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Found injured in Lajpat Nagar park, Kashmiri garment business owner dies

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 4

A 30-YEAR-OLD Kashmiri garment business owner died after he was found injured in a park in Lajpat Nagar, the Delhi Police said Wednesday.

Police said eyewitnesses and residents of the area claimed he was wandering around the locality on Tuesday before he started banging his head on the walls inside the park. "One of the residents, also a doctor, informed the police and immediately took the victim to a hospital where he was undergoing treatment," a police officer said. He later died. His family alleged that he may have been attacked by unidentified people.

However, police said, prima facie, it appears the injuries were self-inflicted and the victim succumbed during treatment.

A police officer said the man's family told them he would often come to Delhi to look after the family-run garment business. He had reached Delhi on May 20, they said. His family members also said he suffered from migraine and that they couldn't contact him after 4 pm on Tuesday.

Police said further investigation is underway.

The body has been sent to his family in Kashmir's Sehgar Ali Kadal area after post-mortem proceedings were completed, police said. The deceased stayed at a hotel in Lajpat Nagar for two days.

IIT-Delhi PhD student found dead in hostel

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 4

A SECOND-YEAR PhD student of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi was found dead in his hostel room on Wednesday. The student, enrolled in the Biomedical Engineering programme, had reportedly not been seen or heard from since Monday night, said police.

IIT officials said the student, Ayush Singhal, was a resident of Dronagiri hostel. Police sources said the 25-year-old was from Chandigarh.

A PCR call was received at Kishangarh police station that the student had not responded to knocks on his room door. The Station House Officer (SHO) of Kishangarh police station and local police staff rushed to the location and found that the room was locked from the inside. Fire service personnel were called in to assist, and the door was forcibly opened, said police. Inside, the student lay unconscious on the bed. Medical staff from IIT-Delhi who examined him at the scene declared him dead. "There were no visible external injuries found on the body. However, some vomit was observed on the floor, indicating possible health-related complications. The Crime Team and Forensic Team were called to the spot for further investigation and examination," said a police officer.

According to police, preliminary investigation revealed that the student had dinner on Monday and went back to his room, after which no one saw



IIT-Delhi officials expressed shock over the incident. File

him. When he remained unresponsive through the next day, fellow students alerted the security staff, who then called the police.

"After the necessary legal and procedural formalities, the body was shifted to Safdarjung Hospital Mortuary for a post-mortem examination," said the officer.

Officials from IIT-Delhi expressed shock and remorse over the student's death.

On Wednesday evening, Dean Student Affairs at IIT-Delhi, B K Panigrahi, wrote in an email to students: "With a very heavy heart, it is our unfortunate duty to inform you of the tragic and untimely demise of our student Ayush Singhal, a resident of Dronagiri hostel and a second-year research scholar of the Centre for Biomedical Engineering. His body was found in his room. The police have taken custody of his mortal remains."

"While we try to deal with the terrible pain and sorrow, the loss to his family and friends is unimaginable. This challenging time reminds us of the constant need to be there for each other," Panigrahi wrote.

Belgium says man behind posters on Netanyahu is linked to its embassy

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 4

BELGIUM ON Wednesday confirmed that the foreign citizen who allegedly put up posters carrying a photograph of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu alongside the word "Wanted" in Chanakyapuri area of the national capital was a staffer of a government export and investment agency linked to its embassy.

On Tuesday, *The Indian Express* had reported that the Delhi Police have approached the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on the issue.

Responding to questions from *The Indian Express*, the Belgian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday, "The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is aware of the incident." The



The Indian Express report on June 3.

spokesperson said the "person works for the Wallonia Export & Investment Agency (AWEX)".

Wallonia is one of the three regions of Belgium -- the other two being Brussels and Flanders -- and has some companies which are world leaders in armaments, glass production, lime and limestone production, and aviation parts. AWEX is the region's government agency in

charge of foreign trade promotion and foreign investment attraction.

"For the time being, (neither) the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor the Embassy of Belgium in New Delhi have received requests from the Indian authorities on this matter," the spokesperson said.

The *Indian Express* had reported that the matter came to light around 7.30 am on May 29 when personnel from the Chanakyapuri police station spotted two such posters on electricity poles -- one near the Carmel Convent School in Malcha Marg and another near the American Embassy School.

"They informed their seniors and were asked to remove the posters," a Delhi Police officer had said.

"After scanning footage from around 50 CCTV cameras, police personnel found that a man

wearing a blue shirt and black trousers came on a bicycle at around 5.30 am and put up one of the posters on an electricity pole. After scanning multiple CCTV cameras, it has been revealed that he left from one of the flats in Sardar Patel Marg," the officer had said.

A team from the Chanakyapuri police station then reached his residence and identified the occupant. Since it involves a foreign national working for an agency associated with the Belgium Embassy, the Indian officials are cautious on how to proceed.

It is a sensitive matter pertaining to certain immunities granted to embassy staffers. Although the person concerned is not a diplomat and therefore doesn't enjoy full diplomatic immunity, it is a grey area and Delhi is treading the issue with some degree of caution.

New SOP aims to reduce IOs' burden in collecting forensic samples

SAKSHICHAND  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 4

WITH AN aim to save time and manpower in the collection of forensic samples and submission of reports in courts, Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora has shared a new protocol for investigating officers (IOs). The IOs, he has directed, will procure digital devices required for investigation, such as hard disks, pen drives, centrally through the Provisioning and Logistics (P&L) unit instead of procuring them through the head office of their respective areas.

