

CM and Deputy CM inaugurates 'Nayak' and 'Arjun' TBMs

Coffee Table
News Network

Thane, 7th (Jimaka): The Thane-Borivali double tunnel project, which is considered to be very ambitious to break the traffic congestion in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, reached a historic milestone today. The launching ceremony of the huge 'Tunnel Boring Machine' (TBM) tunnel boring machines was held in Thane today in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar and Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik. MP Naresh Mhaske, MLA Niranjan Davkhare, MLA Sanjay Kelkar, Thane Municipal Corporation Mayor Sharmila Pimpolkar, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority Metropolitan Commissioner Dr.

Sanjay Mukherjee, Additional Metropolitan Commissioner-2 Ashwin Mudgal, Managing Director Megha Engineering Krishna Reddy and other dignitaries were present. While interacting with the media on this occasion, Chief Minister Fadnavis described this project as "an important milestone in the field of engineering". He said that the work of this subway has now started in earnest with the help of two TBM machines 'Nayak' and 'Arjun' from the Thane side. The total length of this project, implemented by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), is 11.84 km. These two parallel tunnels (Twin Tunnels) passing under the Sanjay Gandhi National Park will directly connect Borivali and Ghodbunder Road in

Thane. This route has been kept completely underground so that there is no adverse impact on the biodiversity of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. About 11 thousand trees will be replanted/planted under the project. Also, 'cross passages' and advanced fire extinguishing systems will be installed every 300 meters for the safety of passengers. The biggest success of this project is the saving of time and fuel. Currently, the journey from Thane to Borivali takes 90 minutes, but with this tunnel, it will come down to just 15 minutes. This distance will be reduced from 23 km to 12 km. Vehicles coming from Nashik, Kalyan and Navi Mumbai will be able to enter this tunnel directly by detouring Thane city. This will significantly reduce the traffic pressure on



Ghodbunder Road, he said. Chief Minister Fadnavis said that since the structure of this tunnel is completely underground, it has been ensured that there will be no adverse impact on biodiversity. Stating that about 11 thousand trees will be planted as part of the compensatory

plantation, he further said that since this project will be integrated with the upcoming 'Thane Coastal Road' and other major regional road networks, it will give a big boost to the economic progress and regional development of the state. At the same time, this project will provide a direct

alternative route (Bypass) for traffic in Thane, reducing the traffic pressure on Ghodbunder Road. By saving time and fuel, up to 75 minutes will be saved in each journey, which will also significantly reduce fuel consumption. Due to reduction in travel time and distance, emissions (pollution)

from vehicles will decrease. There will be seamless connectivity between Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Kalyan and Nashik corridors (Margika), as well as with Gujarat. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde interacted with the media. He said that there was a big challenge in this regard that there would be no adverse impact on the biodiversity of Sanjay Gandhi National Park. However, all the systems are working together to meet this challenge. Specially, special care is being taken to ensure that the surrounding citizens are not inconvenienced while doing this work. This project will provide a direct alternative route (Bypass) for traffic in Thane, and the traffic pressure on Ghodbunder Road will be reduced. The Thane-Borivali distance will be

covered in just 15 minutes. Many developmental projects have been completed in the state through the government, various developmental projects of public utility like this subway will also be completed as soon as possible. At the beginning of the program, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was welcomed by the Metropolitan Commissioner of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, while Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Ajit Pawar were welcomed by Additional Metropolitan Commissioner Ashwin Mudgal. On this occasion, a presentation about this project was made through a video. The program was moderated by Rajendra Patankar.

Study the impact of the war in the Middle East on the economy - Governor Jishnu Dev Verma

Coffee Table
News Network

Study the impact of the war in the Middle East on the economy - Governor Jishnu Dev Verma Mumbai, Date 7: The war in the Middle East has affected the lives of every person in the world. The war is having an adverse effect on the economies of many countries. Governor Jishnu Dev Verma appealed to FICCI, which is entering its centenary year, to assess the potential impact of this war on the Indian economy, especially on services and micro, small and medium enterprises, and to make recommendations to reduce the damage. The 99th foundation day of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) was celebrated in the presence of Governor Jishnu Dev Verma, when he was speaking. Marketing Minister



Jayakumar Rawal was present on this occasion. The war is also having an adverse effect on the information technology sector. Some companies have made large staff cuts. The government is making every effort at its level to ensure that the common man does not suffer the brunt of the war. The Governor said that FICCI should also make recommendations regarding skill development of the people. The Governor also appealed to FICCI to work with the

universities in the state and create training opportunities for graduates. India is the fastest growing economy and the state contributes the most to the country's economy and is at the forefront in terms of foreign direct investment. He said that the Department of Protocol is trying to increase foreign direct investment and connect the people of Maharashtra from home and abroad with the state's economy. FICCI was started in Mumbai on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi.

FICCI is celebrating its centenary next year, said FICCI President Anant Goenka on this occasion. On this occasion, the Governor felicitated the former presidents of FICCI in the last thirty years, including Rajiv Bharti Mittal, Harsh Pati Singhanian, Rajiv Chandrashekhar, Habil Khorakiwala, Harsh Mariwala, Saroj Kumar Poddar, Omkar Kanwal, Dr. A. C. Muthiah, Rajendra Lodha, Chirayu Amin, Sudhir Jalan, K. K. Modi, A. S. Kasliwal, Deepak Banker, A. K. Rungta etc. were felicitated for their contribution to the industry. The program was attended by FICCI Senior Vice President Vijay Shankar, Director General of the organization Jyoti Vij, Secretary to the Governor Dr. Prashant Naranware, Joint Secretary to the Governor S. Ramamurthy and others.

US-Iran War: The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has disrupted international oil and gas supplies. Consequently, India was compelled to import approximately 10 to 12 million barrels of crude oil from

Venezuela, located in South America, during April. According to data from Kepler, a commodity market analytics firm, this marks the highest volume of imports recorded in the last six years. These statistics also indicate that April will be the first month since May of last year in

which Venezuelan crude oil arrives at Indian ports. Although these barrels constitute only a small fraction of India's total crude oil imports, they are expected to provide the country with some relief and bolster its strategy of diversifying crude oil sources. India meets over 88 percent of its

crude oil requirements through imports and processes more than 5 million barrels of crude oil daily. Over 40 percent of these imports originate from West Asia, arriving via the Strait of Hormuz—a route where shipping traffic has come to a near-complete standstill since early March.

ST travel will become more expensive in summer! 10 percent seasonal fare hike in ticket prices

Coffee Table
News Network

Mumbai: Passengers traveling by ST during the summer vacation will now have to pay more rupees. Keeping in mind the holiday season, the State Transport (ST) Corporation has decided to levy a sanitation surcharge of Rs. 2 per ticket along with a 10 percent seasonal fare hike on passengers. The seasonal fare hike is only for ordinary trains, while the sanitation surcharge will be applicable to ST trains in general. Currently, a simple ST journey between Mumbai and Pune costs Rs. 281. As per the seasonal fare hike on April 15, a total of Rs. 312 and a surcharge of Rs. 2 will be charged, making a total of Rs. 314. The State Transport Authority (STA) has



approved the ST Corporation to increase fares by up to 30 percent during travel, summer vacations and festivals. It has decided to increase passenger fares by 10 percent for the summer season of 2026. Accordingly, the fare hike will be effective after midnight of April 14. The summer fare hike is for only two months and the sanitation surcharge will be permanent. The ST Corporation has a shortage of sanitation workers. Therefore, a contractor will be appointed for cleaning

the ST trains, stations and depots. The corporation has decided to levy a sanitation surcharge of Rs. 2 per ticket for the initiative to keep passengers clean. The surcharge will be levied from midnight of April 14. This surcharge will not be applicable to Mahila Samman Yojana, senior citizens, Amrit senior citizens and other concessional passengers. Four and seven-day passes are given under the travel scheme wherever they like. A surcharge of Rs. 5 will be levied for such passengers. This

amount will be collected from the passengers while issuing the pass. There will be no sanitation surcharge on passes issued through advance reservations. The ST Corporation has clarified that those who rent ST buses will have to pay a surcharge of Rs. 50 per bus. The ST fare hike will be applicable for the period from April 15 to June 15. The fare hike will be for ordinary buses only. E-buses including Hirkani, Shayanayan, Shivshahi, Janshivneri, Shivneri have been excluded from the fare hike. The Corporation's Vice Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Madhav Kusekar has instructed to recover the difference amount during the journey from passengers who have made advance reservations for the summer season.

Will Petrol and Diesel Prices Drop in India? 12 Million Barrels of Crude Oil to Arrive in the Country at a Discount.

