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'BJP IT cell's households will run on tax money': Owaisi

Sanjay Kumar

New Delhi, Aug 28: Under the digital media policy, the Uttar Pradesh government will pay up to ₹8 lakh per month to influencers for promoting its schemes and achievements. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government's new digital media policy that offers financial incentives for social media influencers to promote government schemes while threatening legal action against those who post "objectionable content." The BJP lauded the policy saying it was an "innovative move" of the Yogi Adityanath-led government (File Photo) "To cover up its failures Yogi Adityanath has started a new scheme. Under this scheme, one can earn up to ₹8 lakh rupees by falsely praising Baba on social media," Owaisi posted on X in Hindi. "If you even legally oppose Baba or his party, you will be declared anti-national and sent to jail. Now the IT cell people will run their household with your tax money," he added. The Uttar Pradesh government's digital media policy aims to leverage social media platforms to disseminate information about state welfare schemes and achievements. Under this policy, influencers and social media account holders on platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube will be eligible to receive up to ₹8 lakh per month, depending on their reach and engagement. The policy categorises these platforms into tiers, with higher payouts for accounts with larger followings.

**Rahul Gandhi takes a ride on DTC bus, interacts with staff**

ST Correspondent

New Delhi, August 28: Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday undertook a ride on the DTC bus and interacted with the drivers, conductors and marshals near the Sarojini Nagar Bus depot here to discuss their issues. In a Facebook post, Gandhi shared pictures of his interaction and the bus ride. "There was a meeting and discussion with the driver and conductor brothers, and bus marshals in



Delhi and then a fun ride in a DTC bus. A talk with loved ones on their issues!" he said in a post in Hindi on X. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also posted pictures of her brother's interaction. "How do the drivers, conductors and marshals who run a transport corporation with thousands of buses in the service of the public manage their households? How do they manage their lives amidst inflation, rising fees of children, tensions regarding salary and pension?" she said in a post in Hindi on X. "There are crores of such voices in the country, who are forced to live in terrible economic insecurity.

**IMA suspends membership of RG Kar Hospital ex-principal Sandeep Ghosh**

New Delhi, August 28: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Wednesday suspended the membership of former RG Kar Medical College and Hospital principal Dr Sandip Ghosh, amid a CBI probe into the alleged rape and murder of a junior doctor at the Kolkata-based institute earlier this month. The decision to suspend the IMA membership of Ghosh, who is the vice president of the association's Kolkata branch, was taken by its disciplinary committee. In an order, the Indian Medical Association said the committee constituted by IMA national president Dr R V Asokan on Wednesday suo-moto considered the rape and murder case of the postgraduate resident doctor and the subsequent developments at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. "They had put up their grievances against you (Ghosh) in dealing with the situation as well as lack of empathy and sensitivity in handling the issue in an appropriate manner befitting the responsibility held by you in your dealings with them," the order said.

**ECI issues notice to Haryana BJP for using child in election campaign video**

New Delhi, Aug 28: ECI issues show-cause notice to BJP Haryana for using a child in an election campaign video, violating guidelines. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has taken serious note of a post on X (formerly Twitter) by the BJP Haryana's handle, which featured a child in a poll campaign video. This violates ECI guidelines that prohibit the use of children in election-related activities and campaigning, the poll body said in a show-cause notice issued on Wednesday. The chief electoral officer of Haryana has issued a show-cause notice to the state president of BJP Haryana, demanding immediate corrective action. The saffron party has been instructed to submit a response by 6pm on August 29. ALSO READ: Jammu and Kashmir assembly election: Government sets up helpdesk for displaced Kashmiri voters nationwide Political parties are strictly prohibited from involving children in any election-related activities, such as rallies, slogan shouting, or distributing posters, as per the ECI directives based on the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act. Political leaders and candidates are not allowed to use children in campaign activities in any form, including holding a child, carrying a child in a vehicle, or involving them in rallies.

## 'Dismayed and horrified'; President Murmu calls for end to violence against women

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, August 28: President Droupadi Murmu has spoken out for the first time on the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata and her anguish at continuing crimes against women. The gruesome incident of rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata has left the nation shocked. I was dismayed and horrified when I came to hear of it. What is more depressing is the fact that it was not the only incident of its kind; it is part of a series of crimes against women. Even as students, doctors and citizens were protesting in Kolkata, criminals remained on the prowl elsewhere. The victims include even kindergarten girls. No civilised society can allow daughters and sisters to be subjected to such atrocities. The nation is bound to be outraged, and so am I. On the occasion of Women's Day last year, I had shared my thoughts and hopes about women's empowerment in the form of a newspaper article. I remain an optimist, thanks to our past achievements in empowering women. I consider myself as an example of that spectacular journey of women empowerment in India. But I myself feel

deeply anguished when I hear about brutality against women in any part of the country. More recently, I was in a unique predicament when some schoolchildren who had come to celebrate Rakhi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan asked me innocently if they could be assured that there would be no recurrence of the Nirbhaya-type incident in future. I told them that though the State is committed to protect every citizen, training in self-defence and martial arts is essential for all, particularly girls, to make them stronger. But that's not a guarantee for their security as women's vulnerability is influenced by many factors. Obviously, the full answer to that question can come only from our society. For that to happen, what is needed first of all is honest, unbiased self-reflection. The time has come when we as a society need to ask ourselves some difficult questions. Where have we erred? And what can we do to remove the errors? Without

finding out the answer to that question, the half of our population cannot live as freely as the other half. To answer it, let



me explain it right at the beginning. Our Constitution granted equality to all, including women, when it was only an ideal in many parts of the world. The State then created institutions to establish this equality, wherever needed, and promoted it with a series of schemes and initiatives. Civil society came forward and supplemented the State's outreach in this

regard. Visionary leaders in all spheres of society pushed for gender equality. Finally, there were exceptional, feisty women who made it possible for their less fortunate sisters to benefit from this social revolution. That has been the saga of women's empowerment. Yet, this journey has not been without its obstacles. Women have had to fight for every inch of ground they have won. Social prejudices as well as some customs and practices have always opposed the expansion of women's rights. This is a rather deplorable mindset. I won't call it a male mindset, because it has little to do with the gender of the person: there are many, many men who don't have it. This mindset sees the female as a lesser human being, less powerful, less capable, less intelligent. Those who share such views then go further and see the female as an object. It is this objectification of women by a few that is behind the crimes against women. It is ingrained deeply in the minds of such people. Let me also note here that, regrettably, this is the case not only in India, but across the world.

## BJP bandh evokes mixed response in Bengal amid sporadic violence

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

Kolkata, August 28: Sporadic instances of violence marked the BJP-sponsored 12-hour shutdown in West Bengal on Wednesday which had a mixed impact in the wake of bandh supporters clashing with the police and ruling Trinamool Congress workers at several pockets of the state. The most significant of these clashes was reported from Bhatpara in North 24 Parganas district where the BJP alleged that TMC goons fired multiple rounds on its local leader Priyangu Pandey's car and shared a purported video of the crime on social media platforms. Although Pandey escaped unhurt, the vehicle's driver and a party worker sustained bullet injuries on their heads and were admitted to a private hospital, BJP leaders claimed. The violence was followed by a showdown between local BJP leader Arjun Singh and his TMC counterpart Somnath Shyam, with both leaders

and their supporters standing face to face in altercations further triggering tensions and the police finding it tough to disperse the



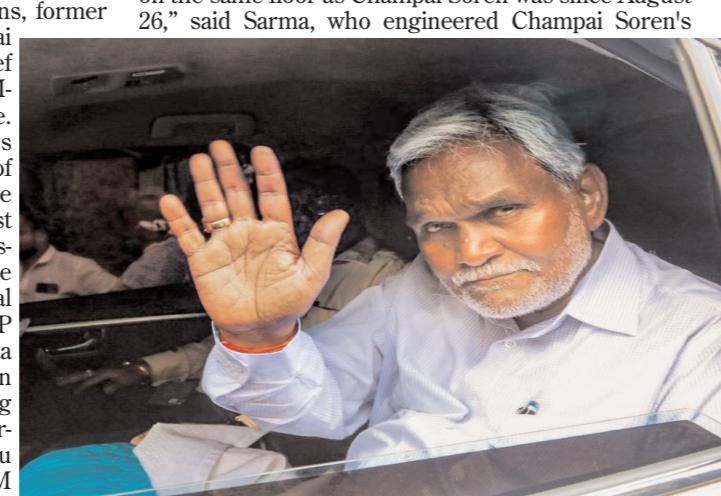
warring groups. "Miscreants owing allegiance to the Trinamool Congress fired the shots. If police are not around we will show TMC what people's power looks like," Singh said. Shyam countered by saying that

the newly formed students' group Chakra Samaj over the alleged rape and murder of the doctor at RG Kar hospital. The shutdown partially affected daily life in the state with many people choosing to remain indoors apprehending trouble outside. In Kolkata, the usual weekday flurry was missing with a smaller number of buses, auto-rickshaws and taxis plying. Private vehicles were also significantly less, even as markets and shops remained open. Schools and colleges were open, though the number of students was fewer. Many English-medium schools in Kolkata suspended classes. In many private offices, attendance was low with employees asked to work from home. However, attendance was usual in government offices. Several BJP leaders were detained across the state for attempting to enforce the shutdown. Ganguly and Paul were detained from south Kolkata's Gariahat area when they were urging traders to down their shutters and requesting people to support the bandh. Chatterjee along with party leaders Rahul Sinha and Tamagni Ghosh was detained from Shyambazar, while Bhattacharya was picked up in Salt Lake.

## Champai Soren slaps 'spying charges' on JMM-Cong govt, lodges FIR

Naresh Malhotra

New Delhi, August 28: In a dramatic turn of events on the eve of Jharkhand Assembly elections, former chief minister and tribal stalwart Champai Soren has slapped 'spying charges' on Chief Minister Hemant Soren who leads the JMM-Congress alliance government in the state. The FIR has been lodged in Delhi's Chanakyapuri police station and two cops of Jharkhand special branch, allegedly to have been following Champai Soren for the past five months, have been handed over for questioning. Sharing the details of what he described as the "biggest case of political surveillance in independent India", BJP leader and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said, "Never in the history of independent India had a sitting chief minister (Hemant Soren) ordered surveillance of his own cabinet colleague. You had heard stories that the late Assam CM ordered my surveillance but there was no evidence at the time. In Champai Soren's case, two cops of Jharkhand special branch were caught trailing the ex-CM whenever he came to Delhi. These two



switch over to the BJP Champai will join the BJP on August 30 and till he resigns from JMM; he would remain Jharkhand water minister. Sarma said the Jharkhand cops had revealed in interrogations that

they had been asked by the state's special branch chief to track Champai Soren's movements. "This spying has been going on for five months and a lot of money is being spent on it. Now Champai Soren has lodged an FIR in Delhi and the probe is underway. We have the details of the cops and their photos," Sarma said, demanding a thorough investigation into the issue. Jharkhand BJP is also expected to meet the state governor to demand an investigation into the matter, with Sarma saying Champai's phones could also have been tapped and there's evidence of attempts to even honey trap him. "A woman had visited these two cops in the Taj Hotel and there may have been a plot to trap Champai Soren," alleged Sarma accusing the JMM-Congress of shredding the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right to privacy. "The Congress and JMM say they are guardians of the Constitution. Nothing can be farther from the truth," said Sarma who had earlier last week accompanied Champai to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah paving the way for his BJP entry. Champai Soren had visited Delhi a few days ago and stayed at Hotel Taj where Sarma alleged the two spies were detected tracking and photographing him and were later handed over to Delhi police.

## DMK MP slapped penalty of Rs 908 crore in FEMA case

New Delhi, August 28: The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday said a penalty of Rs 908 crore has been slapped in a case related to the alleged violation of foreign exchange rules against DMK MP S Jagathratchakan and his family. The federal agency issued a statement which said that properties worth Rs 89.19 crore, seized in September 2020, have been confiscated following an adjudication order issued on August 26 under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Jagathratchakan, 76, represents the Arakkonam Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu. He has earlier served as a minister of state for Information and Broadcasting in the Union government. The agency said a FEMA violation probe was initiated against the MP, a businessman from Tamil Nadu, his family and a linked Indian entity. This investigation, it said, resulted in the passing of seizure order, dated September 11, 2020, under section 37A of FEMA, for various movable and immovable properties in the name of the MP and his family. These are valued at Rs 89.19 crore. "The properties worth Rs 89.19 crore which were seized in terms of section 37A of FEMA were also ordered for confiscation, and penalty of Rs 908 crore is levied vide Adjudication Order dated 26/08/2024," the ED said. The 2020 seizure order was "set aside" by the Competent Authority (under the FEMA) in February 2021 and the ED challenged it before the Appellate Tribunal where, the ED said, the "appeal is pending". Later, the agency filed a complaint in December 2021 before the FEMA Adjudicating Authority against the MP, his family and a linked company "charging them for violations of various FEMA provisions, particularly in respect of their investment of Rs 42 crore in a shell company incorporated in Singapore in 2017". The accused were also charged by the agency with "acquisition and holding" of Singapore foreign shares and its subsequent transfer amongst the family members "in defiance of" extant provisions of FEMA, and also with regard to the investment of around Rs 9 crore made into a Sri Lankan entity.

## News box

## Rameswaram fishing boat capsizes, two men missing

**RAMANATHAPURAM:** Two fishermen from Rameswaram went missing after their unregistered fishing boat capsized in Indian waters on Tuesday. The boat had four persons on board and the other two are safe. The Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard have deployed rescue units to locate the missing fishermen.

According to official sources, more than 430 boats from Rameswaram took to the sea on Monday, including the unregistered boat carrying Dalvinraj (45), Emerit (49), Muniyandi (55) and Suresh (49). When the fishermen were returning to the shore on Tuesday, they encountered rough waters that damaged the boat, causing it to capsize. Dalvinraj swam to Katchatheevu and alerted the Sri Lankan Navy who then rescued Suresh. Both fishers were given first aid and handed over to officials of the Indian embassy in Sri Lanka, sources added. The other two fishermen are still missing. Upon information, INS Parundhi and the Indian Coast Guard deployed helicopters and patrol units to search them. Their families in Rameswaram have urged the authorities to bring back the two fishers from Sri Lanka and rescue the missing two, sources said. On August 1, a fisherman from Rameswaram died and another went missing after a Sri Lankan Navy patrol vessel collided with their fishing boat, causing it to capsize. Two others on board were rescued by the Lankan Navy in the incident. The missing fisherman is yet to be traced.

## FGG wants HYDRAA to cover entire Telangana

**HYDERABAD:** The Forum for Good Governance (FGG) is advocating for the expansion of HYDRAA's activities beyond Hyderabad to cover the entire Telangana. They proposed to establish a new agency, the Telangana Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (TGDRAA), through an Act to give legal status to the agency. While the forum appreciates Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's decision to establish HYDRAA for protecting government assets and water bodies around Hyderabad, they highlighted the issues faced by flat buyers. They have suggested several measures to address these issues and assist affected people.

FGG President M Padmanabha Reddy stated that builders have constructed flats in Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zones and sold them to unsuspecting people mostly belonging to lower and middle class families. FGG stated that when HYDRAA demolishes such properties, the builder should be held accountable, with their assets confiscated and compensation be given to the affected buyers. In case this is not possible, the government should provide alternate land and financial help for constructing new houses (Indiramma houses). The Irrigation department, which owns the tanks, should inform the registration department, HMDA and GHMC about the survey numbers with the FTL and buffer zone.

## Karnataka's Ballari prison to house Darshan

**BENGALURU:** After two photos and a video of actor Darshan Thoogudeepa smoking and having tea with some prisoners inside the Bengaluru Central Prison went viral, a city court on Tuesday granted permission to shift him to Ballari jail. Along with Darshan, nine other accused in the Renukaswamy murder case will be shifted to different jails in the state. Meanwhile, warden KS Sudarshan, jailer Paramesh Nayak and assistant jailer Rayamane KB of Bengaluru prison have been suspended.

Earlier in the day, CM Siddaramaiah hinted that Darshan would be shifted to the Ballari jail. The police moved the court seeking its permission to shift some of the accused in the murder case to other jails. Bengaluru prison officers will shift the accused to other jails after receiving the court order. The photographs of Darshan with his manager Nagaraj, rowdy sheeters Wilson Garden Naga and Kulla Seena on the lawns of the jail sparked a controversy after they went viral on Sunday. Of the accused, Jagadish alias Jagga and M Lakshman will be shifted to the Shivamogga jail, Stony Brook pub owner V Vinay to Vijayapura, K Pawan alias Puttaswamy, N Raghavendra and S Nandish to Mysuru, Dhanaraj alias Raju to Dharmad, Darshan's manager Nagaraj to Kalaburagi, and S Pradush to the Belagavi jail.

## Pavithra Gowda, 2 others to remain in B'luru prison

The main accused, Pavithra Gowda, and Anu Kumar and M Deepak, also accused in the murder case, will remain in the Bengaluru prison. Ravi Shankar, Karthik alias Kappe, Keshavmurthy and L Nikhil Nayak have been shifted to the Tumakuru jail. City Police Commissioner B Dayananda told reporters that a request has been made to the Prison Department officers to shift some of the notorious criminals, including those involved in the recent incident, from Bengaluru to other prisons as they may continue their illegal activities inside the jail. Of them, eight rowdy sheeters have been booked under the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act, 2000 (KCOCA).

# KSRTC plans additional night-time 'Minnal' buses with minimal stops

**KOCHI:** With an eye on revenue, the cash-strapped Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is taking a series of measures to lure commuters to its long-haul services by cutting down on running time. Starting in September, the corporation will roll out more non-stop 'Minnal', semi-sleeper and premium super fast services with minimal stops en route. "The 'Minnal' services, which run during the night, have been enjoying a good collection. We'll introduce four more Minnal services from September on routes such as Palakkad-Kanyakumari and Palakkad-Mookambika, besides non-stop semi-sleeper buses. Also, 40 premium super fast buses will be rolled out as and when we get the delivery of the new buses,"

Transport Minister K B Ganesh Kumar told TNIE. These services will have minimum stops so as to facilitate commuters to reach their destinations quickly. Such services, if they enjoy nearly-full capacity passengers from the starting point, will skip bus stations enroute. "But passengers, who book tickets online, can board from points along the nationalised routes by sharing their Google location with the respective conductors, who would contact them at least an hour before the boarding time. For instance, if their house is near the NH, they can share the Google location and board the bus from before the residence," the

minister pointed out. A challenge, though, is the allocation of buses. While the KSRTC has placed an order for 300 new Leyland buses,



it's yet to make the payments. "We're yet to make the payment. We expect the Government to help us out. Once the payment is made, the company will start delivering

the buses. Many of the buses will be operated as 'Minnal' services once we start getting the delivery of the buses. We've readied 30

buses to start the non-stop bus services from next month," he added. To tide over the bus-shortage crisis, the corporation is refurbishing all the 'Minnal' buses currently in operation. Such vehicles will boast added facilities like comfortable seating for long-distance travel. 'Minnal' services, which take almost the same travelling time as compared to long haul trains, were first introduced in June 2017 by the then Managing Director M G Rajamanickayam. KSRTC SWIFT Ltd operates 269

long-distance buses on intercity and interstate routes. On an average 40,000 passengers are commuting in the buses daily.

