second game was one-way traffic as Lakshya raced to 5-0 and then 11-2, aided by a string of

unforced errors from Li. The Indian maintained relentless pressure to force a decider.

In the third game, Lakshya trailed 1-4 but recovered to 7-7. However, Li opened up a cushion at the interval after forcing errors from the Indian.

Lakshya briefly threatened at 10-12 after winning a long rally with a precise cross-court return, but repeated errors on his smashes allowed Li to regain control.

The Chinese shuttler stretched the lead to 17-12 and soon earned eight match points, converting the opportunity with a clinical cross-court smash.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi becomes fastest to 400 runs in IPL season, achieves feat during PBKS vs RR clash

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli should play 2027 ODI WC: Shikhar Dhawan

New Delhi

Former Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan backed India's batting heavyweight Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli for the 2027 Cricket World Cup.

Dhawan believes that Sharma and Kohli both are experienced, and heading into such a big tournament, teams need experience.

After announcing their Test retirements in May this year, Rohit and Virat have not been getting enough game time in ODIs, a format which does not dominate the cricket calendar like before.

While they have showcased fine form throughout the year in ODIs, questions have often arisen about whether the lack of game time will catch up with their ageing bodies and whether their reflexes could slow down with age ahead of the marquee tournament, with both men currently in their late 30s.

When the marquee tournament, to be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, arrives in 2027, Rohit will already be in his 40s, while Virat will be in his late 30s.

"Ofcourse they can, and they should play. Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli both are experienced, and you need experience going into the ODI WC, which is only a year away," Dhawan said.

Dhawan also praised Rajasthan Royals (RR) young batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi for his fearless batting, highlighting how confidently he handles high-speed bowling.

Dhawan said he is very impressed with his ability and believes he could soon earn a debut for India if he continues performing this way.

"Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is doing extremely well. I am very impressed by him. The way he is taking on bowlers easily when they are bowling him at 145 kmph, it's fantastic, and the day is not far when he will debut for India," he added.

Chandigarh

Rajasthan Royals (RR) opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has scripted history in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 by becoming the fastest player to reach 400 runs (in terms of balls) in a single season, achieving the milestone in just 167 balls, according to ESPNcricinfo.

The 15-year-old sensation achieved this historic feat during his side's clash against the table-toppers Punjab Kings (PBKS) at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur on Tuesday night.

The record-breaking feat puts Sooryavanshi ahead of some of the most explosive batters in the tournament's history. Former record-holder Andre Russell reached the landmark in 188 balls during the 2019 season.

India's Abhishek Sharma follows in third place, having taken 195 balls in the 2024 edition, while Nicholas Pooran (197 balls in 2025) and Glenn Maxwell (200 balls in 2014) complete the top five.

In the ongoing IPL 2026,



the left-handed batter became the first player to breach the 400-run mark. In nine matches, Sooryavanshi has smashed 400 runs at an outstanding average of 44.44 and an astounding strike rate of 238.09.

The 15-year-old has hammered two half-centuries and one century, which came against the Sunrisers Hyderabad in Jaipur.

Sooryavanshi's remarkable consistency and aggressive approach have been key highlights of the ongoing season,

with the young batter dominating bowling attacks and maintaining an exceptional strike rate.

Coming to the match, table-toppers Punjab suffered their first loss in the IPL 2026. Put to bat first, PBKS reached 222/4 courtesy half-centuries from Marcus Stoinis (62* in 22 balls, with four boundaries and six sixes) and Prabhsimran Singh (59 in 44 balls, with six fours and a six).

But during the chase, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (43 in 16 balls, with three fours and five sixes) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (51 in 27 balls, with seven fours and a six) started with a 51-run stand.

A fifth-wicket stand of 77 runs between Donovan Ferreira (52* in 26 balls, with six fours and three sixes) and Shubham Dubey (31* in 12 balls, with three fours and two sixes) sealed the win with four balls left.

PBKS stay at the top despite the loss, with 13 points after six wins, a no result and a loss. RR rise to third spot, with six wins and three losses, giving them 12 points.

Afghan women on way back to official international matches after FIFA rule change

FIFA has approved a rule change allowing Afghan women footballers to play official international matches in FIFA competitions, giving players exiled since the Taliban's return to power a route back into international football.

