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This monkey, found with an arrow lodged in its jaw, was rescued late on Sunday

# This savagery has to stop!

## Two more monkeys found with arrows lodged in their bodies in SGNP buffer zone; forest officials suspect planned hunting attempt

**Dipti Singh**  
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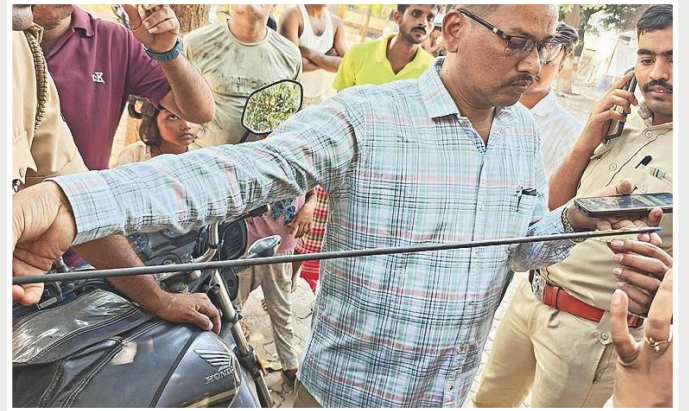
**M**onkeys have become the target of suspected hunters in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) buffer zone in Thane, with two bonnet macaques spotted with arrows lodged in their bodies on Sunday. One of the monkeys – that had an arrow piercing its jaw and passing out of its head – was rescued late in the evening.

The shocking cases came within 48 hours of a juvenile

monkey being rescued with an arrow lodged in its hip in the same location and reveals a pattern of deliberate attacks on the simians.

The monkey that was rescued on Sunday evening had fled during a rescue attempt earlier in the day, but the arrow had come out of its head at that time. The second monkey was spotted near a residential building in Thane with an arrow piercing its abdomen but has evaded capture so far.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 9**



A forester inspects the arrow dislodged from the monkey's head

# CUT, CLEAR, REPLANT: WAS BMC MANGROVE DRIVE AN EYEWASH?

## Activists claim the civic body chopped existing mangroves at Bhayander Creek and replanted the same stretch in the name of compensatory afforestation

**Sameer Surve**  
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**A** controversy has erupted over the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) mangrove compensation project at Bhayander Creek, with environmentalists alleging the exercise is a "systematic eyewash" rather than genuine ecological restoration.

The project involves planting 1.37 lakh mangroves as compensatory afforestation for trees removed for the Versova-Dahisar Coastal Road. Activists, however, claim that large portions of existing mangrove cover were first cleared, only to be replanted and presented as new plantation.

Activist Dhiraj Parab said satellite imagery spanning more than a decade raises serious red flags.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**



**Mangroves BMC planted 3 months back are 'dying'**  
Over 1 lakh mangroves were planted in Bhayander to compensate for 45,000 trees to be cut down for Versova-Dahisar Coastal Road

BMC claims to have planted 1.37 lakh mangroves at Bhayander Creek to make up for the trees that will be cut for the Versova-Dahisar Coastal Road; (left) Mirror's report on March 21

# IRAN WON'T STEP BACK

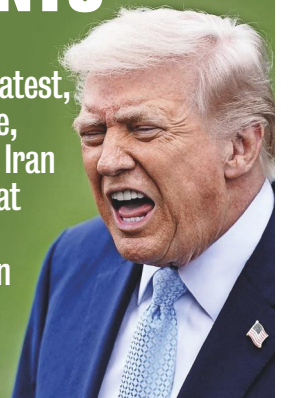
Pummelled by US-Israel, Iran's control of Hormuz gives it the power to ratchet up global economic pain



**P12**

# 'WE WILL OBLITERATE YOUR POWER PLANTS'

Donald Trump's latest, desperate, threat to Iran is aimed at opening Hormuz in 48 hours



**P13**

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**PAGE THAT** suspects gold prices drop only to remind you you still can't afford enough of it

SATYAJIT DESAI



## Let's play

Rohit Sharma was in the mood for some fun and games during a recent event

## Peak performance

**DR RAVI** Mariwala, better known for building a dominant consumer empire, spent the weekend convening a very different kind of room, one where altitude replaced ambition and stories did the heavy lifting. As part of the Himalayan Club's annual adventure festival, he brought together a serious roster: Sir Chris and Lady Bonington, veteran chronicler Harish Kapadia, Piolet d'Or winner Spencer Gray, and Tibetologist Dr Alex McKay among those in attendance.

Mariwala told this diarist, "The festival is far more than an event. It brings together stories from the mountains that are raw, honest and deeply human, of courage, failure, exploration and quiet perseverance."

These stories matter, he stressed. "They inspire the next generation and remind us that the mountains are not just places we visit, but places that change us for the better." We love that in a city obsessed with scale, he chose elevation.



Ravi Mariwala



**@readswithravi**

I'm in love with this sentence: "The best math you can learn is how to calculate the future cost of current decisions."

## Scene here

**THIS** Juhu venue may not command the same frenzy it once did, but it still delivers where it matters, bringing together the right people, at the right tables. Jayna Lakhiani was there over the weekend with friends visiting from Dubai, Kanchan Madnani and they bumped into Kanika Kapoor and Gautam Hathiramani — a neat reminder that in this city, some places save you the trouble of making plans twice.

The first wave of novelty may have passed, but the place still knows how to deliver — with a little social serendipity built in.



Jayna Lakhiani and Kanika Kapoor with friends

## Lot to talk about

**THIS** diarist hears Dinesh and Minal Vazirani's Spring sale has collectors circling, with Raja Ravi Varma's Yashoda and Krishna expected to lead, estimated at USD 8.88–13.33 million, alongside Husain's Benaras, Raza's Kundalini, Souza works on paper and a rare Gaitonde, a lineup that tends to declare its own pecking order. The list also includes stunning works by Edwin Lord Weeks, Sadanand Bakre, Piraji Sagara and



Dinesh Vazirani

Jangarh Singh Shyam.

Dinesh Vazirani tells this diarist, "We don't follow a fixed curatorial framework. We look at each work on its own merit, its quality, significance and how it resonates with the market, and the collection takes shape organically."

He adds, "The Indian auction market has nearly doubled to over USD 200 million, and with private sales, it approaches USD 400 million." The room certainly looks different these days: sharper buyers, deeper pockets, and a clear appetite for the right names.

## LIFE AT LARGE

Phani Tetali



"Ouch... nobody on the local train told me that the platform was on the other side!"

## Blue blood blueprint

**THE** city's cultural cognoscenti are currently abuzz over the Mumbai arrival of BAPJI: The King Who Would Be Man, an intimate chronicle of Maharaja Gajsingh II of Marwar Jodhpur. We know what you're thinking, but no, this isn't some dusty hagiography; it's a richly illustrated dive into a life that pivoted from the ivory towers of Jodhpur to the gritty reality of democratic diplomacy.

Asad Lalljee, the former New York advertising man turned cultural catalyst, is particularly struck by the Maharaja's foresight. "Legacy is not what you inherit, but that which you leave behind," he told this diarist. From transforming desert citadels into global heritage benchmarks to championing grassroots linguistics, the man they call Bapji has spent decades rewriting the rules of modern monarchy.

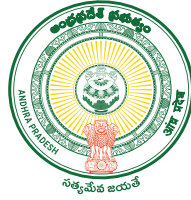


Asad Lalljee

## Tailpiece

**THIS** neta, long the internet's favourite punchline, is edging towards the exit. His curious elevation always raised eyebrows, given his opposition roots, though the logic was neat: when things unravel, spread the blame across the aisle, dilute the heat on familiar faces. It sounded clever, though it was never convincing. Now the mood has changed. We hear patience has worn thin with his omnipresence, and with how the camera chasing has turned into camera claiming. The bigger problem is belief. He seems to have bought into his own myth, stepping into decisions that carry weight far beyond his brief. The retreat will not be abrupt, you can be sure. His visibility makes that risky. Instead, expect a careful dimming, a slow vanishing act that leaves him stranded in yesterday's headlines.

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# Ulhasnagar demolition contracts under scanner over 'payments for free work'

BJP corporator accuses UMC of paying contractors in crores for demolitions typically offset by scrap value



Demolitions of dilapidated buildings being carried out in Ulhasnagar



NAVNEET BARHATE

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Over the past four years, several allegations of misappropriation of funds have emerged regarding the demolition of dilapidated buildings in Ulhasnagar.

According to sources, the Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation (UMC) sanctioned payments worth crores for demolition activities which were reportedly required to be executed at zero cost.

Information suggests that within the most urban jurisdictions, the high resale value of salvaged materials from deconstructed buildings like TMT bars, structural steel, wooden doors and window frames is used to offset the contractor's fee. However, in Ul-

hasnagar, the administration allegedly paid for the service while allowing contractors to keep the lucrative scrap.

Ulhasnagar, located in the Thane district within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), was developed specifically for the rehabilitation of refugees who migrated from Pakistan following the partition in 1947.

"During the 90s, this township started developing rapidly and many private buildings emerged in the area. Most of the dilapidated buildings that stand today were constructed during that time," said sources. "But in the last several years, these buildings were found unsafe and needed to be demolished immediately, as per the regular structural audits," they added.

However, BJP corporator Rajesh Wankhede raised questions over the demolition of these dilapidated build-

ings. "The corporation paid money to the contractor for the demolition, which needs to be free of cost, as recovery material cost is higher than cost of the demolition," said Wankhede.

"Hundreds of building demolitions were carried out during the Administration raj [when undivided Shiv Sena controlled the civic body] and the corporation paid money to the contractors," he said.

He further demanded to table the details about the work in the general body meeting of the UMC last week. "How much money did the corporation spend on the demolition of the dilapidated buildings of the city, and where did the debris, which was generated due to demolition, go?" Wankhede questioned. "I am sure the corporation did not pay a penny to the contractors who demolished the build-

ings, while on paper the corporation created bills of the payment. After getting all information from the administration, the truth will come to light," he asserted.

Responding to the allegations, civic chief Manisha Awhale of the UMC said, "We will present a detailed report of the work." The previous term of UMC ended in 2022, while the new corporation body was formed after the civic election in January this year. Within the duration of these four years, the civic chief ran the Corporation as the administrator.

According to Wankhede, during this time, the corporation paid money for the demolition and funds were misappropriated.

A private builder, requesting anonymity, who undertook redevelopment work in Kalyan and Ulhasnagar

**How much money did the corporation spend on the demolition of the dilapidated buildings of the city and where did the debris go?**

-BJP corporator Rajesh Wankhede

area, said there are two systems of contract for the demolition of the old and dilapidated buildings. "If we paid contractors for demolition of the building, we took recovery materials like iron and wooden. If we did not pay contractors, then we did not take recovery material, and the contractor recovered the cost of the demolition by recovery material," he said.

## Forest officials deny allegations, claim green cover was enhanced

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I analysed images from 2013, 2016 and October 2025. Earlier images clearly show land survey number 341/1 fully covered with mangroves. In 2025, the same area appears cleared, with open patches that look like trenches dug for plantation," he said. Parab, who recently visited the site, alleged that ground conditions contradict official claims. "Authorities claim fresh plantation, but most mangroves at the site are already dead. This raises questions about whether this is genuine restoration or an attempt to show compliance on paper," he said, adding that he plans to file a formal complaint.

Authorities have said the plantation was carried out in January 2026.

Similar concerns were raised by Vanshakti director Stalin D, who also inspected the site. He said there was little viable space for plantation and that many of the newly planted mangroves had not survived.

Activists argue that clearing an already mangrove-rich area for replantation defeats the purpose of compensatory afforestation. "It creates an illusion of environmental mitigation while reducing ecological value," one activist said, calling the process a "recycling of destruction under the guise of restoration."

Officials, however, strongly denied the allegations. SV Ramarao, additional chief conservator of forests with the Mangrove Cell, said the plantation was carried out only on degraded land. "All claims are false. We have enhanced forest cover through new plantation," he said.

The dispute comes amid ongoing legal scrutiny. Vanshakti had challenged the mangrove cutting for the coastal road project. While the Bombay High Court permitted the removal, the Supreme Court recently refused to intervene, allowing the BMC to proceed with cutting over 45,000 mangrove trees.

Under a court-monitored plan,

**Authorities claim fresh plantation, but most mangroves at the site are already dead**

-Environmental activist Dhiraj Parab

the BMC has committed to compensatory afforestation, including relocating 36,675 mangroves and permanently removing 9,000 across 103.65 hectares. It has also undertaken to restore non-forest land in Chandrapur district to offset ecological loss.

Despite these assurances, activists remain unconvinced. They argue that on-ground practices—such as clearing existing mangroves for replantation—undermine the credibility of the compensation framework and point to what they describe as a systemic attempt to "eyewash" environmental compliance.



Satellite images show the same green stretch from January 2025 had become free of mangroves by October 2025 and turned green again after it had been replanted in January 2026, claim activists



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# Bridge too far: Belasis upgrade leaves ppl footsore and fuming

Rebuilt Mumbai Central connector criticised for poor station access, no mid-bridge drop-offs, gaps in commuter planning

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The newly inaugurated Purnyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Bridge (formerly Belasis Bridge), connecting Nagpada and Tardeo near Mumbai Central, has become a point of contention among residents and daily commuters, who say the redesign has compromised accessibility despite improved structure.

While the bridge strengthens east-west connectivity, it lacks integration with public transport and direct access to Mumbai Central station—features that were part of the earlier design. Commuters say the absence of mid-bridge drop-off points, bus stops, and pedestrian access has made daily travel more difficult.

Shuaib Khatib, a local businessman, recalled that the older bridge allowed buses and taxis to stop directly on it. "I could step out, catch a cab or bus, and be dropped on the bridge. From there, it connected straight into Mumbai Central station," he said.

He added that ticket counters were strategically placed at the top of the bridge, allowing commuters to alight, buy tickets, and reach platforms within minutes. "Everything was connected and designed for convenience. Now, you are dropped at the end, made to walk long distances, climb up to the ticket counter, and then go back down to the platform. It's a waste of time and energy," Khatib said.

At present, bus stops are located only at the ends of the bridge, and taxi drop-offs have largely been removed from the structure. Commuters are left to walk significant distances, often with luggage, to reach station entrances. In some cases, concrete dividers prevent pedestrians from crossing to the other side, adding to the difficulty.