Coffee Table
News Network

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Coffee Table

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Resolved to make Mumbai the city with the most accessible and integrated transport system in the country - CM Fadnavis

Coffee Table

News Network

Mumbai, Date 7: The state government has resolved to make Mumbai the city with the most accessible and integrated transport system in the country and the focus of the state government is on providing a seamless and easy travel experience to the citizens through multi-modal integration, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Chief Minister Fadnavis inaugurated the first phase of Mumbai Metro Line 2B (D.N. Nagar to Mandalay) from Deshbat N.G. Acharya Udyan - Diamond Garden to Mandalay and also performed the e-bhoomi puja of the pod taxi project. The program held at Deshbat N.G. Acharya Udyan - Diamond Garden Metro Station in Chembur was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Ajit

Pawar, MLAs Sana Malik, Tukaram Kate, Mangesh Kudalkar, Metropolitan Commissioner of Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority Dr. Sanjay Mukherjee, Additional Commissioner Ashwin Mudgal and many other dignitaries were present. On this occasion, the cornerstone of Mumbai Metro Line 2B (D.N. Nagar to Mandalay) was unveiled by Chief Minister Fadnavis as well as the coffee table book prepared by BKC Connect Company regarding Pod Taxis. The first phase of 5.6 km and five stations of Metro 2B is starting from today and after the completion of the remaining two phases, a large-scale consistent and fast connectivity will be available in Mumbai, Chief Minister Fadnavis said that this project will effectively connect East-West and North-South Mumbai with each other, and in the future, uninterrupted



travel will be easy to BKC, Andheri, Bandra and Chembur. Notably, as this metro is the first to connect to the Harbour Line, a new chapter is beginning in the transport system. Chief Minister Fadnavis said that all the stations in this project are IGBC Platinum certified and emphasis has been placed on energy saving and maximum use of natural light. He mentioned that the double-storey depot

being built at Mandalay is one of the largest in the country and 72 lines will be built on two floors. The aim is to build a total 337 km metro network in Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, and after its completion, about 70 lakh passengers will be able to travel by metro every day. Chief Minister Fadnavis expressed confidence that this will greatly reduce the pressure on the 90 lakh

passengers currently on the suburban railway. At this time, the e-bhoomipujan of the innovative last mile connectivity project 'Pod Taxi' was performed in the BKC area. He also said that through this automated system, passengers will be able to reach their destination within a distance of 100-150 meters, which will help reduce traffic congestion in BKC. Chief Minister Fadnavis said that

this project will be implemented on BOT principle and the aim is to complete the first phase in 20 months. He directed that the relevant agencies should cooperate promptly to avoid any hindrance in the work. Chief Minister Fadnavis specially appreciated and thanked the engineers, workers, contractors and the entire MMRDA team who contributed to this project. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that Metro 2B is an important line connecting East-West and North-South Mumbai, and for the first time, the Metro will get direct connectivity from the Harbour Line. This project will provide seamless connectivity between Metro 1, Metro 3, Metro 4, Western Railway, Monorail and Harbour Line. The first phase of this project, costing about Rs 10,986 crore, is worth Rs 3,225 crore, and the Mandalay Depot will

be the backbone of this project. This depot, which will be built on an area of about 30.45 hectares, will be the largest metro depot in the country. Also, this project is a great example of green mobility and all the stations have received IGBC Green Platinum rating. This metro line will reduce travel time to a great extent, and will also contribute to fuel saving and pollution control. Deputy Chief Minister Shinde said that citizens will have a more comfortable, faster and safer travel option. The Metro 2B project will be completed in three phases and the entire route is aimed to be operational by March 2027. He expressed confidence that this project will create a multi-modal transport system in Mumbai and traffic congestion in the city will be reduced to a great extent after the completion of the future 337 km metro network. The

foundation stone of the country's first pod taxi project was laid today, and this service will strengthen last mile connectivity, said Deputy Chief Minister Shinde. He also said that this project will be built on the lines of facilities in Dubai and London. Stating that such projects are being realized as a result of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make Mumbai a global financial hub, Deputy Chief Minister Shinde clarified that the state government is implementing development works at a rapid pace. He also said that various infrastructure projects in Mumbai and the MMR area will lead to all-round development of the city and make public transport more efficient. On this occasion, the dignitaries visited the patriotic N.G. Traveled by metro between Acharya Udyan - Diamond Garden Metro Station and Deonar Metro Station.

Strict Monitoring of Candidates' Poll Expenditure Ordered in Rahuri Bypoll

Coffee Table

News Network

Ahilyanagar : Expenditure Observer V. Kumar has directed authorities to maintain strict vigilance over election spending by candidates in the upcoming Rahuri Assembly by-election, making it mandatory for candidates to open a separate bank account for poll-related transactions. Addressing a review meeting of the expenditure, media and excise departments, Kumar stated that any suspicious bank transactions exceeding 10 lakh must be directly reported to the Income Tax Department. He emphasized that, as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India, regular scrutiny of candidates' election expenses will be conducted. A minimum gap of three days must be maintained between



inspections, and accordingly, expenditure checks have been scheduled for April 15, 18 and 21. If candidates or their representatives remain absent during inspections, notices should be issued to them. Kumar also instructed that a detailed expenditure report of all final candidates must be prepared systematically by the monitoring teams. The Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) has been tasked with closely tracking newspapers, television and social media platforms. Strict

action has been ordered against "paid news", with directions to submit advertisement expenditure reports on time. Complaints received through the 'C-Vigil' system must be addressed promptly. Under the single-window system, permissions for campaign vehicles and rallies should be granted in a transparent manner. Authorities have also been asked to verify instances where permission was taken but public meetings were not held. Video surveillance teams have been deployed to record campaign

rallies and public meetings, and regular reports must be compiled based on their observations. The police department, state excise authorities and flying squads have been directed to intensify action against illegal activities in the constituency. All teams must maintain updated daily reports and submit consolidated reports within the stipulated time. Kumar urged all officials to discharge their responsibilities with utmost transparency and diligence to ensure free and fair elections.

Modi's 'Na Khaunga, Na Khane Dunga' slogan hollow; country looted for 12 years with his involvement : Harshvardhan Sapkal

Mumbai Congress chief addresses Youth Congress' Nyay Satyagraha protest

Coffee Table

News Network

Mumbai : Maharashtra Congress President Harshvardhan Sapkal launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that his much-publicized slogan "Na Khaunga, Na Khane Dunga" has turned out to be hollow, and that the country has been "looted" over the past 12 years under his leadership. Sapkal made these remarks while visiting the ongoing "Nyay Satyagraha" protest led by Mumbai Youth Congress president Zeenat Shabrin. He praised the efforts of the Youth Congress and assured full support to their movement, while sharply criticizing the BJP-led government. He said that Modi came to power in 2014 with big promises, including creating 2 crore jobs annually, doubling farmers' income, building 100



smart cities, and ensuring overall development. However, Sapkal alleged that none of these promises have been fulfilled. "Instead, the country is witnessing systematic exploitation, where a few are selling the nation while others are buying it," he remarked, using a metaphor to criticize the current economic scenario. Highlighting farmers' distress, Sapkal said India is an agrarian country, but under BJP rule, farmers are suffering immensely. "The promised doubling of farmers' income has

not materialized. On the contrary, input costs have doubled or even tripled, while returns remain stagnant," he said. He also alleged that trade agreements with the United States, influenced by former US President Donald Trump, have negatively impacted Indian farmers. Sapkal further accused the government of failing to address key national security concerns. Referring to the Pulwama attack, he questioned the source of the explosives used and claimed that the matter remains unresolved. He also

cited another alleged terror incident in Pahalgam, criticizing the government for not apprehending those responsible. Drawing a comparison with former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Sapkal said she forced Pakistan to surrender and signed the Shimla Agreement, whereas he claimed that the current leadership has compromised India's self-respect on the global stage. He added that under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, the Congress party is fighting to "save the Constitution, democracy, and culture." Calling it a "second freedom struggle," Sapkal expressed confidence that the opposition would succeed in its mission. Several Congress leaders and Youth Congress members, including office bearers and activists, were present at the protest in large numbers.

Roads, urban planning, Jalyukt Shivar, Dongri Vikas, e- Panchnama, mineral management will gain momentum

Coffee Table

News Network

The Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC) has been deregistered as a company under the Societies Act and has been approved by the Cabinet meeting held today. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC) was established by the state government in 1988 to use geospatial technology in the planning and decision-making process. The centre has sub-centres in Pune and Mumbai. MRSAC has studied roads, regional plans of the Town Planning Department, Jalyukt Shivar, Watershed Development Scheme, e-Panchnama, MahaAgritech, Kandalvan study,



groundwater management, minerals and mines, etc. based on geographical information. Now, technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, IoT, Web Services, Cloud Computing have been included in various projects of MRSAC. Considering the challenges and the change in the role of MRSAC, today it was approved to cancel the registration of MRSAC under the Societies Act, 1860 and convert

it into a company under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. The registered office of the company will be at Nagpur. The Chairman of the company will be the Chief Secretary. It was approved to create a new post of Managing Director for the company. It was also approved to continue the existing posts within the company. The composition of the Board of Directors of the company is as follows: Chief

Secretary-Chairman, Additional Chief Secretary (Finance), Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary (Planning), Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue), Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary (Urban Development-1), Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary (Rural Development), Principal Secretary/Secretary (Information Technology), Representative of Geo Special Data Centre, Pune, Representative appointed by IISER, Pune, Director, Geology and Mining, Nagpur, Nominated/Expert Scientist (2), Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Nagpur, Managing Director, MRSAC, Chief Finance and Accounts Officer, MRSAC

'Load testing' begins on missing link, route now in final stages

Coffee Table

News Network

Pune: The ambitious Mumbai-Pune missing link project is in its final stages. This much-awaited route is expected to be open for traffic by May and load testing has already begun on this route. This route will be open for passengers as soon as all safety tests are completed. This will bring great relief to passengers going from Mumbai to Pune and further to western Maharashtra. Both the parts of the Mumbai-Pune missing link have been connected. Regular traffic tests are underway on this cable-stayed bridge built



over a deep creek, officials have informed. Work has been completed on both the bridges coming towards Mumbai and Pune. This project is almost complete and MSRDC aims to complete the work by April-end. This entire 13.3 km long route has been constructed between Khopoli and Kusgaon. This route has been built to reduce traffic congestion between Lonavala and Khandala

Ghat. Once the missing link is opened, the journey between Mumbai and Pune will be done in 25 to 30 minutes. Senior officer Anil Gaikwad told the Free Press Journal that the work could be completed on time due to the work being continued even during the monsoon. Meanwhile, for the first three months after the missing link is opened, only light vehicles will be allowed to

ply on the route. After the next three months, heavy and passenger vehicles will be allowed. After checking the traffic flow for six months, a decision will be taken regarding the permission of commercial vehicles. Meanwhile, for the first three months after the missing link is opened, only light vehicles will be allowed to ply on the route. After the next three months, heavy and passenger vehicles will be allowed. After checking the traffic flow for six months, a decision will be taken regarding the permission of commercial vehicles.

