



Vehicles after an accident near Managuli village, in Vijayapura district, Karnataka. Six people died in a road accident



People look for their belongings amid charred debris after a fire broke out at a stone market at Kotla Mubarakpur area, in New Delhi



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann meets the people sitting on a dharna against BBMB in Nangal



Water cannons being used to disperse agitators during a protest march by the DYFI to the Enforcement Directorate office in Kochi

alloverindia



Music composer AR Rahman during the promotion of the upcoming film Thug Life, in Mumbai

ED searches at educational institutions linked to Karnataka Home Minister

**BENGALURU:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted searches at educational institutions linked to Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara at Tumakuru and on the outskirts of Bengaluru, official sources said. According to sources, the searches were conducted at Sri Siddhartha Medical College and Sri Siddhartha Institute of Technology in Tumakuru and Sri Siddhartha Institute of Medical Sciences in Nelamangala on the outskirts of Bengaluru. The reasons for the searches were officially not known. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Congress called it "vengeance politics" against a Dalit leader; while the opposition BJP and JD(S) have tried to link ED searches to the gold smuggling case involving Kannada actress Ranya Rao.

Six killed in road accident in Karnataka

**VIJAYAPURA (KARNATAKA):** Six people died and a 10-year-old boy was injured in a road accident after an SUV allegedly jumped the median and collided with a private bus in this district on Wednesday morning, police said. The deceased were identified as T Bhaskaran Manikanthan (36), a bank manager; his wife Pavithra (34); their son Abhiram (14); and daughter Jyotsana (12)—all residents of Gadiwal, Telangana—who were travelling in the SUV, police said. The SUV driver, Vikas Makani, and the bus driver, Basavaraj Rathor, also died in the accident, they added. Manikanthan's younger son, Praveen Tej, sustained injuries and is undergoing treatment. The accident occurred on National Highway 50 near Managuli village in Basavana Bagewadi taluk, police said.

UP couple facing opposition from families jump before train; man dies, lover loses legs

**BHADOHI (UP):** A man died while his lover lost both her legs after they jumped before a moving train here, a day after the two got married in a court against the wishes of their families, according to police. The refusal of their families to accept their marriage is what appears to have prompted the couple to take the extreme step, police said on Wednesday. The man was already married. "Rohit Kumar Yadav (28) and Kajal Gautam (24), both from Sonhar Mahua Patti, jumped in front of a train around 10 pm on Tuesday night near the Kandhiya railway crossing on the Bhadohi-Varanasi border," said Station House Officer, Chauri, Ramesh Kumar. According to eyewitnesses, the two were seen getting out of an autorickshaw and walking towards the railway track, about 100 metres away, the SHO said. While Yadav died on the spot, Gautam was rushed to Maharaja Balwant Singh Government Hospital in a critical condition, Kumar said.

Highway collapse and cracks on NH66 spark safety fears in Kerala

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/NEW DELHI:** The collapse of a section of the under-construction National Highway 66, the appearance of cracks in parts of the road, and soil slips in areas where hills were levelled for construction have raised public concern in central and northern Kerala following continuous rainfall. The incidents were reported from Thrissur, Malappuram, and Kannur districts. Kerala Public Works Department Minister P A Muhammed Riyas on Wednesday called the incidents "truly regrettable." E T Muhammed Basheer, a Lok Sabha member, said Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has assured a full investigation into the recent collapse of a section of NH66 at Kooriyad in Malappuram. The union minister's assurance came after the IUML Lok Sabha member met him in person in New Delhi on Wednesday and handed over a memorandum explaining the seriousness of the incident.

# Top Naxal leader Basavaraju killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

**PTI, NARAYANPUR (CHHATTISGARH):** In a significant breakthrough in the ongoing fight against Naxalism, security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region have killed Nambala Keshav Rao, widely known as Basavaraju, along with 26 other dreaded Maoists in a fierce encounter.

Hailing from Andhra Pradesh, Basavaraju was considered the top leader and ideological backbone of the Naxal movement. His death marks a pivotal success in anti-Naxal operations.

In his early 70s, Basavaraju held a B Tech degree and was known for orchestrating numerous deadly attacks on security forces. He carried a bounty of Rs 1 crore on his head in Chhattisgarh alone.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the security forces for their 'remarkable success', while Union Home



Nambala Kesava Rao alias Basavaraju, General Secretary of CPI (Maoist) and resident of Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh

Minister Amit Shah called it a 'landmark achievement' in the campaign to eradicate Naxalism.

The encounter began on Wednesday, two days after

the launch of a coordinated anti-Maoist operation in the dense forests of Abujmad — located at the tri-junction of Narayanpur, Bijapur, and Dantewada districts.

Reacting to the development, the Prime Minister wrote on social media: "Proud of our forces for this remarkable success. Our Government is committed to eliminating the menace of Maoism and ensuring a life of peace and progress for our people."

Home Minister Amit Shah emphasised the operation's

importance, highlighting that it marked the first time in three decades that a Maoist leader of General Secretary rank had been neutralised.

"A landmark achievement in the battle to eliminate Naxalism. Today, in an operation in Narayanpur, Chhattisgarh, our security forces have neutralised 27 dreaded Maoists, including Nambala Keshav Rao, alias Basavaraju," the home minister said.

Shah praised the bravery of security forces and further noted that since the completion of Operation Black Forest, 54 Naxalites have been arrested and 84 others have surrendered across Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.

He reiterated the government's goal to eliminate Naxalism by March 31, 2026.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai also praised the forces.

## Pilot reports emergency after hailstorm, lands Safely

**PTI, SRINAGAR:** A Srinagar-bound IndiGo flight from Delhi with more than 220 people on board experienced turbulence on Wednesday due to inclement weather, prompting the pilot to report the "emergency" to air traffic control at Srinagar. The aircraft later landed safely here and has been grounded, officials said.