"The government encourages people to use public transport, but by removing bus stops and taxi access from the bridge, they are doing the opposite," Khatib said. "If commuters cannot easily access stations, they are more likely to use private vehicles."

Residents say the changes have particularly affected senior citizens and daily commuters. Mohammad Zaid, who runs a garment business in South Mumbai, said the lack of direct access has made movement harder. "Now, people are forced to walk the entire stretch. For the elderly, this is not convenience—it's a burden," he said.

Zaid also pointed out that the earlier bridge had a gate connecting directly to nearby institutions such as Gilbert Hill School and Navneet College, which has now been removed. "Students could move easily, and during election periods, when counting takes place there, the connectivity was important," he said.

He also raised concerns about design choices, noting that the bridge transitions from concrete to tar, and vibrations are felt when vehicles pass. "Engineers may have their reasons,



(Clockwise from top) Pedestrian climbs over the bridge railing to access Mumbai Central station; the bus stop, earlier located on the bridge, has been shifted to the bridge's entry, forcing pedestrians to walk from the station; a man exiting the station looks around in confusion, unsure of where to go

but the main issue is accessibility," he added. The addition of central concrete dividers has further restricted pedestrian movement, preventing commuters from crossing sides to access different parts of the station. Residents say this reflects a larger problem in planning, where pedestrian needs are overlooked.

Civic activist Kamlakar Shenoy criticised the broader approach to bridge construction in the city, alleging that several projects have been executed without adequate planning. "Bridges are being rebuilt without widening roads or improving access to

railway stations. At multiple locations, pedestrian connectivity has not been provided," he said.

Referring to other projects, Shenoy said, "Hancock Bridge, Elphinstone Road bridge, and Sion bridge were demolished without extending road width as sanctioned decades ago. At Lower Parel and other locations, pedestrian access has not been properly planned. Earlier, people could get down midway from bridges, but that is no longer the case."

He alleged that projects are being carried out in a rushed and mechanical manner. "There is no application of

mind. Time restrictions and administrative pressure mean that several aspects are overlooked," Shenoy said, calling it a "bad state" of planning within the civic body.

Residents argue that solutions are not difficult to implement. They point out that there is still space on either side of the bridge that could be used for bus stops, taxi bays, and better pedestrian pathways. Restoring some form of mid-bridge access, they say, would significantly improve connectivity. "There is enough room to make these bridges functional for everyone," Zaid said. "If authorities pay

attention, it will make a real difference to daily commuters."

The criticism around Belasis Bridge highlights a larger concern about infrastructure planning in Mumbai. While new bridges may improve traffic flow, commuters say functionality and ease of access are being overlooked. For many, the issue is not the construction of new bridges, but the absence of commuter-focused design. Without seamless integration with public transport and pedestrian access, residents say such projects risk creating new challenges instead of solving existing ones.

PICS: SACHIN HARALKAR

# Flamingo habitats shrink as Navi Mumbai wetlands turn toxic

Climate activists have sounded a “wetland emergency” in Navi Mumbai, warning that three key flamingo habitats have turned toxic, with water tests revealing alarming conditions.

The DPS, NRI and T S Chanakya lakes in Nerul—satellite wetlands of the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary (a Ramsar site)—are showing signs of severe ecological stress. Tests commissioned by the NatConnect Foundation indicate over-concentrated, stagnant water instead of natural tidal flushing. Four key indicators—TDS, pH, BOD and COD—point to declining water quality. “The water is not moving as it should in a healthy intertidal wetland,” said B N Kumar of NatConnect, citing blocked tidal flow.

The warning is underscored by the absence of flamingos this season, typically seen between November and May, with peak sightings from January to March.

Activists have blamed governance failures, alleging that CIDCO and regulatory authorities have failed to act. “These wetlands are a public asset being destroyed in plain sight,” said climate activist Nandakumar Pawar. As water quality worsens, the algae and microorganisms flamingos depend on are disappearing, collapsing the food chain. Calling the situation critical, activists have urged immediate government intervention.

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Says Senior Lawyer and President, CFBP, “our illustrious legacy of path-breaking industrialists and professionals permits us to only have as part of our Team the very best individuals who are remarkably well-established with an insatiable appetite for achievement and are truly ahead of the curve in the eyes of their peers. Integrity and Ethics are irreducible primaries and every programme of ours reflects those cherished ideals. Businesses ought to be handled with a set of principles and professions to be practiced as a fee-earning vocation. Most top-tier law firms in the US, UK and India (having worked in them myself) ensure a robust sense of professional ethics whilst maintaining an enviable financial roster. There has to be a healthy synergy between Business, Ethics and the Law to achieve a Viksit Bharat by 2047.”

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# 'This is not deviant behaviour. This is just lack of awareness'

When sexual exploration goes wrong, it is important to seek prompt medical attention, doctors advise

Swapnil R Mishra  
swapnil.mishra@timesofindia.com

She was 18, standing alone in the sterile fluorescent hallway of BYL Nair Charitable Hospital. To the triage nurse, she described a "vague discomfort" in her lower abdomen – a common complaint.

An X-ray revealed the truth. Lodged deep inside her urinary bladder

was a full-length pencil, inserted through the urethra during a moment of solitary sexual exploration. For days, she had sat in her bedroom, paralysed by the realisation that the object had migrated into a part of her body she didn't understand. Shame kept her silent.

"She didn't understand her own anatomy," says Dr Priyank Kothari, a uro-andrologist at BYL Nair Hospital. "What began as natural curiosity

turned into a medical emergency."

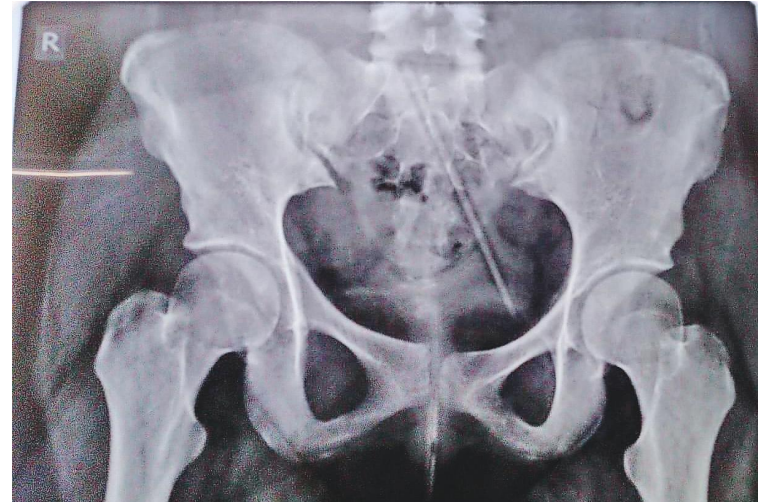
Her case required an emergency cystoscopy to extract the wood and graphite. She survived without permanent injury, but her story opens a disturbing chapter. In under a year, Nair's Department of Urology has seen a surge in what doctors call "sexual misadventures" – involving a ball-point pen, a heavy metal ring, charging cables and nails.

These recent cases involve the young. But the crisis of foreign body insertion is a long-standing fact of the emergency room. Dr Jitendra Sankpal, a surgeon at Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital with 30 years of experience, has seen its extremes.

"I have removed broom plastic covers, liquor bottles, metallic spoons, drug packets, and syringes with needles," he says. "These were inserted out of curiosity, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or for pleasure."

The interventions are almost always surgical – and not always successful. Dr Sankpal recalls a patient who had air forced into his rectum through the hose of an industrial air compressor. The man died on the table, most likely from cardiorespiratory arrest triggered by catastrophic internal pressure. What begins as curiosity can end in a morgue.

Doctors are clear: This is not a morality problem. It is a public health failure. Explicit



An X-ray showing the hip bones and pelvic cavity, with a distinct linear object visible centrally, extending through the lower abdominal region

content reaches young people at the swipe of a thumb. Formal education on pelvic anatomy and bodily autonomy remains a cultural taboo.

"Young people encounter sexual content without any corresponding education on safety," says Dr Tarun Jain of the urology department. "Curiosity is natural. The danger is curiosity without guidance."

This guidance gap creates a vacuum that misinformation fills. When curiosity leads to an accident, shame fills the rest. In nearly every case at Nair, the patient waited days before seeking help. That delay is where the real damage occurs. Objects left in the bladder cause infection. Rings left on the penis cause tissue necrosis – the death of the organ. Foreign bodies in the rectum can perforate the intestinal wall, triggering sepsis.

At Nair, the urology team – led by Dr Mukund Andankar, under Dean Dr Shailesh Mohite – operates on a principle of radical empathy. "This is not deviant behaviour," says Dr Dip Joshi. "This is a lack of awareness."

The hospital's message is a public plea: The emergency room carries no judgment. The goal is the preservation of function and life. A finger-exercise grip lodged on a penis, a spoon lost in the rectum – prompt help prevents a mistake from becoming a lifelong consequence.

The problem extends beyond Mumbai's hospitals. A 2019 case in Navi Mumbai illustrates how these emergencies cross into criminal territory. A man needed emergency surgery to remove a coconut shell. He initially told investigators he had been assaulted. They later confirmed the act was self-inflicted. The case exposed not only the extreme physical risks – internal blockage, perforation, sepsis – but the depth of stigma that drives patients to fabricate stories rather than seek transparent care.

The pencil in the bladder is a symptom of a systemic failure. When anatomy remains a whispered secret and sex education becomes a moral debate rather than a physiological necessity, the list of objects – wires, bottles, rings – will grow longer.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Doctors at Nair Hospital are direct: When a moment of curiosity goes wrong, the first 60 minutes are the most critical. Embarrassment is temporary. The damage from waiting is not.

**DO THIS IMMEDIATELY**  
**Go to the ER.** Seek help the moment an object is lost or stuck. Hospitals are legally and ethically bound to provide non-judgmental care.

**Be honest with triage.** Tell the nurse exactly what happened and what the object is. This allows the surgical team to prepare the correct tools – magnets, scopes, or cutters – without delay.

**Watch for red flags.** An inability to urinate, sudden numbness in the area, or a high fever signal a life-threatening window.

**NEVER DO THIS**  
**Don't attempt self-removal.** Tweezers, hooks, or fingers push objects deeper, cause internal tearing, and trigger severe bleeding.

**Don't wait for it to pass.** Objects in the urinary tract – urethra or bladder – will not pass naturally. They cause rapid, high-grade infection and sepsis.

**Don't use chemicals.** Oils, soaps, or solvents applied to a stuck object cause chemical burns on sensitive membranes.



A scan reveals an object lodged in a patient's abdomen

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# 'Proximity of these cases indicates a pattern'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Pawan Sharma, founder of wildlife rescue group, Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWW), said, "In the last 48 hours, we have come across three such cases in Thane, all reported within roughly a 2-kilometre radius of the initial incident near the SGNP buffer zone. The proximity of these cases indicates a pattern rather than isolated incidents. Based on primary observations, this does not appear accidental, but is clearly intentional. The use of a bow and arrow and the precision of the injuries suggest that the person involved is likely trained or experienced in using such equipment."

Sharma branded this a deliberate act of hunting, which he said was a violation of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. "So far, two arrows have been recovered, one each from the monkeys rescued on Friday and Sunday."

On Friday, the juvenile bonnet macaque was found with a 2.7-foot arrow driven clean through its body. The attack was so precise that officials and activists say it could only have

been carried out with deliberate aim. The macaque, which sustained severe trauma to its pelvic region, leading to infection and a fractured femur, underwent surgery on Friday and is recovering.

Speaking to Mumbai Mirror, Chief Conservator of Forests Jitendra Ramgaonkar said, "This is a serious offence and we are actively tracking down those responsible. The Wildlife Protection Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have strong provisions, and once the accused are identified, they could face imprisonment and strict legal action. At this stage, our teams, along with rescuers, are investigating on the ground to establish how this was carried out and who is behind it. There are a few archery centres in the vicinity, but we cannot jump to conclusions. Similar arrows can be accessed by anyone, so our priority is to first zero in on the source and the perpetrators before deciding the next course of action."

Range Forest Officer (Mumbai) Santosh Dagale, who is leading the investigation, said it is deeply concerning to find multiple such cases emerg-

ing from the same periphery. "We are trying to identify the source of these arrows. The second arrow recovered is slightly different from the first one and bears specific markings, which may correspond to a particular manufacturer or type of archery equipment. However, like the first, even this arrow appears to be of a kind used in professional archery. Based on these findings, we will be visiting nearby archery centres to trace its origin. Injuring a wild animal using such a weapon is a grave offence," he said.

According to Dagale, a Preliminary Offence Report (POR) has been registered and foresters are seeking the help of local police in the case. "Local residents have also been urged to immediately alert the Forest Department and RAWW if they spot any injured animals or arrows lodged in them."

Bonnet macaques (monkey) are listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, the highest level of legal protection, making the offence punishable with stringent penalties, including imprisonment. Sunil Limaye, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Chief

Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of Maharashtra, and a member of the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee (CEC), termed the incident "atrocious" and indicative of deliberate human intervention.

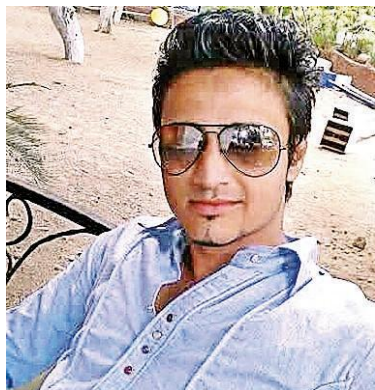
"This is extremely disturbing and clearly points to human handiwork, either an attempt to drive monkeys away or to deliberately harm them. In either case, it warrants a thorough investigation and strict action against those responsible. There are humane methods to manage situations where monkeys are perceived as a nuisance or are found to be creating menace, but injuring them in any manner to shoot them away is completely unacceptable and a clear violation of the law," he said.



The third monkey, spotted near a Thane building, with an arrow piercing its abdomen

# 'Struggled for 12 years to get an FIR registered'

After a legal battle spanning over a decade, a mother secures an FIR against 5 doctors, alleging a cover-up in her son's 2014 death



The deceased Salman Babar Shah; his mother Naseem Bano Shah

Apoorva Agashe  
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A mother's 12-year fight for justice has finally led to the registration of an FIR against five doctors of Millennium Hospital, in connection with the alleged medical negligence that led to her son's death. The incident was first reported by Mumbai Mirror on August 13, 2014.

