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BJP's intent to dismantle Waqf Board clear in Amendment Bill: Owaisi

Sanjay Kumar

New Delhi, Sep 25: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi alleged that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has been introduced by the Centre to per-



manently abolish the Waqf Board. Lok Sabha MP and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday alleged the BJP-led NDA at the Centre does not have intentions to protect, develop or bring efficiency in Waqf properties. He said the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has been introduced by the Centre to permanently abolish the Waqf Board. Citing legal provisions, Owaisi explained that the Waqf Act of 1995 is based on the concept of 'Waqf by user,' which

mandates that if a place is used for prayers, functions as an orphanage, or serves as a graveyard, it becomes Waqf property, something the government now intends to dismantle. "In Hinduism, there are many endowment boards where places become religious by usage. In Uttar Pradesh, out of 1,21,000 registered properties under the Sunni Waqf Board, 1,12,000 are Waqf by user. Once Waqf by user is abolished, what law will they implement?" asked Owaisi. He also alleged that the draft of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill states that a practising Muslim of five years can donate to the Waqf Board. However, it does not clarify what is meant by "practising Muslim," he said. "Does it imply someone who offers prayers five times a day, keeps a beard, wears a skullcap, or doesn't have a non-Muslim wife?" Owaisi questioned. He added that no such law applies to people of the Hindu religion, where anyone can donate at any time without these legal restrictions. "I want to ask the government, why did they come up with such terminology as 'practising Muslim'?"

Congress handed over Haryana to 'dalals' and 'damads': PM Modi

Simmi Kaur Babbar

Sonapat, Sep 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Wednesday that support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is growing while the Congress is losing ground in Haryana as the assembly elections inch closer. "As the day of voting nears, the Congress is losing hope. The support for BJP is increasing day by day in Haryana," PM Modi told a large gathering in Sonapat. Modi accused the Congress of handing over Haryana to "dalals" (middlemen) and "damads" (sons-in-law), in a veiled reference to the Gandhi family. While Modi did not explicitly name anyone, his allusion was clear to many in the audience, who erupted in applause. "Wherever the Congress has put its foot, corruption and 'bhai-bhatijawaad' (nepotism) are inevitable. Congress has given birth to corruption in the government system. The Congress party is the mother of corruption in our country," the prime minister said. In a heartwarming moment during the rally, Modi acknowledged a young boy in the crowd who had drawn a picture of the prime minister. Modi asked

the boy to hand over the picture to his security team, promising to write him a personal letter. The prime minister also invoked the legacy of Dr B.R.



Ambedkar, saying the empowerment of Dalits has always been closely linked to industrial growth. "Today, Haryana ranks among the country's top states in the field of agriculture and industry under the BJP government. When industrialisation happens, poor, farmers, Dalits receive most of the ben-

efits," says PM Modi. Voting for the 90-member legislative assembly in Haryana will be held on October 5. Votes will be counted on October 8 along with that in Jammu and Kashmir. Ahead of PM Modi's rally in Sonapat, the Congress claimed that Haryana's farmers have completely lost trust in the BJP and asked Prime Minister Modi to spell out his party's vision for ensuring that the state's farmers can make a decent living. "Haryana's farmers have completely lost trust in the BJP. When the farm protests were called off in 2021, farmers left after being reassured by the non-biological PM and his government that they would meet their demands," Jairam Ramesh, Congress general secretary in charge of communications, said. Ramesh accused the BJP of resorting to force when farmers took to the streets again to demand action on their issues. "Instead of listening to them, the Double Anyay Sarkar (double injustice government) lathi-charged and tear-gassed them," he said, referring to the BJP's governments at both state and central levels. "What is the BJP's vision to ensure that Haryana's farmers can make a stable, decent living?" he asked.

Nari Shakti Vandan Act to be implemented soon: Cm Yogi

ST Correspondent

Lucknow, Sep, 25: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has assigned a significant responsibility to the newly established State Women Commission, emphasising its vital role in fostering leadership skills among women in Uttar Pradesh. He highlighted that the Nari Shakti Vandan Act would soon be implemented nationwide, reserving one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women. To ensure that women in Uttar Pradesh reap the full benefits of this landmark legislation, Yogi emphasised the importance of developing leadership skills among them. He urged the Commission to take proactive measures in protecting women's interests and enhancing their welfare,



instructing it to prepare a comprehensive programme aimed at achieving these objectives. During a special meeting held on Tuesday with the Commission's chairperson, vice-chairpersons and members, the chief minister also discussed its objectives, responsibilities and rights, and gave necessary guidelines. The chief minister further highlighted the various efforts undertaken by the state government to ensure the safety and development of women and girls. He said multiple schemes are being implemented in the interest of women, including the establishment of special helpline numbers designed to assist them. Positive outcomes from these initiatives have already been observed, he noted. He urged the Commission officials to engage with local women during their district visits to communicate these programmes effectively. "Feedback gathered from these interactions should be reported to the Chief Minister's Office. If any individuals have not been able to benefit from these schemes, the Commission is expected to recommend appropriate solutions," he stated. Additionally, the chief minister emphasised the government's commitment to rescuing children involved in illegal begging activities. He called for efforts to reintegrate these children into society by providing them access to education and housing. He said that the Commission should play an active role in this important work, contributing to the holistic development and welfare of these vulnerable populations.

Siddaramaiah responds to court-ordered Lokayukta probe in MUDA case

New Delhi, Sep 25: Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said he was "not afraid" of the Lokayukta probe ordered by a special court in Bengaluru in the alleged MUDA land allotment scam. Putting up a brave face, Siddaramaiah said he was "ready to face any probe" against him, adding that he would decide his next course of action soon. The Karnataka chief minister posted on X, "It has come to my attention through the media that the Special Court for Elected Representatives has ordered an investigation by the Mysuru Lokayukta. I will provide a detailed response after reviewing the full copy of the order. I am ready to face the investigation and continue the legal fight." "As I said yesterday, I repeat today: there is no question of fearing an investigation; I am determined to face everything. After discussing with legal experts, I will decide the next course of action," he added. It was alleged that Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi was illegally allotted 14 sites worth 756 crore by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA). The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout, as per the allegations. Earlier, the high court granted temporary relief to Siddaramaiah in its interim order passed on August 19.

Rahul says would fight in Parliament, take to streets to restore J&K statehood

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Sri Nagar, Sep 25: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday reiterated the promise of restoring Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)'s statehood, saying they would fight for it in Parliament as well as take to the streets. He said the statehood was snatched because the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wanted to run the region through the lieutenant governor (LG) and outsiders to end the prosperity of the people. "Until the lieutenant governor is here, outsiders will continue to get benefits at the expense of the people of J&K," he said at a rally in Jammu. The rally coincided with the second phase of the first assembly elections in J&K since 2014. J&K was divided into two Union territories when the region was stripped of its semi-autonomous status under the

Constitution's Article 370 in August 2019. He said the elections in J&K were all about people's rights. "We will ensure



statehood and then the government will protect local industries. The doors of banks will be opened for common people." He said there have been instances in the country's history since 1947 wherein Union territories were made states and states divided into two but never was a

state downgraded to a Union territory. "It was grave injustice with the people," he said. He promised to apply the entire might of the Opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) if the BJP did not return the statehood. "If the BJP did not do it for any reason, then the first job under the INDIA government will be to give statehood because this is your right," Gandhi alleged the BJP government continued to work for the two prominent business tycoons. "While the entire government worked for Ambani and Adani, two weapons GST [Goods and Services Tax] and demonetisation were used to clear the way for these two billionaires at the cost of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)." He claimed the government waived the debts of 25 billionaires at the cost of poor people. "...wrong decisions like demonetisation and GST destroyed the MSME sector that gave jobs to the people."

'Why was accused Akshay Shinde shot in head?': Bombay high court

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Sep 25: Badlapur encounter: Bombay HC said shoot-out of Akshay Shinde could have been avoided and urged for probe into his death to be carried out in a fair manner. Badlapur sexual assault case accused Akshay Shinde shot dead: The Bombay high court on Wednesday, September 25, made some sharp observations and raised critical questions to the Maharashtra Police concerning the killing of Akshay Shinde, the accused in the Badlapur sexual assault case. Akshay Shinde was accused of sexually assaulting two minor girls at a school in Badlapur town of Thane district. Akshay Shinde was accused of sexually assaulting two minor girls at a school in Badlapur town of Thane district. A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan said the shoot-out of Akshay Shinde could have been avoided and urged for the probe into his death to be carried out in a fair and

impartial manner. The bench also said if it would be constrained to pass appropriate orders if the probe is not done properly. "We are not suspecting the police on their activities, but come clean on all aspects," the court said. The Bombay high bench



posted the matter for further hearing on October 3, by when the police would have to take a decision on the complaint submitted by Akshay Shinde's father, Anna Shinde, seeking an FIR against the police

officers concerned. Badlapur encounter case: Bombay high court 6 observations and questions The Bombay high court said the shoot-out could have been avoided if the police had tried to overpower Badlapur case accused Akshay Shinde first and added it was very hard to believe that he managed to seize a pistol from a police officer and open fire. Why the accused was shot in the head, and not on hand or legs first? the high court asked. The Bombay high court said while it was not raising any suspicion at this stage, it was very hard to believe that Akshay Shinde managed to seize a pistol from a police officer and open fire. It is not very easy to unlock and open fire from a pistol, the bench said. Appearing for the state, chief public prosecutor Hiten Venegavkar said the Maharashtra CID was also probing the incident. "Two FIRs one is u/s 307 and one is an Accidental Death Report (ADR). Both are being probed by

the CID," Live Law quoted Venegavkar as saying. At this stage Justice Mohite-Dere asked Venegavkar about the timeline, noting that there was "nothing confidential" about it. The bench also asked about the time when the body was sent for post-mortem, whether it was videographed, the cause of death and about the injuries to the deceased and the to officer. Venegavkar said, "The body was sent at 8am to JJ Hospital. The autopsy was video-graphed. The cause of death was bleeding. Bullet pierced one side of the head and exited from the other. Injury to the officer is also a pierced one." The bench said while it was not raising any suspicion at this stage, it was very hard to believe Akshay Shinde managed to seize a pistol from a police officer and open fire. Justice Chavan said, "Mr Venegavkar this is hard to believe like this. Prima facie this cannot be trusted. A layman cannot fire a pistol unlike a revolver which any tom, dick and harry can do. A weak man cannot load the pistol as it needs strength."

My father is 'most accepted face' in Maharashtra at present: Aaditya Thackeray

Naresh Malhotra

Mumbai, Sep. 25: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on Wednesday said his father and former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray is the "most accepted face" in the state at present. While Congress leaders have pointed out that the chief minister's post traditionally goes to the party in an alliance that wins the highest number of seats, Aaditya said at the India Today Conclave here that his father was one of the "foremost leaders who can lead Maharashtra." Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) are part of the Opposition's Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the state and INDIA grouping at the national level. Asked what would the Sena (UBT) do if the Congress won more seats in the coming state elections, Thackeray referred to the work done by his father's government during the coronavirus pandemic, and said it was one of the best governments of the past few decades. "Even today, he is the most accepted face. If you go out to the hinterlands of Maharashtra, farmlands of Maharashtra, and (ask people) they will tell you that Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray is the only man who stood with us in our



toughest of times," Aaditya said. Asked if he would like Uddhav Thackeray projected as the face of the alliance, Aaditya said, "If today there is a person who can lead the state in a unified manner, in a manner that is able, (then) yes, Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray stands as one of the foremost people who can

lead Maharashtra because we want someone who will speak about Maharashtra pride. Seat-sharing talks of the MVA were proceeding in a better manner than those of the BJP and its "broken" allies in the ruling Mahayuti coalition, he claimed. To a question about the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s low strike rate in comparison to its allies in the Lok Sabha elections, Thackeray said his party won nine seats even after it had lost 40 MLAs and 12 MPs (when Eknath Shinde split the party in June 2022 and toppled the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government). The votes it polled in Thane and Dombivli, considered to be Chief Minister Shinde's strongholds, were "very good", he added. Of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra, the Congress won 13 of the 17 seats it contested, Sena (UBT) won nine out of 21 and NCP (SP) eight out of ten. The Sena (UBT)'s strike rate of 42 percent was lower than the rival Shinde-led Shiv Sena's 47 per cent strike rate. "We may go low in terms of strike rate but we will not lose out on principles which the BJP compromises on for electoral gains," the Thackeray scion further said. "We have a clear-cut understanding in the MVA. We are not fighting for the post."

Omar Abdullah slams Centre for foreign diplomats' J&K visit: 'No need of certificate'

Sri Nagar, Sep 25: National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah hit out at the Centre for inviting a delegation of foreign diplomats to witness phase 2 polling of the ongoing assembly election in Jammu

Kashmir Assembly elections, in Srinagar, Wednesday. Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) President Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah show their fingers marked with indelible ink after casting vote during the second phase of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, in Srinagar, Wednesday. "I don't know why foreigners should be asked to check elections here. When foreign governments comment, then the government of India says 'this is an internal matter for India' and now suddenly they want foreign observers to come and look at our elections," Omar Abdullah, who was flanked by his father Farooq Abdullah, told reporters. Omar Abdullah said the central government has no right to claim for peaceful conduct of elections in the union territory after stripping Jammu and Kashmir of statehood and successive actions like a prolonged internet blockade in the region. Also read | Jammu and Kashmir phase 2 poll: Diplomats from 16 foreign missions witness assembly election process



and Kashmir (J&K). Omar Abdullah described the elections as an internal matter of India and questioned the need for an external validation. Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) President Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah show their fingers marked with indelible ink after casting vote during the second phase of Jammu and

News box

Badlapur killing: Troubled history of encounters returns to haunt Mumbai

MUMBAI. The killing of the Badlapur accused has stirred memories of Mumbai's troubled history of police encounters dating back to mid-1980s. Between the 1980s and 2010, more than 200 suspects and accused persons were killed in police encounters.

While a magisterial enquiry followed in every such case, convictions were rare. One of the few cases where policemen were convicted involved the encounter of alleged Chhota Rajan aide Rammarayan Gupta, also known as Lakhani Bhaiyya, in 2006. Several officers were held accountable, marking a rare moment of judicial success in a landscape otherwise dominated by acquittals and clean chits. Other high-profile cases such as the killing of UP gangster Sandeep Gadoli are still under trial. Another notable case is the custodial death of Khwaja Yunus, whose murder trial is still pending. Assistant police inspector Sachin Waze and three of his constables are accused of killing Yunus in custody while claiming that Yunus had escaped. Police encounters became common in Mumbai during the 1980s and peaked in the 1990s, when organised gangs ruled the underworld. Back in the day, police often claimed that in most cases, suspects opened fire first and officers were forced to retaliate in self-defense. Police sources attribute the decline in the trend to the elimination or escape of many dreaded gangsters.

Among police officers who came under the radar for fake encounters in this era were Vijay Salaskar, Pradip Sharma, Praful Bhosale and Daya Nayak. Salaskar died in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack while Sharma was convicted in the Lakhani Bhaiyya case. Bhosale was implicated in the Khwaja Yunus case but was acquitted and rejoined the force.

Water supply to parts of G-North, G-South wards to be hit for 19 hours



MUMBAI. Water supply to parts of G-North and G-South wards will be affected from 10pm on Thursday to 5pm on Friday for carrying out repairs to a 1,450mm diameter main water channel at Senapati Bapat Marg. The repair work will be carried out for 19 hours, said BMC officials.

Supply will be stopped at Currey Road, Sakharum Bala Pawar Marg, Mahadev Palav Marg, Lower Parel, Delail Marg, and BDD chawl which daily get water from 4.30am to 7.45am, and NM Joshi Marg and BDD chawl which receive water from 2.30pm to 3pm. There'll be 33% water cut in Prabhadevi, Adarsh Nagar, P Balu Marg, Hatiskar Marg, Marathe Marg, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Senapati Bapat Marg, NM Joshi Marg, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg in G-South ward, and Senapati Bapat Marg, Veer Savarkar Marg, Sayani Marg, Kakasaheb Gadgil Marg, Bhawani Shankar Marg, Gokhale Marg in G-North ward. All these areas have daily water supply between 4pm and 7pm.

Second Oz varsity to start classes at GIFT City from Nov

AHMEDABAD. The campus of the University of Wollongong (UOW) at GIFT City in Gandhinagar will start operations from Nov, stated the varsity authorities on Tuesday. It is the second Australian university after Deakin University to set up a campus at the fintech city. The university will offer two courses primarily in fintech and data science with 50 students each, said officials. Executive director for global student recruitment at UOW, Kath McCollim, said that the university aims to provide international experience through inter-campus initiatives. "Due to GIFT City, the Indian campus will be the first, besides the Australian one, to offer a course in fintech," she said.