Videos of the moments of turbulence have emerged on social media in which panic-stricken passengers could be heard making religious supplications as the plane swayed.

One passenger claimed that the nose of the plane was damaged but there was no official word on it.

"IndiGo flight 6E2142 enroute Delhi to Srinagar experienced bad weather (hail storm), emergency reported by Pilot to ATC SXR (Srinagar)," an official of the Airport Authority of India said here.

He said the flight landed safely at Srinagar at 6.30 pm.

## Delhi: Dust storm, rain hit air traffic, transport

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** A hailstorm accompanied by heavy rain with wind speed of 79 kmph lashed Delhi-NCR late Wednesday evening, causing tree felling, waterlogging and traffic jams in many areas, after the city endured a hot and humid day.

Flight operations were hit at the Delhi airport, while Metro passengers on the Yellow Line were stranded for hours.

"Our flight schedules are currently impacted due to the heavy rains and thunderstorm sweeping across Delhi, Chandigarh and Kolkata," IndiGo said in a post on X.

Air India, in a post on X, said rain and thunderstorms may disrupt flights to/from Delhi this evening. "Due to bad weather (thunderstorm with heavy rain) in Delhi (DEL), all departures/ arrivals and their consequential flights may get affected.

# India expels Pakistan high commission staffer; second case in a week

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** India on Wednesday expelled a Pakistani official working at the Pakistan high commission on charges of involvement in espionage, in the second such expulsion in a week, people familiar with the matter said.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the staffer at the Pakistan mission has been declared "persona non grata" for indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status and that he has been given 24 hours to leave India.

The charge d'affaires of the Pakistan high commission, Saad Warraich, was issued a demarche or a formal diplomatic protest on this issue, it said in a statement.

The charge d'affaires was asked to "strictly" ensure that none of the Pakistani diplomats or officials in



The diplomat was working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi

India misuse their privileges in any manner, the MEA said.

On May 13, India had expelled another Pakistani official for allegedly indulging in espionage.

Following India's action,

Pakistan had also expelled an Indian staffer posted at the Indian high commission in Islamabad.

India's expulsion of two staffers at the Pakistani high commission came as police in Punjab and Hary-

ana are carrying out an investigation into espionage activities linked to Pakistan.

At least three persons have been arrested so far in the case.

"The government of India has declared a Pakistani

official, working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, persona non grata for indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status in India," the MEA said in a statement this evening.

It said the official has been asked to leave India within 24 hours.

"The Charge d'Affaires, Pakistan High Commission, was issued a demarche to this effect today. He was asked to strictly ensure that none of the Pakistani diplomats or officials in India misuse their privileges and status in any manner," the MEA added.

Last week, Punjab Police said it arrested two persons including a woman for their alleged involvement in espionage activities linked to a Pakistani official posted at the Pakistani High Commission in Delhi.

## MAKING HAY WHILE HE CAN



A farm worker carries dry fodder on a bullock cart during a summer afternoon, in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh

## Sonia 'abused' her position to benefit herself, son: ED

**PTI, NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Sonia Gandhi "abused" her position as the then AICC president for personal gains to herself and her son Rahul Gandhi by converting public money for self use through the Young Indian (YI) company, the ED is understood to have alleged in its chargesheet filed in the National Herald case.

### NATIONAL HERALD CASE

Both the leaders, sources told PTI quoting the chargesheet, have told the federal probe agency during recording of their statements in this case a few

years back that they were "not aware" about the activities taking place at the YI and the Associated Journals Limited (AJL).

They are understood to have told the agency that all these affairs were taken care of by late Congress leader Motilal Vora as he was "empowered" to deal with the administrative and financial matters.

he ED has named 78-year-old former Congress president and Rajya Sabha MP Sonia Gandhi as accused no 1 and her son Rahul Gandhi (54) as accused no 2, apart from five others in the prosecution complaint filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

## Narlikar had planted saplings grafted from Newton's apple tree at his astro institute

**PTI, PUNE:** In a little-known tribute to scientific legacy, renowned astrophysicist Dr Jayant Narlikar had planted saplings grafted from Isaac Newton's legendary apple tree at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune during the mid-1990s.

Narlikar, one of the most distinguished astrophysi-

cists, passed away in Pune earlier on Tuesday at the age of 86.

His associates at IUCAA recall that the institute's courtyard features statues of Galileo, Einstein, Newton, and Aryabhata.

However, the statue of Newton stood incongruously beneath a banyan tree. This visual mismatch

prompted Narlikar to import saplings descended from Newton's original apple tree at Cambridge and plant them near the Newton statue.

Speaking to PTI in 2017, then IUCAA Director Somak Raychaudhury had said there were at least three attempts between 1997 and 2007 to grow the Newton

apple trees.

"Some were successful and even bore apples. But the last one died by 2007," Raychaudhury had said, attributing their short lifespan to Pune's rising temperatures.

Dr Raghunath Srianand, the current IUCAA director, recalled that one of the trees bore fruit, which was

shared among staff at the institute's canteen.

"We would cut the apples into small pieces so everyone could taste it," he said, adding that Himalayan apple trees have now replaced the originals.

"They are healthy, but haven't borne fruit yet."

Dr Ajit Kembhavi, noted astrophysicist and close as-

sociate of Narlikar, said IUCAA's campus was designed by renowned architect Charles Correa.

"It was during this phase that Dr Narlikar came up with the idea of planting a descendant of Newton's Apple Tree beneath his statue. I recall that one of the three trees did bear apples," he said.



Prof Richard Ellis with Jayant Narlikar as they planted authorised descendent of Newton's apple tree at IUCAA in late 1990s