The complainant, Naseem Bano Shah, said the FIR is only the beginning of her fight and has demanded the arrest of the accused doctors.

"My son was a junior artist, and we lost him because of someone else's mistake. I have struggled for 12 years to reach this point. This is just the beginning. I will continue the fight until the doctors are punished, so that no one else suffers such injustice," she said.

The FIR, registered at Shivaji Nagar police station, pertains to the death of 23-year-old Salman Babar Shah. According to the complaint, Salman sustained a fracture in his right leg following a road accident in April 2014 and was admitted to a pri-

vate hospital in Shivaji Nagar.

The mother has alleged that doctors at the hospital insisted on advance payment before initiating treatment and discouraged the family from informing the police. She further claimed that the surgery was conducted under questionable conditions, including a power outage during the procedure, followed by inadequate post-operative care.

Despite his deteriorating condition, Salman remained admitted at the same facility for several days before being shifted to a hospital in Chembur, where he was declared critical. He died on April 17, 2014. The cause of death was recorded as septicemia resulting from post-surgical complications.

After the death, Shah approached the Bombay High Court. In 2016, the court directed the police to record her statement. "Following the court's directions, the BMC commissioner initiated an inquiry, and the Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) conducted a detailed probe. Based on these findings, an FIR was registered yesterday," said her lawyer, Misbah Solkar.

"This is not a case of mere negligence. The doctors were fully aware that their actions could be fatal, yet they proceeded with the surgery during a power outage, reportedly using torchlight. Thereafter, the patient was exposed to an unhygienic environment, leading to septicemia, which ultimately caused his death. This is a fit case for invoking Section 304 of the IPC," said Solkar.

Shah said she had approached multiple authorities over the years, including the Chief Medical Officer and the medical council, but to no avail. "I had to run from pillar to post. Nothing worked. It was only after filing an RTI that we discovered the hospital's medical records were missing," she alleged.

The FIR names five doctors—Dr Niyaz Khan, Dr Intiyaz Khan, Dr Umesh Pimple, Dr Khalid, and Dr Amit Shobhavat—and accuses them of negligence, destruction of medical records, and failure to provide proper treatment.

A senior police inspector from Shivaji Nagar police station confirmed the registration of the FIR and said the investigation is underway. "We will determine the exact role of each of the five accused doctors in the alleged negligence," the officer said.

Police officials indicated that the investigation could be time-consuming. "We first need to verify whether the doctors are still employed at Millennium Hospital. If not, tracing them will take time. The process is likely to be lengthy," an officer said on condition of anonymity.

Mirror attempted to contact Millennium Hospital for comment, but the hospital declined to respond.

The doctors have been booked under Sections 304-A (causing death by negligence) and other relevant sections.

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# Medicine healed their mind, but their families never came back

The last three years have seen more than 80 people abandoned by their families at the Thane Mental Hospital recover and make a life on their own

**Anamika Gharat**  
anamika.gharat@timesofindia.com

**A** seven-year-old girl lost both her parents in a tragic accident in 2007—a shock that left deep emotional scars. In the months that followed, her mental health deteriorated; she began talking to herself and showed clear signs of psychological distress.

Relatives who took her in briefly sought help. Within two months, they admitted her to Thane Mental Hospital for urgent treatment. A year later, with medication and care, she had recovered and was declared fit for discharge.

But no one came to take her home.

A social worker even visited her aunt, only to return empty-handed. The family refused to accept her, labelling her “mad” and a burden.

With nowhere to go, the child spent the next five years in institutional care. Gradually, she resumed her education and was later moved to Krupa Ashram in Karjat, where she began rebuilding her life with the help of Bharti Satalkar and nurse Reshma Sarode. She completed her graduation and discovered a talent for art—especially rangoli—which became both her passion and her voice.

Years later, during a festival, she was absorbed in creating an intricate rangoli when a young man from a nearby office noticed her. By early 2024, she was in her early twenties. He had seen her several times near the ashram and was drawn to her quiet focus, unaware of her past. Eventually, he approached the ashram with a proposal.

Before the marriage, he and his family underwent counselling for over 18 months to understand her mental health history and confront any stigma. The aim was simple: Ensure she would never face discrimination in her new home.

Her husband, Nitesh Karade, said, “We realised she didn’t need sympathy—just love and a sense of belonging. My family stands by her.”

She married at 21, after clearances from the Thane District Women and Child Welfare Department, her psychiatrists, and the ashram. Such approvals are standard in cases involving a history of institutional care, ensuring informed consent, emotional stability, and a supportive environment.

What began in loss and abandonment found its way to acceptance. But her story is far from rare. In the past three years alone, more than 80 recovered patients at the hospital have been abandoned by their families. Social workers say efforts to reunite them often end in rejection—doors shut, calls unanswered, and, at times, police intervention met with silence.

Dr Nitin Shivde, civil surgeon at Thane Mental Hospital, stresses that mental illnesses are treatable medical conditions that respond well to timely intervention, medication, and psychosocial support. “Patients need love, care, and someone who genuinely tries to understand them. Treatment works, but recovery also depends on acceptance,” he said.



**A former patient (left) embarks on a new journey with her life partner**

PRASHANT NARVEKAR



**Krupa Ashram in Karjat helps former patients rebuild their lives**

“Patients at the hospital are discharged only after full recovery and careful evaluation,” he said. “What they need then is acceptance.”

Dr Shivde recalled a woman admitted at 30 with severe psychological distress. Within four months, she recovered. Her family, however, refused to take her back. She moved to an ashram, completed a physiotherapy course, and today, at 37, runs her own clinic, treating paralysed patients.

“Isn’t that a normal, independent life?” Dr Shivde asked. “Yet her family still hasn’t accepted her.”

In another case, a young boy from Pune showed significant improvement after a year of

treatment. When the hospital tried to reunite him with his family, they refused. Twice, when officials arrived with police, the family locked their doors.

Today, he works at a multinational company, rebuilding his life—without them.

“These patients don’t just fight illness,” Dr Shivde said.

“They fight loneliness and stigma. Medicine can heal the mind, but only acceptance can heal a life.”

Those without families are often shifted to rehabilitation centres such as Krupa Mahila Ashram in Karjat, where about 20 women continue to receive care and a chance at dignity.



**Nutan Chowda**

## **A lifetime of loss**

Nutan Chowda, 51, carries trauma that stretches back to the 1993 Mumbai riots. A student then, she witnessed violence that left lasting scars.

“I saw things no one should see,” she said. “I couldn’t sleep or think. Only my mother’s care brought me back.”

She completed her education, married, and briefly found stability. But the marriage quickly turned abusive.

“My husband beat me,” she said quietly. “The trauma returned.”

Her father brought her home and helped her secure a divorce. She rebuilt her life again—working and raising her young daughter.

Then came another blow. Her father died, her mother fell ill, and financial stress mounted. She lost her job. Soon after, an accident cost her part of her leg.

“I was already broken... and then this,” she said.

Unable to cope, her daughter was placed in an orphanage. Nutan, battling trauma and injury, was admitted to a mental hospital. Years later, after recovering, she went looking for her child.

“They told me she had been married,” she said. “They gave me no details.”

She pauses often, holding back tears.

“I don’t want anything from her. I just want to see her once... just one glance.”

## **Not uncommon**

Pari Vatan Mehta, president of Ummeed Foundation, says such stories are common. “Many patients here are stable, even fully recovered. Yet their families never return,” she said. “Some have been waiting for years—some for decades.”

She recalls a woman who has spent nearly 20 years in the hospital, despite coming from a well-off family. “Every time she sees me, she asks to meet her daughter once,” the social worker said.

In a society that prides itself on education and progress, the stigma around mental illness persists.

“Recovery is possible,” she said. “Abandonment should not be the outcome.”

Her message is simple: Illness should not strip anyone of their right to family, dignity, or love. “Treatment may begin with medicine,” she said, “but healing begins with acceptance.”

## PAISANOMICS

WHERE EVERY RUPEE TELLS A BIGGER STORY



Vivek Kaul

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# Party is over for the bachcha party

**Over the past few years more youngsters have entered the stock market. Now they are learning that investing in stocks is not a one-way ticket to the moon**

In March 2019, 226 out of every 1,000 individual investors in Indian stocks were under 30. By February 2026, that number had risen to 384 per 1,000.

In the last seven years, more youngsters – or as Shankar Sharma, investor and founder of the AI company, GQ FinXRay, likes to call them, bachcha party – have come to the stock market party.

And lately – particularly during March – they have been finding out that age-old secret: Investing in stocks is not a one-way ticket to the moon. The rocket ride can get bumpy.

The BSE 500 – which is a good representation of the overall Indian stock market – has fallen 8 per cent during March. The bachcha party, which has grown up listening to financial influencers and the well-shaved, tie-less, suited-booted types in the business of managing other people's money (OPM), has found the fall to be out of syllabus.

The finfluencers sold them a dream that it was possible to get rich – just before lunch time. The OPM



The stock market has seen a bumpy ride in March so far — and the worst may not be over yet

types were like, lunch time is difficult, but we can have you up and running by tomorrow morning. And this felt right, as long as prices went up. Now, it doesn't, and hopefully will lead to the bachcha party learning some investing lessons.

First, if you buy stocks at very high prices vis-à-vis the earnings of the companies they represent, making money on that investment is going to take time. You might even lose money.

Second, stories are what drive stock markets. And they keep changing. Like the OPM-wallahs are currently saying that investors should buy stocks now because their prices are in line with the earnings of companies. But doesn't that mean that prices were high in 2023 and 2024, when the OPM-wallahs were falling over each other and screaming: Buy, buy, buy!

The answer is yes. But then, you sell what the season demands: Ice creams in summer, umbrellas in the rain.

Third, the finfluencers and the OPM-wallahs largely specialise in telling people that stock prices will continue to go up because they've been going up. This is a sales trick that is as old as the hills. Indeed, as Andrew Ross Sorkin writes in '1929 – The Inside Story of the Greatest Crash in Wall Street History', "People will find new ways to believe that the good times can last forever," and in the process they will "dress up hope as certainty". Essentially, the OPM-wallahs are catering to investors who want to be lied to.

Fourth, as Herbert Hoover, who was the US president from 1929 to 1933, once said: "The only trouble with capitalism is capitalists;

they're too damned greedy." And this has been on full display. The venture capitalists backed loss-making and discount giving startups, sold shares through initial public offerings at extremely high prices, defining their business model as a situation where they hope to make some money someday.

The promoters of already listed companies cashed in on the frenzy and sold shares. The foreign investors also sold long held Indian shares. Mutual funds launched one new scheme after another encouraging investors to buy at extremely high prices.

In all this, many in the bachcha party ended up doing things that were not right for them – as often happens when you keep saying, "I'll have what you're having."

Fifth, holding cash is often underrated. Cash – that is primarily

money in a savings bank account – may feel boring in a bull market, but when things turn, it's one of the best assets to have. Along with cash, some money in fixed deposits (FDs) is also a great idea, something many in the bachcha party – who fell for finfluencers urging them to break FDs and invest in stocks – may be realising now.

Sixth, as EB White, my favourite non-fiction writer, wrote in The New Yorker magazine in 1929: "The collapse of the market, over and above the pain, couldn't help but be amusing... The quake, furthermore, verified our suspicion that our wise and talky friends hadn't known for months what they were talking about when they were discussing stocks."

The point being the finfluencers and the OPM-wallahs have an incentive to sell what they do, irrespective of the state of the stock market. But it's the bachcha party's incentive to figure out what's right for them. Will they? Julian Barnes in his book 'Flaubert's Parrot' quotes the French writer Gustave Flaubert as saying: "Whatever else happens, we shall remain stupid."

The stock market party was never about investing – it was about belief. The bachcha party bought stories, not stocks. Now the bill has arrived. Markets ultimately punish hope that is dressed up as a certainty. The next cycle will come, with new stories. The only question is: Will the bachcha party pay twice for the same lesson? Their parents clearly did.

Vivek Kaul is an economic commentator and a writer

## AROUND THE BEND

ON BECOMING A BETTER MOTORIST



Shubhabrata Marmar

mirrorfeedback@timesofindia.com

# A little courtesy goes a long way

wonder if you come across as a good person when you wear your car to work. It's easier than expected, and free.

When I drive in, say, Europe, everyone seems friendly and patient. The latter's part of the licence process and training. The other, I think, is because they communicate. Not by flashing brake, auxiliary or head lamps at each other but as humans normally do.

No, really. They wave hellos as well as thank and after you, and they acknowledge courtesies they receive.

It takes away the sense of competition: I don't covet the space in your lane, versus, your lane looks faster... mind if I slot in? More importantly, it makes things clearer. You can signal to another driver



Bikers do better when they are more visible to others on the road

that you'd like to go first, or that you're happy to let them go first, for example.

You do this – I hope – when

entering an elevator. Or when you spot an elderly person in a queue, right? Same to same, but now with feeling. Which is to say, make the

waving and nodding more pronounced because it has to be seen through a windshield or window.

You'll be surprised at the results. When I drive, if I indicate, nay, request that I be allowed into your lane, most drivers, even in dense traffic, don't seem to mind. Indicate and force your way in? Different result.

This is even more effective on a bike. You can be seen as human naturally, which is harder than when you're inside your box-on-wheels.

The science is simple. Humans tend not to want to harm other humans. Which is why motorcyclists do better if they are more visible. But we will thump tables, throw glasses if we're upset enough. The inanimate get no empathy.

Cars dehumanise. You don't see

the next person as a person – they mess with your perception. You can see a head, but not the body template we instantly recognise – biologically – as one of us. It's quite easy to get angry with other drivers, and then the rage can really build out, because they're as inanimate as the table or glass we anointed mere moments ago with our wrath.

All we have to do is make ourselves seen as human.

Human. A mass of blind spots, ill-formed opinions, preferences, bad habits and sometimes, poor etiquette. The ability to be patient with others allows room for them to do silly things and not get angry. To be amused and bemused, not just upset. And to say thank you when someone helps you out.

Things you might do normally but forget to do clad in a car or astride a bike.

An automotive expert, Shubhabrata Marmar decodes modern Indian motoring.

