

Tirupati laddoos were distributed during Ram temple event, says chief priest

Tirupati laddoos row: Ram Temple chief priest Acharya Satyendra Das has said that laddoos from Tirupati temple were distributed as prasadam during the pran prathistha January ceremony.

Ayodhya. Ayodhya's Ram Temple chief priest Acharya Satyendra Das has said that laddoos from Tirupati temple were distributed as prasadam during the pran prathistha (consecration) ceremony on January 22 earlier this year.

cardamom seeds were distributed as prasadam during the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla. Champat Rai, general secretary of the trust, said they were

HANUMAN GARHI TEMPLE ON TIRUPATI LADDOOS ROW

The Tirupati row has prompted several major temples across India to test the quality of the prasadam being offered to devotees. At the Hanuman Garhi temple, one of the famous temples in Ayodhya, authorities said only laddoos made of desi ghee were offered as prasadam.



"We use ghee from branded companies only. All the shopkeepers, who are our tenants, use the same in making the laddoos. From time to time, the purity of ghee is also checked and sampling is done. If any deficiency is found by any visitor, then that shop is completely closed," said Sanjay Das, president of the Sankat Mochan Sena.

Over one lakh laddus were dispatched by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the Sri Venkateswara temple, for the consecration ceremony. The ceremony was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and was attended by 8,000 dignitaries.

However, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, the trust which manages the Ram temple, said only

waiting for the Centre's investigation report on the Tirupati laddoos. "We only distributed cardamom seeds to the devotees. I went to Tirupati once in my life in 1981, and it is not proper for me to comment on the controversy," Rai said.

the laddoos served as prasadam at Tirupati temple during the previous YSRCP regime. Citing a lab report from Gujarat, Naidu claimed the presence of "beef tallow", "lard" (relating to pig fat), and fish oil in the ghee.

Fixed calendar for workplaces: Shashi Tharoor speaks to EY worker's father

Shashi Tharoor said he would propose legislation in Parliament for a fixed calendar to regulate working hours across all workplaces.

Tharoor says he had heartrending conversation with father of EY worker. Says he will propose a law dealing with 'inhumanity' in workplaces. 26-year-old EY employee died due to 'excessive workload'.



New Delhi. Anna Sebastian Perayil, who joined E&Y India in March, died on July 20 after complaining of exhaustion. The incident came to

light earlier this week after her mother Anita Augustine's open letter to the company went viral, in which she alleged that Anna was subjected to "extreme work pressure". Stressing that "human rights do not stop at the

workplace", Tharoor said, "inhumanity at the workplace must be legislated out of existence with stringent punishment and fines for offenders. Will raise this matter at the first opportunity during the next

session of parliament." The incident triggered widespread outrage on social media, especially over the fact that no one from E&Y attended the funeral of the employee. Ernst and Young India chairperson Rajiv Memani also came under heavy criticism after he denied the claim that "work pressure" was behind the death of the employee.

JP Nadda asks Punjab government to clear private hospitals' dues, AAP hits back

The Union Health Minister claimed that due to the mismanagement of the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab, people have lost access to free healthcare.

New Delhi. Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda on Friday hit out at the Punjab government and asked it to clear dues to private hospitals under the Ayushman Bharat scheme.



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Punjab government has been struggling financially since 2023, due to the rising debt and falling revenue clubbed with the rising cost of subsidies. The AAP has reacted to the Union minister's attack, hitting back at him and demanding funds from the Centre.

Swimming expedition to islands named after Param Vir Chakra awardees flagged-in

The Andaman & Nicobar Command launched 'Expedition Param Vir', wherein a team of personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard swam to all the 21 islands as a tribute to the gallantry awardees.



New Delhi. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday flagged-in a first-of-its-kind Open Water Swimming Expedition to the 21 Islands of the Andaman & Nicobar archipelago named after the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) Awardees, in New Delhi.

Vijayapuram. All the swimmers undertook the expedition as per the International standards and regulations for the category of 'Unassisted Open Water Swim', which mandates that swimmers can be attired only in swim trunks, goggles, and caps. Commending the expedition team, the Defence Minister said that it was in line with the government's efforts towards ensuring that the gallant deeds of Indian soldiers, who sacrificed themselves in the service of the nation, are known to the people, especially the youth, and that these bravehearts become their heroes.

During the event, the expedition flag was handed over to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in the presence of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN) Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan and other senior officials.

Manipur Government To Hand Over Case Of Attack On Thadou Leader's House To Anti-Terror Agency NIA

"There's hope the perpetrators' intentions and masterminds will be exposed, and justice will be served..." the Thadou Students' Association (GHQ) said in a statement

Imphal: The Manipur government has asked the police to hand over the case of attack on the ancestral house of a key Thadou tribe leader and BJP spokesperson to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The state government in a letter to the police chief said the case filed over the attack on the house of T Michael Lamjathang Haokip in Churachandpur district, where his elderly parents and some internally displaced people live, should be forwarded to the NIA as soon as possible.

August 31 in the third attack at his house since the Meitei-Kuki ethnic violence began in May 2023. The attack happened on a day the Kuki tribes held protests against Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, who they said was responsible for the crisis, citing a leaked audio tape which the state government had called "doctored".



Six days earlier, on August 25, over two dozen people, some of them armed, had vandalised Mr Haokip's house and also fired shots in the air. In a first information report (FIR), Mr Haokip had named 15 people as "directly or indirectly" responsible for the attack on his property and family.

He also named two people who allegedly asked members of a WhatsApp group to kill him. One of the two promised to give "village land" to anyone who kills the state BJP spokesperson.

Mr Haokip has said the attacks and threats came as a result of him raising awareness about his tribe, Thadou, being inaccurately referred to as a Kuki tribe amid the ethnic tension in Manipur. Mr Haokip, the Thadou Students' Association (TSA-GHQ), of which he is a key leader, and the civil society group Thadou Community International (TCI) have sought to draw attention to the tribe's "inaccurate" reference by leaders and the media, and to spread awareness that "the Thadou tribe is distinct and any confusion with other tribes surmount to being racist, abusive, disrespectful, traumatising and it puts the Thadou tribe in poor light".

Letter To Kuki National Organisation (KNO)

The TSA on September 15 wrote to the heads of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), seeking their cooperation in identifying suspects who attacked Mr Haokip's house twice last month.

TSA spokesperson Vicky Thadou in the letter said that Peniel village, where Mr Haokip's senior citizen parents live in their ancestral house, falls within the operational area of KNO, and are dominated by KNA, KNFMC, KNF-S, KNF-Z, and KLA - the five constituents of the KNO.

"... We hold the KNO and the local civil organisations morally responsible for the attacks," the TSA said in the letter addressed to the KNO president and vice presidents.

News box

Mumbai: Rs 918 crore flyover plan for Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road may face another cost hike

MUMBAI: The BMC's Rs 918-crore plan to construct two flyovers connected to the Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road (GMLR) could face further cost escalation with the potential addition of a new arm leading to Maharashtra Nagar. While this additional flyover arm is not yet included in the current tender, officials are awaiting the necessary approvals. The project already exceeds the cost of the GMLR, which opened just three years ago and cost over Rs 500 crore.

A BMC official explained that the current proposal includes the construction of Arm-1 and Arm-2 flyovers at T Junction on the Sion-Panvel Highway, Maharashtra Nagar, in M/E Ward. However, an additional arm towards Maharashtra Nagar is also being considered, pending railway permissions. "This arm is not yet part of the project scope and will be added once we obtain the required permissions," the official stated.

Arm-1 of the proposed flyover from GMLR is planned to lead towards Vashi, while Arm-2 will connect Vashi to the GMLR. Ravi Raja, former opposition leader in the BMC, criticized the timing of the new flyover proposal, arguing that it reflects poor planning during the GMLR's construction. "If the need for these two flyovers arises just three years after the GMLR was built, it shows a lack of foresight," he said. Faiyaz Alam Shaikh, president of the New Sangam Welfare Society NGO in Govandi, expressed concerns about ongoing traffic issues. "We have yet to fully benefit from the GMLR, which opened in 2021," he said. "Heavy vehicles still use the road below the flyover, particularly during late-night hours, causing regular congestion at the Baiganwadi and Shivaji Nagar signals."

Bombay HC grants bail to 2012 Pune blasts accused after 12 years of pre-trial detention

MUMBAI: Bombay high court on Friday granted bail to Munib Memon, an accused in the 2012 Pune's Jangli Maharaj Road serial blasts, on a bail bond of Rs 1 lakh with one or two sureties of like amount. Memon, through his advocate Mubin Solkar, sought bail on the ground of prolonged incarceration and pre-trial detention of more than 12 years, and violation of his fundamental right to a speedy trial under Article 21 of the Constitution. He was arrested in 2012.

Solkar said the trial was moving slowly and therefore the principle of 'bail is rule and jail is exception' applied even to special anti-terror laws like UAPA, and therefore his client was entitled to bail on account of his prolonged incarceration, which itself amounted to punishment without trial.

The public prosecutor submitted that the earlier bail application of the accused had already been rejected by the high court and therefore a long period of custody cannot be a ground to grant him bail as the charges against him were serious. Earlier in 2022, observing that prima facie, there were no reasonable grounds for believing that the appellant was not guilty of the charges, and that the claims against him seemed true, the high court had rejected Memon's bail plea on merits. The explosions at Pune's Jangli Maharaj Road on Aug 1, 2012, had taken place within minutes, injuring one person; and an unexploded bomb was also defused. The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad arrested eight men including Memon.

Fishermen plan rail roko on new Pamban bridge inauguration day

RAMANATHAPURAM: FISHERMEN associations from six districts announced a rail roko on the inauguration day of the new Pamban railway sea bridge condemning the union government's inaction in addressing the demands of the fishermen, after a meeting in Rameswaram on Friday.

Representatives from several districts including Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi, Pudukkottai, Nagapattinam, and Thanjavur held a consultation meeting in Thangachimadam in Rameswaram. The meeting was organised to condemn the recent actions taken against Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan government and decide on the protests to be staged to press their demands.

The fishermen association leaders said that hundreds of fishermen including country boat fishers were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy. Many fishers have been imprisoned and heavy fines have been imposed, even on those who have been released, which the leaders condemned.

They also said that over 150 Indian fishing boats in the possession of the Lankan government were yet to be retrieved. The union government should delegate with the Lankan government to prevent such harsh punishments and take steps to release the fishermen, they demanded.

TN's first wildlife rehab centre work to end in two months

Speaking in legislative assembly on 3 September 2021, Chief Minister MK Stalin announced the project.

COIMBATORE: Tamil Nadu's first wildlife rescue treatment and rehabilitation centre which is being constructed at Pethikutai in Sirumugai forest range is expected to be completed within two months. Speaking in legislative assembly on 3 September 2021, Chief Minister MK Stalin announced the project. Later, the government sanctioned Rs 4 lakh to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) to establish the facility at an estimate of Rs 19.5 crore. According to forest department sources, the 53-hectare facility will have a veterinary centre, treatment room, post mortem room, enclosure for big cats like tiger and leopard along with elephant



care hub, a resting centre for veterinarians and staff. It will have a core area of greenery to give animals the impression that they are in forest and not in human habitation. Once inaugurated, animals like elephants, sloth bear, leopards, chital, sloth bear, snake, peafowl that get injured in accidents or after they enter human habitations will be brought here and taken

care of. Currently, the forest department treats injured animals and releases them back in the wild or shifts them to the Vandalur Zoo or Kozhikamathi elephant camp. N Jayaraj, district forest officer of Coimbatore forest division said, "Treatment and release of wildlife are among our core activities. The existing facilities are not adequate and do not meet requirements. The lack of dedicated and modern veterinary care facilities lead to delayed or lesser than desired treatment. The rescue treatment and rehabilitation centre will greatly benefit wild animals in distress," he said. "The Pethikutai centre will cater to needs of animals

rescued in and around Coimbatore Forest division especially in the western ghat region of Tamil Nadu," he added. Further, the DFO said a total of 4,243 animals, birds and reptiles have been rescued in the Coimbatore forest division in the last four years.

These include three elephants and six leopards. The Coimbatore forest division is situated within the Coimbatore district and some part falls under Erode district. It is spread across 69,347.72 hectares, extending from the foothills of Nilgiris to the border of Kerala. It shares a 350-km boundary with several revenue villages which are prone to human-animal conflicts.

Local pharmacies to help Kerala govt identify outbreaks through drug usage patterns

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Local pharmacists in Kerala are set to play a crucial role in detecting outbreaks of infectious diseases in their communities, as the health department looks to involve them in disease surveillance efforts. The Drugs Control Department (DCD) aims to transform nearly 27,000 licensed pharmacies across the state into 'Sentinel Pharmacies', which would report drug purchases.

The DCD is developing a framework to accredit these pharmacies, which will help identify unusual patterns in medicine usage. "A sentinel network will enable us to detect disproportionate use of medications," said a source. Historically, health sentinel networks have relied on data from primary care physicians and hospitals, often overlooking the expertise of community pharmacists in drug-related matters. The new network aims to address this by enabling earlier interventions. "Fever is a common symptom of many communicable



diseases. Many people visit a pharmacy for fever medication before seeing a doctor.

By including pharmacies in the sentinel surveillance network, we can track spikes in medications like paracetamol, which may signal an outbreak. This approach allows for early intervention based on regional drug utilisation patterns," said Dr Viswanathan K V, joint director

(Medicine), Directorate of Medical Education. The health department also intends to enhance drug dispensation practices through proper counselling and educating the public on the rational and safe use of medicines. The Union government has agreed to fund the initiative based on the DCD's proposal. The department plans to develop software for pharmacies to update drug information and has initiated discussions with pharmacy organisations. Accreditation by the DCD is expected to enhance the pharmacies' credibility among the public.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Welcoming the proposal, All Kerala Chemists & Druggists Association state president A N Mohan urged the Drugs Control Department to take pharmacies into confidence before implementing the project. O C Naveen Chand, president of Kerala State Pharmacy Council, highlighted potential challenges, noting some pharmacies might be hesitant to share sales data.

Seven detained for harassing army officer, fiance

BHUBANESWAR: Five days after the brutal assault on the army officer and his fiancée in police custody, seven youths were detained on Friday for allegedly misbehaving and manhandling the couple on September 15 night.

This incident of manhandling had forced the couple to approach Bharatpur police where they ended up being victims of extremely distressing custodial excesses. The Crime Branch (CB) of Odisha Police, which registered a case against unknown persons as well as police personnel for allegedly assaulting the couple the same night, also questioned the youths on the day. Chandaka police too registered a case in this connection as the alleged incident took place in Patharagadia area which comes under their jurisdiction. Sources said the cops are trying to ascertain if the youths first harassed the couple near Patharagadia and then chased them till the end of Chandaka police station's jurisdiction for which the duo was compelled to lodge a

complaint in neighbouring Bharatpur police station. Of the seven, some are reported to be students. One car and mobile phones were seized from them, said police. The army officer and his fiancée had claimed that they visited Bharatpur police station to lodge a complaint against the unidentified miscreants but were unable to submit their report as they were subjected to custodial torture. DCP Prateek Singh said, "The army officer and his fiancée were returning from Patia when they had a heated exchange with a group of youths reportedly over an incident of road rage. The accused harassed the couple at around 2.20 am after which they visited Bharatpur police station at 2.40 am to lodge a case as the incident had taken place under their jurisdiction." A video of the heated exchange between the youths and the couple went viral on the day.



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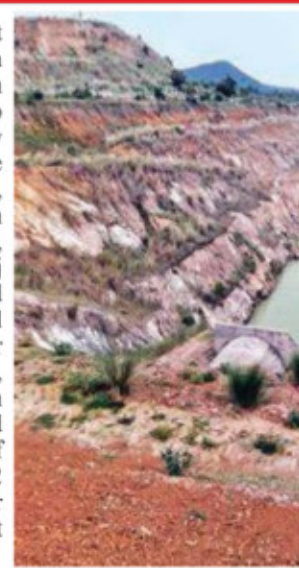
CMC submits 32.32 crore DPR to Address Taladanda canal pollution issues

The report was submitted before the special bench for suo motu PILs on civic issues of Cuttack city by CMC counsel Debashis Nayak on Thursday.

CUTTACK: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) informed the Orissa High Court on Thursday that a detailed project report (DPR) for preventing pollution of the Taladanda canal due to discharge of effluents from municipal drains in the city has been submitted to the state government. The Rs 32.32 crore DPR was submitted to the Housing and Urban Development department for necessary approval and sanction of funds on August 23, 2024, the CMC stated in a status report on discharge of untreated water and sewage from drains into the Taladanda. The report was submitted before the special bench for suo motu PILs on civic issues of Cuttack city by CMC counsel Debashis Nayak on Thursday. Taking the report on record, the division bench of Justice SK Sahoo

and Justice V Narasingh said, "Let the government advocate obtain instruction regarding the approval and sanction of the fund for the execution of the work. List this matter on October 24, 2024." The Taladanda, which starts from Jobra, passes through the city and links the Mahanadi river with the Bay of Bengal at Paradip at about 83 km from Cuttack. The canal has been the source of water for irrigation to Sadar area in Cuttack district and Raghunathpur, Balikuda, Tirtol and Erasama areas in Jagatsinghpur district. According to the status report, effluents from eight municipal drains are being presently discharged into the canal. But the existing outfall points between Malgodown and Naya Bazaar through which untreated water and sewage from drains are flowing into the

canal cannot be closed without construction of a diversion drain connecting these drains to the main storm water channel - 1. "Prior to construction of proposed drain, if now the outfall points will be closed, the upstream side of the adjoining drains, i.e. near Urban Haat at Malgodown area, Light House, Police Colony, Kunja Bihari School of Chauliaganj area will be severely waterlogged and submerged and the local people will suffer," the status report said. "After getting approval and sanction of funds, the CMC will float tender for execution and completion of the proposed diversion drain. As the estimated cost of the said project is more than Rs 32 crore, it will take minimum one year for completion of the project," the report said.