Grand Welcome Ceremony for First-Year Students at Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil College of Engineering

Coffee Table
News Network

Ahilyanagar : A grand welcome and felicitation ceremony for first-year students was held with great enthusiasm at Dr. Vithalrao Vikhe Patil College of Engineering, Vilad Ghat, to honor their remarkable academic achievements. The program was graced by the Technical Director of the Foundation, Mr. Sunil Kalhapure, Principal Dr. Ravindra Navthar,

Head of Departments Dr. Satish Markad, along with all department heads, faculty members, and a large number of students. On this occasion, students who secured First Class with Distinction by successfully passing all subjects in the Savitribai Phule Pune University examination were felicitated. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Kalhapure appreciated the students' hard work, consistency, and determination,



stating, "This is just the beginning. If the start is strong, the journey ahead will surely be successful." He encouraged students to continue their efforts with dedication. Principal Dr. Navthar congratulated both

students and teachers and expressed confidence that such success will continue in the future. Head of Department Dr. Markad stated, "This achievement is the result of students' hard work and the guidance of

teachers." He also appreciated the facilities and student-oriented initiatives provided by the management. At the end of the program, First-Year Coordinator Dr. Sandeep Udvant expressed his gratitude and

mentioned that the event was organized under the concept of Mr. Sunil Kalhapure, whose guidance continues to inspire students. He added that the felicitation ceremony has instilled new energy and confidence among students and

provided a motivating direction for their academic journey. The program was successfully conducted due to the dedicated efforts of First-Year Academic Coordinators Dr. Sandeep Udvant, Dr. Ganesh Shirsat, and all teaching and non-teaching staff. Dr. P. M. Gaikwad, Secretary of Dr. Vikhe Patil Foundation, expressed confidence in the capabilities of the new generation of students. Director of

Vikhe Patil Medical College and Hospital, Dr. Abhijit Divate, extended his best wishes. CEO and former Member of Parliament Dr. Sujay Vikhe Patil encouraged students to pursue their academic journey with determination and confidence. Honorable Chairman and Water Resources Minister Mr. Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil appreciated the students and wished them a bright future.

Maharashtra Geotechnology Application Center -MahaGeotech Company to be established

Using geospatial technology to bring dynamism in administration

Coffee Table
News Network

The decision to establish Maharashtra Geotechnology Application Center-MahaGeotech Company to bring dynamism in administration using geospatial technology was taken in a cabinet meeting held today. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The new Maharashtra Geospatial Technology Application Center (MahaGeotech) Company will have four departments namely Modern Technology Department, Research and Training Department, Geospatial Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department and Administration and Accounting. There will be two sub-departments under the Modern



Technology Department, namely Applications and Development. Under the Applications Sub-department, the work of developing and implementing policies related to artificial intelligence, machine learning, Internet of Things, image processing and photogrammetry, determining data quality, integrity and security will be done. Under the Development Sub-Division, plans will be prepared for developing and maintaining geospatial portals,

designing and implementing software applications, integrating various types of data. Also, analytical methods will be implemented to solve complex problems. There will be two sub-divisions in the Research and Training Division, namely Research and Training. Research and development work related to geospatial technology will be done in the Research Sub-Division. Educational programs will be implemented for students,

professionals and researchers by determining priorities. Under the Training Sub-Division, training will be conducted to enhance the skills and knowledge of the organizations and user departments participating in the geospatial program. Programs will be designed to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the Geospatial Innovation and Entrepreneurship Division. Private sector organizations, NGOs and government organizations will be involved for business reengineering. The headquarters of this organization will be in Mumbai. The cabinet meeting approved a grant of Rs. 25 crores as the initial cost for setting up the organization.

IPO of Mahavitaran to come; Independent distribution company for agricultural power supply

Coffee Table
News Network

The cabinet meeting held today approved the formation of two independent companies by dividing the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (Mahavitaran) into two distribution companies: MSEB Solar Agro Power Limited (MSAPL) to provide power supply and related services to agricultural consumers. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The meeting also approved the listing of Mahavitaran, a company in the non-agricultural distribution sector, in the capital market through an IPO. The government has guaranteed the loans of about Rs 32,679 crore taken by Mahavitaran for various infrastructure projects. The Maharashtra government will issue long-term government bonds with a maturity of fifteen years for this loan obligation. This will help in reducing the debt burden on Mahavitaran and improving its financial position. This restructuring will be done to strengthen the financial position of Mahavitaran and

create sustainability in the distribution system to provide energy security and quality services to the consumers in the state. Two such companies will be created to take

In this, the agricultural distribution company i.e. MSEB Solar Agro Power Limited-MSAPL company will provide power supply and related services only to agricultural



advantage of the market opportunity in the energy sector. As per the recommendations of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission and the strategic objective of Mukhyamantri Saur Krishi Vahini Yojana 2.0, MSEB Solar Agro Power Limited has been established on May 31, 2023. Through this company, an institutional infrastructure will be created to plan power supply for agriculture and develop an agricultural energy system based on solar energy. After the financial restructuring of Mahavitaran, the electricity distribution business in the state will be done by two separate companies.

consumers. While the non-agricultural distribution company i.e. Mahavitaran will provide services to industrial, commercial, domestic and other non-agricultural consumers. The accounts of electricity sales, revenue and expenditure details of both these companies will be presented separately. The IPO of Mahavitaran will be brought within a period of six to nine months after the division. For this, the necessary approvals and financial procedures will be completed with SEBI. The IPO of Mahavitaran will be brought through fresh issue and sale of shares from the government (Offer for

Sale). This will provide the necessary capital for expansion to Mahavitaran. This will enable smart metering and digital distribution systems, investments related to energy transition, and modernization of the distribution system. The cabinet approved the provision of Rs 2,500 crore as initial capital to the newly established agricultural distribution company MSAPL. The establishment of both these companies will enable stable and uninterrupted power supply to agricultural as well as industrial and domestic consumers. Especially farmers will get daytime and uninterrupted power supply. Solar energy required for irrigation of the agricultural sector will be promoted. Industrial consumers will get stable and uninterrupted power supply, pressure on tariff hikes will be reduced, and the use of green energy will be encouraged. Also, there will be more stability in electricity prices for domestic consumers, improvement in service quality, digital billing and more efficient customer service.

Permanent posts for districts including the commissionerate; New IT cadre

New Electronics, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence Department in Maharashtra

Coffee Table
News Network

The cabinet meeting held today approved the creation of an Electronics, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence Department in the state to achieve the goal of a developed Maharashtra. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. With this decision, a new IT cadre will be created, including permanent posts for ministerial departments, commissioner's offices and all districts. This department will be established by separating the IT department under the General Administration Department. Also, a new Electronics, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence Commissionerate will be established by converting the Directorate of



Information Technology. 77 posts will be created for this commissionerate. A separate IT cadre of 427 posts will be created to handle IT-related work in the ministry and other administrative departments and the Collector's Office. Similarly, recruitment will be done through external mechanism for 389 posts in the technical cadre for project management and monitoring and control of implemented projects. Maharashtra E-Mission Team (MEMT) will be established for this recruitment. Apart from this, an internship program

will be implemented for 200 engineering degree students to prepare the required manpower for this department. To provide more government services online to the citizens of the state, to effectively implement various schemes and programs through the state government to increase the efficiency of administration through e-governance, along with making integrated and coordinated use of progress in the field of research, technology and innovation in the state, to effectively implement the developmental needs, administrative

challenges and technology-based measures facing the state, policy formulation and implementation work will gain momentum. With the establishment of a separate department, it will be possible to make planned use of digital services, data-based decision-making, cyber security and emerging technologies. At the same time, this decision will help make administration at various levels more accessible, transparent and citizen-centric by integrating traditional knowledge and modern technology in sustainable agriculture, healthcare, renewable energy, indigenous production and other important sectors. The cabinet meeting also approved the annual expenditure of about Rs 133 crore 35 lakh required for the creation of posts in this department.

Approval to implement Maharashtra Resilience Development Program (MRDP)

Financing with the help of private capital in disaster management

Coffee Table
News Network

A new concept under the Maharashtra Resilience Development Program in the state, the Maharashtra Resilience Financing Program, was approved in a cabinet meeting held today. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Under this program, the funds of Rs 165 crores received from the World Bank will help provide relief to the citizens affected by the disaster. Disaster victims will be provided with home loans as well as loan



concessions and insurance cover to micro, small and medium enterprises in the area. This will also help workers in the unorganized sector as well as women entrepreneurs, construction, and other small units in the commercial sector. For this, an implementation group will be set up at Maharashtra Mitra. These units

will be able to receive financial assistance in natural disasters like floods, heat waves, cyclones. Mitra Institute will work as an implementation group to increase the response capacity of the administrations at the divisional, district and city levels to effectively deal with disasters. Prevention plans will be prepared to reduce the risk of

floods in the Krishna basin, including the cities of Kolhapur, Sangli, Ichalkaranji. In this, the Maharashtra Soil and Water Conservation Corporation will act as the project implementation group for the works in the Krishna and Panchganga river areas of Kolhapur and Sangli districts. The meeting held today approved the establishment of a project appraisal committee under the joint chairmanship of the Disaster Management Minister and the Water Resources Minister to monitor these projects.