Afghanistan's women's national team has not played an official competitive international since before the Taliban returned to power in 2021. The Taliban authorities have imposed sweeping restrictions on women and girls, including restrictions affecting education, work and sport, forcing many female athletes to flee the country or abandon competition.

The rule change builds on FIFA's Strategy for Action for Afghan Women's Football, endorsed by the FIFA Council in May last year, and follows the creation of Afghan Women United, a FIFA-supported team providing structured playing



opportunities for Afghan women footballers living outside the country.

"We are proud of the beautiful journey initiated by Afghan Women United, and with this initiative, we aim to enable them, as well as other

FIFA member associations that may not be able to register a national or representative team for a FIFA competition, to make the next step, in coordination with the relevant confederation," FIFA President

Gianni Infantino said.

The selection phase for the next Afghan Women United squad is under way, with FIFA hosting regional selection camps in England and Australia and providing individual support packages to nearly 90 players.

Afghan Women United are expected to play their next matches during the June women's international window, with details of opponents and venues to be announced.

In 2021, FIFA helped evacuate more than 160 at-risk players, officials and human rights defenders connected to football and basketball in Afghanistan.

Women's football advocates have repeatedly urged FIFA to formally recognise and support Afghan women players in exile, arguing they should not be denied international careers because of restrictions imposed inside Afghanistan.

WAF inspects Mumbai and Delhi as probable host cities for World Armwrestling and Para Armwrestling Championships

Mumbai

A high-level meeting was held at Varsha Bungalow, the official residence and office of Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis, in Mumbai, as part of the official inspection visit by the World Armwrestling Federation (WAF) for the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships 2026 scheduled to be held in India from October 26 to November 7, 2026.

The meeting was attended by Assen Hadjitodorov, President, World Armwrestling Federation (from Bulgaria), and Mircea Simicel Simionescu, General Secretary, World Armwrestling Federation (from Romania), along with the President of PAFI and Vice President of AAF, Preeti Jhangiani and Co-Founder of Pro Panja League, Parvinn Dabass, who hosted the visiting delegation, according to a release.

As part of the visit, WAF officials inspected facilities in both Mumbai and Delhi, which are being considered as probable host cities for the championship. Discussions during the visit also included interactions with the Paralympic Committee officials Sangwan (Vice President PCI), Mr Rahul Swami (CEO PCI), Manish



Rana (Paralympic Sports Specialist PCI) in India, focusing on support, organisation and the development of Para Armwrestling in India.

Following the inspection, World Armwrestling Federation (WAF) confirmed that all technical requirements are met. India offers the necessary infrastructure, including major international airport hubs, online visa access and all key elements required to host a successful global event.

Assen Hadjitodorov, President,

World Armwrestling Federation, stated, "India has demonstrated strong capability and commitment in hosting events of this scale, having successfully hosted the Asian Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championship last year. The infrastructure, organisational strength and overall preparedness give us great confidence that the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships 2026 will be conducted at the highest standard

here. I would like to thank Parvinn Dabass and Preeti Jhangiani for being such wonderful hosts."

Speaking on the successful inspection, Preeti Jhangiani said, "It is a proud moment for us to host the WAF delegation and showcase India's readiness to stage the World Armwrestling & Para Armwrestling Championships. We are grateful for the support and encouragement extended by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, which gives us great confidence that we can deliver a world-class event."

Parvinn Dabass added, "This inspection marks an important milestone for Armwrestling in India. The encouragement and backing from Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, along with such positive feedback from WAF, motivates us to deliver a world-class tournament for all fans, athletes and visiting nations."

Preeti Jhangiani and Parvinn Dabass will travel to the European Armwrestling Championships in Budapest this May, where they will do a presentation for the participating European nations ahead of the World Championships.



सह्याद्रीचा सिंह गर्जतो शिवशंभू राजा..
दरीदरीतून नाद गुंजला महाराष्ट्र माझा..

गर्जा
महाराष्ट्र
माझा

महाराष्ट्र दिनाच्या
व कामगार दिनाच्या
हार्दिक शुभेच्छा !

Across State



मराठी
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महाराष्ट्र उपाध्यक्ष-डिजिटल मिडिया संपादक
पत्रकार संघटना महाराष्ट्र

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