Pocso case slapped on woman who raised allegations against Bollywood actors

KOCHI: The Muvattupuzha police on Friday slapped a case under POCSO Act against the woman complainant who raised sexual harassment allegations against seven persons, including actors Mukesh, Jayasurya, Maniyanpilla Raju, and Edavela Babu. The case was registered by the police, based on a complaint lodged by a Muvattupuzha resident woman, who is the complainant's cousin. In the complaint, she alleged that the woman forced girls into sex trade and presented her to a group in Chennai, during her school days. She also alleged that the complainant woman herself is part of a sex mafia, said a police official. "We registered a case against the woman based on a complaint from her kin. She has been charged under various sections of the Pocso Act, but we are unable to reveal further details due to the sensitive nature of the case," said Murukan C, inspector, Muvattupuzha police station.

The victim had earlier narrated her bad experience before reaching puberty to reporters on Thursday. According to her, she was taken to Chennai under the guise of attending a film audition during her summer vacation when she was in Class X. According to her, there were five or six men at the audition venue and they began to touch her inappropriately. She escaped from the clutches of the gang by shouting and crying. She also said that her woman relative (suspect) advised her to make 'adjustments' if she wanted to have a bright future. Meanwhile, the woman who is at the centre of allegations, said that her relative raised the latest complaint after her repeated demands for money were not met.

COURT RECORDS STATEMENT OF VICTIM IN MOLESTATION CASE AGAINSTRANJITH

Kochi: A magistrate court in Kochi on Friday recorded the confidential statement of the female actor, who had accused filmmaker Ranjith of attempting to outrage her modesty. Though the non-Keralite victim was requested to be present in person as part of proceedings, she could not travel to Kochi. Hence the court recorded her statement online. The recording lasted around two hours.

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NEWS BOX

Biker returning home after work hit by car, dies in hospital

Gurgaon. A 33-year-old biker died on Thursday after being hit by a speeding car in Sector 10 near Prerna Society on Sept 13. Garhi Harsaru resident Lokesh was returning home from work when a speeding car hit him from behind. He succumbed to injuries after a few days of treatment. The car driver is absconding.

ASI Chandar Bhan and constable Neeraj reached the scene after receiving the information. Lokesh's body was handed over to his family after the postmortem.

"My son had no fault; he died because of someone else's negligence. The car driver must be arrested at the earliest and sent to jail," said Lokesh's father, Muni Lal. A case was registered at Sector 10 police station on Thursday under BNS sections 106 (causing death by negligence) and 281 (rash and negligent driving).

"The matter is under investigation. We are scanning CCTV footage of the nearby area to trace the car driver," said a police spokesperson. Speeding, according to police, is the most common cause of road accidents in Gurgaon, claiming over 400 lives every year. A majority of these accidents happen when pedestrians cross roads suddenly without any signals and when vehicles overtake from the wrong side.

Former city police chief files civil defamation suit against judge

Gurgaon: Former police commissioner KK Rao this month filed a civil defamation suit, seeking compensation of Rs 1 crore from an additional sessions judge who had questioned the top cop's role while hearing a case on the 2021 multi-crore heist in the city.

Rao, in the petition submitted through his counsel Parvesh Yadav before a civil court in the city, alleged the judge's remarks were "unwarranted" and crossed "all limits of judicial sanctity". They spread like "wildfire", and "annihilated reputation and loyalty towards my profession", the petition read.

Apart from damages amounting to Rs 1 crore, the suit seeks prohibitory injunction to restrain the judge from maligning and defaming Rao in any manner in the future. The case goes back to Aug 2021, when crores in cash was stolen from an apartment in Sector 84. The burglary was believed to have been carried out by gangster Vikas Lagarpuriya's men, and the syndicate allegedly tried to hush up the case by bribing police.

One of the main accused in the case was IPS officer Dheeraj Setia who was DCP (crime) in the city. Setia was accused of taking money from the gangster to influence the probe. In Feb 2022, additional sessions judge Amit Sahrawat was hearing an anticipatory bail application filed by Setia when he asked how the city police chief was not aware that gangsters and kingpins of the burglary gave Rs 2.5 crore to the DCP, who sat in an adjacent office. Rao moved the Punjab and Haryana high court last year over the remarks made by the judge. The high court, in Sept 2023, directed that the judge's remark be expunged and that it should not be used in Rao's service record. In the civil defamation suit, Rao's counsel argued that neither the work nor the police chief's conduct was under question in Setia's bail application. "The order (rejecting the bail plea) was passed not with the intent to pass the judicial order solely but with the sole intent to target the plaintiff (Rao) and to achieve an ulterior motive by scandalising the matter. The remarks were completely unwarranted and were made by crossing all the limits of judicial sanctity," the petitioner said.

2 held for murder of man looking for son

Ghaziabad: Two people, including a woman, were arrested on Friday for the murder of a 38-year-old factory worker earlier this week. One accused's clothes, covered in the victim's blood, and a stick used in the murder were also recovered, police said.

The accused are identified as Gulfam (35), originally from Muzaffarnagar, and Shahnaz (40), from Badarpur village in Loni. The two were arrested in connection with the murder of Rashid, who was also from Badarpur, on Sept 17. "Rashid was killed while looking for his missing son, Sufiyana," said DCP (Rural) Surendra Nath Tiwari. On Sept 13, Sufiyana had been accused of stealing a phone by Shahnaz's mother Sanno and beaten up by some of their family members. He had gone missing soon after. Rashid was later killed on the intervening night of Sept 16 and 17. His body was found in a field some 200m from his house on Tuesday morning and police were informed about the feud between the two families. An FIR had been registered against Mehtab, a few of his family members and his associates, including Gulfam, under BNS sections 103 (murder), 191 (2) (rioting), and 351 (2) (criminal intimidation). Sufiyana was found hours later in a nearby house.

CRPF to PWD, eight agencies to get land off Yamuna e-way

Noida. Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) is planning to introduce a policy to allot land to central and state govt agencies. This move comes in response to requests from eight agencies seeking land for setting up offices, training institutes, research centres, and other facilities. The proposal will be placed before the Authority's board for approval on Sept 26. The agencies that sought land allocation from the Authority are CRPF, CISF, EPFO, GAIL (India) Limited, UPSRTC, fire department, the ministry of communication (department of posts), and the PWD. The land parcels required by these agencies ranged from 1 acre to 120 acres. CRPF requested 25 acres for a VIP security battalion campus, while CISF applied for 100-120 acres to establish a world-class training institute. The EPFO sought 1 acre for an office building, and GAIL applied for 25 acres to set up a research and development centre. Additionally, the ministry of communication (department of posts) requested two acres for a post office and 2.5 acres for setting up a cargo hub near the airport, and the PWD sought four acres for an inspection building. The UPSRTC sought land for a bus terminal workshop and residential complex on 10 acres.

Gurgaon horror: Driver of SUV that killed biker doesn't have licence

GURGAON. The driver of an SUV who crashed into a biker on the wrong side of Golf Course Road leading to his death earlier this week is a repeat offender and had been challaned earlier for similar offences, sources in police said.

Cops also suspect that Kuldeep Kumar Thakur (25), co-founder of a PR firm, doesn't have a licence to drive a four-wheeler. According to sources, he roped in a tout a day after the Sunday morning accident to get a licence done back-date. He is now out on bail, but is yet to submit his DL, if any, to police. Thakur, sources in police said, had been fined last month for wrong-side driving and illegal parking. Around 5.25am on Sunday, bikers Akshat Garg and his friend Pradyumn Kumar - both from Delhi - had taken a one-way lane off Golf Course Road when Thakur's XUV 300 appeared from the other side. The car crashed head on into Akshat's bike, flinging him in the air and hurling him at a distance. Akshat, who was wearing a helmet and other

safety gear, was declared dead on arrival at a private hospital. Thakur, who was on his way from Palwal with a friend, is believed to have told police he deliberately took the wrong side to cut down on his travel time. He had earlier said he was merely following Google Maps and took the one-way route unwittingly. Akshat's friend Pradyumn has told cops that after the accident, Thakur made a phone call - possibly to a friend - to arrange for a lawyer for him. His car, according to police, had a sticker seeking votes for a BJP candidate in the assembly polls on the bonnet. Pradyumn had alleged that police had declined to accept as evidence footage recorded in his GoPro, showing the car coming from the wrong side and crashing into the bike. Police have denied the allegation. Based on a complaint by Pradyumn, an FIR was registered at DLF 2 police station against Thakur under BNS sections 106 (causing death by negligence), 281 (rash driving)



and 324(4) (causing damage exceeding Rs 20,000) and provisions of the MV Act. Thakur has been released on bail. Vikas Kaushik, ACP (DLF), said they were still waiting for Thakur to submit a driving licence, if any. "He submitted other documents, but claimed he did not have his licence then. So, we gave him time till Friday to submit his licence with us. We believe he doesn't have a four-wheeler licence. We will now include relevant sections of the Motor Vehicles Act in the

FIR and take action accordingly," he added. Kaushik said police would look into these violations as part of the probe against Thakur. "Now that it has come to the fore, we will dig out all his previous challans and call him for further questioning. We are just waiting for the notice period to end by Friday night," the ACP said. Akshat's mother, Rekha Garg, questioned police

vigil on the roads. "My son is gone, but the accused slept peacefully at night," she said, referring to Thakur's bail. "I want justice for my son. Why are police dragging their feet in the case? He should be arrested right away," she added. An ITI graduate, Akshat worked as a food delivery agent to support his elderly parents and younger sister. He would have turned 22 around Diwali this year.

Ask Faridabad to manage its fresh waste within its jurisdiction, MCG tells ULB

Gurgaon. The MCG wrote to the urban local bodies (ULB) department, requesting them to direct the municipal corporation of Faridabad (MCF) to handle their fresh waste within their own jurisdiction rather than transporting it to the Bandhwari landfill site. In a letter to the ULB department, MCG commissioner Narhari Singh Banger highlighted that the amount of fresh waste sent from Faridabad to Bandhwari doubled over the past two months, rising from 650 tonnes to a staggering 1,300 tonnes per day.

The MCG expressed worries about the increased dumping of fresh waste, especially as the deadline for processing legacy waste is

approaching by the end of Dec. "We received a request from the MCF stating that they don't have a site to dump fresh waste, so they will continue with the existing arrangement," said a senior MCG official. The MCG further highlighted that the waste processing capacity at Bandhwari was reduced to 1,700 tonnes per day in August against the required daily capacity of 10,990 tonnes per day.

The MCG, in an affidavit submitted to the National Green Tribunal recently, has reiterated its commitment to clearing the legacy waste accumulated at the Bandhwari landfill by the end of Dec this year. To achieve this, the corporation intends to process 12.1

lakh metric tonnes of waste with a daily processing capacity of 10,990 tonnes. According to the affidavit, 2.5 lakh metric tonnes of solid waste is expected to be dumped from Aug 30 to Dec this year. Currently, 9.6 lakh metric tonnes of waste lie unprocessed at Bandhwari.

In Aug, a mere 53,935 metric tonnes of legacy waste were processed, marking the lowest amount processed in the past nine months. This figure represents a significant 55% decrease compared to the 1.2 lakh metric tonnes processed in July. MCG officials attributed this decrease to the unavailability of agencies to process waste and the relentless rain the city has been witnessing this year.

Mobility plan deadline just 2 years away, Gurgaon yet to meet 90% of bus fleet target

Gurgaon: With just two years left until the 2026 deadline, the city has less than 10% of the required buses needed to meet commuter demands, according to GMDA's comprehensive mobility management plan (CMMP). While the plan estimates that at least 1,550 buses are necessary to serve the city's growing population by 2026, only 200 CNG buses are currently operational. Of these, 150 are deployed in Gurgaon, with the remaining 50 operating in Faridabad.

This leaves the city short by at least 1,350 buses if it hopes to meet its public transport goals by 2026. Gurugram Metropolitan City Bus Limited (GMCBL) was launched in 2018 with the aim to provide seamless connectivity and reduce dependency on private vehicles. Six years later, the city bus fleet has stagnated with GMCBL failing to expand its services. The slow expansion of the Gurugram bus service has left residents with limited commuting options. Moreover, over the past seven years, the city's metro network



has not even moved an inch. The bus service was supposed to fill this void, but the lack of additional buses has left many areas unserved, forcing commuters to rely on cabs and private vehicles, further congesting already traffic-clogged roads. Experts said expansion of the bus fleet needs to be prioritised as part of a larger strategy to improve the city's overall mobility and make commuting more sustainable for residents. "The city has grown exponentially over the last five years, but the public transport infrastructure hasn't evolved along with it. Ideally, 50% of the target should have been achieved as per the population, but that hasn't happened. Without a robust bus fleet, commuters are left with very few viable options," said Sewa Ram,

professor (transport planning) at School of Planning and Architecture. With population expanding rapidly, particularly in sectors along the Southern Peripheral Road (SPR) and Dwarka Expressway, the demand for public transport is increasing. The limited bus fleet, however, has led to long wait times, overcrowded buses during peak hours, and incomplete coverage of many key residential and business areas. According to the mobility plan, around 21.9 lakh intra-city motorised trips are performed daily in the city. About 57% of these trips are for work purposes, followed by 29% for education-related travel. "A lot of development has taken place in Gurgaon, spreading towards various directions — western, eastern, and southern, with new areas along Dwarka Expressway and Southern Peripheral Road. There is a need to build the habit of using the public transit system. Until the metro system fully develops, buses should fill that space, and it will create captive demand for the metro, pushing further expansion."

Ahead of harvest, Haryana ramps up steps to curb stubble burning in 469 villages

Gurgaon. Ahead of the upcoming harvest season, the state govt has identified villages where stubble burning is rampant every year. This time, Haryana's efforts are focused on 469 villages spanning 12 districts — Ambala, Fatehabad, Hisar, Jind, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Panipat, Rohtak, Kaithal, Yamunanagar, Sonapat, and Palwal. Among these, 67 villages are categorised as 'red zones', which are areas experiencing five or more farm fires daily, while 402 are designated as 'yellow zones' — areas experiencing up to two farm fires per day. These statistics demonstrate a significant improvement from 2022 which recorded as many as 147 'red zone' villages and 582 'yellow zone' villages. To further discourage farmers from stubble burning, a WhatsApp group named 'No Straw Burning' was created by the govt for real-time surveillance at the district and block levels and sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) were designated as nodal officers to oversee crop residue management within their respective jurisdictions. Moreover, temporary police posts were established in the 'red zone' villages and control rooms were set up to ensure stringent



enforcement of regulations. Farmers were incentivised to discard the practice of crop residue-burning as well. In 2023, stubble burning in Haryana fell by 37% as compared to the winter months of 2022, as reported by the govt. Every winter, the air quality in Delhi-NCR deteriorates to hazardous levels as the region becomes enveloped in a toxic haze due to cold and stagnant weather conditions coupled with emissions. Farm fires, common in north India's agricultural belt to clear tracts of land for another round of sowing

following the harvest season, are among the primary sources of pollution during this time of the year. This decades-old method, which is cheaper than most others, is used by most small-scale farmers in Punjab, Haryana, and UP. These farmers often do not opt for alternative methods like manually clearing the land or spraying bio-enzyme called PUSA because they do not have the capacity for it. According to Agriculture department, in Haryana, the total estimated area under paddy in kharif 2024

will be 38.87 lakh acres, generating 81.08 LMT of crop residue. Out of this, the areas under basmati and non-basmati will be 19.49 lakh acres and 19.38 lakh acres respectively, generating 40.65 LMT and 40.43 LMT of crop residue. "Villages that manage to eliminate stubble burning and fall in the yellow zone will be awarded cash prizes of Rs 50,000 each and those that eliminate the practice and fall in the red zone will be awarded Rs 1 lakh," said Darshan Singh, technical assistant at the agriculture department. "To tackle the situation, we have a micro-level planning in place. The aim is to further reduce the number of farm fires and increase the area where there is no stubble burning," Singh added. According to officials, various machines such as Super Straw Management System attached with existing combine harvester, Happy Seeder, Straw Chopper, Mulcher, Rotary Slasher, Reversible M B Plough, Super Seeder, Crop Reapers etc have been successfully deployed and demonstrated in fields of these villages. Currently, more than 90,000 machines have been provided for in-situ management of crop residue, they added.

News box

US soldier who fled to North Korea sentenced, then freed on basis of time served

Washington. US Army Private Travis King, who last year ran into North Korea and was taken into custody there, was sentenced on Friday to one year of confinement then freed based on time already served, his lawyer said in a statement. He pleaded guilty to five charges, and the sentencing was held at Fort Bliss in Texas.

The US Army charged King with crimes including desertion for running into North Korea in July 2023, assault against fellow soldiers and solicitation of child pornography, Reuters reported late last year. He was charged by the Army with 14 offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, after his release from North Korean custody in September 2023 following behind-the-scenes negotiations. The government moved to dismiss nine offenses after he pleaded guilty to five charges. "With time already served and credit for good behavior, Travis is now free and will return home," his lawyer said.

King joined the Army in January 2021. He was detained in South Korea over assault allegations to which he pleaded guilty.