Editorial...

A flawed SIR in West Bengal

Disproportionate deletions of Muslims from voter rolls raise questions about motives, institutional propriety. The outcome of the adjudication process of the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral roll in West Bengal — 45% of the 6 million voters subjected to the process were found ineligible — raises several questions. The most pertinent one concerns the disproportionate number of Muslims who lost their vote — an constitutionally-granted universal franchise that infused India's democracy with rare inclusiveness (few democracies allowed universal franchise from their inception). The first phase of SIR, carried out across several states — it will be extended to more eventually — was mostly about removing discrepancies in a very old, and clunky, database. The HT newsroom's data journalists found no correlation to suggest the exercise benefited a particular political dispensation in Bihar, the first state where SIR was carried out, and also the only state for which disaggregated data on exclusions at the assembly constituency level were available. And across all the states where SIR was carried out, the strong correlation between deletions and urban population suggested that migrant workers (including white-collar ones) were mostly picking their place of birth over their place

of work. Expectedly, in terms of deletions (expressed as a proportion of the number of people on the rolls pre-SIR), West Bengal figured in the middle of the pack among states where the exercise was carried out. But that was before the thus-far, unique-to-West Bengal adjudication process. The deletions in the first phase were mostly of ghost voters (including those registered in multiple places), which explains why the deletion of a large share of voters — in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, this was around 19% of the pre-SIR roll — did not see people taking to the streets. The deletions in the second phase in West Bengal, are mostly of people who voted in the previous general and assembly election. Data released by the Election Commission on the adjudication process, along with an analysis by HT's data journalists, shows a significant correlation between the deletions and districts with a high proportion of Muslims in the population. And the new deletions in the state also weaken the correlation between deletions and urban population, suggesting that the deletions are not as much a function of migration in this phase. In any state, this data is bound to raise questions about how the process was carried out. In West Bengal's highly polarised political environment, it will also raise questions about motives and institutional propriety.

Missing women in the candidates' lists

An all-party consensus marked the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in Parliament in 2023. The Act reserves 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women. A special sitting of Parliament is due this month to fast-track its implementation. But the candidates' lists of major political parties in the four states and one Union territory going to the polls this month tell a different story: None of the main parties in the fray — the BJP, Congress, Trinamool Congress, DMK, AIADMK, CPM, CPI, and Muslim League, among others — meet the 33% quota, or even 20%. The gap smacks of doublespeak. It is disturbing that parties will adhere to principles of representation only if forced by the law. The excuse given is that the choice of candidates is determined by non-gender factors such as merit, caste, faith and a word that has found its way into the political lexicon in recent years, winnability. When the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 mandated a

minimum of 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), many male leaders lamented that there were not enough women candidates cut for electoral politics. By 2023, 21 states had increased the women's quota to 50%. And many of the women leaders have turned out to be sensitive and efficient administrators. Despite this pool of experienced hands, political parties, including those headed by women, have refused to field more women in state and general elections. In the 2022 UP assembly polls, the Congress reserved 40% of seats for women, but it made no difference, as the party exists more in memory than on the ground in that state. Rahul Gandhi has spoken in Kerala about a woman chief minister, conveniently ignoring that women's share in the party's list of candidates was just about 10% (9 out of 92). The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam will bring about change, for sure — but the reluctance of political parties to be the agents of change rankles.

What TN poll manifestos say about women voters

Poll promises that recognise and reduce the care burdens women face must be embedded in a long-term vision and political commitment to achieving gender equality.

Coffee Table

News Network

Election season is here with gender-friendly promises galore. These offerings are easy to dismiss as sops offered in exchange for votes. But political parties and the public alike should understand these, especially unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) through a gendered lens centred on women's unpaid work. Only by adopting short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies can we breathe life into these promises to make them gender transformative irrespective of which party comes to power. Let's start with UCTs. The DMK and AIADMK have promised 2,000 per month and the TVK 2,500. The DMK builds on its Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thittam (KMUT) implemented from 2023. The government notification presented KMUT as a rights-based scheme and it is the only scheme in the country to explicitly offer the UCT as recognition of women's unpaid domestic and care work, unpaid economic activity and underpaid employment. This recognition satisfies the first goal of the UN's SDG 5.4, which calls upon governments "to recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within

the household and the family as nationally appropriate". One year after the scheme's roll out, our mixed methods study of roughly 2200 women in eight districts found the scheme to be well targeted and implemented. 99% of the women had complete control over KMUT monies. There was significant improvement in women's financial inclusion, financial well-being and access to financial infrastructure alongside modest improvements in food consumption (especially fish, eggs, meat, green and root vegetables) and intra-household bargaining power. A third of the women said they were able to make demands of political representatives and officials and counter gender-based violence outside the household. While KMUT did not disincentivise education or paid employment, its impact on the female labour force participation rate, unpaid work burdens and intimate partner violence was mixed. Despite the scheme notification, in our survey, only 4% of women knew why they were receiving the payment. Parties must offer adequate messaging for women to understand the purpose of UCTs. Given high levels of household debt, women need meaningful financial literacy and adult literacy as only 2/3rd of the women could read their SMS messages. When asked for suggestions to reform KMUT, 2/3rds



of surveyed women wanted the KMUT amount to be increased, which all three parties have promised. A third of them wanted all women to receive the payment as a matter of right since they had no access to their husband's income. UCTs must therefore be embedded in a right to care law to ensure its long-term sustainability and impact. A gender-sensitive programme design requires that beneficiaries and independent gender experts alike be involved as stakeholders in the regular evaluation of UCT schemes. The 2026 election cycle and promises of a fridge (by the AIADMK) and domestic appliances (by the DMK, all of which are kitchen appliances except for the TV) address the second goal of SDG 5.4, namely the reduction of women's unpaid work. In our field work, we found that most households had mixers and grinders. What women wanted the most was washing machines as they often spent an hour or more a day washing

clothes. The aim of a 8,000 coupon as opposed to a cash transfer may be to ensure that women retain some control over a large sum of money for their benefit. Similar promises of free LPG cylinders by the AIADMK and TVK would reduce the pain of inflation and high gas prices and eliminate likely substitution of LPG by firewood for household needs. Similarly, the DMK's promise of creches in industrial parks is welcome, yet investment in the state's care infrastructure at scale modelling Karnataka's 3,800 rural Koosina Manes (creches) is crucial to reduce women's time spent on childcare and free it up for paid employment and leisure while ensuring high nutrition and learning outcomes for young children. Tamil Nadu should lead nationally by commissioning a care policy and action plan to invest in the care economy for the sustained generation of care jobs and to meet care needs. The third goal of SDG 5.4 is to redistribute

unpaid domestic and care work. Here all manifestoes fall short. Women in our survey on average spent seven hours a day on unpaid domestic and care work. Women spoke of how even their children expected them to bring a glass of water or put away their used dishes. Unless efforts are made to use the Illam Thedi Kalvi or the school curriculum to teach children the value of women's work within the home and the need for men and boys to pitch in, we cannot achieve gender equality. Here even mechanical washing machines (designed by the Washing Machine Project) can be piloted; they work off the electricity grid and can be used by anyone, including men and boys thus disrupting the gendered division of labour. When asked if they preferred a cash transfer or work, 56% of the women in our study said they preferred work, 21% the cash transfer and 23% wanted both. In the long run, the government must provide women locally available decent work. Many women spent

KMUT on medical expenses, hence the need for a stronger public health infrastructure. Given the gendered nature of debt in the state, Tamil Nadu's usury laws must be strictly implemented, clear limits set on interest rates and fees that MFIs can charge, and for MFIs to disclose the total cost of the loan in an accessible manner. Finally, a resounding 96% of the women we surveyed (KMUT beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) wanted TASMACH shops to be closed. The AIADMK manifesto mentions this. Even if prohibition seems unrealistic, policy makers must encourage responsible drinking practices, issue warnings on the harms of drinking and monitor the minimum drinking age as time and again we saw women suffer the immense social costs of male alcoholism. In conclusion, many poll promises that recognise and reduce the care burdens women face are welcome but they must be embedded in a long-term vision and political commitment to achieving gender equality with women as stakeholders every step of the way. Prabha Kotiswaran is professor of Law and Social Justice, King's College London. The views expressed are personal. Caption for image: In the long run, the government must provide women locally available decent work.

Ethanol push: Firms gain, food & water lose

Coffee Table

News Network

Every crisis in India is fast becoming a pretext for profit masquerading as reform. The Strait of Hormuz oil crisis has now been repurposed to justify 20 per cent ethanol blending (E20) pitched as green and strategic, but structurally unsound. It threatens food, water and land security while enriching an industry. Consumers pay twice: 8-10% lower mileage and costly retrofits -- 20,000- 70,000 for each of over 40 crore running vehicles turning a supposed solution into a nation-wide economic crisis. The touted energy benefit is possibly a myth and drain on agricultural resources gigantic. To meet the target, the country will require about 1,016 crore litres of ethanol annually. Achieving this would require a shift from sugar and sugarcane, leading to a growing dependence on maize, broken rice and rice procured from the Food Corporation of

India. Estimates suggest that India will need to produce 11-12 million tonnes of grains, comprising maize and rice, and 275 million tonnes of sugarcane, covering a land area equal to 7.1 million hectares of land. Experts caution that while high yielding varieties can help meet the demand, it would also increase reliance on water, pesticides and fertilizers. According to Mumbai-based IndiaSpend's report, the E20 target may not significantly reduce emissions, may harm food security and will provide only marginal energy security. Further, the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) argues that using food-based feedstocks for ethanol production may not be the best use of land in a country where hunger remains a pressing issue. In effect, fuel drives would bite into food-producing lands or forests, burdening the nation's scarce resources. Not carbon neutral. Equally alarming is the water footprint.



