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'Will free India from Naxal violence by March 2026'

New Delhi, August 24: Union home minister Amit Shah said a "strong, ruthless strategy is required for launching last assault against Naxals". Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government "will free India from Naxal violence by March 2026".

Unified Pension Scheme Explained Key features and benefits for retirees

New Delhi, August 24: Unified Pension Scheme: Union Cabinet approved assured 50 per cent of salary as pension for govt employees under Unified Pension Scheme. The Union Cabinet has approved a major reform in the pension system by introducing the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).

Disabled dependent son entitled to pension even if employed earlier

Chandigarh, August 24: The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) has held that a completely disabled adult son is entitled to receive family pension after the demise of his parents if he was dependent on them even though he had earlier been gainfully employed.

J-K Assembly election: Statehood restoration, India-Pakistan ties part of PDP manifesto

Srinagar, August 24: The PDP on Saturday released its manifesto for the Assembly elections, promising to pursue the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. It also promised to advocate for diplomatic initiatives between India and Pakistan, and establish full connectivity across the Line of Control (LoC) for trade and social exchange.

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi's visit to Manipur

Imphal, August 24: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said on Saturday that the visit of Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi shows that the Centre is concerned about the ethnic violence in the north-eastern state and is keen to restore peace.

Wayanad landslides an instance of nature reacting to human apathy, greed

Kochi, August 24: The landslides that hit Wayanad district in Kerala claiming over 200 lives was just another instance of nature reacting to human "apathy and greed", the High Court here has said.

Court adjourns order on cognisance of ED chargesheet against Lalu, Tejashwi

New Delhi, August 24: A Delhi court on Saturday adjourned its order on whether to take cognisance of a supplementary ED chargesheet against former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, his son Tejashwi Yadav and eight others in the alleged land-for-job scam case.

Pity govt standing with culprits involved in crimes against women: Uddhav Thackeray

Mumbai, August 24: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said it is a pity that instead of taking action against culprits involved in crimes against women, the Maharashtra government, which he termed "shameless", was standing with them.

Congress leadership briefed on political developments in Karnataka

Bengaluru, August 24: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said the Congress high command had been explained about the recent political developments in the state, and the prosecution sanction against him by the Governor, which he termed as "anti-Constitution and illegal".

Polygraph test on Kolkata horror accused Sanjay Roy, ex-principal of RG Kar Medical College begins

Chandigarh, August 24: Polygraph test on the main accused in the Kolkata murder and rape case, Sanjay Roy and 6 others, including ex-principal of RG Kar Medical College has started. The polygraph test on the main accused, Sanjay Roy, will be conducted in the prison, where he is lodged, while the remaining six, including former principal Sandip Ghosh and four doctors who were on duty during the night of the incident and a civil volunteer, will undergo test at the agency's office, officials said.



News box

Mumbai and surrounding areas on high alert as IMD predicts heavy rainfall



MUMBAI. The city and many other parts of Maharashtra are expected to receive heavy rainfall over the next four to five days, India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday said. The Met office issued an 'orange' alert forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall in Palghar, Thane, Mumbai, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts of Konkan from Saturday onwards. It also issued 'orange' alert for Pune and Satara districts of western Maharashtra and Amravati, Bhandara, Chandrapur and Gondia districts of Vidarbha for Saturday.

The IMD has issued an 'orange' alert for some districts of Konkan and western Maharashtra on Aug 25 and 26 as well.

A low-pressure area over northern parts of West Bengal and adjoining areas of northeast Jharkhand and another over east central Arabian sea off Maharashtra coast will bring rain to most parts of Maharashtra in the next 48 hours, an IMD scientist said.

Senior molests BBA student, assaults her with 3 pals; all held in Mumbai



MUMBAI. An 18-year-old first-year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) student was molested by her senior and then assaulted and verbally abused by him and three of his friends near a suburban railway station on Wednesday afternoon.

The senior had been insisting she accept his "friendship proposal" for days and was angered as she repeatedly rejected his advances. Police registered an FIR on Aug 22 and arrested the four, all second-year BBA students.

Those who witnessed the incident in the crowded station area did not intervene when the four punched and kicked her on the road. A woman passerby eventually called the police helpline and cops reached the spot soon after. The injured teen was taken to a hospital, where she received medical assistance and was discharged.

The incident took place after the teen left her institute at 1pm. Her senior forcibly took her to a snack corner nearby. "Three of his classmates joined him and began to force me to accept his friendship. When I walked out of the corner, he charged at me and pulled me closer to him and molested me in front of all," she said in the FIR.

When she tried to escape, he began to assault her and his friends joined in. She then managed to grab a sharp object lying on the roadside and pointed it at them, warning them to stop. Meanwhile, a woman called the police. "The institute has been informed about the FIR, and action will be taken," said a police officer. - V Narayan

Mumbai: Biker chases woman's SUV, 'threatens rape'

MUMBAI. A 49-year-old businesswoman said she experienced a frightening ordeal on Thursday when a biker pursued her SUV for nearly 10 minutes in Bandra (West) and allegedly threatened to rape her. The incident unfolded around 12.50pm when the woman, en route to her workplace, pointed out to the biker that he had entered a no-entry lane at Pali Naka in Bandra (West) which angered him, said the police. Bandra police filed an FIR against the unidentified man on Thursday. "The team is searching for the accused. We are going through the CCTV footage to identify the accused and the motorcycle registration number to locate his whereabouts. He fled when he noticed the woman calling the police," stated a Bandra police officer.

The incident took place between 12.55pm and 1.05pm as the woman left her residence at Pali Naka to drive to her workplace. In her complaint, she recounted, "On noticing the biker riding in a no-entry lane, I pointed out to him that he was violating traffic rules. This angered him and he hurled abuses at me, saying he was headed to a building nearby."

Despite her efforts to disregard the biker's verbal abuse, he continued to trail her. "After a 10-minute pursuit, he managed to intercept my vehicle and proceeded to threaten me and screamed that he would rape me," the woman alleged. A police officer said she stayed in her SUV and dialled 100 to call the police. A case was filed under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Motor Vehicles Act.

Traders on South Cliff march to Varkala Municipality office to protest against civic body's eviction drive

The municipal authorities have sealed two tourism establishments on South Cliff on Thursday leading to widespread protest disrupting tourism activities.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Hundreds of traders operating tourism-related businesses on South Cliff took out a march to the Varkala Municipality office on Friday to protest the eviction drive initiated by the local authorities. The municipal authorities have sealed two tourism establishments on South Cliff on Thursday leading to widespread protest disrupting tourism activities.

There are around 250 shops and 30 resorts on the South Cliff. It is learned that a large majority of the traders are from other states running stalls selling handicrafts and other products. Recently, the municipality had issued eviction notices to the shops following directions from the district disaster management authority in response to the escalated erosion and collapsing of the cliff. The authorities have given 15 days' time to stall the operations. "The municipal authorities initiated action without holding discussions with the stakeholders association. This is happening at a time when discussions with the tourism department and the district collector are underway and it was unfair for the authorities to take such an extreme step.

All these shops are located on private land and this area falls under CRZ II, there are



no restrictions in construction activities too. The municipality is not giving licences to these traders, who have been

running business on the cliff for more than three decades," said Sanjay Sahadevan, advisor to Varkala Tourism Development Association (VTDC). The traders are demanding the municipality to issue numbers, authorise the structures and give trade licenses. The Varkala municipality officials maintained that they have not launched any mass eviction drive. The municipal council has decided to take strict action against illegal establishments at the destination.

"We took action against a couple of violators to stop new construction activities. We have served notices to unauthorised shops. Besides that, we haven't taken any action. We have informed the tourism department and they will be taking necessary steps to rehabilitate and protect the cliff," said Chairman Laji K M, Varkala Municipality. The tourism department is looking for government land on the cliff to rehabilitate the traders. Varkala MLA V Joy said that a meeting has been scheduled in the first week of September to resolve the issues.

Teen girl who went missing from Thiruvananthapuram to return on Sunday

A team of four police officers from Kazhakoottam Police Station travelled to Visakhapatnam to bring her back to Kerala.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. The girl who went missing from Kazhakoottam is expected to return home on Sunday night. A team of four police officers from Kazhakoottam Police Station travelled to Visakhapatnam to bring her back to Kerala. They reached the shelter home of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) in Visakhapatnam at 6.30 pm on Friday, where the girl was staying.

Representatives from the Malayalee Association were also present with the police. The police handed over a letter from the Kerala State CWC requesting the

child's release. Although the procedures for the release were completed, a special request was made to keep her at the shelter for one more day as it was late. The police team is expected to take charge of the girl by Saturday afternoon and begin their return journey to Kerala.

The team with the girl is expected to arrive in Thiruvananthapuram by Sunday night. Initially, it was planned that the girl would travel with the police on Friday itself. The four-member police team arrived in Visakhapatnam at 5.45 pm on Friday, after changing trains twice. N M Pillai, A R G

Unnithan and other members of the Malayalee Association had been waiting to assist them. The team had to arrange train tickets for the return journey but could only secure tickets back to Vijayawada by Saturday afternoon. From there, they will travel to Kerala on Kerala Express, which departs at 10 pm.

The girl's parents, Anwar Hussain and Parveen Begum, are awaiting her return in Kazhakoottam. It was on Tuesday that the girl went missing from Kazhakoottam. Thirty-six hours after she went missing, she was found on a train at Visakhapatnam

railway station. She was found asleep on one of the berths in the Santragachi Antyodaya Express by Keralites, who identified her to be the missing child, and informed the matter to the Kerala Samajam members in Visakhapatnam.

The child was taken out of the train and handed over to the Railway Protection Force.

The matter was duly conveyed to the child's parents in Kazhakoottam, who profusely thanked the state police and the media for getting her back without any harm.

Hyderabad: Land acquisition accelerated for Old City Metro stretch

The land acquisition for the Old City Metro stretch involves 1,200 properties, with notifications issued for 400 under the Land Acquisition Act 2013.

HYDERABAD. The Land Acquisition process for the Old City Metro stretch between MGBS and Chandrayangutta is being expedited, according to HMRL Managing Director NVS Reddy. As many as 1,200 properties will be affected by road widening and station construction over this 7.5 km stretch. Notifications have been issued for 400 properties so far under the Land Acquisition Act 2013.

Property owners can seek clarifications and file objections at the Land Acquisition Officer's office at HAML during the stipulated period. The entire land acquisition process is likely to take about eight months, as per the LA Act procedures.

The road will be widened to 100 feet as per GHMC Master Plan. At Metro station



locations, the road will be widened to 120 feet. Currently, the road width ranges from 50 to 60 feet between Darulshifa junction and Shalibanda junction and 80 feet

between Shalibanda junction and Chandrayangutta. Thus, the affected portion of each property will generally be about 20 to 25 feet from Darulshifa to Shalibanda and about 10 feet from Shalibanda to Chandrayangutta. The affected area may increase at station locations and in sections with sharp curves.

Reddy also noted that in addition to conventional survey methods, a Lidar drone survey was conducted to create a 3D view of the affected properties and neighbouring properties. To protect the 103 religious and other sensitive structures along this stretch, innovative engineering solutions and careful adjustments of Metro pillars and station locations are being made.

12-yr-old girl dies of dengue amid surge in cases in city

Ahmedabad. This monsoon season, due to light rainfall, there has been an increase in mosquito activity. July and Aug saw a rise in dengue and malaria cases. Amid these conditions, the first dengue death of the season has been recorded.

Dr Bhavin Solanki, the in-charge health officer of AMC, said: "A 12-year-old girl in Vastrapur died of dengue while receiving treatment at a private hospital."

Dr Pragnesh Vachcharajani, a local physician, noted a significant increase in dengue cases over the past two weeks due to a break in rains. He said, "Patients must remain cautious even after fever subsides, typically after three to four days, to avoid complications. Many let their guards down when they should follow medication with rest. Though hospitalization is rare, it's wise to consult a doctor if fever persists beyond a day." He also mentioned a rise in viral fever cases this season. According to the epidemic statistics released by the AMC health department, from Aug

1 to 17, the city recorded 345 dengue cases, 110 malaria cases, 18 cases of severe malaria, and 35 chikungunya cases. Additionally, in just 17 days, 35,391 cases of viral fever were recorded. During this period, 4,524 serum samples with suspected dengue symptoms were tested.

From Jan 1 to Aug 17, 2024, Ahmedabad recorded 765 dengue cases. In 2023, the city saw 805 dengue cases. From Jan 1 to Aug 17, the health department inspected 6,819 construction sites for mosquito breeding and issued notices and imposed fines at the places where breeding was found. It received over 30,000 complaints regarding mosquito nuisances.

We also published the following articles recently: City reports 345 dengue, 35 chikungunya cases in Aug; Cholera and other mosquito-borne diseases continued to impact Ahmedabad, with dengue, malaria, and chikungunya cases on the rise due to light monsoon rains. From Aug 1 to 17, 35,391 viral fever cases were

reported. Cholera cases surged to 193 in 2024, with significant outbreaks in several areas. Efforts to control the situation continue.

345 dengue, 35 chikungunya cases in August in Ahmedabad; Ahmedabad has seen a worrying rise in cholera and mosquito-borne diseases following light monsoon rains. Between August 1 and 17, the city reported 345 dengue cases, 110 malaria cases, and 22 cholera cases among other illnesses, according to the health department. Cholera cases have surged significantly this year compared to previous years.

Dengue bites harder than malaria in Ahmedabad; Ahmedabad Civil Hospital reported 134 malaria and 202 dengue cases, shedding light on the rising incidence of dengue in urban areas. Citywide, 371 malaria versus 765 dengue cases were recorded. Experts highlight urban breeding conditions for Aedes mosquitoes and the importance of cleaning to control populations, noting dengue's higher transmission potential due to vectors' behavior. 1

Monitor water pollution: PAC

Gandhinagar. The state's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) expressed apprehension over the contamination of rivers and water bodies in the state and recommended that the govt establish a permanent framework to monitor and mitigate water pollution.

The PAC, chaired by senior BJP MLA Jitu Vaghani, underscored the alarming levels of pollution in the state's rivers and water bodies in its report presented to the state assembly on Friday.

Harris super PAC founder says public polls are too optimistic; During a talk at the University of Chicago Institute of Politics, Chauncey McLean, president of Future Forward, revealed that internal polling for Kamala Harris shows a closer race than public polls suggest. McLean emphasized critical battleground states and the need to solidify voter coalitions as essential for her campaign's success against Donald Trump in the November election.

New panels set up, Congress MP KC Venugopal to head PAC; Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla announced the heads of six key parliamentary committees, including KC Venugopal of the Congress as chair of the public accounts committee (PAC). Prominent figures like Ganesh Singh and Faggan Singh Kulaste were also named to lead committees focused on welfare of Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes and Tribes respectively.

Water from contaminated nullah at Sao Jose tested; A large number of small fish were found dead in a nullah at Sao Jose de Areal, leading to concerns of contamination. Officials from the Goa State Pollution Control Board inspected the site and collected water samples. Velim MLA Cruz Silva indicated that locals suspect chemicals from nearby scrapyards and a fish canning factory as potential sources of pollution.

Rescue or shut state public sector undertakings, CAG suggests

Ahmedabad. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in its state finances audit report for the fiscal year concluding March 31, 2023, expressed apprehension over the escalating losses incurred by state public sector undertakings (SPSUs). The report, which was presented in the legislative assembly on the concluding day of the session on Friday, has advocated for either the resuscitation of the loss-making SPSUs to render them lucrative or their dissolution to avert further losses to taxpayers. The CAG observed that as of March 31, 2023, there were 101 SPSUs, encompassing 65 govt companies (including one dormant company), four statutory corporations and 23 govt-controlled other companies. The CAG noted that one of the 65 govt companies and four of the 23 other govt-controlled companies were inactive. In its recommendations, the CAG suggested that Gujarat govt should evaluate the performance of all loss-making SPSUs and implement necessary measures to enhance their performance. The CAG stated, "Govt may issue necessary directives to administrative departments to establish targets for individual SPSUs to submit financial statements punctually and to rigorously monitor the clearance of arrears. Govt may review the inactive govt companies and make appropriate decisions regarding their revival or winding up."