King had already been due to face disciplinary action in the United States after his release from South Korean detention. He was on his way home last year when he slipped away from Seoul's international airport and made his way to a civilian tour of the border area between North and South Korea. Then King sprinted across the border into North Korea. He was immediately taken into North Korean custody.

Indian embassy official found dead under mysterious circumstances in US

World An Indian embassy official died under mysterious circumstances inside the embassy premises in Washington. According to a statement by the Indian embassy, the incident happened on Wednesday, September 18, and is currently under investigation by the local police and Secret Service. The probe into the embassy official's death is covering all the angles, including the possibility of suicide, the statement by the Indian embassy added. With deep regret, we wish to confirm that a member of the Embassy of India passed away in the evening of 18th September 2024. We are in touch with all relevant agencies and members of the family to ensure the swift transfer of the mortal remains to India," the Indian Embassy said in a statement on Friday. "Additional details regarding the deceased are not being released out of concern for the family's privacy. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in this time of grief," it said, without giving any further details.

Weaponizing ordinary devices violates international law, United Nations rights chief says

UNITED NATIONS. Weaponizing ordinary communication devices represents a new development in warfare, and targeting thousands of Lebanese people using pagers, two-way radios and electronic equipment without their knowledge is a violation of international human rights law, the United Nations human rights chief said Friday.

Volker Türk told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council there must be an independent and transparent investigation of the two attacks in Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday where these devices exploded, reportedly killing 37 people and injuring more than 3,400 others. "Those who ordered and carried out these attacks must be held to account," he said. Lebanon has blamed Israel for the attacks, which appeared to target Hezbollah militants but also saw many civilian casualties, including children. Hezbollah has fought many conflicts with Israel, including a war in 2006, and it has conducted near-daily strikes against Israel to support Hamas militants who attacked Israel on Oct. 7. Before the council meeting, Israel's U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon was asked by reporters about speculation Israel was behind the two explosions. "We are not commenting on the specific attacks you mentioned, but I can tell you that we will do everything we can to target those terrorists to minimize casualties for civilians," he replied.

Lebanon's Foreign Minister Abdallah Bouhabbib accused Israel of terrorizing the entire Lebanese population on streets, in markets, shops and their homes where their communications devices exploded. He held up a photo of a mangled and bloodied hand, telling ambassadors from the 15 council nations: "Look at the ugliness of what has happened in this picture." Bouhabbib insisted that Israel not only launched the attacks but told the council there were "official declarations" and a tweet by an adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "that was lately deleted, emphasizing the responsibility of Israel and praising the positive results of this assault." He appeared to be referring to a deleted tweet by Netanyahu adviser Topaz Luke, who reportedly retweeted a post that included a reply indicating that Israel was behind the attacks in Lebanon and neighboring Syria.

Rare polar bears shows up outside woman's house in Iceland, cops shoot it dead

← The bear was killed Thursday afternoon in the northwest of Iceland after police consulted the Environment Agency, which declined to have the animal relocated, police told Associated Press.

London. A rare polar bear that was spotted outside a cottage in a remote village in Iceland was shot by police after being considered a threat, authorities said Friday. The bear was killed Thursday afternoon in the northwest of Iceland after police consulted the Environment Agency, which declined to have the animal relocated, Westfjords Police Chief Helgi Jenson told The Associated Press. "It's not something

we like to do," Jenson said. "In this case, as you can see in the picture, the bear was very close to a summer house. There was an old woman in there." The owner, who was alone, was frightened and locked herself upstairs as the bear rummaged through her garbage, Jenson said. She contacted her daughter in Reykjavik, the nation's capital, by satellite link, and called for help. "She stayed there," Jenson said, adding that other summer residents in the area had gone home. "She knew the danger." Polar bears are not native to Iceland but occasionally come ashore after traveling on ice floes from Greenland, according to Anna Sveinsdóttir, director of scientific collections at the Icelandic Institute of Natural History. Many icebergs have been spotted off the north coast in the last few weeks. Although attacks by polar bears on humans are extremely rare, a study in Wildlife Society Bulletin in 2017 said that the loss of sea ice from global warming has led more hungry bears to land, putting them in greater chance of conflicts with humans and leading to a greater risk to both. Of 73 documented attacks by polar



bears from 1870 to 2014 in Canada, Greenland, Norway, Russia, and United States — which killed 20 people and injured 63 — 15 occurred in the final five years of that period. The bear shot on Thursday was the first one seen in the country since 2016. Sightings are relatively rare with only 600 recorded in Iceland since the ninth century. While the bears are a protected species in Iceland and it's forbidden to kill one at sea, they can be killed if they pose a threat to humans or livestock. After two bears arrived in 2008, a debate over killing the threatened species led the environment

minister to appoint a task force to study the issue, the institute said. The task force concluded that killing vagrant bears was the most appropriate response.

The group said the nonnative species posed a threat to people and animals, and the cost of returning them to Greenland, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) away, was exorbitant. It also found there was a healthy bear population in east Greenland where any bear was likely to have come from. The young bear, which weighed between 150 and 200 kilograms (300 to 400 pounds), will be taken to the institute to study. Scientists took samples from the bear Friday. They will be checking for parasites and infections and evaluating its physical condition, such as the health of its organs and percentage of body fat, Sveinsdóttir said. The pelt and skull may be preserved for the institute's collection. A Coast Guard helicopter surveyed the area where the bear was found to look for others but didn't find any, police said. After the shot bear was taken away, the woman who reported it decided to stay longer in the village, Jenson said.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy to visit US next week, hold talks with Biden, Kamala Harris

← US officials said they have asked Ukraine to spell out more clearly its combat objectives should the administration green light loosening restrictions on long-range weaponry.

Washington. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will travel to Washington next Thursday for talks with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris as he presses the US to allow Ukraine to use Western-provided weapons to strike deeper into Russia. "I'm looking forward to hosting my friend President Zelenskyy of Ukraine next week at the White House," Biden said in a message posted on X. "During his visit, I'll reaffirm America's commitment to supporting Ukraine as it defends its freedom and independence." The Biden administration still is not convinced that it should give Ukraine the authority to launch long-range missiles deeper into Russia, and US officials say they are seeking more detailed information about how Kyiv would use the weapons and how



they fit into the broader strategy for the war. US officials said they have asked Ukraine to spell out more clearly its combat objectives should the administration green light loosening restrictions on long-range weaponry. Administration officials are concerned that loosening restrictions would have limited impact and come with great risk. Russian President Vladimir Putin last week warned that Russia would be "at war" with the United States and its NATO allies if they allow Ukraine to use the long-range weapons.

US defense officials have repeatedly argued that the long-range missiles are limited in number and that Ukraine already is using its own long-range drones to hit targets

farther into Russia. Zelenskyy is notably meeting separately with Harris, who is looking to succeed Biden. She last met with the Ukrainian president in July at an international gathering in Switzerland to discuss the war, shortly before Biden announced he was abandoning his bid for reelection and endorsed Harris. Former President Donald Trump has repeatedly said that he would move to quickly end the war should he win the November election. His running mate, Senator JD Vance, said in a recent interview with the "Shawn Ryan Show" that Trump's plan would include establishing a "demilitarized zone," and Ukraine would not reclaim territory that Russia occupies and would agree not to join NATO.

Biden says 'working' to get people back to homes on Israel-Lebanon border

Washington. US President Joe Biden said Friday he was working to allow people to return to their homes on the Israeli-Lebanon border, in his first comments since a wave of explosions targeting the Hezbollah militia sent tensions soaring.

Biden added that it was crucial to keep pushing for a Gaza ceasefire to underpin regional peace, despite a media report that his administration had given up hope of securing a truce before he leaves office in January. Speaking at the start of a cabinet meeting in the White House, Biden told reporters he wanted to "make sure that the people in northern Israel as well as southern Lebanon are able to go back to their homes, to go back safely." "And the Secretary of State, the secretary of defence, our whole team are working with the intelligence community to try to get that done. We're going to keep at it until we get it done, but we've got a way to go," Biden said. It was Biden's first reaction since the violence shifted dramatically from Gaza to Lebanon, with thousands of Hezbollah operatives' pagers and walkie-talkies exploding earlier this week. The blasts - which Hezbollah blamed on Israel - killed 37 people including children and wounded thousands more. Israel has not commented on the explosions. Months of near-daily border clashes have killed hundreds in Lebanon, most of them fighters, and dozens in Israel, forcing thousands on both sides to flee their homes. Biden also denied that a ceasefire to end Israel's war in Gaza following the Hamas October 7 attacks was unrealistic, following a Wall Street Journal report that officials believe is now unlikely.

"If I ever said it's not realistic, we might as well leave. A lot of things don't look realistic until we get them done. We have to keep at it," Biden said.

Trump assassination bid: Secret Service says complacency led to security breach

← US Secret Service Acting Director Ronald Rowe Jr. said that while some members of the advance team were very diligent, there was complacency on the part of others that led to a breach of security protocols.

Washington. The US Secret Service on Friday detailed a litany of failures uncovered by its review of the attempted assassination of former president Donald Trump at a rally in July.

Shooter Thomas Matthew Crooks was able to open fire from a nearby rooftop at the outdoor event held by Republican election candidate Trump, who narrowly escaped

death and suffered a wound to his right ear. "While some members of the advance team were very diligent, there was complacency on the part of others that led to a breach of security protocols." Among the failures identified by Rowe were poor communication with local law enforcement, an "over-reliance" on mobile devices "resulting in information being siloed" and line of sight issues, which "were acknowledged but not properly mitigated."

"At approximately 18:10 local time, by a phone call, the Secret Service security room calls the counter-sniper response agent reporting an individual on the roof of the AGR building," Rowe recounted.

"That vital piece of information was not relayed over the Secret Service radio network." Two attendees of the rally in Butler, Pennsylvania were injured by gunfire and a third, 50-year-old firefighter Corey Comperatore, died as a result. Crooks was shot dead on the roof by Secret



Service personnel. Secret Service director Kimberly Cheatle resigned in the aftermath of the dramatic incident, and several Secret Service agents have been put on leave. Rowe said the Secret Service needed additional funding, personnel and equipment to complete a "paradigm shift... from a state of reaction to a state of readiness." The US House of Representatives unanimously passed a bill on Friday to boost Secret Service protection for presidential candidates to the same level as sitting

presidents and vice presidents.

The bill now awaits a vote in the Senate and a signature by President Joe Biden before it becomes law. Rowe said that Trump is now being given the same levels of protection as the president. The increased demand for security came into sharp focus again after a second apparent assassination attempt on Trump's life at his golf course in West Palm Beach, Florida last weekend. "What occurred on Sunday demonstrates that the threat environment in which the Secret Service operates is tremendous," Rowe said. The gunman in Florida did not have a line of sight on the former president and failed to fire a shot before he was discovered and arrested, officials say. Trump has sought political advantage by blaming - without evidence - Biden and Democratic election rival Kamala Harris for fuelling motivation behind the plots, citing their "rhetoric" about him endangering democracy.

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka votes to elect new President

World Millions of Sri Lankans were casting their votes on Saturday to select a president who will face the task of bolstering the South Asian country's fragile economic recovery following its worst financial crisis in decades.

More than 17 million of Sri Lanka's 22 million people are eligible to vote in an election that has shaped up to be a close contest between President Ranil Wickremesinghe, main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and Marxist-leaning challenger Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who led in one recent opinion poll. Citizens in the capital Colombo lined up early at polling booths, which were guarded by security personnel, as voting began at 7 a.m. (0130 GMT). It was proceeding peacefully across the island nation, according to local media. Polls close at 4 p.m. (1030 GMT), with counting scheduled to start shortly afterward. The



Election Commission is expected to announce the winner on Sunday. Over 13,000 polling stations were set up across the country and 250,000 public officials deployed to manage the election. R.M.L. Rathnayake, the head of Sri Lanka's election commission, told Reuters. This is the first election since Sri Lanka's economy buckled

in 2022 under a severe foreign exchange shortage, leaving the Indian Ocean island nation unable to pay for imports of essentials including fuel, medicine and cooking gas. Thousands of protesters marched in Colombo in 2022 and occupied the president's office and residence, forcing then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee and later resign. Buttressed by a \$2.9 billion bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund, Sri Lanka's economy has posted a tentative recovery, but the high cost of living remains a core issue for many voters. Although inflation cooled to 0.5% last month from a crisis high of 70%, and the economy is forecast to grow in 2024 for the first time in three years, millions remain mired in poverty and debt, with many pinning hopes of a better future on their next

leader. Whoever wins the election will have to ensure Sri Lanka sticks with the IMF programme until 2027 to get its economy on a stable growth path, reassure markets, attract investors and help a quarter of its people climb out of crisis-caused poverty. "Your decision at the polls today will shape the future of our nation, not just for the next five years, but for generations to come," Foreign Minister Ali Sabry posted on X in support of Wickremesinghe. "Use your vote wisely so Sri Lanka can continue its recovery and move forward towards a sustainable and prosperous future. Sri Lanka's ranked voting system allows voters to cast three preferential votes for their chosen candidates. If no candidate wins 50% in the first count, there is a second round between the two frontrunners, with the preferential votes of other candidates redistributed, an outcome analysts say is likely given the close nature of the election."

News box

Install sign boards to prevent encroachments near Dhandayuthapani Temple: Madras HC to DSP

MADURAI: The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court directed the Palani deputy superintendent of police (DSP) to install sign boards to prevent any further encroachments in the area after the Palani municipality submitted that the encroachments around the Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple were removed. The division bench of Acting Chief Justice D Krishnakumar and Justice R Vijayakumar was hearing a contempt petition filed by A Radhakrishnan on the non-compliance of an earlier order passed by the court pertaining to the removal of encroachments around the girivalam path of the Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple in Palani in Dindigul district. Earlier, the court had appointed a monitoring committee for the removal of the encroachments. The counsel appearing for Palani temple had sought two weeks for completing the aforesaid works and file a detailed report before the court. The counsel also submitted that battery-operated cars would be parked at the junction of the girivalam path for picking-up and dropping devotees. Subsequently, the encroachments leading to Palani Temple Adivaram, Sannathi Road, Aiyampuli Road, Arul Jyothi Veethi, Adivaram Retteri Road, Kuravankaripari and Thiruvinankudi would be removed, the counsel said. The court directed the Palani DSP to regulate and monitor the aforesaid streets by installing sign boards and not allow further encroachments in the area. Furthermore, the Palani municipal commissioner was directed to file a detailed report on the number of unauthorised constructions there.

Pondy man duped of Rs 1 lakh in child adoption scam

PUDUCHERRY: A Puducherry resident who was trying to adopt a child was cheated of Rs 1.07 lakh by an online group posing as an adoption agency. The victim, Sinode, had reached out to the group after spotting a Facebook advertisement for child adoption under the name 'Anbu Illam' said Inspector (Cyber Wing) BC Keerthi. Sinode responded to the ad and was soon contacted by the fraudsters. They sent him photographs of more than ten children, asking which one he would like to adopt. Believing the scheme to be genuine, Sinode continued the conversation. Over the span of a month, the group tricked him into transferring Rs 1.07 lakh, in various installments, under the guise of handling "legal proceedings" for the adoption. The scam came to light when Sinode realised that despite the payments, no real progress was made, prompting him to report the matter to cyber police. Authorities are now investigating the case to trace the fraudsters.

Silectric Denies investment reports following Odisha approval for 3,034 crore project

BHUBANESWAR: A day after the high-level clearance authority (HLCA) headed by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi cleared a proposal of Silectric Semiconductor Manufacturing Pvt Ltd for its Rs 3,034 crore silicon carbide device manufacturing unit in Khurda, the firm surprisingly dismissed reports of its investment in the state. On Friday, CEO of Chennai-based tech giant Zoho Sridhar Vembu said the proposal is still pending and the media reports on the semiconductor investment is inaccurate. Silectric Semiconductor Manufacturing Pvt Ltd was formed by directors of Zoho in March this year. "I do not like to comment on rumours and speculation but today's news item on our semiconductor investment is inaccurate.

Our investment proposal is still pending with various authorities and decisions have not yet been made. That is all I can say at this point," Vembu posted on X.

This is for the first time that an investor has reacted on social media on a proposed multi-thousand crore investment in the state creating ripples in both the industry and political circles here with some hinting that the firm might have plans to shift the project to another location.

Sources in the Industries department, however, said Silectric Semiconductor Manufacturing Pvt Ltd had applied for its silicon carbide device manufacturing unit on May 17 as per the Odisha government's single-window investor facilitation and tracking system. After due scrutiny, it was placed before the HLCA for approval.

Principal secretary of Industries department Hemant Sharma said the company had duly applied for the project seeking approval of the state government. Its authorities had met him on a couple of occasions and discussed the project. They also visited the proposed site before the project got the in-principle approval, he clarified.

Towards a better working 'period' for women employees

While it is a well-intended move, what needs to be questioned is whether six days a year as menstrual leave is adequate.

KARNATAKA. The Karnataka government is considering the introduction of paid menstrual leave for women employees in public as well as private sectors. As of now the talk is about offering six days of paid leave annually to women employees aged up to 55 during menstruation. An 18-member committee that was set up to study and recommend the implementation of menstrual leave for women employees recently submitted its draft recommendations to the state government. These are being discussed ahead of getting it endorsed in the state legislature. The draft recommendations recognised such a leave as a "right of the women", while stressing that it should be a paid leave which needs to be treated confidentially. It also suggested imposing penalties for denial of such leaves.