## Mini-buses to prop up rural services

Meanwhile, the minister said the corporation would replace its ageing ordinary and fast

passenger services currently plying in the hinterlands with mini buses.

"We've also floated tenders for nearly 300 mini buses. The same are intended to be operated in rural areas, besides operating takeover services.

The maintenance cost and fuel charges for these buses will be comparatively lower than the normal buses. They can easily be operated through the narrow routes as well," the minister added.

## Parents appeal for govt aid to save son with rare disorder

**CUDDALORE:** The parents of a one-and-a-half-year-old boy suffering from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (Type-2) are appealing for government aid and public donations to purchase a Rs 16-crore medication from the United States, which they have been told as the cure for their son's disorder. P Sivaraj, an electrician from Kamblimeedu near Alapakkam in Cuddalore district, lives with his wife Sivasankari and three children. Among them is S Krishikraj, who has been diagnosed with the genetic disorder. Krishikraj exhibited symptoms when he was eight months old.

After being treated at several hospitals, he was diagnosed with the disorder at the Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children in Egmore, Chennai, a few months ago. Sivaraj told TNIE that the doctors instructed that the medicine must

be administered within four or five months. He said his son's food intake is minimal, turning him underweight, because of which he could not sit or stand. The



doctors at a private hospital in Bengaluru informed Sivaraj that the required medication, available only in the US, costs around Rs 16 crore.

Saying her husband is her family's breadwinner, Sivasankari said even Rs 1

lakh is a huge sum, and the thought of raising Rs 16 crore is unimaginable. "Due to our son's treatment, my husband also could not go to work regularly," she added.

The parents have already petitioned the state government seeking assistance, however, officials have informed them it would be difficult for the government to allocate such a huge sum and suggested crowdfunding. Considering their advice, the family took to social media to appeal for public donations, through which they have raised nearly Rs 6 lakh so far. "We need to raise more money to save my son's life. We request the public to support us," Sivaraj said.

With time running out, the family is hopeful that the chief minister would extend assistance by allocating funds through a special order. The people willing to contribute can contact Sivaraj on 8825642634.

## Centre urges state to sign PPA with NLC's Gujarat unit

**HYDERABAD:** The Union government on Tuesday offered 200 MW clean energy to Telangana from Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLC) solar power plant under Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) scheme and asked the state government to sign an MoU for the same. In a statement, Union Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy said that the NLC agreed to supply 200 MW solar power to Telangana every year, as part of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) scheme, within the purview of CPSU scheme. The NLC is starting a 520 MW power plant in Kutch district in Gujarat with an estimated cost of Rs 1,214 crore. The work on the plant has almost been completed and the



commercial product is expected to commence from June 2025. This solar plant would meet the power requirements of Telangana, Kishan said. The state would purchase power at Rs 2.57 per unit and would save around Rs 2,000 crore in the next 25 years, he said.

The solar panels required for the Gujarat plant would be purchased from Telangana, the Union minister said, adding that this would translate into direct and indirect employment as well as SGST revenue. The Union minister requested the state government to sign an MoU with NCL. He said that the Centre was supporting the state in meeting its power requirements. The Union government sanctioned Ramagundam thermal plant (1,600 MW) and NTPC Ramagundam solar plant (100 MW), the Union minister said, adding that if the Telangana government signed the MoU with NLC, the Centre was ready to construct another 2,400 MW unit at Ramagundam thermal plant.

## Palik has no control over contractors'

The energy department has installed a 370-MW liquified natural gas-based power plant in Yelahanka. The two will start supplying power to the grid in the first week of September. The Bidadi plant will take only segregated dry waste and requires 600 tonnes daily when it is fully functional. "But the plant load will be 75% of the capacity," the official said. An official from the energy department said, "The two units will not help address the problem of waste as expected. Because the waste generated is much more than the plants can handle. Moreover, there are no plans to expand the plants or start new ones." Over the past few years, five legacy waste units have closed down. Also, the BBMP's old plan of converting landfills into tree parks has shown poor results. Only the landfill at Bagalur has been converted into a tree park. Biomining is on in Mandur landfill. But so far, only five lakh metric tonnes of the accumulated 23 lakh metric tonnes have been removed.

## Bengaluru throws its hands up on growing garbage woes in Bengaluru

**BENGALURU:** Despite directives from the National Green Tribunal (NGT), waste continues to pile up everywhere in Bengaluru. The government agencies seem to have no solution to address the garbage problem. Worried about the garbage menace, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is now asking citizens to manage their waste. "Citizens must now segregate and process their waste, not just in large apartments or residential complexes, but even in individual homes as there is nothing more we can do," said Basavaraj Kabade, BBMP Solid Waste Management, chief engineer. According to data, the city generates 6,000 metric tonnes (MT) of waste daily. Of this, 2500-3000 MT of waste is sent to the landfill at Mitiganahalli. "This is the only landfill in Bengaluru. There are seven waste processing units. But most of them are not working due to technical failures and citizens' protests," a senior BBMP official said. The palike hoped that the energy department's waste-to-energy plant coming up in Bidadi (11.5 MW plant) would address the problem.

## BBMP has no control over contractors'

The energy department has installed a 370-MW liquified natural gas-based power plant in Yelahanka. The two will start supplying power to the grid in the first week of September. The Bidadi plant will take only segregated dry waste and requires 600 tonnes daily when it is fully functional. "But the plant load will be 75% of the capacity," the official said. An official from the energy department said, "The two units will not help address the problem of waste as expected. Because the waste generated is much more than the plants can handle. Moreover, there are no plans to expand the plants or start new ones." Over the past few years, five legacy waste units have closed down. Also, the BBMP's old plan of converting landfills into tree parks has shown poor results. Only the landfill at Bagalur has been converted into a tree park. Biomining is on in Mandur landfill. But so far, only five lakh metric tonnes of the accumulated 23 lakh metric tonnes have been removed.

# Kerala to take up research on amoebic infection cases, prepare action plan

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** The health department has decided to take up research on amoebic meningoencephalitis after the deadly infection has been reported in different districts in the state, said Health Minister Veena George. The department will study the rise in the number of cases of the disease in the state. The research, according to the minister, will be the first such attempt made at the global level. She was speaking at a technical workshop organised by the department at the Government Medical College here on Tuesday. The research will be based on the One Health approach in collaboration with

expert organisations like ICMR and the Indian Institute of Science. Experts from ICMR, IAV, Pondicherry AV Institute, Indian Institute of Science, Pollution Control Board, Medical College, rapid response team, state public health lab, etc. spoke at the workshop. The Environmental Engineering Department of Kerala University and the Pollution Control Board presented a detailed study report on the factors that favour the growth of amoeba. The department has also decided to assess the condition of water bodies in the state and an action plan will be formulated based on the one health approach. Though

considered rare and highly fatal, the state reported 19 cases which included 5 casualties. When there was a cluster in Thiruvananthapuram, the first case was detected and then other infected people



were identified. Only 11 people have recovered from the disease in the world. "The state has been able to improve the recovery rate. So far, 4 people have recovered from the disease in the state," said the minister. All the confirmed cases in Kerala have had contact in one way or the other with contaminated water where amoeba is likely to be present. It was also decided to conduct a case-control study with the help of ICMR and the National Institute of Epidemiology to find out the reason why only some of those who used the same water source developed the disease.

## GMC to implement special action plan to remove illegal encroachments

**GUNTUR:** All necessary measures will be taken to safeguard the properties of Guntur Municipal Corporation (GMC), and a special action plan will be implemented to remove illegal encroachments on GMC lands, said civic chief P Srinivasulu. He, along with GMC officials, visited Inner Ring Road, Teachers Colony, Mallikarjuna Puram, and Amaravathi Road on Tuesday. During his visit, he inspected GMC parks, vacant lands, water supply, and sanitation works in these areas and provided instructions. He emphasised that strict measures will be taken to protect GMC properties from encroachments. As part of this effort, fencing and compound walls will be erected in GMC layouts. He directed the engineering and town planning department officials to prepare proposals for the construction of parks in

appropriate locations and asked them to submit a thorough report on the vacant GMC lands. During his interaction with the public, locals complained about illegal water bores in the region, which are causing insufficient water supply. In response, he assured them that inspections will be conducted by special teams and stern action will be taken against those responsible. He observed that, despite all necessary measures being taken to prevent the overflowing of drains during the rainy season, these efforts are being undermined by illegal encroachments on the drains. He warned that departmental action would be taken against town planning secretaries if they fail to remove encroachments on roads and drains.



## Andhra Pradesh: Energy minister blames YSRC govt for decline in ratings of Discoms

**VIJAYAWADA:** Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar blamed the previous YSRC government, led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, for the drop in the ratings of power distribution companies (Discoms) and alleged that its "immature decisions" resulted in the debts of power utilities piling up over the last five years. In a press release, he said debts have piled up so much so that the State government has no other go, but to again borrow to run the Discoms. He pointed out that debts in the five-year regime of YSRC increased by 79%. The Minister recalled that during the TDP-led government between 2014 and 2019

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Advocate Pooja Bhaskar Sharma

## News box

## 2k potholes filled in 9 days: MCG

GURGAON. MCG filled up 2,076 potholes on internal roads across the city in nine days, officials said on Tuesday, citing the results of a campaign launched earlier this month. The corporation had issued a helpline (9821395133) for commuters and residents to complain about pothole-riddled stretches.

"From Aug 19 to Aug 27, the corporation's teams repaired 2,076 potholes in different areas. For this purpose, 35 teams are working across all 35 wards. The objective is to improve the condition of internal roads, benefiting commuters and residents. We are also receiving positive feedback through social media and other channels," MCG commissioner Narhari Singh Banger said.

The urban local bodies (ULB) department had recently tasked 22 of its officers, including the ULB director, with inspecting all districts to assess the state of road. Officers were asked to submit their findings. Ashok Rathore, chief engineer of the ULB department, was assigned to carry out the inspection in Gurgaon. He is expected to provide a detailed report on the condition of roads in the city.

Residents have complained that even the newly built roads were damaged by heavy rains this year. TOI reported on Tuesday that GMDA's claim last week to make all master roads in the city pothole-free within 7 days did not meet this deadline till Aug 26. Residents of new sectors were among the worst affected as many master roads in the area are riddled with potholes that turned into sinkholes after heavy rainfall over this month. Residents also said that authorities carried out some patchwork repairs, but all of it got washed away after showers. Recarpeting of roads is not possible as the model code of conduct came into effect after the schedule for Haryana elections was announced.

## Plaster chunk falls off bedroom ceiling in Gurgaon's condo, none injured

GURGAON. A large piece of plaster fell off the bedroom ceiling of a seventh-floor flat in DLF New Town Heights condominium in Sector 90. The room was unoccupied at the time, preventing a mishap.

The flat is located in Tower N of the society. Jugabrata Gogoi, who lives in the flat, said he was on his way home from work when the incident occurred on Monday.

At the time, his wife was busy with preparations for Janmashtami when a loud crash from the bedroom startled her. Upon rushing inside, she discovered that a large piece of plaster had fallen from the ceiling. Gogoi expressed relief that neither his family members nor their pet dog, which often sleeps in the spot where the plaster fell, were present in the room at the time. "I promptly informed police, but no action has been taken so far. DLF employees and maintenance staff arrived at the scene to assess the damage," he said.

## Cabinet approves two new lines and one multi-tracking project across Indian Railways

New Delhi: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved 3 (Three) projects of Ministry of Railways with total estimated cost of Rs. 6,456 Crore (approx.). The approved projects will improve logistical efficiency by connecting the unconnected areas, increase the existing line capacity and enhancing transportation networks, resulting in streamlined supply chains and accelerated economic growth. The new line proposals will provide direct connectivity and improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. The multi-tracking proposal will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across Indian Railways. The projects are in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Vision of a New India which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities. The projects are result of PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity which have been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services. The 3 (Three) projects covering 7 Districts in 4 States i.e., Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 300 Kms. With these projects 14 New Stations will be constructed, providing enhancing connectivity to 2 (Two) Aspirational Districts (Nuapada and East Singhbhum). New Line projects will provide connectivity to approx. 1,300 villages and about 11 Lakh population. Multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approx. 1,300 villages and about 19 lakh population. These are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as agriculture products, fertilizer, coal, iron ore, steel, cement, limestone etc. The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 45 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum). The Railways being environment friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, will help both in achieving climate goals and minimizing logistics cost of the country, reduce oil import (10 Crore Litres) and lower CO2 emissions (240 Crore Kg) which is equivalent to plantation of 9.7 Crore trees.

## Closure of 2 lanes on Gurgaon's Sohna Road triggers tailbacks



GURGAON. Commuters on Sohna Road faced traffic congestion on Tuesday, as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has closed two lanes for maintenance work. The closure, which was initiated three days ago, caused traffic disruptions in the morning rush hours as many office-goers returned after a long weekend. NHAI is expected to take at least the next seven days to complete the upkeep work, which is likely to further inconvenience daily commuters. NHAI is currently replacing expansion joints near the Galleria on the Sohna-Gurgaon carriageway. As a precautionary measure, a 100-metre stretch has been barricaded, covering nearly two lanes. This has left one lane for traffic on the elevated section, restricting vehicular flow. The service road beneath the flyover has also been closed to avoid any mishaps due to falling rubble or

plaster during the repair work. "This is routine maintenance work to ensure long-term safety of the road. As a precautionary measure, we have barricaded the area and are working to complete the repairs as soon as possible," a senior NHAI official said. Despite the NHAI's assurances, the ongoing maintenance work has only added to the woes of those who rely on this route for their daily commute. The lane closure resulted in long tailbacks on

Tuesday morning, with traffic stretching for over half a kilometre during peak hours on the elevated section. This prompted the highways authority to ease restrictions on another lane to help alleviate the traffic. Many office-goers returning to work after the long weekend found themselves stuck in the gridlock. The situation was worse for those commuting on the service lane. Dharmendra Mishra, a resident of GLS Aravali Homes, who commutes daily to Manesar, said, "Traffic was moving slowly due to the restriction. Due to the closure of the service road, I had to take the elevated road, further adding to the traffic there. I reached my office quite late." Shalini Verma, another commuter, said, "It was a bad way to start the week as vehicular movement was very slow. It's frustrating that this work couldn't have been scheduled for a less busy time."

## Bail is rule and jail is exception' is applicable even in money laundering cases: Supreme Court

New Delhi, August 28: The Supreme Court on Wednesday held that even in money laundering cases, bail is a rule and jail is an exception, and granted relief to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren's aide in an illegal mining related case registered by the Enforcement Directorate. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said the court has held that even in cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), "bail is a rule and jail is an exception." The bench said no person should be deprived of its liberty and section 45 of the PMLA which lays down twin conditions for bail of an accused in a money laundering case does not rewrite the principle to mean that deprivation of liberty is the norm. The top court referred to the August 9 verdict in the money laundering and corruption cases involving former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia to say that liberty of the individual is always the rule and deprivation of it by procedure established by law is the exception.

## Name Change

I, hitherto known as RAKESH PRASAD SAHOO, alias RAVI KUMAR S/o MANI PRASAD SAHOO R/o Block R, D-242 B, Dharmpura, Nalagarh, South West Delhi, Delhi - 110043 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAKESH PRASAD SAHOO.

## Name Change

I, hitherto known as JAGMOHAN SINGH KOCHAR alias JAGMOHAN SINGH S/o UTTAM SINGH, R/o Road No. 43, House No. 11, Purjoi Bagh, West Delhi, Delhi-110026, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JAGMOHAN SINGH KOCHAR.

## Name Change

It is for general information that I, SHASHI RATAN S/o MEHAR CHAND R/o 26, Bhogal Road, Bhogal, South Delhi, Delhi-110014, declare that name of mine and my wife have been wrongly written as SHASHI RATAN HARIT and MEENAKSHI HARIT in my minor son's name ARYA HARIT aged 13 years, in his School Records and Birth Certificate Registration No. MCDOLR-0110-004594390. The actual name of mine and my wife are SHASHI RATAN and MEENAKSHI respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

## Name Change

I, No-1611434P Rank-HAV Name-AVULA BHAVANAPANNAVAR residing at VPO-HULKOTI, TEH-GADAG, DIST-GADAG, KARNATAKA-582205 have changed my name from BHAVANA I H to BHAVANA I HAMAPANNAVAR for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, SOUNMI Mother of No-1611394A Rank-HAV Name-VIJU KUMAR K C R/o VPO-UDINUR, TEH-HOS-DURGE, DIST-KASARAGOD, KERALA-671310, have changed my name from SOUNMI to SOUNMI K C for all future purposes and in my son's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1965 instead of my correct date of birth as 23/05/1968 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, BADOLE SHILPA TUSHAR Wife of No-4584365Y Rank-NK Name-BADOLE TUSHAR KISAN residing at VILL-VIHIRGAON, PO-BHUGAON, TEH-KHADJAM, DIST-BHANDARA, MAHARASHTRA-441809 have changed my name from BADOLE SHILPA TUSHAR to SHILPABAI TUSHAR BADOLE for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, RAJAS mother of No-4580248W Rank-NK Name-GHODAKE SANDIP BANSI R/O SAMUDRA MALA, PO-KARJAT, TEH-KARJAT, DIST-AHMEDNAGAR, MAHARASHTRA-414402 have changed my name from RAJAS to RAJASHRI BANSI GHODAKE for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 09/09/1970 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1958 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## E-Auction Notice

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, North Eastern Railway, Lucknow invites E-Auction for following work. Admin/Unit/Zone: Lucknow-NER-Divisional/Commercial/North Eastern Railway, Auction catalogue No./Lot no: LNFSLR-17-24, Catalogue Published on: 26.08.2024 at 13:53 Hrs., Auction Start (All Lots): 10.09.2024 at 13:00 hrs., Auction close/Date/Time: 10.09.2024 at 17:10 hrs., Auction Type: Close Ended, Website particulars where complete details of auction can be seen by registered bidders: E-Auction Module of [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). Sr. Divl. Commercial Manager CPD/C-116 Lucknow

DO NOT TRAVEL WITH INFLAMMABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN

## Application No.

## Carpet Area (Sq. Ft.)

## Apartment No.

58204, 59603, 58519 3 BHK, TYPE-2A (643.041 SQ.FT.) T4-1201A, T5-408, T5-901

70006 3 BHK, TYPE-2AP (643.041 SQ.FT.) T5-101

58229, 58872 2 BHK-S, TYPE-2 (643.041 SQ.FT.) T5-1405, T5-704

59271, 59042 2 BHK, TYPE-3 (503.540 SQ.FT.) T6-1002, T6-1206

For Pegasus Land and Housing Pvt. Ltd.

Place: Gurugram (Haryana) Director

## Will boycott elections if 'outsiders' contest: Haryana's Sohna mahapanchayat

GURGAON. Residents from more than 100 villages in Sohna and Taura held a mahapanchayat on Tuesday to oppose "outsiders" contesting in elections. Since 1972, none of the MLAs elected from the Sohna assembly constituency are locals.

Mostly, people from adjoining districts and constituencies have contested and managed to win elections from Sohna, according to residents.

The mahapanchayat alleged that political parties - both national and regional - give tickets to candidates from outside the assembly seat.

