

The Quad nations — India, the US, Japan, and Australia — announced a high-level foreign ministers’ meeting in New Delhi next week to strengthen Indo-Pacific cooperation, maritime security, and strategic regional partnerships.



India and the African Union postponed the India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi following concerns over the Ebola outbreak, highlighting the growing importance of global health diplomacy and international crisis management.



The Union Public Service Commission introduced major reforms for Civil Services Examination 2026, including immediate release of prelims answer keys and AI-based evaluation checks to improve transparency and examination efficiency.



India expanded renewable energy initiatives through solar and green hydrogen investments as part of long-term carbon reduction goals and efforts to strengthen national energy security and sustainable development targets.



BVICAM organised a workshop on electronic media led by Bhalinder Singh Virmani, focusing on video journalism, camera techniques and digital storytelling skills for faculty members....

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Droupadi Murmu met artisans and weavers from North-Eastern states at Rashtrapati Bhavan, praising their contribution to preserving India’s cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship...

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Narendra Modi said India and Nordic nations are “natural partners,” pledging deeper cooperation in green technology, trade, innovation, Arctic research and global peace initiatives at the India-Nordic Summit in Oslo...

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Ministry of Ayush and DGHS issued a nationwide heatwave advisory, urging citizens to stay hydrated and avoid peak heat as temperatures across northern India approach 45°C.....

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X has introduced new daily limits for unverified accounts on posts, replies, direct messages and following activity to improve platform stability and reduce technical disruptions across its services, while regulating excessive usage and backend system load more efficiently...

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Shah Rukh Khan is reportedly preparing for a big-budget action thriller, with industry insiders claiming the film will feature international locations, large-scale visuals and a pan-India theatrical release strategy....

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Jannik Sinner enters the French Open as the leading title contender after a dominant ATP season, symbolising the rise of a new generation in men’s tennis following the era of Nadal and Djokovic....

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## UPI dominates India’s digital payments with 85.5% share of transaction volume: RBI

Dr. Saheb Kumar, New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India has said that the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) accounted for the highest share of digital payment transaction volume in the second half of 2025, reinforcing its position as the leading platform in India’s digital payments ecosystem.

According to the RBI’s latest half-yearly Payment Systems Report, UPI contributed 85.5 percent of the total digital payment transaction volume during the period. National Electronic Funds Transfer and Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) each accounted for 3.6 percent of transaction volume, while the Real Time Gross Settlement system contributed only 0.1 percent because it primarily handles high-value transactions rather than large transaction volumes.

Despite its low transaction count, RTGS remained the largest platform in terms of transaction value, accounting



UPI contributed 85.5 percent of the total digital payment transaction volume during the period.

for 68.6 percent of the total value of digital payments. NEFT followed with a 14.9 percent share, while UPI accounted for 9.5 percent of the total transaction value. PPIs contributed just 0.1 percent of the overall value.

The RBI noted that the figures underline RTGS’ importance for large-value financial settlements, whereas UPI continues to dominate mass retail digital

payments across the country. The report also stated that NEFT continues to remain relevant in India’s evolving digital payment landscape due to its flexibility in handling both small and large transactions with settlement generally completed within an hour.

India’s digital payments ecosystem has witnessed significant expansion over the last decade. According to the report,

transaction volumes increased 33 times and transaction values nearly tripled between 2016 and 2025.

Over the past five years alone, digital payment transaction volumes have grown more than four times, while transaction values have almost doubled. This reflects a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 43 percent in transaction volume and 17 percent in transaction value. The RBI attributed this rapid growth to increasing smartphone penetration, expansion of public digital infrastructure such as UPI, and rising public confidence in secure and convenient cashless payment systems.

The report further revealed that the total volume of payment transactions in India rose from 6,437 crore in 2021 to 26,819 crore in 2025. In value terms, transactions increased from ₹1,741 lakh crore to ₹3,215 lakh crore during the same period, recording a CAGR of 42.9 percent in volume and 16.6 percent in value.

## President Droupadi Murmu honours North-East artisans and weavers

BT Sources

A group of artisans and weavers



from the North-Eastern states met the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on May 19, 2026.

These artisans and weavers had contributed to the preparation of the invitation kits and highlighted the rich artistic and cultural traditions of North-East India during the ‘At Home’ Reception held on January 26, 2026. Artisans from Nagaland crafted baskets using banana

fibre and bamboo, while weavers from Assam designed traditional stoles. Craftspeople from Manipur

created black pottery items, and artisans from Sikkim produced goods made from natural fibres. During the interaction, the artisans and weavers shared their experiences of contributing to the Republic Day reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan and thanked the President for giving them an opportunity to showcase their craftsmanship on a national platform.

## Rajasthan to join Namo Bharat network as Delhi-Alwar RRTS project gains momentum

BT Sources

The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project aimed at improving connectivity between Rajasthan and New Delhi has received a major boost, with Rajasthan set to become part of the ‘Namo Bharat’ high-speed transit network following an agreement between the governments of Rajasthan and Haryana.

The proposed Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar corridor will enable operation of Namo Bharat trains between Delhi and Alwar. Beginning from Sarai Kale Khan, the corridor will pass through Munirka, Aerocity, Gurugram, and Bawal before reaching Khairthal and Alwar via SNB. Officials from the Rajasthan Chief Minister’s Office said an

additional section from SNB to Sotanala will also be developed through Neemrana and Behror. The project is expected to provide significant benefits to industrial hubs such as Bhiwadi and Neemrana by improving regional connectivity and attracting



investment, employment opportunities, and economic growth.

The RRTS initiative is part of the Integrated Transport Plan for the National Capital Region, under which major cities are being connected through a modern high-speed transport network.



## BVICAM hosts media workshop by Vii Media CEO following MoU collaboration

Prof. Sheel Nidhi  
BT | New Delhi

Bharati Vidyapeeth's Institute of Computer Applications and Management successfully organized an engaging and insightful Workshop on Electronic Media for the faculty members of BAJMC on 18-05-26. The workshop was conducted by Mr. Bhalinder Singh Virmani, CEO of Vii Media, with the objective of upgrading the technical skills of educators in the field of modern media practices.

The workshop focused on contemporary aspects of Video Journalism, Camera Techniques, Storytelling, and evolving Media Skills required in today's digital ecosystem. During the session, Mr. Virmani elaborated on the latest trends in camera handling and explained the various uses and applications of



Mr. Bhalinder Singh Virmani, CEO, Vii Media, and Prof. M. N. Hoda, Director, BVICAM, exchange the signed MoU to strengthen collaboration in media training and industry-oriented initiatives.



A group photograph after the successful Electronic Media workshop conducted in BVICAM.

camera settings in professional media production. He emphasized the importance of empowering teachers with the language and techniques of the digital generation, enabling them to frame impactful stories and create compelling visual content.

To make the learning more practical and engaging, Mr. Virmani showcased excerpts from some of his documentaries, demonstrating how effective camera positioning and framing can significantly enhance visual storytelling and news coverage. The workshop also included hands-on training sessions where participants learned practical camera operations and gimbal handling techniques.

The faculty members actively interacted with the expert, discussing several technical aspects related to media production and journalism. The session concluded with an enriching exchange of ideas, and the faculty expressed their gratitude to Mr. Virmani for sharing his valuable industry insights and practical knowledge.

The event was followed by an interactive podcast session with Mr. Virmani. The podcast highlighted his inspiring journey from being a dedicated media professional to becoming the Founder and CEO of Vii Media 24x7 News Channel. The session was attended by the faculty members of the BVICAM, who discussed key issues concerning the challenges faced by the media industry, the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence, and the future of journalism and media. It is noteworthy that Bharati Vidyapeeth's Institute of Computer Applications and Management has recently signed an MoU with Vii Media to collaborate on innovative activities, workshops, media training programs, and industry exposure initiatives for journalism and media students.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. M. N. Hoda, Director, BVICAM stated that the partnership aims to bridge the gap between academics and the real media industry by creating meaningful opportunities for aspiring journalists and media professionals.

## Cinema shapes political thought and nationalist discourse: Dr. Ram Pravesh Rai

Dr. Priyanka Singh,  
BT | New Delhi

The 214th National Webinar, jointly organised by Communication Today and Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Computer Application and Management (BVICAM), featured an in-depth and thought-provoking discussion

played a decisive role in shaping political discourse and influencing public debates in democratic societies.