# WHY TEHRAN BLEEDS BUT WON'T BLINK

Strategic leverage, survival instincts and a belief that economic disruption can outpace military pressure are driving Iran's defiance as strikes mount and diplomatic options narrow



People survey a site that was struck by an Iranian missile in Dimona, southern Israel, on March 22

Susannah George  
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As the war in Iran enters its fourth week, with US operations increasingly focused on global energy flows, Tehran is rebuffing efforts to identify a diplomatic off-ramp from the war launched by the United States and Israel, according to officials in the region.

Instead, Tehran is escalating attacks on its neighbours, betting it can ratchet up global economic pain faster than the Trump administration can relieve it with military force, according to an Iranian diplomat, two European diplomats stationed in the region and a senior Arab official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to brief the media on sensitive details.

Iran's unwillingness to capitulate is tied to the power it exerts over a critical maritime chokepoint through which roughly one-fifth of the world's fuel shipments transit, which

Tehran has largely closed, roiling energy markets. President Donald Trump gave Iran a 48-hour deadline on Saturday to reopen the waterway, threatening to "obliterate" the country's power plants if Tehran does not comply. By partially closing the route, Iran is seeking to "make this aggression super expensive for the aggressors", according to the Iranian diplomat. "We are alone against the biggest military superpower in history," he said. Iran's leaders see their ability to control the passage and withstand the US and Israeli onslaught as a short-term victory, the Arab official and European diplomats said. But as the war expands, with Iran's critical infrastructure increasingly threatened, the country's leadership is also deeply concerned about its ability to recover in the long term.

"As long as the regime is there, they can create terror in the region; they terrorise international markets with oil and gas prices. Yes, that's what winning is for them," said one European diplomat based in the Persian Gulf. "They don't feel any

pressure to negotiate."

So far, the conflict's economic fallout for the United States and its European allies has been "moderate", by the diplomat's assessment, not reaching a level that would increase pressure for talks on the US side. However, rising energy prices are causing concern in Washington.

Before Trump issued the 48-hour deadline, the Pentagon had been intensifying operations around the chokepoint, ramping up airstrikes and deploying additional attack helicopters. Opening the route by force would require clearing Iranian positions so that US warships can escort tankers through.

The Treasury Department on Friday attempted to ease energy markets by lifting sanctions on Iranian crude already loaded on to vessels.

Qatari and Omani officials began contacting Iran about a possible ceasefire last week after assessing that overwhelming US and Israeli military force would be unable to topple the Iranian government in the near term, according to the Arab official

and European diplomats. Iran responded that it would only engage if the US and Israel stopped attacking first. "Iran is not willing for a premature ceasefire like the 12-day war," said the Iranian diplomat, referring to last year's conflict between Israel and Iran, during which the US struck Iranian nuclear sites. Iran would not be willing this time to halt attacks against US interests unless Washington agreed to a number of "non-aggression" guarantees, including monetary compensation for war-related damage.

The diplomat appealed to Trump to end the war before it escalates further. "This is the very beginning of the US getting stuck in a swamp," he said. "There is no other ramp off."

The US and Israel have hit more than 15,000 targets across Iran, according to the Pentagon. The strikes have destroyed military infrastructure, municipal buildings and eliminated senior leadership ranks. Iran's Health Ministry says more than 1,200 civilians have been killed, including in an attack on a school

that left over 160 people dead, most of them children.

Within the past week, Israeli strikes killed four senior Iranian officials, including Ali Larijani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, and Ali Mohammad Naini, spokesperson for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The conflict has expanded to include strikes on regional energy infrastructure. Iran retaliated after an attack on the South Pars gas field by launching strikes on Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, causing billions of dollars in damage to a Qatari natural gas facility, according to local authorities. "We're still on an escalatory path," said Alan Eyre, a fellow at the Middle East Institute and a former US State Department official focused on Iran. Iran's leaders believe that by inflicting sufficient economic pain, they can force Trump to back down. "Iran still hasn't made its point; they are still trying to raise the costs." The back-to-back assassinations of senior Iranian officials appear to have disincentivised Tehran from talks, according to a European official formerly based in Iran. The killing of Larijani, in particular, damaged prospects for dialogue as he was uniquely positioned to engage with the West.

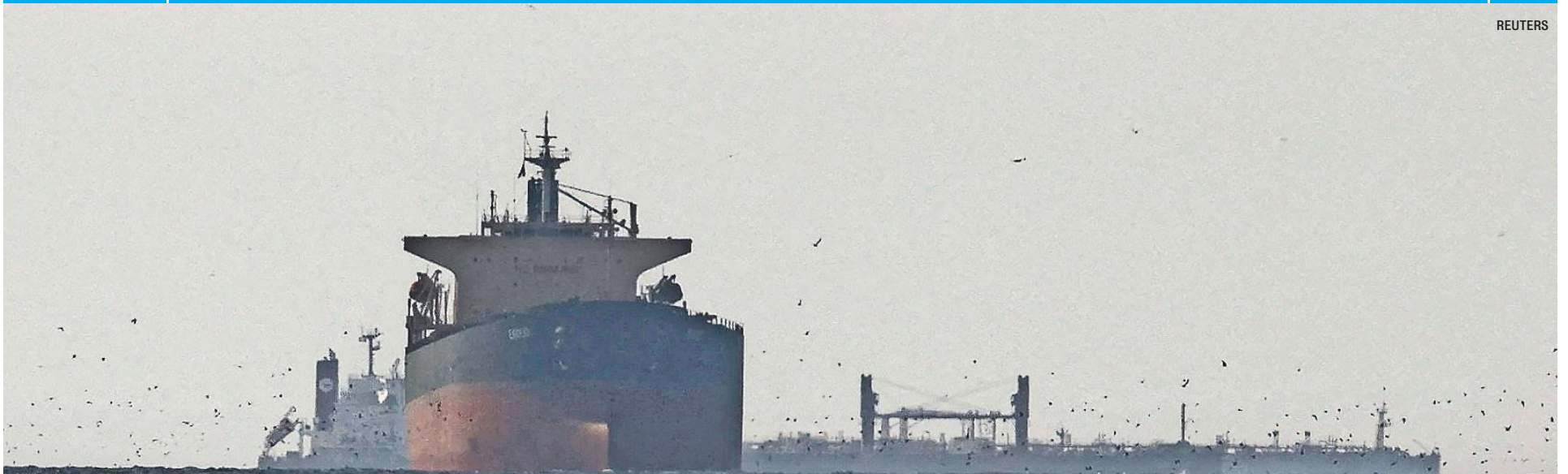
For years, Larijani maintained a backchannel with the U.S. through Europe and was exploring ways via Moscow to communicate with the Trump administration, the official said. The killings are "a stress test of a system built to outlast individuals." In the short term, they are unsettling for Iran's ruling class. "Long term, I think it increases defiance."

Messages of defiance marked communications from Iranian leaders during the Persian new year, Nowruz. They expressed support for those who lost loved ones but also promised that Iran's enemies would be defeated. On the eve of the holiday, Iranian state media announced three executions. Rights groups condemned the judicial process. Those executed included Saleh Mohammadi, 19, a national wrestler accused of attacking police during protests earlier this year.

"The new year will be a year of delivering a strong blow to Iran's enemies," said Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, adding the country "will emerge from these storms with pride and stronger than before." Iran's newly appointed supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, issued a written statement but has not been seen in public since the start of the war and is believed to have been wounded in the strike that killed his father, according to U.S. intelligence assessments.

Beneath the public bravado, Iran's leadership is grappling with concerns about the war's long-term costs, said Reuel Marc Gerecht, a former U.S. intelligence officer. While a prolonged conflict may serve short-term interests, it could ultimately backfire.

"Eventually, in a long war, almost nothing is going to work in Iran," he said. The scale of destruction could leave the government less capable of addressing grievances and trigger fresh unrest. "The most critical moment for them is not during the battle," he added, "it is when the pummeling stops."



Cargo ships in the Gulf, near the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from northern Ras al-Khaimah, near the border with Oman's Musandam governance

# 'Open Hormuz in 48 hours, or else...' Trump's threat to Iran

US President Donald Trump threatens to 'obliterate' Iran's power plants if the vital shipping chokepoint isn't fully opened

Sammy Westfall  
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President Donald Trump threatened to strike Iran's power plants if the country does not fully open the Strait of Hormuz by Monday, escalating efforts to force Tehran to reopen the waterway as energy prices surge. "If Iran doesn't FULLY OPEN, WITHOUT THREAT, the Strait of Hormuz, within 48 HOURS from this exact point in time, the United States of America will hit and obliterate their various POWER PLANTS, STARTING WITH THE BIGGEST ONE FIRST!" Trump said Saturday night on Truth Social.

Tehran has largely shut down the vital shipping chokepoint, and the president has sought to pressure European and Asian countries to protect the strait with their militaries. At the same time, he has complained that allies are dragging their feet about joining a fight launched without their input. The International Energy Agency has called the war "the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market," pushing up gas prices about 33 per cent in just three weeks. The nationwide average gas price hit \$3.91 this week, the highest in almost four years.

Iran's escalating strikes on energy infrastructure across the Persian Gulf have also stoked fears of a full-blown energy crisis. Trump's warning comes as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it is looking into reports from Iran that a nuclear site was attacked on Saturday. Its director, Rafael Mariano Grossi, called for "military restraint to avoid any risk of a nuclear accident."

The IAEA said Iran reported an attack on the Natanz nuclear site south of Tehran, one of its main enrichment facilities. There was no increase in off-site radiation levels so far at Natanz, it said. The Israel Defense Forces said it was "not aware of an IDF strike on the location". The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment, and claims of a strike could not



US President Donald Trump posted the warning on Truth Social on Saturday night

be independently verified.

Satellite images appear to show Natanz was targeted earlier this month, after strikes carried out in June 2025 by the US and Israel. The Trump administration said after last summer's attacks that Iran's nuclear capabilities had been "obliterated" and that suggestions otherwise were "fake news". US intelligence reports assessed the strikes set Tehran's nuclear programme back by months but did not eliminate it.

Strikes across the region continued on Saturday. The IDF said it struck dozens of targets in Tehran, including missile production sites.

Adm. Brad Cooper, head of Central Command, said Iran has "lost the ability to launch missiles and drones at the high rates seen at the beginning of the conflict". In a video statement, he said the US is "on plan to eliminate Iran's ability to project meaningful power outside its borders".

The IAEA's warning comes as human rights organisations say they fear Iran will carry out mass executions of citizens who took part in large-scale anti-government demonstrations earlier this year, following

public hangings this week of three men, including a 19-year-old wrestler. Rights groups said more than two dozen people face the death penalty in relation to the protests, and potentially hundreds face charges.

On the eve of Nowruz, the Persian new year, state media announced the hanging of three men accused of participating in the killing of two police officers. The men — Saeed Davodi, Mehdi Ghasemi and Saleh Mohammadi, a 19-year-old who represented Iran internationally in wrestling — were arrested during anti-government demonstrations earlier this year, according to rights groups.

The New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran said the executions followed "grossly unfair trials without any semblance of due process, with forced 'confessions' obtained under torture".

Iran responded to the mass protests, largely in January, with overwhelming violence, killing more than 7,000 people, including over 6,500 protesters, according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency. The number of casualties is expect-

ed to rise, with many thousands of cases under investigation.

US and Israeli leaders have publicly called for Iranians to rise up against their government. Privately, senior Israeli officials told US diplomats that protesters would "get slaughtered" if they took to the streets, according to reporting on a State Department cable, which said Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps "has the upper hand".

Bahar Ghandehari, director of advocacy at the Center for Human Rights in Iran, called the executions "a calculated effort during wartime" to use three young people arrested only two months ago "to instil fear and deter further protests".

She said Iran uses executions as a "tool of terror" to send a message to the population. "This is an existential moment for the regime, and Iranian authorities, when in crisis mode, escalate domestic oppression," she said, warning that dozens more arrested during the protests could face similar punishment. Last year, Iran executed an estimated 1,500 people — double the previous year — according to Iran Human Rights.

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, director of Iran Human Rights, said there is a "very real and imminent risk of mass executions of protesters" and urged the international community to "act with urgency".

"We consider these executions to constitute extrajudicial killings, carried out with the intent of creating terror to suppress political dissent," he said. "The Islamic Republic is fighting for its survival and knows that the greatest threat to its existence comes from the Iranian people who demand fundamental change."

Reza Pahlavi, Iran's exiled crown prince, who has called for protests, described the executions on X as "the latest desperate killing spree" by the regime, adding that "their names will be spoken alongside all those who refused to kneel before tyranny. Their dream will not die. Iran will be free," he wrote.

## Homeward bound



# Why many Indian students are reimagining their global dreams

**Tighter visa rules, a tech slowdown and fewer jobs are weighing on study-abroad plans**

Preeti Kulkarni  
 preeti.kulkarni@timesofindia.com

**W**hen Abhiprit Saha, 22, decided to pursue an undergraduate degree in Environmental and Resource Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, his aim was to gain professional experience in the United States after completing his degree.

However, after graduating in December 2024, he decided to return to India. The reason? The increasing uncertainty around visa policies and

long-term work opportunities in the US. "While the US offers strong professional exposure, the immigration pathway can be unpredictable for international students," he explains.

### THE SHIFTING REALITIES

In 2025 (June, July, and August), F-1 student visa issuances in the US for Indian students declined by 67% compared to the same period a year ago. For corporates, sponsoring H-1B visas has become more uncertain and expensive, amid policy changes and rising compliance costs. For students, this means an unclear post-study work pathway.

The United Kingdom, another major study destination, raised entry barriers in January 2024, especially for students' dependents. The financial requirements for students are also more stringent now—£1,529 per month (for up to 9 months) for courses in London and £1,171 per month (for up to 9 months) for courses outside London.

Take, for instance, the case of Bhavya Amin, who completed her MS in Finance and Investment Banking in 2024. After interning for a while, she decided to return to India last year.

"The cost of living and working in the UK after graduation has gone up. If you want to continue working, you need an employer-sponsored visa, which has become expensive. At the same time, opportunities for foreign students have reduced, and inflation is high," she explains.

"While official data remains fragmented, rising visa rejection rates, a global tech slowdown and tightening post-study work policies have prompted students to return, particularly from the US, UK, Canada and Australia," says the founder of an education consultancy firm, speaking on the condition of anonymity. The dream of overseas education has lost some of its shine amid the changing economic and geopolitical scenarios. "Canada implemented study permit caps in 2024, the US tightened F1 approval processes, and the UK restricted visas for dependents. Fewer employers are willing to provide sponsorship, especially in the UK and Australia," says Eela Dubey, Co-founder, EduFund, an education counselling firm.