Cong MLAs spotlight dummy student issue in A'bad schools

Gandhinagar. Congress MLAs, led by Shailesh Parmar, highlighted a concern regarding some Ahmedabad schools admitting dummy students in Classes 11 and 12 science streams. These students were reportedly attending private coaching classes instead of regular school sessions. Parmar mentioned that two GSHSEB members had emailed the chief minister about this issue.

In response, education minister Kuber Dindor stated that the education department had conducted checks in govt and grant-in-aid schools, finding over 80% attendance. He assured that the department will continue monitoring if similar issues are reported.

TN govt says kallar reclamation schools wont be integrated with school education dept; The backward classes, most backward classes and minorities welfare department clarified that there was no plan to integrate the kallar reclamation schools with the school education department. With 299 such schools in Theni,

Madurai, and Dindigul, the government is focused on developing these institutions and implementing special schemes for the benefit of piramalai kallar students.

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NEWS BOX

Maximum temperature rises by 3°C in Gurgaon, but rain spells likely for 5 more days

GURGAON. Though most of Friday was overcast, the city didn't receive any rainfall. The maximum temperature was recorded at 33.2 degrees Celsius, a rise of almost three notches than the previous day's 30.3 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature was 26.4 degrees Celsius, 0.5 degrees lower than Thursday's 25.9 degrees. By the afternoon, it was sunny and humidity fluctuated between 59% and 85%. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a partially cloudy sky accompanied by one or two spells of rain or thundershowers for the next five days in the city. The maximum temperature is expected to range from 34 to 35 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature is likely to hover around 26 degrees Celsius till August 29.

Several areas of Delhi witnessed moderate to heavy rain on Friday morning while many localities in southern and central parts did not. The overcast sky brought the daytime temperature down by five degrees. IMD has changed its forecast and issued a yellow alert for light to moderate rain on Friday. A yellow alert for moderate rain has also been issued for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. "We expect light rain accompanied by thunder on Saturday. By Sunday, however, the intensity of rain is expected to increase," said an official at IMD. On Friday, the capital recorded a maximum temperature of 31.2 degrees and the minimum was 26.5 degrees Celsius. The humidity oscillated between 94% and 80%. The maximum temperature on Saturday is expected to hover around 34 degrees Celsius.

Haryana: Three lure man to isolated spot via dating app, extort Rs 68,000 from him; arrested

GURGAON. Two persons were arrested from Sohna on Thursday for luring a man to an isolated place and forcing him into paying Rs 68,000 by threatening him of death. Third accused in the case was already in jail and was taken into two-day police remand.

On June 12, a 25-year-old man - employee of a private firm in the city - filed a complaint at the Udyog Vihar police station alleging that on March 5, he got in contact with a man through a dating app and they agreed to meet in Dundahera. They met at Ram Chowk and the accused, Harsh Mathur (24) took him to an isolated forest area nearby, where his associates - Narayan (21) and Laxman (22) - were already present. Naveen Sharma, ACP, Udyog Vihar, said, "By threatening to kill him, they snatched his cell phone and made him transfer Rs 68,000 via UPI." A case was registered under sections 420 (cheating) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC at Udyog Vihar station. By analysing the call details and UPI transaction, Harsh was identified. He was already arrested by Palam Vihar police on June 1 in a murder case, so Udyog Vihar cops took him into two-day police remand from jail on a warrant. "During the interrogation, Harsh confessed to the crime and named the other two. On Thursday, Narayan and Laxman were arrested. Harsh contacts targets through dating apps and lures them to isolated places. With the help of his associates, he extorts money from them after clicking their obscene photos," the ACP said.

Gurgaon: Amazon sets up rest point in Sector 47 for delivery execs

GURGAON. Amazon India on Friday launched 'Project Ashray', an initiative to establish rest points for delivery executives working with the e-commerce giant. The company, which received a notice from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) earlier this year after its warehouse workers complained of intolerable working conditions during the heatwave in Delhi-NCR, is collaborating with an NGO to establish rest points in the region, apart from Mumbai and Bengaluru. The first Ashray centre was opened in Malibu Towne Boulevard in Sector 47 on Friday. International Labour Organisation director (India) Michiko Miyamoto inaugurated the rest point.

The move comes two months after TOI reported the woes of Amazon warehouse workers and delivery associates who were pushed to meet unrealistic targets without breaks in Manesar. The e-



commerce giant came under the lens of NHRC over alleged anti-labour practices. Amazon India later accepted that there was a violation of workplace safety standards on May 16, 2024, at its Manesar warehouse and assured govt of prompt corrective action, including setting up rest points. Talking about Project Ashray, the company's vice-president (operations) Abhinav Singh said, "The rest points will offer a range of amenities, including comfortable seating, access to clean water and mobile charging stations."

Long waits, surge in fares on Day 2: Auto-cab strike fuels chaos in Delhi-NCR

NOIDA/GURGAON. As cab drivers' strike continued for a second day, commuters across Delhi-NCR had trouble, not just to get to their destinations, but also to and from metro stations in areas where there are no alternative options for last-mile connectivity. With fewer cabs on roads, commuters said on Friday that the waiting time to get rides kept stretching till rides were cancelled. Though fares were already higher than usual, cab drivers who accepted rides called up commuters and asked for double or triple of the booking amount in apps.

Vanshika Bansal, a Delhi resident, said she tried to book a cab from Delhi University North Campus to Sector 135 along the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway. "There was a lot of delay in booking the cab. Once a driver accepted the ride, he called and said he wouldn't go. Another driver demanded Rs 1,400 against the normal fare of Rs 500. Eventually, I took the Metro to Botanical Garden," Bansal said. On Friday morning, app fares from Noida Film City to ITO in Delhi were

between Rs 400 to Rs 500. Similarly, the costs of Indrapuram in Ghaziabad to New Delhi Railway Station and Connaught Place were between Rs 450 and Rs 550. Some commuters said it was easier to find rides through BluSmart, Rapido and InDrive, and the worst hit appeared to be Uber and Ola. Vinay Kumar, a resident of Sushant Lok in Gurgaon, said he resorted to taking an autorickshaw from Delhi railway station to his home, but he had to pay Rs 200 extra for it. "My brother, my mother and I had been trying to book a cab to get to Fortis Hospital for 45 minutes. Neither cabs nor autos were available. Fares were at least two and a half times more than the usual on three apps - Uber, Ola and Rapido. We finally managed to get an auto from Rapido," said Kritika, a Gurgaon resident who had to reach the hospital for a consultation. Others weren't as lucky.

Yatin Dasniyal, a student at Galgotias University, said he took the Metro from Moti Bagh to Greater Noida, but wasn't able to book a cab to reach his college.



"Greater Noida does not have a robust public transport system. In this situation, what are commuters supposed to do," he asked. Cab drivers participating in the two-day strike told TOI they were demanding better commissions from app aggregators as their share and compensation have reduced over the years even though their services are key to commuting across NCR. Arun Kumar, a cab driver who was dropping off his brother at a Noida metro station on Friday, said it has become difficult for him to manage his household expenses as his earnings have reduced. "For example, the normal fare from Noida's Sector 18 to

New Delhi Railway Station is Rs 400. The cab aggregator takes Rs 150 as its commission. We have to pay Rs 100 as MCD's toll for entering Delhi. Fuel prices have gone up. After deducting everything, we are left with almost nothing. That's why we are protesting," Kumar said. With little to no alternative public transport in parts of NCR, commuters said they ended up having to use their private vehicles or mini-vans to get to their destinations. Others said they resorted to working from home after giving up on getting cabs. NK Negi, who lives in Ghaziabad's Siddharth Vihar and works in Sector 8 of Noida, said he tried for a while, but eventually asked his employers to let him work from home.

A striking cabbie in Delhi told TOI, "Not only are the app taxis taking away our passengers, but people pay the app taxis Rs 20 per km when our rate is just Rs 8-9 per km. CNG price has gone up and we feel our charge should be at least Rs 15 a km." Kishan Verma, president, All-India Auto Taxi Transport Congress Union.

2 illegal buildings razed, 14 plots sealed in colony along GCR

GURGAON. A large-scale sealing and demolition drive was conducted in Saraswati Kunj on Aug 22 and 23. Two under-construction structures were demolished, while 14 other plots, where commercial activities were going on, were sealed. The operation was part of an ongoing effort by GMDA and Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) to curb unauthorised construction and illegal commercial activities in the area. According to RS Bath, the duty magistrate for this operation, any construction in Saraswati Kunj Colony without an approved plan is prohibited. "Despite the ban, several



plots were found to have illegal constructions. Also, some houses were being used for commercial activities, and work was being done on properties that had previously faced demolition," he said. After having subjected several of these properties to demolition earlier, the enforcement team removed

encroachments along the service road adjacent to Golf Course Road.

"Stalls, street vendors, and illegally constructed ramps extending from properties were cleared during the operation," said an official.

The colony's administrator is the deputy commissioner, while the ownership status of many plots remains unclear. Therefore, any construction without approved plans is illegal.

Established in 1983, Saraswati Kunj has been under legal scrutiny since 2004 when the cooperative group allegedly promised allotment to 9,000 applicants despite the colony's capacity of 4,000.

Survey finds mosquito larvae in 8k homes in Gurgaon

GURGAON. A door-to-door survey by the state health department found mosquito larvae in 8,491 houses of the 15.38 lakh it screened. The survey was initiated after the city reported 23 cases of dengue since June this year. Those who are showing symptoms of a viral infection were also tested for various vector-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria and chikungunya at their nearest primary health centre. As many as 7,712 notices were issued to defaulters for failing to implement protective measures against vector-borne diseases. As part of precautionary measures, health officials pinpointed five hotspots for the disease - Wazirabad, Bhangrola, Nakhrola, Badshapur, and Bhondsi and put them under surveillance.

The department also plans to geo-tag all positive larvae bases to establish a comprehensive database. All private hospitals in the city were mandated to establish a separate ward dedicated to dengue cases and collect samples from



designated flu corners where individuals exhibiting symptoms can be screened. "This is an ongoing process. We are conducting a survey to identify suspected cases and provide prompt treatment. Our teams are inspecting areas where cases were previously found and also identifying water-holding containers that can serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. We will gradually increase the sample collection to check fever clusters in the district," said Virender Yadav, the city's chief medical officer. Last year, Gurgaon documented 276 dengue cases and one fatality. In 2022, it recorded 440 cases, while in 2021 there were 327 dengue cases and one death. The city's highest count was in 2015 when 451 people got the infection.

Bus crash on Delhi-Gurgaon expressway; 1 dead, 10 injured



Gurgaon. A 20-year-old student died and 10 others suffered injuries after a private bus crashed into a divider and overturned on Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway at Narsinghpur on Friday. Based on the complaint by one of the injured passengers from Alwar, police registered a case against the bus driver. The incident happened around 1.30am as a sleeper coach bus of Vikas Travels, carrying about 55 passengers from

Delhi to Jaipur, lost control and hit the median on NH-8. Passersby informed the police, and the victims were rushed to the civil hospital in ambulances and private vehicles by cops. "We do not have the complete list of injured persons as most of them have left the place after the incident on their own," SI Virender Singh of Sector 37 police station said. Sandeep Gurgar, who was from Rajasthan's Kotputli, was

pursuing a Junior Basic Training course at Kinder Kin College in Panipat. He was declared dead upon arrival at the civil hospital. His friends, Naveen Kumar, Romesh Chandolia, and Madanlal Saini, who were also on board, said the driver had been speeding despite warnings from passengers. "We were on our way home after our first-year exams concluded on Thursday. We boarded the bus at IFFCO Chowk to go to Rajasthan around 1.20am on Friday. The bus driver was driving at a high speed. We and several passengers asked him to drive slowly, but he continued to drive at a very high speed," Naveen said.

"All the injured are out of danger. The driver fled the spot," the SI said. Naveen filed a complaint, after which a case was registered at Sector 37 police station under sections 106 (death due to negligence), 125 (a) (hurt caused in an act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 281 (rash driving) of BNS.

Spotted at a sniffing distance, patrol team set to tranquilise & relocate Sariska tiger

GURGAON. Sariska tiger ST-2303 was sighted by a patrolling team of forest department officials a mere 25m away on Friday morning. This was the big cat's first direct sighting since it came to the Jhabua reserve forest in Rewari on Saturday.

The team, which ventured into the dense forest on foot, encountered the three-year-old male tiger around 7am. Earlier, the tiger's presence was detected only through camera traps and pugmarks.

Before Friday, forest officials were unable to enter deep into the dense forest due to rain. As the rain subsided on Friday, the search for the tiger resumed with the primary objective of tranquilising and transporting it. Officials meticulously analysed camera trap footage to track the tiger's movement. On reaching the spot where the tiger was last seen, they found it still seated there, a mere 25m away from them. On seeing the team, the tiger swiftly retreated into the dense foliage.

"This is the first time that ST-2303 has been directly sighted in the past seven days," Rewari divisional forest officer Deepak Patil told TOI. Efforts are ongoing to secure an opportunity to administer tranquilisers to the big cat, officials said. It is believed that the tiger has hunted, but



the carcass remains concealed deep within the jungle. "It has obviously hunted, but it must have kept the carcass deep inside the jungle, so we haven't seen it. The team is trying to get a clear opportunity to tranquilise it. We are

closely monitoring the situation and are hopeful for successful tranquilisation and safe return of the tiger to its natural habitat," he said.

This marks the second instance this year that the three-year-old male tiger has

strayed from Sariska National Park in Rajasthan, presumably in pursuit of new territory to establish its dominance. The tiger had previously returned to Sariska in Jan after staying in the Rewari forest for four days. Its pugmarks were initially detected in the Jhabua reserve forest on Saturday, located 125 km away from Sariska. On Monday, it was captured on a camera trap, providing conclusive evidence of its presence. Forest officials also identified fresh pugmarks of ST-2303 near a water hole, indicating its recent activity in the area. Meanwhile, experts said more tigers may venture into Haryana's forests in the future as their population is rising in Sariska. "As large areas of Sariska are not viable for tigers to thrive and there is a limited prey base, and the number of tigers is also going up, this cocktail is very likely to push tigers in the future into nearby forest areas. So, both Haryana and Rajasthan govts should work together to create safe corridors for big cats. Also, villages which are close to such tiger corridors need to be sensitised. Forest officials should educate and ensure that people living in close vicinity of forest areas are well aware of the presence of tigers and their movement to avoid man-animal conflicts," wildlife biologist Sumit Dookia said.

News box

3 killed, several injured in knife attack at festival in Germany

Berlin. At least three people were killed and several others were injured in Germany's Solingen on Friday after an unidentified attacker went on a stabbing rampage at a local festival.

According to news agency Reuters, the attack was reported on Friday night at the festival marking 650 years of Solingen. After the incident, the attacker fled the scene. The police advised the people to leave the area and also launched a manhunt to arrest the attacker. In a statement on Facebook, Solingen's Mayor Tim Kurzbach said, "Tonight all of us in Solingen are in shock, horror and great sadness. We all wanted to celebrate our city anniversary together and now we have to mourn the dead and injured." "It breaks my heart that an attack has happened in our city. I have tears in my eyes when I think of those we've lost. I pray for all those still fighting for their lives. Also my greatest sympathy for all those who had to experience this, these images must have been horrific," he added.

Solingen has a population of 160,000 people and is located near two bigger German cities -- Cologne and Duesseldorf. Earlier in May this year, several people, including a police officer, were injured in Germany's Mannheim after an unidentified attacker launched a similar knife attack at a right-wing demonstration.

The attack happened when an elderly man was preparing to address the far-right protest that was called by anti-Islam activist Michael Stuerzenberger. Stuerzenberger, who describes himself as an Islam-critical journalist, has been a member of several far-right anti-Islam organisations, including the PEGIDA movement that holds regular marches in cities, especially in eastern Germany.

Ready or not, election season in the US starts soon

World There are just over 70 days until Election Day on Nov. 5, but major dates, events and political developments will make it fly by. Think about it this way: The stretch between now and then is about as long as summer break from school in most parts of the country.