While it is a well-intended move, what needs to be questioned is whether six days a year as menstrual leave is adequate. Many women have extremely painful and excruciating menstrual cycles, and considering that this cycle repeats on an average every 28 days, six days a year is grossly insufficient. It is crucial to note that many workplaces where women are employed do not have toilets, or are not hygienic, or are just not in usable



conditions. This makes it extremely difficult for menstruating women to work comfortably. There have been many unfortunate cases in which young, married working women who experience painful menstruation have even preferred hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) to avoid menstruation forcing them to keep away from work and lose salary for it — sacrificing their dreams of having children for the sake of earning a livelihood. The new rules must mandatorily apply to contractors so that it benefits daily wage women workers who are most affected by this.

Lack of proper toilets and sanitation are also among the main reasons for many schoolgirls aged between 13 and 15 (the age of puberty when girls begin

menstruating) to leave schools. A little on the anatomical process to understand what menstruation is: It is the discharge of blood and mucosal tissue from the inner lining — called endometrium — of the uterus. The discharge happens through the vagina. It is the rise and fall of hormones, which characterises the menstrual cycle. Occurrence of menstruation signals that the woman is not pregnant. It happens this way: The ovaries release the female hormones estrogen and progesterone, which cause the endometrium to build up with eggs. The built-up endometrium is ready to nurture the eggs fertilised by the sperms. The fertilised egg attaches to the endometrium, developing into a baby, signifying pregnancy. However, if the eggs are not fertilised, the endometrium breaks down and bleeds, passing out through the vagina — the process called menstruation. It is during this breaking down of the endometrium that different menstruating women experience varying degrees of pain or discomfort. The average menstrual cycle lasts 28 days. The cycle starts with the first day of this menstruation, referred to as 'period', and ends with the first day of the next period, with an average woman ovulating on day 14.

73% of stray dogs surveyed not sterilised: Corporation report

CHENNAI: Chennai's stray dog population has surged, reaching to around 1.8 lakh in 2024, from 57,336 in 2018, according to a recent survey conducted by the Chennai Corporation, Tamil Nadu Animal Welfare Board (TNAWB), and Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS). The survey reveals that only 27% of the city's stray dogs have undergone sterilisation, leaving the remaining 73% reproductively active, which raises concerns about further population growth. The data shows a stark disparity in sterilisation rates across the city's 15 zones, largely due to uneven distribution of animal birth control (ABC) centres. Zones 12 and 13, which have higher access to these centres, recorded fewer stray dogs, with only 985 and 2,158 dogs, respectively. In contrast, northern zones, particularly zones 7, 3, and 4, have significantly lower sterilisation rates, leading to a higher concentration of stray dogs. Zone 7 alone has the highest stray dog count at 5,625, underscoring the need for greater focus on animal birth control in these areas.

Karlette Anne Fernandes, director of WVS DogPop Taskforce, warned that without focused ABC efforts in the north zones, the dog population will continue to increase exponentially. "As female dogs are able to breed up to 12 puppies in six months, the numbers could spike if preventive measures are not properly implemented," she said. The survey also indicated that 18% of female dogs were observed to be lactating, further contributing to the rapid breeding cycle. Interestingly, the report established a correlation between effective sterilisation programmes and reduced public complaints related to stray dogs. In areas where sterilisation efforts were successful, the public grievance redressal (PGR) system reported fewer dog-related complaints, highlighting the need for the corporation to scale up sterilisation drives.

Andhra effect: Karnataka to test prasada in muzrai temples

BENGALURU: The Karnataka government has decided to test prasada given in temples under the endowments department, according to Endowment Minister Ramalinga Reddy. This is in the wake of the controversy over the presence of animal fat in the prasada given to devotees at Tirupati temple. The state government has issued a circular directing the temples to use only KMF's Nandini ghee to prepare prasada, especially laddus. Karnataka has over 34,000 temples under the

department. Of them, 205 have been classified as Class-A with an annual revenue of over Rs 25 lakh, 193 as Class-B with a revenue between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 25 lakh and the rest as Class-C with a revenue of less than Rs 5 lakh. Most of these temples give prasada to devotees. Reddy told TNIE that temples in the state offer safe and hygienic prasada and food to their devotees. "But people should not have any doubt. So we have issued a circular to conduct a test," he said. Meanwhile, the office of the Commissioner for

Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments issued the circular to temples to use only KMF's Nandini ghee to prepare prasada and other food items.

'Use Nandini ghee in temples'

The temples have also been directed to use only Nandini ghee to light lamps. Earlier, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Pralhad Joshi urged the Congress government to test prasada given in temples. Karnataka has been supplying Nandini ghee to Tirupati temple.

114 families evicted from Villivakkam

CHENNAI: A total of 114 families were evicted on Friday from Annai Sathya Nagar near Villivakkam lake, and shifted to the TNUHDB high-rise phase I apartments at Moolakothalam, 12 km away. Chennai Corporation is planning an eco-park at the eviction site. The families, had taken part in the biometric enumeration process carried out by the government in 2023. A few other families, who had not participated in the process despite residing in the locality, protested against the eviction. Following their protests, the eviction of these families was temporarily halted. The families blamed the officials for trying to evict them without due process. "We told the officials that we hadn't received any eviction order and questioned why we

should leave. But a senior police officer threatened to break our noses if we didn't comply. In fear, at least 20 families left their belongings and gathered at the bus stand," said R Muthaiyan (41), a resident who did not provide biometric details. Highlighting that the eviction was being carried out in the middle of the academic year, Vanaja J (35), said, "Our children's education, our work among others will be affected by such evictions."

A corporation official told TNIE, "The land originally belonged to the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board but has been transferred to the corporation, which now plans to develop an eco-park on the site, prompting the eviction process."

Malayali from Wayanad under investigation for connection to Lebanon pager blasts

KOZHIKODE: On Friday, the people of Kerala woke up to shocking news connecting a Malayali from Mananthavady, Wayanad, to the devastating pager explosion spree in Lebanon. Authorities are investigating the involvement of Rinson Jose, a 39-year-old entrepreneur and a Norwegian citizen, in the incident. Jose, originally from Mananthavady and currently living in Oslo, is the owner of Norta Global Limited, a Bulgarian shell company allegedly involved in supplying pagers to Hezbollah.

The explosions in Lebanon occurred on Tuesday, targeting Hezbollah, and preliminary investigations suggest that the pagers were provided by Norta Global Limited, a Sofia-based company linked to Jose. International media reported that Jose's company received components from Taiwan, which were then used to manufacture the devices. It is reported that



he might have fled to the US or the UK, where his younger brother resides, as he and his wife have not been seen since the day of the explosions. Jose's family in Mananthavady expressed shock at the allegations. His uncle, Thankachan, denied any suspicion of illegal activity, stating that Rinson had been in touch with the family just a week ago and had always been a well-behaved individual. According to Thankachan, Rinson last visited his

hometown in 2022. Rinson moved to Norway in 2012 and holds Norwegian citizenship. He is involved in several ventures, including an IT consulting firm called NortaLink, and works as the Customer Journey and CRM lead for DN Media Group in Oslo.

He also runs a cultural organisation called the Indian Sport and Cultural Association of Norway.

Wayanad District Police Chief Taposh Basumatary confirmed that local authorities were aware of the sensitive nature of the issue and have provided protection to Rinson's family in Mananthavady. However, no specific orders have been given by state or central authorities regarding the investigation. Meanwhile, international media reported that Bulgarian authorities clarified that Norta Global had nothing to do with the delivery of exploding communication devices.

Odisha: Clash over ash disposal at NTPC plant in Darlipali

Sundargarh SDPO Himanshu Behera said NTPC has given the contract to Pande to load ash from its ash pond in vehicles for disposal.

ROURKELA: A clash erupted at Bhasma over control of ash discharged from Darlipali power plant of NTPC on Thursday. It all started when a gang led by one Suraj Patel from Tileimal in adjacent Jharsuguda district and Darlipali ransacked the office of ash loading contractor Sanjay Pande. Pande and another person were injured in the assault. One round was fired in the air by the gang members to terrorise Pande. Sundargarh SDPO Himanshu Behera said NTPC has given the contract to Pande to load ash from its ash pond in vehicles for disposal. As the contract tenure will end soon, Pande's associate Jayant Majhi has bagged the contract for the job. However, for the last few days a rival gang led by Patel has been demanding the contract and preventing Pande's team from loading



ash into vehicles. The gang's members also had a scuffle with Majhi's group. He said Patel along with 15-20 others assaulted Pande and ransacked his office. A case has been registered and efforts are underway to nab the accused. An empty bullet case was recovered from the spot. The SDPO said NTPC authorities have been asked to sort out the issue and asserted police would deal with any law

and order situation sternly. On July 4, a clash had erupted between two rival gangs over ownership of Bhatia Energy & Minerals (Sundargarh) Pvt Ltd (BEMSPL), a coal washery unit, at Garjanbahal within Hemgir police limits. Goons owing allegiance to Chhattisgarh businessman Bharat Agarwal attacked men of another businessman from the neighbouring state Ravi Gupta with sticks, iron rods and other weapons to take possession of the coal washery unit. At least eight persons from both sides were injured and properties including four vehicles and office premises damaged. Hemgir police said 17 people from Raigarh in Chhattisgarh and five from Sundargarh were arrested for the violence.

Actor rape case accused Pulsar Suni released on bail after seven years

The accused was directed to execute a bail bond for Rs 1 lakh with two solvent sureties each for the same amount. He should not influence the witnesses directly or indirectly.

KOCHI: After seven-and-a-half years, Sunil aka Pulsar Suni, the prime accused in the 2017 actor abduction case was released from the jail after the Ernakulam District Principal Sessions Court granted him bail on Friday. Earlier, allowing the bail petition of Suni, the Supreme Court had directed the trial court to decide on bail conditions to be imposed on Suni for his release. The apex court granted bail to Suni considering that the trial is unlikely to end soon. As directed by the SC, Suni's lawyer approached the trial court on Thursday with a copy of the apex court order. Following this, the district court ordered Suni to be produced before it on Friday. After Suni was produced, the court heard his counsel and the prosecution on the conditions to be laid for granting him bail. The prosecution demanded strict conditions so that the accused could not influence the witnesses or tamper with any evidence. Suni's lawyer submitted that the accused is ready to follow any conditions imposed by the court.

After the hearing, the court set 10 conditions for releasing Suni on bail. The accused was directed to execute a bail bond for Rs 1 lakh with two solvent sureties each for the same amount. He should not influence the witnesses directly or indirectly. Suni should furnish the details of his place of abode before the court within one week and should not change the place without its permission. He should furnish the phone number before the court within one week and he should not use more than one SIM card. The district probation officer should file a report regarding his conduct during bail on or before the 10th of every month from October 2024. The Ernakulam Rural SP should ensure the safety of the accused while he is on bail. The accused should not be involved in criminal activities while on bail. He shall not give any interview or make any comments about the case or any related matters through any of the print, electronic, visual or social media. As directed, Suni's lawyer produced two solvent sureties in the court. After leaving the court, Suni reached Ernakulam Sub Jail and completed the formalities for his release by evening. From the jail, he travelled to his residence in Perumbavoor. He will appear again before the court on September 26 when the court examines accused persons under Section 313 of CrPC.

Global Pact for the Future mired in ambivalence

THE Summit of the Future, to be held in New York on September 22-23, originated as a response to concerns about the derailment of the implementation of the UN's Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In September 2023, the UN's SDG Summit attributed 'numerous crises' for this derailment. Since the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020, India has taken the lead in calling for 'reformed multilateralism' to respond to the crisis facing international institutions. Stressing that these challenges needed a 'human-centric' response, India participated in the inter-governmental process launched by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in February 2023 to draft an outcome document titled the 'Pact for the Future' (PFTF). The negotiations, co-facilitated by Germany and Namibia (representing the developed Global North and the developing Global South, respectively), call for a "new beginning in multilateralism". The PFTF attaches a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations as proof of its future-looking orientation. In policy terms, the emphasis that no single country can substitute for the collective impact of international cooperation, required to respond to the crises facing the world, is well-timed. The PFTF reiterates a "recommitment to international cooperation based on respect for international law". This highlights the predominance of the treaty framework of the UN Charter over 'rules' drawn up by informal plurilateral groupings.

The PFTF begins with sustainable development issues, vindicating the stand taken by India and developing countries of the Global South that sustainable development is the "central objective of multilateralism". However, while the document devotes considerable space to reiterating existing commitments to the SDGs, its specific recommendations on responding to the crises facing Agenda 2030 are limited.

The PFTF highlights the impact of an SDG Stimulus to generate the necessary finances for sustainable development. It endorses the localisation of SDGs to maximise a whole-of-society ground-up approach to sustainable development. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Spain in July 2025 is expected to integrate the SDG Stimulus in its outcome, while the Second World Summit for Social Development to be held in Qatar in November 2025 will do likewise for the localisation of SDGs. Outsourcing these initiatives to ongoing inter-governmental processes, which have their own dynamics, may or may not produce time-bound outcomes. The impression that despite holding a Summit to respond to the crisis, it will still be "business as usual" in the UN, is based on specific timelines in the PFTF. The next milestone to recommend action on Agenda 2030 is the July 2027 annual meeting of the UN's High-Level Political Forum, which has looked deeply into implementation of SDGs on an annual structured basis since July 2016. This is to be followed by a UNGA Summit in 2027 on the future of Agenda 2030, and a Review Summit of the PFTF in September 2028. Adding to this ambivalence is the proposal for the UN Secretary-General, through experts appointed by him, to suggest how to "go beyond GDP" in measuring implementation of the SDGs. This potentially makes implementation of Agenda 2030 a self-sustaining open-ended enterprise, substituting statistical analysis for ground-based action by UN member-states. The fracturing of the UN's political framework has led to the mushrooming of armed conflicts and confrontational unilateral responses. This has increased pressures on implementing Agenda 2030. An ineffective UN Security Council (UNSC), mandated by the Charter to maintain international peace and security, requires urgent reform to respond to the crisis.

Fairly or unfairly, judges are being judged

TRYSTS AND TURNS: No reason to criticise the CJJ's invite to PM if there was no hidden agenda

I have a soft corner for Justice Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud, the Chief Justice of India (CJI). He was my daughter's classmate at Mumbai's Cathedral and John Connon School for a short period. But that is not the reason for the affinity which is often tested when my friends criticise some of his judgments. My sympathies have much deeper roots — his father, Justice YV Chandrachud, who also served as the CJI, was one of my mentors in my student days. I will not dare to advise the son, now that he occupies the highest judicial post in our country. Even the fact that he is a good 30 years younger than me gives me no right to preach.

His father was my teacher at Government Law College (GLC), Mumbai, where I studied from 1948 to 1950. The Chandrachud family's ancestral home was in Pune, where I happened to be posted as that city's last Superintendent of Police in 1964. It was upgraded to a Police Commissionerate in 1965, but in the one year that I led the city's police force, Justice YV Chandrachud visited his home in Pune thrice. He was the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court at that time. That fact did not deter him from visiting an old pupil. My office happened to be midway between his ancestral home and the Pune railway station. Each time that happened, the entire clerical staff of my office would stop work to get a glimpse of the state's highest judicial authority. On one of those visits, Justice JR Vimadlal, another of my teachers at the GLC, accompanied him. My appointment as the Superintendent of the Pune city police at a comparatively junior stage had displeased many senior colleagues but gladdened the hearts of two of my teachers who had been raised to the Bench from the Bar. Their visits are etched in my memory. And when the senior Chandrachud himself became the CJI some years later, I had sufficient cause to experience vicarious pride. My readers will now understand why I wince when my old teacher's son, who has also risen to occupy the CJI's chair, is sometimes justly, but often unjustly, criticised by my liberal friends.

The present CJI's gesture of inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his official residence to participate in the aarti of Maharashtra's favourite deity Ganesha has attracted flak. Personally, I see no harm in the gesture. There is no reason to discard social contact if it has no hidden agenda. I am sure past Chief Justices had invited Prime Ministers or senior politicians to their homes. The problem arose this year because unnecessary publicity was accorded to what should have been a private occasion. The question arises: Who gave the aarti photographs to the media? If it was not the Chief Justice, I see no fault in him. If it is the Prime Minister's well-oiled propaganda cell, that would be par for the course. And in that case, the CJI cannot be pilloried. If, however,



the Chief Justice or his staff did distribute the photos among the media, the intelligentsia would be justified to ascribe motives and my tongue would then be tied. I do hope that the culprit is not my revered teacher's son or his administrative establishment. Another Supreme Court judge from Maharashtra who was in the news recently, albeit for positive reasons, was Justice BR Gavai. His Bench examined the complaint against 'bulldozer justice', which needs to be strictly restricted lest the 'rule of law' is sent for a toss. Bulldozers can be used for demolishing illegally built structures. Before municipal officers use them, procedures have to be followed. If they are not followed, the entire exercise is patently unlawful.

There has been much criticism, mostly justified, of parties to unauthorised construction taking advantage of the judicial process to delay the use of the bulldozer. The remedy lies not in abandoning the procedures but for the high courts instructing the judicial magistrate's court not to give leeway to lawyers attempting to delay the due process. Justice Ujjal Bhuyan is another Supreme Court judge who did the judiciary proud recently. In the matter of Arvind Kejriwal's bail, he lambasted the CBI for not stepping out of the 'parrot's cage' even after its Director was chosen under the new arrangement that permitted him or her to ignore irregular verbal orders of the

political establishment. Of course, he or she will not be offered a post-retirement sinecure. But that is a small price to pay for a clear conscience and self-respect.