The situation is even tougher for students who may have enrolled in lower-ranking colleges and universi-

ties or "those with little-to-no placement support or industry networking," as Dubey puts it. "In addition, the persistent depreciation of the rupee has significantly increased the real-term burden of international education loans," she adds.

The shrinking job market clearly weighs on students' minds now. "Global hiring, especially in technology, is no longer as accommodating as earlier. Entry-level roles are harder to secure, and the pathway from degree to job to visa is far less predictable. What this creates is not a single barrier, but a combination of friction points. Students are responding rationally to that," says Rohan Ganeriwala, Co-founder, Collegify, an education consulting firm.

The rapid growth in artificial intelligence (AI) adoption has also contributed to a hiring dip in the traditional technology and consulting sectors globally. "This has reduced entry-level opportunities in some companies and sectors. Also, record-high rents and inflation in large cities across the US and the UK have

### Outbound slowdown

The number of students travelling for studies abroad has seen a dip



Source: Ministry of Education, India

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

made it financially unsustainable for many students to stay," says Dubey.

**OVERSEAS EDUCATION RESET**

The tightening of visa norms, government policies and the post-study job scenario are increasingly prompting a rethink among parents and students who aspire to pursue global education. "Many of our clients are re-evaluating their plans. Those planning undergraduate studies overseas are now considering completing them in India and pursuing master's programmes abroad instead. These are shorter courses, so the financial outgo is lower," says Vishal Dhawan, Founder, Plan Ahead Wealth Advisors. "There is a clear slowdown in out-bound mobility, with industry estimates suggesting that the number of Indian students going abroad has dipped by 25-30%," adds Ganeriwala.

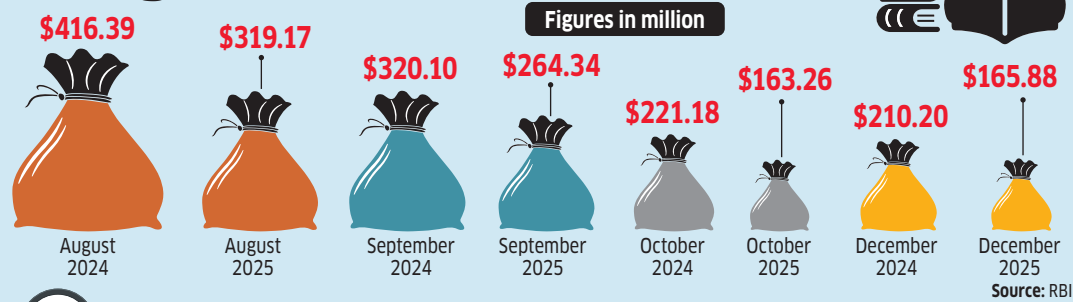
According to the Ministry of Education, Government of India, the number of students travelling abroad to pursue higher education dipped from 9,08,364 in 2023 to 7,70,127 in 2024 and to 6,26,606 in 2025. Given the less-than-welcome sentiment toward immigrants prevalent in the US, UK, and Canada, students are exploring destinations beyond the Big Four.

Students who are already abroad are also reassessing their options. "This is not a story of students being forced to come back. It is a story of students making more deliberate choices. Some are choosing not to extend their stay after graduation, and others are returning sooner than they might have a few years ago," adds Ganeriwala.

The current scenario has led to a shift in the mindsets of students and parents. "Earlier, international education was often linked to migration. Today, it is increasingly about education, exposure and optionality. Coming back to India is not always a forced outcome. In many cases, it is a conscious decision," he adds.

Amin, for instance, is satisfied with the exposure she received while pursuing her Master's programme. "Academically, the UK is a great place to study. The system is very different

**Outward remittances for foreign education**



**What's changing**

- | US  | UK  | Global  |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>F-1 visas drop sharply</li> <li>H-1B pathway more uncertain</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dependents restricted (2024)</li> <li>Higher financial requirements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer entry-level jobs</li> <li>Tech hiring slowdown</li> <li>High inflation &amp; living costs</li> </ul> |

**Financial reality check**

Education cost: ₹30-80 lakh

EMI/month: ₹40,000-1 lakh

Time taken to repay study loans when you work.....

Abroad: 3-5 years  
In India: 10-15 years

Source: EduFund

**New pathways**

Alternative destinations

Germany, France, Netherlands

**The India pivot**

Global Capability Centres (GCCs), Start-ups, Family business

from India, it's less about rote learning and more about assignments, independent research and practical exposure, which really helps," she says.

Then, there are those who intend to join their family businesses and establish start-ups in India. "For many students, especially those from business families, there is a third path of transforming and scaling existing enterprises using global exposure. For those seeking a salaried job, Global Capability Centres (GCCs), offshore units set up by multinational compa-

nies in India to handle high-end functions such as technology, analytics, and research) are emerging as a lucrative option. They are hiring for highly skilled roles across AI, analytics, engineering and product design," says Ganeriwala.

**THE REALITY OF ROI**

Parents have always set aside funds to create an overseas education corpus for their children. Many also take out loans to cover any shortfall in funds and hope to pay them off once they start working in their destination countries. In the backdrop of the emerging visa and job scenarios abroad, however, they now need to plan for the post-study phase as well. Many might have to reset their return on 'investment' expectations.

"With education loans for foreign studies typically ranging from ₹30-80 lakh, monthly equated monthly instalments (EMIs) can reach ₹40,000 to ₹1 lakh. The 'currency mismatch' creates a significant debt trap; while a graduate earning in foreign currency might clear the debt in 3-5 years, those earning in rupees face a stretched repayment timeline of 10-15 years, impacting their long-term financial stability," says Dubey.

Amin, who currently works with a wealth management firm in India, acknowledges that salary ranges in the UK and India are not comparable, which affects loan repayments. "However, the relatively lower rent and inflation in India do ease the burden," she says.

Saha, who is pursuing a master's programme in the UK, intends to return to India for a career in business analytics. "I want to use the analytical and quantitative skills developed during my studies to help organisations or establish an organisation or maybe start a business of my own here," he says.

lier, many students assumed that a foreign degree would automatically translate into a strong job outcome and long-term work opportunities. That assumption is now being questioned," he adds.

Other countries in Europe such as Germany, France and Netherlands are emerging as sought-after alternatives. "Besides strong academic outcomes at a lower cost, these countries offer clearer post-study pathways. Overall, this is less about restriction and more about maturity. Students and families are making more informed and economically rational decisions," points out Ganeriwala.

**THE WAY FORWARD**

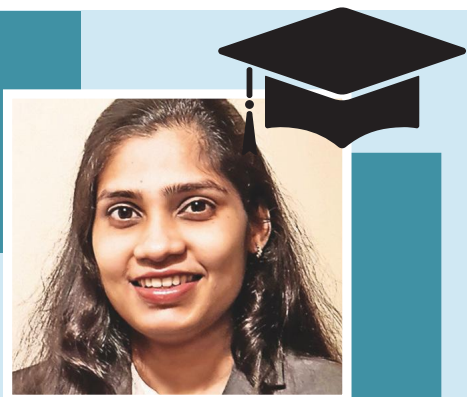
For students returning to India, judicious use of salary to repay education loans and invest can play a stabilising role. Families that plan to send their children abroad for studies must start investing as early as possible—many start as soon as kids are born—to build a corpus capable of absorbing unforeseen shocks. "Invest in a mix of diversified equity funds, debt schemes and also international mutual funds at least 10-15 years prior to the goal to build an adequate kitty," says Dhawan.

"As you get closer to the goal, it is critical to taper down the risk on the portfolio to avoid surprises that may emerge due to market volatility." Investments with a global edge can reduce the impact of rupee volatility. "This can be in the form of international stock exposure directly or through GIFT city instruments," says Dubey of EduFund.

Investing through such avenues can help mitigate the impact of rupee depreciation. "Additionally, it's important to think of your higher education abroad as a long-term financial plan. It is not just about the university or degree but also about the placement rates of these universities and whether the programmes you intend to pursue will yield job outcomes," she adds.

While your course of action after higher studies abroad depends on your needs and aspirations, meticulous financial planning, thrift and fortitude can help you navigate an unplanned return to India until you find your final calling.

**Bhavya Amin,**  
28, Mumbai



**STUDY DESTINATION**

United Kingdom

**PROGRAMME**

MS in Finance and Investment Banking

**CURRENT COURSE**

Employed with a wealth management firm

**REASONS FOR RETURNING TO INDIA**

Employer-sponsored visas now more expensive; rise in overall cost of living and working in the UK

**Abhiprit Saha,**  
22, Nabadwip



**FIRST CHOICE**

United States

**PROGRAMME**

Graduation in Environmental and Resource Economics

**CURRENT COURSE**

Master's programme in Economics in the UK

**REASONS FOR RETURNING TO INDIA**

Increasing uncertainty around visa policies, lack of long-term work opportunities in the US



## ASK THE SEXPERT



**Dr Tanaya Narendra, aka Dr Cuterus, is an Oxford-trained doctor, bestselling author and one of the country's most trusted voices on sexual and reproductive health**

**1 I am an 84-year-old man. My partner and I still enjoy affection and closeness, but our bodies cannot do what they once did. Sometimes we wonder what intimacy is supposed to look like at this age. How do older couples adapt?**

It's so beautiful that you and your partner still cherish that closeness. At your age, a great way to maintain intimacy is to move from intercourse to outercourse (no, I'm not kidding). Try cuddling, massages, or simply holding each other. Our bodies change, but our need for connection doesn't. Many couples adapt by exploring different types of touch that don't require high physical exertion. Enjoy those moments!

**2 I am a 19-year-old woman. Sometimes after sex, I get itching and tiny red bumps around the genital area. I cannot tell if it is from shaving, condoms, or something else. When should someone worry about symptoms like this?**

I am sure you must be stressed out by these bumps, but instead of stressing, just see a doctor. Tiny red bumps like this can be anything from a razor bump to an allergy from your condoms/lube, rashes from rough sex, or even an STI. A quick consultation can clear the mystery and keep you stress-free. You got this!

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# Schools have a new purpose

**As artificial intelligence reshapes industries and learning, schools must shift their focus from delivering information to developing judgement, creativity and ethical reasoning, writes author and educator Arwa Baldiwala**



IMAGE:AI

**P**redicting the future is always a problematic exercise. A decade ago, much of the education world believed that online learning would eventually erase brick-and-mortar campuses. Five or six years ago, another prediction gained momentum – that everyone in the world would need to learn coding to survive in the future workforce. Yet, the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence has already begun to challenge that assumption.

This is why the more urgent question today is not what the future will hold, but the more fundamental: What do we want from education? If we fail to answer that thoughtfully, we risk misunderstanding both the opportunities and dangers that AI presents. Artificial intelligence will reshape industries, but the deeper concern is whether it could undermine the core purposes of education: collaboration, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, empathy and emotional intelligence. These human capacities lie at the heart of what educators nurture, and AI cannot replace them.

AI should therefore be seen as a tool that can scale knowledge and enhance learning, not replace what schools and universities fundamentally do.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the scale of transformation underway. The question today is not how fast AI will advance; that trajectory is already clear. The real

question is whether our education systems will evolve quickly enough to keep pace. Global projections suggest nearly 40% of core skills will be influenced by AI, particularly in STEM and technology-driven sectors. Coding, simulation and digital design will continue to evolve, but technical knowledge alone will no longer be sufficient. Degrees will matter less than the competencies students develop.

In India, encouraging steps have already been taken. Initiatives such as Digital India and the rise of the start-up ecosystem have accelerated technological innovation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has also shifted the focus away from rote learning toward interdisciplinary thinking and technology integration. Yet policy frameworks are only the starting point. The real transformation must happen inside classrooms.

### Skills machines cannot replicate

As generative AI advances at extraordinary speed, educators must help students focus on capabilities that machines cannot easily replicate: systems thinking, ethical reasoning, interdisciplinary awareness, communication and the ability to critically evaluate AI outputs. Understanding AI's limitations and broader societal implications will become just as important as knowing how to use the technology.

Teachers will play a pivotal role in this transition. Pedagogy will need to evolve toward flipped

classrooms, project-based learning, simulations and digital tools that encourage exploration and creativity. Used responsibly, AI can reduce administrative burdens for teachers, allowing them to devote more time to mentoring and guiding students.

The goal is not simply to integrate AI tools into classrooms. The goal is to ensure that human intelligence evolves alongside artificial intelligence, becoming more thoughtful, ethical and adaptable.

### Preparing students for uncertainty

There is also considerable anxiety about the future of jobs. Technological revolutions have always followed a familiar pattern: while some roles vanish, new opportunities emerge. By 2030, AI will likely create entire categories of work that do not yet exist. In the meantime, we must prepare students for an uncertain future, and that requires reimagining education. It's vital to place greater emphasis on creative thinking, analytical reasoning and ethical decision-making. Competency-based learning and the spirit of enquiry must replace memorisation and passive learning.

Introducing AI awareness early in schools could help build this mindset. Students can begin exploring digital thinking, programming concepts and data literacy from the primary years in



Arwa Baldiwala

engaging ways. AI education should not remain confined to STEM subjects; it should extend into a broader STEAM framework integrating arts, creativity and design thinking.

This again brings us back to teachers. Empowering educators with AI literacy will be essential, not only so they know how to use these tools, but also when not to use them.

Students must also learn to move beyond simply asking chatbots for answers, because the future will belong to those who can collaborate intelligently with AI, using one system to research, another to verify and another to synthesise insights. The aim is for AI to become a partner in problem-solving, not a shortcut to information.

To prepare students for this world, education must cultivate several essential competencies: AI fluency, iteration, human-AI collaboration and curiosity. As automation handles routine work, human beings will increasingly focus on strategic thinking, decision-making and innovation. Curiosity will drive these abilities and ensure learners continue exploring beyond what machines produce.

Seen through this lens, AI does not diminish the importance of education; it makes it indispensable. Because when machines can deliver information, schools must focus on a greater ambition: shaping how people think, question and use knowledge.



SONAMKHAN\_72

# People would shout Oye Oye in public transport: Sonam Khan

The 90s actress gets nostalgic about the hit song Oye Oye after watching references of it in Dhurandhar 2

**J**ust like the first part of Aditya Dhar's Dhurandhar rekindled some fond memories associated with Ramba Ho, Dhurandhar: The Revenge has references to Oye Oye from the 1995 film Tridev. Actress Sonam Khan turned nostalgic after watching the film, which features the iconic track Oye Oye from Tridev (1995). Sharing memories from the song's original release, she recalled its massive popularity in the 90s.