Cave-in near Vasna metro stations repaired for 27L

AHMEDABAD. A cave-in in Vasna area was repaired at a cost of Rs 26.87 lakh, said AMC officials. A breakdown occurred in the 1600mm diameter drainage line passing near the APMC metro station in Vasna ward. The repair work was completed at 18% less than the estimated cost determined by the AMC, said officials.

Tenders had also been issued to repair several manholes of drainage lines in Ambawadi area of Navrangpura. The breakdown repairs were carried out at 27% less than the estimated cost, amounting to Rs 36.36 lakh, said officials. Proposals to report these works after the breakdown repairs will be presented at the water and sewerage committee meeting on Sep 25.

'Waqf Board laid unlawful claim on 600 families' land in Munambam'

Residents to stage protest in Munambam alleging unlawful claims of the Waqf Board on the land owned by them. KCBC, Syro-Malabar Public Affairs Commission declare support

KOCHI. The plight of over 600 families residing in Munambam, who are fighting the alleged unlawful claims of the Waqf Board on the land owned by them, has been brought before the Lok Sabha Secretariat by the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) and the Syro-Malabar Public Affairs Commission (SMPAC). In two separate missives, the organisations have expressed their support for the Union government's proposed amendment of the Waqf laws. On September 27, the residents of Munambam will hold an agitation at Vanchi Square in Fort Kochi.

Both KCBC and the Syro-Malabar Public Affairs Commission have urged the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill to take immediate and decisive action to resolve the issue and ensure that such claims on lawfully owned



properties of Indian citizens are not repeated in the future. "It is the committee's responsibility to guarantee that the law is enforced fairly and justly, without infringing upon the constitutional rights of citizens to live with dignity and to own property," said the KCBC and SMPAC missives to the Lok Sabha Secretariat signed by Cardinal Baselios Cleemis and Archbishop Mar

Andrews Thazhath, the respective president and chairman of the organisations.

Speaking about the issue that has placed the residents in a quandary, Fr Michael Pulickal CMI, secretary of KCBC's Commission for Social Harmony and Vigilance, said, "Nearly five years ago, the Waqf Board had laid claim to the areas of Munambam, Cherai, and Pallikal islands in Ernakulam district, located along the northern coast of

Vypeen. This region comprises around 1,000 land titles and is home to more than 600 families of various religious backgrounds, with land ownership records dating back to 1989. These residents are now facing severe hardship as they are being forced to vacate the land they legally purchased. This situation has led to serious human rights violations, infringing on their constitutional

rights to live and own property."

Elaborating on the issue, he said, "The history of ownership of this disputed land dates back to 1902. At that time, the King of Travancore leased 404 acres of land and 60 acres of water to Abdul Sattar Musa Haji Seth, who had come to Kerala from Gujarat for farming purposes. The lease had previously excluded the land of local fishermen who had lived there for many years before it."

"Later in 1948, his successor Siddique Seth registered this land at Edappally (Ernakulam) Sub-Registrar Office. During the last 50 years, sea erosion led to significant land loss in this region. In particular, torrential rains and rough seas in 1934 completely obliterated a locality 'Pandara seaside'. A significant portion of this was the land leased by the King to Seth. But, later on, land registered by Seth included areas where fishermen had resided for nearly a century," he added.

BMC issues Rs 1,600cr tender for concretisation of EEH, WEH service and slip roads

MUMBAI. BMC has proposed to spend Rs 1,600 crore for concretisation of service roads, slip roads, and junctions of both Eastern Express Highway (EEH) and Western Express Highway (WEH).

In a tender notice published on Sept 23, BMC said that the contract period for the work would be 24 months excluding monsoons. The scope of work includes civil works, concretisation works, construction of storm water drains, ducts, footpaths, and allied works.

"The contractor is expected to maintain the project road in traffic-worthy conditions/motorable by using asphalt mixes during monsoon after notification of award of works and till completion of contract period or completion of entire work whichever is later. The trenches excavated by various utilities including



BMC's departments on Eastern Express Highway, during the contract period shall be reinstated by the contractor of the said work, as per existing policy guidelines and relevant specifications and as directed by the engineer including intervening monsoon," states the tender document.

RTI activist Anil Galgali criticised the move, stating that service roads are not meant for heavy vehicles and therefore do not require concretisation. "If they are

properly asphalted and maintained, service roads can last just as long. These roads are frequently dug up for trenching work, and once concretised, it will be harder to do so repeatedly without compromising the road's quality," said Galgali. This year, a tender was floated before monsoon for repair of bad patches on both WEH and EEH during monsoons.

While EEH spans across 20km of road length, WEH is spread across 35km. They are two of the busiest traffic stretches, especially during peak hours in the morning and evenings.

In Nov 2022, MMRDA handed over EEH and WEH to BMC. Since then, BMC has taken over repairs of the road, beautification, and also full-fledged cleaning.

MSc graduate arrested for arson after setting royal enfield bullets on fire

The accused is identified as Pulakith, a resident of Mahalakshipuram. Despite having an MSc in Tourism, he was unemployed.

BENGALURU. Upset over not having a Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycle of his own, a 25-year-old MSc graduate went about setting three motorcycles of the type on fire, for which he has been arrested by the Peenya police. The accused had set fire to three Bullets that were parked outside a PG accommodation in HMT Layout. He sourced petrol from the vehicles that he targeted, and used it to ignite the fire.

The accused is identified as Pulakith, a resident of Mahalakshipuram. Despite having an MSc in Tourism, he was unemployed. Pulakith had set fire to the motorcycles around 1 am on September 19. Deepanshu Agarwal, one of the bike



owners, had filed a complaint in this regard. Agarwal, who is a student, had purchased a second-hand Bullet, a few months ago. The accused had

specifically set Agarwal's Bullet afire, however, the flames spread to the other Bullets parked nearby, and incinerated them. The inmates of the PG, on seeing the flames, alerted Agarwal. Based on CCTV footage, the police arrested the accused, who has since been released on bail. "The accused and the complainant don't know each other. Pulakith, who keeps loitering around, saw Agarwal's Royal Enfield Bullet parked outside the PG. Upset over not having a Bullet himself, he set fire to the two-wheeler. Two other motorcycles that were parked on either side also caught fire in the incident. Initially, it was suspected that some local criminals could be involved," said an officer. The Peenya police have registered a case.

Thiruvananthapuram: Finally, KWA charges new pipelines on Vellayambalam-Thycaud stretch

KWA will take up another major work along the stretch in coming week, at Vazhuthacaud junction

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. After months-long protests and delays, the Kerala Water Authority (KWA) finally charged the new pipelines in the Althara-Thycaud areas in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. Several residential areas on the Vellayambalam-Thycaud stretch suffered water-supply disruptions owing to the smart road works for several weeks, forcing the residents to stage multiple protests demanding immediate restoration of water supply.

Charging the new pipelines along the Althara-Thycaud stretch is among the major works taken up after the controversial pipeline shifting at Nemom, which led to a five-day disruption of water supply in the capital city. On Tuesday, the KWA managed to complete the 12-hour-long work ahead of schedule.

"The work began at 10am and we were able to complete the work by 4pm. We have successfully charged the lines and everything is under control. The higher areas will start getting water soon, and by midnight, the water supply will be restored," said a KWA official. Following a series of protests by the residents'



association along the stretch, the Kerala State Human Rights Commission too had intervened in the matter. On account of the

charging work, KWA has announced a 10 to 12-hour disruption in water supply in many parts.

NIA charges cafe blast accused in Shivamogga ISIS case

Duo engaged in radicalising, recruiting gullible Muslim youths, were involved in burning of the Indian national flag



BENGALURU. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday charge-sheeted The Rameshwaram Cafe blast co-accused Abdul Matheen Ahmed Taaha alias Taha, and Mussavir Hussain Shazib alias Shazib in the Shivamogga ISIS conspiracy case, taking the total charge-sheeted accused to 10 in the case.

The duo was charged under various sections of the former criminal code, the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in the third supplementary chargesheet filed by NIA before the special court in Bengaluru.

Taha and Shazib were earlier charge-sheeted by NIA in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, and for their involvement in Al-Hind ISIS module, Bengaluru. "Residents of Shivamogga district, the two men were engaged in radicalising and recruiting gullible Muslim youths, including the co-accused, in the ISIS conspiracy case," NIA stated in an official release on Tuesday.

The case relates to the anti-India activities of the proscribed terrorist organization Islamic State (IS/ISIS). The Central counter-terrorism agency had taken over the case from Karnataka police in November 2022. "The accused were involved in violent activities like arson, trial explosions and burning of the Indian national flag, in addition to radicalization, recruitment, terror funding, as part of the IS conspiracy to spread terror and destabilise the nation," the agency added. Investigations in the case, originally filed in September 2022 by the state police, are ongoing.

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NEWS BOX

Max temp 37°C, no respite from sultry weather for a few days

Gurgaon: The city witnessed a sultry day on Tuesday with the maximum temperature soaring to 37.2 degrees Celsius, which was 1.8 notches higher than the previous day — highest for the month in Sept so far. It felt like a hot summer day. The sultry weather conditions may continue for the next few days, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD). On Tuesday, the minimum temperature was at 26.1 degrees Celsius, which was 0.8 notches higher than the previous day. IMD predicted that the maximum temperature for the next five days is likely to remain in the range of 34 and 35 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature may fall between 25 and 26 degrees Celsius. This means that the sultry weather conditions are expected to continue for a few more days, much to the dismay of the residents.

However, there is some relief in sight as isolated areas in the region are expected to experience light showers from Thursday onwards. An IMD official said, "Weather has been dry for Haryana on Monday. Gurgaon is likely to see partly cloudy skies with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers between Sept 26 and 30." The city's air quality index (AQI) remained in the 'satisfactory' category on Tuesday at 71.

Meanwhile, a haze hung over Delhi on Tuesday as the national capital's air quality deteriorated. The average AQI worsened to the higher end of 'moderate' category at 197 at 4pm. By 6pm, it entered the 'poor' category with an AQI of 201, rising to 204 by 8pm. The last time Delhi recorded a 'poor' air day was on June 12, when the AQI stood at 211.

Man treated for cancer without stoma bag in city

Gurgaon: A 53-year-old Indian-origin man residing in the UK, diagnosed with stage one rectal cancer, discovered a life-altering solution at a hospital in the city. The patient was initially advised to undergo radiation and chemotherapy in the UK. The recommended treatment plan involved radiation and chemotherapy, along with the excision of his rectum, necessitating a permanent stoma bag for stool passage. He then travelled to India and visited CK Birla Hospital. Dr Vinay Samuel Gaikwad, director (surgical oncology) at the hospital, said: "We opted for TAMIS procedure as this technology is cost-effective, abbreviates hospital stay and diminishes morbidity. Had it not been for TAMIS, the surgery would have left a long incision besides posing the risk of infection and complications."

No relief from water, sewer problems: Minister heckled

Gurgaon: Mool Chand Sharma, the BJP candidate from Faridabad's Ballabgarh, encountered resistance from locals during an event late on Monday evening.

Sharma, Haryana minister for industries and two-time MLA, has been given the party ticket for the third time. When he arrived in Sector 22 Ballabgarh for campaigning later than the scheduled time, a crowd of locals surrounded him and heckled him. In response, he took an oath on stage, promising to resolve the area's issues. People said despite him being an MLA for 10 years and a minister in the govt, they neither got uninterrupted drinking water supply, nor relief from choked sewer lines. Sharma then started making promises that he would resolve the grievances if elected this time. Dissatisfied by his replies, people continued to heckle him and soon began leaving. Seeing this, Sharma said: "I swear that after winning this time, I will provide relief to the people from drinking water shortage and sewer overflow."

E.coli in water of condo with 5k residents

Ghaziabad: The health department confirmed on Tuesday that coliform bacteria were present in water samples collected from KW Srishti, a housing society in Raj Nagar Extension (RNE).

The apartment complex with 1,500 flats is home to over 5,000 people. Over the last two weeks, several residents have flagged the poor quality — blackish and pungent — of water reaching their taps. Nearly, 20 people have also complained of stomach aches.



Earlier this month, nearly 800 residents of a Greater Noida society fell ill after consuming contaminated water. Traces of coliform bacteria were also found in the water samples collected from Ecovillage 2.

District surveillance officer RK Gupta said 39 water samples were collected from the overhead tanks of the 11 towers of the housing society and a borewell — the main water source of the society — first on Sept 18 and then again on Sept 21 — and sent to the district lab for tests. The analysis confirmed the presence of coliform bacteria in all the samples. The presence of these pathogens indicates faecal contamination, which can lead to diarrhoea, vomiting, and fever. If left untreated, these conditions can have serious consequences.

Assistant CMO RK Gupta said residents have been advised not to use tap water for drinking purposes till the superchlorination process — a water treatment process where large amounts of chlorine are added to the water supply to ensure rapid disinfection — is complete. He accused the society's maintenance team of "negligence" and said if the situation persisted soon there could be an outbreak of diarrhoea cases.

"The developer has been directed to set up a dossier pump for superchlorination by next week.

Dust control, checks on farm fires: Haryana draws up winter action fires:

Gurgaon: Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) unveiled its winter action plan on Tuesday with the aim of tackling pollutants as the colder months approach. The plan includes promoting use of public transport, ensuring timely maintenance of vehicles, and minimising construction activities. The state will also focus on identifying and repairing major roads before winter, hiring additional mechanised sweepers and sprinklers, and planting 1.3 crore saplings. It also plans to manage 73.1 lakh MT of paddy straw through in-situ and ex-situ strategies and reduce stubble burning. The action plan takes into account the fact that over the past three years, PM2.5 and PM10 have emerged as the primary pollutants in Haryana. The three-year annual average of PM2.5 in various districts is between 70µg/m3 and 80µg/m3, significantly higher than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 40µg/m3. Similarly, the annual average PM10 level from 2021 to 2023 in various districts

falls between 150µg/m3 and 170µg/m3, more than double the national standard of NAAQS of 60µg/m3, according to calculations by the pollution control board. "All districts have been instructed to implement measures as per the action plan from now onwards," HSPCB chairman P Raghavendra Rao told TOI. Officials stated that the action plan will address local sources of pollution such as dust generated from traffic on roads and construction and demolition sites, emissions from industries and vehicles, and burning of waste. "In this context, in 2024-25, the state will focus on undertaking preventive maintenance of all sprinkling and sweeping machines to ensure they are in working condition, efficiently operating existing sprinkling and sweeping machines to minimise resuspension of road dust due to movement of vehicles and procuring new machines... and surprise inspections and test runs," the HSPCB plan stated. Furthermore, the state govt also

plans to leverage the Centre's 'Nagar Van Yojana', under which urban local bodies will receive assistance to establish nagar vans (city forests) in 10-50 hectares of land and vaticas (gardens/parks) in 1-10 hectares of land. For 2023-24, Haryana achieved 88% of its plantation target of 98 lakh plants and shrubs. After a detailed identification exercise, nearly 76% of the identified pollution hotspots have already been rectified and converted to green spots by urban local bodies and other agencies. HSPCB aims to undertake measures which, to the extent possible, prevent the AQI forecast from breaching the thresholds for stage 1 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). To achieve this, pollution sources in the state must be abated with greater intensity, officials said. This is because in winter, due to temperature inversion, pollutants tend to remain suspended in the atmosphere at lower heights.

To ensure the effective implementation and success of the winter action plan, a review

and monitoring mechanism will be established, officials said. A high-level committee will be constituted under the chairmanship of the HSPCB member secretary, comprising officials from key govt departments, experts, industry stakeholders, and academic institutions. "When it comes to air pollution, citizens are as much a part of the problem as they are of the solution. The state will launch a 360-degree information and awareness campaign urging people to avoid unnecessary use of vehicles and choose public transport wherever possible, and scrap personal vehicles which are nearing end-of-life," the action plan stated. Experts, meanwhile, said the state should work on pollution mitigation throughout the year, not just in the winter months. "Though Haryana's action plan is very precise and has details of what has been done last year and what is planned for this year, several works which were supposed to be done by municipalities are still pending.

Rules flouted, water and power supply to 11 buildings to be snapped

Gurgaon: The department of town and country planning (DTCP) has initiated action against 11 illegally-constructed buildings in Palam Vihar's C2 block, ordering that their water, sewer and electricity connections be cut off.