In just two weeks, Sept. 6, the first mail ballots get sent to voters. The first presidential debate is set for Sept. 10. Former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, is scheduled to be sentenced in his New York hush money case on Sept. 18. And early in-person voting will start as soon as Sept. 20 in some states. Here's a look at why the calendar will move quickly now that the Democratic and Republican conventions are wrapped.

Who's ready to vote?

The first batch of ballots typically sent out are ones to military and overseas voters. Under federal law, that must happen at least 45 days before an election -- which this year is Sept. 21. Some states start earlier. North Carolina will begin sending mail ballots to all voters who request them, including military personnel and overseas voters, in just two weeks, Sept. 6. Voter registration deadlines vary by state, with most falling between eight and 30 days before the election, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The deadline is Oct. 7 in Georgia, one of this year's most prominent presidential battlegrounds. Nearly all states offer some version of in-person voting, though the rules and dates vary considerably. In Pennsylvania, another of the major presidential battleground states, voters can visit their local election office to request, complete and return a mail ballot beginning Sept. 16. For those counting, that's about three weeks from now.

Harris isn't backing away from Biden's democracy focus; she's putting her own spin on it

CHICAGO. Before dropping his bid for reelection, President Joe Biden framed voters' choice in November in dark and ominous terms, painting Republican nominee Donald Trump as a menace to American democracy and questioning whether the country could survive if he won.

The Democratic Party's new nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, isn't exactly shrinking from that message, warning in her Thursday night acceptance speech of "extremely serious" consequences of Trump returning to the White House.

But Harris is putting her own spin on what has been a central messaging strategy for Democrats. Rather than focusing on the existential threat a second Trump term could pose to the country's foundational institutions and traditions, she is expanding Democrats' definition of what's at stake in this election: It's about preserving personal freedoms.

The fresh frame was on full display this week at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where attendees wrote their own definitions of freedom on handmade posters and Beyoncé's anthem "Freedom" boomed through the loudspeakers. The convention dedicated a day's theme to "fighting for our freedoms," with special guest Oprah Winfrey suggesting those working to preserve reproductive rights are "the new freedom fighters." Harris drove the point home over and over as she summarized her promises to American voters.

Robert F Kennedy Jr endorses Donald Trump, to end his independent presidential bid

Phoenix Ahead of a planned speech, Robert F Kennedy Jr campaign said in a Pennsylvania court filing Friday that he is endorsing Donald Trump for president. Kennedy's independent campaign also requested that he be removed from the Pennsylvania ballot, though it was not immediately clear that he was officially dropping out of the race. Kennedy had a speech planned in Arizona on Friday to discuss "the present historical moment and his path forward," according to his campaign. Hours later, Trump will hold a rally in neighboring Glendale. Trump's campaign has teased that he will be joined by "a special guest," though neither campaign responded to messages about whether Kennedy would be that guest. The late-stage development in the presidential race could give the former president a modest boost from Kennedy's supporters. A year ago, some would have thought it inconceivable that a member of arguably the most storied family in Democratic politics would work with Trump to keep a Democrat -- Vice President Kamala Harris -- out of the White House. Even in recent months, Kennedy has accused Trump of betraying his followers, while Trump has

criticized Kennedy as "the most radical left candidate in the race." The Pennsylvania filing came Friday in a case in which Kennedy was defending his paperwork to get on the ballot in the battleground state against a challenge by two Democratic activists. The filing said that, "as a result of today's endorsement of Donald Trump" he was requesting the dismissal of his campaign's nomination papers so that he would not appear on Pennsylvania's ballot.

The Kennedy and Trump campaigns have ramped up their compliments to each other and engaged in behind-the-scenes discussions in recent weeks, according to those familiar with the efforts. Both campaigns have spent months accusing Democrats of weaponizing the legal system for their own benefit. And both have hinted publicly that they could be open to joining forces, with the shared goal of limiting Harris' chances. Last month, during the Republican National Convention, Kennedy's son posted and then quickly deleted a video showing a phone call between Kennedy and Trump, in which the former president appeared to try to talk Kennedy into siding with him. Talks between



the two camps continued, with close Trump allies quietly lobbying Kennedy to drop out of the race and support the Republican nominee, according to a person familiar with the efforts who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. Trump told CNN on Tuesday that he would "love" an endorsement from Kennedy, whom he called a "brilliant guy". He also said he would "certainly" be open to Kennedy playing a role in his administration if Kennedy drops out and endorses him. Kennedy's running mate, Nicole Shanahan, also openly suggested on a podcast this week

that his campaign might "walk away right now and join forces with Donald Trump." While she clarified that she is not personally in talks with Trump, she entertained the idea that Kennedy could join Trump's administration as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. "I think that Bobby in a role like that would be excellent," Shanahan said. "I fully support it. I have high hopes."

Earlier Friday, Shanahan posted on X that she isn't a Kamala Democrat or a Trump Republican. "I'm an independent American who is endorsing ideas, not a person or a party," she wrote. "I will continue working to give a voice to the voiceless and bring power back to the people." At Kennedy's Phoenix event, 38-year-old Casey Westerman, a Chandler, Arizona, resident who works in software sales, said she trusted Kennedy's judgment and had planned to vote for him, but would support Trump if Kennedy said that was who he was endorsing. "My decision would really be based on who he thinks is best suited to run this country," said Westerman, who wore a "Kennedy 2024" trucker hat and voted for Trump in the last two presidential elections.

Nepal bus accident: Death toll rises to 27, injured moved to Kathmandu

Nepal. The death toll in a bus accident in Nepal has risen to 27, authorities said, a day after an Indian-registered bus carrying 40 Indian tourists crashed into the Marsyangdi River in Tanahun district while travelling from Pokhara to Kathmandu. The initial death toll was 14, but it has since increased as rescue efforts continue. Sixteen injured passengers were airlifted to Kathmandu for medical treatment. The bodies of the victims have been transported to Pokhara for autopsies.



will be travelling to Kathmandu to collect the bodies of the deceased and meet the injured. All the passengers on the bus hailed from Jalgaon, Maharashtra. Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister

Devendra Fadnis wrote about the tragedy on social media platform X: "In connection with the bus accident in Nepal, the work of providing all kinds of help to the stranded devotees in Jalgaon district has started in coordination with the relevant authorities on the border with Nepal." Prime Minister Narendra Modi also wrote on X, expressing his grief: "Saddened by the loss of lives due to a road mishap in Tanahun district, Nepal. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover at the earliest. The Indian Embassy is providing all possible assistance to those affected."

Ukraine launches drone attacks on Moscow, claim Russian officials

Kuala A woman from India disappeared in Malaysia's capital Friday when pavement collapsed beneath her and she fell into a sinkhole where she may have been swept away by an underground water current, police said. The woman plunged into the 8-meter-deep (26-foot-deep) sinkhole in the Dang Wangi area of the Malaysian capital, where local police chief Sulizmie Affendy Sulaiman said witnesses saw the paved walkway suddenly collapse under her while she was walking. Rescuers barricaded part of the area and used an excavator to clear debris in the sinkhole, but there was no immediate sign of the victim. Sulizmie declined to comment when asked about the possible condition of the woman,



or the cause of the incident. Kuala Lumpur police chief Rusdi Mohamad Isa said there was a strong water flow underground and that the woman may have been swept away. Rusdi was quoted by the national Bernama news agency as saying the search required careful planning because it involves public infrastructure. For instance, if pipes or drains were shut down, it could cause flooding in the area, he said. "We can't act recklessly," he added. Rusdi said a soil slip was reported last year in the same location where the sinkhole appeared but that it was fixed. He said businesses in the area have been advised to close temporarily for safety reasons

Want India on our side to end war, not do balancing act: Ukraine's Zelenskyy

Kyiv Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday called on India to lend its support to Ukraine in its war with Russia and urged it to refrain from taking a neutral or balancing stance in the crisis. Speaking to reporters after holding wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kyiv, Zelenskyy also expressed his desire to visit India soon and reach out to Indians. PM Modi arrived in Kyiv earlier in the day, becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to visit war-torn Ukraine since its independence. PM Modi also held one-on-one and delegation-level talks with Zelenskyy with a focus on ways to find a negotiated settlement to the Russia-Ukraine conflict that has badly impacted the world. Here's what Volodymyr Zelenskyy said after meeting PM Modi: "Want India on our side to end the war and not do a balancing act. I want to visit

India soon and reach out to Indian people. India has a big role to play in ending our war with Russia. India is an important country in the world and can have a big role in peace making," the Ukrainian President said while speaking to India Today TV exclusively. When asked about his meeting with PM Modi, Zelenskyy said, "We had a very good meeting, in fact a historical one. It was not about me or PM Modi, but about both the nation and its people. I am very thankful to PM Modi for coming to Ukraine".

Speaking about the four agreements inked by India and Ukraine earlier in the day, Zelenskyy said that Kyiv was ready to extend its technology to India for mutual benefit. "We signed four Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with India and I think it's just the beginning. During the meeting, I told the Prime Minister that we are ready to share our technology with India," he added. Later, while speaking to

news agency ANI, President Zelenskyy also said that India will play its role in the war which was started by one man, Vladimir Putin. "India will play its role. I think that India has begun to recognise that this is not just conflict, this is a real war of one man and his name is Putin against the whole country whose name is Ukraine. You are a big country. You have a big influence, and you can stop Putin and halt his economy, and put him really in his place," he said. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also said that Russian President Vladimir Putin doesn't respect Prime Minister Narendra Modi and does not want peace. "The problem is that Putin doesn't want peace. I don't know what they spoke about when they had the meeting. If, during the official visit of the PM, you attack the children in hospital. So, he had to recognise that he (the Russian President) didn't respect India or didn't control his Army."

Jake Sullivan to make first China visit as US security adviser amid tensions

Washington. Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden's national security advisor, will visit China next week in a new bid to manage tensions months before US elections, the White House said Friday. Sullivan will travel to Beijing from August 27 to 29 in the first visit by a US national security advisor to China since 2016, although other senior officials including Secretary of State Antony Blinken have visited over the past two years. The visit comes months ahead of US elections in November. The Democratic presidential nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, would be expected, if she wins, to continue Biden's approach of seeking dialogue with China while also maintaining pressure. Her Republican rival Donald Trump has vowed, at least rhetorically, to take a harder line, with some of his aides seeing a far-reaching global showdown with China. A senior US official told reporters that the Biden administration's engagement with China did not indicate any softening of approach and that it continued

to believe that "this is an intensely competitive relationship." "We are committed to making the investments, strengthening our alliances, and taking the common steps on tech and national security that we need to take," the official said, referring to sweeping restrictions on US technology transfers to China imposed under Biden. "We are committed to managing this competition responsibly, however, and preventing it from veering into conflict," she added, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. A key area of friction has been Taiwan, the self-ruling democracy which Beijing considers its territory and has not ruled out "reuniting" through force. China has kept up its sabre-rattling since the inauguration this year of President Lai Ching-te, whose party emphasises Taiwan's separate identity. "We're going to raise concern about the PRC's increased military, diplomatic and economic pressure in Taiwan," the administration official said, referring to the



People's Republic of China. "These activities are destabilising, risk escalation, and we're going to continue to urge Beijing to engage in meaningful dialogue with Taipei," she said. The official said Sullivan would also discuss the South China Sea, where tension has been rising between China and US ally the Philippines. The official did not indicate that the United States expected breakthroughs on the trip, in which Sullivan will meet with

China's foreign policy supremo Wang Yi. The official said Sullivan will reiterate US concerns about China's support for Russia in its major expansion of its defence industry since the Ukraine invasion. Beijing counters that, unlike the United States, it does not directly give weapons to either side. China has historically been eager to work with US national security advisors, seeing them as decision-makers close to the president who can negotiate away from the media spotlight that comes with the secretary of state or top leadership. The modern US-China relationship was launched when Henry Kissinger, then national security advisor to Richard Nixon, secretly visited Beijing in 1971 to lay the groundwork for normalisation of relations with the communist state. Sullivan and Wang have met four times over the last year and a half -- once in Washington and the other times in Vienna, Malta and Bangkok -- as well as alongside Biden and President Xi Jinping at their November summit in California.

US, European nations reject Venezuela court's nod to Nicolas Maduro's poll win

Caracas, Venezuela The United States along with countries in Europe and Latin America on Friday rejected the certification by Venezuela's Supreme Court of strongman Nicolas Maduro's widely questioned presidential reelection. Washington, which has sanctions in place against Maduro's regime, said through State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel that the ruling "lacks all credibility," while Spain and Mexico continued to insist on a detailed breakdown of voting results. Venezuela's top court, widely regarded as loyal to Maduro, on Thursday certified his disputed reelection to a third, six-year term -- a ruling he welcomed as "historic." The CNE electoral council, also seen as a Maduro ally, had declared him the winner of the July 28 election, with 52 percent of votes cast. It never provided a detailed breakdown of results. The opposition says polling station-level results show that its candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, a 74-year-old

retired diplomat, defeated Maduro by a wide margin. It published these results online, prompting an investigation by Attorney General Tarek William Saab, seen as a Maduro ally, who said the opposition had "usurped" the powers of the CNE to release election results.

On Friday, Saab said he would summon Gonzalez Urrutia "in the coming hours" to explain his "disobedience" of state institutions. Patel said Friday there was "overwhelming evidence" Gonzalez Urrutia had won the vote, and warned that "continued attempts to fraudulently claim victory for Maduro will only exacerbate the ongoing crisis." Protests in the hours following the vote left 25 people dead, nearly 200 injured and more than 2,400 under arrest. It was time, said Patel, for "discussions on a respectful, peaceful transition." Maduro has called for the arrest of Gonzalez Urrutia, who has not been seen in public since leading a July 30 opposition



march. "Lack of independence" - The United States also signed a joint statement with 10 Latin American countries that decried a "lack of independence and impartiality" on the part of the high court and the CNE. "Only an impartial and independent audit of votes... will ensure respect for the sovereign popular will and democracy in Venezuela," said the document, which was also signed by Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and

Uruguay. Venezuela rejected the statement as "unacceptable" interference. Spain and Mexico insisted that unless Venezuela publishes detailed voting results, Maduro's victory claim cannot be recognised. For his part, EU top diplomat Josep Borrell insisted Friday that "we have not seen any evidence" of a Maduro victory. "Until we see a result that is verifiable, we will not recognise it," he said. The CNE has said it could not provide a polling station-level breakdown as its systems had been targeted in a "cyber terrorist attack" -- a claim backed by the Supreme Court. An observer mission from the US-based Carter Center said there was no evidence of a cyber attack. The opposition, for its part, says it has access to the results from 80 percent of paper ballots cast and that they show that Gonzalez Urrutia won handsily. Gonzalez Urrutia on X urged the international community to remain "firm in defending our democracy and continuing to demand transparency from state bodies."

News box

City gets 16mm of rain, more likely

Ahmedabad. The city recorded 16mm of rainfall on Friday, marking the second consecutive day of over 10mm rainfall after an extended dry spell. According to the IMD, the city is likely to experience light to occasional heavy showers on Saturday.

Despite the rainfall, Ahmedabad's maximum temperature reached 32 degrees celsius, slightly above the normal by 0.6 degrees, as noted in the bulletin. The IMD bulletin attributed the rainfall to the ongoing monsoon trough, supplemented by two weather systems: an off-shore trough over the east-central Arabian Sea and low-pressure in the same region.

On Saturday, parts of Valsad could see very heavy rain, while regions in Narmada, Bharuch, Surat, Dang, Tapi, Navsari, Amreli and Bhavnagar may get heavy to very heavy rain.

Isolated heavy rainfall alert for state till Monday. The IMD had issued an isolated heavy rainfall warning for Kerala until Monday due to a low-pressure area over the east-central Arabian Sea. Yellow alerts were in place for Kannur, Kasaragod, and Kozhikode districts. Squally weather with wind speeds up to 55kmph was expected along the Kerala coast, and fishermen were advised to avoid these areas. 112718563

IMD warns of heavy rain in state till Tuesday. The IMD had issued an isolated heavy rainfall warning for Kerala until Tuesday. Yellow alerts were issued for Kannur and Kasaragod districts on Saturday, extending to Kozhikode, Kannur, and Kasaragod on Sunday and Monday. Additionally, squally weather with gusts up to 55kmph was expected over parts of the Arabian Sea. Incois warned six districts in Kerala.