He further stated that themes such as nationalism, warfare, national security, cultural identity and social justice are frequently portrayed in films in ways that directly impact public opinion and collective

214<sup>th</sup> National Webinar

**Nationalism and Political Narratives in Cinema**

Friday  
15<sup>th</sup> May  
2026

Link to Login: <https://bvicam.webex.com/meet/Webinar>

Eminent Speaker

Prof Ram Pravesh Rai

Department of New Media  
Central University of Himachal Pradesh,  
Dharamshala

on the theme "Nationalism and Political Narratives in Cinema" on May 15, 2026.

Delivering the keynote address, Ram Pravesh Rai said cinema should not merely be viewed as a medium of entertainment, but as a powerful ideological and cultural force capable of influencing political thought, social values and national identity. He observed that films do not simply narrate stories; rather, they actively construct social norms, political perspectives, power structures and nationalist sentiments.

Referring to examples from mainstream Hindi cinema, Dr Rai explained that films often reflect four significant political viewpoints- the perspective of the ruling establishment, the voice of the opposition, the interests of pressure groups and the sentiments of the common public. According to him, cinema has historically

consciousness. Stressing the importance of critical engagement with cinema, Dr Rai remarked that audiences must learn not merely to "watch" films, but also to "read" and interpret them critically in order to understand the deeper ideological narratives embedded within cinematic texts.

Expressing concern over the declining culture of serious film criticism, he observed that intellectual engagement with cinema has weakened considerably in recent years.

Contemporary audiences, he noted, increasingly depend on social media trends, online ratings and viral reactions rather than informed criticism and analytical discussion to evaluate films. This shift, according to him, has reduced meaningful public discourse surrounding cinema as a medium of social and political communication.

## AI transforming content creation across media industries- Dr Paramveer Singh

Dr. Priyanka Singh,  
BT | New Delhi

The 215th National Webinar, jointly organised by Communication Today and Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Computer Application and Management (BVICAM), featured an insightful and highly engaging discussion on the theme "AI Tools for Content Creation." The webinar formed part of the continuing academic webinar series dedicated to exploring emerging trends in media, communication and digital technologies.

Delivering the keynote address, Paramveer Singh stated that Artificial Intelligence has rapidly become an integral component of media production and digital

storytelling. He observed that AI tools are revolutionising script writing, blog creation, video production, graphic designing, podcast generation, animation and multimedia storytelling. According to him, AI not only accelerates content production but also enhances audience engagement, personalization and creative experimentation.

Dr Singh emphasised that media professionals and students must continuously upgrade their technological skills to remain relevant in the evolving communication ecosystem. He elaborated upon a wide range of AI-powered applications and platforms used in media production, including Jasper AI and Descript for automated script writing

AI Tools for Content Creation

Tuesday  
19<sup>th</sup> May  
2026

Link to Login: <https://bvicam.webex.com/meet/Webinar>

Eminent Speaker

Dr Paramveer Singh

Professor  
Department of Mass Communication and New Media  
Central University of Jammu  
Rahya-Suchani (Bagla), District - Samba (J&K)

and content generation. He also discussed AI-assisted video editing applications featuring background music, subtitles and voiceover support.

In the field of audio production and podcasting, Dr Singh highlighted the growing relevance of tools such as Adobe Audition and Suno AI for sound design and AI-generated music creation. He further

introduced participants to graphic designing and animation platforms including Canva, Adobe Firefly and AI-supported 3D software applications, explaining how these technologies are reshaping visual storytelling and creative production workflows.

While discussing the advantages of AI-driven technologies, Dr Singh also stressed the importance

of responsible and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence. He cautioned that despite offering immense creative possibilities, AI simultaneously raises serious concerns relating to misinformation, deepfake content, copyright violations and declining originality in media production. According to him, digital media literacy has become essential in the present era, and technology should support human creativity rather than replace authenticity, critical thinking and ethical responsibility.

Providing a broader perspective on the theme, Sanjeev Bhanawat remarked that Artificial Intelligence has significantly transformed journalism, broadcasting, advertising, filmmaking and digital communication.



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## Govt. clarifies on rumours about monetisation of gold held by temples

**BT Sources**

The Government on May 19, 2026 dismissed reports and social media rumours claiming that it plans to monetise gold owned by temples and religious

The Ministry also denied reports claiming that gold plates installed on temple towers, doors, or other temple structures would be classified as “Strategic Gold Reserves of



institutions across the country, calling the claims completely false and misleading.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Finance clarified that there is no proposal under consideration to issue gold bonds in exchange for temple gold reserves, nor has any scheme been approved for monetising gold held by temples.

The clarification came after several media reports and social media posts suggested that temple gold could be included under a government-backed monetisation programme.

India.” It described such claims as entirely baseless and without factual basis.

The Government urged citizens not to believe or spread rumours or unverified information, stating that such misinformation creates unnecessary confusion and can mislead the public.

It further advised people to rely only on official announcements issued through authorised government channels, adding that any future policy decision or government scheme would be communicated through official press releases, government websites, and verified public platforms.

## President Murmu honours North-East artisans and weavers

**BT Sources**

A group of artisans and weavers from the North-Eastern states met the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on May 19, 2026.

pottery items, and artisans from Sikkim produced goods made from natural fibres.

During the interaction, the artisans and weavers shared their experiences of contributing to

cultural traditions. She stressed the importance of supporting artisans and weavers so that their traditional knowledge and skills can reach wider audiences and help them achieve self-reliance.



These artisans and weavers had contributed to the preparation of the invitation kits and highlighted the rich artistic and cultural traditions of North-East India during the ‘At Home’ Reception held on January 26, 2026. Artisans from Nagaland crafted baskets using banana fibre and bamboo, while weavers from Assam designed traditional stoles. Craftspeople from Manipur created black

the Republic Day reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan and thanked the President for giving them an opportunity to showcase their craftsmanship on a national platform.

Addressing representatives from Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the President praised the North-East for its immense natural beauty and vibrant

The President also appreciated their efforts in preserving India’s cultural heritage and described them as custodians of the nation’s living traditions. She encouraged them to pass on these valuable art forms and skills to future generations.

Following the meeting, the artisans and weavers were taken on a guided tour of Rashtrapati Bhavan, including the famous Amrit Udyan.

## Centre accelerates Brahmaputra development as economic and connectivity corridor in Northeast

**BT Sources**

The Union Government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is intensifying efforts to transform the Brahmaputra River into a major economic and connectivity corridor for the Northeast, with Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal leading an integrated strategy focused on transport, trade, tourism and sustainable river management.

The initiative was reviewed during the High Powered Review Board (HPRB) meeting of the Brahmaputra Board held in Guwahati on May 19, 2026. Ministers, technical experts and representatives from northeastern states discussed measures to strengthen scientific river basin planning, flood control and sustainable utilisation of water resources across the region. The meeting also highlighted the need for greater coordination among basin states and the use of modern technologies such as GIS



mapping, LiDAR surveys and hydrological modelling.

Addressing the meeting, Sonowal said the government views the Brahmaputra not merely as a river but as a strategic national asset capable of driving economic growth and regional connectivity in the Northeast. He noted that the Inland Waterways Authority of India is working to fully develop the Brahmaputra, designated as National Waterway-2 (NW2), as a key inland transport corridor linking Assam and other northeastern states to the ports of

Kolkata and Haldia through the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route. According to the minister, infrastructure projects worth nearly ₹751 crore have already been completed in Assam, including terminals at Pandu, Dhubri and Jogighopa, along with floating jetties and upgraded shore facilities. Projects worth more than ₹1,100 crore are currently underway, covering fairway development on the Brahmaputra, ship repair facilities, tourist jetties and a Regional Centre of Excellence in Dibrugarh.

Sonowal also welcomed the Centre’s decision to launch the State Water Reforms Framework aimed at promoting sustainable water governance and reform initiatives across states.

He stressed that the development of the Brahmaputra requires an integrated river development strategy combining flood management, erosion control, dredging and infrastructure expansion to ensure year-round navigability and long-term economic growth. He added that the adoption of modern digital monitoring and GIS-based planning systems would help create efficient and environmentally sustainable waterways while preserving the ecological balance of the region.