Each 500 sq yd plot, originally meant to have a single housing unit per floor, has as many as 16 unauthorised flats. District town planner (enforcement) Manish Yadav has written to the MCG commissioner, GMDA executive engineer and DHBVN requesting the disconnections. The tehsildar has also been instructed to halt any further registration of these properties. "All three departments have been instructed to take immediate action, and our enforcement office is actively working on the necessary measures," Yadav said. The case is currently pending in the Punjab and Haryana high court, following a petition by the Palam Vihar



C2 Block RWA and other locals. Residents also took to the streets over the issue, after which the petition was

submitted before HC. DTCP has named specific plots — 913, 1310, 921, 1251, 924, 979B, 956, 1226, 922, 935, and 951 — in the letters to the relevant authorities. It had also filed police complaints against several building owners for similar illegal constructions in the past. Some building owners allegedly illegally de-sealed their properties, prompting the department to take further sealing action and recommend additional FIRs. Residents have expressed concern about the impact of these illegal constructions on basic infrastructure in the area. Where only one unit per floor is permitted, the property owners constructed four to six units per floor. In alleged collusion with tehsil officials, these properties were registered and water and electricity connections issued, they said.

City sees 36 dengue cases this month, year's tally reaches 60

Gurgaon: Four patients were diagnosed with dengue on Tuesday, taking the city's tally for this month to 36 and total count to 60 this year.

According to the health department, two dengue patients are being treated at hospitals and are stable, while 30 others are recovering at home. All others have recovered. Of the 36 cases this month, 17 are women. All patients are between 7 and 56 years old. An official from the department told TOI that Wazirabad, Bhangrola, Nakhrola, Badshapur, Bhondsi, Bhoralakan, and Garhi have been identified as dengue hotspots in the city.

Officials said they expect more cases in the coming weeks. "We anticipate a further rise in dengue cases, with a potential decline in Gurgaon by mid-Oct. Currently, warm and humid conditions following rainfall create an ideal environment for breeding of mosquitoes that transmit the disease, leading to an increase in dengue and other mosquito-borne illnesses. We have shared the list of hotspots with MCG for carrying out fogging drives," said Virender Yadav, chief medical officer, Gurgaon.

Last year, the city recorded 276 dengue cases, and one of the patients succumbed to the infection. In 2022, the number of cases reached 440, and the previous year, 327 patients were diagnosed with dengue. Doctors emphasised the importance of implementing preventive measures to curb the spread of infections. They advise wearing full-sleeved clothing, using mosquito repellents, and eliminating any stagnant water from containers, coolers and other sources.

Common symptoms of dengue include fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, and a distinctive skin rash. "Although the current strain appears to be mild, we are implementing all necessary measures to ensure that patients receive prompt and effective care. Our team of doctors and medical staff is working tirelessly to manage the increasing number of cases, providing comprehensive treatment and support," said Dr Govind Prakash, head of emergency at Paras Health Hospital. Other medical professionals cautioned about the prevalence of various other viruses circulating. "Due to changing weather

Trade show starts today, brace for traffic curbs on Noida expressway, DND

Noida: Traffic will be restricted on the Noida Expressway and DND Flyway around Wednesday noon to make way for VIP dignitaries to the UP International Trade Show at Expo Mart in Greater Noida. The trade show will be inaugurated by chief minister Yogi Adityanath and Vice-President Jagdeep Thakkar. Both of them are expected to travel by road from Delhi to Greater Noida around noon. The trade show will continue till Sept 29. On all these days, goods vehicles will not be allowed on the expressway from 7am to

"On Wednesday, VIP dignitaries are expected to arrive for the international trade show. So, there will be traffic restrictions on Noida Expressway and



routes near the Expo Mart in Greater

to Golchakkar Chowk in Sector 15, allowing them to proceed along DSC Road. Similarly, traffic from DND Flyway towards Greater Noida will be diverted to Rajnigandha Chowk in Sector 16, proceeding via MP-01 Road and DSC Road. Vehicles planning to take the expressway from Kalindi Kunj border to Greater Noida will be diverted from Mahamaya Flyover towards Sector 37, allowing it to continue via MP-03 Road and DSC Road. Traffic coming from Agra towards Noida will be guided to exit at Jewar toll, then proceed

<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, Aftab D/o Manu Malik R/o H. No. 343, Call No. 3, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094 have changed my name to Aftab Malik for all future purposes.</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>It is for general information that I, ARSHI NAAZ W/o MOHD NADEEM R/o HOUSE NO-3208, PHATAK TELVANI, SITAPURAM BAZAR, DELHI, NORTH DELHI, DELHI-110069, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as ARSHI NADEEM in my minor daughter ALEHA NADEEM aged 14 years in her school records. The actual name of mine is ARSHI NAAZ, which may be amended accordingly.</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, Kamlesh Kumar W/o Karan Bansal R/o House No-A1-299, 2nd Floor, Sushant Lok-2, Near Unicosmos School, Sector-55, Ghata, Gurgaon-122003. Have Changed My Name To Kamlesh For All Future Purpose</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, SANTOSH KUMAR MAHTHA S/o PRAHLAD KUMAR MAHTHA residing at O-50, Sector-12, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301, have changed the name of my minor son SHASHANK KUMAR aged 14 years and he shall be hereafter known as SHASHANK MAHTHA. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, Ajay Kumar Vashist S/o Chhotu Lal Vashist R/o VPO Dabodha Khurd, Jhajjar, Haryana-124507. Have Changed My Name to Ajay Kumar For All Future Purposes</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, BASANTU KUSHWAHA Mother of No. 5456675P Rank-HAV Name-SURENDR KUSHWAHA R/o H No-210, VPO-CHANDAI, BIRSINGHPUR, SATNA, MP-485221 have changed my name from BASANTU KUSHWAHA to BASANTI KUSHWAHA for all future purposes and in my son's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 05/08/1968 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1964. Vide Affidavit dated 25/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.</p>
<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, SURENDER S/O ROHATAS SUPARAM DHAMA R/O GODHRI, JHAJJAR, HARYANA-124106, have changed my name from SURENDER to SURENDER DHAMA for all future purposes.</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>It is for general information that I, ROHIT MEHTO S/O LAXMI MEHTO R/O RZA-65, A-BLOCK, DWARIKA PURI, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110045 declare that name of mine and my wife has been wrongly written as ROHIT and BABITA in my minor son RAHUL MEHTO aged 14 years in his birth certificate. MCDOLIR-0110-004074370. The actual name of mine and my wife are ROHIT MEHTO and BABITA MEHTO, which may be amended accordingly.</p>	<p>NAME CHANGE</p> <p>I, RAJNI GARG wife of VIJAY KUMAR GARG residing at B-8/179-180, SECTOR 3, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 have changed my name to RAJNI BALA AGARWAL for all future purposes.</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>I, hitherto known as G Rajesh S/o C Gandhi employed as Interpreter in Cabinet Secretariat, New Delhi Permanent R/o 466/2, Durali Nagar, Pachal Village, Tirupathur, Vellore, Tamil Nadu-635601 Present R/o House No-39-C, Regal Flat Shipra Sun City, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201014, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rajesh Gandhi.</p>	<p>Public Notice</p> <p>Be it known to all the whom, my client, Shri J.N. Saxena S/o Late D.C. Kishore, R/o 100/11, Fourth Floor, Gautam Nagar, New Delhi-110049, has been adopted Shri Rahul Sharma (having UID No. 6062 4072 6553) S/o Shri Ashok Sharma, R/o House Number 45-F Vinay Nagar, Boda, Shahjahan, Agra, Uttar Pradesh 282010, as his son and Shri Rahul Sharma, will be beneficiary/legatee of his WILL, executed on 25.09.2024, before the office of the Sub-Registrar-VA, Hauz Khas, New Delhi.</p> <p>Sd/- (Sandeep Kumar Mohallik) (Advocate) 304, N-161, Yusuf Sarai Community Centre, ND, # 9810015594, 9810866807</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>It is for general information that I Pradeep Kumar S/O Kartar Singh, R/O 100, chaupal mohalla, post office khairai, khar khari nahar, South West Delhi, Delhi, 110043 declare that name of mine and my wife has been wrongly written as Pradeep yadav and Pinki devi in my minor son Aman yadav aged 16 years in his 10th and 12th class educational documents. The actual name of mine and my wife are PRADEEP KUMAR AND PINKI which may be amended accordingly.</p>

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight, Delhi Division, Northern Railway, in terms of Railway Board letter no. 2022/TC(FM)/10/04 dated 13.06.2022, invites bids through e-Auction (www.ireps.gov.in) for leasing of parcel space of **SLR compartments and Parcel Vans** (on round trip basis) for a period of **Two Years** as per detail and schedule given below:-

S.No.	Date & Time of e-Auction	Assets to be auctioned
1	25.09.2024 at 10:30 A.M.	12011 (F1), 12017 (F1), 12029 (F1), 12040 (F1), 12148 (F1 & F2), 12455 (F1), 13430 (F1), 14041 (F1), 14053 (F2), 22454 (F1, F2 & R1)
2	26.09.2024 at 10:30 A.M.	04304 (F1, F2 & R1), 12013 (F1), 12015 (F1), 12031 (F1), 12034 (F1), 12432 (F1), 12448 (F1), 12459 (F1), 14316 (F2), 15035 (F2), 22414 (F1), 22472 (F1, F2 & R1), 22654 (F1)
3	27.09.2024 at 10:30 A.M.	12045 (F1), 12265 (F1), 12754 (F1), 14053 (F1), 14152 (F1), 14164 (F1), 14681 (F1), 20938 (F1 & R1), 22401 (F1), 22634 (F1)
4	30.09.2024 at 10:30 A.M.	12394 (F1), 12442 (F1), 12463 (F1), 12584 (F1), 14035 (F1, F2 & R1), 14521 (F1, F2 & R1), 22210 (F1)
5	04.10.2024 at 10:30 A.M.	12191 (F1, F2 & R1), 12457 (F1, F2 & R1), 12918 (F1), 12963 (F1), 14041 (R1), 14316 (F1), 14507 (F1, F2 & R1), 15035 (F1 & R1), 19338 (F1), 20914 (F1), 20946 (F1), 22429 (F1), 22463 (F1)
6	07.10.2024 at 10:30 A.M.	12066 (F1), 14087 (F1, F2 & R1), 14089 (F1, F2 & R1), 14316 (R1), 14731 (F1 & R1), 15060 (F1 & R1), 20473 (F1 & R1), 20488 (F1), 22168 (F1 & F2), 22950 (F1), 22986 (F1)

Important notes: 1. For more information, requirement and various aspects regarding these e-Auctions, interested bidders are advised to visit https://www.ireps.gov.in/html/helpdesk/learning_centre.html. (E-Auction leasing section). 2. **Earnest Money Deposit (EMD):** 5% of the total contractual bid value to be deposited online during the auction. EMD of the successful bidder will be retained as Security Deposit. 3. Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute rights to short terminate these contracts at any point of time and/or for taking any decision regarding the discontinuation/continuation of these contracts with modified/additional terms and conditions depending upon the continuation/discontinuation of these trains or commencement of new train services.

2974/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

News box

Mexico's most popular president in decades is retiring. What will he leave behind

MEXICO CITY. Many Mexicans will feel a deep sense of loss when folksy, charismatic, nationalistic President Andrés Manuel López Obrador leaves office on Sept. 30—and that's no surprise. López Obrador himself has spent an inordinate amount of time talking about his own legacy—and his place in history—over his six-year term, something he brings up at almost every one of his marathonic daily 7 a.m. media briefings. But what legacy will the ruffled, grinning López Obrador leave behind? It is perhaps the main question for a man who is obsessed with history, and one thing appears clear: he has changed the way politics is done in Mexico, perhaps forever. Unlike decades of reserved and distant presidents, López Obrador has built a deep personal connection with many Mexicans. He has stripped the office of the thousands of presidential guards, limousines and walled compounds that once characterized it, saying "you can't have a rich government with poor people." "He is a politician who evokes familiarity, he reminds people of a father, an uncle, a grandfather," said Carlos Pérez Ricart, a political analyst at Mexico's Center for Economic Research and Teaching. That's not a coincidence, either. López Obrador constantly praises the traditional family and says it has saved the country. "He does feel nostalgia for some of the social structures of the 1970s in Mexico and nostalgia for the family," said Pérez Ricart. Will his legacy be like that of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose New Deal created lasting institutions like Social Security and home mortgage programs that resulted in an enormous, stable middle class? The Mexican leader stakes his movement on cash social-benefit programs, he likes to compare himself to Roosevelt and many Mexicans think of him with the same fondness that the more patrician FDR inspired in his day.

China test-fires ICBM into Pacific Ocean using 'dummy warhead'

BEIJING. China test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday, the defence ministry said, announcing the rare trial run as Beijing flexes its military might. The Chinese military's "Rocket Force launched an ICBM... carrying a dummy warhead to the high seas in the Pacific Ocean at 08:44 on September 25, and the missile fell into expected sea areas", the ministry said in a statement. An analyst told AFP that China has typically conducted such tests in its own airspace. "This is extremely unusual and likely the first time in decades that we've seen a test like this," Ankit Panda, Stanton Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said. "The test likely speaks to China's ongoing nuclear modernisation manifesting in new requirements for testing," he added. China's defence ministry, however, called the firing a "routine arrangement in our annual training plan." "It is in line with international law and international practice and is not directed against any country or target," it said. Last October, the US Defense Department said China was developing its nuclear arsenal more quickly than the United States had anticipated. China possessed more than 500 operational nuclear warheads as of May 2023 and is likely to have more than 1,000 by 2030, it said. The United States and China in November held rare talks on nuclear arms control, part of a bid to ease mistrust ahead of a summit between leader Joe Biden and Xi Jinping.

Missouri executes man for 1998 murder of woman despite calls from victim's family to spare his life

BONNE TERRE. A Missouri man convicted of breaking into a woman's home and repeatedly stabbing her was executed Tuesday over the objections of the victim's family and the prosecutor, who wanted the death sentence commuted to life in prison. Marcellus Williams, 55, was convicted in the 1998 killing of Lisha Gayle, who was stabbed during the burglary of her suburban St. Louis home. Williams was put to death despite questions his attorneys raised over jury selection at his trial and the handling of evidence in the case. His clemency petition focused heavily on how Gayle's relatives wanted Williams' sentence commuted to life without the possibility of parole. "The family defines closure as Marcellus being allowed to live," the petition stated. "Marcellus' execution is not necessary." As Williams lay awaiting execution, he appeared to converse with a spiritual advisor seated next to him. Williams wiggled his feet underneath a white sheet that was pulled up to his neck and moved his head slightly while his spiritual advisor continued to talk. Then Williams' chest heaved about a half dozen times, and he showed no further movement. Williams' son and two attorneys watched from another room. No one was present on behalf of the victim's family. No juror nor judge has ever found Williams' innocence claim to be credible, Parson said in a statement.

Deadly flooding in Central Europe made twice as likely by climate change

WASHINGTON. Human-caused climate change doubled the likelihood and intensified the heavy rains that led to devastating flooding in Central Europe earlier this month, a new flash study found. Torrential rain in mid-September from Storm Boris pummeled a large part of central Europe, including Romania, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Germany causing widespread damage. The floods killed 24 people, damaged bridges, submerged cars, and left towns without power and in need of significant infrastructure repairs. The severe four-day rainfall was "by far" the heaviest ever recorded in Central Europe and twice as likely because of warming from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, World Weather Attribution, a collection of scientists that run rapid climate attribution studies, said Wednesday from Europe. Climate change also made the rains between 7% and 20% more intense, the study found. "Yet again, these floods highlight the devastating results of fossil fuel-driven warming," said Joyce Kimutai, the study's

lead author and a climate researcher at Imperial College, London. To test the influence of human-caused climate change, the team of scientists analyzed weather data and used climate models to compare how such events have changed since cooler preindustrial times to today. Such models simulate a world without the current 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) of global warming since preindustrial times, and see how likely a rainfall event that severe would be in such a world. The study analyzed four-day rainfall events, focusing on the countries that felt severe impacts. Though the rapid study hasn't been peer-reviewed, it follows scientifically accepted techniques. "In any climate, you would expect to occasionally see records broken," said Friederike Otto, an Imperial College, London, climate scientist who coordinates the attribution study team. But, "to see records being broken by such large margins, that is really the fingerprint of climate change. And that is only something that we



see in a warming world." Some of the most severe impacts were felt in the Polish-Czech border region and Austria, mainly in urban areas along major rivers. The study noted that the death toll from this month's flooding was considerably lower than during catastrophic floods in the region in 1997 and 2002. Still, infrastructure and emergency management systems were overwhelmed in many cases and will require billions of euros to fix. Last week, European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen pledged billions of euros in aid for countries that suffered damage to infrastructure and housing from the floods. The World Weather Attribution study also warned that in a world with even more warming—specifically 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming since preindustrial times, the likelihood of ferocious four-day storms would grow by 50% compared to current levels. Such storms would grow in intensity, too, the authors found. The heavy rainfall across Central Europe was caused by what's known as a "Vb depression" that forms when cold polar air flows from the north over the Alps and meets warm air from Southern Europe. The study's authors found no observable change in the number of similar Vb depressions since the 1950s.

Shots fired at Kamala Harris's poll campaign office in Arizona

← This is the second time in a month that the campaign office in Arizona's Tempe city was targeted after the front windows of the establishment were shot at using a pellet gun on September 16.