She wrote, "Oye Oye! Watched Dhurandhar 2 yesterday and hearing my song in the movie bought back some good old memories, which I

would like to share with all of you. Hope you enjoy the trivia." Revealing she wasn't the first choice for the film, Sonam said, "I was in fact roped in at the last minute, while I was shooting with Yash Chopra Sir in Hyderabad for Vijay. I flew down from that shoot just to attend the mahurat of the film." Talking about her first day on set, she added, "My first day on the set of Tridev was the shoot of Tirchi Topiwale song... we were originally meant to shoot the song in a single outfit, but instead I ended up with six or seven changes."

She also shared how she discov-



ered the song's popularity. She said, "How I did get to know the song was such a big hit? Well it was when my driver told me then, that people were shouting 'oye oye', in public transport and on streets. We had no social media then. We just had people calling each other by just saying 'oye oye!' (sic)."



**Sonam Khan; (inset) a still from the song Oye Oye in Tridev**

## Are you scrolling past a real connection?

Almost 46% people experience phubbing, which is when your significant other ignores you in favour of their phone. In the long run, this can cause lower relationship satisfaction and higher rates of depression.

In response to this important concern, The Times of India has partnered with leading institutions like IIT Delhi, NIMHANS, and CENABH for an initiative that will help provide credible, research-driven insights to foster a healthy digital balance in your life.



Scan the QR to take a scientific psychological assessment of your digital habits.

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CHANGE Begins Here

# This is one of my favourite characters, says Shahid Kapoor

The actor begins shooting for the second season of Farzi 2, calling the new script a natural progression

TEJAS KUDTARKAR



Shahid Kapoor; (left) a still from Farzi

**S**hahid Kapoor has begun shooting for the much-anticipated second season of the crime-thriller Farzi. The announcement came at an event recently, where the official posters were unveiled. Calling it one of his favourite roles, the actor shared his excitement about returning to the series and revealed that the new script struck an immediate chord.

"This is one of the favorite characters that I've ever played," Kapoor said, adding, "I am so excited that we're finally doing the second season. Whatever they have taken me through sounds like a level up from the first season, but also it sounds very much like the natural progression of the story. I love the fact that they've organically developed it in a manner where it almost felt like I was reminded of everything that happened in the first season. As an artist, that organic connectivity always really resonates."

Directed by Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK, the first season, which premiered in 2023, marked Kapoor's digital debut and followed Sunny, a gifted artist drawn into the high-risk world of fake currency.

-ANI



Ryan Gosling; (right) in a still from The Big Short

## Why Ryan avoids wigs after The Big Short

**R**yan Gosling revealed that he has trauma when it comes to wearing wigs on-screen, recalling a memorable on-set moment with Steve Carell. The actor currently sports long hair and a bushy beard in Project Hail Mary, where he plays science teacher Ryland Grace, who initially appears as a space caveman. During an appearance on Late Night with Seth Meyers, he said, "I have a little bit of trauma because I went for a bit on this film, The Big Short. And when I stepped out in my wig and in costume, and I ran into Steve Carell, who was the first person I saw. He just stared at me. And he said, 'Never do this again.' I was like, 'Damn it.'"



The actor added, "It's the last thing you want [to hear from a scene partner]! Never do this again — and I didn't until now!" He added, "I never spoke to him again."

The actor spoke about his fascination with space, a recurring theme in his work. He said, "[Space] can be hard to understand, but it's important to find a way to make it accessible but also feel realistic."

-Agencies

## I do plan to do my masters but not immediately: Ashnoor Kaur

Balancing fame and academics, the actress says education remains a long-term goal



Ashnoor Kaur

**I** Hasti Doshi  
hasti.doshi@timesofindia.com

**G**rowing up in the spotlight is no easy feat, but Ashnoor Kaur, who started her career as a child artiste, has managed to strike a fine balance between her professional journey and academic aspirations.

At 21, Ashnoor is clear about one thing — higher studies remain an important milestone she intends to achieve. While the fast-paced nature of the entertainment industry often makes returning to academics seem daunting, she views it not as a pressure, but as a personal goal she is determined to fulfill.

"Definitely, I do plan to do my masters. Not immediately, this year I want to focus on my projects and also do my research on what and where I want to study.

But masters will happen," she shares.

Ashnoor, who was recently seen in Bigg Boss and has acted in shows like Patiala Babes and Suman Indori is also mindful of how fame influences opportunities. "With more visibility, you meet more people and more avenues open up. But at the same time, some opportunities also close because certain projects don't want a very familiar face," she explains.

**“This year I want to focus on my film projects and research on what and where I want to study”**

— Ashnoor

Despite the dual nature of recognition, her outlook remains optimistic. "I would say it all looks positive because I think it's positive. I really believe that life is a projection of what your mindset is. I am in talks for a few projects, and I am looking forward to this year," she says.

## 05 THINGS TO DO TODAY

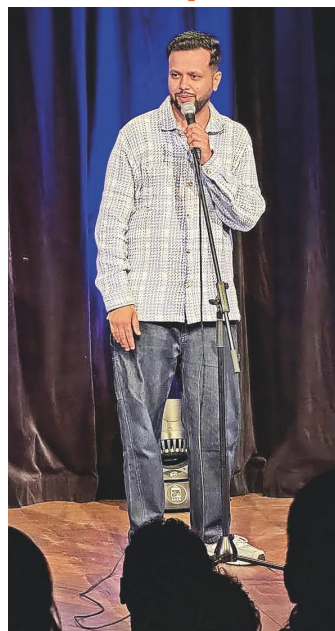


### Reimagine the everyday

Immerse yourself in the visual poetry of everyday lives, homes and families at an exhibition that brings together nine photographers of the 8:30 Collective. Titled 'Interior Weather', the artworks reflect on memory and belonging.

**WHERE:** Dilip Piramal Art Gallery, NCPA, Nariman Point  
**WHEN:** Till March 28, opens 12 PM  
**ENTRY:** Free  
**CALL:** 02266223754

### Get to the punchline



Grab your seats as stand-up comedians Raunaq Rajani and Sapan Verma join forces for 'Duos', belting out all-new material. It's bound to be a night of unexpected punchlines and sharp, observational humour.

**WHERE:** Khar Comedy Club, Khar (W)  
**WHEN:** 10 PM  
**ENTRY:** ₹499  
**BOOK:** @kharcomedyclub

### Explore weather science

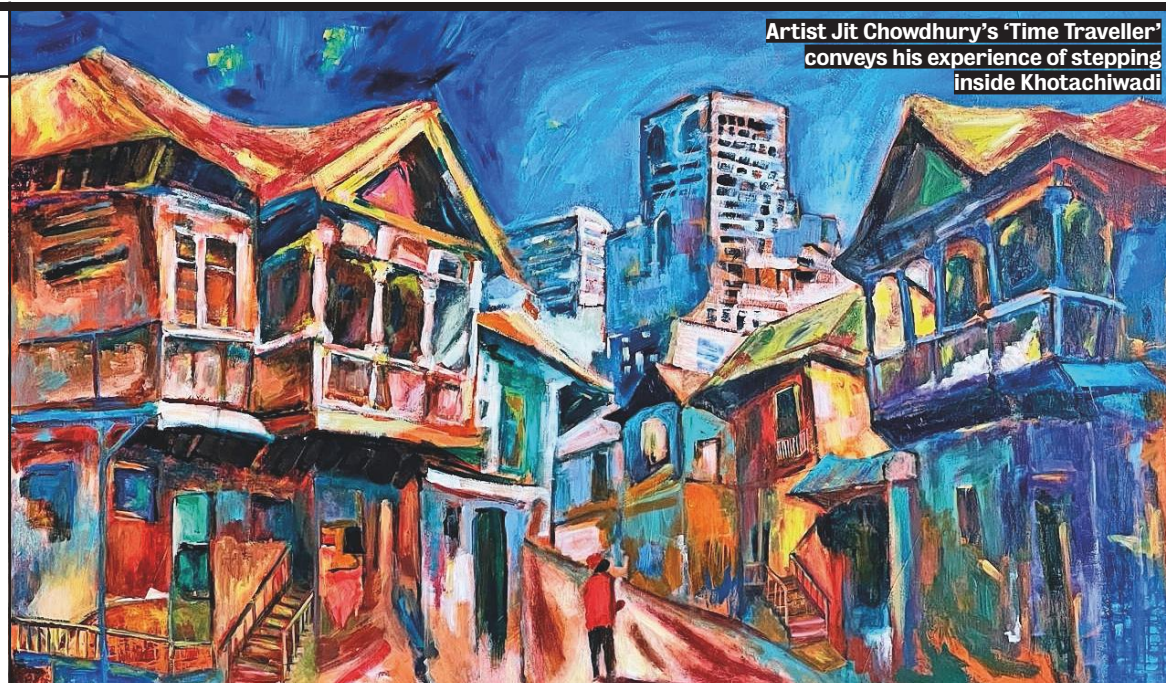
Discover the science behind forecasting at the World Meteorological Day 2026 exhibition hosted by the Regional Meteorological Centre Mumbai. Experience displays, instruments and insights into modern meteorology at this open public showcase in Colaba.

**WHERE:** Regional Meteorological Centre, Colaba  
**WHEN:** 10.30 AM  
**ENTRY:** Free  
**BOOK:** 02222174716

### Know your history

Join the 19th Godrej Archives Annual Lecture featuring historian Dr Lakshmi Subramanian, exploring how archives shape business history, object narratives, and research insights. The lecture will look at the dynamic relationship between historians and archival records.

**WHERE:** Royal Bombay Yacht Club, Colaba  
**WHEN:** 6 PM  
**ENTRY:** RSVP only  
**BOOK:** @godrej.archives



Artist Jit Chowdhury's 'Time Traveller' conveys his experience of stepping inside Khotachiwadi

# A WADI IN WAITING

The past, present and future of Mumbai's most iconic heritage precinct — Khotachi Wadi, form the central theme of an ongoing exhibition that features works by a Mumbai native and a discerning visitor

**Anindita Paul**  
mirrorfeedback@timesofindia.com

Tucked deep into the urban maze of Mumbai, Khotachi Wadi exists as somewhat of a living contradiction. Here, Portuguese-style houses harken back to a pre-Raj Mumbai, whose large verandas look out on a city, constantly straddling a variety of influences, and whose courtyards still hold space for memory and metaphor. It is this slice of the city that two artists working in different mediums and from dissimilar backgrounds interpret, not as it was, but as it is. The show, titled Shadows of Empire, is on display at 47-A, Khotachi Wadi, until April 19, and highlights the dissimilarities of their approaches to a common theme.

### Present imperfect

Jit Chowdhury, a Kolkata-based artist, illustrator and visual storyteller, is reimagining snapshots of the precinct in natural indigo and shola, the pith that is found inside mangrove weeds — a medium that is common to both his homeland and Mumbai's ecology. "I use shola as a symbol of the natives, of those who claimed the land first. Whether through my usual practice in Bengal or this body of work that is based on Khotachi Wadi, shola is the basis on which the stories lie," he explains. To him, it was particularly important that his art communicates the beauty and value of this historic neighbourhood and

highlights the magnitude of the loss to the city and its people, if Khotachi Wadi and its culture are not treasured and ultimately fade away. One of his pieces particularly emphasises this concern: named Tall Shadows, it depicts a hand-shaped dark shadow looming over the bungalows. Lurking in this shadow are the tall buildings standing behind the village, overlooking it and waiting to seize and claim it.

### Living legacy

If Chowdhury's muse is Khotachi Wadi's landscape, his fellow artist Kaushal Parikh, an ex-banker and Mumbai native, uses his craft to unveil the hidden lives ensconced within the wadi's fading bungalows

— the combination of his sharp-eyed camera and bold mixed-media strokes lays bare a more intimate look of the neighbourhood, one that is laced with humour, controversy and colour. Of his approach, he says, "Khotachi Wadi's legacy is steeped in time, embedded with charming idiosyncrasies, even as the future of the wadi looms around it, in the form of impersonal towering buildings." His piece, Time Traveller, is representative of his own experience of stepping into the past when he steps into Khotachi Wadi and walking back into the future when he leaves. "The expressive nature of the painting is a reference to the impermanence of things, with change in the guise of progress always lurking around the corner," he elaborates.



Jit Chowdhury



Kaushal Parikh

And then, there's Rockstar, which celebrates James Ferreira, an iconic Indian fashion designer and one of Khotachiwadi's most prominent residents, who lives and works out of bungalow 47-G. Having made his mark dressing movie stars and city socialites, Ferreira's home also doubles up as one of the city's most unique homestays that offers a gateway into Bombay from another time. As president of the Khotachi Wadi Heritage Trust, Ferreira is

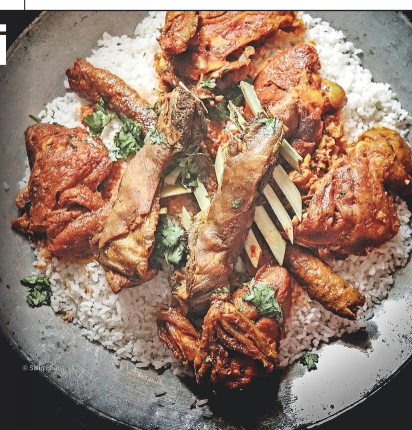
known for the innovative ways he devises to ensure that Khotachi Wadi continues to be at the forefront of the city's culture — whether through protest marches, pop-up dinners, grand Christmas galas or art exhibitions.

### Memories that meander

In a city that is at constant battle with its indigenous character, where the old has increasingly been torn down to make way for the new, Khotachi Wadi serves as a quiet reminder of the Bombay that once was — a patchwork of overlapping colonial legacies and native histories. And, through their artistic lenses, both Chowdhury and Parikh hope to hold on to this fading memory for just a little longer and, perhaps, to have their audience fall in love with this heritage precinct just as they once did.