PG owners want a relook at new rules in Bengaluru

BENGALURU. The recent guidelines issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) for the running of paying guest (PG) accommodations have raised concern among owners of such establishments.

The PG Owners' Welfare Association contended that the decision to keep 70 sqft space per person and a limit on the number of inmates will lead to high rentals that will put many customers at a disadvantage. They are now planning to appeal to the civic body to take a relook at the guidelines.

Association president Arun Kumar said customers, mainly poor students from rural areas and other states, generally pay Rs 5,000 a month for a small room and three meals, and the Palike's move will force PG owners to increase the space and charge more, which may lead to losses as well.

"Many homeowners have converted their houses into PGs for their livelihood. They may find it difficult to hire two round-the-clock staff as their earnings will go towards the salaries of the employees. A site measuring 30x40 sqft can accommodate 40 inmates. This accommodation may also have about 12 bathrooms. PG owners also bear the cost of food, power, and water bills, as well as maintenance. Guidelines like 70 sqft area per person, having a backup of CCTV footage for 90 days instead of 30 days, and having an employee 24x7 will impact the business of small-time owners, and many will be forced to shut down," said Kumar. Association general secretary Chandrashekar DS said students and job seekers opt for PGs as many government accommodations like hostels may not have sufficient space and may not prefer the food.

Upset student jumps from third floor of school in Bengaluru, fractures legs

BENGALURU. A Class 10 student reportedly attempted suicide by jumping from the third floor of her school, Al Fahad Education Centre, on 15th Cross of Bapuji Nagar 1st Main around 1.40 pm on Friday.

The student climbed over the fence of the third floor wall, and jumped in front of other students. The incident has reportedly been filmed by a person on a mobile phone. The school staff rushed the 15-year-old student, a resident of Bapujinagar, to Victoria Hospital, and later to Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health in Jayanagar. It is said she told her classmates before jumping. By the time the teachers could catch her, she sustained severe injuries to her legs and back. She was said to be upset after a staff member allegedly scolded her in front of other students.

"She has suffered fractures in both her legs and is being treated at Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health in Jayanagar. The doctors said she is out of danger. She is a bright student. We don't know the reason behind her action. The allegations against the staff are false and baseless. There are CCTVs in the school, and the recordings will throw light if she was scolded by any teacher. The treatment expenses will be borne by the management," school Vice-Principal Mohammad Fahad told.

Bandh will hit normal life, no party shall enforce it: Bombay High Court

MUMBAI. MVA on Friday called off its statewide bandh on Saturday over the Badlapur school sexual abuse case after Bombay HC, pointing at the "huge loss" to the economy and disruption of essential services like health that would occur, restrained all parties concerned from proceeding with the general strike.

MVA constituents Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP) and Congress decided that instead of the total bandh, all their politicians would wear black badges and resort to sit-in protests across the state. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar said they disagreed with the view of the high court but were following the order out of respect for the judiciary. CM Eknath Shinde called HC direction a slap on the

face of the opposition and said MVA was milking the Badlapur incident in the hope of gaining votes in the assembly election after seeing the popularity of the Ladki Bahin scheme of govt.

The order of HC bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Amit Borkar came on two PILs filed by daily wageer Nandabai Misal and advocates Jaishri Patil and Gunaratan Sadavarte.

Initially, HC bench had been disinclined to interfere in the matter, saying the court "should not be dragged in and politicised" when there existed a state machinery to prevent the bandh.

The PILs expressed concern about the adverse consequences citizens and organisations, including students, small and big businesses,



and taxi and autorickshaw drivers, were likely to suffer because of the bandh.

For Misal, advocates Subhash Jha and Harekrishna Mishra referred to the statewide Maratha agitation that had led to destruction of public and private properties and urged HC to intervene.

Sadavarte said protests were being

planned despite an SIT having been set up in the Badlapur case.

"For 10 hours ... stone-pelting for justice? It was for their own mileage," he said.

To the bench's query on preventive steps taken, advocate general Brendra Saraf said notices had been issued to the bandh organisers but arrests were not yet

made. "While the state is taking all steps to ensure there is no disruption, the constitutional obligations of others not to call for a bandh should also be enforced," he said. The judges said from the material available they were prima facie convinced that the call given by political parties to observe the bandh would mean "cessation of all kinds of activities, which will result in the life of the state coming to a halt". They said it may entail heavy loss to industrial, business, economic and other activities.

They said the bandh was likely to not only affect students but also adversely impact emergency services such as health and public conveniences like electricity, water, local trains and "entire life of Mumbai may come to a halt".

Migration of CBSE, ICSE students to state Plus II course records huge dip in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.

The number of students migrating from schools affiliated with national boards, such as CBSE and ICSE, to the state higher secondary schools after Class X has registered a significant dip this year.

While more than 50% of students who passed CBSE Class X from the state used to switch to the state Plus II syllabus five years ago, the migration rate has fallen to 32.43% this year, denoting a sharp drop of around 10% compared to the previous year.

The number of ICSE students who shifted to the state higher secondary course also dropped by nearly 10% this year compared to 2023. In 2019, close to 47% of students had migrated to the state Plus II syllabus from the ICSE stream.

A section of academics has cited chances of better performance in the entrance examinations for admission to engineering, medical and other professional courses as the reason for national board students not opting for migration to state syllabus.

Notably, in the state engineering entrance exam this year, 55% of the top 5,000 ranks



were bagged by students from the CBSE stream, according to figures provided by the Commissioner for Entrance Examinations (CEE). The state syllabus students clinched 40% of the top 5,000 ranks. In exams such as NEET also, CBSE students were at an advantage.

According to Indira Rajan, secretary-general of the National Council of CBSE Schools, the trend of migration of national syllabus students to the state has been on the wane since 2018. She attributed the parents' insistence on quality of education rather than ease of fetching marks as the reason for the drop. "Also, the trend of overseas migration of students for

undergraduate courses has brought back the focus on communication skills and educational standards that are important yardsticks to succeed at the international level," she opined.

Meanwhile, stakeholders in the higher secondary sector have pointed out that the recent controversies surrounding the availability of seats for state Plus I admission have landed the sector in a state of uncertainty. "With even students who have cleared the

SSLC exam uncertain about chances of admission in the state higher secondary course, parents of children in CBSE and ICSE schools would naturally prefer their children continuing in the same syllabus," pointed out a higher secondary teacher. According to this year's higher secondary admission statistics, only 25,350 students from the CBSE stream had applied for the state Plus I course. The number of applicants from the ICSE stream was only 2,627. "The number of applications used to be nearly double this year's figure in the previous years," said a senior official of the general education department.

Origin of Badlapur rail roko remains a mystery, say police and protesters

Mumbai. The origin of Tuesday's rail roko agitation in Badlapur over the sexual assault of two minor schoolgirls remains shrouded in mystery. The police are baffled how a parents' dharna outside the school metamorphosed into a public protest involving at least 5,000 people sitting on the railway tracks. Railway property was also vandalised.

The school protesters say their intention was only to gather outside the institute during the bandh called in the city. They did not understand when the plan to halt local trains was made. In an impromptu move, people started talking about stopping trains to have their voices heard by the

central govt. After this, the crowds swelled upon the tracks as the school agitators joined the sit-in.

A high-ranking police official said the unhelpful attitude of school authorities and the police station, where the parents were made to wait for 11 hours before an FIR was registered, had fuelled the outrage. Eventually, following the intervention of the zonal DCP, the accused was arrested. The school principal, a teacher and a female attendant were also sacked and a woman inspector, Shubhada Shitole, shunted for stalling the FIR.

By then a women's organisation had announced a protest outside the school. Some local activists and

unions also called for a bandh.

Sangeeta Chienvenkar, who was part of the group at the school and is booked in the case, said: "We planned to hold a peaceful bandh and agitate outside the school since they were negligent in handling the case. On Aug 20, at 6.30 am, as per the plan, parents as well as other citizens gathered outside the gate demanding that the authorities explain what action they had taken, but till 9.30 am when they did not even reply, people got angry, entered inside and vandalised the nursery section where the crime occurred." Another agitator who had heard about the dharna at the school, said: "I have a small daughter too, so I decided to join

the sit-in outside the school. There the group said the next protest is at Badlapur railway station to have our voices heard by the central govt, after which I participated in the rail roko but avoided going on the railway track."

It appears that apart from the parents who went to Badlapur station, more than 3,000 persons gathered in response to messages on social media and news alerts on television channels. In a few hours, the number swelled to 5,000.

Another youth said two college friends were on the tracks but he was watching from the platform. "After watching the news on television, they called me to join. I feel the rail roko should have lasted

an hour at most until our voice reached the authorities," he said.

Railway police commissioner Ravindra Shiswe and Thane police commissioner Ashutosh Dumbre had arrived to pacify the crowd, but the demand was that the accused be hanged in public. The officers cited the legal position and their inability to accept such a demand. Suddenly, the mob started pelting stones on security personnel, following which police resorted to lathi-charge to disperse the crowd.

"We understood their mentality. Even though they were violent, we dealt with them very carefully. Without using much force, we ensured that they dispersed as early as possible," an IPS official said.

Bengaluru celebrates India's moon odyssey

BENGALURU. Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), along with its field stations across India, celebrated the first National Space Day on Friday to mark the country's successful conquest of the moon.

On August 23, 2023, India became the fourth country in the world to land on the moon and the first to reach its southern polar region. The event commemorates the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission, the landing of the Vikram lander and the deployment of the Pragyan rover.

The space day featured numerous events across the city on the inaugural theme -- Touching Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga -- to celebrate India's achievements in space exploration.

IIA organised two public talks focused on the institute's space mission, astronomy from the space mission, and the significance of placing telescopes in space.

Scientist Rekhesh Mohan from IIA explained the significance of space-based telescopes and why they matter, stars and their evolution, spectral analysis, and the challenges of ground-based observations. He also shed light on the future of space-based astronomy and strategic locations for space telescopes.

The second session was based around 'Astronomy from

Space Missions of India' by S Seetha from the Raman Research Institute of India (RRI), who delved into Astrosat, satellite technology and earth observations, and future space missions.

Mohan explained how the Aditya L1 mission, specifically its visible emission line coronagraph (VELC) instrument, is crucial for studying the sun's corona. He underscored how the mission highlighted the significance of placing telescopes in space, where they can collect data without interference from the Earth's atmosphere.

The Aditya L1 mission is part of a broader trend in space-based astronomy, he said while speaking about the future of space-based astronomy.

SPACE EXPO

The Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium organised a variety of space-themed activities for students and the public. Minor

Irrigation and Science and Technology Minister NS Boseraju inaugurated an exhibition that showcased models of the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft and the LVM-3 launch vehicle, along with displays illustrating the spacecraft's journey and vibrant informational panels. The International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore (IIIT-B) hosted a workshop titled 'Space is the Limit, Powered by Science and Technology'.



Chennai: Woman, son killed in blast, police probing suicide angle

CHENNAI. Minutes after a loud explosion rattled the neighbourhood, a 55-year-old woman and her 26-year-old son were found burnt to death inside their house on the second floor of an apartment in T Nagar on Friday afternoon. Police have not ruled out a suicide bid, though no note was found at the site.

Around 1pm, neighbours broke open the door and found the bodies on a bed in a room adjacent to the kitchen, sources said. They immediately alerted the Mambalam police who rushed to the house and inspected the spot.

Police identified the victims as G Rajalakshmi, who worked as a cook in some houses, and Kishore Kumar, a delivery executive. Rajalakshmi's husband, who works as a security guard, was at work at the time of the incident.

The impact of the blast was such that it created a huge hole on a room and the debris flew and

landed on a few nearby apartments, damaging PVC pipes. Though neighbours said the incident might have happened due to an LPG cylinder blast, a police official said it was too early to arrive at a conclusion. Sources said two LPG cylinders were found in the kitchen, but they had not been damaged.

Police sources also quoted neighbours and relatives saying that they smelled petrol or kerosene. The bodies were sent to the government hospital in KK Nagar for a postmortem.

A case has been registered and a police investigation is on.

(If you are in distress or have suicidal thoughts, call government's helpline at 104 or Sneha suicide prevention helpline at 044 24640050/24640060.)



Why delivery of justice is difficult in India

THE rape-murder of a young trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata has led to a justified hue and cry not just in West Bengal but across the nation.

Kolkata witnessed more trouble on Sunday after a Durand Cup football match between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal at Salt Lake Stadium was cancelled due to the non-availability of police personnel in view of the serious law and order situation elsewhere in the city.

The molestation of two schoolgirls at Badlapur in Maharashtra has added to the nationwide disgust. Appalling crimes and political mudslinging are nothing new in our country.

Of course, the police leadership is also to be blamed for not doing its job efficiently and quite a bit of it is also compromised unfortunately due to corruption and career interests, due to which many policemen join hands with politicians.

Curiously, the Supreme Court, which gave a historic judgment in 2006 on police reforms, is not even keen to issue a contempt notice to state governments for not acting on its directions in letter and spirit.

TRYSTS AND TURNS: Political patronage emboldens offenders

The new criminal laws have many lacunae. The sad part is that police officers, lawyers and judges who deal with criminal cases have not been consulted.

MAMATA Banerjee, West Bengal Chief Minister and the feisty boss of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), is squarely on the back foot today.

The doctor was shamelessly brutalised at her workplace. It almost seems that young men are on the prowl looking for opportunities to rape and kill their chosen victims. There is a loud call for more stringent laws.



message being circulated that if you support or help the party in power, your time in jail will be curtailed by the easily obtained parole and even jail sentences can be prematurely terminated.

These instances of an anti-women attitude of parties in power in order to bolster their political fortunes is what contributes to the general disrespect for womanhood and, further, disrespect for the law itself.

Mulayam's adage that "boys will be boys" is presently the reigning philosophy in our land. It is fortunate that educated women have revolted against this philosophy.

Unsafe women

Laws, guidelines must be implemented effectively

THE Kolkata rape-murder has glaringly shown how unsafe and vulnerable working women are. Twenty-seven years after it acknowledged sexual harassment at the workplace as a human rights violation and issued the Vishaka Guidelines, the Supreme Court has directed the Centre and the states to take urgent steps to institutionalise the safety of medics.



Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, was enacted as an extension of the Vishaka Guidelines with the primary aim of ensuring safe working spaces for women.

Supreme Court flagged 'serious lapses' and 'uncertainty' regarding the implementation of this Act.

The Nirbhaya Fund, set up by the Union Government to implement initiatives and schemes for enhancing the safety and security of women, has often been in the news for the wrong reasons — money being underutilised or misused.

Need to look beyond identities to remove inequalities

The SC judgment has underlined the critical need for empirically verifiable data based on which states can introduce quotas within quotas.

THE Supreme Court judgment validating the sub-classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs) for reservation has touched upon many contentious issues. Besides creating a ground for significant shifts in the reservation policy, it raises questions about the changing nature of caste and how the state policy should deal with it.

The judgment has come at a time when a section of the mainstream political class is aggressively campaigning for the need to enumerate the caste-wise socio-economic status of the Indian population.

Interestingly, many of those who oppose the SC sub-classification judgment have been supporters of a caste-based census for ascertaining the status of OBCs. The case of SC reservations, they would argue, is different from that of OBCs.



special provisions for the uplift of those who had suffered untouchability and exclusion for centuries. BR Ambedkar's presence in the Constituent Assembly as the Chair of the drafting committee ensured that they got a fair deal in the form of reservations.

together as a political bloc. However, their being together in the SC list has not resulted in a melting of their jaati identities.

Every state of the Indian Union has a separate set of communities listed as SCs. It is likely that their sub-classification into separate blocks could weaken their political strength and ability to lobby with the state in support of the reservation action.

Though a part of the Constitution, the SCs have not been a fixed or closed category. Many communities have been added to the list over the years.