World Shots were fired at Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris's election campaign office in the state of Arizona. This is the second time in a month that the office in Tempe city was targeted after the front windows of the establishment were shot at using a pellet gun. In a statement to NBC News on Tuesday, Tempe Police confirmed that the incident occurred the previous night, adding that "damage from gunfire" was discovered at the Democratic National Committee office. However, there were no reports of

any injuries. Tempe Police's Public Information Officer Sgt. Ryan Cook said no one was inside the office premises at the time of the incident, "but this raises concerns about the safety of those who work in that building, as well as those nearby," reports The New York Post. Local TV stations aired footage that showed two bullet holes in a door and two more in windows of the office. An investigation into the incident is currently underway, with detectives analysing evidence collected from the crime scene. The police also said that additional security measures have been put in place for employees of the campaign office, as well as others in the area. Confirming the incident, Arizona Democratic Party Chairwoman Yolanda Bejarano said in a statement that it was "extremely sad that the Arizona Democratic Party has become the target of violence – it's not who we are as Arizonans or Americans," reports NBC News. We are working with law enforcement to ensure this threat is taken seriously and that our staff members are safe while they're at work," she added. The gunfire incident comes just days before Harris's scheduled trip to Arizona on Friday, during which she is likely to visit the US-Mexico border.

The office in Tempe is one of 18 field offices for the Democratic nominee's campaign in Arizona. On September 15, Harris's Republican rival Donald Trump survived a second attempted assassination at his gold club in Florida. The 58-year-old suspect, Democratic supported Ryan Routh, was arrested shortly after.

Israel foils Lebanon missile attack, airstrikes on Hezbollah kill over 550

World Israeli air defence systems intercepted a missile launched from Lebanon on Wednesday, following sirens in Tel Aviv, the nation's economic centre, according to the Israeli military. No casualties or damage were reported, and no changes to civil defence instructions were required, news agency Reuters reported while citing officials. Thousands of people fled southern Lebanon as Israel intensified strikes against the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant organisation, resulting in 558 deaths, according to Lebanon's health minister, CNN reported. Amid two days of intense Israeli attacks, panic-stricken civilians continued to flee southern Lebanon, crowding main roads and gas stations en route to the capital. United Nations (UN) and Lebanese officials on Tuesday stated that 27,000 displaced individuals had been settled in temporary shelters, while many others were forced to sleep in cars, parks, and along the beach. Top Points An Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Tuesday killed a senior Hezbollah commander, Ibrahim Qubaisi, heightening fears of a full-scale war in the region as cross-border rocket attacks surged between both sides. Israel stated that Qubaisi headed the group's missile and rocket brigade. Israel's airstrikes since Monday morning have killed 569 people, including 50 children, and injured 1,835 in Lebanon, said Health Minister Firass Abiad, news agency Reuters reported.

Israel has landed heavy blows on Hezbollah, but the victory it seeks could prove elusive

World It has been a devastating week for Hezbollah and the people of Lebanon. Bombs hidden in the group's pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens of people and wounded thousands many of them Hezbollah members. Israeli strikes on Beirut killed two of its top commanders. And Israel has bombed what it said were 1,600 militant sites across large parts of Lebanon, killing hundreds of people and displacing thousands. Israel says its objective is to secure the border so that tens of thousands of people who fled under Hezbollah fire nearly a year ago can return to their homes. But it's far from clear that its recent operations as tactically successful as they were will bring that about. "No one either in or out of the defence establishment has any clue as to how to translate these brilliant operational achievements into political benefit, into a real victory that will stop the war in the north," columnist Nadav Eyal wrote in Israel's Yediot Ahronot newspaper. "As long as Hezbollah retains any firepower, the

northern border will not be able to return to normal." Hezbollah began firing into Israel the day after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack triggered the war in Gaza. Its stated aim was to pin down Israeli forces in the north to help its ally Hamas, which like Hezbollah is backed by Iran. The Lebanese militant group has said it would cease the attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, which appears increasingly unlikely. Hezbollah's response to the past week's escalation has seemed meagre. The hundreds of rockets and drones it has fired into northern Israel including areas much farther from the border than it hit previously have caused few casualties and only scattered damage. But experts say it can weather Israeli strikes and is likely holding its most potent weapons in reserve. Israeli air power has its limits. The footage on Monday of Israeli strikes sending up plumes of dust and smoke seemed grimly familiar. The American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the NATO campaign in Libya in 2011, and the U.S.-led war against the



Islamic State group in 2014 all began with massive airstrikes lighting up the sky. In each case, the war dragged on for months or years, and ground forces played a crucial role. Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza began with nearly three weeks of heavy airstrikes across the territory, followed by a full-scale ground invasion. Nearly a year later, Hamas is still putting up a fight and holding scores of hostages. With Hezbollah, Israel has so far adopted narrower objectives

not the disarmament or defeat of the Lebanese militant group, but a new arrangement in which militants retreat from the border and halt their attacks. But even that may not be possible without a ground invasion. There's also the risk of mission-creep, as America discovered after its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan ground on for years after the toppling of Saddam Hussein and the Taliban. NATO airstrikes initially aimed at preventing a feared massacre in Benghazi morphed into a seven-month campaign of regime change from which Libya has yet to fully recover. Hezbollah likely has capabilities we haven't seen yet. Israel's Defense Minister Yoav Gallant boasted that Monday's strikes alone had taken out tens of thousands of Hezbollah's rockets and missiles. "This is the most difficult week for Hezbollah since its establishment," he added. "A blow has been dealt to the chain of command, to the terrorists themselves on different levels, to their shooting capabilities and to their morale."

Zelenskyy's victory plan sets Ukraine's terms in desperate war against Russia

KYIV. The victory plan that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will present to the White House this week asks the Biden administration to do something it has not achieved in the two and a half years since Russia invaded Ukraine: act quickly to support Kyiv's campaign. While Western dawdling has amplified Ukraine's losses, some Ukrainian officials, diplomats and analysts fear Kyiv's aim to have the plan implemented before a new US president takes office in January may be out of reach. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield, reportedly briefed on the plan, said it "can work," but many privately question how. The specifics of Zelenskyy's blueprint have been kept under wraps until it can be formally presented to President Joe Biden, but contours of the plan have emerged, including the need for fast action on decisions Western allies have been mulling since the full-scale invasion began in 2022. It includes the security guarantee of



NATO membership, according to Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andrii Yermak—a principal demand of Kyiv and Moscow's key point of contention. Western allies, including the US, have been sceptical about this option. Zelenskyy has said he will also seek permission to use long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory, another red line for some of Ukraine's supporters. "Partners often say, 'We will be with Ukraine until its victory.' Now we clearly show how Ukraine can win and what is needed for this. Very specific things," Zelenskyy told reporters ahead of the trip. "Let's do all this today, while all the officials

who want victory for Ukraine are still in official positions." Meanwhile, outnumbered Ukrainian forces face grinding battles against one of the world's most powerful armies in the east. As Zelenskyy pitches his plan to Biden on Thursday, Ukrainian servicemen will be grappling to hold defensive lines in the key logistics point of Vuhledar in the Donetsk region. For some of them, it is essential that Biden buys into Zelenskyy's plan. I hope that allies will provide us with what we need," said Kyaniy, a soldier fighting in the Donetsk region. "Not 10 or 31 tanks, but a thousand tanks, thousands of weapons and ammunition." Kyiv sets the terms The victory plan is Kyiv's response to rising pressure from Western allies and war-weary Ukrainians to negotiate a cease-fire. A deal with Russia would almost certainly be unfavourable for Ukraine, which has lost a fifth of its territory and tens of thousands of lives in the conflict.

Man who staked out Donald Trump at Florida golf course charged with attempted assassination

WASHINGTON. A man who authorities say staked out Donald Trump for 12 hours on his golf course in Florida and wrote of his desire to kill him was indicted Tuesday on an attempted assassination charge. Ryan Wesley Routh had been initially charged with two federal firearms offences. The upgraded charges contained in a five-count indictment reflect the Justice Department's assessment that he methodically plotted to kill the Republican nominee, aiming a rifle through the shrubbery surrounding Trump's West Palm Beach golf course on an afternoon Trump was playing on it. Routh left behind a note in which he described his intention, prosecutors said. Court records show the case has been assigned to Aileen Cannon, a Trump-appointed federal judge who generated intense scrutiny for her handling of a criminal case charging Trump with illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. She dismissed that case in July, a decision now being appealed by special counsel Jack Smith's team. The attempted assassination indictment had been foreshadowed during a court hearing Monday in which prosecutors successfully argued for the 58-year-old Routh to remain behind bars as a flight risk and a threat to public safety. video They alleged that he had written of his plans to kill Trump in a handwritten note months before his Sept. 15 arrest, in which he referred to his actions as a failed "assassination attempt on Donald Trump" and offered \$150,000 for anyone who could "finish the job."

News box

Proper coordination ensured peaceful festivities, says DGP Dr Jitender

HYDERABAD. No major untoward incident took place during the Lord Ganesh idol immersion and Milad-un-Nabi celebrations, said DGP Dr Jitender on Tuesday. "For the peaceful conduct of these festivals, elaborate measures were taken. A total of 15,400 police personnel were deployed across the state," he added.

The DGP said few minor incidents occurred during the festivities but these were quickly resolved by the local police. Some people were taken into custody as preventive measure and cases were also registered, the top cop said.

Jitender, providing the statistics, said, "A total of 1,36,638 Lord Ganesh idols were immersed in 5,879 immersion points in the state." A control room was set up in the DGP office and the law and order situation was closely monitored by senior officials, he added. During this festive season, for the first time, over 500 sub-inspector (SI) trainees and 12,000 constable trainees were deployed for first-hand experience of bandobast arrangements. For Milad-un-Nabi, a total of 330 processions were carried out in the state, the DGP noted. He mentioned that there was a minor scuffle in Narayanpet town a day prior to the festival. However, the local police maintained law and order, he said. Jitender also lauded the coordinated efforts among the GHMC, HMDA, local municipal bodies, RTC and district collectors for the smooth conduct of the festival.

No DJ, alcohol, plastic during Durga Puja in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR. Durga Puja in the state capital city will be DJ, alcohol and plastic-free this year. A decision to this effect was taken at the preparatory meeting on Durga Puja celebrations held here on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by officials of the Commissionerate Police, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and all the stakeholders concerned. As per the decision, no puja committee in the city will play DJ music during Dussehra and immersion ceremony, said Police Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda.

"The puja committees have also assured us that the celebrations will be alcohol-free. Puja organisers will take pledge to refrain from consuming alcohol or any other intoxicant during the festival. The Commissionerate Police will print and distribute 'pledge posters' among puja committees for display at mandaps," he said. Panda further said steps will be taken to put in place adequate security and traffic arrangements during the festival. CCTV cameras will be installed at all puja mandaps. The existing CCTV cover of the city will also be increased as per need and more surveillance cameras may be installed at different locations for safety and security of citizens. If required, night patrolling will also be extended.

MLAs Babu Singh, Ananta Narayan Jena and mayor Sulochana Das urged puja committee members to take steps to make the celebrations plastic-free and check use of single-use plastic by vendors near pandals. The meeting was attended by representatives of 187 puja committees.

Surge in crimes against women: 1.18 lakh cases reported since 2017 in Kerala

KOCHI. In the backdrop of several women raising allegations of sexual abuse in the film industry, concerns have resurfaced over women's safety in the state. Despite the LDF government's creation of a dedicated women and child development (WCD) department in 2017, incidents of violence against women continue to rise.

Data from the home department reveals that since 2017, a total of 1,18,581 cases related to crimes against women have been reported in the state. As of June this year, 1,338 rape cases and 2,330 molestation cases have been recorded, bringing the total number of crimes against women to 9,501 in just the first six months. In 2023, the figures were even more alarming, with 18,980 cases including 2,562 rapes and 4,816 molestations. This was slightly higher compared to 2022, which saw 18,943 cases including 2,518 rapes and 4,940 molestations.

According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, Kerala has an 82% crime rate—significantly higher than the national average of 66.4%.

Former MLA and Kerala Women's Commission member Elizabeth Mammen Mathai said that while crimes against women are rising, the women and child development department has established an effective complaint disposal mechanism. "Complaints are steadily pouring in, but we have an effective system to address the issues," Elizabeth said.

Cochin Fame and Fables, unfolding rich history of port city, released

Justice Jayasankaran said the book is a rich treasure house of new information about the port city's history which is presented in a very interesting manner.



KOCHI. Cochin Fame and Fables, a book authored by veteran journalist M K Das, which sensitively traces Cochin's eventful journey across centuries, was released at a glittering function held in Kochi on Tuesday. The first copy was handed over by Justice A K Jayasankaran Nambiar to writer N S Madhavan at the function held at KMA Hall, Panampilly Nagar.

"The book captures the complete history of the port city, from its birth till the present day, very precisely. The author has really delved into the core of history and did a lot of scholarly studies to come out with the brilliant work. A real attempt is made to bring out the administrative history of Cochin," Madhavan said. Justice Jayasankaran said the book is a rich

treasure house of new information about the port city's history which is presented in a very interesting manner. "Penning a book is a daunting task as often the facts need to be corroborated....Here the author has done extensive research on artefacts and documents. Among the numerous sources include the Regional Archives, Ernakulam," he said while underlining the need to digitise historical documents.

"...This is one occasion that I've always dreamed about...that it has come about and become a reality in front of so many esteemed guests is something very good. It's a sense of achievement..." said Das, who boasts a career in print media spanning over four decades. The book, which presents an interesting read through the nine chapters, brilliantly captures the transformation of a cluster of fishing villages, which is what Cochin was to begin with, into a metropolis of sorts. A good portion of the narrative covers the period when the state was under monarchy.

"The book is the work of a journalist and not written by a historian. The author took care to make it a very interesting read through simple captivating language," noted K Pradeep, a retired senior journalist.

Lokayukta sleuths raid 62 excise offices, find cannabis



BENGALURU. Following complaints of irregularities in the distribution, renewal, and relocation of excise licences, sleuths of the Lokayukta carried out simultaneous raids across 62 excise offices in the Bengaluru Urban excise district on Tuesday afternoon. They found cannabis, liquor bottles, and unaccounted cash of Rs 2 lakh during the raids.

A release from the Lokayukta office stated that in response to public complaints, teams were formed to investigate the allegations. After gathering information, a suo motu case was taken up. On Tuesday afternoon, the Lokayukta officials, including the police, simultaneously raided 62 excise offices. During the raid, Lokayukta Justice BS Patil, and Upalokayukta Justice B Veerappa visited the Yeshwantpur and Byatarayanapura excise offices and ordered an investigation into several flaws found during the visit.

Inquiry is also ordered in connection with detection of unaccounted cash amounting to Rs 2 lakh, and seized cannabis and liquor bottles. Additionally, it has been noted that there are 132 cases with the anti-corruption agency related to irregularities in excise department offices across the state, which are under investigation at various stages.

Kerala: Police chief recommends detailed inquiry into Pooram disruption

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. State Police Chief Shaik Darvesh Saheb on Tuesday handed over the report of ADGP M R Ajith Kumar on Thrissur Pooram disruption to CM Pinarayi Vijayan with a recommendation to hold a detailed probe into the incident.

The report filed by Ajith had placed the full onus of the fiasco on then Thrissur city commissioner Ankit Asokan citing his inexperience. The state police chief in his covering letter, however, pushed for a comprehensive probe citing that the ADGP's report mentioned efforts made by some quarters to create hurdles in the smooth conduct of the Pooram proceedings. The ADGP's report had triggered a fresh controversy after it was criticised that the conspiracy angle was overlooked during the inquiry. The UDF and the CPM-backed MLA P V Anvar had alleged that the Pooram was sabotaged to help the BJP make electoral gains in the Lok Sabha polls and the



ADGP was the architect behind the plan. Both the CPI and Congress leadership had come out against the report as they felt it failed to identify the actual reason behind the Pooram

fiasco. While CPI mouthpiece 'Janayugam' came out with a detailed article criticising the report, senior CPI leader and party candidate in the last Lok Sabha poll V S Sunil Kumar dismissed the findings in the report.

Stating that there's a conspiracy behind Pooram disruption, Sunil Kumar said the finding ruling out the conspiracy angle could not be accepted. Senior Congress leader K Muraleedharan too criticised the ADGP's report.

The police had earlier suspended the police state information officer, who gave a reply to an RTI query that the Police Headquarters had no information about such an inquiry on the Thrissur Pooram disruption. This reply had put the government on a backfoot following which the CM answered that a probe was conducted.

Eateries can stay open till 1 am: Police memo



HYDERABAD. All eateries, including hotels, restaurants, dhabas and ice cream parlours, are permitted to run upto 1 am every night, read an internal memo issued to the city police from the Office of Commissioner of Police on Tuesday.