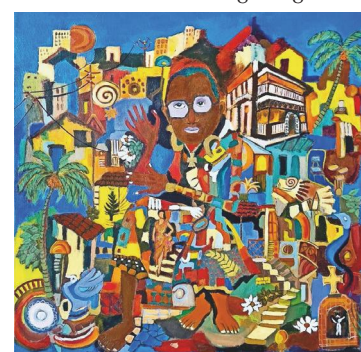
## Savour Kashmiri flavours

Discover the rich culinary heritage of Kashmir at The Merchants through home chef Aparamita Sapru's soulful menu. Experience authentic recipes, time-honoured techniques, and rich flavours. Reserve your spot now, as today is your final chance to indulge in this Kashmiri feast.



**WHERE:** Fairmont, Vile Parle  
**ENTRY:** ₹3500

**WHEN:** 7 PM  
**CALL:** 8097555901



Rockstar celebrates James Ferreira, an iconic Indian fashion designer



-Former SA skipper, Faf Du Plessis

# CAN DELHI CAPITALISE ON KEY MOMENTS?

GETTY IMAGES

**After winning five games on the bounce last year, their campaign fizzled out as they were unable to close out games**

**Nitin Naik**  
nitin.naik@timesofindia.com

**M**ay 21, 2025: MI laboured to 132 for 5, batting first in 18 overs in a must-win game for both sides to ensure qualification. Mukesh Sharma's 19th over went for 27, and Dushmantha Chameera's last over went for 21, and MI got an above-par 180 on an unusually difficult pitch at the Wankhede, thanks to unreal hitting from Suryakumar Yadav and Naman Dhir. Jasprit Bumrah and Mitchell Santner then blew the Delhi Capitals away to bowl them out for 121.

It was that kind of campaign for the Capitals: Dominating large portions of an innings or match, only to lose it towards the end with both bat and ball.

## Choke that started the slide

The corresponding fixture at home, early in the tournament, which was their first loss after winning 5 on the trot, started the slide. Chasing 206 for victory, Karun Nair belted a heroic 89 off 40 balls that included a takedown of Bumrah, who he hit for 18 runs in an over, a record by any Indian batter against the pacer. At 119 for 1 in 10 overs and 87 needed in 60 balls with 9 wickets remaining, the game looked done and dusted.

Then, Santner castled Nair with the delivery of the IPL, and the wheels just came off. A hat-trick of run-outs in the 19th over, when they needed 23 off 12 balls, signalled the panic in the camp as they lost by 12 runs.

## Eyeing depth over destruction

A look at the squad in 2026 gives you the indication that the management

wanted a batting line-up with more pedigree rather than pure pyrotechnics.

## How did they do that?

By releasing the maverick called Jake Fraser-McGurk, who was retained by the franchise for 9 cr. The Aussie just could not get going in 2025, scoring only 55 runs in 6 games (average 9, strike rate 105).

His early departure often exposed the middle order. It also forced them to keep shuffling KL Rahul up and down the order.

## Ace replacement in Nissanka

By bringing in Sri Lankan dynamic opener Pathum Nissanka (Rs 4 cr), DC got in someone who can bat as aggressively as McGurk, but who has more international experience and big-match temperament (see his hundred vs India in the Asia Cup and the ton he scored vs Australia in the T20 WC). They also roped in English pocket rocket Ben Duckett (Rs 2 cr).

## The back-up plan

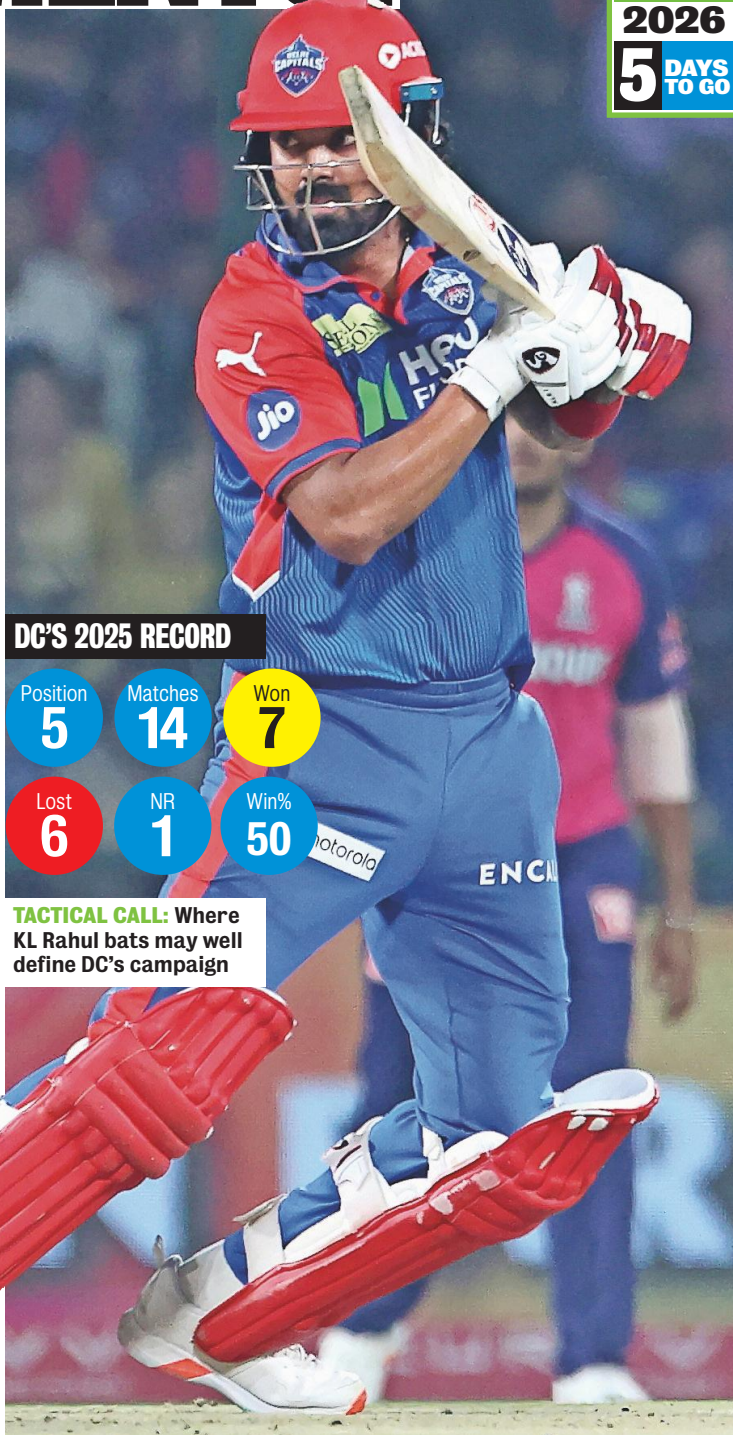
If the two openers fail to fire, they can also go back to one of their yesteryear stars, Prithvi Shaw, who they picked up for Rs 75 lakh. The right-handed batter went astray for a while, but seems to be a born-again cricketer with renewed focus. He can be used as an impact sub.

## Miller for a perfect finish

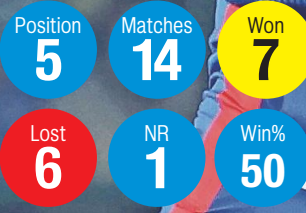
David Miller has been in and around the IPL for 13 years and knows most Indian grounds well. He is also one of the finest finishers in the game, and by getting him for Rs 2 cr, the



**Axar Patel**



## DC'S 2025 RECORD



**TACTICAL CALL:** Where KL Rahul bats may well define DC's campaign

**“Our team (DC) is well-balanced. Everyone wants to win. We are going with a winning mentality. We want to dominate”**

-DC batter, Ashutosh Sharma

Capitals have got someone who can control the end overs with a calm mind, something that was lacking last year. Last year, it seemed as if Ashutosh Sharma and Tristan Stubbs had to play the miracle men once too often.

## Watch out for

Auqib Nabi Dar (Rs 8.4 cr): The Jammu & Kashmir pacer was the highest wicket-taker (60 wickets @ 12.5) for the side in a generational Ranji Trophy triumph. He was picked to provide fast bowling support to champion Aussie left-arter Mitchell Starc. They also got good bargains in the shape of the towering Kiwi Kyle Jamieson and the slow-ball master Lungi Ngidi (Rs 2 cr each). It allows the coaching staff to rotate the pacers without compromising on quality.

If you add the Indian bowling core of Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, T Natarajan and Mukesh Kumar to that group, you know why runs could be at a premium for the sides facing DC.

## Rana comes 'home'

Nitish Rana has played all his early domestic cricket in Delhi. Having been traded from RR (Rs. 4.2 cr) it gives the side a left-handed hitter in the middle order. It also allows KL Rahul to play the role that he likes, that of a tactical anchor, and frees up Tristan Stubbs to unleash his power.

## Expected playing XI

Pathum Nissanka, Abhishek Porel (wk), Nitish Rana, KL Rahul, Tristan Stubbs, David Miller, Axar Patel (c), Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Kuldeep Yadav, Auqib Nabi Dar.  
**Impact sub:** Ben Duckett/T Natarajan

## BEST FINISH Runners up (2020)

### Opening fixtures

<b>April 1:</b> Vs LSG, Lucknow
<b>April 4:</b> Vs MI, Delhi
<b>April 8:</b> Vs GT, Delhi
<b>April 11:</b> Vs CSK, Chennai

# Jonty trains Mumbai's jr cricketers

**Gaurav Gupta**  
gaurav.gupta4@timesofindia.com

**S**outh African fielding great Jonty Rhodes conducted a one-day camp for Mumbai's junior men's and women's cricketers — from Under-14 to Under-19 — at the Mumbai Cricket Association's (MCA) academy in the Bandra-Kurla Complex on Saturday.

“It was an honour to have Jonty at the MCA academy in BKC for a special training session for our junior boys and girls. He is an icon of world cricket and one of the finest fielders in the history of the game. His pres-

ence will inspire our young cricketers,” MCA president Ajinkya Naik told Mumbai Mirror.

“Ideally, we wanted him for a week-long camp, but even a day's exposure to his expertise and world-class fielding techniques is invaluable,” he added. Rhodes worked closely with the youngsters on key aspects such as agility, anticipation, catching techniques and ground fielding, emphasising the importance of fitness, reflexes and mental sharpness in modern-day cricket. The session also included interactive drills and practical demonstrations



**Jonty Rhodes**

**MCA to host T20 scouting tournament**  
Meanwhile, the MCA will organise a 15-day, eight-team T20 talent scouting tournament from mid-April to help franchises identify players ahead of the T20 Mumbai League, which begins on June 1.

The auction for the league is likely to be held in the first week of May. On Jan 14, the MCA's apex council had announced plans for a dedicated T20 scouting tournament in line with the evolving demands of modern cricket. The tournament will serve as a merit-based platform for young players to progress to the T20 Mumbai League.

## YOU DON'T FORGET A PLACE LIKE KOTLA: SHAW BACK WITH CAPITALS

### #New Dekhi

“You don't forget a place like Kotla — not the noise, not the silence, not what it made you... Delhi, your boy is home.” With these words, Prithvi Shaw marked his return to the Delhi Capitals (DC) camp ahead of IPL 2026, rejoining the franchise after a brief absence.

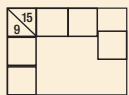
Shaw's long association with Delhi had ended after seven seasons when he was released ahead of the IPL 2025 auction. The 26-year-old then went unsold, with DC opting not to bring him back at the time. He had to wait for another opportunity in the IPL 2026 auction, remaining unpicked in the main rounds before finally being snapped up in the accelerated phase for Rs 75 lakh by his former franchise. **MMB**





## KAKURO

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas



for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9. Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.

	11	18		24	8			11	14
17			8		8			16	
4			16			15			
	22		27			11			
	9			14		4			
		15			11				12
	10								
11	7				10		13		
3			8			11	8		
	15			24					
	4			3					

## GOFIGURE

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

**Easy**  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] = 20  
 3 7 7 9

**Medium**  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] = 8  
 5 5 7 9

**Hard**  
 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] = 2  
 3 4 7 8

The operators  
 ⊕ ⊗ ⊕ ⊖

## MENSA PUZZLE

Enter the missing number to complete this grid.

5	21	2
4	20	6
8	55	

**SOLUTION**  
 Working in rows the central figure equals the difference in the squares of the left and right hand numbers.

## WORDSEARCH

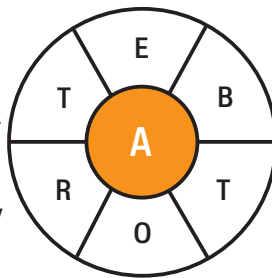
**Meat**  
 Can you find the words connected in one way or the other with the theme indicated by the title in today's Word Search?  
 The words may be read horizontally, vertically or diagonally either forwards or backwards, but always in straight lines. Use a ruler to cross them through as you find them.

J	Y	E	N	D	I	K	P	R	B	O	R	N
Q	X	N	O	T	T	U	M	R	D	I	O	O
E	G	D	I	R	T	R	A	P	S	X	N	M
M	R	E	V	I	L	W	H	S	T	O	N	M
N	I	T	A	P	N	L	O	A	E	H	O	A
O	E	N	K	E	A	L	I	G	A	A	C	G
S	S	L	C	F	E	L	I	F	K	M	A	Y
I	U	T	F	E	F	P	L	A	M	B	B	E
N	O	O	H	A	G	G	I	S	N	U	T	K
E	R	N	D	E	P	A	T	E	P	R	H	R
V	G	G	L	I	A	U	Q	V	O	G	A	U
K	C	U	D	N	M	R	S	B	R	E	R	T
Y	O	E	S	O	O	G	T	Z	K	R	E	K

**Wordlist:**  
 Bacon, Brawn, Duck, Gammon, Goose, Grouse, Haggis, Ham, Hamburger, Hare, Heart, Kidney, Lamb, Liver, Mince, Mutton, Offal, Oxtail, Partridge, Pate, Pigeon, Pork, Quail, Rissole, Steak, Tongue, Tripe, Turkey, Venison

## BULL'S EYE

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.