The arrest of then Delhi Chief Minister in June was patently an attempt to keep him incarcerated for a prolonged period. He had been granted interim bail in May in the case registered by the Enforcement Directorate. That bail order was not to the government's liking! So, it did appear that the CBI helped to ensure that Kejriwal would be kept away from the political arena for a few more months. The timing was too convenient for the public to ignore. Kejriwal started off as a crusader against corruption. As a crusader, he made his mark. If he had continued as a crusader, he would have been a resounding success. Besides being useful to the people, he would have been assured of their respect. By deciding to abandon Anna Hazare and enter the political arena, he ventured into dangerous territory, one that he had fought against. He soon learnt that political parties cannot exist without funding. One of his present bugbears, the BJP, managed very cleverly with electoral bonds. Once the apex court frowned on the system because of its opacity, that party, too, went back to traditional methods. The BJP can go after other parties that follow such known (and unfortunately accepted) methods because it is today in the driver's seat.

Save Indus treaty

India, Pak must prioritise water security

THE landmark Indus Water Treaty (IWT), which has survived India-Pakistan wars and diplomatic tensions over the past 64 years, finds itself at a crossroads today. India has served a notice on its neighbour, seeking a review and modification of the treaty in view of 'fundamental and unforeseen changes in circumstances that require a reassessment of obligations'. Since January 2023, New Delhi has repeatedly written to Islamabad to initiate talks on revising the World Bank-brokered treaty, but all this has merely been water off a duck's back. Pakistan, which red-flagged its water crisis during a UN Security Council meeting in February this year, is banking on the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague to resolve the festering dispute over water-sharing.

River waters know no boundaries. Considering their mutual reliance on this precious natural resource, the two nations must realise that the IWT's survival is integral to ensuring regional water security. Intransigence and one-upmanship have made a bilateral settlement elusive. India



has unreasonably indicated that there will be no more meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission, which

includes officers from both nations, till the two governments discuss the renegotiation of the treaty. This 'Big Brother' approach may prove to be counterproductive as Pakistan has managed to internationalise the issue and is portraying India as the uncooperative party. The established dispute resolution mechanism — which has the provision for neutral experts as well as the arbitration court — should be honoured by both countries. Every effort must be made to keep the IWT alive and relevant.

Amid its muscle-flexing over the Indus treaty, India must not lose sight of the Brahmaputra basin, which lacks a water management framework. This major river system has India, China and Bangladesh among the stakeholders. Delhi must keep a close eye on China's proposed Great Bend Dam, which is expected to expand the country's capacity to store and withhold/release water. Beijing's 'upper riparian' status should not deter Delhi from insisting on multilateral cooperation.

Pakistan's worsening internal security a concern for India

Pakistan's growing relations with China have adverse implications for India. It needs to remain vigilant against this nexus.

Pakistan is in the news again for all the wrong reasons, with its internal security in a shambles. It is facing unprecedented terrorist violence — the chickens have come home to roost. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan, languishing in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since August last year, allegedly on trumped-up charges, has compared the worsening situation in Pakistan to circumstances which prevailed during former military dictator Gen Yahya Khan's rule. Imran lamented that the country's institutions were being destroyed systematically. It was during Gen Yahya Khan's tenure that Pakistan was split into two nations, as Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) came into existence. Imran has accused PM Shehbaz Sharif of being a 'tout' who is taking orders from the Army. The former PM has been continually blaming the judiciary's timidity for not giving him justice. He has also questioned the Pakistani establishment for incarcerating Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, terming the situation in that restive province as 'scary'. Earlier this month, Imran's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), held a massive rally demanding his release. The establishment reportedly employed strong-arm tactics, including arresting some top PTI leaders. The PTI is majorly concerned about reports that Imran may be tried by a military court. The head of the Army's press wing has hinted that "under military law, any individual who uses military personnel, for personal or political gain, and if there is evidence, will face legal consequences". It was a clear reference to the unrest on May 9 last year when PTI supporters had allegedly targeted military installations and state buildings. Imran has moved

the Islamabad High Court to pre-empt any move against him by the establishment.

Meanwhile, Imran has himself suggested 'conditional talks' with the Army. However, the main conditions cited for these talks are "clean and transparent elections" and the dropping of 'bogus' cases against his supporters. The Army has not yet responded to his proposal. Shehbaz, as expected, has ridiculed Imran's offer for talks. Marriyum Aurangzeb of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has also criticised Imran, stating that "the self-proclaimed revolutionary who used to say that he won't ask for forgiveness, has come down to pleading to the armed forces to talk to him." Overall, Imran remains the most popular political leader in Pakistan, much to the discomfiture of his political opponents and the Army. And if any extreme measure is directed against him, Pakistan, perhaps, will be thrown into unprecedented violence and anarchy. The situation is going from bad to worse in Pakistan's largest province, mineral-rich Balochistan. It has had a strong separatist rebellion movement festering for decades. The Pakistani establishment has been employing harsh measures to quell this movement, and able-bodied men disappearing from villages in Balochistan has been a regular feature. In order to quell this independence upsurge, the Pakistani security forces have violated the human rights protocol, employing their infamous "kill and dump policy". Despite Balochistan contributing the maximum to Pakistan's coffers, it remains its most impoverished province.

Islamabad's assistance to China in the construction and operation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) and the leasing of the Gwadar Port to Beijing in Balochistan has only added fuel to the fire as the self-respecting Baloch people do not appreciate foreigners and even non-Balochis from other parts of Pakistan getting better economic opportunities than the locals. Consequently, the Baloch National Army



and other insurgents are perpetrating targeted killings of labourers, drivers and other non-Balochis coming to Balochistan for work. These insurgents have even targeted Chinese engineers working on the CPEC. On August 25-26, Baloch insurgents killed nearly 70 Pakistanis in four incidents. That some of these killings took place close to the Punjab border indicated the audaciousness of Baloch insurgents. Also, it was not a coincidence that these attacks were carried out on the 18th death anniversary of charismatic Baloch royal Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti,

who was murdered by the ISI in 2006. Moreover, the pro-Pashtun terror outfit, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, has reportedly joined hands with Baloch insurgents to target Pakistani state assets, including its security apparatus. Meanwhile, apart from the complex and deteriorating internal security situation of Pakistan, its economic health is in the doldrums, to say the least. Pakistan's debt, fiscal deficit, generation of internal wealth — all are in an alarming condition. Recently, PM Shehbaz Sharif visited Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Turkey to obtain low-interest loans to service its external debts and have a modicum of reserves within the nation to fulfil its inescapable financial obligations.

Importantly, Pakistan's security situation and its ever-growing multifaceted relations with China have adverse implications for India. Thus, India needs to remain ever-vigilant apropos of the China-Pakistan nexus. Pakistan Army chief Gen Syed Asim Munir has an anti-India reputation. No wonder, over the past year, infiltration attempts in J&K, especially now in the hitherto peaceful region of South Kashmir, and targeting of Indian Army installations are on the rise. Since last month, events in Bangladesh leading to the ouster of its pro-India PM Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League government and the rapid transition to a highly radicalised environment in that country have made things challenging for India. The possibility that Pakistan and China will fish in troubled waters on India's eastern flank as well cannot be discounted. India, thus, has to remain vigilant and enhance its security preparedness to counter any mischief from its adversaries.

These places offer more than just photo opportunities. Many of them have been significant for people throughout history as places of pilgrimage and worship. Even if the faith isn't your own many of them resonate with an atmosphere of reverence and solemnity that will touch the least religious soul. You will often leave feeling connected, if not to the whole of nature, at least to the chain of human history.

Machu Picchu, Petra, Angkor Wat, the Parthenon and the Pyramids appear in this list, proving that it's not just the meditative perspective of remote mountain tops that pilgrims seek out in order to connect with their spiritual side. These wondrous monuments are attractions from a purely historic and architectural viewpoint as well, and many people don't realise until they arrive how much of the atmosphere survives beyond the visitors and their cameras.

You may have already planned to visit one of these sacred places on your holiday - even to us modern folk many of them have a certain regenerative and restorative power. Could it be the perspective they give on human history, or is it just seeing such a revered spot in person and feeling the atmosphere that gives you something to think about and share with friends and family when you return?

Many of the places on this list are worth building a holiday around so trawl through and plan yourself a mini pilgrimage and recharge your spiritual batteries.

Stonehenge



More than nine hundred stone rings exist in the British Isles and twice that number may originally have been built. These megalithic structures are more accurately called rings rather than circles because they often display non-circular elliptical shapes; Stonehenge, however, is circular. It is difficult to precisely date the stone rings because of the scarcity of datable remains associated with them, but it is known that they were constructed during the Neolithic period, which in southern England lasted from approximately 4000 to 2000 BC.

Before the development of archaeological dating methods, 17th century antiquarians assumed that Stonehenge and other megalithic structures were constructed by the Druids. The Druids, however, had nothing to do with the construction or use of the stone rings. The Celtic society, in which the Druid priesthood functioned, came into existence in Britain only after 300 BC; more than 1500 years after the last stone rings were constructed. Historians in the 19th century often attributed the stone rings to Egyptian travelers who were thought to have infused Europe with Bronze Age culture. With the development of Carbon-14 dating techniques, the infusion-diffusion concepts of European Neolithic history were abandoned and the megalithic structures were shown to predate Egyptian culture.

Mid-20th century archaeology generally assumed stone rings were used for ritual activities and recent research has deepened our understandings. Beginning in the 1950's, Oxford University engineer Professor Alexander Thom and astronomer Gerald Hawkins pioneered the study of the astronomies of ancient civilizations, or archaeoastronomy. Conducting precise surveys at hundreds of stone rings, archaeoastronomers discovered significant celestial alignments indicating that the stone rings were used as astronomical observatories. These

studies also revealed the extraordinary mathematical sophistication and engineering abilities with which the stone rings were built.

Stonehenge, the most well known stone ring, is a composite structure built during three periods from 3100 to 1100 BC. Constructed with massive stones weighing as much as twenty-five tons and transported from quarry locations hundreds of miles away, Stonehenge was a structure with multiple purposes. It was a monument of nearly imperishable nature located at a specific site of terrestrial energetic power and celestial significance. It was an astronomical observation device used to predict, in advance of their occurrence, particular

periods in the annual cycle when the earth energies were most highly influenced by the sun, moon and stars. It was a temple, built by and for the people, in which festivals of renewal were held at those energetic periods determined by astronomical observations. It was a structure built with certain types of stones, positioned according to sacred geometry, which functioned as a sort of battery for gathering, concentrating and emanating the earth energies of the site. It was also an eclipse predictor of astonishing accuracy.

Bagan Temples

There are two enormous ancient temple complexes in Southeast Asia: Bagan in Burma and Angkor in Cambodia. Both sites are remarkable for their expanse of sacred geography and the number and size of their individual temples. For many visitors Bagan is the more extraordinary because of its wonderful views. Scattered across a vast dusty plain may be seen scores of exotic Buddhist temples. The kingdoms of Bagan date to the early 2nd century AD, yet the region entered its golden age during the reign of King Anawrahta in 1057 AD. From this time, until it was overrun by Kublai Khan's forces in 1287 AD, more than 13,000 temples, pagodas and other religious structures were built. Today, seven centuries later, approximately 2,200 temples remain standing. The river Irrawaddy has washed away nearly one-third of the original city area, thieves have torn apart many temples in search of treasures, while earthquakes and the ravages of time have reduced hundreds of other temples to piles of crumbling stones.

Two of the loveliest temples are the Mahabodhi and



Gawdawpalin. The Mahabodhi, a smaller replica of the famous Bodhi temple in Bodhi Gaya, India (where the Buddha attained enlightenment), was built during the 13th century reign of King Nantaungmya and is covered with niches containing seated Buddha figures. The 60 meter tall Gawdawpalin temple, built in the 12th century by King Narapatisithu, was badly damaged in a 1975 earthquake but has since been reconstructed. Many of the temples of Bagan are still functioning and large numbers of pilgrims visit the ancient holy place.

Baalbek

In the hills of Lebanon stands the temple complex of Baalbek, one of the most enigmatic holy places of ancient times. According to orthodox archaeological theory, the story of Baalbek goes back approximately 5000 years. Excavations around the Roman Temple of Jupiter have uncovered remains dating to the Early Bronze Age (2900-2300 BC). During the 1st millennium BC, the Phoenicians chose the site of Baalbek for a temple to their Sun-god Baal and legends tell that Baalbek was the birthplace of Baal. Next came the Seleucid and Roman Empires and it is to the Romans (64 BC - 312 AD) that archaeologists attribute the many and massive temple foundations of Baalbek.

The Roman city at Baalbek, called Heliopolis or the City of the Sun and dedicated to the sun god Jupiter, does contain the largest stone structures ever built in the Roman Empire. The Romans, however, did not have the engineering or construction skills necessary for the carving and placement of the enormous blocks of stone which underlie their own constructions. The courtyard of the Jupiter temple, completed around 60 AD, is situated upon a platform, called the Grand Terrace, which consists of a pre-Roman outer wall formed of immense, finely crafted and precisely positioned blocks. These blocks of stone, ranging in weight from 450 tons to 1200 tons, are the largest pieces

of stonework ever crafted in the world. Why these stones, as large as 69 feet long by 14 feet wide, are such an enigma to contemporary scientists is that their method of quarrying, transportation and placement is beyond the technological ability of any known ancient or modern builders. These great blocks of stone show extensive evidence of wind and sand erosion that is absent from the Roman temples, indicating their construction dates from a far earlier age. Finally, the stones of Baalbek show stylistic similarities to other cyclopean stone walls at verifiably pre-Roman sites such as the Acropolis foundation in Athens, the foundations of Mycenae, and the megalithic constructions of Ollyantayambo in Peru and Tiahuanaco in Bolivia.

Canterbury Cathedral

Mother church of the Anglican communion and the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, this wonderful cathedral has featured heavily in English history—most notoriously in 1170 when Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in the cathedral, since when the cathedral has attracted thousands of pilgrims. It also featured in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. The Cathedral was founded in 597AD by St Augustine—sent to convert the heathens of Britain by Pope Gregory the Great.

Augustine's original building under the nave was extensively rebuilt and enlarged by the Saxons, and the cathedral was



rebuilt completely by the Normans in 1070 following a major fire. A staircase and parts of the North Wall—in the area of the North West transept, also called the Martyrdom—remain from that building. The church was substantially rebuilt at the end of the 14th century in the high English gothic style.

The Parthenon

The supreme expression of ancient Greek architectural genius, the Parthenon has enchanted painters and poets for two thousand years. Neolithic remains indicate a continuous sacred use of the hill from at least 2800 BC. Built upon the foundations of an earlier Mycenaean temple, the first known Hellenistic structures, dating from the 6th century BC, were temples dedicated to the goddess Athena. In 480 BC Persians destroyed these temples and in 447 BC the Athenian leader Pericles erected the presently standing temple of Athena. Made of white marble, the temple had 46 columns, was roofed with tiles, and enshrined a 40 foot tall golden statue of Athena. The Parthenon has suffered considerable damage over the centuries. In 296 BC the gold from the statue was removed; in the 5th century AD the temple was converted into a Christian church; in 1460 it housed a Turkish mosque; in 1687 gunpowder stored by the Turks inside the temple exploded and destroyed the central area; and in 1803 much of the remaining sculpture was sold by the Turks, who controlled Greece at the time, to the Englishman Lord Elgin, who then removed the sculptures and sold them to the British Museum.

The name Parthenon refers to Athena Parthenos, the daughter of Zeus. Patroness of Athens, she represents spiritual development, intellect and understanding, and is the symbol of the human aspiration for wisdom. The character of Athena represented these qualities yet it was the sacred geographical location, the astronomical orientation and the sacred geometry of the temple which actually generated the qualities for which Athena was known. In the Greek religious tradition particular geographical locations were known to have and express specific energetic characteristics. Therefore, while Greek sacred architecture praises the qualities of certain deities, it was understood that the deities themselves were metaphors for unique natural powers which already existed before the temples were constructed. Certain holy places around Greece, being expressive of specific powers, were also understood to be in spatial relationship with one another, as shown by the study of sacred geography. The temples developed at these sites incorporated sophisticated mathematical and astronomical knowledge which further enhanced the powers inherent at these places.



Didn't want to play a serial killer just for shock value: Vikrant Massey on 'Sector 36'

Vikrant Massey, along with director Aditya Nimbalkar, on why he was wary of his Sector 36 character being 'gimmicky', and the mental toll of playing a psychopath

NEW DELHI: Vikrant Massey does a 180-degree turn with Sector 36. After essaying the role of an exemplary IAS aspirant in 12th Fail, he embodies a serial killer with a penchant for kids in this cat-and-mouse thriller. The film also marks the debut of Aditya Nimbalkar, who has learnt the ropes while working with acclaimed director Vishal Bhardwaj. Vikrant calls Sector 36 a story of the "times we live in." We speak to the actor and director on whether the film was inspired by the 2006 Nithari killings, how Vikrant didn't want his portrayal of a psychopath to be "gimmicky" if the character messed with his head and more.

Excerpts from the conversation:

Vikrant, would you say that the urge to do something different made you say yes to this role? Vikrant Massey: On a surface level, the reason would be this. I wanted to take a shot at playing a character I hadn't done before. It was surely a challenge. But, one major reason I did this film was because I felt it was one of the most important stories of our time. When I



was contemplating being part of Sector 36, a lot of my advisers were doubtful as to whether it was the right film to do at a time when I had become a "commercial actor". When I heard that label, I wanted to do it even more.