Tuesday's mahapanchayat at the Punjabi dharamshala in Sohna saw the participation of hundreds of people, including members of 54 village panchayats from Taoru and 35 panchayats from Sohna, along with members from the Taoru municipality and Sohna municipal council.

Chaired by local elder Deshraj Goyal, the mahapanchayat was held for an hour and a half. "We want a representative who belongs to this place and lives among us. It was unanimously decided that we will not vote for any outsider," said Goyal. The mahapanchayat decided to hold another meeting a day before the last date of nomination to select a candidate who would work for the development of the region. "If political parties or independent candidates do not meet the criteria, the

## Name Change

I, MOHD QASIM, S/o MOHD TAQI R/o H.NO.1119/20, GALLI TELYAN, GANJ MIR KHAN, RAKAB GANJ, DARYA GANJ, DELHI-110002 have changed my daughter's name from AREEFA (mentioned on his old Passport No.J8611263) to AREEFA QASIM for all future purposes. That simliarly her mother's name is also changed from IRAM to IRAM QASIM. Which may be amended accordingly.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I, hitherto known as SHALU SINGH daughter of SHILU SUNIL SINGH residing at House No. 1986, First Floor, Village Pillanji, Pillanji Bridge, Kothi Mukbar Pur, Lodhi Road, Central Delhi, Delhi-110003, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as REHANA USMAN for all future purposes.

## Name Change

I, RIYAZ AHMAD S/o HABIB KHAN R/o H.NO.V-46, GALI NO. 23, VIJAY PARK, MAUJPUR, DELHI-110053 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME RIYAZ AHMED FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

## Name Change

I, hitherto known as SHALU SINGH daughter of SHILU SUNIL SINGH residing at House No. 1986, First Floor, Village Pillanji, Pillanji Bridge, Kothi Mukbar Pur, Lodhi Road, Central Delhi, Delhi-110003, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AMARA KHAN.

## Name Change

I, BANSI father of NO-4592048W Rank-NK Name-GHODAKE SANDIP BANSI R/O SAMUDRA MALA, PO-KARJAT, TEH-KARJAT, DIST-AHMEDNAGAR, MAHARASHTRA-414402 have changed my name from BANSI to BANSI TUKARAM GHODAKE for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 10/05/1965 instead of my correct date of birth 01/01/1962 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, Roshni Khan W/o Haroon Sayed, R/o G-106, KDP, Grand Savanara, Raj Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, date of birth of my minor son, Hadi Sayed, aged 17 years has been wrongly written as ABUDL HADY SAYED in his 10th class certificate and Aadhar Card No. 360989842861. The actual name of my minor son is Hadi SAYED, which may be amended accordingly

## Name Change

I, Roshni Khan W/o Haroon Sayed, R/o G-106, KDP, Grand Savanara, Raj Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, date of birth of my minor son, Hadi Sayed, aged 17 years has been wrongly written as ABUDL HADY SAYED in his 10th class certificate and Aadhar Card No. 360989842861. The actual name of my minor son is Hadi SAYED, which may be amended accordingly

## Name Change

I, No-7789103Y, Rank-LNK, Name-BARUN KUMAR S/o B BALU residing at VILL-SHORE POINT, PO-BAMBOOFLAT, PS-BAMBOOFLAT, SOUTH ANDAMAN, ANDAMAN & NICOBAR, ISLAND-744107 have changed my mother's name from B AMUDA to B AMUDHA for all future purposes and in my service records my mother's date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/01/1976 instead of her correct date of birth as 23/07/1974 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, No-14669518M, Rank-HAV Name-IRANNA V HAMAPANNAVAR residing at VPO-HULKOTI, TEH-GADAG, DIST-GADAG, KARNATAKA-582205 have changed my name from SAROJAMMA to SHIRI GIRI SAROJAMMA for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1961 instead of my correct date of birth as 19/10/1961 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, MUTHULAKSHMI mother of No. 15120848Y Rank-SPR Name-RIYAZ RAMEEMWARA REDDY, R/o VPO-MAMINIPAL, PO-BAMBOOFLAT, PS-BAMBOOFLAT, DISTT-CHILKURNOOL, ANDHRA PRADESH-518563 have changed my name from SAROJAMMA to SHIRI GIRI SAROJAMMA for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/01/1976 instead of her correct date of birth as 23/07/1974 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, MUTHULAKSHMI mother of No. 1613771L Rank-SPR Name-AJITH C R/o H.NO.5/161, VILL-THATHANUR (EAST), PO-TKEELAVELI, TAL-UDAIYAPALAYAM, DISTT-ARIALUR, TAMILNADU-621804 have changed my name from MUTHULAKSHMI to MUTHULAKSHMI C for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/01/1975 instead of my correct date of birth as 02/03/1975 vide affidavit dated 28/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## Name Change

I, RAHUL KUMAR GUPTA (ADVOCATE) M-NO- 725922875

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Smt. Arifa W/o Sh. Lukman is the owner of Freehold Residential Plot bearing No. H-4. Consisting of Part of land in Khasra No. 2529, land area measuring 167 22 Sq. Mts. Situated at New Friends Enclave, Revenue Village Darsa, Pargana Darsa, Tehsil & Distt Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh. By virtue of dated 18.09.2023 as Document No. 9327, Bahi No. 1, Jild No. 20281, on Pages- 113/142 SR- GZB. In the chain Documents below mentioned documents not available i.e. Death Certificate & SMC of Late Jiyullah Siddique now our client is declaring that any other Person does not have any right over the said property,

## News box

## AT&T outage in US impacts thousands, carrier cites 'software issue'

**World** Thousands of AT&T customers across the US experienced outages on Wednesday, leaving their phones in SOS mode for over several hours and unable to make or receive calls or send texts. The outage began on Tuesday at around 4 pm (local time), with as many as 5,800 reports made by 6.46 pm. The outage impacted people in major cities like Tennessee, Florida, Los Angeles and Arkansas, among other cities. An AT&T spokesperson, while speaking to CNN, said that the outage could be due to a "software issue" and efforts have been made to rectify the issue. "We are working to address a software issue that may affect the ability of a limited number of our customers to connect to our wireless network," the AT&T spokesperson was quoted as saying by CNN. "Keeping our customers connected is our highest priority, so we appreciate their patience as we work to resolve this issue," the spokesperson said, as per CNN. Earlier on Tuesday, in Tennessee, the emergency services in Hawkins County announced that an AT&T wireless service outage "may affect the ability of some AT&T wireless customers to reach our 911 centre." In a post on X, the agency also urged people to call its non-emergency line if they were unable to connect with 911. Similarly, in Florida, police announced a "reported outage with our non-emergency and district phone lines," but added that 911 was not affected.

In California, police in Pinole said that some AT&T wireless callers "may have issues calling 911," but added that "landlines as well as other wireless carriers not affected." Earlier in February this year, thousands of AT&T customers across the US also experienced similar outages, leaving their phones unable to make or receive calls or send texts.

## X suffers brief outage, thousands of users report interruptions

**World** Microblogging platform X on Wednesday suffered a brief global outage, with services down for thousands of users. The outage lasted for a few minutes, with pages failing to load on the site. Users were shown the "something went wrong, try reloading" message on the screen. According to outage tracking website Downdetector.com, 915 outages were reported in India at 9.15 am. In US, meanwhile, nearly 36,000 outages were reported at 11.15 pm ET (8.45 am IST). The website, which tracks outages by collating



status reports from several sources including users, also showed more than 3,300 reports of outages in Canada and 1,600 reports in the UK as of 11.20 pm ET (8.50 am IST).

## Japan braces for typhoon Shanshan, flights and trains cancelled

**Tokyo.** Japan on Wednesday braced for Typhoon Shanshan, with heavy rain and strong winds forecast, forcing airlines and railways to cancel some services over the coming days.

Shanshan is expected to strike Japan's southwestern Kyushu island over the next few days, and the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said it may issue a special warning to Kagoshima prefecture.

"Maximum caution is required given that forecasts are for strong winds, high waves and high tides that have not been seen thus far," the JMA warned. The typhoon is expected to approach Japan's central and



eastern regions, which includes the capital Tokyo, around the weekend, according to JMA. ANA Holdings 9202.T plans to cancel 110 domestic flights on Wednesday slated to leave or arrive in southwestern Japan, affecting around 4,200 passengers, public broadcaster NHK said. Rival Japan Airlines 9201.T plans to cancel 80 domestic flights from Wednesday to Friday, according to the report. Some Shinkansen bullet train services in the area are expected to be cancelled on Wednesday and Thursday, NHK said.

# Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he will present plan to Biden to end war with Russia

**Kyiv** Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday that the war with Russia would eventually end in dialogue, but that Kyiv had to be in a strong position and that he would present a plan to US President Joe Biden and his two potential successors. The Ukrainian leader, addressing a news conference, said Kyiv's three-week-old incursion into Russia's Kursk region was part of that plan, but that it also comprised other steps on the economic and diplomatic fronts. "The main point of this plan is to force Russia to end the war. And I want that very much - (that it would be) fair for Ukraine," he told reporters in Kyiv of the war launched by Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. He did not elaborate further on the next steps, but said he would also discuss the plan with Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and probably also with Republican Donald Trump, the two nominees for the US presidential election. Zelenskyy said he hoped to go to the United States in September to attend the UN General Assembly in New York and that he was preparing to meet Biden. His remarks indicated that he sees the main potential

forum for talks as a follow-up international summit on peace, at which Ukraine sees it wants Russia to have representatives. The first summit to advance Kyiv's vision of peace, held in Switzerland in June, pointedly excluded Russia, while attracting scores of delegations, but not from China, the world's second largest economy, despite Kyiv's push to win over the global south. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Aug. 19 that talks were out of the question after Ukraine launched major cross-border incursion into Russia's Kursk region on Aug. 6.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was in Kyiv last week, spoke by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday and told him he supported an early and peaceful resolution to the Ukraine conflict.

**'NO COMPROMISES WITH PUTIN'**  
Zelenskyy has been adamant that Russia wants



to dictate terms to Ukraine in any settlement of the war, something that Kyiv sees as unacceptable. Putin has said any deal needs to start with Ukraine's acceptance of "realities on the ground", that would leave Russia with possession of substantial chunks of four Ukrainian regions as well as Crimea. Now Ukraine says it controls more than 1,200 square km (463 sq miles) of Russia's Kursk region. "There can be no compromises

with Putin, dialogue today is in principle empty and meaningless because he does not want to end the war diplomatically," Zelenskyy said at the news conference. He said the offensive into the Kursk region had reduced the number of governments around the world calling for Ukraine to make compromises with Russia to end the war and give up swathes of territory.

On the battlefield, Zelenskyy mocked Putin, who he said was prioritising the capture of Ukrainian land over the defence of Russia's own territory. He pointed to Kursk region where Ukraine has claimed the capture of 100 settlements, while Russian forces continue to inch forward in the eastern Donetsk region. The Ukrainian leader also said that Kyiv was continuing to make progress on its domestic weapons production and that it had conducted its first test of a domestically-produced ballistic missile.

## North Korea's Kim Jong Un oversees test firing of new rocket launcher system

**Seoul.** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended the test of an upgraded 240mm rocket launcher system, state media said on Wednesday. The system "proved its superiority in mobility and strike concentration" during the inspection testing, state news agency KCNA said.

Earlier this week, Kim oversaw tests of new "suicide drones," and urged researchers to develop artificial intelligence for the unmanned vehicles. US and South Korean officials have accused North Korea of supplying Russia with artillery shells, missiles and other equipment in recent



months for Moscow to use in its war on Ukraine. From last year until August 4, North Korea has shipped more than 12,000 containers to Russia, sending three

or four kinds of shells of different sizes including rockets, and separately also supplied dozens of short range missiles, South Korean Defence Minister Shin Won-sik told Reuters this month.

Moscow and Pyongyang have denied accusations of arms transfers but have vowed to deepen military relations.

A Russian delegation led by the vice minister of industry held talks with North Korean counterparts on Tuesday to further develop economic cooperation between the two countries, according to KCNA.

## Trump agrees to debate with 'comrade' Kamala Harris on September 10

**World** Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has agreed to a debate with his Democratic opponent Kamala Harris on September 10, saying that "the rules will be the same as the last CNN debate, which seemed to work out well for everyone." Sharing a post on his social media platform Truth, Trump said, "I have reached an agreement with the Radical Left Democrats for a debate with Comrade Kamala Harris. It will be broadcast live on ABC FAKE NEWS, by far the nastiest and most unfair newscaster in the business, on Tuesday, September 10th, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania." This comes after a statement issued by the former US President over the weekend, hinting at possibly cancelling the debate due to ongoing disputes between the campaigns over the debate rules. On Truth Social,



Trump stated that he and Harris had reached an agreement to follow the same set of rules that he and President Joe Biden followed during the June 27 debate, including no live audience and muted microphones when the candidates aren't speaking. After the June debate, US President Joe Biden quit the presidential race and endorsed Kamala Harris for

president. Trump stated that with the CNN rules, the candidates would not be able to bring notes or "cheat sheets." "We have also been given assurance by ABC that this will be a "fair and equitable" debate and that neither side will be given the questions in advance (No Donna Brazile!)" he added. The 78-year-old former US President went on to say that the "Radical Left" would not agree to the third debate, which was supposed to be broadcast live on Fox News on September 4. "Harris would not agree to the Fox News debate on September 4th, but that date will be held open in case she changes her mind or Flip Flops, as she has done on every single one of her long-held and cherished policy beliefs. A possible third debate, which would go to NBC FAKE NEWS, has not been agreed to by the Radical Left," he stated.

## Two sworn enemies hold the key to ending the war in Gaza. Does either man want a deal

**World** The latest flurry of Gaza cease-fire talks — the back-and-forth over now-familiar sticking points and appeals from around the world — obscures a grim truth about the months-long efforts to end the Israel-Hamas war and free scores of hostages. Any deal requires the signatures of two men: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. They are sworn enemies, notoriously tough negotiators and know that the outcome of the talks will profoundly shape their legacies. In Sinwar's case, it could mean life or death.

Both have strong incentives to end the war. But they may also think they stand to gain by holding out a bit longer, and that war is preferable to a deal that falls short of their demands. Here's a look at the two leaders and the constraints they face.

### What does Netanyahu want?

Netanyahu has promised "total victory" over Hamas and the return of all the hostages held

in Gaza — goals that many believe are incompatible. He has come under tremendous pressure from the hostages' families and much of the Israeli public to make a deal to bring them home, even if it leaves a battered Hamas intact. The United States, which has provided key military aid and diplomatic support to Israel, is also pushing for such a deal. But Netanyahu's governing coalition relies on far-right ministers who want to permanently reoccupy Gaza and have threatened to bring down the government if he concedes too much. That would force early elections that could drive him from power at a time when he is on trial for corruption. It would also hasten a broader reckoning over the security failures surrounding the Oct. 7 attack in which Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 others — on Netanyahu's watch. Netanyahu has rejected calls for a government investigation until the war is over. The

longer the war drags on, the more likely Israel is to achieve something that looks like victory — the killing of Sinwar, the rescue of more hostages — and the longer Netanyahu has to repair his political standing and reshape his legacy. But it also comes with risks as the number of soldiers killed in action rises nearly every day and Israel becomes increasingly isolated because of the suffering it has inflicted on Palestinians.

Netanyahu has clashed with his own defense minister over the endgame. Israeli media is filled with reports quoting unnamed senior security officials expressing frustration with Netanyahu, especially his demand for lasting control over two strategic corridors in Gaza. Some have gone so far as to accuse him of sabotaging the talks. Both Israel and Hamas say they have accepted different versions of an evolving U.S.-backed cease-fire proposal in principle, while suggesting changes and accusing the other of making unacceptable demands. Yohanan Plesner, head of the Israel Democracy Institute, a local think tank, acknowledged the anger directed at Netanyahu but said it was impossible to know which leader was the greater roadblock. "If we saw Sinwar was serious about getting a deal, that would force Israel and Netanyahu to expose their cards," Plesner said. The current situation is "almost like negotiating with oneself."

### What does Sinwar want?

Sinwar wants to end the war — but only on his terms. Israel's offensive has killed over 40,000 people, according to local health officials, displaced 90% of Gaza's population and destroyed its main cities. Hamas has lost thousands of fighters and much of its militant infrastructure. Sinwar's only bargaining chips are the roughly 110 hostages still held in Gaza, around a third of whom are believed to be dead. And he needs much more than a temporary pause in the fighting if he hopes to salvage anything resembling victory from the Oct. 7 attack that he helped mastermind.

## Australia Restricts Foreign Student Intake For 2025, Indians Impacted

**The limit includes higher education courses as well as vocational education and training courses, Australia's Education Minister Jason Clare said.**

**World** Australia has announced that it will be limiting its international student intake to 2.7 lakh in 2025 in a bid to tackle record levels of migration that has led to skyrocketing house rental prices. The limit includes higher education courses as well as vocational education and training courses, Australia's Education Minister Jason Clare said today. The move is set to impact Indian

students hoping to go abroad for higher education, especially those from Punjab which accounts for a large number of such students. In June 2022, Australia capped the foreign student intake at 5.10 lakh. This number was reduced to 3.75 lakh in 2023. Now they have reduced the annual planning levels further. These levels are accorded to individual universities for all international students and not just for Indian students. The universities will distribute the quotas country wise then state wise," Sunil Jaggi, a member of Migration Agents Registration Authority of Australia, said. "The students who were preparing to take admission for the February intake will get affected by this announcement. Students from Punjab will be worst affected," he further said. "This will affect my career. My family is taking loans for my education as the cost of studying in Australia is quite high," a student from



Haryana, who wishes to study nursing in Australia, said. "The Indian government must put forward students' point of view to the Australian government," another student said. Notably, the Australian Education Minister on a visit to India last year had signed an agreement to expand in-country access to Australian higher education institutions for Indian students. According to India's

Ministry of External Affairs, around 1.22 lakh students from the country study in Australia. India's Quad partner is the fourth most popular destination for Indian students studying abroad, after Canada, the US and the UK. Australia also increased its non-refundable visa fee for foreign students from AUD 710 to AUD 1,600, another measure that seemingly aims to reduce migration levels. Canada has also announced new restrictions on its temporary foreign workers' programme.

Starting September 26, businesses will only be allowed to fill up to 10 per cent of their workforce with low-wage foreign workers, down from the previous 20 per cent. The decision to limit the number of low-wage foreign workers comes in response to rising unemployment rates in Canada. The overall unemployment rate has climbed to 6.4 per cent, with the rate for younger workers reaching 14.2 per cent.

## News box

## Mom among three arrested for selling newborn for Rs 1 lakh in Tamil Nadu

**COIMBATORE:** Three women, including the mother of a 14-day-old girl, were arrested for allegedly selling the newborn for Rs 1 lakh. The suspects have been identified as A Nandini (22) of Chinnakannanpudur near Periyanaickenpalayam, V Devika (42) of Kasthuripalayam, and M Anitha (40) of Kavundampalayam in Coimbatore. Police said Nandini, the mother of the girl, and her husband, a driver, work in an apparel unit at Periyanaickenpalayam. The couple already have a three-year-old son.