The government is additionally planning future projects worth nearly ₹4,800 crore across the Northeast. These include community jetties, cargo vessels, dredgers and cruise terminals aimed at improving

last-mile connectivity, boosting logistics efficiency and creating employment opportunities in riverine areas.

At the policy level, the Brahmaputra Board is being repositioned as a technology-driven river basin organisation with digital governance systems, data-based project monitoring and the strengthening of research institutions such as the North Eastern Hydraulic and Allied Research Institute.

The Centre also sees the Brahmaputra as an important component of its Act East Policy by enhancing regional trade and cross-border connectivity. Inland waterways are being promoted as a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternative to road and rail transport, helping reduce congestion, fuel consumption and emissions.

Since 2014, inland water transport in India, especially in the Northeast, has expanded significantly under the Modi



सीधा, सटीक और निष्पक्ष

# भारती News

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## PM Modi Calls India and Nordic nations 'Natural Partners' at Oslo Summit

**BT Sources**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 19, 2026 described India and the Nordic countries as “natural partners” connected through shared democratic values, respect for the rule of law and a common commitment to multilateral cooperation, while advocating stronger collaboration in trade, green technology, innovation and global peace initiatives.

Speaking during the joint press statement after the third India-Nordic Summit in Oslo, Modi thanked Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre for hosting the summit and welcomed the leaders of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. The summit focused on expanding cooperation in strategic sectors and deepening ties between India and the Nordic region.

Highlighting the growing partnership, Modi said trade between India and Nordic countries has nearly quadrupled over the past decade, while investments from Nordic nations into India have risen by almost 200 per cent during the same period. He noted that the expanding economic engagement has supported India’s growth and also generated employment



opportunities within Nordic economies.

The Prime Minister said recent trade agreements, including the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the EFTA nations — which include Norway and Iceland — along with the proposed India-European Union Free Trade Agreement involving Denmark, Finland and Sweden, are expected to open a new phase in India-Nordic relations.

Modi also announced that India and the Nordic countries have agreed to develop their relationship into a Green Technology and Innovation

Strategic Partnership.

Under this framework, India will cooperate with Iceland in geothermal energy and fisheries, partner with Norway in areas such as the blue economy and Arctic collaboration, and work with Nordic countries in maritime development and sustainability initiatives.

The Prime Minister further identified opportunities for joint work in advanced manufacturing, defence, telecommunications, digital technologies, cybersecurity and health technology by combining Nordic innovation with India’s scale and skilled workforce.

## Taiwan Travelogue wins 2026 International Booker Prize

**BT Sources**

Taiwan Travelogue by Taiwanese author Yáng Shung-z won the 2026 International Booker Prize, becoming the first work translated from Mandarin Chinese to receive the prestigious literary honour awarded annually for fiction translated into English. The award also marks a historic achievement for author Yáng Shung-z and translator Lin King, who became the first Taiwanese and Taiwanese-American recipients of the prize. The pair will share the £50,000 award, equivalent to nearly 67,000 US dollars.

Judges praised the novel as a “captivating” and “subtly sophisticated” work. The book, which previously won the 2024 National Book Award for translated literature, is presented as a fictional rediscovered travel memoir set in Japanese-occupied Taiwan during the 1930s. The story follows two central characters on a culinary journey across Taiwan while exploring themes of identity, colonialism and human relationships.

Natasha Brown, chair of the judging panel, described the novel as both a compelling romance and a sharp postcolonial narrative, saying it successfully

balances emotional depth with historical and political insight. The winning title was selected from 128 submissions sent by publishers, with six books

Taiwan  
Travelogue

Yáng Shuāng-zī



“Hold on. What’s going on here?” I couldn’t help but voice the thought out loud. For, in that moment, I seemed to have been transported back into the midst of Shōkyokusai Tenkatsu’s Magic Troupe. I’d crossed paths with Tenkatsu’s troupe long ago, before I’d started high school. They had been on tour, and on the day they arrived in Nagasaki, my aunt Kikuko and I happened upon the opening parade.  
Translated by Lin King

ultimately making the final shortlist.

Other shortlisted titles included The Nights Are Quiet in Tehran by Shida Bazyar, On Earth As It Is Beneath by Ana Paula Maia, The Witch by Marie NDiaye, The Director by Daniel Kehlmann, and She Who Remains by Rene Karabash.

Each shortlisted author and translator will receive £5,000, to be shared between them.

The 2025 International Booker Prize was awarded to Heart Lamp by Banu Mushtaq, a collection of stories centred on the lives of girls and women in South Indian Muslim communities.

## PM Modi receives Norway’s highest civilian honour during Oslo visit

**BT Sources**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded Norway’s highest civilian honour for foreign heads of government, the Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, by King Harald V during a special ceremony in Oslo on Monday. The recognition marks the 32nd international honour received by Modi during his tenure as Prime Minister.

The award was presented during Modi’s two-day visit to Norway as part of his five-nation foreign tour. The Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit is conferred in recognition of exceptional service in the interests of Norway and humanity.

Expressing gratitude to King Harald V and the people of Norway, Modi dedicated the honour to the longstanding friendship between India and Norway. He described the award as a reflection of the trust, goodwill and close ties shared by the people of both nations, adding that it would further

strengthen future cooperation and friendship.

In a message posted on X, the Prime Minister said the honour belonged to the people of India and symbolised the shared commitment of India and Norway



towards global progress.

The Ministry of External Affairs termed the award a “special gesture of friendship” from Norway. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the honour was conferred in recognition of Modi’s leadership and his contribution to strengthening India-Norway relations.

Established in 1985 by King Olav V, the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit is awarded to Norwegian and foreign citizens for distinguished service to Norway and humanity.

## Heavy rain and floods claim lives across China, several missing

**BT Sources**

Severe rainfall and flooding have caused widespread destruction



across several regions of China, leaving at least 12 people dead and several others missing, according to state media reports. The worst-affected areas include the provinces of Hunan, Hubei and Guizhou.

In Hunan province in central China, torrential rain led to severe flooding in Shimen County, where five people lost their lives

and 11 others remain missing. Rescue and relief operations are continuing in the affected

from inundated areas. Officials confirmed that three people died in the province, while four others

are still missing. In southwestern Guizhou province, heavy rains and floods claimed four lives and left five people unaccounted for. Floodwaters damaged roads, submerged homes and disrupted communication services in several localities. More than 3,700 residents have been moved to temporary relief shelters as rescue efforts continue.



## Question of Accountability

The now-viral exchange between Narendra Modi and Norwegian journalist Helle Lyng in Oslo was not merely an awkward diplomatic moment. It reopened an unresolved debate at the centre of Indian democracy: should political authority remain insulated from unscripted public questioning?

During the May 2026 media interaction alongside Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, Lyng asked why Mr. Modi did not take questions from “the freest press in the world.” The Prime Minister did not respond and exited the venue, while later Indian officials strongly defended India’s democratic and constitutional framework.

The incident became globally significant because it aligned with a long-standing criticism of Mr. Modi’s communication style. Since becoming Prime Minister in 2014, he has rarely participated in open-ended press conferences. Even during international visits, media interactions have generally remained tightly managed. In contrast, former Prime Ministers such as Manmohan Singh regularly addressed press briefings, while archival references show Indira Gandhi taking questions during her 1983 Norway visit. The debate gained further intensity because of India’s declining position in the World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders. India ranked 151 in 2025 and reportedly slipped further to 157 in 2026, while Norway retained the top position globally. Yet the controversy also exposed deep polarisation within Indian media and public discourse. One section defended the Prime Minister, arguing that Western journalists selectively target India and ignore its democratic scale and diversity. Others viewed the Norwegian journalist’s question as legitimate and necessary in a democracy where accountability depends upon free questioning. Perhaps the larger concern is not whether one journalist asked a difficult question, but why such moments have become so rare that they instantly turn into national controversy. Democracies are strengthened not by avoiding uncomfortable questions, but by normalising them.

## Fuel Crisis Sparks Work-From-Home Push: PM Modi Urges India to Cut Fuel Consumption

Dr. Jaspreet Kaur  
Chandigarh University

Amid rising global crude oil prices and growing concerns over India’s fuel import bill, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged citizens and businesses to revive work-from-home (WFH) practices to help conserve fuel and reduce economic pressure on the country. Speaking during recent public events, PM Modi appealed to people to adopt Covid-era habits such as virtual meetings, online conferences, and remote work wherever possible. The move comes as tensions in West Asia continue to disrupt global oil supplies, leading to higher petrol and diesel prices across India.