The memo was issued over a month after Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy announced on the Floor of the Legislative Assembly that restaurants will remain open till 1 am in the tri-commissionerates. "While the

government order in writing is awaited, the CM's announcement has been taken into record and the memo was issued. The instructions have been implemented orally for the past month," a senior official told. As per the order, all shops and establishments other than eateries will be permitted to stay open from 9 am to 11 pm and liquor stores will be allowed to operate between 10 am and 11 pm in GHMC limits. Following a previous memo issued by the Excise department, the permitted timings for establishments where liquor is served by 2B (Bar) in GHMC and the 5-km periphery of GHMC during the weekdays is 10 am to 12 am. On Fridays and Saturdays, these establishments will be allowed to function from 10 am to 1 am, the memo reiterated. In the memo, Hyderabad Commissioner of Police (CP) CV Anand directed all DCPs, ACPs and Station House Officers to instruct shops and other establishments regarding the timings. "If the managements fail to follow these instructions, action will be taken against them as per law," he noted.

Peeping Tom: Panel wants college students protected

The commission has directed the college principal to resolve the issues listed by the students and implement the advisories issued by it within 15 days.



BENGALURU. Following an incident where a student was caught filming in the girls' washroom at ACS Engineering College in Kumbalgodu, the President of the State Women's Commission, Dr Nagalaksmi Choudhary, visited the institution on Tuesday.

Dr Nagalaksmi said that students complained about various issues, including a lack of functioning sanitary pad dispensing machines and inadequate lighting in the girls' washroom, and a lack of hygiene in the women's hostel and washrooms.

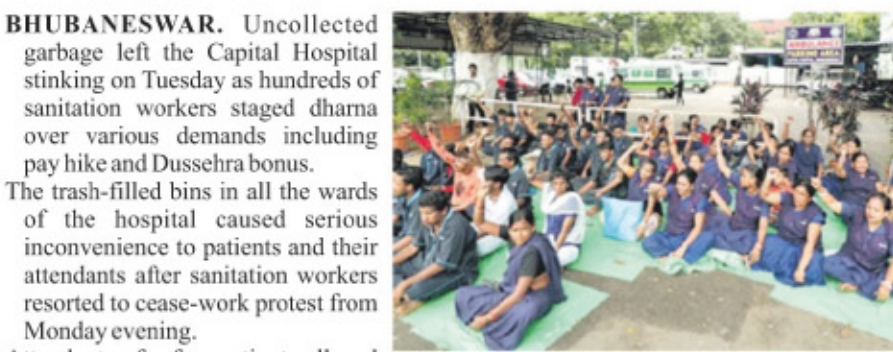
Students also requested for the installation of CCTV cameras at the entrance of the washroom, besides the presence of female security staff. "They further asked for CCTV cameras in the lift. Additionally, we asked the college authorities to display the contact numbers of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), so that students can report any issues, along with police and cybercrime police numbers," she said.

The commission also directed the management to organise awareness programmes on Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), women's rights and to form a Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) committee to protect women staff.

The commission has directed the college principal to resolve the issues listed by the students and implement the advisories issued by it within 15 days. Later, the officials of the commission visited the Kumbalgodu police station and gathered information about the accused student arrested for video-recording in the girls' washroom. The police informed them that while he is not a habitual offender, around seven videos were found on his mobile phone.

Sanitation worker's cease-work leaves Capital Hospital stinking

However, the agitating sanitation workers remained unfazed and sat outside the hospital director's office shouting slogans.



BHUBANESWAR. Uncollected garbage left the Capital Hospital stinking on Tuesday as hundreds of sanitation workers staged dharna over various demands including pay hike and Dussehra bonus.

The trash-filled bins in all the wards of the hospital caused serious inconvenience to patients and their attendants after sanitation workers resorted to cease-work protest from Monday evening.

Attendants of a few patients alleged that the uncollected left-over food items and biomedical waste led to an unhygienic condition on the hospital premises.

However, the agitating sanitation workers remained unfazed and sat outside the hospital director's office shouting slogans. They warned of intensifying the protest if

A male worker said at the time of engagement, the agency had assured to pay bonus on Dussehra. However, it has gone back on its promise. The agitators further alleged that they are not able to meet the agency's owner and air their grievances. They also claimed that the hospital authorities have turned a blind eye to their plight.

Hospital director Dr Dilip Kumar Panda said he has apprised senior officials of the Health department and labour commission about the matter. "Quess Corporation, which was awarded the contract to clean the hospital premises, has been asked to look into the demands of the agitating workers and resolve the matter at the earliest to ensure that the sanitation services are not affected," he added.

The rise of Anura Kumara Dissanayake

IN January 2020, weeks after becoming the President of Sri Lanka, Gotabaya Rajapaksa set up a commission of inquiry "to investigate allegations of political victimisation, 2015-19". Anura Kumara Dissanayake, or AKD, sworn in as Sri Lanka's ninth President on Monday, was among the many named by the commission for punitive action as he was part of an anti-corruption panel set up after Mahinda Rajapaksa's authoritarian and nepotistic presidency was voted out in 2015 to investigate the alleged misdeeds of the Rajapaksa clan and cronies. Had the economic meltdown in 2021 not interrupted the Rajapaksa's nightmarish rerun from 2019, Dissanayake may have been stripped of his civil rights for seven years and imprisoned. The incident may be a footnote in Dissanayake's political journey from a student cadre of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in rural Sri Lanka during its blood-soaked armed insurrection of 1987-90 to a pragmatic leader of his party and its National People's Power (NPP) alliance, and now to the country's most powerful office, the executive presidency. It is also true that this historic, politically shape-shifting election victory may not have come about had it not been for the Rajapaksa, and not just for their mismanagement of the economy.

A quick flashback: Through the first dozen years of the new millennium, the JVP split twice on the question of whether its alliances with the main ruling coalitions of that period, led by President Chandrika Kumaratunga first and then her successor, Mahinda Rajapaksa, had identified the party with Sri Lanka's entrenched power elite, robbing it of its unique identity as an anti-establishment, 'pro-people' entity.

In those years, the JVP was an eager partner in the war against the LTTE, with no daylight between it and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, of which Rajapaksa was then the leader. JVP's charismatic leaders of that period favoured the alliance and quit the party, hoping to reap electoral benefits from the war. AKD, who had been a parliamentarian since 2000, stayed put. By 2014, he had risen to the leadership of the JVP.

In the presidential elections of 2015, held against the backdrop of popular discontent against the authoritarian regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa, AKD's JVP backed the common Opposition candidate, Maithripala Sirisena, the main challenger to Mahinda. But the association with the dysfunctional successor government — this was the period in which AKD was part of the anti-corruption committee against the Rajapaksa — burnt the JVP once more. In 2019, AKD stepped out of the mould. He formed a 'socialist coalition', the NPP, with 27 other leftist and like-minded groups such as trade unions, women's rights groups and youth organisations, and announced himself as a candidate in the presidential election of that year. He polled just 3.16 per cent of the votes. Gotabaya Rajapaksa won with 52 per cent of the votes, while Sajith Premadasa, then the main Opposition candidate, representing the United National Party (UNP), polled 42 per cent.

In the parliamentary elections of 2020, the NPP did just as badly. It won just three seats. This was still slightly better than Ranil Wickremesinghe's UNP, which was wiped out after most of its members walked out after Premadasa, whose new party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya, emerged as the main Opposition party in Parliament. Undeterred by the double defeat, AKD set to work. He saw the 2022 Aragalaya, the people's movement to demand accountability from the Rajapaksa for the economic crisis, as an opportunity to stay relevant in the Sri Lankan polity. The JVP's participation in the movement leading to the ouster of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, without grabbing its leadership from the disparate student and youth entities at its helm, was the turning point for the party.

The seeds of AKD's victory were sown right then, when people saw the Rajapaksa clawing their way back to power by propping up Wickremesinghe as the new President.

Punjab's agri draft policy fails to tick all the boxes

The draft policy proposes to promote production and marketing through the cooperative mode, even though state-controlled cooperatives have failed in the state.

THE absence of an agricultural policy in Punjab is baffling, given that there are policies for the industry and other sectors. In the past decade, two drafts remained on paper only. Now, we have a draft of the much-awaited agricultural policy in the public domain almost a year after it was submitted. Let us hope that this will not meet the fate of previous drafts. However, it had a flawed start as the policy committee was set up without any terms of reference (ToR); the committee, too, did not deem it fit to frame the ToR.

The policy vision "to continuously improve the livelihoods of farmers, farm workers and those dependent on agriculture by making farming healthier, profitable and globally competitive... for future generations" is silent on the sector's social sustainability, which includes equity, concern for small producers, etc. In 2018-19, 27.8 per cent of the area in Punjab was under lease. Some field-based studies suggest it to be even 50 per cent in some regions.

The practice of reverse tenancy and a reduction of small and marginal farmers in the state's agriculture, both in terms of numbers (35 per cent of the total, compared to India's 86 per cent) and the area operated by them (9 per cent against 45 per cent in the country), underline the need for incorporating this sustainability dimension. The draft proposes land leasing reforms but fails to mention the draft land leasing Bill, which is problematic. Punjab can end up with only large farmers with higher incomes if the policy remains blind to social sustainability.

The report terms the task of rejuvenating the agriculture sector as a 'holy' one by setting up a system and the use of science, which can lead to agricultural per capita income being comparable to other sectors of the economy. It is difficult to understand how the farm sector can create value comparable to that in other sectors. The very idea of such a 'holy task' makes the theory of structural transformation stand on its head. The major objective of the policy — to promote healthier agricultural production, value addition and marketing systems for globally competitive agriculture — is intended to be achieved through the cooperative mode. This is like betting on a lame horse, as traditional and state-controlled cooperatives have failed in Punjab or are no more than a part of the state system. The report itself confirms this when it says that these public sector organisations should not behave like private enterprises to earn super-normal profits. Terming these agencies as PSUs also reflects the poor understanding of the committee. Unfortunately, the more promising alternative of farmer producer organisations (FPOs) is not even recognised in the draft policy when the Centre is promoting it with plenty of resources. There are more than 25,000 such entities in India, while Punjab has only



a few dozen despite having a so-called FPO policy since 2018. It is surprising that the draft has not specified any time frame for achieving the objectives and has no milestones, except in saving water. It was important to specify these, as by the time the policy is finalised and as and when accepted for implementation, just two years will be left for the present government to deliver on it.

The biggest weakness of the draft is its neglect of the marketing issues of the state's farm sector, which are well known and debated for long. It recognises that there is a potential (not real) exploitation of farmers by commission agents. But it does not suggest the abolition of commission agents unlike Madhya Pradesh, which did it decades ago.

It is a sad commentary on the agricultural markets of the state that today no farmer can sell directly, and no buyer can buy directly in the state's agricultural markets, especially grain markets. The irony is that the state has not conducted elections to APMCs (Agricultural Produce Market Committees) for more than 40 years, and this absence of governance has not been even pointed out. Opening up of regulatory market space can provide alternative marketing channels for farmers; that too has not been discussed. Another doable mechanism that can protect farmers from low prices and exploitative credit linkage — warehouse receipts — does not even find a mention in the report. The draft recommends a legal guarantee of procurement of all crops, including perishables like milk and poultry, at the MSP and a state-

level commission to provide cost estimates for all produce to determine the MSP. How can a committee make such definitive recommendations regarding the MSP issue that is not even a state mandate? It is also not clear why the committee did not propose a state-level mechanism for MSP for perishable produce like in Kerala or Haryana. It could have mandated all purchases in APMC mandis at or above the MSP for all buyers under the APMC Act as in MP's legislation. It also goes beyond its mandate while recommending 200 days of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) work as this is not a state government programme.

The report points out that the power subsidy per connection varies from a low of Rs 21,234 to as high as Rs 89,556 across districts. Sadly, it does not recognise the equity issue in this wherein bigger and better-placed farmers get bigger subsidies and those who don't own tubewells (mostly small and marginal farmers) are left out. It is also a wasteful subsidy which perpetuates the cultivation of paddy (except basmati), which should be eliminated from the state. The committee should not have been so mindful of political considerations if it was serious about addressing the issues of the sector and farmers therein. A policy should be framed at the level of ideas and innovations with adequate reference to various worldviews on the state's farm sector, which, unfortunately, are found missing in this draft policy.

Dousing farm fires

Much more is expected of Punjab

IT's that time of year again, when Punjab and Haryana come under intense scrutiny to gauge the success of their efforts to control farm fires. Punjab claims to have taken several proactive, even penal, measures. A series of reports in The Tribune has brought out the trials and tribulations as well as the hits and misses in the state's campaign. Red entries are being made in the revenue records of farmers who burn crop residue. They can't apply for or renew arms licences. In Amritsar, as stubble management plans falter and baler operators cry foul, quickfix options are being tried out. In Sangrur, the district with the most farm fires in the past, scientific solutions have been chalked out. Ludhiana, strangely, is seeing opposition to such interventions. It's a long, tough road ahead. Much more is expected than a strategy that can at best deliver a slight drop in count.



Like last year, paddy harvesting, and stubble burning as a result, has started early in Punjab this season. Those setting stubble on fire insist that since the window for

sowing wheat is short, this is the quickest way to get rid of the paddy residue. Several districts have been identified as stubble-burning hotspots. Teams of government staff have been activated. With farmers' unions warning against coercive methods, any stringent action is unlikely. A reassuring aspect is the growing awareness among farmers of the need to desist from stubble burning and how it is in everyone's interest, in particular their own. The worrying part is the inefficacy of policy initiatives. State support and optimum incentivisation have to be at the core of plans to counter the resistance.

The farm fire season often becomes a rallying point against the farmers. Irresponsible and uninformed reactions only complicate the pressing issue and dilute the debate.

1977 J&K Assembly elections were a watershed

The initial effort of the state administration was to 'arrange' the election, as had been the practice.

EVEN though these are but UT elections to a limp Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, they have evoked reminiscences of the Assembly elections of 1977. Those elections, held under Governor's rule, are often cited as a watershed. All shades in Kashmir's political firmament had leaped eagerly into the fray.

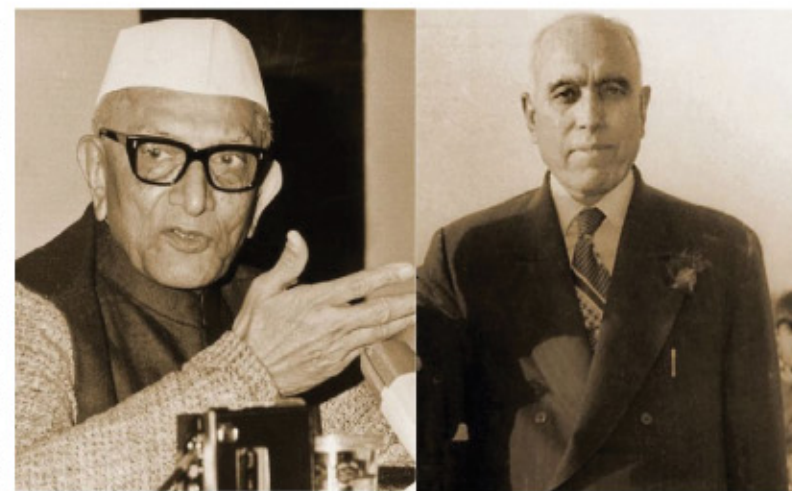
Pro-independence Mirwaiz Farooq of the Awami Action Committee put up candidates but, like the Jamaat-e-Islami now, not under the party's name. The pro-Pakistan Jamaat-e-Islami led by Ali Shah Geelani was a contender, as it had been in 1972, when it won five seats, and is contesting again today, in thin disguise. Former supporters of Sheikh Abdullah become antagonists and set up a branch of the Janata Party, the ruling party at the Centre. Among its leaders was Hameed Karra, nephew of Mohiuddin Karra — one of the Sheikh's lieutenants in the 1940s and 1950s. Maulana Masoodi, another of the Sheikh's former close associates and the Assembly Speaker in 1953, threw his considerable clout with his Gujjar community behind the Janata Party. Maulana Ifkhar Ansari, the leading Shia cleric, was a formidable opponent. The Sheikh's party stood alone. Yet, his appeal, as always, was his promise to restore to the people their dignity. His son Farooq is heir to that promise.

The Janata Party pulled out all stops in its campaign. Among the leaders who descended on Kashmir were Home Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, Industries Minister George Fernandes, Minister for Works and Housing Sikander Bakht and Defence Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram, once a pillar of the Congress. Finally, on the eve of polling, then Prime Minister Morarji Desai, like the present PM, made a campaign visit.

