



THE Hans India



Scrap Ranji if it doesn't matter: Vengsarkar blasts selectors
Cricket legend Dilip Vengsarkar has slammed the Aji Agarkar-led selection committee for ignoring Ranji Trophy star Auqib Nabi for the Afghanistan Test, calling the decision 'absurd' and questioning the value of domestic cricket performances. **P6**

Hashtags, hate and half-truths: The dark side of India's digital politics
The rise of social media in India was once hailed as a democratic revolution. It promised to dismantle the monopoly of traditional media, amplify unheard voices, deepen citizen participation, and establish a direct connection between political leaders. **P4**

India's residential market matures; Hyderabad joins growth surge in Q1 2026
India's residential real estate market has transitioned into a "structurally mature, demand-anchored growth phase", with Q1 2026 recording 93,065 new unit launches and 95,973 unit sales across the top eight cities, a report said on Saturday. **P7**

Preethi Pagadala's elegant look speaks beyond fashion
Preethi Pagadala once again proves that simplicity and confidence can create the most striking visual impact. In this stunning photograph, the young actress appears effortlessly graceful as she poses in a flowing white outfit against a warm natural backdrop. **P8**

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WINDOWS
SKM announces nationwide stir from May 27

NEW DELHI: The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Friday announced a nationwide agitation beginning May 27, calling upon farmer unions and agricultural workers to burn copies of the Centre's recent minimum support price (MSP) order and the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) report on price policy for the 2026-27 Kharif season. The CACP is an expert advisory body under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and is responsible for recommending MSPs for notified crops during Kharif and Rabi seasons. The farmers' body, that had led the 2021-22 farmers' agitation at Delhi's borders, said it would intensify protests against the Union government over the announced MSP structure for the 2026-27 Kharif season, the recent increase in fuel prices, and the worsening fertiliser situation.

2 Indians die while descending from Everest

KATHMANDU: Two Indian mountaineers who summited Everest have died while descending, an official said on Friday. The climbers, identified as Arun Kumar Tiwari and Sandeep Are, were exhausted while they were coming down from the peak and could not be saved despite the best efforts of their guides, said Rishi Bhandari, secretary general of the Expedition Operators Association of Nepal. It appears that Are summited on Wednesday and Tiwari on Thursday around 5.30 pm, Bhandari told PTI. The guides "worked really hard" but were not able to save them, he said.

IUML, VCK join Vijay govt

CHENNAI: A M Shahjahan and Vanni Arasu, legislators belonging to the Indian Union Muslim League and Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi respectively were sworn in as ministers by Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on Friday in a simple ceremony held at the Lok Bhavan in Chennai. In the presence of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, Shahjahan who won from Papanasam Assembly constituency and Vanni Arasu, who emerged victorious from Tindivanam segment took the oath of office and secrecy.

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We are working on the heat-wave problem. Just wait a little, there will be a cold-wave

EC ANNOUNCES POLLS FOR 26 SEATS

NDA may lose a Rajya Sabha seat in June 18 polls

National Democratic Alliance is likely to get 17 seats in these elections, while the Congress will get five, the JMM two and the TVK one; former PM HD Deve Gowda, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge set to retire

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE NDA is likely to lose one Rajya Sabha seat in the biennial elections for 26 seats in 12 states across the country, while the Congress-led opposition is

set to gain three. The Election Commission on Friday announced elections for 26 Rajya Sabha seats on June 18 following the retirement of incumbents, including former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, Congress president Mallikarjun



HD Deve Gowda, Mallikarjun Kharge

Kharge and party leader Digvijaya Singh, besides two Union ministers Ravneet Singh and George Kurian. In a statement, the EC said the elections for the Rajya

Sabha seats will be held in 10 states where 24 incumbents are retiring on different dates beginning June 21 to July 19. Of the total 26 seats where elections are being held, the NDA currently has 18 and the Congress four while one seat is with the JMM and three are with the YSRCP. The NDA is likely to get 17 seats in these elections, while the Congress will get five, the JMM two and the TVK one. The NDA currently has 149 MPs in the upper house while the opposition has 78 and non-aligned regional

parties have 17 MPs in the 244-member house. The Rajya Sabha elections will be held in four seats each in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka, three seats each in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, two seats in Jharkhand and one seat each in Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Besides, one seat each in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu will also go to the polls on June 18. The last date for filing of nominations is June 8,

according to the EC. In a separate notification, the EC also announced by-elections to fill the vacancies created by the NCP's Sunetra Pawar in Maharashtra and the AI-ADMK's C Ve Shanmugam in Tamil Nadu following their resignations after they were elected to the state assemblies. While the NDA is set to bag Pawar's seat, going by its strength in the state assembly, the TVK is likely to get the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Tamil Nadu going for a bypoll.

RBI's Rs 2.87L crore gift to Centre amid austerity

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MUMBAI

THE Reserve Bank on Friday announced a record dividend of Rs 2.87 lakh crore to the government for the year-ended March 2025, providing a financial boost for the exchequer amid rising import bills and supply chain disruptions due to the West Asia conflict.

The dividend is 6.7 per cent higher than Rs 2.69 lakh crore for the 2024-25 fiscal year. In a statement, the RBI said its net income, before risk provision and transfer to statutory funds, aggregated Rs 3.96 lakh crore in FY26 as against Rs 3.13 lakh crore in FY25. "The balance sheet of the Bank expanded by 20.61 per cent to Rs 91,97,121.08 crore as on March 31, 2026,"

The RBI's Central Board of Directors, at its meeting, reviewed the global and domestic economic scenario, including risks to the outlook, and also approved the dividend.



the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. The RBI's Central Board of Directors, at its meeting,

reviewed the global and domestic economic scenario, including risks to the outlook, and also approved

the dividend. According to the statement, the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF) provides flexibility to maintain the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) between the range of 4.5 per cent and 7.5 per cent of the size of the balance sheet. "Taking into consideration the current macro-economic factors, financial performance of the Bank and maintenance of appropriate risk buffers, the Central Board decided to transfer Rs 1,09,379.64 crore towards the CRB for FY 2025-26 as against Rs 44,861.70 crore in the previous year," it said. The CRB at 6.5 per cent of the size of the RBI balance sheet, compared to 7.5 per cent for 2024-25.