When Nandini gave birth at Mettupalayam Government Hospital on August 14, Devika and Anitha, who were also working in the same apparel unit, approached her and convinced her to sell the baby to Anitha claiming she has no child even 15 years after her marriage. Nandini allegedly handed over the child to Anitha on August 19 after receiving the money. The neighbours who grew suspicious alerted the Childline, and its organiser Angela Josephine and other staff visited the Nandini's house on Monday for an inquiry. Based on a complaint by Angela, the Periyanaickenpalayam All-Women Police booked the three under sections 143 of BNS and section 80 and 86 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and arrested the women on Monday. The baby was taken to a government centre.

## Two Aavin officials in Madurai suspended for milk spoilage

**MADURAI:** Two weeks after customers from Koodal Nagar, BB Kulam, Thirupulai, Arapalayam, and Sikandarsavadi complained about Aavin milk packets getting spoilt within a few hours of purchase, two officials of the Aavin dairy plant in Madurai were suspended by the authorities on Tuesday. Action was taken against the officials, identified as deputy manager (dairy) Hariharan and supervisor Palanikumar, who were in charge of the plant, citing delivery delay. According to an official from Aavin (Madurai), an internal committee was set up to investigate the issue, and its inquiry revealed that the milk was spoilt. "Around 1,500 litres of milk packets were replaced and returned to milk agents in the last two weeks. Though thousands of packets were also returned due to fear of spoilage, we replaced the spoilt ones only. The spoilage was mainly due to faulty preservation systems maintained by the milk agents in Madurai," the official said.

Milk packets must be stored below 4°C to prevent bacteria formation. "However, a majority of Aavin agents and dealers are not cautious, and often packets are sold in the open, under the scorching sun. If milk is stored in such poor conditions, the shelf life will be less than four hours. Milk packets have an expiry window of two days and if the milk is not boiled, it will get spoilt faster. Besides, there was a delivery delay on our part, and hence we have suspended two officials," the official added.

## Chemotherapy daycare units in all Karnataka district hospitals

**BENGALURU:** Chemotherapy daycare centres will be started in all the district hospitals in Karnataka within the next month, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has said. He was speaking after laying the foundation, along with CM Siddaramaiah, DyCM DK Shivakumar, for the construction of a 200-bedded mother and child hospital, a mortuary, a kitchen, a teaching block, a laundry block and a bio-medical waste room at Rs 150 crore on the premises of KC General Hospital, on Tuesday. "Rural cancer patients are forced to travel and come to super speciality hospitals located in cities. If the chemotherapy daycare centres are set up at the district hospitals across the state,



cancer patients need not travel," adding that the chemotherapy daycare centres would be set up in a month's time.

Stating that a separate ambulance service will be started soon only to attend accident victims, Rao said, "Sixty-five ambulances will be operating to attend to accident victims only. This is a new scheme of the State Government and CM Siddaramaiah will flag off the services soon." Siddaramaiah said that the government hospital doctors are more experienced than the private doctors and should not lag behind the private hospitals in providing health services. "Hi-tech health services should be available in government hospitals on par with the private ones. Steps are taken to provide robotic surgeries in government hospitals," the CM added.

## Ex-chief of Telangana WRDC defends BRS government's decisions on KLIS

**The report filed in Kerala High Court pointed out that the construction particulars vary from hilly areas to plains and marshy lands. It is doubtful whether the NHAI has put in place any disaster management plans.**



**HYDERABAD:** Former chairman of Telangana Water Resources Development Corporation V Prakash Rao deposed before the PC Ghose Commission of Inquiry on Kaleshwaram and defended the decisions of the BRS regime on the irrigation project. Prakash supported the re-engineering of Kaleshwaram and changing the sources from Tummidihatti to Medigadda. "After the formation of Telangana, the then Irrigation Minister T Harish Rao led a delegation on July 23, 2014 to Maharashtra

and requested the then Maharashtra CM Prithviraj Chavan to approve the request for Tummidihatti barrage at 152 metres height. The approval was not given owing to political pressures of elections slated in Maharashtra, and subsequently the BJP formed the government. Technical meetings were held on August 16, 2014 and February 4, 2015 at Hyderabad to resolve the technical issues with officials of Maharashtra regarding the height of the barrage and submergence in order to

finalise the FRL, which remained unresolved," Prakash said in his affidavit. "On February 17, 2015, the CM of Telangana K Chandrasekhar Rao led a high-level delegation to Maharashtra and requested the then CM Devendra Fadnavis for approval of Tummidihatti barrage at +152 meters," he added. Prakash said that the talks were successful although Fadnavis was appreciative of taking Telangana's share of water from Godavari but opposed the construction of barrage at +152 meters at Tummidihatti.

Later, the BRS government proposed to construct the project at Medigadda, he said. "The Central Water Commission assessed the net water availability at Medigadda barrage site is 284.30 tmcft in 2017. Out of this, 195 tmcft is being diverted under Kaleshwaram Project at Medigadda barrage. With this CWC certified that the selection of Medigadda location is correct in terms of water availability," he added.

He also said that critics of Kaleshwaram like K Raghu and Vedire Sriram have been advocating that previous government had misinterpreted the comments of CWC on water availability at Tummidihatti barrage. But this was utterly wrong and misleading, he said.

## Out of confines, runaway gray langur enjoys 'all-new freedom' at Thiruvananthapuram zoo

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** The troublesome gray langur at the Thiruvananthapuram zoo has finally been 'released' in an open enclosure. For now, the five-year-old female monkey is enjoying the newfound freedom after being moved out of the confines of an iron-grilled enclosure. Along with its male partner, both rescued animals, the gray langur was brought to the city zoo from the Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park in Tirupati on June 5 last year. But the monkey proceeded to give the zoo authorities a hard time as it escaped from its cage while being shifted to the open enclosure at the end



of a two-week quarantine. For more than three weeks the monkey languished outside the zoo, much to the embarrassment of the authorities. After being nabbed, the gray langur was confined to its small enclosure.

Dr K R Nikesh Kiran, the veterinarian at the Thiruvananthapuram zoo, told TNIE that they had been beefing up the security arrangements in the open enclosure after the monkey was brought back from its tryst with real freedom. "Recently, we freed three gray langurs that we received from the Tilyar Mini Zoo, Rohtak, in Haryana into the open enclosure.

## Kerala: Actor-MLA Mukesh denies sexual harassment charges, calls for impartial probe

**Sandhya, a junior artist, accused Mukesh of inappropriate behaviour towards her friend's mother at their home.**

**KOLLAM:** Rejecting allegations of sexual harassment against him, actor and Kollam MLA M Mukesh has called for an impartial investigation into the same. The MLA accused the actor who raised allegations against him of attempting to blackmail him in 2009 when he refused her request for financial assistance. Mukesh said he would pursue legal action against her. Mukesh's response came after a series of sexual harassment allegations were raised against him. He welcomed a transparent investigation into the allegations raised by the actor, who filed a complaint with the

Special Investigation Team. "There is no truth in the allegations. An impartial investigation is essential to reveal the facts to the public," Mukesh asserted.

Mukesh recounted that in 2009, the actor that raised allegations against him, approached him seeking opportunities in films. "I promised to help where I could and sent her on her way. Later, she sent me a message thanking me for my respectful behaviour. The next time I heard from her was in 2022, when she asked for financial help. A man claiming to be her husband contacted me, demanding Rs 1 lakh. They tried to extort

me, but I have the WhatsApp messages they sent, which I will provide as evidence if necessary. I have no intention to succumb to such threats," Mukesh stated.

Meanwhile, fresh allegations have emerged against Mukesh from junior artists. Sandhya, a junior artist, accused Mukesh of inappropriate behaviour towards her friend's mother at their home. According to Sandhya, Mukesh visited her friend's house, where only her friend's mother was present, and behaved inappropriately, leading the mother to ask him to leave. "The incident happened decades ago. Mukesh somehow found out

my friend's address and went to her house when only her mother was there. My friend was not at home at the time. Mukesh's behaviour was unacceptable, and her mother eventually asked him to leave. She shared this disturbing experience with me, though my friend is no longer active in the film industry," Sandhya recounted.

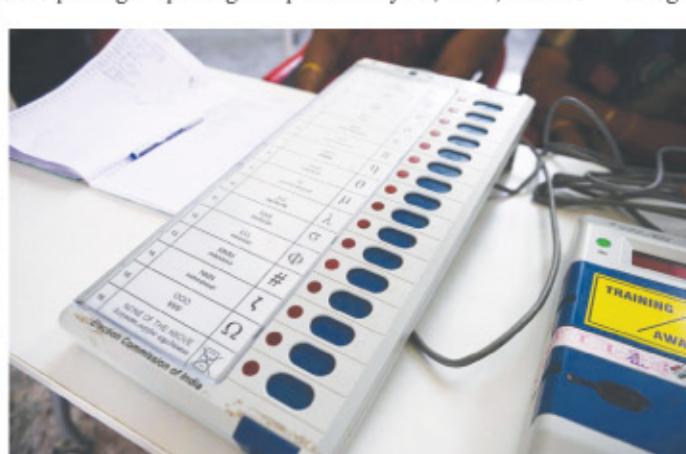
Additionally, casting director Tess Joseph had earlier accused Mukesh of inappropriate behaviour during an event several years ago. Mukesh has denied these allegations, dismissing them as part of a political conspiracy.

## Furnish polling booth-wise results, YSRC makes representation to CEO

**VIJAYAWADA:** The YSRC has urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to publish Form 20, which includes polling booth-wise results, of the recently concluded General Elections 2024 in the State. A delegation of YSRC leaders, including former ministers Ambati Rambabu and Merugu Nagarjuna, and MLC Lella Appi Reddy, met Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav at the State Secretariat on Tuesday, and mentioned that polling details have not been made available in the required format even after the declaration of election results two-and-a-half months ago. The YSRC highlighted inconsistencies in polling percentages announced at various stages of the election.

According to press notes released by the ECI, Andhra Pradesh recorded 68.12% polling at 8 pm on May 13, 2024, 76.50%

polled on the election day surpassed these figures, reaching over 82%. The delegation also reminded the CEO of a formal request made on June 10, 2024, seeking voting percentage information, and there has been no response to it so far. Hence, the CEO and the ECI should take immediate measures to publish Form 20, and resolve all the inconsistencies in the reported polling data, it said. The YSRC sought a detailed breakdown of the percentage of votes polled in each Assembly and Lok Sabha constituency up to 8 PM (68.12%) and up to 11.45 PM (76.50%) on May 13, 2024. It also asked for information on the number of votes polled in each constituency after the official polling hours ended at 4, 5 or 6 pm as per the election notification.



by 11.45 pm the same day, and later it was revised to 80.66% on May 17, 2024. However, the actual number of votes

## HYDRAA officials reach Janwada farmhouse door

**HYDERABAD:** AMID its demolition drive against the illegal structures constructed in the full tank level (FTL) and buffer zones of lakes, the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Monitoring and Protection Agency (HYDRAA) on Tuesday along with irrigation officials took measurements of the Janwada farmhouse, which was taken on lease by BRS working president KT Rama Rao. HYDRAA officials also visited Salakam Cheruvu, where Akbaruddin Owaisi's Fatima Owaisi College was allegedly constructed in the full tank level. Officials took measurements of the farmhouse near Gandipet in Rangareddy to ascertain whether it was constructed in the FTL or not. There was talk that the farmhouse would be demolished at any moment as the High Court recently refused to pass any order to not demolish the alleged illegal structure. Meanwhile, the BRS working president said that he

would stand firm if officials find any violations and decide to demolish the allegedly illegal structure. Rama Rao also demanded that the officials start demolishing the illegal structures in the academic year, students would suffer. He said the illegal structures of the college and another educational institution owned by former minister Ch Malla Reddy located near a water body near Dulapally would be razed later.

**Patnam: Built my house as per rules**  
Responding to BRS working president KT Rama Rao's allegations, former minister Patnam Mahender Reddy said on Tuesday that if officials found any irregularities with his house near Gandipet lake, then he would himself remove the illegal structure. The former minister said that he purchased 14.14 acres of land in 1999 and it was owned by his son now. He added that he constructed the house per the rules. "I did not receive any notices from the officials. If the officials found any irregularities and issued notices, then I will demolish my house," Mahender Reddy said.



of Congress leaders, including of Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. After HYDRAA officials visited the Fatima Owaisi College, Commissioner AV Ranganath told visiting BJP corporators on Tuesday that if the college was demolished in the

## CID intensifies inquiry into fire incident at Madanapalle Sub-Collector's office

**CHITTOOR:** The CID has intensified its probe into the Madanapalle Sub-Collector's office fire and conducted a thorough inspection of the scene of offence. The team, led by CID chief Ravi Shankar Ayyanar, along with Annamayya district SP Vidyasagar Na idu, Additional SP Rajkamal, and DSP Venugopal, participated in the inspection where a scene of the incident of arson was reconstructed. The drill went on from Monday night to Tuesday noon. Senior assistant Gautam Teja, who is in police custody, was interrogated regarding the oil cans in the cupboards at the time of the incident. Nimmannapalle Village Revenue Assistant Ramanaiah, who witnessed the incident, and RDO Hari Prasad, who was present at the office



earlier, were summoned and questioned. The fire that broke out at the Madanapalle Sub-Collector's office on the night of July 21, severely damaged files of nearly 25 departments. Following Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's directive, DGP Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao and CID chief Ravi Shankar Ayyanar probed the incident, and determined that the fire was a deliberate act rather than an accident. The RDO's failure to promptly notify the Collector had raised suspicion, with the Collector only becoming aware of the fire from the District Fire Officer. The conduct of the RDO and the CI present at the scene is under scrutiny as the investigation continues to reveal the full scope and implications of the incident.

## Avoid half-measures in adopting CDS system

THE proposal for adopting the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) system was first floated by Lord Mountbatten, then Governor General of India. He had firsthand experience in leading a unified command (Army, Navy and Air Force) during World War II. But his proposal was given the cold shoulder by then PM Jawaharlal Nehru. Mountbatten then left it to Lord Ismay to resolve this issue. He faced opposition from both the PM and then Defence Minister Krishna Menon.

Later, when Nehru stayed at Mountbatten's residence (in Broadlands, UK), he was warned by the latter of possible Chinese aggression and the prospect of India's quick defeat. Mountbatten urged Nehru to appoint Gen KS Thimayya as the CDS and form integrated theatre commands (ITCs). But Nehru responded by saying that there was no question of a war, as India wished to be at peace with everybody. This neglect of national security and the non-adoption of an appropriate defence policy and command structure have been India's bane through the ages. From Alexander's invasion of India to the Battle of Plassey, a fuzzy, ponderous and pedestrian system of higher defence organisations, as articulated by historian Jadunath Sarkar, runs like a warp thread in the management and conduct of India's battles. Even during the battles fought by India after Independence, complete integration between the Army and the Air Force has been missing.

During the 1962 war against China, the Indian Air Force (IAF) stayed out, yet the then Indian Prime Minister wrote two letters to the US President, seeking fighter aircraft support for the Indian Army. As regards coordination between the Army and the Air Force during the 1965 war with Pakistan, Air Vice Marshal KL Sondhi's assessment of the IAF's performance (as recorded in Lt Gen Harbans Singh's book, *War Despatches*) goes thus: "This also exemplified the IAF's own half-hearted participation before the desperate reaction of Pakistan's air force, which led to an air war — but the IAF missed a rare opportunity to demonstrate more fully to the Indian Army that it exists otherwise than a fighting service for its own good."

Unfortunately, the core and kernel of the CDS system in its full spectrum have been missing from the IAF's perception as well as that of some defence experts. Germany's spectacular victories and rapid advances across Europe and the USSR during World War II were the result of a close integration of mechanised forces and the Luftwaffe. What most miss out is that war is akin to an orchestra, where, on one part, all musical instruments are played, conforming to the same tune, and, on the other, there has to be only one conductor. Similarly, all elements taking part in military operations have to focus on the same objective, with one overall commander, in line with the principle of war called 'unity of command'. Somehow, the IAF appears to be missing out on the adoption of the concept of ITCs and the principle of 'unity of command'. Its imperatives seem to skip the Air Force's grasp and thinking. Here, it would be appropriate to quote Gen Albrecht von Wallenstein: "Never will I accept divided command, even were God Himself to be my colleague in office. I command alone or not at all." This is the essence of unity of command. Equally, with the adoption of the CDS system in totality, the three service chiefs are left with only staff functions and no operational role. Hence, they have given the proposal short shrift.

Since the time Mountbatten's proposal was turned down by Nehru, India has simply overlooked the importance of integrating the potential of its three services, the very concept of the CDS system and the need to adopt it in its full spectrum. After the 1999 Kargil conflict, two panels were constituted — the K Subrahmanyam Committee and the Arun Singh Committee. In my presentation to the latter, it was recommended that two ITCs — Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) and Northern — be created and an Air Force officer could be the first commander of the Northern ITC to allay any apprehension on the part of the IAF. The remaining ITCs could be formed in stages. It was recommended that one Mountain Corps be raised for the Northern Theatre Command.

MY mind goes back to the mid-1990s when I was posted at the police headquarters in Chandigarh in an administrative capacity. One afternoon, the Director General of Police (DGP) called me over and desired that I should accompany him to a meeting with the chief minister at Punjab Bhawan. Both of us reached there in time but the CM was not there; after some time, a colleague of his turned up on his behalf. After the exchange of pleasantries, the minister pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and handed it over to the DGP. My boss was well known for a short fuse and I could see him turning red in the face. He then handed the paper to me; it had a list of about 20 transfers. The proposed transfers were based on one principle: all the rakes go to the field and all the good officers to desk jobs. The DGP asked me for my opinion, I seconded him and held forth that not even one proposal was acceptable. The DGP got up, and as we prepared to move out, the minister suggested that we could discuss the matter and make some changes. He was told in no uncertain terms that we were not into bargaining, and we exited the meeting on that note. I dropped the DGP at his place and told him to be prepared for a transfer. After two days, both of us were shifted out as also was the chief secretary (evidently, he had had a similar experience). However, times were different and values and principles still existed as none of our careers were adversely affected. In fact, the DGP went as the Governor of a state, the chief secretary as Principal Secretary to the PM and I was appointed DGP of Jammu and Kashmir.

Will this unholy alliance ever be broken? It seems only the combined will and strength of the people can fix this malaise.

This incident took place when we were still not completely out of the woods as far as militancy was concerned. Even otherwise, the old rules and regulations regarding postings and transfers were still being followed. Proposals were sent from the DGP to the Home Department and differences, if any, were ironed out between the home secretary and the DGP and then the names were sent to the

## The great Indian transfer bazaar

The institution of the police and other civil services which constitute the criminal justice system lies broken

CM. Also, because of militancy, the DGP's proposals were generally accepted. Even before this, the practice since pre-Independence times was the same and was meticulously followed. There was no question of large-scale political interference in these matters. Reforms were introduced in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) in the mid-19th century (as a result of Lord Macaulay's 1854 report on the ICS) and the recruitment shifted from patronage to a



merit-based system. These reforms were also introduced in the British Home Civil Service. In a paper written by Elke Frank (Hunter College, City University of New York), he describes the importance of the bureaucracy in transition: "Because bureaucracy is the 'core of modern government', the role of the bureaucrats is especially crucial in the process of political transition. When one government succeeds another, whether the transfer of power reflects a revolutionary change in the political system, or merely a reversal of party fortunes within the established constitutional framework, the bureaucrats are expected to remain at their posts and attend to the activities of government much as usual. However, drastic changes in the policy machine, the wheels of government may not grind to a halt. Essential programmes and operations must be continued; basic commitments must be respected, lest the whole social fabric disintegrate."