On Thursday, India increased petrol and diesel prices by ₹3 per litre for the first time in nearly four years. According to reports, the price hike was triggered by surging international crude oil rates and supply disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz. Addressing the nation’s growing fuel concerns, Modi said reducing unnecessary travel and fuel consumption could help save

foreign exchange reserves and shield the economy from global

Industry experts believe that even partial adoption of remote work



instability. He also encouraged greater use of public transport, electric vehicles, and carpooling. The Prime Minister’s comments quickly sparked nationwide discussion, with “work from home” becoming one of the top trending topics online. Several companies have reportedly started reconsidering hybrid work policies to reduce commuting costs and fuel usage.

However, government sources later clarified that there is currently no official mandate requiring companies to implement compulsory work-from-home policies. Officials stated that the appeal was part of a broader call for voluntary fuel conservation and economic caution amid global uncertainty.

could significantly reduce fuel demand in major cities. Analysts have pointed out that during the COVID-19 lockdown period, India managed to save billions of dollars in crude oil imports due to reduced travel and transportation activity.

Meanwhile, opposition parties have criticized the recent fuel price hike, accusing the government of burdening common citizens with rising living costs. Despite the criticism, the Centre continues to emphasize energy conservation and self-reliance as key priorities during the ongoing global energy crisis. As fuel prices remain volatile, the debate over remote work, fuel savings, and economic sustainability is expected to continue in the coming weeks.

## How digital dependency is accelerating the rise of De Quervain’s Syndrome

Dr. Akanksha Tyagi &  
Dr. Kavita Semwal  
Chandigarh University

The rapid integration of smartphones, laptops, gaming devices, and digital technologies into everyday life has significantly transformed modern lifestyles. However, along with convenience and connectivity, excessive dependence on digital devices has also contributed to a growing increase in musculoskeletal disorders affecting the hand and wrist. Among these conditions, De Quervain’s Syndrome, also known as texting thumb, gamer’s thumb, or radial styloid tenosynovitis, has emerged as a major repetitive strain disorder associated with continuous thumb and wrist overuse.

De Quervain’s Syndrome is characterized by inflammation and irritation of the tendons responsible for thumb movement, particularly the abductor pollicis longus (APL) and extensor pollicis brevis (EPB) tendons. These tendons pass through the first dorsal compartment near the radial side of the wrist.

Repetitive hand and thumb movements cause friction and thickening of the tendon sheath,

leading to pain, swelling, tenderness, and restricted movement. Patients frequently complain of discomfort around the base of the thumb and wrist, especially during activities such as typing, scrolling on mobile phones, lifting objects, writing, or performing repetitive household and occupational tasks.



AI generated.

The disorder was once primarily observed among middle-aged individuals involved in manual labour. However, recent trends indicate a substantial rise in cases among younger populations due to prolonged smartphone usage, excessive gaming, continuous computer work, and poor ergonomic practices. Healthcare

professionals are increasingly identifying the condition among students, office workers, tailors, healthcare staff, musicians, and homemakers who perform repetitive hand-intensive activities for extended durations. Women are reported to be more commonly affected than men, particularly during pregnancy and the postpartum period,

when repetitive infant handling and hormonal changes may increase susceptibility to tendon irritation.

Clinically, De Quervain’s Syndrome is usually diagnosed through physical examination. One of the most reliable diagnostic procedures is the Finkelstein test, where

the patient flexes the thumb inside the fist while the wrist is deviated toward the little finger side, producing sharp pain over the radial wrist region. In addition to clinical assessment, imaging modalities such as ultrasonography and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are often used to confirm tendon inflammation and rule out other wrist pathologies. Ultrasonography is increasingly preferred because it is cost-effective, easily accessible, and capable of dynamically visualizing tendon movement and vascular changes without invasive procedures.

Early intervention plays a crucial role in preventing chronic pain and functional disability. Conservative management remains the primary treatment strategy and includes rest, ergonomic modification, activity restriction, thumb spica splinting, physiotherapy rehabilitation, cryotherapy, therapeutic ultrasound, tendon-gliding exercises, and soft tissue mobilisation techniques. Kinesiologic taping has also gained recognition as an effective conservative approach because it provides muscular

support, reduces swelling, and improves functional movement without significant side effects. Corticosteroid injections into the tendon sheath continue to provide effective short-term pain relief and reduction of inflammation in many patients. In severe or treatment-resistant cases, surgical decompression of the tendon compartment may be considered to restore tendon mobility and relieve pressure. Although surgery demonstrates high success rates, postoperative complications and dissatisfaction may occasionally occur.

Recent studies additionally emphasize the role of psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, and pain catastrophizing in worsening pain perception and functional limitations. As digital dependency continues to dominate modern lifestyles, healthcare experts stress the importance of ergonomic awareness, balanced technology use, regular stretching exercises, and early physiotherapy intervention to prevent the growing burden of De Quervain’s Syndrome and promote long-term wrist health.



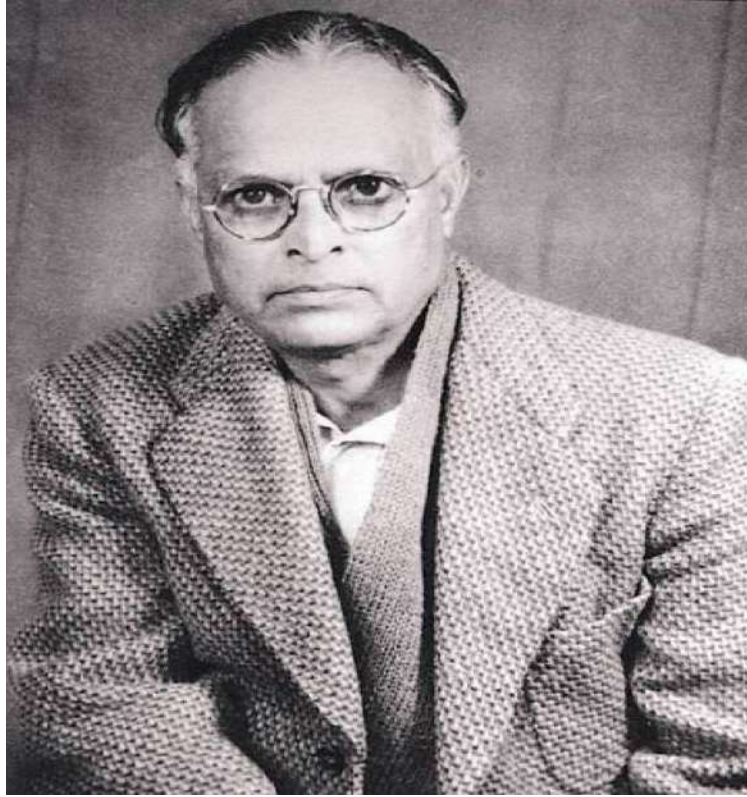
# R.K. Narayan from rejection to recognition

Shrikant Singh

Assistant Professor, BVICAM

The Indian novelist R.K. Narayan and the British literary figure Graham Greene share an unexpected connection that transformed the landscape of global literature:

In the 1930s, Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami was an aspiring English author who, ironically, had failed his university English examinations. His manuscripts faced repeated rejections from publishers, who deemed them “too simple.” Narayan entrusted his unpublished work to his friend, Kittu Purna, a student at Oxford. Purna succeeded in getting the raw manuscript into the hands of Graham Greene, who was already a prominent and celebrated novelist. Greene immediately recognized Narayan’s brilliance, understanding that he had created a rich literary universe previously unseen by the English-speaking audience. He compelled his own publishers to accept the book.



Importantly, Greene advised the author that his birth name was excessively lengthy for Western readers, shortening it to R.K. Narayan.

This pivotal moment led to the release of his first book, *Swami and Friends*, in 1935, which introduced the iconic town of Malgudi, a lasting symbol of Indian cultural nostalgia.

Although they corresponded

for decades, they met for the first and only time in 1956 in London. At that time, Narayan was in the process of writing his renowned work, *The Guide*. Greene provided him with essential editorial guidance, suggesting that the protagonist, Raju, should perish at the conclusion of the narrative—an insight that significantly influenced what would become

a masterpiece of global literature.