Standing desks may help reduce weight in kids



Struggling to shed those extra kilos in your kids? Standing desks in schools may prove beneficial as they cut down on sedentary time in classrooms as well as help reduce body mass index (BMI) -- a key indicator of obesity -- by an average of 5.24 percentile points, new research has found. The findings showed that the students who had the stand-biased desks for two years averaged a three per cent drop in BMI, while those in traditional desks showed the two per cent increase typically associated with getting older. However, even those students who spent just one year in classrooms with stand-biased desks had lower mean BMIs than those who had traditional seated classrooms in their third and fourth grade years.



In addition, there weren't major differences between boys and girls, or between students of different races, suggesting that this intervention works across demographic groups. "These types of standing desks encourage the students to move instead of being forced to sit in poorly fitting, hard plastic chairs for six or seven hours of their day," said

Mark Benden, Associate Professor at the Texas A&M School of Public Health, US.

Moreover, these standing desks might also help students who aren't overweight maintain their BMI, while at the same time help those who are overweight or obese get to a healthier weight, said the paper published in the American Journal of Public Health.

"Research has shown that standing desks are positive for the teachers in terms of classroom management and student engagement, as well as positive for the children for their health, cognitive functioning and academic achievement," Benden added.

Previous studies have also shown that children who stand burn 15 per cent more calories, on average, than those who sit in class.

For the study, the team followed 193 students from three elementary schools in US, from their third grade to the end of fourth grade.

At each school, four classrooms were outfitted with stand-biased desks (which allow students to sit on a stool or stand at will), and four classrooms in each school acted as a control and utilised standard classroom desks.

Are you fit to work?

According to psychologist Daniel Goleman, "Emotional intelligence matters twice as much as technical and analytical skill combined for star performance... And the higher people move up in the company, the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes." Going back in time, there were jobs for everyone. However, since then the rules have changed drastically, giving no choice to employees to choose their own faith. Moreover, they have accustomed to shorter deadlines, long working hours with no promises of job security.

Recent rise in deadly health threats are mostly linked to hectic work schedule. Several organisations in India are taking steps towards better health for their employees, some have allied with wellness companies to monitor employees' health.

According to Ravi Krishnan, CEO & Co-founder, Stepathlon, "One of the biggest challenges we face is changing the mindset about fitness and embedding the gravity of the ill-effects of a sedentary lifestyle. Historically, in India, companies and employees have focused on illness, not on wellness. The rest of the developed world realised, more than two decades ago, that preventative programs benefit both individual and company from both a health and productivity perspective."

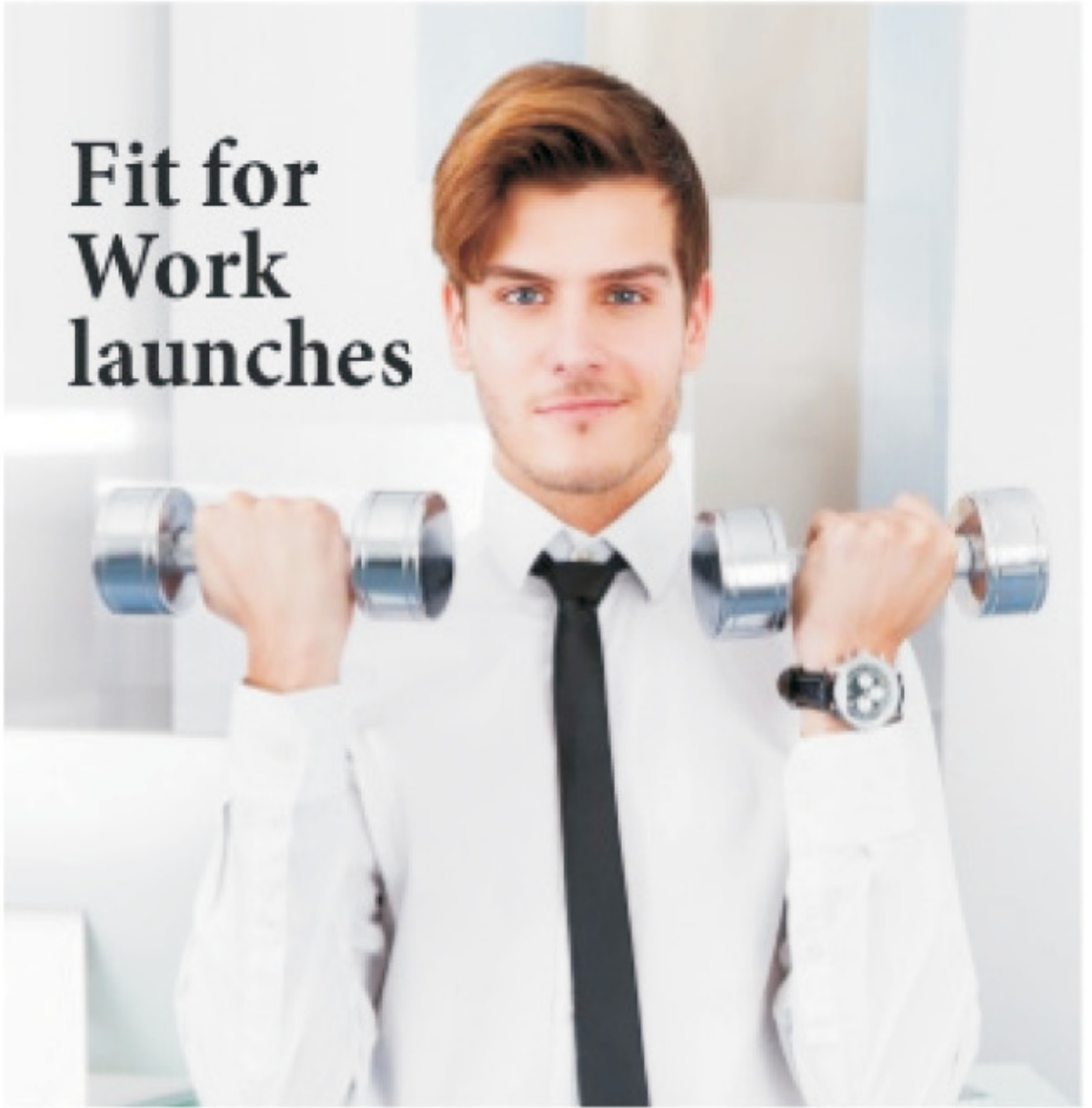
The companies should also take special interest in their employees and gain their trust by offering them options to work from home or reduce their hours of work. Recently, Cognizant Technology Solutions has asked its employees in India to work from home. Too add on "Developed countries realize this and lay a lot of emphasis on productivity and efficiency. Countries like Sweden have introduced 5-6 hour work days keeping in mind that employees are most productive in that time frame. Indian organizations must initiate employee wellness programs that enable them to live better personal and professional lives", remarks Ravi Krishnan.

However, some employees need to cut down on certain bad habits that can alter their life. For instance, cigarette breaks at work or going for drinks post work. These habits will only pile up more health issues while one is burdened with work. Time that's gone will never come back.

There are several ways to pursue healthy lifestyle. Nonetheless, it's crucial to segregate these issues into mental and physical categories. Usually, health deteriorates when one stops listening to body needs. It could be a simple thing like drinking water at regular intervals or stretching at your desk while working on computer. However, one of the most common health issues at work is stress. Stress alone can magnify issues that would lead to bigger risks. It is difficult to diagnose problems at the beginning, but it's not impossible—few good habits can do the trick!

How does one inculcate good habits? It's simple, one has to understand the knowledge, skill and desire to create a habit. For instance, an obese who wants to lose weight because it is affecting his health—is the

Fit for Work launches



knowledge. To understand what skills are required to lose weight, he

has to find out different ways that will help him achieve the goal. At last, he requires motivation to persevere with his plan to lose weight. Nonetheless, according to psychotherapist Alfred Adler, "The hardest thing for human beings to do is to know themselves and to change themselves."

In some countries, like India, employees are usually over loaded with work without sufficient breaks, which can lead to stress. And stress increases the level of hormones—the rest is history when it comes to making bad choices at work in regards to health. However, it takes two hands to clap, which means organisations should help employees to work in a stress free environment. Companies can offer recreational activities to their employees—it could be a simplest thing like a small library or provide healthy food in the canteen.

"The World Economic Forum listed health as one of the top 10 global concerns last year. India's diabetes rate has gone up by 123% in the last 25 years. We are sitting on a ticking time bomb, with an alarming 70% of our urban population in the obese or overweight bracket. An ASSOCHAM survey shows that nearly 42.5% employees in the private sector suffer from general anxiety disorders. This highlights a burning need to address employee health and wellbeing across all companies and industries", adds Ravi Krishnan.

As an employee, it's important for him to be self-aware of his surroundings to choose what suits him in long run, rather than become part of a never-ending rat race. As rightly put by psychotherapist Alfred Adler, "The power-hungry individual follows a path to his own destruction." Nonetheless, all one has to do is break the bad habits, and follow a better lifestyle that will lead to his well being.

Wearable activity trackers may not boost

Weight loss



One week of Panchakarma programme -- an Ayurvedic-based well being programme that features a vegetarian diet, meditation, yoga and massages -- can lead to measurable decreases in a set of blood-based metabolites associated with inflammation, cholesterol regulation and cardiovascular disease risk, the results of a clinical trial have shown.

"It appears that a one-week Panchakarma programme can significantly alter the metabolic profile of the person undergoing it," said senior author Deepak Chopra, Professor at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine and a noted

proponent of integrative medicine.

The findings, published in the journal Scientific Reports, represent an attempt to use metabolic biomarkers to assess the reported health benefits of integrative medicine and holistic practices.

"As part of our strategy to create a framework for whole systems biology research, our next step will be to correlate these changes with both gene expression and psychological health," Chopra said.

The research team from the University of California San Diego School of Medicine noted that alternative and integrative medicine practices, such as meditation and Ayurveda, are extremely popular, but their effects on the human microbiome, genome

and physiology are not fully understood.

"Our programme of research is dedicated to addressing these gaps in the literature," first author Christine Tara Peterson said.

"Panchakarma refers to a detoxification and rejuvenation protocol involving massage, herbal therapy and other procedures to help strengthen and rejuvenate the body," Peterson pointed out.

The study involved 119 healthy male and female participants between 30 and 80 years of age who stayed at the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in Carlsbad, California.

Slightly more than half were assigned to the Panchakarma intervention and the remainder to a control group.

Blood plasma analyses, using liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry, were taken before and after the six-day testing period.

The researchers found that in the Panchakarma group there was a measurable decrease in 12 specific cell-membrane chemicals (phosphatidylcholines) correlating with serum cholesterol and inversely related to Type-2 diabetes risk.

"These phospholipids exert broad effects on pathways related to inflammation and cholesterol metabolism," Peterson explained.

"Plasma and serum levels of the metabolites of phosphatidylcholine are highly predictive of cardiovascular disease risk," Peterson noted.



4 stretches you must do every morning

Now finally, you have a legit reason to stay in bed a tad bit longer. And no, you won't be branded lazy for it! Experts say that stretching your body gently post waking up, helps deal with the sluggish early-morning feeling, and also give relief to your aching and tight muscles. Do the following stretching exercises, before you kick-start your day.

Sit in Padmasan or with your legs crossed in the lotus position. As you stretch out your hands in front of you, slowly link and interlace fingers. Your palm should be facing outwards. Stretch your arms out as far and then slowly extend your arms up above your head. Keep your fingers interlaced all the time as you stretch. Then, slowly (from your waist) bend towards your right as far as you can, come back straight up and then bend towards your left.

Lie down on your back. Now, raise your leg and bring one knee towards your stomach and hold it with your opposite hand. Next, gently twist your spine as you pull your knee towards the floor across your body. You don't need to touch the floor with your knee. The key is to keep both your shoulders on the floor as you stretch and twist your spine. Once back to the starting position, you can do the opposite side.

Sit with your legs crossed and place both hands behind you with palms flat on the floor and fingers pointing outwards. Shift your weight to your hands as you slowly let your head fall back. Apply pressure on your palms as you lift off your body and butt off the floor, and you slowly bring

your chest and hips towards the ceiling. Pause for a few seconds, go back to the starting position and repeat.

Stand straight and inhale as you reach your arms high up over your head. Stretch your arms up as you gradually stand on your toes. Feel your entire body stretching. Exhale and return to the standing position. Now slowly bend forward and touch your toes. Feel every bone in your spine bend one after the other slowly. Avoid bending your knees. You can feel your entire torso stretch, beginning from your neck, to upper back, middle back, lower back, hamstrings, feet, shoulders and hands.



Cheetahs At Kuno National Park To Roam Free After Year-Long Enclosure Stay

Kuno National Park: The first batch of eight cheetahs from Namibia was introduced in India in September 2022 and the second batch of 12 cheetahs was flown in from South Africa last February.

New Delhi: African cheetahs brought to India as part of the world's first intercontinental translocation of big cats will soon be released into the wild, nearly a year after they were returned to enclosures in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park for health check-ups and monitoring, according to officials. Officials told Press Trust of India that the Centre's Cheetah Project Steering Committee on Friday decided to release the African cheetahs and their cubs, born in India, into the wild in a phased manner after the monsoon withdraws from central parts of the country. "Members of the committee and NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) officials conducted field visits to Kuno and discussed the schedule for releasing the cheetahs. While adult cheetahs will be released into the wild in

phases once the rains end, the cubs and their mothers will be released after December," an official said. All 25 cheetahs - 13 adults and 12 cubs - are doing well, according to the official. The first batch of eight cheetahs from Namibia was introduced in India in September 2022 and the second batch of 12 cheetahs was flown in from South Africa last February. Some cheetahs were initially released into the wild but were brought back to their enclosures by August last year after the deaths of three cheetahs - a female named Tbilisi (from Namibia) and two South African males, Tejas and Sooraj - due to septicemia, an infection that occurs when bacteria enter the bloodstream and spread. This condition arose from wounds under the cheetahs' thick winter coats on their backs and necks, which became



infested with maggots and led to blood infections, according to the government's annual report on Project Cheetah. Officials had earlier told news agency PTI that the unexpected growth of winter coats by some cheetahs during the Indian summer and monsoon, in anticipation of the African winter (June to September), was a major

challenge in managing the animals in India during the first year. "Even African experts did not expect this. The winter coat, combined with high humidity and heat, caused itching, leading the cheetahs to scratch their necks on tree trunks or the ground. This resulted in bruises and exposed skin, which attracted flies that laid eggs, leading to maggot infestations, bacterial infections, and ultimately, the death of three cheetahs," said SP Yadav, Director General of the International Big Cat Alliance and former NTCA member secretary. The deaths prompted the steering committee to recommend that "future cheetahs for reintroduction should be sourced from countries in the Northern Hemisphere, such as Kenya or Somalia, to avoid biorhythmic complications". Currently,

only one cheetah, named Pavan, is roaming free, with officials noting that he is difficult to spot and capture. Though such "experimental" projects come with challenges and expected mortalities, experts in both India and Africa have expressed concerns about keeping the cheetahs in enclosures for extended periods. "The cheetahs are not truly living in the wild, despite spending two years on Indian soil. Cheetahs prefer long journeys and they could be under severe stress," an African expert who assisted with the cheetah reintroduction in India said on condition of anonymity. Since their arrival in India, seven adult cheetahs - three females and four males - have died, including four due to septicemia. All these deaths occurred between March 2023 and January 2024.

Army chief meets Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, reviews security situation

Imphal. The Indian Army chief, General Upendra Dwivedi, on Friday met Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh and held discussions on a wide range of issues, including on ways to bring peace in the northeastern state. Expressing appreciation for the Army chief's visit, Singh posted on X, "I deeply appreciate General Dwivedi's visit to Manipur. Deliberated on critical issues concerning the current situation of our state. We reaffirmed the cooperation between the state government and the security forces in effectively responding to the challenges we face, maintain peace and harmony in the state." According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, General Dwivedi, who is on a two-day visit to Manipur, was accompanied by Lieutenant General RC Tiwari, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, Lieutenant General Abhijit S Pendharkar, General Officer Commanding 3 Corps, and Major General Ravroop Singh, Inspector General Assam Rifles (South). This is General Dwivedi's first visit to the state since he assumed office as the 30th COAS from General Manoj Pande on June 30. He is also expected to meet the senior Army ground commanders and the leaders of other security agencies in the state.