16 Average 18 Good  
 20 Outstanding

## FAST FIVE

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the 10 words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given? One letter has already been entered to get you started. On your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
	K			
6				
7				
8				
9				

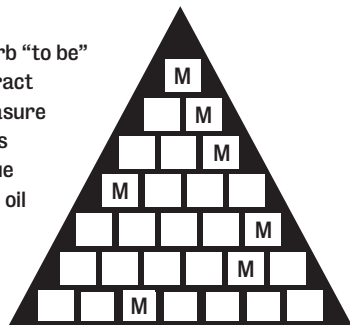
**Across**  
 1 Kelps  
 6 XI Pie  
 7 Medea  
 8 Pad at  
 9 Taros

**Down**  
 1 Pears  
 2 Do kid  
 3 Tee ax  
 4 A limp  
 5 Tapes

## ALPHATRIANGLE

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

- 1 Meter, abbr.
- 2 Part of the verb "to be"
- 3 \_\_\_ it up, overact
- 4 Jet speed measure
- 5 Attractiveness
- 6 Intensity of hue
- 7 Solid essential oil



## MUMBAI MINI CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4			
									5
6						7			
		8	9		10				
		11		12		13			
14						15			
		16							

### Across

- 1 Area formerly known as Koliwada (3,5)
- 6 Law professor's degree (3)
- 7 Marsh (3)
- 8 \_\_\_ Shri (26th January award) (5)
- 11 Marine \_\_\_ : First stop on a North bound Western line train (5)
- 14 Cleaning agent (3)
- 15 Sugar suffix ? (3)
- 16 Byculla's Hotel \_\_\_ (8)

### Down

- 1 Credulous (8)
- 2 Collide with (4)
- 3 Barren (4)
- 4 Car manufacturer \_\_\_ Romeo (4)
- 5 Native (8)
- 9 Bird: prefix (3)
- 10 One of the Three Stooges ? (3)
- 11 \_\_\_ majesty : treason toward the king or country ? (4)
- 12 Sports club in Worli (4)
- 13 Carbonated beverage (4)

## STRIKEOUT

B	R	H	M	N	L		B	U	K	I	T	H
E	A	U	T	A	A		W	R	A	U	I	
A		P		D	A	I	E	E		O		A
H		G		N	A	E	C	H	A		R	A
I	N	O	R	K	S	D		A	G	A	I	C
K		U		H	K	A	A	A		O		M
L		E		M	E	L	L	S		I		R
A	S	O		N	T	O		S	M	G	O	R
S	Y	A	D		N	E	A	E		S	R	A
S	L	E	A	R	U	T		W		S	T	R
	H		S	R	O	O	P	E	R		N	
	A		T	H	E	I	G	C	E		T	
S	C	T	E	E		O		O	T	R	U	A
A	M	R	N	E		N		N	V	E	A	S
T	H	R	D		H	I	I		N	S	A	I
L	E	O	R		S	D	T		A	O	S	H
A		D		S	U	A	R	E		L		I
L		R		E	K	C	I	D		I		S
E	B	E	S	T	C	E		M	O	R	A	C
L		N		R	I	D	Y	E	H	S		R
E	O	E	D	A	N		A	E	E	D	E	D
B	S	T	A	T	E		L	H	A	N	A	E

This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

## RIDDLER

My first wears my second; my third might be  
 What my first would acquire if he went to the sea.  
 Put together my one, two, three  
 And the belle of New York is the girl for me.

What am I?





comics | UNGOD CREATOR / RANDEEP SINGH



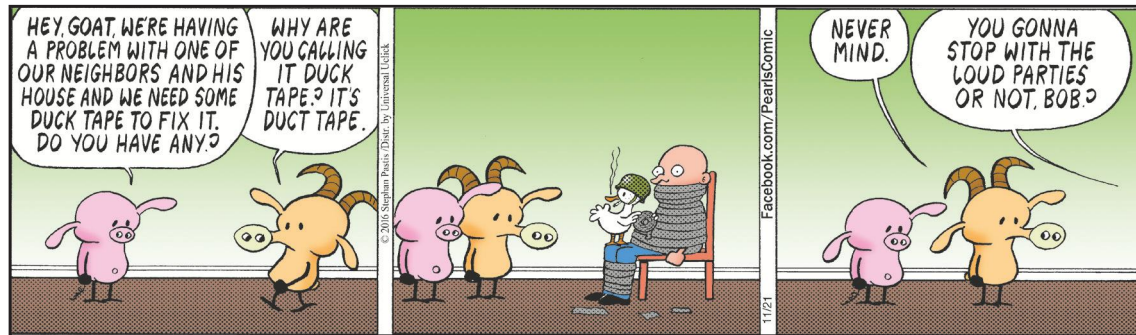
CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON



BETTY BY GARY DELAINEY AND GERRY RASMUSSEN



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE BY STEPHANS PASTIS



PEANUTS BY CHARLES SCHULZ



HANUMAN TO THE RESCUE BY L. PRABHU / M. MOHANDAS



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

Optimism shapes your outlook. Love feels generous and joyful. Career opportunities expand when you share your vision. Financial matters benefit from positive planning. Travel broadens your horizons and confidence. At home, conversations feel inspiring. Your enthusiasm becomes contagious, helping you attract people and situations that reflect your hopeful, forward-looking mindset.

CAPRICORN



A small loss soon creates space for progress. Don't cling to what leaves; focus on what arrives. Change opens doors constantly, replacing endings with beginnings, growth, opportunity, learning, renewal ahead.

CANCER



Success feels effortless, but don't tempt fate. Focus on long-term goals while managing details carefully. Balanced attention prevents mistakes and keeps progress steady rather than reckless or careless now behavior.

AQUARIUS



Communicate gently this week. Soft words persuade better than force. Choose patience, empathy, and forgiveness to bring others toward understanding and cooperation at home, work.

LEO



Attraction draws opposites together briefly, then highlights unbridgeable differences. Accept that not all partnerships last. Some connections simply aren't designed for long-term collaboration.

PISCES



If plans feel uninspiring, postpone them. Rest deliberately this week. Mental and physical recovery now restores energy later, boosting motivation, clarity, and performance.

VIRGO



Imagination lifts your mood now, and that's healthy. Lightness returns after seriousness. Allow humor, playfulness, and creative wandering to refresh your outlook and bring joy back into daily life again.

ARIES



This week, slow down and let others share the load. Ask for help freely; friends and colleagues are willing. You don't need to handle everything alone, so release control rest.

LIBRA



Harmony comes easily this week, but beware excessive leniency. Forgive minor slips, yet address serious issues promptly. Fair boundaries protect respect and prevent bigger problems later from escalating unnecessarily again.

TAURUS



Don't wait for directions at work. Decide next move independently, take initiative, and act confidently. Superiors will notice, appreciate drive, and be impressed by results you deliver through leadership initiative.

SCORPIO



Multiple responsibilities test you this week, yet you manage competently. Avoid adding more commitments, or everything could collapse. Know your limits and protect existing obligations.

GEMINI



Confidence is high and support surrounds you this week. Step forward, showcase abilities, and engage widely. Influential observers are paying attention, so demonstrate talent and seize opportunities as they appear.

SAGITTARIUS



Being kind won't suffice now. Early events demand firmness and clear boundaries. Address underperformance directly, show seriousness, and ensure standards are understood without apology or hesitation.

www.sundeepkochar.com

# RUNNING THROUGH EXTREMES

From minus 20 degrees to 40 in 7 days, Mumbai couple conquer World Marathon Challenge

Mufeed Mahdi Rizvi  
mirrorfeedback@timesofindia.com

From minus 20 degrees in the icy expanse of Antarctica to the 40-degree heat of Perth, the human body is rarely exposed to such extremes — especially within a span of seven days.

For 57-year-old Sanjay Dharewa, however, it was less about pushing limits and more about pursuing a purpose. In one relentless sweep across the globe, Sanjay and his wife Rima took on the World Marathon Challenge 2026 — seven marathons on seven continents in seven days — one of the toughest endurance feats in the world.

What makes their story even more compelling is not just the distances they covered, but the life they carried alongside it: business responsibilities, family commitments, physical setbacks, and at an age most would associate with slowing down.

"This is the seven-day, seven-continent, seven-marathons challenge... and this year both my wife and I completed it together," Sanjay said.

It began on January 31 in Antarctica, the most unforgiving starting line imaginable. The temperature hovered around minus 20 degrees, and the course was carved into a frozen wilderness. Runners looped a 4.2-km track ten times, battling not just distance but nature itself. "The temperature was around minus 20... but the main issue was the ice storms," Sanjay recalled. "The wind was maybe around 40 to 50 kmph... that was the toughest part."

Each step forward felt like resistance against the planet itself. The final laps were not about pace, but persistence. And yet, that was just the beginning. From Antarctica, the race became a blur of continents and time

zones — 18 of them in total. Cape Town, Perth, Dubai, Madrid, Fortaleza, and finally Miami. Airports replaced rest zones. Airplanes became bedrooms. Recovery was reduced to whatever sleep they could steal mid-flight.

"You don't get rest... you rest only during flights," Sanjay said. "Normally, after one race you take one or two weeks to recover, but here it's back-to-back." In Perth, the pendulum swung to the other extreme. The race began at 5 pm, yet the temperature still touched 40 degrees.

Through all seven continents, Sanjay maintained a relentless rhythm — 42.2 kilometres each time. But in Miami, with six marathons already behind him, he chose not to slow down. He went further. "I did 42 km on each continent, and in the final leg in Miami I did 50 km," he said.

That decision made him the first Indian to complete an ultramarathon within the World Marathon Challenge — an achievement that demanded both physical endurance and mental resilience. "This race is not just physical; the mental challenge is much greater," he said. "If you decide to do something, you can do it."

At 57, with a career in the diamond trade and a family of four children, Sanjay's journey breaks the mould of what endurance athletes are expected to look like. "Even with family and

**Even with family and business commitments, it is possible to take on extreme athletic challenges. It is not about what you do, but how you commit to it** —Sanjay Dharewa



## THE DHAREWAS' FEAT

- **Sanjay Dharewa (57):** Completed all 7 marathons + 50 km ultra in Miami
- **Rima Dharewa:** Completed 7

half marathons (21.1 km each)

- **Highlight:** Rima finished first in 5 of the 7 races
- **Challenge:** Extreme weather (-20°C to 40°C), minimal recovery, travel fatigue



## WORLD MARATHON CHALLENGE: THE ULTIMATE TEST

- **Format:** 7 marathons in 7 days across 7 continents
- **Distance:** 295 km+ in one week (42.2 km each race)
- **Start:** Antarctica (extreme cold, sub-zero conditions)
- **Finish:** Miami, USA
- **Continents covered:** Antarctica, Africa, Australia, Asia, Europe, South America, North America

business commitments, it is possible to take on extreme athletic challenges," he said. "It is not about what you do, but how you commit to it."

Alongside him was Rima, matching the challenge stride for stride. She completed 21.1 kilometres on each continent, stepping into a league few ever reach. But her journey came with its own battles. "A couple of months before the event, I was nursing a leg injury. Earlier, after one run I used to rest for two weeks," she said.

"So managing seven consecutive races was very challenging." And yet, she endured — not by force, but by focus. "I think it's totally a mind game.

Once you control your mind, you can push your body much further," she said. Her days blurred into a simple, relentless cycle.

"Our routine was just run, go back to the plane, sleep... I don't know how seven days passed," she said. What began as a condition — run if you want to come along — turned into triumph. Not only did she complete the challenge, she excelled, finishing first in five of the seven half marathons. "It was a very different and wonderful experience," she said.

For Sanjay, the challenge extended beyond distance and terrain. "Being strict vegetarians, food was also a chal-

lenge... in Dubai I had to vomit twice and suffered loose motions," he said. "But that is part of the challenge — you have to keep going."

That, perhaps, is the essence of the World Marathon Challenge.

By the time they reached Miami in the early hours of February 6, the finish line was not just a destination. It was a culmination of resilience — of choosing to continue when stopping would have been easier. And in the middle of it all, a 57-year-old businessman and his determined partner proved a simple, powerful truth:

"If you decide to do something, you can do it."

## Is LeBron James running out of records to chase?

LeBron James might be running out of records to chase.

He already has gotten plenty of them: most points scored, most seasons played, most minutes played, most All-NBA selections, most All-Star selections, most field goals made, most field goals attempted, most playoff games, most playoff points, highest career earnings ... James has all those marks, and probably many more.

And that list doesn't even include ones that James' Los Angeles Lakers teammate Austin Reaves adds to the tally — highly nuanced and perhaps made-up categories like most sneakers worn and most shoestrings used.

"He says a new stat every day about me," James said.

James took outright possession of yet another record Saturday night,

when he started the Lakers' game in Orlando and officially played in the 1,612th regular-season game of his career — breaking a tie with Robert Parish for the most in NBA history.

It's an obvious tribute to James' longevity. He is in his 23rd season, one more than Vince Carter's previous record.

Entering Saturday, there are 79 players who have logged NBA minutes this season and weren't even born when

James played his debut game in the league on Oct. 29, 2003. "It's not like I'm like writing things down and looking at the record book and saying: 'I'm going to get that, I'm going to get that, I'm going to get that.' It just kind of happened," James said. "It was not on the list of things that I wanted to accomplish." AP



## DOUBLE GLORY FOR CONSCIENT SPORTS

Conscient Sports White sealed their dominant run by beating NYN Sports Academy 2-0 to lift the Under-12 SFL Football League Mumbai title. Conscient Sports White also bagged the Under-10 title beating MH Oranje FC with a 1-0 win. In the Under-8 final, MH Oranje FC Bhandup produced a strong defensive showing to secure a 1-0 victory over Kandivali FC. The award ceremony was graced by former India internationals Henry Menezes and Santosh Kashyap as well as Dronacharya Award-winning coach Bimal Ghosh.

## DIJVIJAY WINS MAIDEN CCI SNOOKER CROWN

Punjab cueist Digvijay Kadian continued his sparkling run of form and steamrolled past PSPB's Brijesh Damani 7-1 in the best-of-13 frame final of the CCI Snooker Classic 2026 at the Cricket Club of India's Wilson Jones billiards hall on Sunday.

Digvijay, constructed breaks of 88 (2nd frame), 67 (3rd frame), 91 (6th frame) and 37 (8th frame) as he went on to record a 55-59, 88-17, 77-1, 83-73, 76-36, 92-0, 62-53, and 95-0 win for his maiden senior title. He pocketed Rs 3.5 lakh.

## Taronish, Tanvi triumph

Taronish Irani clinched the men's 10K title with an impressive time of 35:45, while Tanvi Lad secured the women's title with a strong finish of 42:56 at the third edition of the Bombay Gymkhana 10K Run 2026. Around 2,000 participants took part in the event as runners competed across two categories — the 10K Run and the 5K Fun Run.

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