The initial effort of the state administration was to

'arrange' the election, as had been the practice. As deputy commissioner, I was the returning officer for the district of Srinagar. Hameed Karra soon came calling to ask that I make appointments of the election staff in consultation with him. He was the secretary to the state unit of the Janata Party. When I stated clearly that any such step was illegal, he was surprised. I was a promising young Muslim officer, he averred, and it would break his heart to have to destroy my career. The morning after my meeting with Karra, my boss, the commissioner of Kashmir, called me to his office. Upon entry to his chamber, whom did I find but Karra! "What is the difficulty Karra sahib is facing?" asked Commissioner Ghulam Mustafa Khan. I told him of Karra's demand. But the commissioner's response, uttered with endearment, was that I was an innocent person, that administering Poonch, where I had just conducted parliamentary elections, was another matter, and I should now recognise that the demands of Srinagar were different.

As the election approached, the strong support base of Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference (NC) became increasingly manifest. He suffered a heart attack that confined him to his home, but that led to an upsurge of support, causing his opponents to claim that the reports on the Sheikh's health were fake. The administration decided to attempt to cripple his election campaign. All deputy commissioners in Kashmir were given orders requiring that leading NC volunteers be arrested under the Preventive Detention



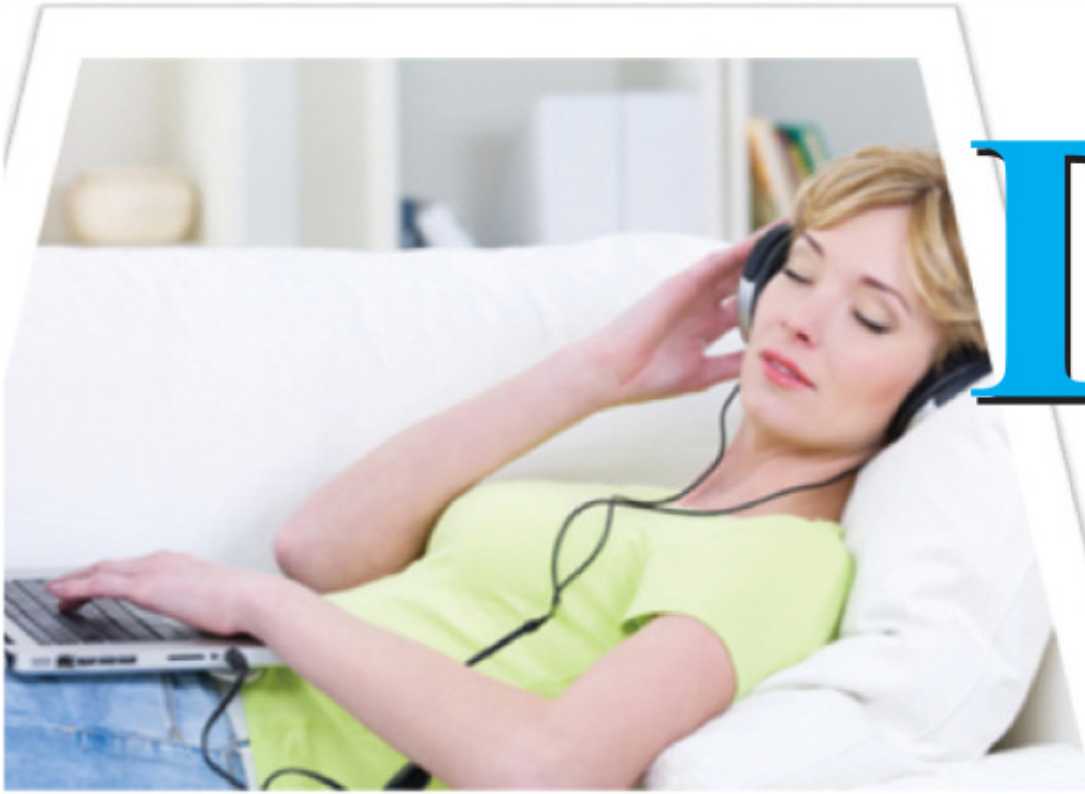
Act, which permitted detention without trial. Up all night, I approved nine arrests, only to receive a call early next morning from Chief Secretary Pushkar Nath Kaul, asking why I had been so slow. He told me that the deputy commissioners of other districts had each issued 30 to 80 warrants in one night. When I protested that a deputy commissioner was expected to satisfy himself that the grounds for detention made a convincing case of a threat to public security, he suggested that time spent scrutinising grounds was time wasted. Prime Minister Desai paid a visit on June 25, 1977. As we prepared for our meeting, I was told by the IG of the state police, Peer Ghulam Hassan Shah, that the PM would ask that we ensure his party's victory and that we should comply, for this was a duty to the nation. I told him that in that event, I, inexperienced in this art, must be replaced. As it happened, our meeting with the PM witnessed an

amiable chat. When asked by the chief secretary if he had any advice for the state's administration on the elections, the PM's response was simple: "One doesn't know whom to trust in Kashmir."

The state police, frustrated with my insistence on adhering to the law, launched a flurry of arrests of NC activists, particularly of its youth wing, under Section 107 of the CrPC. Then party president Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah, brother of the Sheikh's son-in-law, visited my office to object formally to this repression. I explained that this was the way the police wished to display their national commitment and asked him whether this would hamper or, in fact, strengthen his campaign. At this, Shah allowed himself a grin.

On election day, as I raced about the city, responding to calls, allegations and threats, Farooq Abdullah called on the IG, ensconced in the police control room, to complain that the elections were a farce. When results began to be announced and it was clear that the NC would win, I drove around Srinagar with the IG. The city rejoiced. Our car was repeatedly stopped, our hands kissed, blessings showered, as is the Kashmiri's wont.

The June 1977 elections were a milestone in the political evolution of the state. Because of the high public participation and the healthy slate of candidates across the state's political leadership, some believe that these were the fairest elections ever held there. Others have gone even further to declare them the only real elections ever held in J&K. Are the 2024 elections a resonance of that?



Top 5 ideas to De-stress this weekend



images in my mind. If I asked you now, whatever you do, do not think of a blue ball, what happens? Exactly, you conjure up an image of a blue ball and I might even guess that it showed in the top right hand corner of your "internal screen". The premise is that you can't visualize nothing, and what you visualize, you are giving power to, so if you "see" pictures of what you don't want, guess what? You will end up attracting what you don't want. We cannot bring into our world what we have not been able to at least imagine first.

Stressed due to exams? Try these foods

daily is a must for school going children. Calcium is important for physical development in children, and helps build immunity as well. **Protein:** Whether through eggs, dairy or meat, adequate quantities of protein is a must for a child's growth. An appropriate supply of protein leads to muscle boosts and helps your child remain physically alert, active and fit. **How to reduce stress in daily life** **Tips to control stress:** In order to lead a healthy and stress-free life, it is vital to follow certain guidelines or steps. They will help you get a better control over life and alter the way you view stress or its trigger factors. **Regular exercise:** Not surprisingly, exercise is one of the best

conflicts or any other stressful situation. Try to keep yourself calm in every way and avoid indulging in unnecessary situations. **Sleep:** Finally, a regular 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep is also important to relax your mind and body. If you face any difficulty in sleep, you can also make use of relaxation techniques like listening to music or reading a book. **Beat stress with these yoga poses** **Corpse Pose or Shavasana:** Lie flat on the back with legs together and (palms facing up) arms close to the body. Relax your body and mind with this pose. **Half-moon Pose or Ardha Chandrasana:** This pose benefits the lower back, abdomen and chest by stretching and balancing the body. Start with your feet together and arms by the side. Bring both the hands at the chest with

Caught up with work, life and traffic this week? It's time to let go and unwind over the weekend. Stress is a silent killer that claims many lives each year. Whether through cardiac issues, mental instabilities, or projections of unhappiness into one's relationships, stress is not a weak enemy to conquer. And conquer we must. Today we've lined up our top five tips for combating stress. So, take off those work shoes, release the tension in your shoulders and neck, and settle down to read some de-stressing news. **Take a mental vacation** Who wouldn't mind a relaxing vacation on a beach, away from life's daily stresses from work, socialising and technology. The constant battle for 'me' time leaves most of us frustrated and exhausted week after working and socialising week. Whether it's constant connectivity to social media, your Blackberry, or endless computing work at a work station, we think it's time you took a mental vacation for a day - right where you are - in your city, even in

your own home. **Meditation through visualization** Life Coach Malti Bhojwani takes us through the technique of visualization and how it can help us meditate effectively, and in a way that we can affect positive change in our lives. Meditation has many connotations and some of them may trigger different reactions from all of us. When I was younger, I thought it was the most boring thing anyone could indulge in and I conjured up an image of bearded yogis up in the Himalayas who starved and smelled. Today however, thanks to the holistic awareness, movements towards personal development and the amalgamation of Eastern and Western thoughts becoming more and more popular, meditation has taken on a more marketable name. I meditate and in my personal experience, I call it 'plugging-in' in fact as I am working on my book, there is an entire chapter dedicated solely to "plugging into the Universe". Visualization to me is constant, I think with

Oranges: Studies suggest that when a child is under too much pressure his/her vitamin C levels tend to dip, thus making him/her more vulnerable to illnesses. So, incorporate oranges in their diet. **Spinach:** Spinach is a rich source of iron and calcium along with vitamin A. Iron in spinach helps in developing a strong immunity and helps in developing social and cognitive development during childhood as it aids in the formation of haemoglobin and essential enzymes. Calcium, on the other hand, helps in the formation of strong bones and vitamin A is beneficial in reducing eye strain to a great extent. **Water:** Water aids digestion and helps avoid conditions related to stressed kidneys and constipation. It helps regulate and maintain body temperature. Water also aids several other functions within the human body that relate to energy, wakefulness and performance. **Milk:** Ideally, around 600 milligrams of calcium

ways to deal with stress. A regular 20-30 minutes of physical activity every day is vital to decrease stress hormones like cortisol and increase your body's feel good chemicals called endorphins. Besides this, certain forms of exercise like martial arts or boxing can act as an outlet for releasing all your vent-up emotions and frustrations. **Relaxation techniques:** This not only involves taking time to relax everyday but also employing certain basic relaxation techniques. This involves deep breathing techniques, meditation and practicing different yoga postures to relax your body muscles. **Balanced diet:** What you put inside your body also determines your ability to cope with stress or anxiety. A balanced diet comprising fresh fruits and vegetables is a must to reverse the negative impacts of stress and lead a healthy life. **Avoid stressful situations:** As far as possible, ensure that you avoid unnecessary arguments,

palms lightly pressed against each other. Breathe-in while raising the arms straight up keeping palms pressed lightly together. Arch your body backwards while keeping the arms alongside your neck and head. **Downward-Facing Dog Pose or Adho Mukha Svanasana:** The Adho Mukha Svanasana helps to cure backaches, relieve stress and mild depression and revitalizes energy. **Forward Bend Pose or Padahasthasana:** Stand straight with arms by your side, exhale and bend touching the floor with your hand. This pose helps in stretching the hamstring of the legs and helps spine and internal organs. **Straight Angle Pose or Samakonasana:** Start the asana with sitting on the ground and stretch the legs forward. Keep you legs straight and be rested on the ground. Now, slowly stretch your legs sideways so that it should form a straight line and keep the body straight. Stay in this posture for a few seconds and then slowly bring back the legs to the normal position.

How I start my day

Starting your day is like building a foundation for a house. It doesn't matter how well your house is designed - without a stable foundation, it'll crumble. My morning routine actually begins the night before. I am very disciplined about having all gadgets off in my house by 10 pm. I wrap up my day with a shower, brushing my teeth, stretching, reading, and finally, my gratitude blessing. By doing this, I have prepared my mind and body for a deep rest in tune with the circadian rhythms. Ideally, I wake up before the sun rises. The first thing I do is scrape my tongue with my tongue scraper to remove the ama (white toxins). Then I brush my teeth, and drink a large glass of warm water with a dash of apple cider vinegar or lemon juice. Then I move. Depending on the weather, I surf, go to the gym, do yoga, stretching or swimming. Then it's time for stillness - meditation. It works on every level - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Once that is done, it's time for breakfast and to get cracking with my day.



Smoking prompts Crohn's relapse after surgery

People with Crohn's disease -- a serious bowel condition -- are more likely to experience a recurrence after surgery if they continue to smoke, new research has found. Crohn's disease occurs when the immune system attacks the lining of the gut and bowel to cause severe inflammation. It results in abdominal pain, urgent diarrhoea, sickness and profound lethargy. Doctors recommend people with the condition stop smoking to avoid their illness worsening. "Our study confirms that the most important thing somebody with



Crohn's disease can do for their health is not to smoke," said Jack Satsangi, Professor at University of Edinburgh in

Britain. Most patients with Crohn's disease require surgery to remove the affected section of their bowel. Surgery is not curative, however, and the condition often relapses. The researchers also assessed whether a drug treatment that is commonly used in treating the disease is effective at preventing it from coming back after surgery. They found that the therapy had limited beneficial effects for non-smokers in preventing relapse after surgery. It did, however, offer protection for smokers.

A class of drugs called thiopurines have often been prescribed to patients after surgery to try to prevent relapse but until now, it was not clear whether the therapy offers any benefit. The researchers conducted a trial of the therapy involving 240 people with Crohn's disease. Patients were monitored for three years after they had undergone surgery. Some 128 patients were treated with a drug from the thiopurine family called mercaptopurine and 122 were given a dummy medicine. Only three of 29 smokers treated with the therapy experienced a relapse compared with 12 of 26 who received the dummy drug. The rate of relapse in the non-smoking group was much lower and was unaffected by treatment with the medicine, showed the findings published in The Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology. "There is an unmet need to identify therapies or life-style changes that prevent Crohn's disease recurrence after surgery to avoid patients having to undergo multiple operations," Satsangi said.

More than 300 dengue cases recorded in a week in Delhi

Last year, the city saw a total of 426 malaria cases, with West Delhi being the worst affected.

NEW DELHI. Delhi has reported over 300 new dengue cases in the past week, bringing the total number of cases this year to 1,229, according to official data. Malaria cases in the city have also surged compared to last year, with 363 cases recorded this month, up from 294 during the same period in 2023. Last year, the city saw a total of 426 malaria cases, with West Delhi being the worst affected. Chikungunya cases have also risen, with 43 reported so far this year, nearly double the 23 cases reported last year. According to Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) data, between January and September 21, Delhi saw 1,229 dengue cases, including the death of a 54-year-old man at Lok Nayak Hospital. This month alone, Delhi has recorded 651 dengue cases, a notable increase from the 256 cases reported in August. However, despite the



recent rise, the numbers are still lower than last year when the city had already recorded 3,013 dengue cases by this time. In contrast, in 2022, there were only 525 cases in the same period. Last year, Delhi saw a total of 9,266 dengue cases and 19 deaths, with 2,141 cases occurring in September alone. This year, the

highest number of dengue cases, 180, has been reported in the Najafgarh zone, with 45 cases recorded in the past week. The South zone has reported an equal number of cases. Non-MCD areas, including the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Delhi Cantonment, and Railways, have contributed 312 cases to the total count. However, the data excludes patients who are not residents of Delhi, those with incomplete or incorrect addresses, and those who could not be located at their recorded address. Civic officials credit the lower number of dengue cases this year to their intensified efforts, including door-to-door inspections, regular insecticide spraying, and public awareness initiatives. The MCD has issued over 1.14 lakh legal notices and 39,338 challans.

Meet DUSU presidential candidates from 'lesser-known' outfits

Aniket Madke is a first year student of Law Centre. He hails from Madhya Pradesh, represents the Dalit community and contesting as a candidate of All India Students Federation (AISF).

NEW DELHI. Five of the eight presidential candidates belong to lesser-known organisations and have no political or financial backing. However, they follow the guidelines in the true sense and wish to contest only 'student-based politics'. With a clear and larger vision for the University in their minds, these five candidates include Aniket Madke from Law Centre II, Badee U Zaman from Arabic Department, Pinki from the Buddhist Studies, Shivam Maurya from Hindu College and Sheetal from Shyama Prasad Mukherjee College.

Aniket Madke is a first year student of Law Centre. He hails from Madhya Pradesh, represents the Dalit community and contesting as a candidate of All India Students Federation (AISF). The AISF's manifesto outlines a robust agenda for marginalised communities, including establishing a North-East Students' Protection and Welfare Committee and measures to support LGBTQIA+ students. "Discrimination, hate crimes, and financial barriers against North-East students will not be tolerated. We will provide comprehensive legal, social, and financial assistance," the manifesto states.