Opposition questions death of man accused of raping minor in Tamil Nadu

Chennai. The Opposition leaders in Tamil Nadu on Friday raised doubts about the circumstances that led to the death of the accused in the Krishnagiri sexual assault case and his father. Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) functionary A Sivaraman, who was arrested for allegedly raping a minor student at a fake NCC camp, died at a hospital in Tamil Nadu's Salem. The 30-year-old accused was arrested by police as he was trying to flee and had consumed rat poison and died on Friday. Earlier on Thursday, his father also died. After the death of Sivaraman and his father, AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said that they died under suspicious circumstances. In addition, Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai also raised doubts about the circumstances that led to the death of Sivaraman and his father. Both the leaders also questioned if there was an attempt to save the real culprits and others involved in the case by



"silencing Sivaraman and his father". They also demanded a Special Investigative Agency (SIT) to probe the case. However, the police have refuted claims of any foul play concerning the deaths of Sivaraman and his father. The police have said that Sivaraman had fractured his leg while trying to evade arrest on August 19, following which he was arrested at a government hospital in Krishnagiri. During interrogation, he admitted that he had consumed rat poison two days before being arrested. This was recorded in the medical history sheet of Sivaraman by the doctors, police said. Later, he was shifted to a government hospital in Salem for further treatment, including dialysis, but he died during treatment. The police also claimed that Sivaraman had also consumed rat poison earlier last month due to a family dispute and underwent treatment at a private hospital. Meanwhile, Sivaraman's father, Ashok Kumar, died after suddenly collapsing and falling on the road from his bike. A CCTV footage showed Ashok Kumar suddenly collapsing on the ground. After the incident, the police sent the body for postmortem and a report was awaited to find out whether Kumar collapsed due to a cardiac arrest or if he was under the influence of alcohol.

'Raise your voice': Indian community in US seeks justice for Kolkata trainee doctor

New Delhi: Several people from the Indian community, including doctors and other medical professionals, organised a series of events in the United States to highlight their demand for justice following the rape-murder of an on-duty female doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. The body of the 31-year-old trainee doctor with severe injury marks was found earlier this month inside the seminar hall of the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital's chest department. The preliminary autopsy report suggested she was subjected to violent sexual assault, evoking widespread protests from medical and non-medical fraternities in that state and others. People in several cities of the US, including Miami, Florida, Chicago,

Boston and New York, lit candles to spell out justice and held placards with messages calling for respect and empowerment of women. In addition, as many as 37 notable



medical associations such as the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO), Lady Hardinge Medical College Alumni Association of North America (LHMC), AIIMSONIANS of America (All India Institute of Medical

Sciences, Delhi), Connecticut Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (CAPIO) also extended their support for justice to the trainee doctor. A letter has also been sent to President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, and the Chief Justice of India, to seek justice for the female doctor. Speaking to India Today TV, Dr Sanjay Bindra, President of the GOSUMEC foundation, said, "I urge the Indian government to implement strict laws to ensure physician

safety. "Earlier on Thursday, Indian-origin female medics in the UK also expressed solidarity with the protests taking place in India demanding justice for the trainee doctor who was raped and murdered in West Bengal.

Why Actor Nagarjuna's N-Convention Centre Is Being Demolished

New Delhi: Popular actor Nagarjuna's N-Convention centre is being demolished by the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection (HYDRA), owing to allegations of encroaching the Full Tank Level (FTL) area and buffer zone of the Thammidikunta Lake. The FTL refers to the spread of any water body upon which construction is restricted. A buffer zone also remains established with the FTL area to prevent encroachments upon water bodies. Earlier this year, the zonal commissioners of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) were tasked with forming lake protection committees to prevent encroachments upon water bodies in and around the city. Recently, the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) has also

revealed that the extent of lakes in Hyderabad was reduced by 61 per cent between 1979 and 2024. Nagarjuna's Convention Centre allegedly stood on 1.12 acre of the FTL area and an



additional 2 acre within the buffer zone. According to official sources, the FTL area of Thammidikunta Lake is approximately 29.24 acre. The property was under scrutiny for several years. However, the GHMC

had not taken any action against it. The management of the convention centre allegedly used influence to bypass regulatory actions from concerned authorities. An official complaint against the convention centre was filed to HYDRA on Wednesday by Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Telangana's Minister of Roads and Buildings. He also enclosed with his complaint the FTL map pointing out the encroachment along with a Google Earth map. The actor took to social media platform X (formerly Twitter) following the demolition drive. "The land is a Patta land, and not even an inch of tank plan is encroached. As a law-abiding citizen, if the Court before which the matter is pending, had decided against me, I would have carried out the demolition myself," he wrote.

'Two politicians and 4 future ones': Abdullahs in throwback photo with Gandhis

New Delhi: Former J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's daughter shared a throwback picture of the Abdullahs with the Gandhi family on social media, coinciding with the announcement of the Congress-National Conference alliance for the upcoming Assembly polls. The photo, which is from December 1986, shared by Safia Abdullah Khan, shows Farooq Abdullah with his three daughters, wife, and son, Omar Abdullah. The Abdullahs are seen posing with the Gandhis, which includes former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, wife Sonia Gandhi and their children Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka. Safia shared the picture on X with the caption, "On a day when Rahul Gandhi is visiting Kashmir, I can't help but remember a visit many moons ago."



In subsequent tweets, Safia, recounting the day, said it was "just two old friends with their families". "Two politicians and four future ones!" she further tweeted. She also said the photo was shot in Tangmarg as they couldn't get up to Gulmarg due to heavy snowfall. A user on X pointed out that Rajiv Gandhi and his family had travelled by road from Jammu to Srinagar on that day. Earlier this week, the Congress stitched an alliance with the National Conference (NC) as Rahul Gandhi and party president Malharjun Kharge visited the Union Territory. On Friday, Omar Abdullah said a seat-sharing arrangement with the Congress had been finalised on a majority of the 90 Assembly seats. According to sources, Congress has expressed its desire to contest 12 seats in Kashmir and has offered 12 seats to the National Conference in the Jammu division. Assembly elections will be held in Jammu and Kashmir for the first time since the scrapping of Article 370. The polls will be held in three phases on September 18, September 25 and October 1. Votes will be counted on October 4 along with that of Haryana.

The latest example of this exploitative scheme comes from a Mumbai club which is now under investigation following a viral social media post.

New Delhi: A match on a dating app, an invitation to a fancy restaurant and a bill that will not just burn a hole in the pocket but set whatever you're wearing on fire - the standard modus operandi of 'scam dates' has claimed many victims. The

latest example of this exploitative scheme comes from The Godfather Club in Mumbai's Andheri West, which is now under investigation following a viral social media post. The post, shared by activist Deepika Narayan Bhardwaj on X, has shed light on a scam that has left several men out of pocket and deeply embarrassed. According to Ms Bhardwaj's post, the scam begins innocently enough on popular dating apps like Tinder, Bumble, Hinge and OKCupid. Men connect with women who quickly express interest in meeting up. The chosen venue is often The Godfather Club or another similar establishment in the vicinity. Once at the location, the women reportedly order expensive items such as high-end liquor or hookah, none of which

appear on the menu. The men, eager to impress, are unaware of the looming financial trap.



After the orders have been placed, the women abruptly leave, often citing an emergency, leaving the men to face an exorbitant bill. The sums involved are staggering, with bills ranging from ?

23,000 to ? 61,000, as evidenced by photos of receipts shared by Ms Bhardwaj. When the men protest or refuse to pay, they are reportedly threatened by the club's staff or bouncers, forcing them to settle the bill out of fear and humiliation. The Godfather Club is not the only venue under scrutiny. Ms Bhardwaj's post hints at a broader network of nightclubs across Mumbai engaging in similar practices. These establishments allegedly employ PR personnel who hire women to bait men on dating apps, luring them into expensive and intimidating situations. Similar incidents have also been reported across major cities like Delhi, Gurugram, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, among others. In June, a civil service aspirant's date went wrong when he was scammed into paying a staggering ? 1.2 lakh in bills at a popular joint in the national capital.

Matched On App, Scammed At Cafe: Mumbai Man Pays 61,000 On Fraud Date

Putting the fun into Work

Getting back to work after a long vacation or after that relaxing weekend can be quite a task. Mondays are daunting, while mid-week blues are enough to make you want to crawl under the covers and not go to work. But what happens when going to work becomes something to look forward to? Of late, many employers are getting quirkier and more innovative with their team bonding activities, engaging their employees in a fun and interactive atmosphere and making offices an actual fun place to work. From themed potlucks and TGIFs to traditional games, it looks like corporate offices today are breaking out of the strictly professional tag, and are focusing more on the person who matters the most — the employee.

Shrinika Thanikachalam, who works in a media agency in the city, says that their agency had recently organised a corporate potluck contest among the employees. "It was a really huge deal. We were asked to draw lots and we were split into three teams. Each team had to come up with a team name, a logo and a menu in a stipulated period of time. It was fun because everyone, men included, had to cook. We even formed a WhatsApp group to plan the entire thing."

The actual potluck happened over a three-day period, and our team, Bite and Chew, dialled things up with a live barbecue and mocktail counter in office. We had someone from another agency be the judge and we were asked to plan things out carefully, ensuring that food did not go to waste. While our team did not follow a particular theme, one of the other teams chose Kerala cuisine as their theme, and served dishes pertaining to that cuisine alone. We plan to make this a regular activity going forward." Tarun Mishra, who works with an IT firm in the city adds, "Potlucks are the easiest way to bond, as food is the binding factor among most people. They also add a personal touch as people

bring home-cooked meals. It involves a bit of self-pride, too, when people like your dishes. At our firm, we have potlucks on a regular basis, where people bring different kinds of dishes - it is like India on a platter. I remember once a girl had brought beetroot halwa and the dish was so tasty, it became a conversation starter for us. I had never spoken to this girl before. It does a lot in bringing out the best in people." There are other corporates which indulge in team bonding activities, which include team outings. Nomitha Nandakumar, who works at an MNC says, "We have regular team outings, not just within departments, but interdepartmental ones as well. These outings are usually fun, and packed with activities which include games you can play in groups such as treasure hunt and charades. At office, we have this break group and interchange policy, where employees are encouraged to come out of the comfort zone of their group and interact with new members of the team and work together. This ensures that there is no groupism of any sort. Then of course, there are the usual sports teams that each department has, and inter-department sports tournaments, too."

Festivals are also a time when team bonding activities are at their peak. What is fascinating to note is that this is also the time when employees themselves take the initiative to do something out-of-the-box and quirky, keeping up with the general good spirit and cheer of the season. From Secret Santas and Best Christmas Tree contests during Christmas, to dressing up in ethnic wear for Pongal, there are many activities that take place. Poornima Ranjit, who works with a multiplex chain in the city says, "We are over 200 employees, and during festival times, we have activities where



- Mondays are daunting, while mid-week blues are enough to make you want to crawl under the covers and not go to work.
- From-themed potlucks and TGIFs to traditional games, it looks like corporate offices today are breaking out of the strictly professional tag.

we have almost everyone participating in various games that are organised, depending on what festival it is. For instance, for Pongal, we had traditional games like lemon and spoon race. Apart from that, we also have activities in smaller groups like there was this game where we merged photos of two people in office and we had to identify who those people were. There was another game where we played only a video without the voice of a popular punch dialogue in a movie and the teams will have to enact and repeat the dialogue. Games like this is a great way to get to know people from other teams as well as take a break from the usual pressure you deal with at work." At Deepa and Arvind Athreya's event management company, there is no concept of employees — they are all family. "We have a number of activities in

place which take place on a regular basis — including TGIF, where we have book reading sessions and beer party on Fridays, flexi timings for ladies, movie nights once a month, fitness challenges for everyone (where we encourage people to walk 2 lakh steps every day). We also babysit the children of our women employees from time to time, so they don't have to worry if they aren't able to find someone to look after their kids at any time," says Deepa, adding, "The concept is simple really. There is an environment of ownership and freedom here. We have witnessed people in our team walking that extra mile when in need. We build teams we love." Going that

extra mile to make employees, in fact, can indeed have tangible results. At Shrinika's firm, the employees got together to make an actual difference in their workspace. "We wanted to make the office a little more environment-friendly, so the employees got together and drafted a plan to convert our office balcony into a little green space. Once we got the approvals, we went all out and made a beautiful garden in the balcony, which we continue to nurture. We also converted our pantry into a sports-themed cafe. We painted the entire thing ourselves, and hung up posters of sportspersons...we went all out," shares Shrinika.

When your ex becomes your co-worker

Office breakups are the toughest, especially because you have to see you're ex every day at work and if that is not enough you've to work with them as well. An office breakup can affect you in several ways and can be very demotivating. We give you a few tips on how to deal with your ex when he/she is a co-worker...

- Be professional. Don't bring your personal problems to work. As difficult as

ex to your other co-workers, as they are going to find out sooner or later. Let the breakup stay between the two of you.

- Your ex is going to move on. If you see him/her get close to someone else at work, just ignore. It is hard to watch the person you loved, flirt with someone else, but acceptance is the best way to go about it. Do not react.
- If he/she is ignoring you at work and behaves as though nothing has happened, follow suit. You don't have to go out of the way to find out what the issue is. Now that you have broken up, it is better to mind your own business.
- Don't let the breakup demotivate you at work. Set higher goals and work towards them. Distraction will help.



it may seem, treat your ex as just another employee at work.

- What is the status of the relationship now? Is he/she your friend now or just a colleague or will you consider dating them again? If you have made up your mind about moving on in life, it is better to cut them out.
- If you haven't gotten over the breakup as yet, don't talk about the relationship with your ex at work. It will only disturb the both of you!
- Don't gossip. Don't backbite about your

- Increase your non-work social life. It is better to hang out with friends who are not your colleagues. Avoid talking about the breakup, and distract yourself completely.
- If you ex is doing everything to sabotage you at work, take time and clear out the differences. If that doesn't work, take the issue to a higher official and discuss the matter.
- Let time heal you. It might take a while, but time certainly will help!

Sharing personal information helps women get hired

A female applicant strongly raises her chances of getting hired if she gives out personal information, finds a new study, contradicting the conventional theory that if a woman wants equal footing professionally, she should not share any personal information.

The findings showed that female candidates who gave personal information clarifying her resume gaps raised their chance of being hired by 30 to 40 per cent, compared to a comparable female candidate who provided no personal information. "Our study provides the first-ever evidence that women who conceal personal information dramatically lower their hiring prospects," said Joni Hersch, a professor involved in the research.



Employers overwhelmingly preferred to hire female candidates who provided information to explain a resume gap, regardless of content.

"If we start to encourage honest conversations between employers and employees on an official level, it could lead to meaningful change in the quality of applicants, particularly in industries that have been so resistant to providing family-friendly work policies," added one of the researchers, Jennifer Bennett Shinnall.

For the study, the team included 3,022 people who acted as potential employers and had to choose between two job candidates, described as mostly similar except for their openness about a 10-year gap in their job histories. The gap was explained with information such as taking time off to raise children or a recent divorce as the reason for leaving and wanting to re-enter the workforce.

The link between grit and performance revealed



There are many paths to success, but the significance of grit in helping you reach that goal has been greatly overstated, according to a psychologist. Researcher Marcus Crede and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of all prior research on grit.

Their results found no evidence that grit is a good predictor of success. While some educators are working to enhance grit in students, Crede says there's no indication that it's possible to boost levels. And even if it was possible, it might not matter.

Grit is defined as perseverance and commitment to long-term goals. The research is relatively new compared to the decades of work on performance indicators such as conscientiousness and intelligence. "If you look at the questions on the grit measure, they're often almost identical to the questions that we ask when we measure conscientiousness. Many are almost word-for-word the same. It's really just a repackaging or relabeling of conscientiousness, which we've known about for over 50 years. It's perhaps a sexier title, but it's nothing new," Crede said.