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan (1906–2001) is regarded as a foundational figure in Indian English literature, celebrated for embedding ordinary Indian experiences within the global literary consciousness. His brilliance resided in his ability to explore intricate human conditions through a clear, unpretentious prose style that concealed profound psychological and social insights.

At the core of Narayan’s literary universe lies Malgudi, a fictional town in South India that reflects the entirety of human existence. Malgudi functions as a living entity where the traditional, leisurely ancient world intersects with the tumultuous forces of modern advancement, creating an ideal environment for his characters. Narayan’s narrative landscape is filled not with conventional epic heroes, but with everyday people—struggling educators, street vendors, quirky financial analysts, and restless schoolboys like Swami.

His significant breakthrough occurred in 1935 with the publication of *Swami and Friends*, a success facilitated by British novelist Graham Greene, who served as his lifelong mentor and introduced his work to global publishers. Narayan’s unequivocal masterpiece, *The Guide* (1958), chronicles the moral transformation of Raju from a corrupt tour guide to an unintentional, widely revered holy figure—a narrative decision that garnered him India’s esteemed Sahitya Akademi Award.

Marked by gentle irony, profound humanism, and an unwavering refusal to morally judge his flawed characters, Narayan’s oeuvre encapsulates the authentic rhythm of Indian life without ever yielding to exoticism. Through timeless works such as *The Vendor of Sweets* and the highly acclaimed broadcast adaptation *Malgudi Days*, Narayan demonstrated that the most deeply universal truths are frequently found embedded within the local, everyday nuances of ordinary existence.

## Oil Wars and Economic Tremors: The Global Impact of the US-Israel-Iran Conflict

Dr. Kapil Sharma  
Chitkara University

The escalating tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran are creating serious concerns for the global economy, particularly in the energy sector. Although a full-scale war has not officially been declared, recent military actions, sanctions, and rising instability in the Middle East indicate the possibility of a wider regional conflict with worldwide consequences.

The biggest concern emerging from the crisis is the rising fuel shortage and increasing oil prices. Iran’s strategic position near the Strait of Hormuz — a route through which a significant portion of global oil passes — makes the region extremely important for international energy security. Any disruption in this area directly impacts global oil supply and transportation costs.

Recent developments have already pushed crude oil and fuel prices upward, increasing inflation across several countries. Higher fuel costs affect transportation, manufacturing, agriculture, and aviation industries, eventually

increasing the prices of daily consumer goods. Experts fear that prolonged conflict may lead the world economy toward stagflation, where inflation rises while economic growth slows down.

Developing countries such as India are particularly vulnerable because of their heavy dependence on imported crude oil. Rising oil prices may increase fiscal pressure, weaken currencies, and reduce purchasing power among consumers. At the same time, the crisis may encourage nations to invest more aggressively in renewable energy and electric mobility.

The conflict also threatens global trade routes and investor confidence. Shipping costs, insurance charges, and supply-chain disruptions are already increasing. If diplomatic efforts fail, the world may witness a prolonged economic crisis similar to earlier oil shocks.

In the long run, peace and diplomatic engagement remain the only sustainable solutions to prevent economic instability and a severe global fuel crisis.

Dr. Yasir Arfat  
BVICAM, New Delhi

The emergence of the so-called “Cockroach National Party” as a symbol of online dissent may appear frivolous at first glance. Yet, dismissing it merely as internet satire would mean overlooking a deeper shift in the language of protest, particularly among younger generations. In an era shaped by digital culture, irony and symbolism are increasingly replacing conventional political expression.

The trend underlines an important reality: Gen Z is politically aware, but often unwilling to engage through traditional methods. Their protests are layered in humour, memes, coded messages and unconventional imagery. What may seem absurd to older political establishments often carries sharp commentary on governance, inequality and public frustration. The use of a cockroach — an insect associated with survival under hostile conditions — is unlikely to be accidental. Symbols emerge from collective emotions, and they usually reflect anxieties that formal political discourse

fails to address.

The government’s reported action against the “Cockroach National Party” may temporarily curb its visibility, but bans rarely eliminate the sentiments that give rise to such movements. History repeatedly demonstrates that suppressing symbols does not dissolve discontent. It merely compels dissent to reappear in new forms, often more creative and more difficult to regulate. When people feel unheard, they seek alternative ways to communicate their dissatisfaction.

What is particularly significant is the changing nature of political participation. Younger citizens no longer separate entertainment, culture and politics into distinct spaces. Social media has blurred these boundaries. A meme can become a campaign; satire can become resistance. Digital movements gain traction not because they possess formal organisational structures, but because they resonate emotionally with large sections of society.

The appearance of unusual protest symbols should therefore

be viewed less as a threat and more as an indicator of public mood. Democracies must possess the confidence to tolerate uncomfortable expression, even when it arrives wrapped in humour or absurdity. Excessive attempts to police symbolic protest risk deepening alienation among young citizens who already perceive institutions as distant and unresponsive.

The larger issue is not whether one satirical movement survives or disappears. It is whether political systems are prepared to understand why such expressions are gaining relevance. Public frustration does not vanish through prohibition. If one channel is closed, another inevitably opens.

The “Cockroach National Party” may fade as a passing trend. But the anxieties, scepticism and dissatisfaction that produced it are unlikely to disappear so easily. In democratic societies, unusual protests are often early warnings of deeper unease. Ignoring them would be a mistake; understanding them would be wiser.



## India reaffirms commitment to Universal Health Coverage at World Health Assembly

BT Sources

Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda reiterated India's commitment to universal healthcare,

Arogya Mandir centres have been made operational across the country, providing comprehensive primary healthcare services at the grassroots

partnership between the two nations and discussed cooperation in digital healthcare, including telemedicine services. India also expressed



digital health transformation and global cooperation in the health sector while addressing the 79th World Health Assembly in Geneva. Speaking on the theme "Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility," Nadda outlined India's achievements in expanding healthcare access through a coordinated whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach aimed at achieving Universal Health Coverage.

The minister informed delegates that more than 1.85 lakh Ayushman

level. He also highlighted the progress of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, stating that the initiative has helped build a robust national digital health ecosystem by generating over 880 million unique digital health IDs, enabling seamless access to longitudinal health records and integrated healthcare services. On the sidelines of the Assembly, Nadda held discussions with Bhutan's Health Minister Lyonpo Tandin Wangchuk and reaffirmed India's "Neighbourhood First" policy. Both leaders reviewed the strong bilateral

readiness to share best practices and explored the possibility of expanding access to affordable medicines in Bhutan through Jan Aushadhi Kendra outlets.

Nadda also met Nepal's Health Minister Neesha Mehta and congratulated her on assuming office. During the meeting, both sides recalled the longstanding civilisational and cultural ties between India and Nepal and expressed confidence in further strengthening bilateral cooperation in the health sector.

## India's renewable energy sector likely to attract up to \$120 billion investment

BT Sources

India's renewable energy industry is projected to attract investments worth 110 to 120 billion dollars in the coming years, primarily driven by the rapid expansion of solar and wind energy projects, according to a report released by Colliers India on Wednesday.

The report stated that the planned increase in solar and wind power capacity by 2030 could generate a business opportunity of nearly 10 to 15 billion dollars in land aggregation and acquisition activities. The expansion is being supported by the government's clean energy goals and its long-term commitment towards achieving net-zero emissions.

According to the report, India's current renewable energy capacity stands at 251 gigawatts (GW), while an additional 270 to 300 GW of solar and wind energy capacity is expected to be added by the end of the decade.

Chief Executive Officer of Colliers India, Badal Yagnik, said the renewable energy sector is entering a new phase of accelerated growth due to the large-scale addition of clean energy capacity.

He noted that the expansion is

expected to create significant opportunities for the real estate sector, especially in areas such as land acquisition, industrial infrastructure and warehousing.

The report added that the growth of renewable energy projects would not only support India's decarbonisation efforts but also contribute to the development of new industrial corridors and investment hubs across the country.

It further observed that non-fossil fuel energy sources, including renewable and nuclear energy, currently account for 51 per cent of India's installed electricity generation capacity. Combined with increasing domestic manufacturing capabilities, this places India in a strong position to achieve its target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based power capacity by 2030.

The study pointed out that land acquisition and aggregation generally account for around 10 to 12 per cent of the total cost of solar and wind power projects.

In the case of solar energy developments, land is usually acquired either by private developers or by central and state agencies for large solar parks.