Aditya, this is your debut. Every director wants his first to be a theatrical... Aditya Nimbalkar: Honestly, I desired it too but we were getting a platform like Netflix so I was content. In today's day and age, not every film gets the big screen, I understand that.

Moreover, Sector 36 is a film made for personalised watching. I wouldn't exactly call it a commercial film. You have extensively worked with Vishal Bhardwaj as an assistant director. You were also credited as co-writer for Talvar (2015). How much of his style influenced your filmmaking? AN: Almost all of it. Showing the film to him was one of my most nervous screenings. It was only him and me in the in-house theatre at the Maddock Films office. He really liked it. Our relationship is such that he didn't shy away from giving his critique of certain portions that didn't work for him. Although it's not explicitly stated, Sector 36 seems to be inspired by the 2006 Nithari killings. AN: We actually took inspiration from multiple events and cases that have happened all over the country. This film is told through the prism of Deepak Dobriyal's cop Ram Charan Pandey and how he clashes with Vikrant's Prem Singh. VM: It is a story that is rooted in realism but there is also a lot of symbolism and metaphor.

Out of 87 nominations, 66 candidates withdraw their names in DUSU polls

After the withdrawals held on Friday, eight candidates were in the list of presidential candidate, five for the post of vice-president, four for the post of secretary and four for the post of joint secretary.

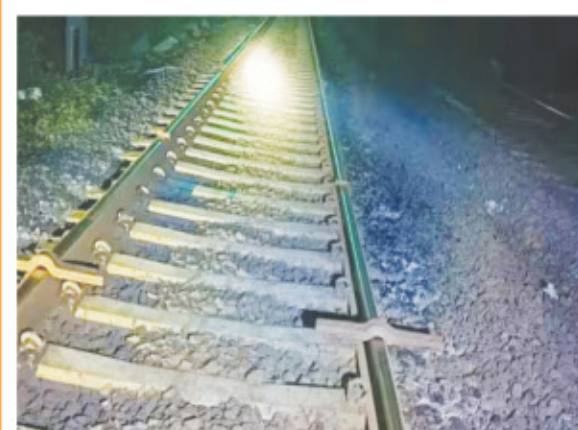
NEW DELHI: Unlike last year when over 40% of DUSU poll candidates were from the Buddhist Studies Centre, this year it is a mixed batch of candidates from the Law department, different DU Colleges, south campus etc. Among the eight final candidates for the post of President, only two are from Buddhist Studies while three are from Law Centre, one from Hindu College, another one is from Zakir Hussain College and one candidate is also from Shyama Prasad Mukherjee College.

Meanwhile, a day after 87 nomination papers were filed for the DUSU polls, the chief election officer on Friday published the final list of the candidates from each of students' organisations. After the withdrawals held on Friday, eight candidates were in the list of presidential candidate, five for the post of vice president, four for the post of secretary and four for the post of joint secretary. Aniket Madke, Badee U Zaman, Pinki, Rishabh Choudhary, Ronak Khatri, Savvy Gupta, Sheetal, Shivam Maurya are the names of the eight presidential candidates.

After scrutiny and withdrawal of the nomination papers, five candidates were finalised for the vice president's post. Ayush Mondal, Banshree Das, Bhanu Pratap Singh, Rovin Singh and Yash Nandal are in the final list. Adithyan MA, Mitravinda Karanwal, Namrata Jeph and Sneha Aggarwal are contesting for secretary post while Aman Kapasiya, Anamika, Anjana Sukumaran and Lokesh Choudhary are contesting for the post of joint secretary. With only five days left for the polls, the entire campus is abuzz with election fever but despite all warnings and notices, the election guidelines are going for a toss on the campus.

Another Train Accident Prevented: Fish Plates, Keys Found On Railway Tracks In Gujarat

NEW DELHI: An attempted train derailment was discovered and prevented on Saturday after unknown miscreants tampered with a railway track near Kim Railway Station in Surat, Gujarat. As per ANI reports citing Western Railway's Vadodara Division, unknown individuals removed the fishplate and some keys from the UP line track and placed them back on the same track near Kim railway station.



The foundation work for eight bullet train stations was completed in the state on September 19. Bullet train project director Pramod Sharma stated that bullet train technology has arrived in India, and they are moving forward with the 'Make in India' initiative. "The bullet train technology has come to India... we are going forward through the 'Make in India' initiative. It is our duty to tell media about what we are doing... we get positivity and support through this," said Sharma, ANI reported. Stay informed on all the latest news, real-time breaking news updates, and follow all the important headlines in India news and world news on Zee News.

'Living Symbols of Inhumanity & Brutality': Naxal Violence Victims Meet Amit Shah, Govt Pledges Action, Support

NEW DELHI: Amid ongoing anti-Naxal operations, the RSS-BJP combine has launched a new social campaign to rally support for victims of Maoist violence. A committee, Bastar Shanti Samiti, has been formed to unite and assist these victims. In a major move, Chhattisgarh's home minister Vijay Sharma led 55 victims to Delhi, where they met union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday and were scheduled to meet the President of India on Saturday before returning to Raipur. Of these 55 victims, 37 have lost their limbs or eyesight in IED blasts while the rest have lost their family members in the violence. This move seems crucial as it signals an intensified crackdown on Naxal activity and more anti-Naxal operations in the Bastar region, with Amit Shah reportedly assuring victims that the guerrillas will be flushed out by March 31, 2025.

Shah also promised multiple schemes to support victims who lost limbs in IED blasts or family members in attacks, emphasising the government's commitment to both eradicating Naxalism and rehabilitating survivors.

This marks a strategic shift—combining military action with emotional outreach to strengthen their position.

Operations to intensify

Later, on social media platform X, Shah stated, "I am deeply moved after



interacting with the brothers and sisters affected by Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh.

I assure all of you that the Modi Government is committed to eradicating Naxalism completely within two years and restoring peace in your region. "Lambasting Naxalites, he added, "Naxalism follows the ideology of destruction and violence.

Hiding behind the guise of human rights to garner sympathy for themselves has been a consistent strategy of the Naxalites. The wounds of those affected by the violence in Naxal-impacted areas are living symbols of the inhumanity and brutality of Naxalism. "Over the past eight months, around 150 Naxalites, including at least 55 young women cadres, were killed during anti-Naxal operations by security forces in Bastar. Meanwhile, there have been several instances of IED blasts, attacks on the security forces and other forms of Naxal violence in the region. Sharma, in an earlier interview with News 18, said that the ongoing flush-out operations in Bastar are based on verified intelligence inputs to avoid any misunderstandings or confusion. He added that the state government is ready to initiate "unconditional" dialogue with the Naxals.

He asserted that poor tribal villagers are coerced or enticed into taking up arms, resisting development, and remaining isolated from the mainstream by "urban Naxals" residing in cities like Delhi.

Defamation complaint: You cannot be touchy in politics, says Supreme Court to Minister Murugan

NEW DELHI: You cannot be "touchy" in politics, the Supreme Court observed while hearing Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L Murugan's plea relating to a criminal defamation proceeding initiated against him. Murugan approached the apex court last year, challenging a September 5, 2023, Madras High Court order in which it had refused to quash the proceeding against him on a complaint filed by Chennai-based Murali Trust for his alleged defamatory statements during a December 2020 press conference. While agreeing to hear his petition on September 27 last year, the top court stayed the proceeding against Murugan that was pending in a special court in Chennai. The apex court had also sought the Trust's response on his plea challenging the high court order. When the matter came up for hearing before a bench of Justice BR Gavai and Justice KV Viswanathan on Friday, the counsel appearing for Murugan said,



"Where is the question of defamation in this case?" The lawyer appearing for the Trust sought an adjournment in the matter. "You cannot be touchy in politics," the bench observed. "Put up after four weeks at the request of the counsel for the respondent," the apex court said. Murugan had earlier approached the high court, challenging the

proceeding initiated against him. The high court had noted in its order that according to the Trust, Murugan made the statements "with an ulterior motive to degrade and tarnish the reputation of the Murali Trust in the eyes of the general public." "While dealing with the quash petition, this court cannot go into the merits of the case or the disputed questions of fact. This court has to merely go by what is alleged in the complaint and prima facie find out as to whether the offence is made out," the high court had said. "In an offence of defamation, the statements have to be tested only from the point of view of a common prudent man, who comes across the defamatory statements made," it had said. While dismissing the petition, the high court had directed the trial court to dispose of the case within three months. "It is left open to the petitioner (Murugan) to raise all the grounds before the trial court and the same will be considered on its own merits.

Crumbling Town Hall awaits restoration

The municipal corporation recently held an inspection of the premises, which has been lying vacant since 2012

NEW DELHI: Administrative apathy has been causing deterioration of the iconic Town Hall, erstwhile headquarters of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), located in Chandni Chowk. The colonial-era building is in dire need of urgent repair as its structural integrity is being threatened by negligence and poor upkeep. Rampant water seepage has resulted in erosion of plaster; exposed steel bars at places thus weakening the

structure. The Corporation recently held an inspection of the premises, which has been lying vacant since 2012 when the municipal body shifted its head office to swanky 28-storeyed Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Civic Centre at Jawaharlal Nehru Marg opposite Ramlila Maidan.

According to the officials, the inspection team comprising conservation experts from the state archeology department and Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has suggested a comprehensive conservation plan to prevent the about 160-year old Town Hall from further degeneration. However, the agency, at present, is aiming only to restore two historic meeting halls given the shortage of funds, the officials said. Earlier, several plans were made for Town Hall's restoration and to convert it into a museum and heritage hotel over the years nothing materialised. "Earlier this year, a proposal was initiated to set up a museum in one portion of Town Hall. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) agreed to provide technical assistance and helped in preparation of the tender document. That plan is yet to take off," said officials, privy to the matter.

No immediate response was available from the MCD as the commissioner Ashwini

Kumar and Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi didn't respond to calls and text messages. The building, spreading over 16 acres, was constructed in the 1860s and it was then



known as Lawrence Institute. The municipality bought it in 1866. It became the office of the MCD as it came into being in 1958. The officials, aware of the

dilapidated condition of the building, suggested that Delhi lieutenant governor (L-G) should take over the control of the building to initiate repairing and conservation of the heritage property.

"Lieutenant governor should intervene like he did for redevelopment of four ASI-protected monuments including some buildings in Mehrauli Archaeological Park and Sheesh Mahal in Shalimar Bagh," said officials.

Plan to make it a museum yet to take off

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In dire need of urgent repair

Due to the poor upkeep of the iconic Town Hall, a colonial-era building in Chandni Chowk, severe seepage in walls has taken place at many places. This has caused erosion, resulting in exposed steel bars thus weakening the structure.

Bengal doctors resume duties partially after 42 days impasse over Kolkata rape

Doctors in West Bengal have rejoined their duties partially at various government-run hospitals in essential and emergency services after protesting for 42 days demanding better security measures in hospitals.

NEW DELHI: Junior doctors on Saturday morning rejoined their duties partially at various government-run hospitals in West Bengal after a hiatus of 42 days. They were on 'cease work' agitation in protest against the rape and murder of an on-duty woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The junior doctors rejoined their duties in essential and emergency services at all state-run hospitals but not in the outpatient department (OPD).

"We have started rejoining duties today. Our colleagues have started returning to their respective departments since this morning only in essential and emergency services, but not at



the OPDs. Please do not forget that this is only a partial resumption of duties," Aniket Mahato, one of the agitating doctors, told PTI.

He said his other colleagues have already left for flood-hit districts of the state where they would start 'Abhaya clinics' (medical camps), to demonstrate their commitment to public health even amid ongoing protests.

The agitating doctors said that they would wait for another seven days for the administration to fulfill their demands for justice for the deceased doctor and the removal of state health secretary or else they would start another round of 'cease work'. The doctors have been protesting since August 9 when the body of a woman medic was found at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, demanding justice for the deceased doctor as well as removing key officials from their posts alleging their involvement in the case. The CBI, which is investigating the case, has arrested several people, including former principal of the RG Kar Hospital, in connection with its investigation into the matter.

The 5 signs that you are about to be Fired

losing your job is something that is at the very top of most people's worry lists. Whether you've been underperforming when it comes to sales, or the company



you work for has been implementing cutbacks; feeling insecure in your employment can have a huge impact on your mental health. In a thread on Reddit, users asked

managers and HR staff to share some of the known warning signs indicating you may be about to be given your notice.

1. Receiving fewer emails from your boss.

User team-evil wrote that receiving "fewer emails about projects and corporate events is bad. More emails regarding performance issues is worse".

2. Being asked too many questions

Someone writing under the name 19southmainco suggested that being asked for a comprehensive list of "everything" you're working on was a warning sign.

He recalled that before he was laid off, he "had my editor come up to me and ask what I was working on".

When he explained that they had some



articles on the way, he was asked to provide a comprehensive list of "everything" he was working on.

User throwaway757575751 agreed with this suggestion that "the list" was a warning sign, writing: "This is exactly right. I got an email from my boss early one morning asking me what I'm currently working on ... 3 hours later, I was let go."

3. When there's less to do

Another group of users argued that being given fewer work projects could indicate bad things to come.

User 'Cowboy law' wrote: "Your workload will get lighter and lighter. You'll complete projects and no new projects will be given to you. He added: "Obviously, this is so that, when it comes time to drop the axe, there will be minimal transitioning needed for works in progress."

4. How's your schedule looking?

Reddit user WeYoung touched upon how to tell you're about to be fired if you do shift work. They wrote: "At an hourly

job, if they stop putting you on the schedule/make you only work one or two shifts a week, you're probably about to be fired."

5. Your emails stop working

One IT worker, going under the username lucky_ducker, posted an illuminating insight into what it's like to be involved in the firing process from an IT point of view.

They explained that "when someone is being fired I am notified a few minutes before the employee is told". He added: "We have a checklist: disable network and email credentials, then forcibly disconnect their connections / sessions. So if you suddenly are kicked out of your email and can't connect to network resources, you are very likely being terminated. VERY shortly."

Introverts find modern offices uncomfortable

dem office features such as hot-desking or desk-sharing and open-plan floors appeal mainly to extrovert workers but others find them uncomfortable, research has found. The findings highlighted that



extroverts are significantly happier at work and have higher levels of job satisfaction and also pointed out that personality differences are behind areas of conflict in the office. "Understanding how personality interacts with the office environment is key to improving job satisfaction and productivity," said researcher John Hackston.

The findings are based on an online survey of over 300 people about their current office environments. The participants had previously completed a personality test to ascertain their personality type. "These results support

previous research into the unpopularity of open-plan offices and hot-desking and the positive effects of personalisation. However, there are some simple changes that can be made to improve staff satisfaction and increase productivity," Hackston said.

"These include allowing staff more storage for personal items when hot-desking, creating smaller neighbourhoods within open-plan offices, not overdoing clear desk policies as clearing away all personal items can be demotivating to some people and providing quiet zones for people to work in when needed," Hackston noted.

head gestures, which Brain Power uses to track when kids look or don't look at their parents, as well as stereotypy, or the repetitive movements which many people with autism make. "In this way, we can provide numerical, objective, repeatable assessment of a child's current behaviours, as well as progress over time," Sahin said.

Brain Power's Google Glass apps - Empowered Brain Suite for Autism - encourages kids to interact with their parents and make eye contact by presenting exercises like a game. The apps have "social engagement module monitors" that assess how a child engaged with parents, Sahin said.

The software also helps kids interpret people's expressions through a series of games. "It has often surprised parents how quickly their children have adapted to Google Glass," Sahin said.

Other areas the suite will tackle include language. When a child looks at something through Google Glass, the object is identified and its name displayed and spoken through the Glass's earbud.

Now, apps to help autistic kids learn

Social skills

A US-based start-up is developing Google Glass apps and hardware add-ons that can help autistic kids learn social and communication skills, while also providing feedback to caregivers. The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based startup called Brain Power was founded by neuroscientist Ned T Sahin, who did his graduate training at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Since the autism disorder spectrum is so wide, Brain Power is initially focusing on children with moderate to high-functioning autism, though it hopes to extend its apps' capabilities to other kids, Tech Crunch reported.

So far, 200 people have signed up for Brain Power's beta programme, which will be conducted in three stages next year.

Sahin believes Google Glass is ideal for helping kids with autism because it has an accelerometer chip that enables

9 people at work who make work life

Interesting

Wespend major part of our lives at the workplace. Hence the environment should be such that we should be able to look forward to work and not dread it.

Among several other things that make your workplace tolerable, the most important are the people or colleagues as we call them. We do have our loyal set of friends, both from childhood and college. However, we do meet some interesting people at our workplace too who go on to become our best buddies for life. There are all kinds of people at work and the list can be exhaustive. However, here are a few interesting ones that are part of every organisation.

Altruistic: This person would go out of his way to make others happy, sometimes at the cost of getting himself in trouble. People take undue advantage of him for their selfish gains.

Chamchi: She loves to be in the good books of the boss. She's willing to go the extra mile to make the boss happy. She will spy on colleagues, sweet talk you into giving out information only to pass it on to the boss. She always speaks in favour of her superior and also covers up for her absence. However, it's not difficult to spot one at work. People can easily identify her and know better than to confide in her. The life expectancy of a chamchi in the organisation will last only till the boss exists.

Reliable: This person is the best of the lot. Want someone to work on your weekly off? She's only too willing to lend her supporting hand. You can confide your secrets in her and be sure they won't be shared.