Telecom players meet Jyotiraditya Scindia to discuss regulations on OTT platforms

NEW DELHI: Telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia recently met with top telecom service providers to discuss the regulation of Over-the-Top (OTT) communication services. The meeting included Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra, Reliance Jio managing director Pankaj Pawar, and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) Director General S P Kochhar. BSNL Chairman Robert J Ravi also participated. Telcos reiterated their demand to bring OTT services like WhatsApp, Telegram, and Skype under regulation, referencing the Telecommunication Act 2023. They argued that the bill's broad definition of "message" could encompass OTT communication services. Other topics included relaxing norms for quality of service. Kochhar said TSPs still grapple with Right of Way (RoW) issues when acquiring permissions for infra deployment on public and private land for installation of towers and fiber-optic cables. The situation is aggravated by additional requirement of street furniture for 5G networks. Interference from other wireless devices and electromagnetic interference, degrades signal quality and network performance.

Telcos have been advocating for OTT regulation, contending that these services offer similar functionalities to traditional telecom operators but are not subject to the same regulatory requirements.

Swiggy eyeing to launch IPO at USD 15 bn valuation

NEW DELHI: Foodtech firm Swiggy, which was last valued at \$10.7 billion, is reportedly targeting a valuation of \$15 billion valuation for its initial public offering (IPO). The company, which competes with Zomato, is working to launch a mega IPO of \$1 - \$1.2 billion. On Friday, one of Swiggy's investor 360 One valued Swiggy at \$ 11.5 billion. Other investors, however, sees the Bengaluru-based company at much higher valuation. Invesco had last valued Swiggy at \$12.3 billion while Baron Capital valued the firm at \$15.1 billion. Swiggy was valued at \$10.7 billion after its last funding round in 2022. In April, Swiggy's shareholders had approved the much awaited public issue. The company's confidential filing may receive approval from capital market regulator Sevu in the coming weeks. According to the filing, the IPO offer will include a fresh issue of shares worth Rs 3,750 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) component worth Rs 6,664 crore. Swiggy will use the initial public offer (IPO) proceeds to expand its quick commerce Instamart business and open more warehouses to increase its competitiveness. Goldman Sachs said in April that quick deliveries accounted for \$5 billion, or 45 per cent, of India's \$11 billion online grocery market.

Govt invites proposals for setting up e-commerce export hubs



Based on these proposals, further details, including software requirements for e-commerce export hubs (ECEH) to facilitate seamless and expeditious export clearances, will be finalised, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) stated in a trade notice.

New Delhi After Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech announced the establishment of e-commerce export hubs, modelled on similar initiatives in several Southeast Asian countries, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has invited proposals to finalise the operational modalities of these hubs. Based on these proposals, further details, including software requirements for e-commerce export hubs (ECEH) to facilitate seamless and expeditious export clearances, will be finalised, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) stated in a trade notice.

"In this regard, detailed proposal(s) for setting up ECEH may be submitted to this Directorate for examination, support, and guidance," the DGFT said.

Initially, there are plans to set up 10-15 hubs across the country. These hubs would be designated areas, serving as centres with favourable business infrastructure and facilities for cross-border e-commerce activities.

The main objectives are to ensure predictability and the shortest possible turnaround time for e-commerce exports, to facilitate easy re-imports for e-commerce returns or rejects, and to bring various cross-border e-commerce stakeholders under one roof.

While Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and artisans in China, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam have experienced a surge in exports through e-commerce, India's exports via this route, at \$5 billion, have only been a fraction of its total goods exports of \$450 billion. In contrast, China's exports through this medium alone have surpassed \$300 billion.

A report by the economic think tank GTRI suggests that India's e-commerce exports have the potential to reach \$350 billion by 2030, but banking issues hinder growth and increase operational costs. India has set a target of \$1 trillion in merchandise exports by 2030, and cross-border e-commerce trade has been identified as one of the avenues to achieve this goal.

Bangladesh owes USD800 million to Adani Power Ltd

Despite the financial turmoil, Adani Power has assured that it will continue to supply power to Bangladesh from its 1,600MW plant in Jharkhand.

NEW DELHI: Amid student-led protest in Bangladesh, Adani Power Limited, the power generating unit of Adani Group, has accumulated unpaid dues of up to \$800 million from the country.

According to a report, Bangladesh Bank's newly-appointed Governor Ahsan H. Mansur warned that if the payments are not made, electricity supply may be halted. However, Adani Power has no plans to cut off supply lines for now, but may face pressure from lenders and coal

suppliers if payments remain outstanding.

Despite the financial turmoil, Adani Power has assured that it will continue to supply power to Bangladesh from its 1,600MW plant in Jharkhand, which is dedicated to supplying 100% of its electricity to the neighboring nation. The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for the power supply was signed between Adani Power (Jharkhand) and the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). The plant currently sources coal from Adani Group's mines in Australia.

Recently, the power ministry amended power import/export guidelines to enable electricity supply from plants set up as export-oriented units to sell power within India. The amendment allows the



government to permit connection of such generating stations to the Indian grid to facilitate the sale of power within India in case of sustained non-scheduling of full or part capacity or default notice issued by the generator for any default, including delayed payment under the PPA. This

amendment comes after the recent political crisis in Bangladesh, which saw the Sheikh Hasina-led government forced to resign and the former Prime Minister of the country fleeing to India for safety. The move is seen as a precautionary measure to ensure power supply and mitigate potential losses for Adani Power.

Adani Group has not issued an official statement on the matter. The delayed payments highlight the financial and geopolitical risks Adani Group faces as it expands globally, particularly in neighboring countries like Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal. This expansion aligns with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's broader policy goals in the region.

Why Cognizant Sues Indian Tech Giant Infosys in US Court; Know the Reason Here



New Delhi. Cognizant vs Infosys In US Court: US-based software company Cognizant TriZetto has filed a lawsuit against Indian tech giant Infosys in a Texas federal court, accusing Infosys of stealing confidential information related to its healthcare insurance software. This comes 8 months after Infosys sent a missive to Cognizant accusing the US-based IT firm of unfair employee poaching. However, Infosys has denied all allegations levelled by Teaneck-based rival Cognizant's subsidiary Cognizant TriZetto in Texas federal court. Cognizant, headquartered in New Jersey and with

70% of its employees in India, claims that Infosys unlawfully extracted data from its databases and used this information to develop and market competing software. Cognizant's software includes TriZetto's Facets and QNXT, used by healthcare insurance companies to automate administrative tasks. According to the complaint by Cognizant, Infosys misused TriZetto's software to create "Test Cases for Facets," which improperly repackaged TriZetto's data into an Infosys product. Notably, the companies are locked in a closed combat even in the market with both companies approaching \$20

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billion in revenue. Cognizant has requested the court to award an unspecified amount in monetary damages and to issue an order directing Infosys to cease the misuse of its trade secrets. Moreover, you will be surprised to know that the Cognizant's Chief Executive Officer Ravi Kumar S is an Infosys veteran, having served as its president and deputy Chief Operating Officer for over nine years, with the stint ending in October 2022. Just two before this saga, Cognizant appointed Rajesh Varrier to replace former Cognizant India Chairman and Managing Director Rajesh Nambiar, who will assume the role from October 1, 2024.

Finance ministry to issue circular on GST Amnesty Scheme in October or November

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Finance will soon issue a circular regarding the much-anticipated goods and services tax (GST) Amnesty Scheme, which was recently proposed in the Budget 2024, as per sources. The scheme aims to provide relief to taxpayers by waiving interest and penalties under certain conditions for tax matters arising between July 1, 2017, and March 31, 2020. It covers show cause notices (SCNs), adjudicating orders, and appeal orders issued for the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. According to sources, under the scheme, taxpayers can benefit from a waiver of interest and penalties if they pay the full amount of tax due by March

31, 2025. "However, cases concerning refunds are explicitly excluded from the scheme. Taxpayers currently involved in appeals or court proceedings must withdraw these cases to be eligible for amnesty. Furthermore, once a case is resolved under the scheme, it cannot be appealed against," said a government source. The applicability of the scheme is expected to commence around October or November 2024, following the issuance of the official notification. Additionally, there is ongoing industry representation advocating for the inclusion of cases with demands solely for interest or penalties, as well as for the consideration of transitional credit

disputes under the scheme. The scheme operates on a SCN or order-wise basis, necessitating taxpayers to address all issues related to a specific SCN or order if they choose to participate. "We have represented that in case tax amount has been paid earlier and only interest and/or penalty are pending, technically these are not included in the Scheme as per enacted Section 128A of CGST Act; these cases should be included. Another issue is that there must be a provision for carving out the three FYs 17-18 to 19-20 out of the SCN/Order for which Amnesty can be availed; whereas the balance years can be mitigated by the taxpayer, incase desired.



festive season, these changes are not temporary measures, the company said. The reduction in fee will give sellers an opportunity to optimise their operations in time for the Diwali shopping rush as well as beyond the festivities.

"Sellers, particularly those selling affordable products, will experience a significant decrease in fees on Amazon. This will provide them with an opportunity to reinvest in their business for accelerated growth," Nanda added.

Vistara set to merge with Air India as Cabinet to decide on FDI

NEW DELHI: The final nod for Vistara's merger into Air India could come as soon as this Saturday when the Cabinet clears the foreign direct investment by Singapore Airlines (SIA) into AI. SIA, which was 49% stake holder in Vistara, will get 25.1% stake in the merged airline by investing 2,059 crore in it, hence the need for FDI approval. All other nods from agencies like the Competition Commission and DGCA are already in place. Tatas will have remaining 74.9% stake in AI.

After Govt FDI nod, AI-Vistara will shortly communicate timelines of the merger to passengers. People who have booked tickets on Vistara flights post the date of merger will be informed that their flight will be on Air India along with the changed flight number of AI and its time. Sources say the date of merger is likely to be after Diwali (Nov 1) as the airline will avoid taking any chances during the peak festive travel season. "There will be a decent window between post Diwali and the onset of fog that usually happens after Dec 20 which leads to flight disruptions. Ideally the merger should happen in that



space to sort out any merger teething issues like informing passengers booked on Vistara their changed AI flight details before fog adds further complexity to the equation," said sources. Vistara has 70 aircraft which will continue to fly in the airline's livery. The same will be changed to

AI's new livery when the aircraft go in for heavy checks. "Taking out aircraft just for painting purpose and letting capacity take a hit makes no sense. Also Vistara aircraft have a better cabin product than that of AI's old planes," said sources. Vistara had earlier reached out to

passengers informing them about the transfer of frequent flyer miles to AI's loyalty programme. The movement of personnel has already started, with many Vistara employees now operating from AI's new Gurgaon headquarters.

Are there chances that passengers who have booked on a certain class of Vistara, say business or premium economy, on a flight that has to operate after the date of merger being shifted to economy on the AI flight they take as the latter's business may be full or it may not have a premium economy? "There are little chances of such things happening," said sources.

AI management had last considered toyed with the idea of postponing Vistara's merger. The reason: They wanted AI planes to be upgraded first and till then retain Vistara as the better product carrier. However given mounting concerns among Vistara employees about AI officials getting all key posts in the merged airline, that plan was shelved. So even as AI remains very much a work in slow progress, the merger is now going to happen before the end of this calendar year.

NEWS BOX

Miss you Gabbar: Shikhar Dhawan's retirement leaves fans nostalgic

New Delhi. The morning of Saturday, August 24 didn't start well for several cricket fans as star India cricketer Shikhar Dhawan announced his retirement from international and domestic cricket. Dhawan was a regular mainstay in the Indian cricket team across all three formats from 2013 to 2018.

The southpaw didn't have a memorable beginning to his international career as he got bowled for a two-ball duck by Clint McKay on his debut during an ODI in October 2010. However, he made a stellar comeback to the team scoring the fastest hundred by a player on Test debut off 85 balls against Australia in March 2013, Mohali. From there onwards, there was no looking back for Dhawan as he carried his form in the Champions Trophy 2013 and finished as the highest run scorer of the tournament with 363 runs from five innings including two hundreds and one fifty. He further finished as India's highest run scorer in the 2015 ODI World Cup with 412 runs to his name from eight innings.

Dhawan: The Man of ICC events



Courtesy of Dhawan's back-to-back stellar performances in the ICC events, he was given the nickname 'Mr ICC' and 'Man of ICC Tournaments' by his fans. Dhawan was also India's highest run scorer in Asia Cup 2014 and the highest scorer in 2018 edition of the continental tournament with 342 runs to his name from five innings. He also won back-to-back golden bat award for being the highest run scorer in the 2017 edition of the Champions Trophy as well.

The Delhi-born cricketer had announced himself in the 2019 ODI World Cup as well with a marvellous hundred against Australia before an injury during his innings ruled him out of the tournament. Dhawan's leaves behind a legacy of standing up for his team on the biggest of stages and taking them over the line time and again with his stupendous knocks. Following his announcement, fans were left emotional as they paid tribute to the stylish left-hander in their own unique ways.

Shikhar Dhawan, Mr. ICC, retires from international and domestic cricket

New Delhi. Former India cricketer Shikhar Dhawan announced his retirement from domestic and international cricket on Saturday, August 24. Dhawan last played for India in the ODI series against Bangladesh in December 2022 before losing his place to Shubman Gill. The 38-year-old shared a long video message for his fans on his social media handles thanking them for their love and support throughout his career. The Delhi-born cricketer made his international debut against Australia during an ODI in Visakhapatnam but didn't have a memorable beginning to his career getting dismissed for a two-ball duck. However, after initial



failures, Dhawan made his return to the Indian team in 2013 and sealed his place across all three formats through remarkable performances. "I always had one goal in mind that was to play for India and I achieved it thanks to a lot of people. First of all my family, my childhood coach Tarak Sinha and Madan Sharma, under their guidance, I learnt cricket. Then my entire team with whom I played for years, got another family, fame and everyone's love and support. As it's said that to move ahead in the story you need to flip over the pages. Hence, I'm also doing that, I'm announcing my retirement from international and domestic cricket," said Dhawan in the video. And now when I'm bidding adieu to my cricketing journey, I have the satisfaction that I played a lot for my country. I'm really thankful to the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) and DDCA (Delhi & District Cricket Association) for giving me this opportunity and all of my fans for their love and support. I just say this to myself that don't be sad that you won't play for your country again but always be happy that you played for your country. And it's the biggest achievement for me that I played," he added.

With grit and grace, 'Gabbar' Shikhar Dhawan entertained and carved his legacy

India are all set to face Germany in the Paris Olympics 2024 hockey semifinal, which will be a rematch of the bronze medal tie from Tokyo 2020. Both teams are giants of the game and will be aiming to serve another thriller for the hockey fans.

New Delhi. Shikhar Dhawan gave his 100 percent, every time he stepped onto the field. He had fun while doing so. Gritty, elegant and fun-filled, Shikhar Dhawan never missed a moment to express himself. One of MS Dhoni's trusted lieutenants, the left-handed opener had a thrill ride that will last long in the memories of Indian cricket fans.

In a country that has produced some of the greatest openers, Shikhar Dhawan carved his own legacy. And when he announced retirement on Saturday, August 24, he hung

his boots with a sense of fulfilment and gratitude. Dhawan was an integral part of India's transformation period under MS Dhoni's captaincy. When the big guns, including Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir were in the twilight of their careers, Dhawan carried forward the baton, making sure India's openers continued to dominate world cricket. His partnership with Rohit Sharma was one of the cornerstones of India's success between 2013 and 2019.

The Gabbar from Delhi and the Hitman from Mumbai forged one of the most successful opening partnerships for India in ODI cricket. Shikhar Dhawan might have earned his redemption ticket in Tests after having had a wobbly start in white-ball cricket at the highest level. But, 50-over cricket was where Dhawan truly shone. With 6793 runs at an average of over 40 and a strike rate of over 90, the Delhi batter drew the curtains on his career after having established himself as one of the modern-day masters of white-ball cricket. Shikhar Dhawan left the stage on which he entertained and inspired with no regrets. As the prolific opener bid goodbye to the sport he loved, here are some of the highlights of his decorated career.



From the very beginning of his career, Shikhar Dhawan loved the big stage. When he was a teenager, he top-scored in the ICC U19 World Cup in 2004, amassing 505 runs, 122 runs more than the next-best -- Alastair Cook. His love affair with ICC tournaments continued until a tragic injury cut-short his stay in the ODI World Cup in 2019.