## Centre issues heatwave advisory as temperatures soar across North India

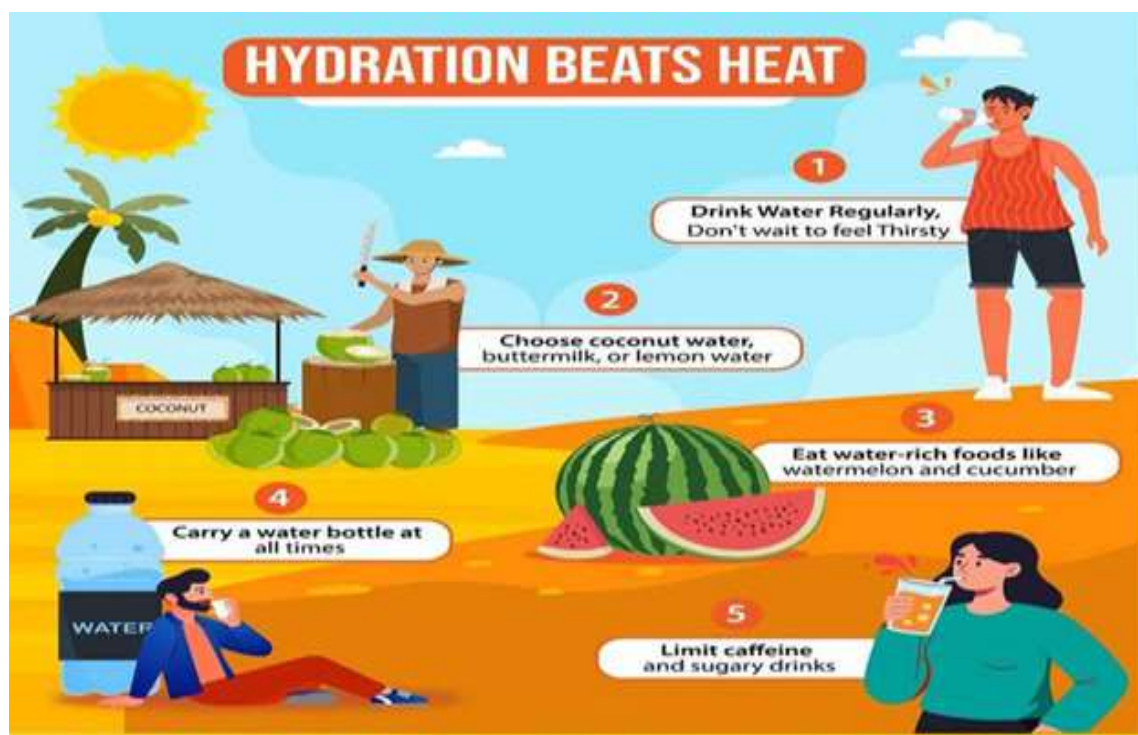
BT Sources

Amid escalating temperatures and severe heatwave conditions in several regions of the country, the Ministry of Ayush, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has released a detailed public health advisory to help people stay safe during extreme summer conditions.

The advisory follows forecasts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), which predicted intense heat and dry weather across Delhi-NCR and many northern and central states until May 23. Temperatures in the National Capital Region are expected to reach nearly 45 degrees Celsius.

The IMD had also issued a yellow alert for May 19 and 20, cautioning residents about possible heatwave conditions and advising them to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day.

According to weather forecasts, Delhi's temperature may rise by another 2 to 3 degree Celsius over the next few days. Although partly cloudy skies, thunderstorms and gusty winds of 20-30 kmph could



Temperatures in the National Capital Region are expected to reach nearly 45 degrees Celsius.

provide temporary relief, daytime temperatures are still likely to remain close to 44 degrees Celsius. Clearer skies later in the week may further intensify the heat.

States such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Chhattisgarh are also expected to face heatwave conditions in the coming days.

The advisory outlines preventive measures for the public, vulnerable groups, employers,

workers and people participating in outdoor events and sports activities. Citizens have been urged to stay hydrated, avoid direct sunlight during peak hours, wear loose cotton clothing and consume seasonal fruits along with electrolyte-rich drinks.

Special caution has been advised for infants, children, pregnant women, senior citizens, outdoor labourers and individuals suffering from chronic illnesses such as heart disease and

hypertension, as they are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses.

The guidelines also recommend workplace safety measures such as shaded rest spaces, frequent hydration breaks, gradual acclimatization for workers and awareness about symptoms of heat stress.

People have been asked to watch for warning signs including dizziness, headaches, nausea, dehydration, fainting, seizures

and confusion. The advisory describes heatstroke as a medical emergency and advises immediate contact with emergency helplines 108 or 102 in serious situations.

The Ministry has also included traditional wellness recommendations from Ayurveda, Siddha, Yoga, Unani and Homoeopathy systems to help people cope with extreme heat.

Ayurveda recommends cooling foods and drinks such as buttermilk, coconut water, lemon beverages and traditional preparations like Nimbukaphala Panaka, Amra Prapanaka and Chinchapanaka for maintaining body temperature.

Siddha and Yoga practices encourage cooling drinks, breathing techniques such as Sheetal Pranayama and light yoga exercises to ease heat stress. The Unani system suggests herbal cooling remedies and traditional drinks to prevent dehydration and sunburn.

The advisory additionally recommends including water-rich foods such as cucumber, watermelon, lime, musk melon, ash gourd and tomatoes in daily meals during the summer season.



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## Google says over 8.5 million developers are using its AI models monthly

Dr. Saheb Kumar, BT

US technology company Google, owned by Alphabet Inc., has said that more than 8.5 million developers are now creating applications and digital experiences every month using its artificial intelligence models, according to CEO Sundar Pichai. Speaking about the company's expanding AI infrastructure, Pichai said Google's capital expenditure is expected to reach nearly 190 billion dollars this year, with significant investments directed towards AI data centres, custom silicon chips and model training capabilities.

He noted that demand for Google's AI ecosystem continues to grow rapidly among developers, enterprises and consumers worldwide.

The California-based company said its AI model APIs are currently processing nearly 19 billion tokens every minute. It also revealed that more than 375 customers of Google Cloud processed over one trillion tokens each during the past year.

Pichai highlighted the increasing popularity of Google's AI-powered products, stating that the



Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google

Gemini application has crossed 900 million monthly active users, more than double its user base from the previous year. Google's AI-driven search features are also seeing strong growth, with AI Overviews reaching over 2.5 billion monthly users and AI Mode crossing one billion monthly active users.

The company unveiled several new AI products and upgrades, including Gemini 3.5 Flash, a faster AI model designed for coding and workflow tasks, and Gemini Spark, a personal AI assistant capable of performing

tasks on behalf of users.

Google also announced improvements to its AI infrastructure through its latest generation of Tensor Processing Units (TPUs), which are aimed at accelerating AI training and large-scale inference operations.

Reaffirming Google's AI-first approach, Pichai described artificial intelligence as a transformative technology capable of advancing the company's mission and improving lives globally.

Among other announcements, Google introduced "Ask YouTube," an AI-powered feature that allows users to locate specific moments within videos using conversational prompts, and "Docs Live," a tool that enables users to create and organise documents through voice commands.

The company further expanded its AI transparency efforts through SynthID, a watermarking system for AI-generated content. Google said several firms, including OpenAI, Kakao and ElevenLabs, are adopting the technology to help verify AI-generated images, videos and audio content.

## X introduces new daily limits for unverified accounts

BT Sources

X, formerly known as Twitter, has announced new daily usage limits for unverified accounts in an effort to improve platform stability and minimise technical disruptions.

The company said the updated measures are aimed at reducing strain on the platform's backend systems and preventing downtime and error-related issues.

According to details published on X's website, the new restrictions apply to posting activity, replies, direct messages and account following limits. The rules will be enforced across all access points, including mobile apps, web browsers, APIs and third-party applications connected to the platform.

Under the revised policy, unverified users will be permitted to publish up to 50 original posts and 200 replies per day. The company said these limits are also divided into smaller semi-hourly intervals to better regulate activity on the platform.

The direct messaging limit for unverified accounts has been set at 500 messages per day. Users will also be allowed to change

their registered email address up to four times within an hour.