Sugarcane in India alone uses 50 per cent of irrigation water. Producing one litre of sugarcane-ethanol guzzles about 2,860 litres of water. That is nearly three cubic metres of water for a glass of fuel. In a water-stressed country, this is catastrophic. NITI Aayog warns that ethanol expansion could raise India's annual irrigation demand by 50 billion cubic metres by 2070 enough to quench Delhi's thirst for 17 years. Most districts in India already face water scarcity. Redirecting scarce groundwater into fuel tanks undermines farms and drinking

supplies alike. Ethanol expansion in India will divert 7-8 million hectare of cropland, sharply raise water use and intensify food-fuel competition, risking higher food prices. Forcing crop-based fuels can increase over-all greenhouse emissions as seen in the US. More land clearing and fertilizer use raised carbon intensity of ethanol. Lifecycle emissions: Food security under threat India is already wrestling with food inflation and crop shortages. Retail food prices have been above the RBI's comfort zone for years. In 2023, poor rains and heat

knocked down yields of staples (wheat, rice, sugarcane). The government banned wheat and sugar exports and imposed minimum prices on rice to keep markets stable. Against this backdrop, turning food crops into fuel is perilous. NITI Aayog estimates ethanol demand will divert 6.1 mt maize and 5.5 mt rice (~7.1 million hectare), tightening food supply and raising prices. Who profits and who pays? While communities face scarcity, ethanol producers and associated industries reap profits, stated to be 20-25 a litre. In other words, etha-

nol pricing needs drastic cut. Companies building new unnecessary distilleries and sugar mills enjoy record demand and generous pricing for ethanol. In a recent tender for the Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2025-26 (starting November), Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) asked for 10.5 billion litres of ethanol, but the domestic industry offered 17.76 billion litres, far exceeding the government's requirement. This massive over-subscription of over 70 per cent highlights a significant structural surplus in India's ethanol capacity, driven by over 40,000 crore in investments in recent years for E20 blending. India's strategic goal should be securing energy and agriculture simultaneously, not sacrificing one for the other. By all means, use cleaner fuels, but not at the cost of starving our farms and drying our wells. The true path to energy independence lies in myopic promotion of ethanol. -INFA

Indian warship INS Trikand visits Mombasa for joint engagements with Kenya

Coffee Table
News Network

INS Trikand, a frontline warship of the Indian Navy, arrived at Mombasa on Tuesday, April 7, for joint engagements with Kenya, an official statement said. The visit is part of its ongoing deployment in the South West Indian Ocean Region and aims to enhance cooperation between India and Kenya. The port call coincides with the visit of Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, to Kenya. His visit highlights the growing strategic and defence ties between the two nations. Planned engagements and cooperation during the stay, the ship's crew will take part in professional, cultural and social engagements with local authorities and the Kenya Defence Forces, the statement issued by Defence PRO said. Essential stores brought from India will also be handed over as part of cooperation efforts. The Commanding Officer of INS Trikand is scheduled to meet senior government



officials in Kenya, further strengthening bilateral relations, it said. Joint naval exercise planned after departing from Mombasa, INS Trikand will take part in a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with units of the Kenya Navy. The exercise will help improve coordination, share best practices and enhance maritime interoperability between the two navies. The visit is in line with India's MAHASAGAR vision—Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions—focused on promoting regional security and cooperation. INS Trikand at Dar es Salaam last week had last week arrived at Dar es Salaam on April 3, 2026, an official statement had earlier said. The visit was part of its

ongoing deployment in the South West Indian Ocean Region and aims to strengthen maritime cooperation between India and Tanzania, it had said. During the port call, the crew was scheduled to take part in professional exchanges and joint training activities with the Tanzania Navy. These exercises are aimed at improving interoperability and enhancing coordination between the two naval forces, the statement had said. A series of social and community engagements are also planned, including friendly sports matches and yoga sessions. INS Trikand at Seychelles last month, INS Trikand had successfully completed an engaging and productive port call. During the visit, Captain Sachin

Kulkarni called on senior government officials of Seychelles, as well as the High Commissioner of India to the island nation. The ship also handed over critical spares and essential stores to the Government of Seychelles as part of ongoing cooperation. The port call, which began on March 16, concluded on March 20 and featured a range of operational and collaborative engagements between the two countries. INS Trikand also participated in the first tri-services edition of Exercise Lamitiye 2026, alongside personnel from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and the Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF). This marked the maiden participation of the Indian Navy in the exercise.

India welcomes US-Iran ceasefire, calls for lasting peace in West Asia

Coffee Table
News Network

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday welcomed the recent ceasefire between the United States and Iran, expressing hope that it would lead to lasting peace in West Asia. In an official statement, the ministry stressed the importance of de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy to end the ongoing conflict. The MEA noted that the conflict had caused significant suffering and disrupted global energy supplies and trade networks. In an official statement, posted on X, MEA emphasised the need to ensure uninterrupted navigation and smooth flow of commerce through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global shipping route. Earlier, US President Donald Trump announced a two-week suspension of military strikes on Iran, describing it



as a "double-sided ceasefire". He said the decision was based on progress in negotiations and a proposal put forward by Iran that could lead to a long-term agreement. Trump said the decision followed discussions with Shehbaz Sharif and Asim Munir, who urged a pause in military action, the ANI reported. The ceasefire is also linked to Iran ensuring safe and open passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi confirmed that Iran would halt its military operations if attacks against it stopped. He added that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz would be allowed for two

weeks in coordination with the country's armed forces. Further negotiations are expected to take place in Islamabad, with the Iranian delegation led by Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and the US side led by Vice-President JD Vance. The talks aim to reach a long-term agreement and reduce tensions in the region. Israel has supported US President Donald Trump's decision to suspend military strikes against Iran for two weeks, according to a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, reported the PTI. The pause is conditional on Iran opening the Strait of Hormuz and stopping attacks on the

United States, Israel and other countries in the region. The statement said Israel supports US efforts to ensure that Iran no longer poses a nuclear, missile or terror threat to the region and beyond. It added that the United States has reaffirmed its commitment to these goals during upcoming negotiations. However, Israel made it clear that the ceasefire does not apply to its operations in Lebanon, according to the PTI. The government said military action against Hezbollah will continue, particularly in southern Lebanon and other strongholds, to prevent attacks on northern Israel. The two-week ceasefire was proposed by Pakistan and accepted by both sides. Iran's Supreme National Security Council confirmed it would enter negotiations with the US in Islamabad to resolve ongoing tensions.

Manipur: Situation tense yet under control after violence over Bishnupur bomb attack

Coffee Table
News Network

The situation remained tense but calm across five valley districts in Manipur on Wednesday, with curfew, internet suspension and heavy police deployment in place, after violence broke out over a bomb attack that left two children dead in Bishnupur a day ago, a senior officer said. No fresh violence was reported this morning, but clashes between security forces and protesters broke out late on Tuesday in some places in Imphal East and West districts, prompting the police personnel to fire tear gas shells to disperse the demonstrators, he said. They also burnt tyres on the streets at Khurai Lamlong and Wangkhei in Imphal East district, and at Uripok and Kwakeithel in Imphal West, and demanded action against those involved in the killing of the two children. "The situation has been brought under control after the