It is this premise of meritocracy and that basic commitments must be respected which form the heart of democracy and a competent government. However, with the general fall in standards of political and administrative competence, accountability and morality, outside interference began to creep into the civil services. It began with those in power wanting officers of their choice in their areas of influence and officers using their political connections to go to positions they wanted — a quid pro quo was established. In the beginning, it was a trickle and then the floodgates opened. The reason for this was politicisation of the civil services and the emergence of the politician-criminal-police nexus, which was augmented by the introduction of the halqa incharge system by political parties (the halqa incharge went by different names in different states). Civil servants openly aligned with political patrons and in turn patronised criminal gangs in order to help their political masters with money and muscle. Transfers at the district and subdivision levels, i.e. of the DSP, SDM and SHO, were farmed out to the halqa incharge, who then became the conduit for these officers, whose allegiance was no longer to their seniors and the service but to this mafia. This development broke the back of the hierarchy in civil services and its moral spine, and the days of the civil services being committed to the rule of law were over. Most of the good officers were sidelined or opted for deputation to the Government of India (it took some time for the malaise to spread there also, but now it is well-entrenched). Because of the increasing need for money and muscle, corruption grew exponentially, and big 'dirty' money came from organised crime syndicates which supplied the muscle also. It ushered in the era of full-time smugglers, drugs and money-laundering mafias — the gangs. Gangs that had never been heard of, but now it is difficult to keep up with their proliferation. There are gang shootouts, fights in jails and targeted killings of the drug mafia. In the extensive network here and abroad, the inimical hand of political parties is always there. This network has become even stronger as the way elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha are conducted, they both need increased money and muscle power.

## Israel vs Hezbollah

The US is letting things spin out of control



Tel Aviv is also being blamed for the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, even as Iran has renewed its threat to launch a retaliation. Unfortunately, Israel's persistent belligerence, bordering on recklessness, is not

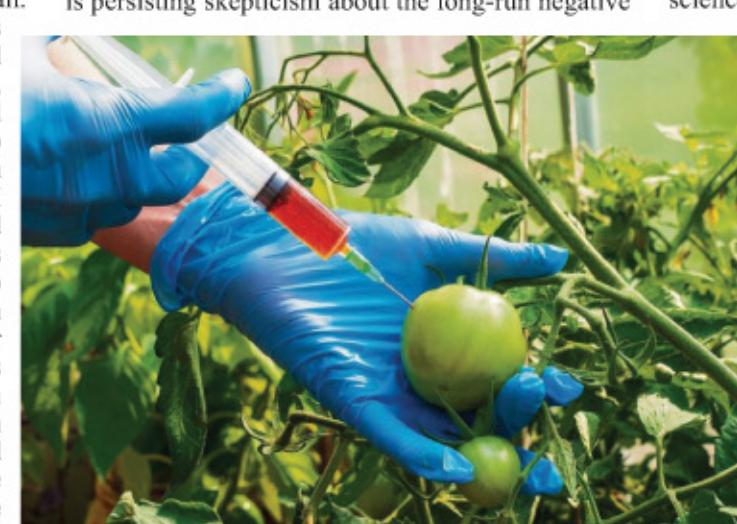
getting the international flak it deserves. The United Nations has merely warned against 'escalatory action', describing the barrage of attacks as 'worrying'. In the US, former President Donald Trump has confined his potshots to 'Sleepy Joe' while warning that World War III is not too far away. The Biden administration has certainly not helped matters by letting Israel get away with one provocative move after another. Israel's actions have put a question mark on the efforts to resume talks aimed at wrapping up a hostage release and truce deal in Gaza. Lebanon, which had managed to hold its own in a month-long war with Israel in 2006, will find the going tougher this time in view of its prolonged political and economic crises. Israel, which fears there is an enemy behind every tree and beneath every rock, must be made to see reason as its military overzealousness is a threat to global security and stability. But the all-important question is: Who will bell the cat?

## India must learn from EU experience of approving GM products

We must assess holistically the long-term effects, both positive and negative, of the technology before according approval.

THE Supreme Court recently asked the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to develop a national policy on genetically modified (GM) crops. The skeptics have been able to block the entry of GM crops in the country for the past two decades, and they are likely to again oppose it tooth and nail. Last week, farm union leaders from 18 states organised a national convention on GM crops and its effects on the environment, trade of goods, agricultural diversity and human and animal health. They were unanimous in their opposition to GM crops. India is struggling to form an appropriate and acceptable policy regarding GM organisms. The European Union (EU) has wrestled for long to restrict the entry of GM products/seeds in its member countries. The EU has been able to form a fairly good, though not perfect, policy on GM organisms and that offers lessons for India. The history of agricultural growth tells us that the world has witnessed three 'Green Revolutions' so far. The first started in the 1930s in Europe and North America. It brought quick yield increases in maize and other temperate-climate crops with increased, intensified and effective use of fertilisers, pesticides, crop species, machinery and farm management. The second one took place in the 1960s and 1970s — including in some Indian states — and it passed almost the same technologies to the developing world and crops grown in the tropics. Of course, these technologies were customised to suit local conditions by using local applied research and extension networks. GM products, especially the seeds produced by using genetic engineering in agriculture, appeared in the 1970s and were commercialised in the 1990s, mainly in North America. Advocates of this technology claim that it would result in another enormous

increase in agronomic productivity and provide qualitative improvements in the food supply. The big difference between the first two Green Revolutions and the third one is that the latter has not been received with conclusive inquisitiveness. There is persisting skepticism about the long-run negative



effects of GM technology on human, animal and plant health. EU countries have framed severe regulatory restraints on GM products, whereas the US, Canada, Argentina and Brazil have allowed most of the agri-biotech applications. Most of the other countries, including India, are struggling to find the right path. European countries were the first to confront this technology and adopted a severe GM-restrictive policy. Most of the European governments and the EU embraced the precautionary approach (called the 'better safe than sorry' principle), keeping

in view uncertainty about risks associated with GM organisms. The US claimed that under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, particularly those enshrined in the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, required a strong 'sound science' evidence to restrict the import of 'like' products ('like' product is a directly competitive or substitutable products). It means the potential importers or recipient countries must provide irrefutable scientific evidence that a GM seed/product (if a like product) in question is unsafe for human or animal or plant health. Interestingly, the onus was not on the GM seed/product exporters to provide evidence that the seed/product was 'safe' but on the importers to prove that the seed/product was 'unsafe'. In other words, it was the responsibility of the buyer to prove that the product was unsafe rather than on the seller to prove that it was safe. So, all countries must assume that any GM seed/product is perfect unless proved wrong. Therefore, in the free trade regime that is accepted and endorsed by the WTO, the EU cannot

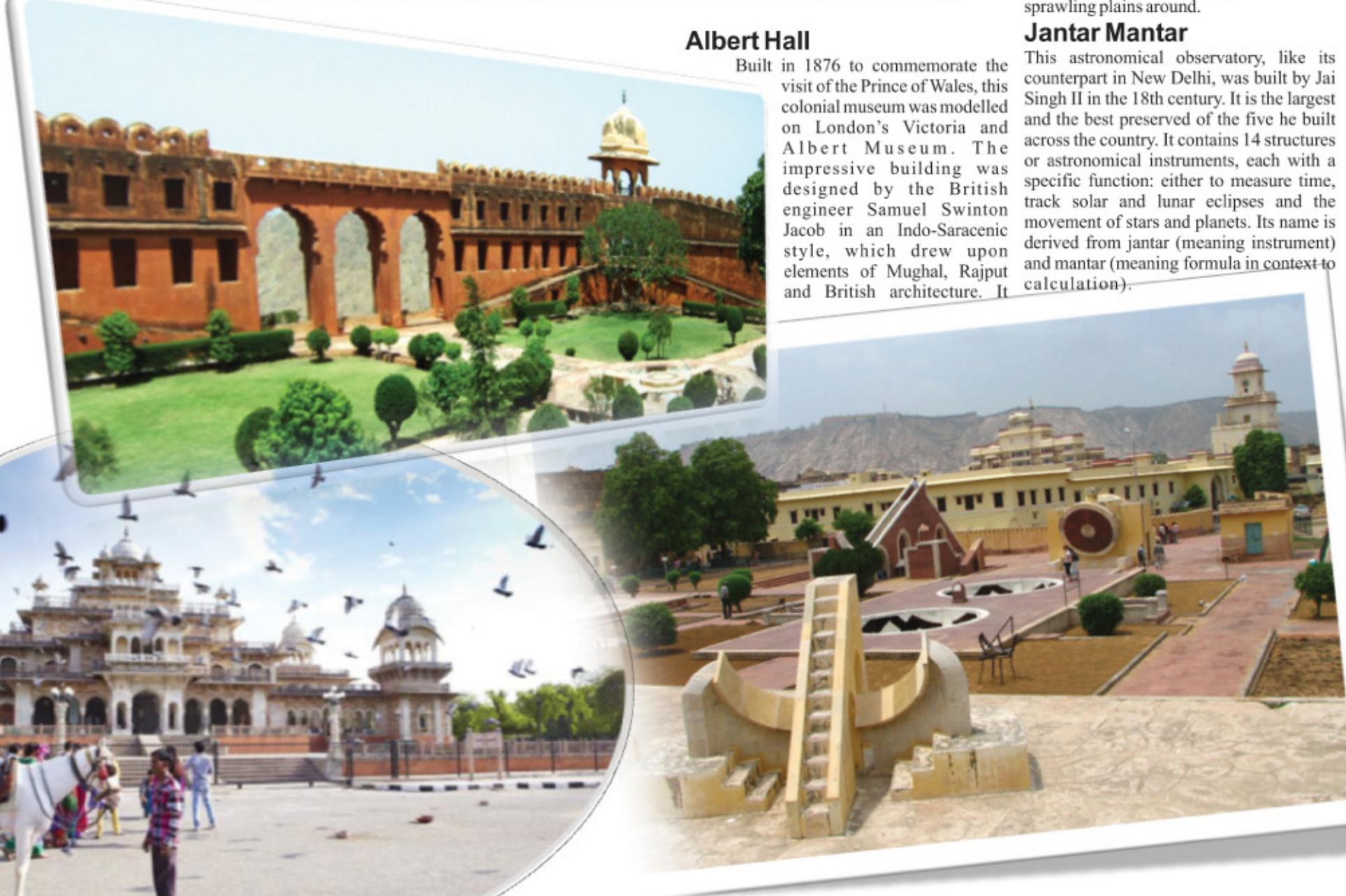
restrict imports of GMs from the US in the absence of 'sound science' evidence. Disagreeing with the US perspective, the EU used all available means to restrict the import of GM seeds/products by its member countries, starting with a moratorium on approval of GM crop varieties (1998-2004). Irked by the moratorium, the US, Argentina and Canada initiated a lawsuit in the WTO against the EU's regulatory policy for GM products in 2003, claiming that the EU's GM policy was creating illegal trade restrictions. The WTO Dispute

Settlement Panel issued a verdict in September 2006 in favour of the complainant countries and asked the EU to bring its GMO approval process in line with WTO rules. The EU changed its decision-making process even before the WTO decision and that has remained very complex till today. The risk assessment is done in close consultation with member countries' scientific bodies. The opinion is made accessible to the public for open consultations. As per EU regulations, a member state has the right to opt out, prohibit or restrict the cultivation of the crop based on a wide range of grounds, such as environmental or agricultural policy objectives, town and country planning, land use and socio-economic impact. Resultantly, very few agricultural biotech applications have been approved for commercialisation in the Europe. Despite the WTO decision and the consistent pressure from the US Government, EU members and other European countries have continuously avoided according easy approval to GM crops and other products, especially those that are part of the food chain. The reluctance of the EU and other countries has weakened the WTO and the GM technology generators' pressure on the governments. The deflated pressure puts India in a better position to choose its independent path.

The apex court has rightly accorded the responsibility to the Centre to bring in an appropriate and acceptable policy on GM organisms. Indian policymakers must examine the European experience. Earlier, we accepted the Green Revolution technology that resulted in a tremendous increase in agricultural productivity and production, but not without some long-term negative effects. This time, as far as possible, we must assess holistically the long-term effects, both positive and negative, of the technology before according approval.

# 6 places that reveal Jaipur's exciting history

**Most of Jaipur's attractions are clustered together, either located within the boundaries of the walled city built by Sawai Jai Singh II in the 18th-century, or around the former capital at Amber. These six attractions are essential for any visitor looking to get a sense of the city's history.**



One of Tamil Nadu's most picturesque hill stations, Kodaikanal is located at an altitude of 7,200 ft in the Palani hills in the Western Ghats. Comprising of densely wooded jungles, cascading hill slopes, circuitous rivers and green rolling valleys, it is a favourite amidst tourists visiting the country's south. Though a trip to Kodi—as it is popularly referred to—is all about revelling in nature, here are a few things to take in during your time there.

#### Kukkal Caves

This is one of the most interesting excursions from Kodaikanal. Located at a distance of about 40 km from the city, the journey will take you through thickly forested areas abounding with orchids and shoal trees. The Kukkal caves are amongst the oldest carved caves in the region. Situated at an altitude of 1500 m, they offer the most breathtaking views of the Manjampatti valley down below. The caves themselves form a rock shelter with an overhang of stalactites and stalagmites rising from the base.

#### Subrahmanya temple

Also referred to as the Karthikeya temple and the Palani temple, this place of worship is a major draw for tourists. Located about 65 km ahead of Kodaikanal, it is dedicated to Lord Subramanian. One of south India's most famous

#### 5 interesting excursions to take in Kodaikanal

## Kodaikanal

temples, the Subrahmanya temple is perched at an altitude of 135 m, and is approached by 659 steps, or alternatively by using the winch facility. The festivals of Tai Pusam (January) and Panguni Utaram (April) are carried out on the premises with great pomp and show.

#### Bryant Park

Named, conceptualised and landscaped after the British officer Glenn Bryant back in 1980, Bryant Park is a botanical garden located to the east of the Kodaikanal Lake. The park holds an annual flower and vegetable show in May, which is the best time to visit. In addition, there is a glasshouse on the garden grounds, which houses a wide

variety of beautiful blooming flowers and ferns.

#### Pillar Rocks

One of Kodaikanal's most famous attractions, these three mammoth rock pillars stand shoulder-to-shoulder, looming 400-ft-high in the sky. Affording a bird's eye view of the surrounding vista, these granite structures are located at a distance of about eight km from the lake tower, and encompass little hidden nooks and crannies within them, which are great to explore. The chambers between the pillars are referred to as the devil's kitchen, and there's a beautiful public garden just adjacent that offers a great view of the structure.



You can marvel over the striking architecture, but we also recommend taking a tourist guide to understand how the instruments are used.

#### Hawa Mahal

The city's most striking landmark is famous for its pink latticed windows and balconies which offer panoramic views of the city below. This 'Palace of Winds' as it is often called, was constructed in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh, and used by the women in the royal family to observe the city's processions without being seen. Built with red and pink sandstone, the five-storey monument was designed by Lal Chand Ustad who drew upon several Mughal architectural elements. An important note for visitors: entry to the Hawa Mahal isn't from the façade but through a side road at the rear end of the monument.

#### Amber Fort

This hilltop fort complex lies on the dusty Aravalli hill range, 11 km outside Jaipur. It was the capital of the Rajputs for 700 years and the original residence of the royal family, before Jaipur was constructed. Built in a combination of Hindu and Islamic architectural elements, it encloses pretty palaces, imposing gates and several official buildings. These are decorated with wall murals, carvings, and mirror and glass work. Take a moment to admire the magnificent inlay work in the Sheesh Mahal or Hall of Mirrors. The fort truly comes alive in the evenings with a light and sound show, which narrates its history in Hindi and English.

#### City Palace

Located in the old part of the city, the City Palace encloses several palaces, courtyards and gardens. These have been built over the last two centuries, and are a blend of the Rajput and Mughal architectural styles. The royal family continues to live in a part of the palace, and this impressive complex still exudes a regal aura.

Your first major stop inside will be the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, which has a good collection of royal costumes, weapons, miniature paintings, manuscripts and sculptures. Other highlights include the Diwan-i-Am or the Hall of Public Audience, where durbars (royal courts) were held, and which still has painted walls and ceiling, marble pillars and glass chandeliers. Another hall, the Diwan-i-Khas, was used during ceremonies, and exhibits the largest silver water containers in the world.



# Rameshwaram Cafe blast planner calls for attacks on trains across India

Indian agencies are on alert after coming across a video of terrorist Farhatullah Ghori, who reportedly orchestrated Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast, calling on the sleeper cells in India to carry out attacks on trains across the country.

**New Delhi:** Intelligence agencies in India are on high alert after coming across a video that showed terrorist Farhatullah Ghori asking the sleeper cells in India to carry out attacks on trains across the country. Sources have informed India Today that Ghori, a fugitive jihadist who is currently based in Pakistan, orchestrated the blast in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe through a sleeper cell with the support of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The video shows Ghori, who has been on the Indian agencies' radar for years, calling on the sleeper cells to derail the railway network in India. He explains the various methods of bomb blasts using pressure cookers. Ghori also talks about plans to target the petroleum pipelines in India, and Hindu leaders. He says that the Indian government



is weakening the sleeper cells by targeting their properties via the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the National Intelligence Agency (NIA).

"But we will return and shake the government," Ghori is heard saying in the video. According to sources from

intelligence agencies, the video was released on Telegram about three weeks ago. At least 10 people were injured in the Rameshwaram blast on March 1. The NIA, which took over the case on March 3, had on April 12, arrested two key accused, Abdul Matheen Ahmed Taahaa and

Mussavir Hussain Shazib. While Taahaa was the mastermind, Shazib had allegedly placed the IED at the popular cafe. They were arrested from a lodge near Kolkata, where they were staying under assumed identities. The two are allegedly members of the Islamic State (IS) module based in Karnataka's Shivamogga. Shariq, a member of the same module, had carried out a blast in Mangaluru in November 2022.

Farhatullah Ghori and his son-in-law Shahid Faisal have a strong network of sleeper cells in south India. Faisal was in touch with both the accused in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast, and was the handler in the case.

#### WHO IS FARHATULLAH GHORI?

Farhatullah Ghori, also known as Abu Sufiyan, Sardar Sahab, and Faru, has been

linked to several high-profile attacks, including the 2002 Akshardham Temple attack in Gujarat that killed over 30 people and injured 80 others. He was also behind the 2005 suicide attack on the Task Force office in Hyderabad. Ghori is allegedly orchestrating online jihadist recruitment. Delhi Police said last year after arresting three most-wanted terrorists from the national capital and Uttar Pradesh, respectively. They revealed that Ghori was the handler of the terrorists. A few months ago, Delhi Police took the name of Ghori on record after several terrorists of the Pune-ISIS module were arrested from across the country. Officials had claimed at the time that the ISI was running sleeper cells in India and recruiting young people to carry out attacks.