Couch potato: He's the hungry jack. Always munching something or the other. His desk is filled with food items of all sorts — chips, cup noodles, biscuits, chocolates. He loves to eat and keeps ordering food from outside. Be on good terms with him as he can be your saviour when you are hungry.

Noncommittal: Such people mind their business and choose to be blind to the happenings around. All they want is to be paid at the end of every month. They might offer lip sympathy, but never expect them to stand by you

during crisis.

Backstabber: He's very social and talks to everybody. But his intentions aren't genuine. You never know when he'll let you down. He might let you down when you least expect it. Should he land in crisis, he will use you to get out of it. For instance, if the boss is unhappy with your work, he'll conveniently place the blame on you to save his a**.

Rumour monger: She's always hungry for interesting gossips so she can pass it on to others during lunch or coffee break. She's interested about your personal life, problems and everything about you. Rumours floating around your love life? You know the culprit.

Flirt: No, you don't have to stay away from him as he's harmless. He thinks he's the reincarnation of Lord Krishna and loves to be seen around with women. He doesn't miss a

opportunity to complement you. He makes you feel like the most beautiful person on earth. Many feel such people boost your confidence.

Humorous: He has a great sense of humour and very witty. He makes boring work life so much better and tolerable. You literally chill out when he's around.



Indian Markets See Renewed Buying After Fed Rate Cut, Bullish Momentum To Continue

Mumbai. After a sideways start, the Indian benchmark indices gained momentum this week after a surprise 50 bps rate cut by the US Fed Reserve, as Sensex crossed 84,000 for the first time and Nifty hit a new all-time high. As per market watchers, the apprehension of a slowdown in growth was eased slightly after the lower-than-expected US jobless claim and data pointed to a soft landing of the US economy at the start of the rate cut cycle. The ongoing bullish momentum is like to take Nifty towards 25,900-26,000 levels. On the upside, 26,000 will act as an immediate hurdle for Nifty.

"On the downside, 25,500 will serve as an immediate support for Nifty followed by 15-DEMA support, which is placed near 25,300 levels. As long as Nifty stays above 25,600, a 'Buy on Dips' strategy is advisable for traders," said Hrishikesh Yedve from Asit C Mehta Investment Intermediates. Following the Fed's rate cut, Indian markets have seen renewed buying interest, particularly in sectors that had previously experienced selling pressure. "The resilience of the Indian markets is providing additional strength to the rupee. Key support levels for the rupee are seen at 83.60-83.65, while resistance lies in the range of 83.40-83.30," said Jateen Trivedi from LKP Securities. The rupee traded positively with gains of 0.10 at 83.53, supported by continued weakness in the dollar index, which is trading at 52-week lows. Analysts saw a sectorial rotation among investors to large caps, especially in consumption, staples, auto, finance, and realty.

In the short term, investors are being cautious on export-oriented sectors like pharma and IT due to depreciation in the dollar, they added. Gold traded very positively, reaching an all-time high in Comex above \$2,610, driven by strong liquidity inflows from the US Fed following a significant rate cut.

Vivad se Vishwas 2 to come into effect from October 1

NEW DELHI. The Vivad se Vishwas scheme will come into effect on October 1, 2024, the finance ministry said in a notification. The scheme will provide taxpayers with an opportunity to settle ongoing tax disputes.

The new initiative follows the positive feedback received from the first tranche of the scheme, which was launched in 2020. "The central government hereby appoints the 1st day of October 2024 as the date on which the Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme 2024 shall come into force," the notification said.

The initial 'Vivad se Vishwas' scheme saw about 1 lakh taxpayers participating, resulting in the government collecting nearly Rs 75,000 crore in taxes. As per Karishma R Phatarphekar, Partner, Deloitte India, with tax payment rates set to increase by 10% starting January 1, 2025, it is crucial for companies to evaluate their pending income tax litigations from both a cost-benefit standpoint and a broader non-tax perspective.

SC asks SpiceJet to return three engines to lessors



NEW DELHI. In a setback for SpiceJet, the Supreme Court on Friday in its order upheld the Delhi High Court's decision and directed SpiceJet to ground and return three aircraft engines to their lessors, following the airline's failure to comply with a previous order regarding payment. SpiceJet is reported to owe about USD 6.09 million to its lessors. Refusing to modify the HC's order, the apex court reiterated that the order explicitly outlines the consequences of non-payment, which includes grounding the aircraft. "We see no reason to interfere with the high court order," the Supreme Court's three-judge bench, led by CJI D Y Chandrachud, observed.

Earlier, the HC on September 11 held that the carrier had violated an agreed interim arrangement for payment of dues and upheld an order of a single-judge bench asking the low-cost airline to ground the three engines for defaulting on the payments.

A SpiceJet spokesman said it is in talks with the aircraft lessor to reach an amicable settlement. 2 of the 3 engines in question are already grounded, and our operations remain completely normal and unaffected," it said.

IT cos returning to campuses after gap year

BENGALURU. IT companies are resuming their campus recruitment drives after a nearly year-long hiatus amid signs of revival in business. IT firms are tapping into these colleges for skilled programmers and digital specialists who command salaries in the range of Rs 6 to 9 lakh, rather than entry-level roles where salaries are much lower.

Companies such as IBM, Infosys, TCS, and LTIMindtree have visited campuses for an initial phase of placements, which began in July. While TCS has said it will hire 40,000 freshers, Infosys has planned to recruit 15,000 to 20,000 fresh graduates from colleges and through off-campus drives. In FY24, Infosys had 11,900 campus recruits in the 2023-24 financial year, a 76% drop compared to the 50,000 freshers it hired in the year-ago period.

"After a break of one year, we will return to the campuses with which we have partnerships. Additionally, we will look at off-campus hiring to onboard the same number for next year as well," Wipro HR head Saurabh Govil said.

India to take retaliatory measures against EU's safeguard duty on steel

For India, these safeguard measures have been costly. India estimates that its steel exports to the EU have faced a cumulative trade loss of USD 4.412 billion from 2018 to 2023.

NEW DELHI. India is likely to impose higher import duty on specific goods from the European Union (EU) in retaliation to the EU's extension of safeguard duties on 26 steel items, significantly impacting India's steel exports. The safeguard duty will remain in place until June 2026. India's steel industry is already struggling with cheap imports from China and is facing challenges in meeting the requirements of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), set to take effect in January 2026. The EU's safeguard

measures, which have been in place since 2018 have drastically reduced India's export volumes to the EU, causing significant financial losses.

According to Ajay Srivastava, founder, Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), the EU's safeguard measures are designed to protect its domestic steel industry from an oversupply of cheaper imports. These measures apply to 26 categories of steel products, including non-alloy and alloy hot-rolled sheets, cold-rolled sheets, metallic coated sheets, organic coated sheets, and other key steel products. The EU has established import quotas for each steel product by country, with in-quota imports facing a 0% duty. However, once imports exceed the quota, an out-of-quota duty of 25% is imposed. The quota amounts vary depending on the product category and the exporting country. For India, these safeguard measures have been costly. India estimates that its steel exports to the EU have faced a cumulative trade loss of



USD 4.412 billion from 2018 to 2023. In this period, the EU has collected duties amounting to USD 1.103 billion on Indian steel exports. In response, India has notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 17 September 2024 of its intention to take retaliatory action under Article 12.5 of the Agreement on Safeguards. According to GTRI, India's proposed action involves suspending trade concessions on selected

EU products, with plans to raise tariffs on these imports. The tariff increases will be proportional to the trade losses incurred due to the EU's safeguard measures and may be adjusted in response to future developments. India's response comes after the EU extended its safeguard measures, which were originally set to expire in June 2024, for an additional two years until June 2026. India had earlier imposed retaliatory tariffs on imports from the United States on 16 June 2019 after the US imposed tariffs on Indian steel and aluminium. The US had imposed a 25% tariff on steel and a 10% tariff on aluminium imports from several countries, including India, citing national security concerns. In retaliation, India raised tariffs on 28 U.S. products, including almonds, apples, walnuts, chickpeas, and certain chemicals. India's retaliatory tariffs were aimed at offsetting the impact of the U.S. tariffs on Indian steel and aluminium exports.

Anil Ambani invests Rs 1,100 crore in Reliance Infrastructure

NEW DELHI. Promoters Anil Ambani and family have invested Rs 1,104 crore in the Rs 3,014 crore preferential share issue of Reliance Infrastructure. Ambani and his family, which holds 21.34% in the company has made the investment through Risee Infinity Private Limited. Risee will subscribe to 4.60 crore shares of Reliance Infrastructure. The other major investors, which subscribed the preferential issue include Fortune Financial & Equities Services, which invested Rs 1,058 crore by subscribing to 4.41 crore equity shares. Florintree Innovations will invest Rs 852 crore for 3.55 crore shares. The Board of Directors of Reliance Infrastructure on Thursday approved raising of Rs 3,014 crore by preferential issue of up to 12.56 crore equity shares and/or warrants



convertible into equity shares at a price of Rs 240 per Share/warrant.

The issue will enhance the promoters' equity stake. The board approved seeking enabling authorisation from the shareholders to raise up to Rs 3,000 crore by making a qualified institutional placement (QIP).

The issue proceeds would be utilised for the expansion of business operations and for general corporate purposes. In a

The board approved seeking enabling authorisation from the shareholders to raise up to Rs 3,000 crore by making a qualified institutional placement (QIP).

statement, it said the issue will enhance the company's net worth from over Rs 9,000 crore to over Rs 12,000 crore. The company has near zero debt.

"The enanced capital will support the company's participation in high growth sectors to aid the Government's vision of 'Make in India' and Viksit Bharat," says the company.

PhysicsWallah raises USD 210 million, valuation jumps 2.5x to USD 2.8 billion

The funding for the company comes at a time when it expects to become profitable in the financial year 2025.

NEW DELHI. Edtech firm PhysicsWallah said on Friday it has raised USD 210 million in a funding round led by Hornbill Capital at a 2.5 times higher valuation of USD 2.8 billion. Lightspeed Venture Partners, along with existing investors GSV and WestBridge, also participated in the funding round. The company at the end of its previous funding was valued at USD 1.1 billion. "PhysicsWallah's funding round serves as a beacon of optimism



amidst challenging times for the edTech sector, showcasing the unwavering confidence of both existing and new investors in PhysicsWallah's growth and its mission to democratise education across India," the company said. The funding is expected to bolster PW

cash reserves to support its future growth plans, it said. The company plans to utilise the fresh funds to strategically scale operations, with a key focus on consolidation in the education market. "Prateek and I are excited to partner with Hornbill Capital and Lightspeed Venture Partners in this journey, and we deeply appreciate the continued trust from WestBridge and GSV," PhysicsWallah Founder and CEO Alakh Pandey said.

The funding for the company comes at a time when it expects to become absolutely profitable in the financial year 2025. "This new round of funding will enable us to expand our reach, enhance our technological capabilities, and continue delivering unparalleled learning experiences," PhysicsWallah, Co-founder, Prateek Maheshwari said.

Household spends expected to grow faster, says RBI

The central bank points towards increased hiring activities across sectors ahead of festive season.

NEW DELHI. Household consumption is all set to grow faster in the second quarter amid easing retail inflation, and a revival in rural demand, the RBI said on Friday in its Monthly Bulletin for September. Retail inflation in July and August remained below 4% (3.6% in July and 3.65% in August), even if it showed slight uptick in the latter month. As per the RBI bulletin, the demand for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) is also accelerating as companies target older customers with healthy lifestyle products in response to rising longevity and affluence and younger ones with premiumisation. The central bank points towards increased hiring activities across sectors ahead of festive season. This, it says, is also likely to push up consumption. E-commerce majors have ramped up hiring ahead of the festival season, not just in the

metros but in tier 2 and 3 cities as well. Logistics hiring is also rising to support increased transportation, warehousing and delivery activities. Citing a Team Lease Services report, RBI says 62% companies across telecom, internet service providers and allied industries intend to expand their workforce in this year. The RBI blamed the marginal increase in inflation in August to an unfavourable base effect of around 5 bps while the index remained unchanged at the previous month's level (zero momentum). However, it said that headline CPI inflation coming below the Reserve Bank's target for the second consecutive month in August is a positive development. Though it sounded cautious as some vegetable price shocks have begun to reverse, and an unfavourable base effect may haunt the September inflation number. The RBI report attributes the robustness in private investment to capital investments made towards energy transition. "...energy transition has accelerated in recent years, with the pace of clean technology deployment and capital investment surging to record levels," says the report.

Increased hiring activities across sectors

The central bank points towards increased hiring activities across sectors ahead of festive season.



Vi to go ahead with expansion, fundraising plan

NEW DELHI. Vodafone Idea (Vi) on Friday announced that its equipment deals with vendors for the expansion of its 4G and 5G network infrastructure are in the final stages and go ahead with its plan to raise Rs 45,000 crore from the market through equity and debt.



The statement comes in light of the Supreme Court's dismissal of the telcos' petitions seeking a re-computation of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues. Following the court's decision, Vodafone Idea is now liable to pay nearly Rs 70,000 crore in AGR to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Vodafone Idea will host a conference call with its senior management on Monday to provide updates on recent developments, the company stated.

"The equipment deals with vendors for the enhancement and rollout of 4G and 5G network infrastructure is now in the final stages of discussions and Vi will close the agreements soon," said a spokesperson of Vodafone Idea. Following the court's ruling, shares of Vi plummeted by 20% on Thursday, reaching a 52-week low of Rs 10.33. However, on Friday, the shares closed on a positive note, ending the day on the NSE at Rs 10.52, up by 1.35%.

The telco on Friday said its next step is securing debt funding, and it is in active discussions with multiple banks. "We had shared a target of raising Rs 45,000 crore via equity and debt. We have already raised Rs 18,000 crore in India's largest FPO and preferential issuance of equity shares worth Rs 2,080 crore to ABG entity (promoter group)."

Company says next step is securing debt funding. The telco on Friday said its next step is securing debt funding, and it is in active discussions with multiple banks. Vodafone Idea will host a conference call with its senior management on Monday to provide updates on recent developments, the company stated.

NEWS BOX

Shakib Al Hasan becomes oldest Bangladesh player to play Test cricket

Chennai. Veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan scripted history on Saturday by becoming the oldest Bangladesh cricketer from his nation to feature in a Test match. At 37 years and 181 days, Shakib took the field on Day 3 of Bangladesh's first Test against India at Chennai, surpassing former left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, who was 37 years and 180 days when he last played a Test against South Africa in Chattogram back in 2008. Shakib, a linchpin in Bangladesh cricket for over a decade, added another accolade to his illustrious career with this achievement. Widely regarded as one of the best all-rounders in the game, Shakib's longevity and contribution to Bangladesh cricket have been remarkable. His experience continues to be a crucial asset for the team, especially in challenging contests like the ongoing Test against India.

While Shakib's feat is a significant achievement for Bangladesh, the world



record for the oldest Test player still belongs to England's Wilfred Rhodes. Rhodes played his final Test at the age of 52 years and 165 days in 1930 against the West Indies, a record that has stood the test of time. Notably, Rhodes also holds the record for the longest Test career, spanning an incredible 30 years and 315 days. As Shakib took to the field, Bangladesh found themselves up against a formidable Indian side. Shubman Gill hit his seventh Test fifty while Rishabh Pant was nearing his 12th Test fifty after resuming their innings with authority, propelling India to 141 for 3 after 40 overs, extending their lead past the 350-run mark. Earlier on Day 2, Jasprit Bumrah delivered a stellar bowling performance, claiming 4 for 50 to help India dismiss Bangladesh for a mere 149 runs in the first Test. Bangladesh, who began their innings facing the daunting task of responding to India's solid total, struggled to gain momentum. Despite brave resistance from experienced all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (32) and wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das (22), the visitors were unable to stave off India's relentless bowling attack.

IND vs BAN: Rishabh Pant celebrates his Test comeback with superb 2nd-innings fifty

New Delhi Indian wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant put the disappointment of his first-innings failure behind him to celebrate his Test comeback with a superb second-innings half-century against Bangladesh in the first Test in Chennai on Saturday. Pant's 12th fifty in Test cricket, came after a long gap of 639 days, following his recovery from a near-fatal accident. He reached the 50-run mark in 88 balls, showcasing his trademark aggressive stroke play. Pant's previous Test fifty was scored on December 23, 2022, against Bangladesh at Shere-e-Bangla Stadium in Mirpur. His remarkable comeback journey began with an impressive run in IPL 2024, where he was the top scorer for Delhi Capitals. His strong IPL performance earned him a spot in India's T20 World Cup squad, where he stood out with 171 runs in nine matches during the marquee event in the USA and the West Indies. In this



Test match, Pant fell short of a fifty in the first innings but played a crucial role with a knock of 39 (52) alongside opener Yashasvi Jaiswal. However, his second-innings fifty underlined his ability to play under pressure. His innings included a signature one-handed six and a precise paddle sweep, displaying the audacity and flair he's known for.

Pant reached his milestone on the third day of the Test, displaying his aggressive stroke play. In the 40th over of India's second innings, facing Mehidy Hasan Miraz, he charged down the pitch and lofted the ball over long-off for six, despite losing the grip of his bottom hand. In the following over, he executed a well-timed paddle sweep, adding two more runs to move closer to his fifty. Finally, in the 44th over, a single off Miraz brought up his 12th Test half-century, marking a significant moment in his comeback. Pant's return to form in red-ball cricket is a welcome boost for the Indian team as they continue their two-match Test series against Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka vs New Zealand: Why does Galle Test have a rest day on Saturday

Former India cricketer Dinesh Karthik opined that India all-rounders Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja will be valued a lot after their retirement.