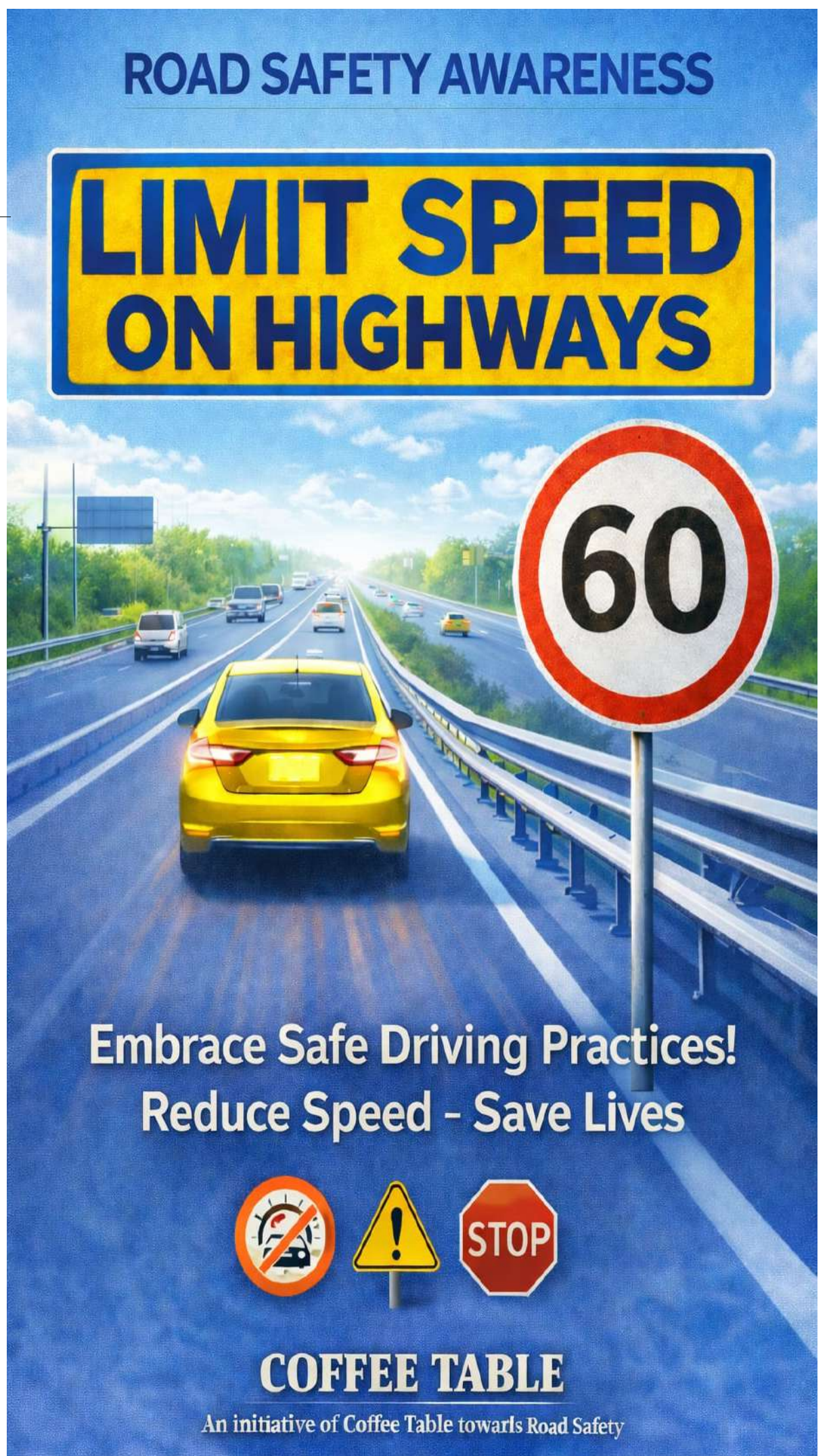
overnight clashes. No fresh violence was reported this morning. The overall situation remains calm," the officer said. Curfew and internet suspension have been in force in Imphal East and West, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching districts, he said. Violence broke out in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Tuesday as two children were killed in the bomb attack on their home, while two others were shot dead when a mob stormed a CRPF camp during a protest against the blast, the police said. A group of people also torched two oil tankers and a truck, vandalised a police outpost and stopped the movement of vehicles on key

roads to protest the bomb attack. Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh chaired an all-party meeting to review the prevailing situation in the state. It all started with suspected militants hurling a bomb at a house in Moirang Tronglaobi, killing a five-year-old boy and his six-month-old sister and injuring their mother, when all of them were sleeping early on Tuesday, the police said. Angered by the incident, around 400 people attacked a CRPF camp, prompting security forces to open fire, leaving two of them dead and about 20 others injured. The protesters were unhappy with the security forces for allegedly failing to take action against

the militants. The chief minister condemned the bomb attack and said the investigation would be handed to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The representatives of political parties expressed deep concern over the law and order situation and emphasised the need to maintain peace, unity, and communal harmony. At least 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in the ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and hills-based Kuki-Zo groups in Manipur since May 2023. The state has been under the President's rule for nearly a year since February 2025.




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Ex-Cricketer Kiran More Moves Gujarat High Court Against Disqualification To Contest Baroda Cricket Association Elections

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News Network

Former cricketer Kiran More has moved the Gujarat High Court challenging a single judge's order which set aside the candidature of four persons (including More) from contesting elections to the Baroda Cricket Association (BCA). The single judge had last month, set aside the candidature after noting that they had completed cumulative term of 9 years as Councillor or Office Bearer. It had said that for determining disqualification, the entire period served either as an "Office Bearer" or as a member of the Apex Council in the capacity of a "Councillor", including service as an elected "Office Bearer" and/or as a member of any Committee or Governing Council, must be taken into account while computing the 9 year period. Any other interpretation would permit individuals to continue in office beyond the permissible cumulative period of 9 years by circumventing the provisions of Rules 6 and 14 of BCA's Rules, the single judge had the hearing on Tuesday (April 7) senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi appearing for More submitted before a division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice DN Ray referred to the constitution of the apex council of the BCA which comprises of 10 elected posts

and 3 nominated posts. Out of the 10, Rohatgi said, 5 are office bearers and other 5 are described as apex council members. He said that as per the Constitution of the body, a person can contest for any post of the office bearer and hold any of those posts three times, having tenure of 3 years; which in total amounts to 9 years along with a cooling period of 3 years in between. "Constitution says if you have done 9 years in any of the post of office bearers, then you cannot hold any other post whatsoever. That is the ban or ceiling put on office bearers. Beyond 9 you will be disqualified for contesting post of any of the 5 office bearers. For ordinary members/apex council members the disqualification also arises after total of 9 years. At this stage the court orally asked if the 9 year cap applied as officer bearers as well as to the apex council members both or 9 years as a whole. Constitution says if you have done 9 years as an office bearer then there is a cap and you can't contest any other election all your life. But the vice versa is not true. If you have done 9 years as ordinary apex council member, then you don't go home you have a right to do 9 more years as an office bearer... Take my case. I'm a former cricketer. I have served 6 years as office bearer. He (More) has 3 more years left, if he wants.

But he has served 3 years as ordinary apex council member. I have not served full 9 years as office bearer. The Single Judge is saying you have completed 9 (years)-6 as office bearer and 3 as apex council member. I'm saying that this does not create disqualification for 3 more years as office bearer," Rohatgi said. He said that there was no dispute over the Constitution and it had been framed on the directions of the Supreme Court in a matter which is also pending. He said that the writ petition was filed without exhausting two alternative remedies—regulation 40 of Constitution which provides for an Ombudsman who is meant to decide disputes between members. He said that the petitioner did not go to the Ombudsman. Rohatgi further said that BCA was a public charitable trust and was governed Bombay Public Trusts Act, wherein the authority—Charity Commissioner is to decide such disputes. He said that this remedy was also not availed by the petitioner. Rohatgi said that the learned single judge should have asked petitioner to move Supreme Court in the pending matter (Civil Appeal No. 4235 of 2014 BCCI v/s Cricket Association of Bihar & Ors) to get clarification over whether the Constitution provides for a hybrid disqualification. He said that the petition



was completely premature. The court asked about the recourse one can take if they want to challenge the election. To this Rohatgi said that remedy was under Section 22 of Bombay Public Trust Act. The court asked if there was any provision for raising objection to nomination of candidates. The counsel submitted that the Election Officer had accepted the nomination and that the officer gave reasons only where he had rejected the nominations. The court was hearing two appeals—one by Kiran More and the other by BCA, challenging the single judge's order. The original petitioners—members of association—had challenged the candidature of four persons—respondent Nos. 4 to 7 from contesting for posts of Office Bearers—President, Secretary and Treasurer for the term 2026–2029. The challenge was on the ground that the

candidates stood disqualified, having completed a cumulative tenure of nine years or more in the capacity of Councillor and/or Office Bearer in the Apex Council. Pursuant to the notification dated 6-01-2026, Respondent No.4 Kiran More submitted his nomination for the post of President, Respondent Nos.5 Amul Jikar and 6 Anant Indulkar submitted

nominations for post of Honorary Secretary, and Respondent No.7 Amar Petiwale for the post of Honorary Treasurer. The petitioners objected to the candidature on the ground that they were disqualified in view of Supreme Court judgment. The petitioners objections were not adjudicated nor were they given opportunity of hearing. On the contrary, the Electoral Officer

proceeded to publish the final list of candidates. Subsequent to the publication of the final list, the petitioners once again approached the Electoral Officer reiterating that Respondent Nos.4 to 7 had completed more than 9 years of tenure and were disqualified. This representation also remained undecided. The petitioners moved a writ petition. Respondent Nos.4 to 7, argued before the single judge that Regulation 40 provides for the forum of an Ombudsman, who is competent to adjudicate upon grievances of the nature raised by the petitioners. It was submitted that Civil Appeal No. 4235 of 2014 (BCCI v/s Cricket Association of Bihar & Ors) is still pending before Supreme Court and therefore, in the event of any ambiguity or clarification with regard to tenure

based disqualification, the petitioners ought to have approached. It was submitted that Supreme Court, by order dated 20-09-2019 passed in various interlocutory applications in Civil Appeal No. 4235 of 2014, clarified that disqualification would be confined only to the posts of Office Bearers of Cricket Associations. It was submitted that restriction and disqualification contemplated under the reformatory directions of Apex Court as well as the Bye-laws are confined only to "Office Bearers", and no reference has been made to "Councillors" or members of any Committee. It is, therefore, contended that a Councillor who has completed nine years in such capacity would nonetheless remain eligible to contest for the post of Office Bearer.

Motor Accident Claim | No Deduction From Salary Just Because Deceased Was On Verge Of Retirement

Coffee Table
News Network

In a motor accident claim compensation case, the Supreme Court recently disapproved of a 50 percent deduction made in the salary of the deceased on account of the fact that he had only 6 months of service left. A bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Vijay Bishnoi enhanced the compensation amount payable to the claimants (deceased's family members), holding that the High Court and the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal erred in deducting 50% from the deceased's salary while computing the compensation amount. In the case at hand before us, both the Tribunal as well as the High Court had made a deduction of 50% from the salary of the deceased on account of the fact that only 6 months of service of the deceased was remaining. In our considered opinion, the Courts below have erred in coming to such an unreasonable conclusion", it said. Referring to Sarla Verma v. Delhi Transport Corporation, the Court reiterated that while computing the compensation amount, the multiplicand shall be determined on the basis of "annual" income of the deceased...any deduction which is not related to the accident, is impermissible in law.