## DMK leader on actor Vijay's political entry: Not everyone can become like MGR

**Nagapattinam.** DMK organisational secretary RS Bharati indirectly took a jibe at actor Vijay, who floated his own political party, and said that not everyone can become like former Tamil Nadu chief minister MG Ramachandran. Addressing an event in Nagapattinam, Bharati said, "We are not worried about anyone starting a political party. They may survive one or two new moon cycles, but not more than that. Not everyone who floats their own party can become like MGR."

Notably, MGR left the DMK and formed his own political party, the AIADMK, in 1972. He then went to become the chief minister of Tamil Nadu for three consecutive terms. RS Bharati further said that even MGR didn't float a party "of his own", but left the DMK and started his own party. "He (MGR) divided the DMK and took a portion of leaders along with him. Seeing this, many people may launch their own parties and dream of entering the Assembly just the next day," he said.

The DMK leader further said that the leaders return from the Assembly "in the same speed" in which they entered it. He said that the reason behind it was that the youth understood that such parties were empty vessels. This party (DMK) has worked for 75 years and survived several storms and tsunamis", stated RS Bharati. Notably, actor Vijay, who announced the formation of his political party in February, recently launched the party's flag and its anthem. Vijay launched the party after his fan club, Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, gave its nod to the formation of the new political party.

## "Any Incriminating Statement...": Supreme Court's Fresh Fire On Bail Denials

**New Delhi:** Stressing that bail is the rule and jail exception, the Supreme Court today said any incriminating statement given by an accused to the investigating officer while in custody in a money laundering case will not be admissible as evidence.

The court made the strong observation while granting bail to Prem Prakash, allegedly an aide of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, in a money laundering case. This comes a day after the Supreme Court granted the relief to Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader K



**BANIHAL CONSTITUENCY**  
Congress has fielded Vikar Rasool Wani

from the Banihal constituency, while the National Conference, which is also part of the INDIA bloc, finalised seat-sharing talks ahead of the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. While the National Conference will contest from 51 seats out of the 90 constituencies, the Congress will contest from 32 seats. Meanwhile, both parties will take on each other in "friendly fights" in five Assembly constituencies, which include four in Jammu division and one in the Kashmiri valley. The Congress and the National Conference will contest against each other in Banihal, Doda, Bhaderwah and Nagrota constituencies in Jammu, and in Sopore region in Kashmir. Sources said that it was the only option left for both parties as an alliance agreement on these five seats would have triggered a rebellion in both parties.

**DODA CONSTITUENCY**  
The Doda constituency was split into two seats after demarcation, into Doda and Doda West. Doda is a Muslim majority seat, while Doda West is a Hindu majority seat. In 2014, the BJP had won the Assembly elections in Doda. The Congress has fielded Sheikh Riyaz from Doda, while the National Conference has fielded Khald Najib

Suharwady from the region. Sheikh Riyaz started his political career as a sarpanch and was the general secretary of J&K Congress when Vikar Wani was the Congress president. His wife is a District Development Council member. On the other hand, Najib Suharwady comes from a political family. His father, Maulana Attaullah Suharwady, had won from Doda in the 1996 Assembly elections. Najib Suharwady was elected from Doda in the by-elections in 1997 after his father's demise. Najib served as J&K's home minister from 2001 to 2002 in the then chief minister Farooq Abdullah's government. He also served as an MLC from 2009 to 2015 and is seen as a strong candidate.

**BHADERWAH CONSTITUENCY**  
Congress has fielded Nadeem Sharief from the Bhaderwah constituency, while the National Conference has fielded Sheikh

## Autopsy says UP girls found hanging from tree died due to suffocation

**New Delhi:** The postmortem report of the two teenage girls, who were found hanging from a tree in Uttar Pradesh's Farrukhabad, has revealed that they died due to asphyxiation (suffocation). Police said that the entire case is of double suicide and that no injury marks were found on either of the girls' bodies. They will now investigate what led the girls to die by suicide. The autopsy report came even as the families of the teenagers, aged 18 and 15 and belonging to the Schedule Caste, alleged the case to be of murder. The girls, who were close friends, were found hanging from the same dupatta from the same tree in a mango orchard. Superintendent of Police, Alok Priyadarshi, said that their necks were "tied at each of the dupatta which went across the tree".



Both the girls had gone out to watch the Janmashtami programme with their families late on Monday night, and the orchard where their bodies were found was 150 metres away from the venue. The mobile phone of the cousin of one of the girls was recovered from the scene along with a SIM card from the clothes of one of the victims. According to the police, the cousin watched the Janmashtami programme with the families of the girls. The recovered items have been sent for further investigation into the matter.

#### FAMILIES ALLEGED MURDER

The father of one of the girls has alleged that both the teenagers were murdered. "My daughter and her friend, who lives in the neighbourhood, had gone to see the (Janmashtami) programme. When they did not return till late night, we thought she (his daughter) must have stayed back at her aunt's house, who lives in the same village. In the morning (Tuesday), we got the information that two girls had hanged themselves."

## Congress, National Conference's 'friendly fight' for 5 seats in J&K polls

**Srinagar.** The Congress and the National Conference, which is also part of the INDIA bloc, finalised seat-sharing talks ahead of the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. While the National Conference will contest from 51 seats out of the 90 constituencies, the Congress will contest from 32 seats. Meanwhile, both parties will take on each other in "friendly fights" in five Assembly constituencies, which include four in Jammu division and one in the Kashmiri valley. The Congress and the National Conference will contest against each other in Banihal, Doda, Bhaderwah and Nagrota constituencies in Jammu, and in Sopore region in Kashmir. Sources said that it was the only option left for both parties as an alliance agreement on these five seats would have triggered a rebellion in both parties.

**BANIHAL CONSTITUENCY**  
Congress has fielded Vikar Rasool Wani from the Banihal constituency, while the National Conference, which is also part of the INDIA bloc, finalised seat-sharing talks ahead of the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. While the National Conference will contest from 51 seats out of the 90 constituencies, the Congress will contest from 32 seats. Meanwhile, both parties will take on each other in "friendly fights" in five Assembly constituencies, which include four in Jammu division and one in the Kashmiri valley. The Congress and the National Conference will contest against each other in Banihal, Doda, Bhaderwah and Nagrota constituencies in Jammu, and in Sopore region in Kashmir. Sources said that it was the only option left for both parties as an alliance agreement on these five seats would have triggered a rebellion in both parties.

## In visuals: Gujarat districts most affected by heavy rains



**New Delhi:** Eighteen out of total 33 districts of Gujarat were pounded by more than 200 mm of rainfall in a span of just 72 hours, flooding neighbourhoods, sending rivers overflowing and disrupting transport network and public life. Weather data analysed by India Today shows the coastal district of Dang received 508 mm (or 20 inch) of rainfall, followed by Valsad (487.8 mm), Anand (374.5 mm), and Panchmahal (343 mm) between 6 am of August 24 and 6 am of August 27. The state's largest city, Ahmedabad, was lashed by 204 mm of rainfall during the same period, while Vadodara and Rajkot received 252 mm and 195 mm of rain respectively, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Many districts have received nearly double the amount of precipitation they normally get in August, the weather office's data suggests. Already water-saturated, scenes of waterlogging and flood-like situations started appearing in many cities over the

weekend, and have been exacerbated by incessant rains. Some cities witnessed heavy downpours in a matter of a few hours. For instance, Ahmedabad and Vadodara were pounded by 129 mm and 126 mm of rain in 12 hours, ending at

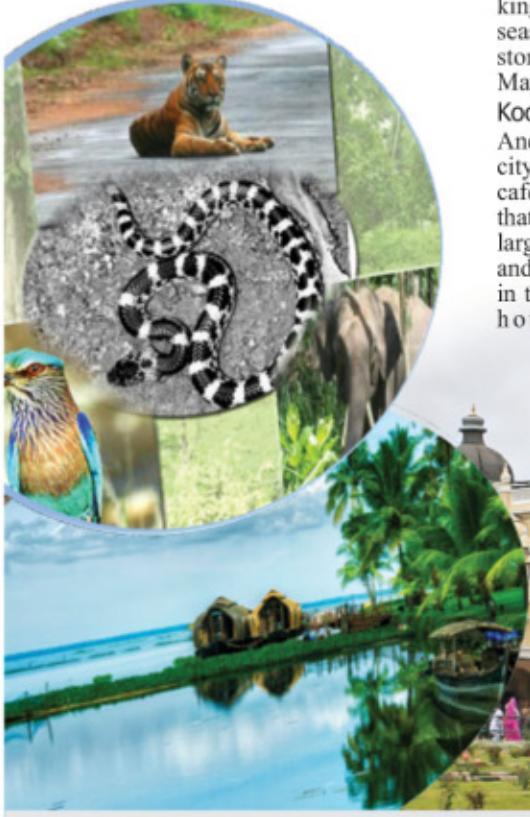
6 am, August 27. Rajkot received 102.4 mm of rain. Anand, Panchmahal, and Morbi received 258 mm, 226 mm, and 198 mm of rainfall during the same period. Fourteen talukas of Gujarat received more than 10 inches of rainfall in the last 24 hours, as per the IMD. Heavy rainfall is likely to continue in the entire state for at least two more days. For Tuesday, August 27, the IMD has issued a red alert – the highest level of warning – in seven districts while an orange alert is in place for 26 others. The Indian Army has deployed six companies or nearly 720 troops in Anand, Vadodara, Devbhumi Dwarka, Kheda, Morbi, Rajkot for relief and rescue operations. The excessive rainfall has been attributed to a deep depression – a weather system which, if intensified, turns into a cyclone – over southern Rajasthan and north Gujarat. It is expected to bring more rain in Saurashtra and Kutch over the next two days.

As many as 280 people were shifted to safer places from the low-lying area in Bharuch city after nearly 4 lakh cubic meters of water was released into the Narmada river from Sardar Sarovar Dam, officials said on Monday.

# Go tripping around Mysore

## Wayanad

Located between the Kannur and Kozhikode districts in Kerala, Wayanad is a sparkling green emerald sprawled across the slopes of the Western Ghats. The monsoons persevere here—the rainy season starts in June and lasts all the way till mid November—during which the already lush landscape takes on an even more vibrant shade of green, and everything is washed squeaky clean. The most enjoyable way to experience it is by checking into a jungle resort—even better if it has a treehouse. During the occasional dry spells between, venture out and enjoy everything else the region has to offer. Wayanad ploughs tourists with some interesting prehistoric archaeological sites, tea plantations and thick



forests, and is home to some of the oldest (and most insulated) tribes in India.

## Kumarakom

Part of the Kuttanad region, picturesque Kumarakom is an archipelago scattered on the eastern edge of the Vembanad Lake. This area's natural splendour and way of life were vividly described in Arundhati Roy's Man Booker Prize-winning, 'The God of Small Things'. Kumarakom has a string of luxury resorts including the Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom Lake Resort and Vivanta by Taj - Kumarakom, located right on the backwaters and guests can rove about the canals on boating and fishing trips. The 14-acre Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is an ornithologist's paradise and home to egrets, darters, herons, herons, waterfowls and kingfishers. The sanctuary also welcomes seasonal guests including the elusive Siberian stork, between the months of November and May.

## Kochi

Ancient meets contemporary in Kochi, a lively city at just an hour's drive from Alleppey. Posh cafes sit right by the side of Chinese fishing nets that were installed here in 1350 AD; India's largest man-made island is a major attraction and so is the Paradesi Synagogue that was built in the year 1560. St Francis CSI Church once housed the

remains of Vasco da Gama and is also the oldest European church in India. Kochi also hosts the world famous Kochi-Muziris Biennale, an event that sees much of the city turning into an art exhibition ground. With its potpourri of history, culture, arts and the great Kerala cuisine, Kochi makes for a perfect short trip from Alleppey.

## Coonoor

An erstwhile summer refuge to the British, Coonoor retains its colonial tinge to this day, with its club culture, well established boarding schools, sophisticated architecture and a distinct plantation lifestyle. Travellers love this tea town for its relatively quieter environs as compared to Ooty, and if you're drawn to the outdoors, here are our top picks for how you can fill your days.

## Bandipur National Park

Bandipur National Park one of the most stunning National Parks in India. Situated between the picturesque Western Ghats next to the

Coonoor

Less-known than the backwaters of central Kerala, the backwaters around Kozhikode are also not as touristy and consequently much less crowded. Houseboats can be hired at the pier near the Purrakkattiri Bridge on the Ullery-Perambra road, 10 kilometres outside Kozhikode. The prettiest routes wind along the Canoly Canal, Kallai River and Elathur. An excursion to the scenic Kadalandi Bird Sanctuary, set amidst hillocks and by an estuary, is highly recommended. The sanctuary comprises of a group of small isles where the Kadalandi River meets the Arabian Sea, and is home to over 100 species of native birds and 60 kinds of migratory birds.

Mysore-Ooty highway in Karnataka, the Park was once the private hunting reserve for the Maharaja of Mysore. It's now home to elephants, gaur, tigers, sloth bears, muggers, Indian rock pythons and Dholes. The park was established in 1974 as a tiger reserve under Project Tiger and has a good number of Tigers, Birds like the jungle fowl and green pigeon are also found here.

## Ooty

The most famous hill station south of the Vindhyas, Ootacamund's resplendent tea plantations and red-roofed bungalows still carry echoes of its colonial past. Originally a densely forested area in the Nilgiri mountains, it was converted into a summer retreat for the British in the 19th century. The undeniable natural beauty of Ooty (as it's universally referred to) and its misty green trails continues to draw visitors every year. Ooty is pleasant all year round, but the summer months are the high season. If you want to avoid the crowds and don't mind a drizzle then head here between August and November, when the rains turn the hills a luxuriant green.

## Kozhikode

Less-known than the backwaters of central Kerala, the backwaters around Kozhikode are also not as touristy and consequently much less crowded. Houseboats can be hired at the pier near the Purrakkattiri Bridge on the Ullery-Perambra road, 10 kilometres outside Kozhikode. The prettiest routes wind along the Canoly Canal, Kallai River and Elathur. An excursion to the scenic Kadalandi Bird Sanctuary, set amidst hillocks and by an estuary, is highly recommended. The sanctuary comprises of a group of small isles where the Kadalandi River meets the Arabian Sea, and is home to over 100 species of native birds and 60 kinds of migratory birds.

**Hogenakkal Falls**  
Experi

**With the places to visit near Mysore as stunning as the city itself, you will have plenty to choose from.**

**While there is no comparing the wonderful Hogenakkal Falls that is just a drive of 4 hours away, Bandipur National Park too is quite alluring for nature lovers. Kerala aficionados can drive off to Kochi, Wayanad or the startlingly scenic Kumarakom. Ooty, Kozhikode and Coonoor are quite popular with anyone seeking a solitary getaway. Most of these places are quite accessible via road and make for a perfect trip to Mysore and around.**

ences like coracle rides (round wickerwork boats called parisals by the locals) and medicinal baths make Hogenakkal Falls literally a much more immersive experience than other large waterfalls in the country. Leading up to the Falls the Cauveri River flows through a forest known for naturally growing herbs which many believe gives the water curative properties. The Falls are located a short drive (150 kilometres) from Bangalore along NH7 on the border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

## Top 5 places to visit in Dooars

# Dooars

With an unspoilt terrain and the mighty Himalayas forming a stunning backdrop, Dooars is a paradise for nature lovers. Many may not be aware of the fact that there are many places to visit in Dooars. Duar means door in Bengali and this region has been aptly named Dooars or Duars as it is the door to Bhutan and North East India. Veined by mighty rivers like Teesta, Torsa, Murti, Jaldhaka, Dyna and Sankosh, the region is blessed with dense forests and exotic wildlife. Nature lovers would have an unforgettable time in this region exploring its rich flora and fauna as well as beautiful landscape.

From the rippling rivulets of Jhalong and the picturesque valleys of Buxa with forests marked by walking trails to the riverbeds at Jaldapara and the lush greenery of Gorumara National Park, these places are a treat for the eyes. These parks, however, remain close during the monsoon season. Travellers coming to this stunning place around November-December can be a part of Raas Mela which is one of the ancient fairs held here. As per the Bengali calendar, the day of full moon (Purnima) in the month of Kartik marks the beginning of the fair. So plan your trip to this lesser-known gem to create memories that can be cherished for a lifetime.

## Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary

Not too far from Gorumara National Park lies Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary, another hidden treasure of Dooars. A drive through some of the verdant tea gardens in the undulating plains of Dooars will take you to Chapramari. The area derives its name from two words—charpa (referring to a variety of fish found in north Bengal) and mari (meaning plenty). Covering an area of 9.6 sq km, the sanctuary boasts of a diverse range of flora and fauna that delights nature lovers.

Chapramari was declared a national reserve forest in 1895 and later, renamed as a wildlife reserve in 1939. After a few decades, in 1998, it was designated a wildlife sanctuary. The region is famous for its elephants that can be spotted easily. In addition, gaur is commonly found here. The sanctuary is also inhabited by Royal Bengal tiger, boars, deer, leopard, reptiles and various other animals. If you love birdwatching, do remember to carry a pair of binoculars to catch a glimpse of colourful birds like parrot, kingfisher and green pigeon, among many others. For accommodation, there are just a few options available in the area. Hence, whenever you visit Dooars, spend some time in this peaceful retreat in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas.

## Buxa Tiger Reserve

A beautiful location in the lap of nature interspersed with the River Jayanti, mountains and dense forests—that's Buxa for you. The area is however more popular for Buxa Tiger Reserve, which is one of its kind in eastern Himalayas. Situated in Alipurduar, the reserve actually consists of the former Buxa Forest Division and a part of the Cooch

Behar Forest Division. It was set up in the year 1983 and was given the status of a national park in 1992.

The reserve's rich biodiversity has been attracting tourists for years now and has become a popular escape for tired souls who love to relax in the lap of nature. The area, approximately 760 sq km, encompasses a mix of different types of forests—riverine, savannah, evergreen, sal and others. The topography and climate not only supports a rich variety of plant species but also animals.

## Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary

The area derives its name from a lake named Rasikbil in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal.

The lake is surrounded by low water land or marshland, which provides appropriate dwelling atmosphere for birds. Rasikbil is one

of the five such low water lands in the area, others being Neeldaba, Bochamari, Shankhadanga and Raichangmari. No wonder, the area attracts a lot of migratory birds year-round, besides being home to several other resident birds. So, if birdwatching is one of your

favourite hobbies, then you would love your visit to the magnificent Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary.

Do remember to carry a pair of binoculars so that you can easily spot some exquisite species

of birds such as cormorants, ibis, parrots, owls and storks. You can also catch glimpses of water birds like lesser whistling teal, shoveler, wigeon duck, small blue kingfisher and gadwall. Apart from birdwatching, you can choose to indulge in other activities as well. Travellers often opt for boating in the lake and nature walk in the forests.

They also visit the aviary and tortoise rescue

centre, deer park, python house, crocodile rehabilitation centre and leopard house in the vicinity. A day spent at such places provides an insight into the ways of animal rescue and rehabilitation. Rasikbil, a paradise of winged beauties, can be reached by road from Cooch Behar and Alipurduar.