Born in Delhi, he made a name for himself in domestic cricket with impressive performances for Delhi in the Ranji Trophy and India's U-19 team. However, his entry into international cricket was not as smooth as many had anticipated. Dhawan made his ODI debut on October 20, 2010, against Australia in Visakhapatnam. The debut, however, was forgettable -- he was bowled out for a duck by Clint McKay. The early

phase of his career was marked by inconsistency, as Dhawan struggled to convert his domestic form into success on the international stage. Between 2010 and 2011, he played sporadically and was often overshadowed by more established players. The year 2013 marked a significant turning point in Dhawan's career, beginning with his sensational Test debut. Selected to play against Australia in Mohali, Dhawan made an unforgettable impact by scoring 187 runs off just 174 balls, the fastest century on debut in the history of Test cricket. This innings not only announced his arrival on the big stage but also paved the way for his resurgence in ODI cricket. Later that year, Dhawan was selected for the ICC Champions Trophy in England, and it was here that he truly blossomed. He finished as the tournament's highest run-scorer, amassing 363 runs in just five matches at an astonishing average of 90.75, including back-to-back centuries against South Africa and West Indies. His performances were instrumental in India's triumph, and he was named the Player of the Tournament. This tournament solidified his place as India's go-to opener in ODIs and marked the beginning of his dominance in ICC events.

Lionel Messi to return to Inter Miami before season's end: Coach Gerardo Martino

Inter Miami head coach Gerardo Martino has announced that Lionel Messi will soon rejoin the team's training sessions. Messi is expected to be back on the pitch before the end of the MLS regular season.

New Delhi. Inter Miami head coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino has confirmed that superstar forward Lionel Messi will rejoin the team for training soon and is expected to return to the pitch before the end of the Major League Soccer (MLS) regular season. Messi, who has been out of action since suffering an ankle ligament injury on July 14, has missed a significant portion of the season, including Inter Miami's entire 2024 Leagues Cup campaign. The injury occurred during the Copa America final between Argentina and Colombia, held at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida. While the 37-year-old has been sidelined since then, Martino remains optimistic about his imminent



comeback. Speaking to ESPN, Martino stated that while he couldn't pinpoint an exact return date, he assured fans that Messi's comeback is on the horizon. "I wouldn't be able to give an approximate number of days that he returns to training, but it is not a situation that is too far away," Martino said. "There is a part of the injuries that have to do with the physical, and there is

a part that has to do with the mental. We have to overcome them both ways, and I think he is going through that process." Martino noted that Messi has been gradually progressing in his recovery, adding, "He is feeling better and better. He has been working in the field for three or four days now. We cannot give a specific time frame because we do not know, and it would be speculative to do so. But it is close." Despite Messi's absence, Inter Miami has been performing well. They currently lead the MLS Eastern Conference with 53 points from 25 games. The team is poised to secure a playoff spot, with their next match against FC Cincinnati at home on Saturday. Even if Miami does not win the game, multiple result combinations could still guarantee them a postseason berth. Since joining Inter Miami in 2023, Messi has made a significant impact, recording 12 goals and 13 assists in just 12 regular-season matches (11 starts). His return would undoubtedly bolster the team's offensive capabilities as they head into the crucial final stretch of the season. Inter Miami's regular season concludes on October 19 with a match against the New England Revolution, and fans eagerly anticipate seeing Messi back on the field, contributing to the team's success.

Josh Hazlewood ruled out of T20I series vs Scotland due to calf strain

New Delhi. Australia's fast bowler Josh Hazlewood has been sidelined from the upcoming three-match T20I series against Scotland due to a calf strain. However, Hazlewood is expected to recover in time for Australia's T20I and ODI fixtures against England, commencing on September 11. Riley Meredith has been called up to the squad in Hazlewood's absence. The 27-year-old Meredith, who last played a T20I for Australia in 2021, has been in fine form, showcasing his skills with Somerset in the English domestic season. He made a significant impact in the T20 Blast, taking 14 wickets at an average of 22.78, and was instrumental in Somerset's run to the final. Additionally, Meredith claimed six wickets in three One-Day Cup matches, including an impressive 4 for 27 against Middlesex at Lord's. Hazlewood's injury is reportedly minor, and he remains optimistic about being fit for the upcoming series against England. Nonetheless, with a busy home season ahead, including five Test matches



WI vs SA 1st T20I: Pooran, Hope's half centuries help WI take 1-0 lead in Trinidad

New Delhi. West Indies beat South Africa by seven wickets in the first T20I of the three-match series on Friday, August 23 at Brian Lara Stadium, Tarouba, Trinidad. After being put in to bat first, South Africa posted a good score of 174/7 in their allotted 20 overs courtesy of a breathtaking knock by Tristan Stubbs (76 off 42).

In reply, West Indies comfortably chased down the target in 17.5 overs with Shai Hope (51 off 36) and Nicholas Pooran (65* off 26) scoring half centuries. West Indies' chase got off to a brilliant start with openers Alick Athanaze (40 off 30) and Hope adding 84 runs for the first wicket off eight overs. Ott Niel Baartman drew first blood for the Proteas as he dismissed Athanaze caught at mid off to bring an end to the massive opening partnership. However, despite taking the first wicket, there was more misery on cards for the



visitors as Nicholas Pooran walked out to bat and annihilated their bowling attack. The wicketkeeper batter played a sensational knock of 65* (26) clobbering two fours and seven sixes. He was well-supported by Hope with the duo adding 54 runs for the second wicket off 33 balls. Baartman (2/30) struck again for his team getting Hope out lbw but that didn't save them from Pooran's storm which blew away South Africa handing them a seven-

wicket defeat. Matthew Forde runs through SA's Top Order

Earlier in the day, after being put in to bat first, South Africa were rocked by terrific new ball spells from Matthew Forde (3/27) and Shamar Joseph (2/40). The duo picked four wickets in the first seven overs leaving the Proteas reeling at 33/4 after 6.1 overs. Seeing their team in a dire need of a partnership, Patrick Kruger (44 off 32) joined Tristan Stubbs at the crease as the duo rescued the innings with their 71-run stand off 50 balls. Forde returned in the 17th over to break the stand and pick his third wicket leaving South Africa on 113/6 after 16.1 overs. However, Stubbs' fireworks in the death overs propelled South Africa to a good score of 174/7. Meanwhile, Pooran was adjudged Player of the Match for his breathtaking knock.

Jamie Smith stars as England on driver's seat on Day 3 end vs Sri Lanka

The England team are currently on the driver's seat by the end of day three play against Sri Lanka at Old Trafford. At the stumps of Day 3, Sri Lanka's score was 204/6 with a slender lead of 82 runs.

New Delhi. It was a bright sunny day at the Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester as day three witnessed a full day's play between England and Sri Lanka. The hosts were on the driver's seat by the end of the 3rd day despite Sri Lanka taking a minor lead. Jamie Smith, the star of the day, led the team off the field amid rousing applause from the crowd. Sri Lanka ended day three at 204/6 with a lead of 82 runs in an extended game. The day was

headlined by England's rising star Jamie Smith, who was crucial in adding 99 runs to the team's overnight score and helping the team reach a commanding position. He broke the 94-year-old record to become the youngest England wicketkeeper-batter to score a century in the red-ball format. His 66-run stand with Gus Atkinson for the seventh wicket was crucial in putting England in the dominant position.

ENG vs SL: As it happened

After reeling at 67 for three, England's lower-middle order ensured the hosts finish the first innings at 358 runs. Meanwhile, Sri Lankan bowlers showcased their top-game with Prabath Jayasuriya and Asith Fernando sharing seven wickets between them.

Sri Lanka started off their 2nd innings after conceding a lead of 122 runs and did not get off to a great start. Nishan Madushka and Kusal Mendis, two of the top-order batters



were dismissed for ducks and the team found themselves reeling at 95 for 4. However, Angelo Mathews rose to the occasion and shared crucial stands with the middle-order batters. Especially his 78-run partnership with Kamindu Mendis came in handy, which kept Sri Lanka's team in the game.

Sri Lanka stay alive in the game

It was around the 42nd over, the umpires changed the ball as the older one lost its

shape. The changed ball certainly started to hoop and offered encouraging signs for England, as Pope brought in his pacers to try and dislodge the partnership.

Mathews was picked up by Woakes and Rathnayake gifted his wicket away to Joe Root, who picked up a wicket in his very second ball of the match after Wood hobbled off the field during his 11th over. The visitors were also dealt with a major blow when their wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Chandimal got retired hurt after copping a blow to his thumb earlier in the day. However, by the end of the day's play he returned to bat and will be looking to forge a stand with Kamindu Mendis who is unbeaten at 56. England were a bit sloppy in the final session, dropping a couple of straightforward chances. Mathews was dropped on 65 and Kamindu Mendis on 39 and both off the bowling of Potts.

Jacqueline Fernandez

To Pair Opposite Akshay Kumar In Housefull 5? Here's What We Know

Akshay Kumar starrer Housefull is one of the most popular franchises. The makers are all set to come up with its fifth installment and an announcement has also been made. This time, Akshay Kumar and Riteish Deshmukh will be joined by Fardeen Khan too. However, amid this a report is coming in that the makers have finalised one female lead and she is none other than Jacqueline Fernandez. Bollywood Hungama has claimed that she will be seen opposite Akshay Kumar. Bollywood Hungama quoted a source saying that Jacqueline is paired opposite Akshay Kumar in Housefull 5. "Jacqueline is excited to return to the Housefull franchise. She enjoys the comic space and is ecstatic to continue her association with Sajid Nadiadwala



and the Housefull Franchise," a source told Bollywood Hungama. The source further added that Sajid is in talks with three other top actresses to come on board the film, and an official announcement will be made shortly," the source added.

In December 2023, it was reported that film release date has been postponed. It will now release on June 6th, 2024.

5. The film's

producer Sajid Nadiadwala released an official statement and wrote, "The Houseful franchise owes its massive success to the audiences, and we hope for a similar reception for Houseful 5. The team has crafted an absolutely mind-blowing story that demands top-notch VFX.

Therefore, we've made the decision to push the release to ensure we deliver five times the entertainment with great cinematic experience. Housefull 5 will now be releasing on 6th June 2024." The first Housefull movie was released in 2010 and starred Akshay Kumar with Jiah Khan, Arjun Rampal, Jacqueline Fernandez, Lara Dutta and Chunky Panday in the lead. The second movie in the franchise hit theatres in 2012. On the other hand, Housefull 3 and 4 were released in 2016 and 2019 respectively. Now, Housefull 5 will be directed by Tarun Mansukhani.



Mari Selvaraj's Vaazhai Opens To Positive Reviews, Director Bala's Heartfelt Gesture Celebrated



Director Mari Selvaraj is currently in the headlines for his Tamil film Vaazhai which was released today at the cinemas and opened to positive reviews from the audience. Apart from the audience, the film also appealed to the director Bala. The filmmaker Mari shared a video on Instagram regarding his and Bala's interaction post watching Vaazhai. The video shows Bala approaching Mari and then embracing him. He embraces the Vaazhai director for a few seconds and then kisses him on the cheek. Both filmmakers then shook hands and sat quietly while having a discussion. Mari wrote the caption in Tamil which translates to, "Kiss??". #Vaazhai Tomorrow."

Vaazhai stars Dhivya Dhuraisamy, Nikhila Vimal, Priyanka Nair and Kalaiyarasan in important roles. Navvi Studios has produced this film. Till now, Mari has directed 3 films, i.e. Pariyerum Perumal, Karan, and Maamannan. All these films were successful at the box office. However, the 40-year-old director finds Vaazhai special. In an interview with The Hindu, the Tamil director said, "Despite doing three films, a film like Vaazhai makes me proud and glad about my talent as a filmmaker." He also talked about how if a director wants to test their acumen, they should do a children's film. According to the 40-year-old director, "The children today are sharp and the inputs given to them are the same as what I usually do with other actors. But the words and attitude I use differ; even the storytelling differs." King forward to his upcoming film Bison: Kaalamadaan. There were rumours that the film is a biopic, but Mari denied the same in an interview with the Times of India. The 40-year-old director stated that this film will revolve around kabaddi, but contrary to reports, it is not a biopic but a fictional one. According to Vaazhai's director, he and his team will shoot a 60-day schedule here and move to Chennai for the remaining portions.

Rishab Shetty Trains In Kalaripayattu For Kantara: Chapter 1, Pic Inside



Rishab Shetty, who received immense recognition for his blockbuster film Kantara, is soon going to be back with its prequel. Kantara: Chapter 1 is one of the most anticipated films, and the National Award winning actor has once again captivated viewers with his dedication to his craft. Rishab recently released a glimpse of his tough training session on social media which has only increased the buzz around the upcoming project. In the latest picture, Rishab Shetty can be seen performing Kalaripayattu, one of the world's oldest advanced martial arts techniques that originated in Kerala. In the photo, Rishab is shown clutching a sword and shield flaunting his well built physique. He was clad in a black vest and a maroon dhoti. The actor posted the picture with nothing but a heart emoji.

Fans soon started showering praises in the comments and also expressed how eager they were to watch the film. One of them wrote, "Kantara chapter 1 create a history," while another stated, "Waiting for Kantara chapter 1." Earlier, a report by Pinkvilla revealed that the Kantara: Chapter 1's fourth scheduled shoot is expected to begin in the last week of August. According to sources mentioned by the publication, the upcoming shoot would contain a major action sequence shot on a grand scale. The film is said to be a precursor to the previous installment and will most likely continue the story of the Panchurli Deiva, which is set in the Kadamba era. The prequel, directed by Rishab, reintroduces Ajaneesh Loknath as the music director, who wowed everyone with his work in the first film.

Further, the report mentioned that the film is anticipated to hit theatres in late 2024, and OTT platform Amazon Prime Video is expected to acquire the streaming rights post-release. The movie Kantara, which was released in 2022, gained major popularity over its narration and the exquisite graphics combined with stunning mythological tales. The film, with its folklore-based storytelling, followed a fight between villagers and powerful landowners, delving into themes of justice, faith, and the relationship.

Kangana Ranaut

Claims To Be 'Most Imitated Actor In The World of Mimicry': 'I Don't Get Offended'

Kangana Ranaut is gearing up for her upcoming political drama 'Emergency', where she not only stars but also takes the director's chair. The actor, who portrays former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the film, has been receiving praise following the release of the film's trailer. In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Kangana addressed the potential for controversy when dealing with sensitive political topics in films. When asked if she was concerned about people taking offense, given the film's politically charged subject matter, Kangana explained that she focuses on telling stories from her own perspective, rather than worrying about public reactions.

She drew a parallel to how she handles being imitated by mimicry artists, saying, "Main apni mimicry dekhti hoon. Kitne log mujhe mimic karte hain. Main to bohot zyada popular hoon mimicry ki duniya me. Bohot mere mimicry artist hain. Aisa nahi hai ki hum dekhte hain aur hum offend ho jaate hain. (I often see people imitating me. There are a lot of mimicry artists who try to imitate me. I don't get offended when I see them)." Kangana further elaborated, "Jab koi bohot dil se kisine mimic kiya ho, mujhe bareeki se pees ke pi liya ho, uspe hum prabhavit aur mohit ho jaate hain. Kyunki wo bhav aap tak pahuch jaata hai. Main kabhi second guess nahi karti ki ye mere baare me kya sochega, wo kya sochega. Maine ye film apne nazariye se banayi hai aur dekhte hain iska kya parinaam hoga (If someone mimics me with sincerity and captures my basic mannerisms, I am truly impressed and flattered. It's about connecting with the intent behind the act. I never second-guess what people will think about me. I made this movie from my own perspective, so let's see how it will be received)."

Speaking about her film Emergency, she announced it in 2021 but later clarified that even though it is a political drama, it is not Indira Gandhi's biopic. The actress is not just playing the lead in the film but is also directing it. Besides Kangana, Emergency also stars Anupam Kher, Milind Soman, Mahima Chaudhry and Shreyas Talpade among others. While Shreyas Talpade will be seen playing the role of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Anupam Kher will be seen as Jayaprakash Narayan. Late actor Satish Kaushik will also be seen as Former Deputy Prime Minister of India, Jagjivan Ram.