At present, IOs have to procure the requisite quantity and specification of hard disks, pen drives, and live cartridges for each case through the head office of their respective district and send these to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), along with the exhibits for forensic examination. This takes a lot of time and delays the process of investigation and submission of FSL reports in the court, as per officials. The FSL deals with around 1,000 cases a day.

"To streamline the process and to save time and manpower, it has been decided in consultation with FSL, Rohini, and all stakeholders to procure digital consumables centrally through P&L unit and live cartridges by DCP first battalion, Delhi Armed Police (DAP), and to supply the same directly to FSL, Delhi, under intimation to Crime Branch," the CP said.



# World Environment Day

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## What's in Your Food Packaging?

EVERY DAY, people unwrap snacks, eat from takeaway containers, and carry meals in disposable packaging. But rarely is there a pause to consider what these packages are made of and where they end up.

**The Problem with Packaging Today**

Most food packaging today is made from plastic, paper, or a mix of materials. These are often difficult to recycle and can take hundreds of years to break down. Some also contain chemicals that may pose health risks.

**Why Food Packaging Composition Matters**

Many food containers include plastic coatings, linings, or printing inks that can be toxic, particularly when they come into contact with hot, oily, or moist food.

**Some recent studies reveal troubling insights:**

- A 2024 study by Toxics Link found microplastics in every tested Indian salt and sugar brand, with iodised salt showing as many as 89.15 particles per kilogram.
- Several Indian food packaging samples have shown the presence of PFAS (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances), commonly referred to as "forever chemicals," which have been linked to liver damage and hormone disruption.
- Single-use plastic containers, especially when exposed to heat, have been found to leach bisphenols and phthalates into food — chemicals associated with endocrine and reproductive disorders.

These findings suggest that the harmful impact of packaging may begin well before disposal.

**Not All "Natural" Packaging Is What It Seems**

With sustainability becoming a buzzword, many packaging materials are now marketed as "green." But not all of them hold up to scrutiny:

**PE-Lined Paper**

- Appears like regular paper but includes a plastic layer of polyethylene (PE).
- This combination is difficult to recycle due to the inseparability of layers.
- Often disposed of in landfills.



**PET Containers (Polyethylene Terephthalate)**

- Commonly used for cold beverages & takeaway containers.
- Technically recyclable, but contamination and poor collection mean less than 30% is actually recycled globally.
- Still derived from fossil fuels and contributes to microplastic pollution.

**Areca Palm Plates**



- Made from fallen palm leaves and often viewed as a biodegradable alternative.
- However, high demand often necessitates transporting leaves across long distances, raising their carbon footprint.
- Also, not ideal for storing hot or greasy food over time.

**Recyclable, Biodegradable, Compostable — What's the Difference?**

These terms are often used interchangeably,

but they represent very different processes:

**Recyclable:** Can be reprocessed into new items, but only if cleaned, collected, and sorted correctly, which rarely happens with food-contaminated packaging.

**Biodegradable:** Breaks down naturally over time, though the duration and by-products can vary widely. Some materials may still leave microplastics behind.

**Compostable:** Breaks down within a spe-


cific timeframe (typically 90–120 days) into non-toxic, organic matter under the right.

A material marked "eco-friendly" may not be truly sustainable unless these distinctions are clear.

**A Scalable Alternative:** Bagasse-Based Packaging

One material offering a viable solution is bagasse — the fibrous pulp left after extracting juice from sugarcane.





**Pakka**, has developed a full range of food packaging made from bagasse. This material is tree-free, toxin-free, compostable, and suited for real-world food packaging needs.

**What Sets Bagasse Apart?**

- Tree-free:** Unlike paper, no forests are cleared for its production.
- Truly compostable:** Breaks down within 90–120 days in industrial composting systems.
- Non-toxic:** No harmful coatings.
- Heat- and oil-resistant:** Suitable for hot, greasy, or heavy foods.
- Scalable:** Already in use across QSRs, cloud kitchens, caterers, and large institutions.

**Three Product Lines for Different Needs**

- 1. Disposables:** Trays, plates, bowls, and containers — ideal for QSRs, event catering, and institutional food service.
- 2. Food Wrap & Carry Paper:** Tree-free paper to wrap burgers & shawarmas or carry break and other bakery items.
- 3. Compostable Flexible Packaging:** Compostable & recyclable flexible packaging for nutri bars, granola bars, etc.

These toxin-free, tree-free, and compostable disposables are available on various quick-commerce platforms such as Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, and retail chains like DMart.

**Final Word**

Food packaging is no longer just about convenience; it's about responsibility. With growing awareness of the health and environmental toll of conventional materials, alternatives like bagasse offer a rare combination of safety, sustainability, and scale.

While compostable packaging may carry a slightly higher price tag today, the true cost of traditional packaging — to the environment and public health — is far steeper.

Choosing better packaging isn't just a product decision. It's a step toward a cleaner, healthier future.

### THE DATA SPEAKS FOR ITSELF:

- India generates approximately **3.5 million tonnes** of plastic waste annually, with **40%** attributed to packaging alone.
- Only **about 60%** of this plastic waste is collected. A significant portion ends up in landfills, drains, or is burned.
- Paper packaging, though perceived as safer, often involves virgin pulp and bleaching processes that release toxins like dioxins.
- A large number of food wrappers contain multi-layered plastics (MLPs), which are nearly impossible to recycle and are typically incinerated or landfilled.

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\* RED ( READ. ENGAGE. DELIVER. ) IS THE MARKETING SOLUTIONS TEAM OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP