

# NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

## Malaysia enforces ban on social media accounts for children younger than 16

KUALALUMPUR, June 1: Malaysia on Monday began enforcing rules barring millions of children younger than 16 from having social media accounts, joining a global effort to tighten online safety protections for young users.

The rules require social media platforms with at least 8 million users including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, to implement age-verification systems and block users under 16 from creating accounts.

Malaysia's Communications and Multimedia Commission said Monday that age verification for existing users will be rolled out progressively over the next six months.

Users identified as under 16 will have a month to download or transfer their data, including photos and videos, before any restrictions, suspensions, or other actions are applied, it said in a statement.

Companies that fail to comply could face penalties of up to 10 million ringgit (\$2.5 million). But parents whose children manage to bypass the law will not be penalised.

The government said the measures are aimed at protecting children from harmful content, cyberbullying and platform features designed to encourage excessive use.

Other countries including Australia, Brazil and Indonesia have introduced or announced age-based restric-

tions or requirements for children's access to social media. Countries including Britain, France, Spain, Denmark, Thailand and South Korea are also studying or developing similar approaches.

The regulator said the rules are not intended to prevent children from accessing digital technology.

"These measures help strengthen the protection of children in the online environment, while providing added reassurance to parents in navigating increasingly complex digital risks," it has said.

Platforms are required to improve user safety, discourage excessive use and take action against underage accounts and harmful content.

Technology companies have yet to detail how they will comply with Malaysia's new requirements.

Clara Koh, Meta's director of public policy for Southeast Asia, had cautioned in April that Malaysia's blanket under-16 ban could backfire by driving teenagers away from protected apps and into unregulated corners of the internet.

She said Meta has launched "teen accounts" for those under 18 that limits contact, screen time and exposure to inappropriate content.

Malaysia's curbs come as governments face growing pressure to address concerns about social media's impact on children's mental health

and online safety.

In March, a US jury ordered Meta and YouTube to pay millions of dollars in damages in a case alleging that platform design features contributed to harm suffered by a young user.

Kuala Lumpur parents Saravanan Ganasan and Jayaradha Veerasamy — whose children are 12 and 15 — approve of the changes. They already banned their kids from using social media, believing minors lack the psychological capacity to cope with it.

The couple ban unsupervised scrolling on TikTok and Instagram. Devices are kept out of bedrooms, screen time is limited to common areas, and their son is not allowed to lock his phone with a password.

"Exposure is what we fear," Saravanan said. "The wrong kind of exposure will do damage to the mind."

Aadhavan Saravanan, 15, said he believes he would be addicted to social media if allowed full freedom. "Social media is like, a luxury and it's not a necessity," he said

The couple said the restrictions have forced their children to develop offline life skills.

Instead of scrolling, Aadhavan reads books in a backyard mango tree and repairs broken household appliances, while their daughter cooks and does crafts.

"A lot of parents are very scared that children get bored," the kids' mother, Ja-

yaradha, said. "But boredom is actually very good because they start thinking out of the box."

But Shaun Hew, who lives in the Kuala Lumpur suburb of Cheras, feels the new restrictions go too far.

Hew believes social media offers an outlet for his kids to spend time productively, as long as there is proper adult oversight. His 11-year-old son uses platforms to learn cooking and his daughter, 14, uses YouTube for exam revision.

He worries a sudden cutoff could cause teenagers to rebel and find unregulated ways to bypass internet blocks.

Some critics contend that Malaysia's move could increase the risks of data privacy breaches and expand state surveillance.

"It is very much following the trend but in a way that is raising alarms due to requiring a government ID for age verification," said Benjamin Loh, social science lecturer at Monash University in Malaysia.

Loh also said experiences elsewhere suggest age-based restrictions have yet to prove consistently effective. Without penalties on parents, families can easily bypass the law by creating accounts for their children, he said.

"This is a major gap that unless regulators are willing to fix, will result in the law having little effect in stopping children from using social media," he added. (AP)

## Shubham Kumar Tops IIT Entrance JEE-Advanced, Arohi Deshpande Is Female Topper

NEW DELHI, JUNE 1: Shubham Kumar from Delhi zone has topped the IIT entrance exam JEE-Advanced with 330 out of 360 marks, officials announced on Monday.

A total of 56,880 candidates qualified for the Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) 2026. Of the total qualified candidates, 10,107 are female candidates. A total of 46,773 male candidates.

One third-gender candidate, who appeared for the exam, could not make it. The exam also saw 3,052 PwD candidates register, of whom 2,864 appeared in both papers and 887 qualified.

Shubham Kumar of the IIT Delhi zone secured the top rank in the Common Rank List (CRL), scoring 330 out of 360 marks.

Arohi Deshpande of the IIT Delhi zone emerged as the top-ranked female can-



didate with an All India Rank (CRL) of 77. She scored 280 out of 360 marks.

Kabeer Chhillar came second scoring 329 marks. Jatin Chahar secured the third rank with 319 marks.

Shubham Kumar said he was delighted to secure the top rank.

"I had been preparing for JEE Advanced for the past two years, and I was hopeful that my hard work would help me secure a good rank.

Now that I have secured All India Rank 1, I feel very happy," Kumar told PTI Videos.

According to the result data released by Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, a total of 1,79,694 candidates appeared in both papers of JEE (Advanced) 2026 conducted on May 17, out of 1,87,389 registered candidates.

The IIT Madras zone had the highest number of quali-

fied candidates at 14,294, followed by IIT Bombay with 12,389 and IIT Delhi with 10,697 qualified candidates.

Candidates who appeared for the exam can access their results and download the final answer key through the official JEE Advanced website.

To download the result, candidates can log in using their roll number, date of birth and registered mobile number.

The final answer key of JEE (Advanced) 2026 was also released on Monday and has been uploaded on the official website.

The JEE (Advanced) is the gateway for admission to undergraduate programmes at the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and several other premier engineering institutions across the country. (AGENCIES)

## West Bengal cabinet undergoes expansion, 35 MLAs take oath as ministers

KOLKATA, JUN 1: West Bengal Governor RN Ravi on Monday administered oath to 35 MLAs as ministers in the state's first BJP-led cabinet, taking the total strength of Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari's council of ministers to 41.

While 13 BJP MLAs were sworn in as cabinet ministers, three were administered oath as ministers of state (Independent Charge) and 19 others were inducted in the council as ministers of state.

The ceremony took place at the Lok Bhavan here in the presence of Adhikari, the existing ministers of his cabinet and senior bureaucrats of the state administration.

Newly-elected BJP MLAs Swapan Dasgupta, Shankar

Ghosh, Arjun Singh, Tapas Roy, Saradwat Mukherjee and Jagannath Chattopadhyay were among those who took oath as cabinet ministers.

Party MLAs Dudh Kumar Mondal, Deepak Burman, Manoj Oraon and Gouri Shankar Ghosh were also sworn in as cabinet ministers.

BJP legislators Rajesh Mahata, Indranil Khan and Malati Rava Roy were sworn in as ministers of state (Independent Charge) in the Suwendu Adhikari government.

Among the ministers of state who were administered the oath were Joyel Murmu, Ashok Dinda, Anandamoy Burman, Kaushik Chowdhury, Gargi Das Ghosh, Bhaskar Bhattacharya,

Dibakar Gharami and Sumana Sarkar.

BJP MLAs Santanu Pramanik, Purnima Chakraborty and Umesh Rai were also sworn in as ministers of state.

The current strength of ministers is now 41, three short of the maximum count that a government can have in the 294-member assembly.

The oath-taking ceremony was held three weeks after Adhikari was sworn in as the chief minister on May 9 in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the BJP's central leadership and CMs of NDA-ruled states.

Along with Adhikari, BJP legislators Dilip Ghosh, Ag-

nimitra Paul, Nisith Pramanik, Ashok Kirtania and Kshudiram Tudu also took oath as ministers on that day.

The cabinet expansion was expected this week as Adhikari and state BJP chief Samik Bhattacharya held meetings in New Delhi with the party's central leadership last week about the induction of members in the council of ministers.

The May 9 swearing-in ceremony was held at the iconic Brigade Parade Grounds after the BJP secured 208 seats in the 294-member assembly in the recently concluded elections, ending the Trinamool Congress' 15-year rule and scripting its most significant electoral breakthrough in eastern India. (PTI)

## French Navy, backed by UK, intercepted sanctioned tanker from Russia: Macron

PARIS, JUNE 1: The French Navy, with support from the United Kingdom, has intercepted an oil tanker under international sanctions that was travelling from Russia, the latest effort by nations that support Ukraine to target Russian oil exports helping to finance President Vladimir Putin's war.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced

the interception in a post Monday on X, saying the Tagor was boarded on Sunday in the Atlantic. The post included a video showing a person rappelling from a helicopter onto a ship.

"It is unacceptable that boats skirt international sanctions, violate the law of the sea and finance the war that Russia has been waging for more than 4 years against

Ukraine," Macron wrote.

"These ships, that don't respect the most elementary rules of maritime navigation, are also a threat to the environment and everyone's security."

Oil revenue is a key part of Russia's economy, allowing Putin to pour money into the war effort against Ukraine without worsening inflation for everyday people and

avoiding a currency collapse.

Russia is believed to be using a fleet of hundreds of ships to evade international sanctions imposed over the war. France and other countries have vowed to crack down on the sanction-busting so-called "shadow fleet."

French naval forces have intercepted a series of tankers suspected of links to Russia.

## Largest Shortages In Cancer Workforce In 2050 Could Be Nurses, Diagnostic Specialists: Study

NEW DELHI, Jun 1: A comprehensive scale-up of the global cancer workforce could reduce cancer mortality by over 50 per cent across 55 countries, including those in South Asia, according to studies published in The Lancet Oncology journal.

Scaling up of surgeons was projected to yield the largest reduction in global cancer mortality of 3.64 per cent, especially in Africa, Asia and Oceania, while scaling up the workforce cadres of diagnostic and imaging personnel could yield the largest reduction of 7.61 per cent.

"(A) comprehensive scale-up of all workforce levels was projected to reduce cancer mortality by over 50 per cent in 55 countries, most notably in Africa, central America, and southern Asia," an international group of authors, including those from the US' Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health, Australia's La Trobe University and University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, said.

A Lancet Oncology Commission report projects the world to be short by 100 million workers in the field of cancer care by 2050, even as cancer cases are likely to increase 21 per cent up to 2050 with low and middle-income countries set to bear the brunt.

"The global cancer workforce shortage is projected to reach about 100 million in 2050, with the largest short-



ages being for nurses (65 million) and diagnostic (radiology and pathology) specialists (16 million), especially in Africa and Asia," the authors wrote.

In 2050, an analysis of survival data from multiple studies shows the lowest rates in Africa (34.4 per cent) and Asia (38.7 per cent), and highest in North America (63.9 per cent) and Oceania (over 70 per cent)

"(A) shortage of well-trained personnel to deliver cancer care and conduct research remains a major obstacle to reducing disparities in cancer survival between high-income countries and low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs)," the report says.

Work needs to be done now to invest in the technology and workforce development needed to handle the increase in cancer diagnoses in the future, the researchers said.

Author Andrew Scott, professor at Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute, La Trobe University, said, "Identifying gaps in the workforce for imaging of cancer patients is essential to ensuring correct diagnoses and treatments are available for patients in all countries." The commission report calls for urgent national and global action, including a stronger workforce planning, targeted investment in training and expanded access to diagnostic

and treatment services to meet growing demand.

The report finds that scaling up the cancer workforce could avert up to 170 million deaths and cut mortality by about 40 per cent, while delivering economic benefits to the tune of USD 120 trillion between 2030 and 2050, "translating to a global return on investment of USD 4 per USD 1 invested".

The authors also called for an establishment of workforce and cancer registries and creating cross-sector and international partnerships to improve access to education and research training programmes as well as diagnostics, therapeutics, and equipment. (Agencies)

## 'Mantri Pradhan' epitome of incompetence, should follow 'rajdharm' and resign: Cong

NEW DELHI, JUN 1: The Congress on Monday launched a scathing attack on the Modi government over the CBSE OSM row, saying the "Pradhan Mantri" has never been known to hold himself or his colleagues to any standard of probity or morality but the "Mantri Pradhan" should follow his "rajdharm" and immediately resign.

The opposition party reiterated its demand that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan must resign immediately, alleging that he had presided "over one of the biggest institutional failures in India's education history".

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh shared a media report on X and said that after denying the cybersecurity vulnerabilities in its On Screen Marking (OSM) system for weeks, the CBSE has finally acknowledged that the system has been compromised.

But what action is it planning to take against its contractor COEMPT, he asked, adding, "not much". It appears that the COEMPT's benefactors in the CBSE and the Ministry of Education anticipated that COEMPT would not be fit for the task, he said. In its August 2025 RFP, the CBSE had retained the power to blacklist vendors who were unable to deliver effectively, Ramesh pointed out.

In September, the CBSE issued a corrigendum which took away its own power to blacklist these vendors, he said. "This is an inexplicable, government-backed attempt to save COEMPT, and

it began even before COEMPT got the contract officially," Ramesh said in his post on X.

How much longer will the nation have to put up with Mantri Pradhan, whose Ministry has overseen and enabled such unfathomable irregularities in its tenders and which has cost lakhs of students their mental well-being, Ramesh asked taking a swipe at Pradhan.

"Mantri Pradhan is the very epitome of arrogance and incompetence, insistent on putting his political agenda above and beyond any responsibility to the nation," he alleged.

"The Pradhan Mantri (PM Narendra Modi) has never been known to hold himself or his colleagues to any standard of probity or morality. But the Mantri Pradhan should follow his rajdharm and resign," Ramesh said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday attacked the Modi government over the CBSE's re-evaluation process and cost, saying that when education is treated not as a service but as a business, errors are not corrected but multiplied.

Several CBSE Class 12 students had flagged mix-up cases after accessing scanned copies uploaded on the portal and finding that the answer sheets did not belong to them.

The CBSE later reached out to them and shared their correct answer sheets. The Board said that it had taken up on "top priority" the cases related to alleged mismatched answer sheets and other concerns faced by students in the revaluation process.

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said the Modi government stands exposed by its disastrous record on education. He alleged that 12 years of blatant misrule and relentless propaganda have eaten away at the foundations of India's education system.

"CBSE compromised, UGC destroyed, scientific temper diminished, NCERT textbook coloured, Vice Chancellors appointed by the RSS, any student protests bulldozed, rights of SC-ST-OBC-EWS-minority youth snatched, unemployment at its peak and persistent cuts in education budget—is the story of India's youth under BJP," he said at a press conference here.

The BJP has put the future of India's students on hold, leaving institutions weakened, standards compromised, and millions of young paying the price for years of deliberate neglect, propaganda, and extortion, Khera alleged. "While PM Modi continued on a personal PR spree with 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' and 'Exam Warriors', crores of young students and their parents suffer daily, even as BJP mints money through mafia and loot," he said.

"More than 9 crore students in 90 paper leaks, along with their parents, have been left to fend for themselves. Not even a single word of responsibility has been uttered by the Prime Minister. At the least, what the Pradhan Mantri can do is to immediately remove Mantri Pradhan," Khera said.

Numerous paper leaks ex-

posed the BJP's nexus with the paper leak mafia, he claimed.

Posing questions to the government, Khera asked why did the CBSE ignore internal warnings from teachers and experts about 36 major flaws in the digital evaluation system and recklessly impose it on 18.5 lakh students within weeks. Who ordered the dilution of CBSE tender norms by reducing scan quality standards, removing mandatory robotic scanners and weakening cybersecurity safeguards before awarding the contract, he asked.

"Why were technical eligibility rules repeatedly changed until a particular vendor became eligible, and what explains the alleged proximity between the contractor and individuals linked to the BJP ecosystem?" he said.

"Why was it preferred over TCS, despite a shady track record, and a name change? Why was the CBSE OSM contract handed to COEMPT—a company already mired in controversy under its old name, Globarena? On whose orders was it done? Why were no background checks done? What is the connection between COEMPT's management and the Modi government?" Khera said.

After destroying the credibility of exams from NEET and UGC NET to CUET and CBSE, following out UGC funding, shutting schools and pushing India's education system into chaos, will PM Modi finally fix accountability or continue shielding failure, Khera asked. (Agencies)