New Delhi Fans who had tuned in to see Sri Lanka and New Zealand first Test in Galle may have been left a little disappointed on Saturday, September 21. There is no action on the supposed 'Day 4' of the Test and due to a valid reason. Saturday is considered to be a 'rest day' in the Test match.

The reason for both teams to call a truce on Saturday is due to the Presidential elections in Sri Lanka on September 21. The players from the host team will cast their votes in



their respective constituencies, exercising their right to participate in the election process. This is the first time since 2008 that such an incident has happened in Test cricket. The last time this happened was when Sri Lanka was facing Bangladesh in 2008. Bangladesh's parliamentary elections were set for December 29, coinciding with the first Test match

between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, held in Mirpur, Dhaka, from December 26 to 31. Due to the election, the match was paused after the third day with the score at 291 for four at stumps. Play resumed on December 30, considered the fourth day, following a rest day on December 29 for the election. This was also the first time since 2001 that a Test match in Sri Lanka has had a rest day

when Zimbabwe had come to tour the Island nation. The first Test in Colombo, held from December 27 to January 1, 2002, featured a rest day on December 30 in observance of Poya Day, a significant Buddhist holiday. Despite the scheduled six days, the match concluded within four playing days, making the sixth day unnecessary.

What happened on Day 3 of Galle Test?

Sri Lanka appear to have the upper hand in the opening Test against New Zealand in Galle, holding a 202-run lead in their second innings with six wickets remaining. New Zealand will be relying on pacer William O'Rourke, who has already claimed three wickets in this innings, following his five-wicket haul in the first.

O'Rourke dismissed Pathum Nissanka before quickly removing Dinesh Chandimal and Kamindu Mendis, leaving Sri Lanka at 178 for four. However, Angelo Mathews and Dhananjaya de Silva resisted the pressure, putting together a valuable 59-run partnership for the fifth wicket, holding off O'Rourke and the other Black Caps' bowlers.

Rishabh Pant hilariously helps Bangladesh to set field on Day 3 of 1st Test

New Delhi Star India wicketkeeper batter Rishabh Pant was hilariously seen helping Bangladesh set the field during his batting on Day 3 of the first Test at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. Pant and Gill resumed India's innings on the overnight score of 81/3 and took the team's past 400.

During their partnership, a hilarious moment was also witnessed as Pant helped Bangladesh set up fielding for his own batting. Between overs, Pant was heard on the stump mic saying "one fielder here" pointing in the direction of mid-wicket. Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto even listened to Pant's advice and moved the fielder in the same position. Pant resumed his innings on the overnight score of 12* (13) and started the day cautiously. However, at the other end, Gill put his wide array of strokes on display as he smacked back to back sixes against Mehidy Hasan Miraz and brought up his half century. Pant also found occasional boundaries and moved to 36 by the drinks break.



Gill and Pant put up 100-run stand

He also brought up his half century on his Test return after over 20 months and registered his second consecutive fifty against Bangladesh in as many matches. After completing their respective half centuries, Pant and Gill launched an all out attack against Bangladesh bowlers and completed their 100-run partnership.

The southpaw even got a life on 71 as he was dropped by Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto on the bowling of Shakib Al Hasan. Pant (86*) and Gill (82*) took India to lunch unscathed as they were 205/3 leading by 432 runs. The duo extended their partnership to 138 leaving Bangladesh in all sorts of trouble.

Ravi Shastri's advice to struggling Virat Kohli: 'You've got to move with time'

Former India cricketer and head coach Ravi Shastri has advised Virat Kohli to change his game plan while facing spinners after his dismissal in the second innings of the first Test against Bangladesh.

New Delhi. Former India cricketer and head coach Ravi Shastri has come up with an advice for star India batter Virat Kohli who's been struggling against spin in recent times in Test cricket. Kohli got dismissed for 18th time against spin since 2021 on Day 2 of the ongoing first Test against Bangladesh.

The right-handed batter missed a straight delivery while trying to work the ball towards the on side and was adjudged lbw. However, replays showed that Kohli had edged the ball onto his pads but didn't opt for DRS. Reflecting on his dismissal, Shastri mentioned Kohli's weakness against spin



and advised him to use his feet to unsettle the spinners. "He has [gotten out to spinners] especially in the last 2-3 years. But he has scored a lot of runs too. What you want to see him do more is use his feet. Get to the pitch of the ball, probably employ the sweep. You've got to move with the times, don't be afraid to go over the top when the field is up. You could try and do things to unsettle the spinners rather than allowing him to keep bowling at you. It's what he did a lot when he scored a lot of runs," said Shastri on commentary. Further speaking ahead, Shastri mentioned how the tracks prepared for India's home Tests in recent times

haven't been easy to bat on." Also some of the tracks that India have played on. It's not been easy. Plus I know a few dismissals where like Shubman Gill in the first innings, he's gotten caught down leg wide. Funny dismissals. He'll be aware of it. That's for sure. There is no batter who doesn't remember. Obviously you find a method of finding a solution. Find out what works for you and stick with that," he added.

Kohli's dismal run in Tests since 2021 In Asia, Kohli has played 14 Test matches since 2021 and scored just 654 runs from 23 innings at an average of 29.72 with one hundred and two half centuries to his name. His numbers have dipped significantly in Test cricket since 2021 as the India star has accumulated just 1669 runs from 51 innings at an average of 32.72 and registered eight half centuries and two hundreds. Kohli will be eager to improve his numbers as India have important series coming up against New Zealand and Australia where his experience will be desperately needed by the team.

Sarandeep Singh appointed Delhi's Ranji coach, Gursharan Singh new chief selector

Former India off-spinner Sarandeep Singh has been appointed the head coach of Delhi's senior cricket team for the upcoming domestic season.

New Delhi Former India off-spinner and national selector Sarandeep Singh will be the new head coach of Delhi's senior team for the upcoming domestic season. He was appointed by the three-member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) of the state unit. Sarandeep will be assisted by bowling coach V Aravind and batting coach Bantu Singh, both of them continuing from last year. In a new position created by the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA), the senior men's team will have two mentors -- Atul Wassan for the white ball and Robin Singh Junior for the red ball. Reema



Malhotra will be the mentor of the women's team. Last year's coach Devang Gandhi, who made quite an impression on both the seniors and juniors in the team will not be available this season for personal reasons and didn't apply for the coach's post. It is understood that the CAC comprising former India players Surinder Khanna, Nikhil Chopra and Anjali Malhotra had two choices for the top job --- Sarandeep and former Delhi coach KP Bhaskar. "The apex council has approved Sarandeep's name for the head coach's post. His name was also there last

year when Devang became coach. Bhaskar was the other candidate but he will be fitted in as one of three selectors," a senior DDCA official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The 44-year-old Sarandeep, who played three Tests and 5 ODIs for India between 2000 and 2003, was a national selector from North Zone under MSK Prasad. While his credentials as a senior-level coach are unknown, it is understood that he has managed institutional teams in the past.

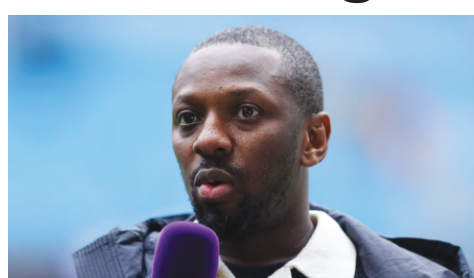
Meanwhile, former India batter and Punjab's only Ranji Trophy-winning captain Gursharan Singh has been recommended for the chairman of selection committee's post. While in the BCCI the cut-off age for national selectors is kept at 60, there is no such rule in state cricket, and the 61-year-old Gursharan has always been a part of the DDCA system, from junior coach to senior selector and at times also a member of CAC.

It is understood that Bhaskar and former Delhi keeper-batter Rajiv Vinayak will be the other two selectors if the CAC's recommendation is adhered to.

'They will break down': Wright-Phillips sides with players on scheduling conflict

New Delhi Former Manchester City winger Shaun Wright-Phillips believes that players voicing their concerns about the over-packed football schedule are entirely justified. In a recent interaction with *India Today*, the former England international discussed how the new format of the UEFA Champions League, along with other European competitions, has significantly increased the number of games for top clubs. Wright-Phillips explained that this gruelling schedule is bound to take a tremendous toll on the players, leading to exhaustion and a higher risk of injuries. Several prominent players, including Dani Carvajal of Real Madrid, Rodri and Kevin De Bruyne of Manchester City, and Jules Koundé of FC Barcelona, have expressed their frustrations with the packed football calendar. "Well, I think, first of all, players like that play pretty much 100% of the games, if they're not injured. I think you have to take notice. I

think if you want longevity in a game, and you want big players like that to be in a game for say, many ways, as long as Ronaldo and Messi, they weren't playing with the schedule this demanding in many ways. It's hard, especially within the Premier League. I think people forget when you come out the back of COVID. I don't think the players have actually had a full summer where they've actually shut their bodies down to rest with the international tournaments and other tournaments going on," Wright-Phillips said. Many of these big names like Koukou and Carvajal have even discussed the possibility of players going on strike in protest. These players argue that the current schedule does not consider the physical and mental strain they endure, which increases the likelihood of suffering serious injuries. Wright-Phillips, who once donned the jersey of Manchester City, referenced the era of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo's



dominance in European football. He emphasised that players are only able to perform at their best when given sufficient rest. Without proper recovery, even the most talented footballers cannot maintain their peak form throughout an extended season. "So in many ways, I agree with them. I think now, if say City or Liverpool or maybe Real Madrid, I'm not sure about their schedule, get to the final of everything. That's only 75 games a season. For me, I think it's too much,

not just physically but mentally. People will eventually break down. I think when you put a Club World Cup in a rest period where, normally, if there are no internationals playing, that is your brain, that's now gone. Where are these players resting and recovering? So then more and more people start to break down. But I hope it really doesn't happen, but you can see every possibility," Wright-Phillips added.

As Wright-Phillips pointed out, elite teams like Manchester City or Real Madrid could end up playing around 80 matches in a single season. In addition to expanded club competitions like the UEFA Champions League, players are also expected to participate in the UEFA Nations League, FIFA Club World Cup, international friendlies, and FIFA World Cup qualifiers. The relentless schedule is a heavy burden for athletes who are already playing at the highest level.



Sharvari Wagh

Reveals Whether Rani Mukerji Was Intimidating On Bunty Aur Babli 2 Set: 'As A Fan Girl...

Sharvari, one of Bollywood's rising stars, has been winning hearts with her performances in recent releases such as Munjya, Maharaj, and Vedaa. After making her debut in Bunty Aur Babli 2 alongside Rani Mukerji, Sharvari recently opened up in an exclusive interview with News18 Showsha about her experience working with the veteran actress. Reflecting on her first encounter with Rani Mukerji, Sharvari admitted, "I was very nervous actually because Rani ma'am is someone I've always looked up to. As a child, I used to watch her films in theatres, come back home, and reenact her scenes and songs. She's been a huge inspiration behind my desire to become an actor. So, meeting her for the first time was a really big moment for me. But she's an incredible person, and within moments, she made me feel comfortable, and all my nerves disappeared."

Sharvari recalled how her initial apprehensions soon faded after spending more time with Rani during rehearsals. "Me and Siddhant [Chaturvedi] thought the first meeting was fun and casual. And then, after a couple of readings and prep sessions, we got to know her better. She became more friendly, and it was exactly what we hoped for," she shared. When asked if Rani Mukerji ever seemed intimidating, Sharvari reassured, "Not at all. She's just a lovely human being. Even though she's a superstar, she never gave off an intimidating vibe. As someone who grew up watching her, I was a total fan girl, but meeting her was an absolute joy."



Sharvari also reflected on her journey in Bollywood, saying, "My journey keeps me grounded and reminds me of the tough days I've had, which is why I remain humble. I've always looked forward to moments like these when my work gets appreciated. The audience's response has been a huge validation for me as an actor, and it reassures me that I'm on the right path." On the professional front, Sharvari is gearing up for her role in Alpha, a highly anticipated project from Yash Raj Films' spy universe. Directed by Shiv Rawail, the film will feature Sharvari and Alia Bhatt as super-agents, alongside Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor. Alpha is set to make history as the first action film in YRF's spy universe to be led by two female protagonists. With a substantial budget and immense buzz surrounding the project, this marks Sharvari's most expensive film to date, as well as her first collaboration with Alia Bhatt.

Alia Bhatt Pens Adorable Birthday Wish For Raha's G-Pa Mahesh Bhatt, Shares Throwback Photos



Alia Bhatt is currently on vacation with Raha, Ranbir Kapoor, and Neetu Kapoor. Amid this also, she took to her social handle and dropped an adorable birthday wish for her father Mahesh Bhatt. Alia also shared throwback photos on her Instagram handle and mentioned that there is no one like her father. Alia took to her photo-sharing platform Instagram and posted two pictures simultaneously and wrote a caption while pouring immense love for her father. The caption read, "Sometimes all you gotta do in life is show up .. you always did and always do (with sunflower emoji). Happy birthday pops/g-pa (with a balloon emoji) there's no one like you". The first picture shared is from her wedding day in which the actress was seen getting ready while Mahesh was seen standing as a protective father to accompany her adorable daughter for her grand day. The second picture showed Alia and Mahesh having a nap while leaning their heads towards the wall.

Soon after Alia's post surfaced online, fans took her comments sections and shared blessings for Mahesh Bhatt. A user wrote, "Happy Birthday to Raha's Nana!" (with two heart emojis). Another user wrote, "Happy birthday our Queen's daddy" (with a heart emoji). On the work front, Alia Bhatt is all geared up for her upcoming release 'Jigra' helmed by director Vasana Bala. The teaser of the film has completely shaken the internet with its power-packed setup as Alia steps into the action arena to save her brother.

The upcoming action thriller film will be theatrically released on October 11, 2024, in a clash with Rajkumar Rao-Triptii Dimri starrer- 'Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video'. 'Jigra' also features Vedang Raina, Manoj Pahwa, Rahul Ravindran and Rahul Nanda in crucial roles. The film is presented by Viacom18 Studios, Dharma Productions, and Eternal Sunshine Productions, and produced by Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, Alia Bhatt, Shaheen Bhatt, and Somen Mishra.

Not SJ Suryah, But This South Actor Was Approached First For The DCP Role In Maanaadu



Maanaadu, directed by Venkat Prabhu and starring Silambarasan, hit the theatres in 2021. The film opened to rave reviews from the audience. The film also starred SJ Suryah, Kalyani Priyadarshan, Premji, Bharathiraja, and many others. It was a huge hit among the audience and the plot centred around time travel. The sci-fi political thriller was produced by Suresh Kamatchi. But did you know SJ Suryah's role was offered to a different actor? Maanaadu marked a grand comeback film for Silambarasan, aka, Simbu. He had been away from the spotlight after delivering a string of failures. The film left Simbu fans ecstatic. There were reports that one of the key reasons, why the film worked was the combination of SJ Suryah and Simbu. As per the latest buzz, Venkat Prabhu had initially approached Arvind Swamy to play SJ Suryah's DCP Dhanushkodi's role in Maanaadu.

In an interview, Arvind Swamy revealed that he was supposed to play the role of SJ Suryah in Maanaadu. However, "due to scheduling conflicts", he asked for a month-long extension to join the shoot. But the production team could not wait for that long and he respected their decision. The actor further shared, "I haven't watched Maanaadu yet because when I heard the story, I completely immersed myself in that character, and it's difficult for me to see someone else in that role. But I will watch Maanaadu one day," he said.

Maanaadu hit the theatres on November 25, 2021, and received widespread acclaim from audiences and critics alike. The film incorporated not just the sci-fi time loop, but other commercial elements to be able to strike a chord with the audience and keep them entertained. Many publications even called the film to be one of the best Tamil films of all time and one of the best Indian films of 2021.

Kriti Sanon

Makes Stylish Entry At Mumbai Airport, Poses An Interesting Question To Paps

Kriti Sanon is back in town after attending the London Fashion Week, which took place between September 13 and 17. The Bollywood actress graced the Summer 2025 Burberry runway show, dressed in a monochromatic chic outfit from the same brand. On Friday, Kriti was spotted exiting the Mumbai airport. Several paparazzi pages shared videos of the actress' stylish appearance at the airport. The actress can be seen wearing a white T-shirt paired with greyish cargo pants and sneakers. Kriti accentuated her look by adding an uber-cool sunglasses and carrying a Burberry tote bag. In a video shared by a paparazzo account, as the actress was walking out of the airport, she noticed that one of the photographers left his slipper mid-way and gestured to him to wear it. Kriti then asked, "Aap log joota kyu nahi pehente ho (why don't you guys wear shoes)?" To which one of the paps replied, "Baarish chalu hai ma'am (rain is still pouring)."



A day ago, Harper's Bazaar India interviewed the Bollywood actress while she was getting ready for the Burberry show at London Fashion Week. During the conversation, she said, "I love spending summers in London. I love the vibe of the city, the food, the parks, the beautiful weather (sometimes), sitting in cafes and soaking in the sun. I'm like a kid

when I go to Hyde Park." For the event, Kriti opted for a classic trench coat in a grey-taupe colour adorned with feather detailing. She paired it with black boots, gold jewellery, brown smokey eyes, and a soft updo for the hair.

In other news, Kriti has been appointed the Global Brand Ambassador for Pepe Jeans, making her the first Indian celebrity to achieve this. The brand shared the announcement on its social media channels. They revealed, "A first look of @kritisanon as our Global Brand Ambassador in our #VeryPepe campaign."