100 'oxygen parks' soon to improve city climate

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

CHIEF Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Friday that the Delhi government plans to develop 100 "oxygen parks" featuring dense tree cover to improve the city's climate and address pollution issues. Laying the foundation stone of the park to be developed on 3-acre land in Mukhmelpur village in north Delhi's Buzurg, Gupta stated that this will be the first such park in the city.

"Delhi was turned into a gas chamber for years, but nobody was concerned to take steps to address pollution in Delhi," the chief minister said and announced that her government has set a target of planting more than 70 lakh trees, shrubs and hedges across the city this year. She



noted that her government has been actively working for the past year to combat pollution, and the establishment of these parks is part of that initiative. The chief minister said the parks will have dense fruit-bearing trees to provide shelter to birds and provide oxygen. "These parks with dense trees are a requirement of Delhi," she said. The park in

Mukhmelpur designed with both public convenience and environmental sustainability in mind, will feature walking tracks, energy-efficient lighting, huts for seating and relaxation, a landscaped pond and a variety of shade-giving tree species. Large green lawns and open spaces will also be developed as part of the project, said a CMO statement.

Centre to bring back some persons deported to B'desh

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Centre on Friday told the Supreme Court that it has decided to bring back some people, who were earlier deported to Bangladesh, to India and would then verify their claim of Indian citizenship.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told a bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant that keeping in view the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case and by not treating it as a precedent to be followed in other matters, the government has decided to bring them back. "The government would bring them back and thereafter examine their status. Depending upon the outcome, we will take steps accordingly," Mehta



told the bench, which also comprised Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi. The top law officer said that it may take 8-10 days to bring these persons back to India. The bench posted the matter for hearing in July.

The top court was hearing a plea of the Centre challenging a September 26, 2025 order of the Calcutta High Court by which it had set aside the central government's decision to deport Sunali Khatun and others to Bangladesh and termed it as "illegal".

Uber airport share service launched

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

IN a fresh push towards cleaner and smarter urban transport, the Delhi Government on Thursday rolled out a large-scale airport ride-sharing initiative aimed at cutting traffic congestion, reducing vehicular pollution and lowering travel costs for commuters.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta formally flagged off the Uber Airport Share service at the Delhi Secretariat in the presence of Environment, Forest and Wildlife Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa. The service has been launched at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, one of the country's busiest travel hubs, and is expected to transform the way passengers commute to and from the airport. The



shared mobility initiative will allow travellers heading in the same direction to pool rides through the Uber app, offering a cheaper and more efficient travel option while reducing the number of vehicles on the roads. The Delhi Government said nearly seven lakh airport passengers stand to benefit from the affordable, technology-enabled and seamless ride-sharing

system. The service will operate through the Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) facility at the airport, where passengers can conveniently access shared rides. Officials said the initiative could bring nearly one lakh app-based and airport-connected vehicles into Delhi's growing shared mobility ecosystem with support from multiple operators and stakeholders.

'Cockroach Janata Party' demands Pradhan's resignation

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

BACK with the tagline "Cockroaches Never Die" after its original X handle was withheld in India, the "Cockroach Janata Party" (CJP), a satirical social-media account, launched a campaign on Friday demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The campaign, spearheaded through CJP's new X handle -- "Cockroach Is Back" -- and its Instagram platform, centres on alleged systemic failures in the education sector, particularly concerns surrounding the NEET-UG 2026 "paper-leak" controversy.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke urged followers to



support an online petition demanding Pradhan's resignation. "How are you, cockroaches? Everyone is saying you are doing great on the internet, but I think now it is time to do some real work. Today, we are starting a petition demanding the resignation of the education minister," Dipke said. Calling for accountability, he said failures in the education system have adversely affected students.

Delhi govt eases DJB policy to reduce water charges

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

IN a major policy shift aimed at reducing the financial burden on property owners, the Delhi Government has revised the Delhi Jal Board's infrastructure charge system, announcing that water and sewer charges will now be based on actual water demand instead of total plot size. The decision is expected to benefit thousands of residents, particularly those with partially constructed properties, smaller housing

units and buildings located in lower-category colonies. Announcing the reform, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the government has been continuously working to strengthen water supply and sewer infrastructure across the capital while ensuring that citizens receive fair and practical services. She said that under the earlier system, infrastructure charges were imposed according to the entire premises area, regardless of how much of the property was actually constructed



or how much water was required. The revised mechanism, however, will levy

charges strictly according to water demand generated by the built-up area.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta says her government has been continuously working to strengthen water supply and sewer infrastructure across the capital while ensuring that citizens receive fair and practical services

Gupta explained that if additional construction or new development increases water consumption needs, only then will infrastructure charges rise. Open spaces within plots will no longer

be included while calculating charges. She cited an example, saying that if a 200-square metre plot has construction on only 50 square metres, charges will now be calculated solely

on the basis of the water requirement of the constructed portion rather than the entire land parcel. "This will provide major relief to Delhi residents. Earlier, even open areas were included while calculating infrastructure charges despite having no water requirement," she said. The Delhi Government also announced a series of detailed relaxations and concessions under the revised Infrastructure Fund Charges (IFC) policy for water and sewer connections.