For following activity, X said accounts can follow a maximum of 400 profiles daily. However, the company noted that additional safeguards remain in place to prevent excessive or aggressive following behaviour. The platform further clarified that accounts following more than



X, formerly known as Twitter

5,000 users will face additional ratio-based restrictions before they can add more accounts.

X also stated that API requests generated through third-party applications will count towards hourly API usage limits. As a result, users accessing multiple external services linked to X may reach their limits more quickly.

If users exceed the prescribed

## India targets \$1 trillion exports this year: Piyush Goyal

BT Sources

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on May 19, 2026 said India has set an ambitious target of achieving exports worth one trillion dollar this year and two trillion dollar within the next five years, describing it as a major milestone towards building an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Speaking at the launch of the website for the Bharatiya Vyapar Mahotsav in New Delhi, Goyal said India's exports have reached 863 billion dollars this year, registering nearly five per cent growth compared to the previous year despite global economic uncertainties and challenges.

The minister noted that both merchandise and services exports have recorded growth, calling it a significant achievement in the current international economic climate.

Highlighting India's economic progress, Goyal said the country continues to move forward rapidly despite global instability. He stressed that the determination to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 remains strong among

industries, traders and citizens, adding that no global force can prevent India from advancing toward its development goals.

He also pointed out that India's economy is steadily expanding alongside rising export performance.



Piyush Goyal, Union Commerce and Industry Minister

Goyal said the primary aim of the Bharatiya Vyapar Mahotsav is to encourage indigenous trade and help Indian goods and services gain greater reach both domestically and internationally.

The trade event, scheduled to be held from August 12 to 15 in New Delhi, is being organised jointly by the Confederation of All India Traders and the India Trade Promotion Organization with support from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

## North East Eri Silk and Kota Doria Fusion set to create premium handloom fabric

BT Sources

In a major initiative aimed at strengthening economic and cultural ties between India's North East and Rajasthan, Shri Sanjay Jaju, Secretary of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), along with Kota District Collector Shri Piyush Samaria and Shri Mara Kocho of the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHDC), visited the Kaithoon Common Facility Centre (CFC) in Kota on May 17, 2026.

The visit focused on exploring the possibility of integrating Eri silk — the renowned "peace silk" from the North East — with Rajasthan's famous Kota Doria fabric. The collaboration seeks to create an exclusive premium textile that blends the softness and richness of Eri silk with the lightweight, airy texture and transparent weave of Kota Doria. The proposed fabric is expected to appeal to both domestic and international luxury markets.

During the visit, the delegation



also met Om Birla at his residence in Kota. Accompanied by fashion designers from the region, the team briefed him on the proposed textile innovation and highlighted its potential to generate livelihood opportunities for artisans and weavers from both Rajasthan and the North Eastern states, while also enhancing India's handloom exports globally.

The initiative is likely to be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NEHDC and the District Industries Centre (DIC), Rajasthan Government. The agreement is expected to provide a structured framework for cooperation in areas such as product design, skill development, artisan training, and market access.

Eri silk, valued for its durability, warmth, and eco-friendly production process, is one of the flagship textiles of the North East. Kota Doria, a GI-tagged handloom fabric known for its signature checkered weave and breathability, represents Rajasthan's rich textile legacy. The fusion of these two traditional fabrics is expected to create a unique textile that combines heritage craftsmanship with contemporary fashion appeal. The initiative aligns closely with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 5F vision — "Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Fabric, Fabric to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign" — which promotes an integrated textile value chain connecting Indian farmers, artisans, manufacturers, and global markets.



# BHARATI TIMES

## (A Weekly News Digest)

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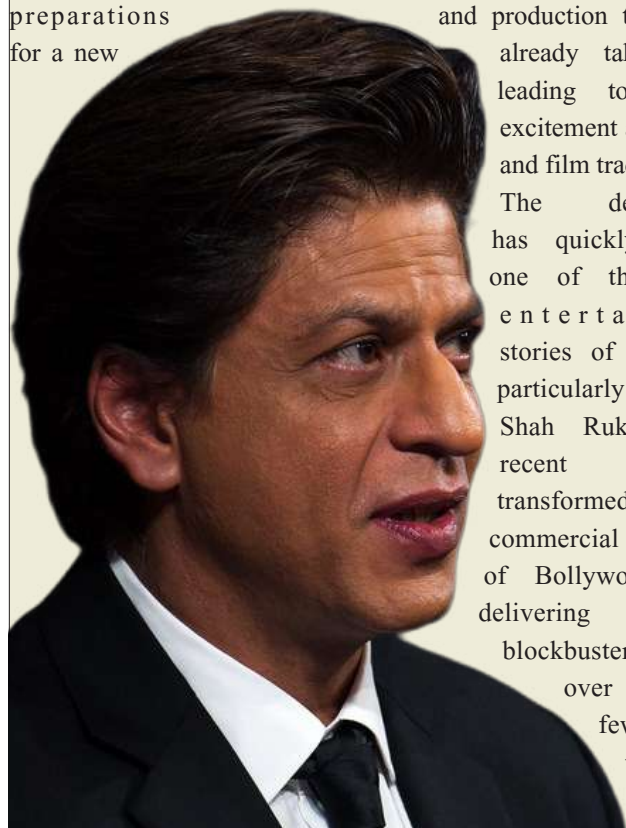


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## SRK begins preparations for next action thriller, fans await official announcement

Dr. Rinku Sethi, BT

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has once again become the centre of attention in the Hindi film industry after reports emerged that the actor has started preparations for a new



large-scale action thriller expected to begin production later this year. While the makers have not yet issued an official statement, industry insiders claim that multiple meetings between the actor, directors and production teams have already taken place, leading to growing excitement among fans and film trade experts. The development has quickly become one of the biggest entertainment stories of the week, particularly because Shah Rukh Khan's recent comeback transformed the commercial landscape of Bollywood. After delivering several blockbuster successes over the last few years, the actor

successfully reinvented himself as an action star capable of attracting audiences across India as well as international markets. Trade analysts believe producers are now increasingly investing in high-budget spectacles centred around established stars in an attempt to revive theatre business after the rapid growth of digital streaming platforms. According to reports circulating within the film industry, the upcoming project is expected to feature extensive action choreography, international shooting locations and advanced visual effects. Sources suggest that the film may also adopt a pan-India release strategy with dubbed versions in multiple regional languages, reflecting Bollywood's growing effort to reach audiences beyond traditional Hindi-speaking markets. Entertainment experts noted that Shah Rukh Khan's popularity continues to remain

unmatched despite changing audience trends and the arrival of younger actors. His ability to maintain strong fan engagement across generations has made him one of the most commercially valuable stars in Indian cinema. Marketing specialists believe any official announcement regarding the project could immediately dominate online conversations and create massive promotional momentum months before release. Social media activity surrounding the actor intensified this week after photographs and videos from private industry meetings surfaced online. Fans speculated about possible directors, co-stars and music composers associated with the project. Several entertainment portals also suggested that leading production houses are competing to collaborate with the actor due to his recent box-office success.

Ranbir's upcoming project fuels excitement among Bollywood audiences

BT Sources

Actor Ranbir Kapoor has become one of the biggest entertainment headlines this week after fresh updates emerged regarding his next major film project. Reports from the film industry suggest that the actor has begun intensive preparations for the role, including physical training and script workshops, as producers aim to develop another large-scale cinematic release. The project has generated strong interest because Ranbir Kapoor's recent films have performed successfully at the box office while also receiving positive critical response. Entertainment analysts believe the actor is currently among Bollywood's most reliable performers capable of attracting both multiplex audiences and mass-market viewers. According to trade reports, the upcoming film is expected to feature a combination of action, emotional drama and high-production visuals. Industry experts noted that Bollywood filmmakers are increasingly focusing on ambitious storytelling formats designed for theatrical spectacles and pan-India appeal.