Badee U Zaman, a 24-year-old final-year student of MA Arabic, is originally from Kerala. He completed his graduation from Kerala and came to DU to pursue post-graduation last year. Badee U Zaman is contesting from the Fraternity Movement, a seven-year-old organisation on the campus. Zaman, sharing his election manifesto, said, "We have been highlighting the issue of low voter turnout. Over the past two years, only 30% of students have participated in the elections, leaving a staggering 70% out of the electoral process. This low turnout highlights a serious problem: the current election system at Delhi University is driven by money and muscle power, leaving many students' voices unheard and their issues unaddressed." "We envision a university where democracy flourishes and anti-caste politics are actively promoted. Fraternity DU is a strong ally for every student fighting against oppression" he added. Among these five candidates is Shivam Maurya—the youngest, 17-year-old candidate. Maurya is a first-year BCom Hons student from Hindu College. He came to DU this year from Gorakhpur and joined the Disha Students Organisation (DSO). As a presidential candidate, he shared his vision for the university: "I want the university to stop exploiting the students in the name of these merit-based CUET exams, etc., and new education policy. These kinds of programmes can further ruin the students' careers."

Delhi HC raps DU for inaction on property defacement

The judges expressed shock over the lack of coordination between government agencies.

NEW DELHI. The Delhi High Court on Tuesday issued strong directives against the Delhi University (DU) and civic authorities for their failure to prevent the defacement of public property in the run-up to the Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) elections. The HC criticised the authorities for not taking necessary steps to spare public places of graffiti and posters.

A bench, led by Chief Justice-designate Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, asked DU to issue immediate disqualification notices to candidates responsible for defacing properties. The court also ordered the university to recover the costs of damage caused by such actions. "Issue them disqualification notices today itself and ask for recovery of funds for the defacement," the bench said.

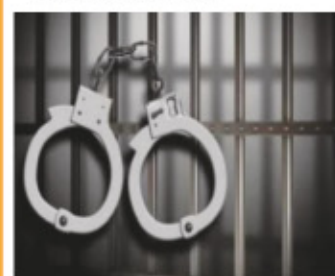
It also asked Delhi Metro and the MCD to list the names of people involved in defacement. The judges expressed shock over the lack of coordination between government agencies. The court directive came on a petition filed by advocate Prashant Manchanda, who raised concerns about the deteriorating state of public spaces as a result of election campaigning. The HC summoned the Chief Election Officer of DU to appear before it on Wednesday. The hearing will continue to address a plea requesting strict compliance with anti-defacement guidelines for the DUSU elections.

19-year-old tries to sexually assault minor, arrested in Delhi

The accused, identified as Harender, a native of Sultanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, was arrested by the police.

NEW DELHI. A 14-year-old girl was rescued by her family members from a vacant shanty in southwest Delhi's Kusumpur Pahari area when a 19-year-old youth was allegedly trying to sexually assault her, an official said on Tuesday. The accused, identified as Harender, a native of Sultanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, was arrested by the police.

DCP (southwest) Rohit Meena said the father of the victim girl came to Vasant Vihar police station on Sunday and stated that his 14-year-old daughter went to a public urinal where she met a person named Harender.



"Harender took her to a vacant shanty in Kusumpur Pahari area and attempted to sexually assault her," the DCP said. At the same time, the family members of the victim girl also reached the place of the incident, broke open the makeshift door of the shanty, and rescued the victim girl. The accused was also caught by them and handed over to the cops after thrashing him black and blue. The victim was medically examined and counselled by a Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) counsellor, following which the police registered a case under appropriate sections of the law. During the investigation, the accused was formally placed under arrest. Interrogation revealed that the accused is a Class 10 passout and presently unemployed. Further investigations are underway, the DCP added.

Posters, banners continue to scar Delhi University walls

The notification also emphasised that candidates are only permitted to use the designated "Walls of Democracy" for pasting handmade posters.

NEW DELHI. Campaign posters and banners continue to cover the walls of Delhi University campuses, despite a 24-hour ultimatum issued by the chief election officer a day earlier directing candidates to remove the printed material or face action.

A spot check of Delhi University's North and South campuses revealed that not only were the walls lined with campaign material but also roads were littered with pamphlets in hues of white, red, and blue.

On Monday, the chief election officer for the DUSU elections issued notices to all candidates, instructing them to remove posters and banners featuring their names and ballot numbers from university premises within 24 hours. The notification also emphasised that



candidates are only permitted to use the designated "Walls of Democracy" for pasting handmade posters. However, enforcement of these rules appeared lacking on the ground. The display of printed posters and banners violates norms established by the Lyngdoh Committee, which governs

student elections. "We are keeping a close vigil on any violations of election rules. Notices were issued yesterday, and we are in the process of identifying violators. Appropriate action will be taken soon," said Chief Election Officer Satyapal Singh.

Defacement of property is also prohibited under the Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, 2007. Despite this, campaign material continues resurfacing with a traffic constable noting that

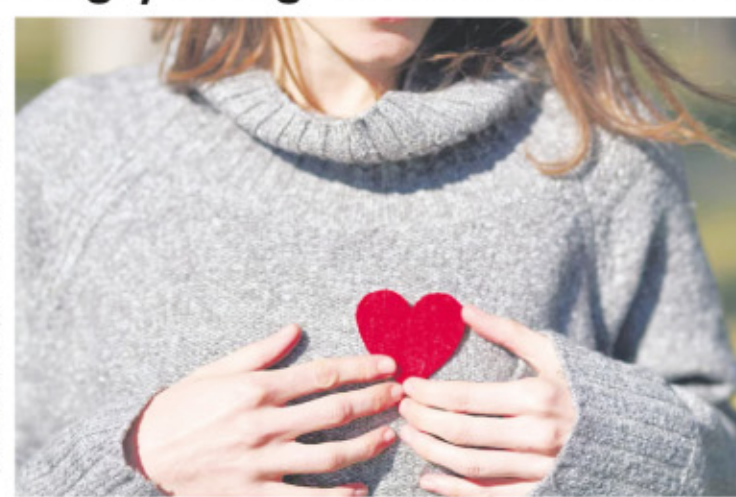
over 50 challans are issued daily. "MCD workers remove the posters and banners, but by night, students hang them up again," he said. The constable also pointed out that convoys of cars during campaign rallies cause significant traffic jams, making it difficult to manage the area.

Heart attacks among young adults doubled post-Covid: Study

NEW DELHI. In a five-year-long study analysis over its cardiac patients, Aakash Healthcare has found that the cases of heart attacks jumped more than double after the pandemic, especially in adults under 40. Besides, the patient landing up in emergency jumped by 60 percent.

The study analysed 762 cases coming to the hospital in ward and emergency spanned into three distinct periods—pre COVID, during COVID, and post-COVID—each of 22 months, from May, 2018 to October, 2023. Dr Harpeet Kaur, Medical Superintendent, Aakash Healthcare, said, "Study paints a worrying picture of cardiovascular risks amid a changing healthcare landscape. These statistics presents intriguing picture demanding investigation and proactive intervention"

The analysis dives deeper, revealing major trends within specific age groups. While all age brackets saw a rise in STEMI cases after COVID, the under-40 demographic saw a sharp rise, with a threefold increase



compared to the pre-pandemic period. The study sheds light on intertwined relationship between STEMI and pre-existing health conditions. The

proportion of diabetic patients among STEMI cases soared by 50 percent post-COVID. While a rise in hypertension cases was observed, it didn't reach statistical significance. "This statistically significant association warrants further research with larger groups to understand potential impact of COVID on metabolic health and its subsequent influence on cardiovascular risk." Dr Aashish Chaudhry, MD, Aakash Healthcare, said, "The observed rise in STEMI cases, particularly among younger individuals and diabetes patients, demands attention for necessary preventive measures."

Covid and heart disease The study Aakash Healthcare sheds light on intertwined relationship between STEMI and pre-existing health conditions. The proportion of diabetic patients among STEMI cases soared by 50 percent post-COVID. While a rise in hypertension cases was observed, it didn't reach statistical significance

Delhi HC says even able-bodied divorced women entitled to maintenance

The contention of the petitioner that the complaint filed by the respondent/wife doesn't come within the four corners of the Domestic Violence Act can't be accepted," read the order.

NEW DELHI. The Delhi High Court, in a ruling, observed that a wife forced to leave her matrimonial home because of husband's extra marital affair makes her a victim of domestic violence under the Domestic Violence Act. Justice Subramonium Prasad also upheld the lower court's previous order towards payment of maintenance by the

petitioner/husband to his estranged wife.

"...No lady can tolerate that her husband is cohabiting with another lady and has a child from her. All these facts make the respondent/wife a victim of domestic violence. The contention of the petitioner that the complaint filed by the respondent/wife doesn't come within the four corners of the Domestic Violence Act can't be accepted," read the order.

Rejecting the husband's plea, Justice Subramonium Prasad observed "...that the amount of Rs 30,000 per month awarded by the trial court to be paid by the petitioner herein/husband to the respondent/wife doesn't require any interference." It further added that the fact that the respondent/wife is capable of earning can't work to her detriment. The couple, married since 1998, has been embroiled in a contentious legal battle after the respondent/wife accused her



husband of domestic abuse, adultery, and neglect. In her complaint, she detailed the deteriorating relationship, attributing it to husband's extramarital affair, which eventually led to his abandonment of their matrimonial home. She further alleged that the husband had introduced a lady to his family and later had a child with her. The Delhi High Court, while rejecting the petitioner/husband's contentions, remarked that the respondent/wife had no choice but to leave her two children with petitioner's parents, as she was unable to

take care for them. The Delhi High Court also stated that even if the respondent is able bodied and can earn a living does not absolve the husband not to provide maintenance to his wife and children.

"...Indian women leave their jobs to look after the family, cater to the needs of their children, look after their husbands and his parents. The contention that the respondent is only a parasite and is abusing the process of law is nothing but an insult not only to the Respondent herein but to the entire women kind", remarked the court.

The case In her complaint, she detailed the deteriorating relationship, attributing it to husband's extramarital affair, which eventually led to his abandonment of their matrimonial home. She further alleged that the husband had introduced a lady to his family and later had a child with her.

A common occurrence, bloating gives one a feeling of 'pressure' or 'fullness' in the stomach. Not exactly an isolated symptom, bloating can be accompanied by acidity, belching, cramps, pain, stomach aches, shortness of breath, and lower back pain. If stomach bloating is a routine problem for you, or if your belly is bulging after last night's heavy dinner, follow these tips and beat that bloating feeling.

Hydrate. Drinking water, perhaps, is the last thing you will think of once your stomach is about to explode. But drinking several glasses of water at one go, will help in maintaining your sodium balance. Water helps in keeping constipation at bay, however make sure you do not indulge in carbonated beverages and fizzy drinks in order to compensate for water intake. A simple trick: Add a dash of lime and black pepper to your water and quench your thirst with this all natural water cooler.

Cut down on salt. Here is what you should do in order to cut back on your salt intake:

Go for fresh food produce rather than processed ones: Many of the naturally produced food and fruit products are low in salt. For instance, fresh meat is low in salt content when compared to its refined and processed versions such as ham, bacon, sausages and hot dogs.



How to beat that bloating Feeling

Check the label and go for low salt products: As explained earlier, the trick lies in going for food products which are low in sodium content by carefully checking the label.

Go for herbs and other spices instead of that extra dash of salt: One can go for in-season produce of dried herbs to add that extra flavour in your meals. You can also use fresh fruits juices, citrus fruits and spices to boost the flavour in your meals.

Be careful when selecting salt substitutes: They may contain excess volumes of potassium, which does help in lessening some of the problems caused by high salt content, but too much of it can lead to kidney or eventually heart problems.

Skip sugary alcohols. Stay away from sugar-free fizzy drinks as much as you can, even when they promise to be full of calorie-free sugar substitutes. This is because sugar substitutes, such as - sorbitol, xylitol, maltitol, isomalt, lactitol, mannitol,

erythritol and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH) - tend to add to the feeling of bloating and thus, are best avoided.

Be wise about dairy. Dairy products are full of natural sugar; called lactose that might interrupt the digestion process leading to bloating. And, if you are lactose-intolerant, make sure to avoid cheese and yogurt, as it can lead to acidity build-up and cramping.

Eat small. Now eating small is the biggest golden rule, if you want to lose weight, but it is also a beneficial exercise if you are battling stomach bloating. Perk up your meal with a healthy snack, if you think your stomach is about to explode and quit indulging in heavy meals. Go for 4-6 mini meals in a day and make sure to eat slowly.

Move it. Get off the couch, if you feel bloated. Never skip your workout, if your belly feels full and uncomfortable. Exercise is a proven solution for any kind of digestive disorders as it helps regulate your body's systems.

However, if your bloating continues then it might be a case of chronic bloating and can be something as serious as celiac disease. So follow the thumb-rule of elimination and failing all else, visit your doctor for a check up.



Light weight exercise increases bone density in adults



A new study has revealed that indulging in low-weight, high-repetition exercise can increase bone mineral density up to eight percent in adults. According to the findings, this type of strength training may be an effective and maintainable method of increasing bone mineral density in older people and sedentary groups. Lead researcher Jinger Gottschall of the Penn State said that this was such a profound finding because low-weight, high-repetition exercise was easily attainable by anybody and everybody. In the study, 20 untrained adults completed a 27-week group exercise program. Participants were assigned to one of two groups that either completed

full-body weight-training workouts or workouts focused on building core muscles, in addition to cardiovascular workouts. The weight-training group completed two to three BODYPUMP(R); classes per week, a low-weight, high-repetition resistance training program in which the participants used a bar and self-selected weights. The study analysis found that participants in the weight-training group demonstrated an eight percent increase in leg bone mineral density, a seven percent increase in pelvis bone mineral density, a four percent increase in arm bone mineral density and a four percent increase in spine bone mineral density. The core group's bone mineral density did not change significantly. Postmenopausal women and osteopenic individuals experienced significant bone mineral density increases of up to 29 percent. The study is published in the Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness



A new study has revealed that many young heart attack patients, especially women, are unaware of the impending cardiac risks. Examining 3,501 heart attack survivors, the researchers found that only 53 percent had considered themselves at risk. Even fewer, 46 percent, of the patients reported being told they were at risk by a healthcare provider, and only 49 percent reported discussing heart disease and risk modification with a doctor. Women were 11 percent less likely than men to be told by their doctors that they were at risk for a heart attack and were 16 percent less likely to report having a healthcare provider discuss heart disease and ways that they could reduce their risk. Lead author Erica Leifheit-Limson of the Yale School of Public Health said that many younger women and men, even those with multiple cardiac risk factors, were not receiving adequate counseling on heart disease. Leifheit-Limson and colleagues used data from the VIRGO (Variation in Recovery: Role of Gender on Outcomes of Young AMI Patients) study to analyze medical records and the results of interviews with heart attack patients from more than 100 hospitals in the United States and Spain. Study participants ranged in age from 18 to 55. In the study, Leifheit-Limson and colleagues compared the prevalence of five cardiac risk factors (diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, obesity, and smoking status) as well as reports of clinical counseling on heart disease. They found that 97 percent of the women and 99 percent of the men had at least one risk factor, and nearly two-thirds had three or more. The most common risk factor was high cholesterol. Senior author Judith Lichtman said that they need to empower individuals to seek information about heart health, and ensure that care



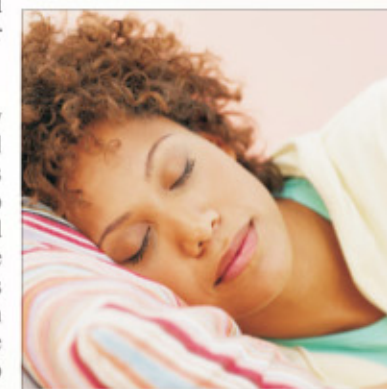
Young heart attack patients unaware of cardiac risks

providers were educating patients about risk factor management. The study appears in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

9 simple tricks to fall into deep slumber

Lying awake in bed unable to doze off? We give you nine simple ways to trick yourself into a peaceful slumber. We all know that a glass of hot milk and a warm bath are supposed to relax us before bed. But what when you still can't slip into a good sleep? Trick yourself to shuteye by using these expert natural tips: **Left nostril magic** This yoga method is known to reduce blood pressure and calm you. The way to do it is to lie on your left side, and rest a finger on your right nostril to close it. Start slow, deep breathing through the left nostril. This technique is particularly good when overheating or menopausal hot flushes are preventing sleep. **Squeeze and relax** Relaxing all your muscles can prepare your body for sleep. Lie on your back, take a deep, slow breath in through your nose and, at the same time, squeeze your toes tightly as if you are trying to curl them under your foot. Then release the squeeze. On another slow breath, curl your foot up toward your knee, then release. Breathe again, contract your calf muscles, then your thighs, buttocks, belly, chest, arms, and so on until

you have moved all the way up your body, squeezing and releasing the muscles one by one. When you have gone from head to toe, your breathing should be steady and you should feel ready for sleep. **Stay up** Challenge yourself to stay awake, and your mind will rebel. This phenomenon is called the sleep paradox. Keep your eyes wide open, and repeat 'I will not sleep'. The brain doesn't process negatives well. It will interpret this as an instruction to sleep and eye muscles tire quickly as sleep creeps up. **Press rewind** Remembering the mundane details of the day in reverse order clears your mind of worries. Recall conversations, sights and sounds as you go. It helps you to reach a mental state that's ready for sleep. **Imagine** Visualisation meditation works best when you use at least three senses. Imagine yourself in a situation where you feel content — a tropical



paradise, sailing on calm waters, walking in flower fields. As you explore your 'happy place', imagine smelling flowers, feeling grass or sand under your feet, and hearing water lap against the boat. You should soon feel relaxed and drift off. **Hum to yourself** Sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, drop your shoulders, relax your jaw, but keep your mouth gently closed. Breathe in through your nose as deeply as is comfortable, ensuring your abdomen, not chest, rises. Breathe gently out of your mouth, lips together so you hum. Try to hum for the whole outbreath. Notice how it vibrates in your chest. Focus fully on this vibration over six breaths then sit quietly for a moment. Tell yourself you are ready for sleep, get up and hit the bed. That's the point there are special points in your body which promote sleep when pressed gently but firmly. Put your thumb on the point between your eyebrows at the top of your nose, where there's a slight indent. Hold for 20 seconds, release and repeat twice more. Next, sit on the edge of the bed and put your right foot across your left knee. Find the slight indent between your big toe and second toe and press in the same way. Finally, still supporting your right foot, find the point just below the nail on the upper side of your second toe. Using the thumb and forefinger of your right hand, gently squeeze the toe.