## Gorumara National Park

Situated along the banks of the River Murti and Raidak, Gorumara National Park is one of the most popular attractions in Dooars. The area of the park, which is around 80 sq km, encompasses grasslands and forests. Since 1895 it was a reserve forest but years later, it was given the status of a wildlife sanctuary in 1949. Furthermore, in 1994, the park was declared a national park which is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna. It is specially known for being home to the great Indian rhinoceros. Other prominent animals that can be spotted here are elephant, leopard, hornbill, king cobra, Indian python and gaur, to name a few. Travellers can choose between elephant safari and jeep safari to explore the park. They can even climb atop the watchtowers (Methla, Chukchuki, Chandracur and Jatraprasad) to spot the inhabitants of the park with the help of binoculars.

One of the most popular tourist destinations in Dooars, Gorumara National Park attracts a lot of tourists round the year. The park's green forests, tall elephant grasses, streams and beautiful landscape provide shelter to several

mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians.

Gorumara National Park is also a birders' paradise.

If you are a birder, you will have a

great time spotting and photographing birds

like hornbill, woodpecker, ibis, drongo, minivet, and pheasants. The ruddy shelduck, also known as the Brahminy duck, migrates to

the park during winters. Beautiful butterflies

can also be spotted in the jungle, along with night hunters like owls and nightjars.

Preferably visit the park during winters as it is considered the best time for coming here. While you can choose from a number of forest rest houses at Gorumara for accommodation, Lataguri, the nearest town offers several accommodation facilities. The nearest railhead is New Jalpaiguri and the nearest airport is Bagdogra. Gorumara National Park can also be reached by road from Siliguri, which is around 72 km away.

## Jaldapara National Park

Situated on the banks of the River Torsa, Jaldapara National Park is one of the popular places to visit in Dooars. Before 1800, when the place was inhabited by Toto and Mech tribes, it was known as Totopara. The sanctuary was established in 1941 with an aim to protect Asiatic one-horned rhinoceros, and was eventually declared a national park in the year 2012.

Spanning over an area of 216.5 sq km, the park

boasts of verdant grassland with patches of

riverine forest and belts of tall grass. At an

altitude of 61 m in the foothills of Eastern

Himalayas, this park is mainly savannah forest

and is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna.

Along with one-horned rhinoceros, various

mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds dwell

here, such as elephant, leopard, Bengal florican, peacock, python, cobra and around eight

species of fresh water turtles.

A fun way to witness the wilderness of Jaldapara National Park is by elephant safari.

Another way to explore the flora and fauna of

the region is to opt for jeep safari. For a close

encounter, you can climb any of the many

watchtowers in the park. There are various

tourist lodges and guest houses available in the

region for accommodation of tourists coming to visit Jaldapara National Park.



## Gold, silver price: Precious metals witness dip on MCX

**NEW DELHI:** Both gold and silver prices recorded a dip on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Wednesday, August 28, 2024. Gold futures, maturing on October 4, 2024, stood at Rs 71,900 per 10 grams on the MCX, after recording a dip of Rs 222 or 0.31 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 72,122.

Similarly, silver futures, maturing on September 5, 2024, witnessed a dip of Rs 430 or 0.50 per cent and were retailing at Rs 85,228 per kg on the MCX against the previous close of Rs 85,658. The gold and silver prices in India depend on several factors, including the value of the rupee against the dollar. Global demand also plays a key role in determining the trends observed in the rate of precious metals.

### GOLD, SILVER PRICES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET

Gold prices slipped on Wednesday as the dollar ticked up, while investors awaited a key U.S. inflation report due this week for more clarity on the size of a likely September rate cut, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold fell 0.4 per cent to \$2,514.11 per ounce by 0313 GMT, while, U.S. gold futures fell 0.2 per cent to \$2,549.00.

## Sensex, Nifty open flat tracking global cues; LTIM shares gain 3%

**New Delhi.** Benchmark stock market indices opened flat on Wednesday, breaking a nine-session rally amid weak global cues. Analysts expect Dalal Street investors to remain cautious ahead of key economic data later this week. The S&P BSE Sensex was down 51.46 points at 81,660.30 at 10:21 am, while the NSE Nifty50 fell 20.55 points to trade at 24,997.20. Most of the other broader market indices were also trading flat, reflecting the weak momentum on D-Street. Major heavyweight Nifty sectoral indices such as Nifty Bank and Nifty Financial Services were trading in negative territory, while Nifty IT gained in view of the recent rally in the US markets. The top five gainers on the Nifty50 were LTIM, IndusInd Bank, BPCL, Wipro and M&M. On the other hand, the top losers were Hero MotoCorp, Adani Enterprises, Asian Paints, Tata Steel and Axis Bank. Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said, "The market has entered a consolidation phase with low volatility and this trend is likely to continue in the near-term. Falling bond yields in the US has restrained FII selling and they have even turned marginal buyers." "Going by previous trends, DIIs are likely to sell if FIIs continue to buy. This trend will keep the market within a range with a slight upward bias. This is a desirable and healthy trend, given the elevated valuations in the market," he added.

The next major catalysts for the markets will be the upcoming domestic quarterly growth figures and the US inflation data, both expected later this week.

## Microfinance sector heading for a bumpy ride as bad loans mount

**MUMBAI.** The microfinance sector is headed for a bumpy ride with overleveraged borrowers missing installments, forcing the lenders to go slow on new loan sales in the first quarter of the current fiscal. There has been a steep 24% drop in disbursals, came on top of the 30% plunge in the previous quarter.

In the June quarter, MFIs saw their collections falling, leading to higher delinquencies as well as a slowdown in the growth of assets under management, which is 24% in the reporting quarter, came in on top of a 30% fall in new loan sales in the March quarter, India Ratings said in a report on Tuesday.

Bihar and UP grew at a major pace over the past three-to-four years, making Bihar as the largest MFI market since July 2023. Bihar and UP grew 30.5% and 35.7%, respectively, during fiscal 2022 through fiscal 2024, as against overall industry growth of 18.1%. Tamil Nadu clipped at 21% during this period.

The industry was on a song since the pandemic along with the harmonisation guidelines including the removal of interest rate caps, easy funding from banks along with banks' own growing need for priority sector loans. All these led to substantial loan growth.

"MFIs are facing headwinds due to many events, including the heatwave conditions across the country, general elections, and field-level attrition, among others. Further, overleveraging in some pockets also continues to be a reason for concern forcing MFIs to take corrective actions which can take one or two quarters to show full results even though already the new loan generation has fallen by 24 percent in Q1."

Further, seasonality should also provide some relief in the second half contributing higher share of the annual business, says the report.

## IT freshers with AI/ML skills in demand, command higher salaries

**BENGALURU.** As specialised skills such as Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning and full-stack developer are in demand, companies are ready to pay from Rs 8.2 lakh to Rs 10.2 lakh per annum for freshers. Ramesh Alluri Reddy, CEO, TeamLease Degree Apprenticeship, said candidates with niche skills, particularly in high-demand areas such as AI/ML, cybersecurity, and cloud computing, are compensated at a premium. "Fresher possessing these specialised skills can command starting salaries 20-30% higher than their peers, reflecting the intense demand and limited supply of talent in these critical areas. This trend is evident across both IT and non-IT industries," he said. In IT services sector, average salary for freshers ranges from Rs 3.5 lakh to Rs 6 lakh per annum, depending on role and organisation. "In case of IT product companies, salary can have 50-80% upside, depending on specialisation the fresher brings," he said. In its recent report, TeamLease Digital stated AWS and Microsoft Azure are sought-after skills. IT companies are offering salaries in the Rs 3.6-Rs 4.5 lakh range for engineering freshers.

# Related-party transactions may be kept out of GST ambit

**"Imposing tax on revenue neutral transactions, which do not contribute to the government exchequer, would defeat the objective for ease of doing business."**

**NEW DELHI.** The government is likely to exclude related-party transactions from the ambit of goods and services tax (GST) if there is no commercial consideration involved, as per sources.

The decision will benefit companies across the sectors, particularly those with foreign branches that engage in transactions with one another. This development follows the recent decision regarding GST on corporate guarantees, in which government exempted companies that can claim full tax credit



and deal exclusively with taxable goods and services. Sources say tax treatment of related-party transactions is somewhat convoluted, and the government aims to eliminate ambiguities by simplifying the law. "Several companies are facing issues regarding related-party transactions. Though the government came up with circular 210 clarifying about the

applicability of GST on imported services, there are instances where the law has been wrongly interpreted," a top official said on the condition of anonymity. "We want to enable ease of doing business and not complicate things for business entities. Though we have been coming out with circulars giving clarification on taxability of goods and

## Orient Technologies shares list at over 40% premium. Sell or hold

**New Delhi.** Orient Technologies made a strong stock market debut on Wednesday, with its shares listing at a 40.8% premium. The stock opened at Rs 290 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), higher than the issue price of Rs 206. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the shares of the company started trading at Rs 288, marking a 39.8% gain. Shivani Nyati, Head of Wealth, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said, "The substantial oversubscription and impressive listing gain demonstrate strong investor confidence in Orient Technologies' future prospects."

"The company's long track record and diverse clientele solidify its market position. Consistent financial growth and a healthy balance sheet further enhance investor appeal," she added. Nyati went on to say that the company's listing "is a testament to its strong fundamentals and positive market outlook".

On the other hand, she also advised investors to remain cautious, citing potential challenges.

"Investors should remain cautious about potential challenges such as industry competition and reliance on key clients. Investors are advised to keep holding their shares with a stop-loss at 270," Nyati said.

**Orient Technologies IPO key details**

Before the listing, the company's shares had a grey market premium (GMP) of Rs 94, indicating strong investor interest. The IPO was oversubscribed by 152 times, with non-institutional investors showing particularly strong demand on the final day.

The funds raised from the IPO are earmarked for capital expenditure, acquiring office space in Navi Mumbai, and other general corporate purposes. Orient Technologies has carved out a niche in IT infrastructure, IT-enabled services (ITES), and cloud and data management services. The company works with leading technology partners like Dell, Fortinet, and Nutanix to provide customized solutions that cater to specific customer needs.

The company's IT Infrastructure division, which includes Data Centre Solutions and End-User Computing, is its oldest and largest revenue-generating segment. This segment has expanded its product offerings and achieved a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 58.60% between fiscal 2021 and fiscal 2023.

For the fiscal year 2024, Orient Technologies reported a 12% increase in revenue, reaching Rs 603 crore. The company's profit for the same period rose to Rs 41.4 crore. Elara Capital served as the sole book-running lead manager for the IPO, while Link Intime India was the registrar.

**New Delhi.** The competition to dominate India's rapidly expanding quick commerce sector is heating up, with a new contender set to join the fray early next year, reported The Economic Times.

US-based e-commerce giant Amazon is gearing up to launch its quick commerce service in the country, targeting the lucrative 20-30 minute delivery window that has become the industry standard. The company has been quietly working on its quick commerce strategy for several months, with plans to roll out the service in the first quarter of 2025, added the report. The development comes as Amazon's local unit undergoes a leadership reshuffle, entrusting the new quick commerce division to senior executive Nishant Sardana, previously head of PC, audio, camera, and large appliances at Amazon India. "The action in quick commerce just can't be ignored anymore," a person familiar with the



matter told ET, highlighting the urgency with which Amazon is approaching this sector. The company is also rumoured to be in discussions to acquire a stake in Swiggy's Instamart, further signaling its intent to strengthen its position in the quick commerce arena. Although Amazon has a strong presence in the grocery delivery segment through its Pantry and Fresh services, the quick commerce model—promising deliveries within 20-30 minutes—represents a significant shift in consumer expectations. Amazon's potential entry

into this space underscores the competitive landscape, which has already seen the likes of Flipkart, Blinkit, and Zepeto vying for dominance. With the quick commerce market projected to reach \$6 billion by 2025, Amazon's entry could intensify competition as it tries to catch up with established players. In the meantime, Flipkart has already made strides with its quick commerce offering, 'Minutes,' which launched in Bengaluru and is expanding to New Delhi and Mumbai. As the battle for quick commerce heats up, platforms are expected to ramp up their product offerings, with some aiming to stock as many as 20,000 items by the Diwali festive season.

The rapid growth of this sector, driven by changing consumer habits, has already seen grocery sales surge by over 38% in the first half of this year, according to industry estimates.

## THIS State Govt Announces Waiver Of Old Electricity Bills For A Particular Section Of Society

**Dumka (Jharkhand).** Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has announced the waiver of the old electricity bills of families living below the poverty line.

Addressing a gathering in Dumka on Tuesday, Soren said, "Our government is giving 200 units of free electricity and now in the first phase, all the old electricity dues of the poor who do not give Income Tax Returns will be waived off. The government will also assess middle-class families. The government is trying to send a zero rupee bill to everyone's house."

The Jharkhand Chief Minister said that the BJP is scared of the development work of the state government, and is now engaged in a campaign to break the government and MLAs, but he will not let their plans succeed. When the media questioned the apprehension related to former Chief Minister Champai Soren joining the BJP, Hemant Soren said



that he would not say anything on this subject at present. The Jharkhand CM transferred Rs 73 crore 29 lakhs through DBT to the bank accounts of 7 lakh 32 thousand 906 women of all the 32 districts of the State, including Dumka, Deoghar, Godda, Sahebganj, Jamtara and Pakur under the Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Maitya Samman Yojana. While targeting the Centre and BJP, CM Hemant Soren said that the State government is ready for the all-round development of the State and the people of the State but the opposition is

busy misleading the people. The Chief Minister said that the state will move forward only if it strengthens and empowers half the population.

"Participation of women is necessary in all circumstances for the development of the state. This is the reason why our government is committed to empowering half the population. Our government is working to bring smiles to the faces of women through various schemes," he said. With former Jharkhand Chief Minister leader Champai Soren deciding to join their party, BJP leaders took a dig at Hemant Soren on Tuesday and said more leaders will leave Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. Jharkhand BJP chief Babulal Marandi alleged that people were "feeling humiliated and are slowly leaving the party" due to "corrupt officials" surrounding Hemant Soren.

## Indian Railways links DigiLocker with its hiring portal; here's how it will reduce railway jobs recruitment time frame

**New Delhi.** Indian Railways has integrated DigiLocker, a digital document wallet launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, with its recruitment portal. This integration allows job aspirants to link their digital documents, which are considered equivalent to the original physical ones. According to an ET report, the move is expected to significantly reduce the recruitment time frame for Indian Railways jobs from the current 18-24 months to less than six months.

As the largest recruiter in the country, the Indian Railways receives applications from millions of candidates. The integration with DigiLocker will streamline the document verification process, reducing the time required to vet documents and minimizing instances of fake documents being uploaded to claim eligibility for government jobs.

The Railway Board has decided to fully integrate all Indian Railways recruitments with DigiLocker, making the entire document verification process DigiLocker-based. Additionally, calls for medical check-



ups and appointment letters will also be issued through DigiLocker.

Since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the railways have conducted two major examinations involving more than 23.7 million candidates, resulting in the recruitment of 1,30,581 candidates, as informed by Union railways minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to the Rajya Sabha. To further streamline the recruitment process, a system of publishing an annual calendar for recruitment to

various categories of group 'C' posts has been established this year.

Between January and July 2024, five centralised employment notifications for 40,554 vacancies were issued under the annual calendar, covering posts such as assistant loco pilots, technicians, sub-inspectors, constables in Railway Protection Force, junior engineers, depot material superintendents, and chemical and metallurgical supervisors.

## 'Not for sale': Bikaji clarifies amid interest in Indian snacks market

**New Delhi.** Indian snacks maker Bikaji Foods is "not for sale" and is instead on the prowl itself, aiming to cash in on the growing appetite for savoury brands in the world's most populous country, a top executive told Reuters. The Indian savoury snacks sector has ballooned in recent years as consumers splurge on packaged foods. "Bikaji is not for sale. Whatever price someone offers, there are certain things that are not for sale," Chief Operating Officer Manoj Verma said earlier this month, without disclosing whether the company has received buyout offers. His comments came after India's Tata Group and a consortium including Blackstone and Singapore's GIC held acquisition talks with market leader Haldhiram's. Shares in Bikaji, which is majority-owned by founder Shiv Ratan Agarwal and his family, have gained around 67% to value the company at \$2.55 billion since Reuters reported on investor interest in Haldhiram's last September.

## NEWS BOX

**Zaheer Khan set to join LSG as team mentor for IPL 2025**

Lucknow Super Giants are set to appoint former India speedster Zaheer Khan as their mentor ahead of the IPL 2025 mega auction.

**New Delhi.** Lucknow Super Giants are set to appoint former India speedster Zaheer Khan as their mentor ahead of the IPL mega auction. The appointment marks the return of the 45-year-old left-arm pacer to the IPL fold after two years, having been associated with five-time champions Mumbai Indians from 2018-2022. A formal unveiling is scheduled at the RPSG Group Headquarters here on Wednesday. "Zaheer has been appointed as team mentor and the unveiling will happen later today," sources told PTI. Zaheer will thus take up the role left vacant by Gautam Gambhir last year when he went to join his former franchise, Kolkata Knight Riders, and guided them to the IPL title in 2024. Gambhir is now the Indian head coach.

At Mumbai Indians, Zaheer first served as the director of cricket before taking on the role of head of global development. LSG currently do not have a bowling coach after the departure of South African speedster Morne Morkel, who has joined Gambhir's



coaching staff. It is learnt that Zaheer will also be involved in scouting and player-development programme during the off season. Before his coaching career, Zaheer played for three IPL teams -- Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, and Delhi Daredevils. Over 10 seasons, Zaheer appeared in 100 matches for these teams, claiming 102 wickets with an economy rate of 7.58. His final appearance in the IPL was in 2017 when he captained the Delhi Daredevils, after which he retired from all forms of cricket. LSG have Justin Langer as head coach with the Australian replacing Andy Flower before the last IPL as he is set to continue with his deputies Lance Klusener and Adam Voges.

**Carlos Alcaraz to win 3 Grand Slams in same season Spaniard hopes 'to be alive'**

**New Delhi** At just the age of 21, Carlos Alcaraz has achieved beyond believable numbers as he became the youngest to win the Roland Garros and Wimbledon titles in the same season. However, he has a chance to become only the third player after Rafael Nadal and Rod Laver to win three Grand Slam titles in the same season. It turns out, the Spaniard is also off to a great start with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 win over Australia's Li Tu in the Round 1 of the US Open 2024. However, the 21-year-old is not thinking too much about it and is emphasising on staying focussed towards getting results. "Well after this interview I'm gonna clear my mind and try to pretend I never heard that. Obviously it would be a great achievement if I make it. But I have 6 matches ahead. Every round is against a better opponent. It's gonna be difficult. The slam is 2 weeks. Staying 100%



focused every day makes it really tough. So I'm trying to think every day to just try to feel better each day in practice and in matches. Let's see if I'm still alive in 2 weeks," Alcaraz told the ESPN.

**History awaits Alcaraz**

The 21-year-old from Spain has been setting one record after the other. With his Round 1 win in the US Open 2024, he won his 60th out of the 70 Grand Slam matches. He is 15-0 in his first-round matches at the Grand Slams and has won 21 out of his last 24 matches. With four Grand Slams at the age of just 21, Alcaraz appears to be the standard-bearer for the future of the tennis sport.

**Alcaraz in US Open 2024**

He is back at Flushing Meadows where he created history by becoming the youngest to win US Open in 2022 and if he wins the title, he will register his name among the greats.

Alcaraz created 19 break chances and converted seven of them, across the two-hour, 42-minute contest. The four-time Grand Slam winner hammered 50 winners and won 80 per cent of his first-serve points. More than half of his unforced errors came in the second set.