## Deepika's next film creates buzz ahead of teaser release



BT Sources

Actor Deepika Padukone has returned to the spotlight this week after reports confirmed that the teaser of her upcoming film is expected to release soon. The announcement has generated strong anticipation among audiences and film trade circles, especially because the project is believed to feature a large-scale production backed by a prominent Bollywood studio. Entertainment industry observers believe Deepika Padukone remains one of the most influential female stars in Indian cinema, consistently balancing commercial success with critically appreciated performances. Her involvement in the upcoming project has therefore attracted significant curiosity regarding the film's genre, storyline and visual scale. According to media reports, the film is expected to combine action, drama and emotional

storytelling while targeting both domestic and international audiences. Industry experts noted that Bollywood producers are increasingly designing films with global market appeal, particularly after the international success of several Indian productions in recent years. Fans have actively discussed possible plot details and character information across social media platforms, contributing to growing online excitement before the teaser launch. Marketing experts believe early digital engagement has become an important promotional strategy for Bollywood films, often determining audience expectations months before release. The actor's professional choices have also been widely appreciated within the industry. Critics believe Deepika Padukone has successfully maintained a strong balance between star power and

## Alia's international appearance sparks discussion over global rise of Bollywood actors

BT Sources

Actor Alia Bhatt remained one of the most discussed names in the entertainment industry this week after her appearance at a major international fashion and entertainment event attracted widespread media coverage and online attention. Photographs, interviews and videos featuring the actor quickly circulated across social media platforms, with fans and entertainment commentators praising her growing global visibility and influence beyond Indian cinema. The event has once again highlighted the increasing international recognition of Bollywood actors in global entertainment and fashion industries. Industry experts believe Alia Bhatt represents a new generation of Indian celebrities who are successfully balancing mainstream cinema careers with global branding opportunities. Her presence at international platforms is being viewed as evidence of Bollywood's expanding cultural influence in overseas markets. Entertainment analysts noted that Alia Bhatt has steadily built an international image over the last few years through film collaborations, luxury fashion



Actor Alia Bhatt

endorsements and participation in global cultural events. Her appearances at international award ceremonies and fashion shows have contributed significantly to her visibility among global audiences unfamiliar with mainstream Hindi cinema. Several industry observers believe streaming platforms have played a crucial role in increasing worldwide accessibility to Indian films and actors. Social media reactions to her latest appearance remained largely positive throughout the week. Fans praised her confidence, fashion choices and interactions with international media representatives. Fashion critics described her appearance as elegant and strategically aligned with the growing trend of Indian celebrities becoming global ambassadors for luxury brands

and entertainment companies. The development also sparked broader discussions regarding the evolving identity of Bollywood stars. Unlike earlier decades when actors primarily focused on films within India, modern celebrities are increasingly expected to maintain strong international profiles through brand partnerships, digital engagement and cross-industry collaborations. Entertainment experts believe this transformation reflects both globalisation and the commercial expansion of Indian entertainment industries. Film trade specialists pointed out that actors such as Alia Bhatt are benefiting from changing audience preferences, where viewers across the world are becoming more open to international storytelling and diverse cinematic cultures.



# Jannik heads into French Open as new face of men's tennis

Dr. Rinku Sethi, New Delhi

With the French Open set to begin this week, World No. 1 Jannik Sinner has emerged as the strongest contender for the title after a remarkable run of form on the ATP circuit. The Italian star, who has steadily established himself among the elite players in world tennis, enters Roland Garros carrying both confidence and expectation as the sport witnesses a gradual transition into a new era.

Sinner's performances over the last few months have attracted widespread attention from tennis experts and fans alike. His aggressive baseline game, improved movement on clay courts and composure under pressure have made him one of the most consistent players on tour this season. Analysts believe the 24-year-old has significantly evolved from a



promising youngster into a mature title contender capable of dominating Grand Slam tournaments.

The spotlight on Sinner has intensified partly because several senior players are

dealing with fitness concerns and inconsistent form. Injuries have affected the preparations of some top-ranked competitors, creating an opportunity for younger players to assert themselves at the

highest level. In this changing landscape, Sinner appears to be leading the next generation of men's tennis.

Former players and commentators have praised the Italian's discipline and tactical awareness. Unlike many young players who rely purely on attacking instincts, Sinner has developed patience and defensive stability, qualities considered essential for success on the demanding clay courts of Paris. His ability to adapt to long rallies and maintain consistency during crucial moments has become one of the defining features of his game.

The upcoming tournament is also expected to carry symbolic importance for international tennis. For nearly two decades, the men's game was dominated by Novak Djokovic, Rafael

Nadal and Roger Federer. However, with Nadal absent and Djokovic nearing the final stages of his career, attention has shifted towards a younger group of players led by Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz.

Commercially too, Sinner's rise has been significant. Sponsors and tournament organizers view him as one of the future global ambassadors of the sport because of his calm personality and growing fan following across Europe and beyond. Tennis observers believe a strong performance at Roland Garros could further cement his position as the new face of men's tennis.

As the French Open begins, all eyes will remain on whether Sinner can handle the pressure of expectations and convert his recent consistency into another Grand Slam triumph.

## CSK crash out of IPL playoffs, questions rise over future strategy

BT Sources

Chennai Super Kings' disappointing IPL 2026 campaign came to an end this week after the franchise failed to qualify for the playoffs, triggering widespread discussion over the team's future direction and leadership structure. One of the most successful teams in Indian Premier League history, Chennai struggled for consistency throughout the season and eventually fell short in the race for the final playoff positions.

The team's elimination has become one of the biggest talking points in Indian cricket, particularly because of the emotional connection millions of fans share with the franchise and its long-time captain MS Dhoni. Chennai's campaign was marked by repeated batting collapses, inconsistent bowling performances and an inability to close out crucial matches during pressure situations.

Cricket experts observed that the team appeared heavily dependent on experienced players while several younger franchises adopted a more aggressive and athletic style of T20 cricket. Analysts pointed out that Chennai failed to adapt effectively to modern tactical demands, especially during high-scoring matches where power

hitting and quick fielding became decisive factors.

The future of MS Dhoni has once again become a major subject of debate following the team's early exit. Although the veteran wicketkeeper continues to command enormous respect within the cricketing world, speculation has intensified over whether IPL 2026 could mark the beginning of a transition phase for the franchise. Fans expressed mixed emotions across social media, with many urging Dhoni to continue while others called for the team to invest in rebuilding its core squad.

Injuries to important players further complicated Chennai's season. The bowling unit often struggled to contain opposition batters during the final overs, while the middle-order batting lineup failed to deliver consistent performances under pressure. Former cricketers noted that the absence of balance between experienced and emerging players weakened the team's ability to compete against younger opponents.

Despite the disappointing season, Chennai Super Kings remains one of the most popular and commercially successful teams in the league.

## Pep Guardiola confirms Manchester City exit, ending a historic era in English football

BT Sources

Pep Guardiola's announcement that he will leave Manchester City at the end of the season has sent shockwaves through the football world, marking the possible end of one of the most successful managerial eras in modern football. The Spanish coach, who transformed City into a dominant force in England and Europe, confirmed his decision amid growing speculation regarding his long-term future at the club.

Since arriving in Manchester, Guardiola has overseen a period of unprecedented success. Under his leadership, City won multiple Premier League titles, domestic



Pep Guardiola

cups and European honours while establishing a style of football admired across the world. His emphasis on possession-based play, positional discipline and tactical innovation redefined the standards of English club

football.

The announcement triggered emotional reactions from fans, players and former footballers, many of whom described Guardiola as one of the greatest managers in the history of the sport. Supporters gathered outside the Etihad Stadium shortly after reports emerged, paying tribute to the coach who helped elevate Manchester City into a global football powerhouse.

Several current and former players praised Guardiola's influence beyond trophies. Many credited him with improving their technical abilities, tactical understanding and professionalism.

## NY Knicks produce dramatic comeback to revive NBA title hopes

BT Sources

The New York Knicks delivered one of the most dramatic performances of the NBA playoffs this week, staging a remarkable comeback victory in the Eastern Conference Finals and reigniting hopes of a long-awaited championship run. Trailing by more than twenty points during the game, the Knicks recovered strongly in the second half to secure a memorable win that immediately became one of the defining

moments of the postseason.

The contest initially appeared to be slipping away from New York as defensive errors and missed scoring opportunities allowed their opponents to establish a commanding lead. The Knicks struggled to control the pace of the game during the opening quarters, with several players appearing frustrated under mounting playoff pressure. Basketball analysts believed the match could significantly damage the

team's confidence if the heavy deficit continued.

However, momentum shifted dramatically after halftime. The Knicks improved their defensive intensity, forced turnovers and capitalised on fast-break opportunities to gradually reduce the margin.

The team's energy inside the arena also changed as supporters responded loudly to every successful possession, creating an atmosphere that players later described as inspirational.

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