Additionally, as per settled law in the case of Sarla Verma's case (supra), the multiplicand is always determined on the basis of the "annual" income of the deceased so as to ensure uniformity and consistency in the calculation of motor accident claim cases." The case pertained to a 59 year old man, who was engaged as a permanent employee with the Railways. In 2013, the man was travelling on his bicycle, when he was hit from behind by a bike being driven in a rash and negligent manner. As a result of this accident, the man suffered injuries and later passed away. The man's widow and children filed a claim petition before MACT, claiming a compensation of Rs.36,16,264/-. They claimed that the deceased was earning Rs.25,507/- per month. The MACT determined that the salary of the deceased was Rs.25,415/- and then made a deduction of 50% from it, noting that the deceased had only 6 months of service left.

Reliance in this regard was placed on the High Court's decision in Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation v. Sri Narasubai. Further, the MACT deducted 1/3rd of the amount on account of personal expenses of the deceased. Thus the net income of the deceased was taken to be Rs.8472/- per month. Ultimately, the Tribunal awarded a total compensation of Rs.11,37,466/-. Seeking enhancement, the appellant-claimants approached the High Court. They disputed inter-alia the salary component and award of future prospects. While the High Court upheld the 50% deduction from the deceased's salary, it awarded compensation under other heads, such as, loss of consortium, estate, etc. The total compensation amount came to Rs.14,05,942/-. Seeking enhancement, the appellants approached the Supreme Court. Relying on Sarla Verma case, they said that there cannot be "split income" for pre-retirement and post-

retirement periods. Rather, what is to be considered is the annual income based on last drawn monthly salary. With regard to future prospects, they claimed that the addition had to be of 15%, instead of 10%, in terms of the decision in National Insurance Co Ltd. v. Pranay Sethi. After going through the record, the Supreme Court observed that the High Court's enhancement of the compensation amount was on the lower side. Declining the 50% deduction in salary and raising the future prospects from 10% to 15% (in terms of Pranay Sethi), the compensation amount was enhanced to Rs. 23,51,362/-. Since the amount was now computed on the basis of annual income, the top Court did away with the sum awarded as loss of earning of 6 months. Referring to Sarla Verma's case, the Court said, "The fact that the deceased had only six months of service left does not cast any aspersion on the fact that had the accident not occurred, the deceased would have been in service and earn commensurate to the last drawn income before the death. Therefore, the annual income of the deceased would be calculated on the basis of his monthly last drawn salary."

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Mumbai, Date 7: It was informed in the cabinet meeting that 1 lakh 80 thousand 574 farmers have been provided with assistance of Rs 128 crore 65 lakh for the damage caused by unseasonal rains in the state between October and December 2025. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. About 1 lakh 14 thousand 752 hectares of agricultural area were affected by the unseasonal rains that occurred between October and December 2025. This caused damage to the agriculture and agricultural products of 1 lakh 80 thousand 574 farmers. Farmers have been provided with assistance of Rs 128.86 crore for this compensation. This damage was mainly caused in the



districts of Chandrapur, Dhule, Gadchiroli, Jalgaon, Nashik, Raigad, Sindhudurg. A total of 1,45,606 hectares of agriculture was damaged due to the unseasonal rains that occurred between January and March 2026, and 2,33,890 farmers have been affected. Due to this rain, crops like banana, onion, papaya, mango, grapes, wheat, gram, jowar etc. have been damaged. Mainly Latur, Solapur, Nashik, Satara,

Dhule, Nandurbar, Yavatmal, Ahilyanagar, Pune, Jalna, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Buldhana, and Beed districts have been affected. Five people died and nine people were injured due to this unseasonal rain. 36 animals have also died due to unseasonal rain. According to preliminary estimates, 1,22,993 hectares of land belonging to 1,94,329 farmers have been damaged due to the rains that occurred in

April 2026. The process of assessing the damage caused by the unseasonal rains that occurred since January is underway. Meanwhile, it was informed that 41 projects of the Water Resources Department have been completed since July 2022 and about 105 TMC of water storage has been created. These projects have created an additional 2.95 lakh hectares of irrigation capacity. Since July 2022, 225 projects have been given revised and administrative approvals. These approvals are worth Rs 4.35 lakh crore and after the completion of all these projects, 33.45 lakh hectares of irrigation capacity will be created, informed the Water Resources Department through a presentation.

Develop transmission network for power supply to other States in near future: Naidu

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VIJAYAWADA: The 16th State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat on Tuesday, cleared 31 projects worth Rs 9,436 crore. The proposed investments in industry, energy, IT, tourism and food processing sectors are expected to generate employment for 1,11,278 people. Naidu directed officials to fully utilise the State's vast potential in solar power generation with a special focus on developing Rayalaseema region as a major renewable energy hub. He emphasised the need for attracting large-scale investments in the solar energy sector. The officials should plan and develop robust transmission infrastructure to supply power to other



States in the future, he said. Naidu stressed the need for developing solar parks in Rayalaseema region and attracting investments accordingly. Transmission lines should be strengthened to connect with both State and national grids for interstate power supply. The State aims to become a key hub for consumer electronics manufacturing with emphasis on setting up units in Sri City, Koppurthy and Anantapur. Greater emphasis should be laid on establishing Global Capability

Centers (GCCs) and strengthening the IT ecosystem, Naidu said. The SIPB granted approval for three companies in Amaravati Quantum Valley, besides encouraging projects utilising agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture waste to produce value-added byproducts such as ethanol. He called for modern safety protocols across sectors like pharma, steel, green energy and battery energy storage systems. A standard operating procedure (SOP) aligned with disaster management norms should be developed.

The approved projects should be grounded quickly within stipulated timelines and MoUs signed during investor summits should also be implemented speedily, he said. AP set to turn green energy leader: Naidu. The SIPB decided to expand food processing capacity in line with rising horticulture output and to provide enhanced marketing support to crops like oil palm and cocoa. The CM reiterated that Andhra Pradesh is determined to become a leader in renewable energy and electronics manufacturing, and achieve sustainable industrial growth. Ministers Nara Lokesh, K Atchannaidu, P Narayana, K Durgesh, A Satya Prasad, TG Bharat, Gottipati Ravi Kumar, BC Janardhan Reddy and Vasamsetty Subhash, Chief Secretary G Sai Prasad and other officials were present.

65 per cent FAR must for affordable housing space in Delhi

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NEW DELHI: To promote planned urban growth and improve affordable housing availability in Delhi, the Centre on Tuesday unveiled a revamped Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) policy, which allows a higher floor area ratio (FAR) within a 500-metre radius of Delhi Metro, the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) and India Railways corridors. In the zones to be taken up under the TOD project, a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of up to 500 will be permitted on a plot measuring 2,000 sqm and above with an 18-metre road. So far, the base FAR for such projects was 400. Out of the total permissible FAR, 65 per cent has been mandatorily earmarked for residential use with dwelling units with a built-up area of 100sqm for affordable housing. Out of the remaining 35 per cent, 10 per cent FAR will be allowed for the provision of commercial activities and amenities for the housing area. There is flexibility in the usage of 25 per cent of FAR, which can be used for bigger-sized housing, office space, guest houses and studio



apartments. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the measurement of a structure's total floor area divided by the total area of the plot. It acts as a zoning tool to control building density, determining the maximum permitted construction size on a property. The TOD concept has already been envisaged in the Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) 2021. The policy was first approved in 2015 and revised in 2019 and 2021, with an aim to address the growing menace of pollution, congestion and shortage of housing stock for the poor and middle class in the national capital. While announcing the change in the policy, union minister of housing and urban affairs Manohar Lal said on Friday that for convenience and enhanced walkability of the residents in the TOD projects, new

underground or elevated pedestrian walkways could be provided for connecting to the transit or metro stations. Speaking at a press conference along with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the minister added that the modification would encourage private players to take up TOD projects. It was also announced that charges to be recovered for such projects would only be spent on providing and improving basic amenities in TOD zones. Addressing the press conference, Gupta said that under the policy, planned, high-density, and mixed-use development would be promoted within a 500-metre radius around Metro and RRTS corridors, covering an area of approximately 207 square kilometres. Gupta said that this will pave the

way for affordable housing, improved connectivity, and ease of living. The initiative will serve as a significant support, particularly for poor and middle-class families. The vice chairman of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), N Saravana Kumar, who was also present, said that the revised policy promotes ease of doing business (EoDB) through single-window application and clearance with a simplified mechanism for approval of TOD projects. "The TOD committee under the vice chairman of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), comprising officials of the other government agencies, will ensure time-bound and seamless approvals. The applicants intended to develop the project will require applying for approvals along with the charges through a single window," he said. The approval will be granted, including sanction to the building plan, within 60 days. It will allow TOD development to commensurate with the construction of the new metro corridors. New affordable housing and related infrastructure can come up in a planned way in such areas.

Mysterious illness claims lives of five children in Rajasthan's Salumber

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A mysterious illness has claimed the lives of five young children in Rajasthan's Salumber district over the past five days, raising concern among health authorities. According to officials, the victims—aged between two and four years—developed symptoms such as fever and vomiting, and died within 24 hours of onset. The cases have been reported from Lalpura and Ghata villages in the Lasadiya sub-division. The deceased have been identified as Deepak (4), his younger brother Laxman (3), and Seema (4) from Lalpura, along with

Rahul (4) and Kajal (2) from Ghata village. Health officials said eight other children showing similar symptoms are currently undergoing treatment at hospitals in Salumber and Udaipur. Authorities have deployed medical teams to the affected villages, which together have over 560 households. Screening drives are underway, and residents exhibiting symptoms are being closely monitored. Additional District Magistrate Dinesh Rai Sapela said that early detection and treatment are critical. "Anyone showing symptoms is being attended to, and villagers are advised to seek immediate medical care," he



said. Chief Medical and Health Officer Mahendra Parmar confirmed that samples have been sent to a government laboratory for analysis, and the exact cause of the illness will only be determined after test results are received. As a precaution, teams from the animal husbandry

department have also carried out disinfection drives in cattle sheds in Ghata village. Local MLA Thawarchand Damor visited the area to assess the situation and urged residents to rely on medical treatment rather than superstition, stressing the importance of timely healthcare intervention.

India issues fresh advisory, urges nationals to leave Iran 'expeditiously' despite ceasefire announcement

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Even as a ceasefire has been announced in the ongoing conflict between Iran and the United States, the Indian Embassy in Tehran on Wednesday issued a fresh advisory urging all Indian nationals still in the country to leave at the earliest, citing the evolving situation on the ground. In its advisory, the Embassy said Indian citizens must coordinate with officials and follow suggested exit routes while leaving Iran. "In continuation of the advisory of 07 April 2026, and in light of recent developments, Indian nationals still in Iran are strongly advised to expeditiously exit Iran, in coordination with the Embassy and using the routes suggested by the Embassy," it said. The advisory also reiterated that no attempt should be made to approach any international land border without prior consultation and coordination with the Embassy. "It is again reiterated that there



should be no attempt to approach any international land border without prior consultation and coordination with the Embassy," the statement added. To assist Indian nationals, the Embassy has also issued emergency helpline numbers and an email ID for coordination. Mobile numbers provided include +989128109115, +989128109102, +989128109109, and +989932179359. Queries can also be sent to cons.tehran@mea.gov.

The United States and Iran on Wednesday agreed to a two-week ceasefire, coming in less than an hour before the deadline set by US President Donald Trump for military action against Iran was due to expire. As part of the arrangement, Tehran has agreed to temporarily reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The White House said Israel has also agreed to the ceasefire. The last-minute breakthrough followed Trump's claim that he had spoken with

Pakistan's leadership, which had called for a pause in hostilities. Iran described the ceasefire as a success and said it would begin talks with Washington on Friday in Pakistan as part of efforts to end the ongoing conflict. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who played a mediating role, said Islamabad would host delegations from both countries for negotiations aimed at reaching a "conclusive agreement."

Nine of family including six children killed as car falls into well in Maharashtra's Dindori

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MUMBAI: Nine members of a family including six children were killed on Friday night as vehicle carrying them plunged into a well at Dindori in Nasik district of Maharashtra. The incident took place in the Shivajinagar area of Dindori town. The victims, who were residents of Indore village in Dindori. According to the police, the car driver lost control of



the vehicle while returning from a social gathering organised by a private coaching class. The vehicle veered off the road and plunged into an open well located

alongside the route and trapped all occupants inside. Upon information, police rescue team rushed to the spot and used two hydra cranes along with local

swimmers to reach the submerged vehicle. Despite sustained efforts by the police and rescue personnel, none of the occupants survived the incident. The bodies were immediately shifted to the govt hospital in Dindori. Maharashtra Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis announced Rs 5 lakh as compensation to the kin of the deceased.

Iran's Lavan Oil Refinery Struck Hours After Ceasefire; Tehran Retaliates Against UAE, Kuwait

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News Network

Iran's Lavan Oil Refinery on Lavan Island was hit in an attack on Wednesday morning, hours after ceasefire reports, with Tehran launching retaliatory missile and drone strikes against the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait within the hour, according to WANA News Agency. The National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) confirmed the attack, calling it a "cowardly" strike that hit refinery facilities at approximately 10:00 AM local time. Safety and firefighting teams were deployed immediately to contain fires and secure the site. No casualties were reported, with the NIORDC crediting the timely evacuation of personnel on the ground. The NIORDC stated that Iran's



national fuel supply and distribution network remains stable. The company, however, urged citizens to manage fuel consumption, avoid unnecessary travel, and use public transportation wherever possible. On the retaliatory front, Iran's state broadcaster IRIB reported, citing local sources, that missile and drone attacks were launched against the UAE and Kuwait in direct response to the Lavan strike. The operations were reportedly carried out within an hour of the attack on the oil facilities. Specific

targets in both countries were not immediately confirmed, with details still emerging. The Lavan refinery, situated on Lavan Island in Hormozgan Province in the Persian Gulf, has been operational since 1976 and processes approximately 55,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Its output, which includes gasoline, diesel, kerosene, fuel oil, and LPG, supplies a significant portion of fuel demand across southern Iran. Wednesday's strike puts a chunk of that regional

supply chain under direct threat. The attack comes hours after the US and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire, with Tehran reportedly committing to reopen the Strait of Hormuz as part of the deal. Iran's Supreme National Security Council, in accepting the ceasefire, stated: "This does not signify the termination of the war. Our hands remain upon the trigger." Peace talks between Washington and Tehran are scheduled for Friday in Islamabad. The strike on Lavan Island and Iran's subsequent military response in the Gulf mark a sharp regional escalation, coming in the immediate aftermath of ceasefire announcements. The situation remains fluid as ground reports continue to come in.

'The Turning Point': How Khamenei Helped Iran Secure Last-Minute Truce With Trump

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News Network

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Ali Khamenei played a decisive role in steering Tehran toward a ceasefire with the United States, approving negotiations at a critical moment even as President Donald Trump publicly threatened escalation. For the first time since the conflict began, Khamenei instructed Iranian negotiators to move towards a deal, sources said, marking a breakthrough after weeks of military escalation and stalled diplomacy. The shift came as US and Israeli officials were preparing for a possible large-scale escalation. Pentagon officials and US forces in the region were bracing for a major bombing campaign, while regional allies anticipated significant Iranian retaliation. Negotiations intensified on Monday, with US envoy Steve Witkoff rejecting Iran's initial 10-point proposal as inadequate, triggering a rapid series of revisions. Pakistani mediators shuttled proposals between Washington and Tehran, while Egypt and Turkey also worked to bridge differences. By Monday night, an updated proposal for a two-



week ceasefire had received US approval, leaving the final decision to Khamenei, who was closely involved in the process. Operating under heightened security concerns and communicating through intermediaries, Khamenei's approval was described by sources as the key turning point in the negotiations. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also played a central role in advancing talks and persuading military leadership to accept a deal, while China advised Tehran to seek a diplomatic off-ramp. "Without his green light, there wouldn't have been a deal," a regional source said, reported Axios. By Tuesday morning, negotiators were nearing agreement, even as Trump issued a stark warning that "a whole

civilisation will die tonight," adding to uncertainty around the outcome. Despite reports suggesting talks had collapsed, officials involved said negotiations were continuing and gaining momentum. Vice President JD Vance engaged with mediators from Pakistan, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remained in close contact with Trump, amid concerns in Israel over losing influence in the process. By midday, there was broad convergence on a two-week ceasefire. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif publicly outlined the terms hours later, urging both sides to accept. Trump, facing pressure from allies to reject the deal, ultimately moved forward after securing

Israel's commitment and holding final discussions with Pakistani leadership. US forces were ordered to stand down shortly after the announcement, and Iran confirmed it would adhere to the ceasefire and reopen the Strait of Hormuz under coordinated arrangements. While the ceasefire has paused hostilities, significant differences remain between the US and Iran on key issues, including nuclear policy and regional security concerns. Officials indicated that upcoming talks in Pakistan, likely led by Vance for the US, will be critical in determining whether the truce can evolve into a longer-term agreement or whether the conflict could resume.

'Will Begin Our Attack If...': Hezbollah Warns Israel Against Strikes In Southern Lebanon

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News Network

Lebanon's Hezbollah on Wednesday issued a stark warning to Israel, saying it would launch attacks if Israeli forces failed to halt military operations and withdraw from southern Lebanon by 11:00 GMT. "If Israel does not stop its attacks and withdraw from the south of Lebanon by 11:00 GMT, we will begin our attacks on Israel," the group said in a statement, sharply escalating tensions along the border. The warning came as Lebanon's Foreign

Ministry said the government had already conveyed its willingness to enter direct negotiations with Israel, signalling a parallel diplomatic push even as hostilities continue. Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces said it carried out its largest coordinated strike across Lebanon since the launch of Operation Roaring Lion. According to the IDF, within a span of 10 minutes, Israeli forces struck more than 100 Hezbollah-linked command centres, headquarters and military facilities

across Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon. The Israeli military said the targets included intelligence command hubs used to plan attacks, missile and naval launch infrastructure, and assets belonging to Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force and its aerial unit. As fighting intensifies, humanitarian conditions across Lebanon have deteriorated sharply. More than 1,500 people have been killed since the conflict expanded. Over 1.2 million people, nearly one-fifth of Lebanon's

population, have been displaced, most of them from Shia-majority areas in southern Lebanon, eastern Bekaa and the southern suburbs of Beirut, where Hezbollah has strong influence. Villages near the Israel-Lebanon border have been extensively damaged or destroyed as Israeli ground forces push forward to establish what Israeli authorities describe as a security buffer zone. The offensive aims to dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure and force its fighters away from the frontier.

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