# Dani Olmo scores on debut as Barcelona clinch comeback win vs Rayo Vallecano

LaLiga: The latest FC Barcelona signing Dani Olmo scored a late winner to secure a 2-1 win over Rayo Vallecano on Tuesday, August 27. Olmo helped Barcelona come from behind and make it three wins in a row in the League.

**New Delhi.** Dani Olmo marked his Barcelona debut with a decisive late goal, securing a 2-1 comeback win at Rayo Vallecano on Tuesday, August 27, extending the club's perfect start to the LaLiga season. The victory, Barcelona's third in a row, keeps them at the top of the standings. Olmo, who joined Barcelona from RB Leipzig after



playing a pivotal role in Spain's Euro 2024 success, had been waiting to make his debut due to registration issues caused by LaLiga's financial regulations. He finally got his chance in the second half and made an immediate impact. The match started with Rayo Vallecano taking an early lead. Unai Lopez capitalised on a quick counter-attack initiated by Jorge de Frutos from the right side of the pitch, scoring in the ninth minute. Rayo continued to press, with Alvaro Garcia and Isi Palazon both missing chances to

extend their advantage. Barcelona struggled in the first half but improved after the break. Manager Hansi Flick brought on Olmo, who had been a standout performer in Spain's recent Euro triumph, finishing as a joint top scorer and earning a spot in UEFA's Team of the Tournament. In the 60th minute, Barcelona equalised with a goal from Pedri. The play began with a counter-attack; Pedri passed to Raphinha on the left and then received the ball back to finish into the bottom

corner. Barcelona should always aim for title: Hansi Flick. Barcelona thought they had taken the lead in the 71st minute when Robert Lewandowski scored, but the goal was disallowed following a VAR review due to a foul in the build-up. Olmo secured the win in the 82nd minute with a well-placed strike. After a clever interplay with Lamine Yamal, who provided the assist, Olmo curled a shot into the far post, sealing the victory for Barcelona. Barcelona now lead the LaLiga standings with nine points from three games, two points clear of second-placed Villarreal. Rayo Vallecano sits eighth with four points.

Olmo was ecstatic after his debut with the club. The Spain star was a prodigy at the junior team in Barcelona, but made a name in the Bundesliga with his creative play. "I've been looking forward to my debut for a long time, and it couldn't have come in a better way," Olmo told DAZN. "It's been many years since Barcelona won here, and this result is just unparalleled." Olmo expressed his satisfaction with his performance, adding, "I felt very good and was really looking forward to this match. It finally happened, and I'm thrilled to have helped the team and even better to have scored."

## US Open, Day 3 Schedule of Play: Djokovic, Sabalenka back in action in Round 2

**New Delhi** After a rusty win in the first round of the US Open, Paris Olympics gold medallist Novak Djokovic returns in action on Wednesday, August 28. The defending champion plays the showpiece event of the day, against Laslo Djere at the Arthur Ashe Stadium. Depending on preference, tennis fans in India will either have to pull an all-nighter or wake up early in the morning, to watch Djokovic weave his magic on the court.

There are several top-seeded stars who are going to be in action on Wednesday. 14th-seed Madison Keys will kick off the action at the Arthur Ashe Stadium against Michaela Joubert at 9:30 PM IST. At the Louis Armstrong Stadium, Paola Badosa, Alexander Zverev and Aryana Sabalenka will play back-to-back matches in the day session of US Open. It is going to be a packed line-up for the fans present in the court. Later in the event, Victoria Azarenka will take on Clara Burei, while Taylor Fritz will play against Matteo Berrettini. Earlier

## Shreyas Iyer imitates Sunil Narine's mystery bowling action in Buchi Babu

Shreyas Iyer imitated his KKR teammate's mystery bowling action during the Buchi Babu tournament match between Mumbai and TNCA XI.

**New Delhi** It looks like the Indian players are not taking anything for granted and don't want to leave any stone unturned to impress the selectors ahead of the big Test season. Shreyas Iyer was spotted showcasing his all-round abilities during the ongoing Buchi Babu tournament. The middle order batter displayed his bowling skills during Day 1 of the match between TNCA XI and Mumbai. He was in the Sarfaraz Khan-led Mumbai's playing XI alongside Suryakumar Yadav at the Sri Ramakrishna College Cricket Ground. Iyer rolled his arms in the last session of the day 1 play as he came out to



was adjudged as the MVP of the tournament for his contributions with both the bat as well as ball. Narine's mysterious bowling action has often come under scrutiny, and he was also banned from bowling in international cricket in 2015 as his arm bent more than the threshold limit. However, Iyer drew inspiration from Narine's version of hiding the face of the ball to bluff the batter. Iyer

bowed just one over by the end of the day's play and imitated his KKR teammate's action.

**Batters to become part-time bowlers?**

He came in to the attack in the final minutes of the day when TNCA XI were at 287/5. He gave just one run off the first five ball but was smacked for a six on the last delivery by R. Sonu Yadav. Under the coaching of Gautam Gambhir, the explosive batters like Suryakumar and Rinku Singh rolled their arms to bowl and help the team win. India's interim bowling coach Saifur Bahutule revealed that the Indian batters will be given ample opportunities to bowl. Iyer will be eager to make a Test comeback after a long break from red-ball cricket. After the Buchi Babu tournament, he will be captaining Team D in the Duleep Trophy 2024, which will begin from September 5 in Bengaluru. The team comprises players like Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Ishan Kishan, Harshit Rana and others.

## Naomi Osaka breaks down in tears after 1st win in US Open since 2021

Naomi Osaka was emotional after winning her first-ever US Open game in last four years as she beat Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-2.

**New Delhi.** Naomi Osaka was left teary-eyed after registering her first-ever win in the US Open since 2021. The former US Open champion beat 2017 Roland Garros winner Jelena Ostapenko on her comeback at Flushing Meadows in the opening round of US Open 2024. It was Osaka's first-ever top-10 win in the last 4 years at this grand slam event in New York. She is a two-time US Open champion, with the first of her four Grand Slam titles coming in 2018, followed by 2020. She missed last year's tournament after giving birth to daughter Shai but watching from the crowd,

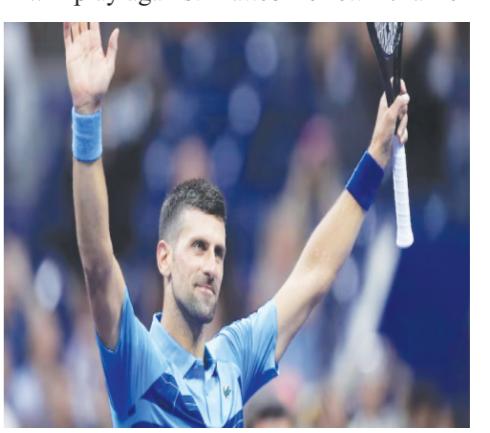


reignited her spirit to compete. Osaka also admitted that she was unsure if she was physically fit to return to the hard court after her maternity leave. "I was trying not to cry when I walked out. Last year I watched coco play and I so badly wanted to step on these courts again. I don't know if I could. I don't know if athletically physically if I was able to. Just to win this match and to be in this atmosphere means so much to me. So thank you."

Osaka's special win at US Open Arriving in her green outfit with full of bows, she was dispatching the no. 10 seed Ostapenko with barrage of powerful serves. She fired over 19 winners, including nine aces, and made just five unforced errors.

"My daughter didn't want to sleep at night." "It was stressful. She was hitting some really good shots. I told myself keep going for every point and maybe you'll have an opportunity. Eventually, I did. The I looked up and saw so many faces. So I was like woah." Juggling a Grand Slam tournament and motherhood would not be easy, but Osaka has been embracing the challenge after she gave birth in July 2023.

"At night my daughter didn't wanna go to sleep at her bedtime so I had to hold her for a while. I was like 'oh wow she picked the perfect day to not go to sleep.' Moments like that are so precious to me. I can only hope I keep having more."



on Tuesday, August 27, Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz bagged wins to progress to the second round of the competition. Both players were wobbled in one of the sets in the match but managed to grow into the game and clinch the win in 4 sets.

**US Open: Jannik Sinner reacts to doping chatter**

One of the biggest highlights on Tuesday was Dan Evans' match against Karen Khachanov, which went beyond the 5-hour mark. The battle between the two set the record for the longest match in the professional era of the US Open. Evans defeated Khachanov 6-7(6), 7-6(2), 7-6(4), 4-6, 6-4 after making an epic comeback from 0-4 down in the final set of the match.

## Fans throng Suryakumar Yadav for pics while fielding during Buchi Babu

A bunch of fans gathered at the venue of Buchi Babu tournament match to get pictures and autographs of India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav during the match between TNCA XI and Mumbai.

**New Delhi.** Suryakumar Yadav boasts of a great fandom across the country and the explosive batter has been kind enough to oblige to the love showcased by his fans. During the ongoing Buchi Babu tournament, Suryakumar Yadav was fielding near the boundary. He was thronged by the fans at the



maiden who wanted to get a glimpse of India's T20I captain. He obliged for pictures as well as autographs to a bunch of fans while fielding during the match. In the video, he was seen posing for selfies with the fans and even told them that he would click pictures with them after the match. However, the ardent fans were persistent and made Suryakumar give his autograph on his photographs and jerseys. The security had to intervene to set the crowd aside but Suryakumar, who was fielding at the deep mid-wicket boundary, showcased his heart-warming gestures by being very polite to his fans. Most of them were school kids who were elated after getting an autograph from the 33-year-old star batter. It was the Day 1 of the match between TNCA XI and Mumbai at the Sri Ramakrishna College Cricket Ground. The star-studded Mumbai line-up with the likes of Shreyas Iyer and Suryakumar is under the captaincy of Sarfaraz Khan. The hosts TNCA XI scored 295/5 on the Day 1 of the match on the back

of three half centuries from the team. However, the Buchi Babu tournament is just a warm-up with the Duleep Trophy starting from September 5 in Bengaluru. Suryakumar recently opened up about his desire to return to the whites for India. He wants to use the domestic tournaments as a platform to offer his contention for a spot in India's Test playing XI.

"Red-ball cricket has always been my priority. When I grew up in the maidans of Mumbai and played a lot of local cricket, I started playing with the red cherry. The love for the longest format began there, and has always been there. I've taken part in a lot of First Class matches for more than 10 years now and I still cherish playing this format. There's no question about it and that's why I'm here before the Duleep Trophy." Suryakumar told Sports Star. "There are a lot of people who have worked really hard to earn their place and even I want to earn that spot again. I made my debut for India in Tests. After that, I got injured as well. There were a lot of people who got an opportunity and have done well too. They deserve that opportunity right now."

There are 10 Test matches lined-up this year with India playing the all-important Border Gavaskar Trophy against Australia, starting in November.

**Suryakumar aims for Test comeback**

# Shraddha Kapoor

**Says Stree 2 'Centres Around A Woman' Amid Rajkummar Rao Credit War: 'Reins Of Narrative...'**

Amid the ongoing credit war between Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao for the success of Stree 2, the actress has opened up about how the franchise has empowered her. Shraddha Kapoor said that Stree and Stree 2 revolve around a woman's story – the ghost of Stree – and she is the backbone of the film. "Stree has empowered me. The film is centred around a woman and she holds the reins of the narrative," Shraddha Kapoor told Hello! India-Arabia in a recent interview. Stree 2 has proven to be one of the biggest films in Shraddha Kapoor's career and has even fast-tracked her popularity on social media, especially Instagram.

Meanwhile, Stree 2 continues its unstoppable journey at the box office, surpassing the Rs 400 crore mark on its 12th day. The film, starring Rajkummar Rao, Shraddha Kapoor, Pankaj Tripathi, Aparshakti Khurana, and Abhishek Banerjee, has become the seventh Hindi film to join this elite club, standing tall among industry giants like Jawan, Gadar 2, Pathaan, Animal, Baahubali 2 (Hindi), and KGF Chapter 2 (Hindi). Produced by Maddock Films, Stree 2 has turned into an all-time blockbuster, thanks to its massive box office performance. After recording the biggest second weekend of all time, the film continued to perform exceptionally well, even on its third Monday, benefitting from the partial Janmashtami holiday. The movie added another Rs 18 crore to its collection on this day, bringing its total to an impressive Rs 403.50 crore net in India. With its current momentum, Stree 2 is set to cross the lifetime Hindi collection of KGF Chapter 2 (Rs 427 crore) within the next few days. Moreover, the film is on track to record the biggest third week in Hindi cinema history. The next major milestone for Stree 2 is the Rs 500 crore club, which is now almost certain. Industry experts predict that the film will reach this milestone by next week. Owing to the film's massive success, a 'credit war' began between Shraddha Kapoor and Rajkummar Rao for the film's success. Abhishek Banerjee told Zoom TV, "I don't understand PR. I don't understand the kind of conversations that happen on social media. Whenever something is successful, there will always be some negative points. Kuch toh negativity chahiye logo ko jisse voh baat karein, cheezon ko bada banaye. We don't focus on these things."

He added, "Jab humne shuru kiya tha, hume kisi ne nahi bola tha ki film iski hai ya uski hai. Jab humne film sign ki thi. Aapne khud hi dekha hoga bohot baar logo ne bola hai ki Jana ki entry pe log sabse zyada taaliban bajate hain. Itne bade stars ke beech main kya hai Jana? Yeh film ensemble cast ki film hai. Yeh sabki film hai and that is the beauty of the film jo kisi shor ya comparison se change nahi hoga."

Aparshakti also commented on the credit war and told Zoom TV, "Main ispe kuch bolunga, baar khulegi toh door tak jaayegi, main kuch bolna nahin chahunga, audience jo kahe wo sahi hai". He said that while the film is minting money at the box office, there is a "PR game" going on of "upping and downing somebody". Directed by Amar Kaushik and produced by Dinesh Vijan of Maddock Films, the film is the sequel to 2018's Stree. The filmmaker has previously confirmed that a third instalment, Stree 2, is also under works.



# Urvi Javed

**Reveals She's Friends With Samantha Ruth Prabhu: 'Sam Is The Best, Humari Baatein...'**

Urvi Javed has become the talk of the town with her latest show, Follow Kar Lo Yaar. In the show, the social media sensation made several revelations and even talked about her personal life. In the show, Urvi claimed that she has no friends in the film industry who support her. However, in a recent chat, Urvi revealed she maintains a virtual friendship with Samantha Ruth Prabhu. "Samantha and I are Instagram friends. Usko agar mera koi video bhi pasand aata hai toh she uploads it on her story. I don't think there's a motive behind it. She's just genuinely supporting me. She is a girl's girl. Sam is full-on like a girl's girl. Sam and I have a common friend, so Instagram pe baat hui hai, but indirectly humari baatein hoti hain... Sam is the best," Urvi told Galatta India.

In the same conversation, Urvi also revealed that she has a huge crush on the Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor. "I must confess, I have a huge crush on Arjun Kapoor! We've met briefly at parties twice, but I get completely tongue-tied around him. My mind starts racing with all the things I'd love to do with him – things he can't even imagine! Unfortunately, he has no idea what's going on in my head. During one party, I mustered up the courage to approach him and simply said, 'You know my name,' hoping



to break the ice and maybe, just maybe, catch his attention," Urvi told Galatta India. Meanwhile, on the work front, Urvi Javed's series – Follow Kar Lo Yaar was recently released on Prime Video. The nine-episode series is produced by Sol Productions' Fazila Allana and Kamna Menezes and directed by Sandeep Kukreja. It has been described as "an unfiltered and immersive viewpoint into the vibrant and captivating life of Javed, India's biggest viral sensation".



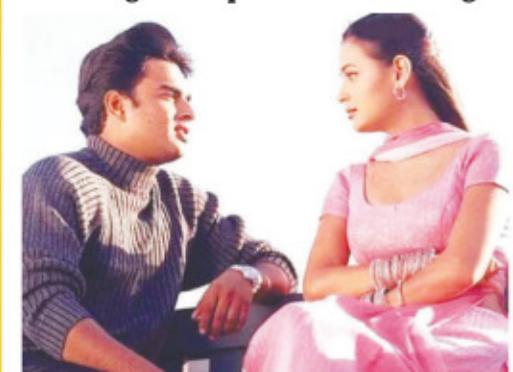
**Mohanlal Met Mammootty Before Quitting as AMMA President? SHOCKING Details Emerge: Report**



Mohanlal discussed resigning as the President of AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) with his fellow actor Mammootty before he shared the news with the press, a new report has claimed. On Tuesday, Mohanlal left the Malayalam film industry in shock after he decided to quit as AMMA's President. His 17-member executive committee also followed his lead and resigned their positions in the association. Hours after the news broke, a report has hinted that Mammootty was aware of the shocking move. Popular Malayalam news publication, Manorama, claimed that Mohanlal held a private consultation with Mammootty. The report also claimed that Mammootty 'supported' his decision. Mammootty allegedly agreed that it was the 'best course of action.' The report also claimed that there were attempts made to urge Mohanlal to reconsider his decision but the actor was unwilling to budge. News18 couldn't verify the claims at the time of reporting.

On Tuesday, Mohanlal issued a statement to press that he was stepping down as the President of AMMA. "AMMA has decided to disperse the executive committee on moral grounds in the light of allegations made by some actors against some of the committee members. A new committee will be formed after an election within two months," the statement read. The association informed that within two months the general body meeting of the association will be called to select the new governing body. "We hope that leadership that is capable of revamping and strengthening the association will take over soon. Thankful to everyone for pointing out our errors," it added. Mohanlal's decision came amid the ongoing sexual harassment allegations in the Malayalam film industry. For the unversed, a report by the Justice Hema Committee detailed in on a sexual assault incidents in the Malayalam film industry.

**When Dia Mirza Called Out Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein for 'Sexism,' 'Stalking': 'People Were Thinking...'**



Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein is set to re-release this weekend. The film, which also stars Saif Ali Khan in a pivotal role, was released 2001 and was loved by many. However, over the years, the film has left cinephiles divided. While many continue to love the film, a section of film lovers have also confessed the film 'glorifies' stalking. Coincidentally, Dia had also called out the film for its sexism and did not appreciate the stalking aspect of the film. In two different interviews, Dia Mirza shared her candid thoughts about RHTDM. Speaking with Brut India in 2021, Dia said, "People were writing, thinking and making sexist cinema and I was a part of these stories... Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein has sexism in it... I was acting with these people. I was working with these people. It's crazy. I will give you small examples. A makeup artist could only be a man, could not be a woman. A hairdresser only had to be a woman... When I started working in films there were at best about four or five women on any given crew with a unit strength of over 120... sometimes 180 people."

In an interview with Outlook in 2023, Dia confessed she would not do Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein in today's day and age if the script did not rectify a few issues. "If I was offered that film, I would question certain aspects of the film and hope that the writers would change it. I internalised some aspects of that film and realised that had to do with the right propagation of love. I am strongly against stalking. I think it is a terrible thing to do," she said. Addressing the discussion around the glorification of stalking in the film, Dia said, "Not only does Maddy's character stalk Reena, but he also lies to her. Of course, she breaks off the relationship with him once she discovers the truth, only to then realise that he is remorseful and genuinely loves and cares for her. But there is no justification in this world for stalking, lying is bad, and stalking is worse."