NEWS BOX

Sensex, Nifty open flat as investors take breather after record run

New Delhi Benchmark stock market indices opened Wednesday's trading session flat, snapping their record run for the past four sessions. The S&P BSE Sensex was down 20.70 points to 84,893.34 at 10:23 am, while the NSE Nifty50 fell 18.20 points to trade at 25,922.20. The other broader market indices were trading in negative territory as the momentum seen over the past few trading sessions seems to have fizzled out. The top five gainers on the Nifty50 were Power Grid, HDFC Bank, Divi's Lab, M&M and Hindalco.

On the other hand, the top losers were Tata Consumer Products, LTIM, Tech Mahindra, Britannia and Tata Motors. Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment



Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said, "The Chinese monetary stimulus measures lifted the Chinese and Hong Kong markets yesterday and if the rally continues it is possible that FIIs will move more funds to invest in these markets which are highly attractive on valuations." "In India, metal stocks rallied in response to the Chinese stimulus measures," he added. He went on to say that it remains to be seen whether the "Chinese monetary stimulus will have an enduring positive impact since China's economic woes are structural and difficult to address through a monetary stimulus". It is more likely that the positive sentiments now being felt may soon dissipate and weaken, Vijayakumar noted. He explained that the gush of domestic liquidity, which is the main driving force behind the rally in India, is likely to keep the market resilient. "If Nifty is to go past 26000 decisively and sustain there, it has to be led by the Bank Nifty. There is more steam in this segment."

Airtel to launch AI-enabled network tech to crack down on spam calls, messages

NEW DELHI. Bharti Airtel is all set to roll out artificial intelligence enabled technology on its network to crackdown on spam calls and messages, company Managing Director and CEO Gopal Vittal said on Wednesday.

The technology will be rolled out at midnight starting September 26, which will alert users about probable spam calls and messages.

"There are several indicators based on which we have identified spammers. We have developed an AI-enabled spam detection solution which analyses calls in 2 millisecond and alert users on dialler," Vittal said. He said that the solution will be rolled out free of cost for all Airtel smartphone users. "In 2 milliseconds our solution processes 1.5 billion messages and 2.5 billion calls every day. Our solution has been able to identify 100 million potential spam calls and 3 million spam SMSes originating every day," Vittal said.

The technology will not block the call on its own but it will be for users to decide on blocking calls, as sometimes there are 'false positives', which means even genuine calls get displayed as spam. He said that the solution will not be able to help users getting spam calls on over-the-top apps like WhatsApp. "It is one of the pain points (spam calls on OTT apps) which we have not been able to address," Vittal said.

Not withdrawing investment from Odisha: JSW

NEW DELHI. Billionaire Sajjan Jindal-led JSW group is not withdrawing its proposed Rs 40,000 crore electric vehicle (EV) and battery project from Odisha and not shifting the same to Maharashtra. This clarification from the JSW group came amid a report that the JSW group is planning to shift its multi-billion dollar EV and battery project from the eastern state. "We are not withdrawing from Odisha," said Ranjan Nayak, executive vice president of corporate strategy, office of chairman and managing director. Odisha Industries Minister Sampad Swani on Tuesday said the state government was talking to the JSW group for implementation of the EV project in the state. In February this year, the JSW group, which now owns a stake in MG Motor India, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Odisha government for the establishment of an integrated electric vehicle and EV battery manufacturing project at an investment of Rs 40,000 crore in the state

GST circular tweak to help Infosys, others

Confusion is about applicability where services are not free and nominal amount is charged

NEW DELHI. The government is considering amendments in the GST circular 210, which clarifies on valuation of supply of services import by a related party where recipient is eligible to full input tax credit, to make it simpler for its correct interpretation by tax officers, according to a senior finance ministry official. This is in context of the recent show cause notices sent to Infosys, foreign shipping lines and several food and beverage companies engaged in related-party transactions by the Directorate General of Goods and Services Tax Intelligence (DGGI). The circular was issued in June. According to the official, despite this circular there have been several instances where GST authorities erroneously sent show cause notices. IT



major Infosys was served a show cause notice for evading taxes amounting to Rs 32,000 crore for the period July 2017 to March 2022. Though the government has waived off the tax demand for FY18 of Rs 3,898 crore for remaining years, they are looking at it on year-on-year basis. "Infosys issue is being addressed at the field level. Infosys has to send its response by November 30, which is the last date for filing the annual return by companies. There seems to be a mistake made by the field officers," the official said, indicating

the likely relief to be given to the IT major, another official said. Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra, during the press conference held after the 54th GST Council meeting, explained that circulars have already been issued clarifying GST applicability on related-party transactions. While the Council in its last meeting, didn't announce any relief to Infosys and other sector companies, it exempted import of services by branch offices of foreign airline companies from related entities. "It is understood that DGGI

has held up certain taxpayers for paying up GST on matters related to interpretation of Circular 210/4/2024 and Circular No. 199/11/2023-GST, along with the amended Rule 28 of the CGST Rules and hence there is a need for clarity," said Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP. As per Pratik Jain, Partner, PwC India, while circular 210 addresses most of the issues, there is some confusion about its applicability where the services are not on free of cost basis and say a nominal amount is charged between related entities, though logically it should also be covered. "Further, it is not clear whether the circular will also apply in cases where the recipient has some minor non-taxable income (such as trading in shares or mutual fund). It will be good if these aspects are further clarified," said Jain. "Authorities sent several show cause notices" As per an official, despite this circular there have been several instances where GST authorities erroneously sent show cause notices. Infosys was served show cause notice for evading taxes of Rs 32,000 crore for period July 2017 to March 2022. Though the govt has waived off demand for FY18 of Rs 3,898 cr for remaining years.

Vodafone Idea shares fall 2% as ICICI Securities cuts target price

ICICI Securities has reduced Vodafone Idea's EV/EBITDA multiple to 13 times FY27 from 14 times and lowered its target price to Rs 11 from Rs 15.

Hyundai Motors India is all set to launch the country's biggest-ever initial public offering (IPO) after receiving approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). The company submitted its draft papers in June 2024 and the IPO may be launched as soon as October, reported Business Today. The South Korean automaker's Indian unit plans to raise \$3 billion, which is around Rs 25,000 crore, through the IPO. The offering will be a



complete offer-for-sale (OFS), meaning that the promoter, Hyundai Motor Company, will sell a portion of its shares to the public. This IPO is expected to not only raise funds but also improve Hyundai Motors India's visibility in the Indian market. By listing on the stock exchange, the company aims to increase its brand image and give more liquidity to its shares. Hyundai Motors India was the second-largest carmaker in India in terms of passenger vehicle sales in the

financial year 2023-24, just behind Maruti Suzuki. Several major financial institutions are involved in handling the IPO process. Citi, HSBC Securities, JP Morgan, Kotak Mahindra Capital, and Morgan Stanley are the lead banks advising Hyundai on the transaction.

In terms of legal support, the company has hired Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas as its counsel, while Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas will represent the banks. Internationally, Latham and Watkins will act as legal counsel. KFin Technologies has been appointed as the registrar for the issue.

The upcoming IPO is expected to be a major event in the Indian stock market, given its size and the reputation of Hyundai Motors India. However, more details about the share price and exact launch date are awaited as the company prepares to enter the final stages of its offering.

Start-up funding falls 7% to \$7.6 billion in January-September

NEW DELHI. Indian start-ups have secured only \$7.6 billion in funding in the last nine months, marking a 7% decline from \$8.2 billion in 2023 and a 66% fall from \$22.4 billion funding in 2022. As per Tracxn's India Tech 9M 2024 report (Jan 1 - Sept 13, 2024), the majority of funding came from late-stage rounds — about \$4.7 billion, compared to \$4.9 billion in 2023 and \$14.3 billion in 2022. The country saw peak funding of \$29.9 billion in 2021, but since then funding has declined due to ongoing geopolitical headwinds and the global funding winter. Retail, fintech, and food and agriculture tech have emerged as the top-performing sectors. The retail sector managed to attract \$1.95 billion in funding so



far this year, and this is a 23% increase from 2023 but a 61% drop from 2022. Flipkart raised \$350 million from Google, and Meesho secured \$275 million during this period. Fintech emerged as the second-highest funded sector as the sector raised \$1.49 billion. However, this is a 39% fall from \$2.46 billion in 2023 and a 70% fall from \$4.97 billion in 2022. The food and agriculture tech sector saw an increase in funding as the sector saw \$1.43 billion in funding, a 63% rise from \$880 million in 2023. However, this is down 48% from \$2.75 billion in 2022. Six start-ups have turned unicorns during this period as against just one in 2023. IPO activity also surged, with 29 tech companies going public, up from 15 in the same period last year. "Despite the broader economic challenges, India's tech ecosystem continues to demonstrate resilience. The emergence of six new unicorns and a surge in IPOs with 29 tech companies going public reflects investor confidence in the sector. While overall funding has slowed, late-stage investments and the increasing momentum in fintech and retail show innovation-driven growth is still thriving in India's start-up landscape," said Neha Singh, co-founder Tracxn.

Retail sector funding
Retail sector managed to attract \$1.95 billion in funding so far this year, and this is a 23% increase from 2023 but a 61% drop from 2022. Flipkart raised \$350 million from Google, and Meesho secured \$275 million during this period

Foxconn eyes \$1 billion display module plant in Tamil Nadu: Report

New Delhi. Foxconn, one of the world's largest electronics manufacturers, is planning to invest \$1 billion to establish a new facility in Tamil Nadu. The new plant will focus on assembling smartphone display modules, according to a report by The Economic Times. This will be the first display module facility Foxconn has built in India, and it is expected to mainly support the production of Apple's iPhones. The new plant could also benefit other manufacturers such as Pegatron and Tata Electronics, as these companies may have access to the components produced at the facility. Foxconn has reportedly secured 5,00,000 square feet of land at an industrial park in Oragadam, near Chennai.

This new site is close to its existing smartphone assembly plant, allowing for streamlined operations and potentially faster production cycles. According to Tarun Pathak, research director at Counterpoint, assembling display modules locally could add between 2-3% more value to the overall production process in India, on top of the 5% value already added by phone assembly. "This is a strategic move

that could help India climb higher in the global electronics manufacturing ladder," said Pathak. Foxconn's new display plant



may also align with its broader plans to assemble other tech products in India, including Google Pixel phones, which are gaining popularity worldwide. Foxconn has been rapidly expanding its business in India over the past few years, with a strong focus on smartphone assembly.

The new display module unit is part of a wider plan by the company to diversify its operations. Beyond smartphones, Foxconn has shown interest in expanding into sectors like electric vehicles (EVs), batteries, and

semiconductors. At present, India imports most of its smartphone display modules from countries like China and South Korea.

By setting up local production, Foxconn could help reduce these imports and bring down the cost of components for phone manufacturers. As per the report, this move could also help brands shorten delivery times by reducing supply chain delays.

Globally, major players in the display module market include companies such as Samsung Display, BOE Technology, and LG Display. In India, however, local assembly is dominated by Chinese firms such as TCL CSOT and TXD (India) Technology. One of the biggest hurdles for Foxconn will be sourcing components for the display modules. Currently, a large portion of these components are still imported from China, and reducing this reliance will take time. Another challenge is the need to build a skilled workforce to manage the production of advanced display technologies. Foxconn's deeper investment in India aligns closely with Apple's strategy to reduce its reliance on China.

Salaried employees work longer hours than casual workers, finds survey

For many corporate workers, these 48-hour weeks translate to roughly 9 hours of work each day if they're working five days a week, or 8 hours if it's a six-day work week.

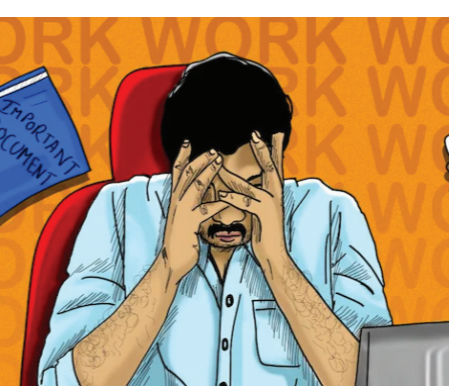
New Delhi. A new government survey has shed light on an alarming trend in the workplace—salaried employees, especially those working in corporate environments, are putting in significantly more hours each week than their casual or self-employed counterparts.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for July 2023-June 2024, regular wage earners are clocking an average of 48.2 hours a week, compared to just under 40 hours for casual laborers and the self-employed. This difference in work hours isn't just a statistic; it paints a picture of the

demanding corporate work culture that salaried employees face. Tight deadlines, high expectations, and the ever-present need for productivity are stretching working hours to new extremes. For many corporate workers, these 48-hour weeks translate to roughly 9 hours of work each day if they're working five days a week, or 8 hours if it's a six-day work week. While some HR experts argue that these hours aren't necessarily overwhelming, others suggest that it's not just the number of hours that matter—it's the environment.

The constant hustle, the pressure to perform, and the rising demands of modern workplaces are pushing many employees to the brink.

Interestingly, while salaried employees are working longer hours, casual laborers and the self-employed are facing a different kind of stress. Although they tend to work fewer hours—just under 40 per week—these workers often deal with income instability and irregular schedules. Self-employed



individuals may enjoy the flexibility of setting their own hours, but their work often depends on market demand, and they don't have the safety net of a stable paycheck.

The conversation around work hours and employee well-being gained renewed urgency after the death of Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old Ernst & Young employee in Pune. Her death has been linked to extreme work-related stress, igniting a nationwide debate on the toll that long hours and high-pressure environments can take on

employees. The incident has prompted a government investigation into work culture and the impact of long hours on employee health. As more details emerge, many are calling for companies to rethink how they approach deadlines and employee expectations. Experts argue that businesses should foster a more balanced work culture—one that values productivity within reasonable limits and discourages the notion that working long hours is a badge of honor.

As work-related stress continues to make headlines, one thing is clear: the way we work needs to change. Whether it's the long hours salaried employees are putting in or the unstable schedules of casual workers, the current system isn't sustainable. A healthier work-life balance is no longer just a luxury—it's becoming a necessity. For salaried employees, it's not just about managing the hours in a week, but also about creating a work environment that supports well-being. And for companies, the message is simple: the time has come to prioritise employee health over outdated ideas of commitment and productivity.

NEWS BOX

Olympiad gold or World No.3 ranking Arjun Erigaisi reveals his favourite

New Delhi. India's star at the Chess Olympiad Arjun Erigaisi claimed that he values the gold medal at the event for the team more than his new World No.3 ranking. Erigaisi was one of the stars of the show as India completed a historic double as both the men's and women's team clinched gold medals. Erigaisi is now behind Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura in the latest rankings after the chess Olympiad. Speaking to Sports Today in an exclusive interaction, the 20-year-old said he felt great about the ranking, but being a team player, valued the gold medal achievement higher.

"I feel great. Firstly there are many Indians in World No.3 and we have two gold medals. The women's team also won gold medal. I wouldn't rank World No.3 as high as the gold medal," said Erigaisi.

Playing all 11 rounds wasn't pre-planned



Erigaisi was the only player from the men's team to have played all the 11 rounds at the Olympiad. The 20-year-old said he had no issues with fatigue as his energy levels are quite high all the time. Erigaisi revealed that the decision to play all 11 rounds wasn't pre-planned.

My energy levels are quite high in general. I don't get tired so easily. And I love playing chess. If the team captain wanted me to play all the rounds, I would be more than happy. It wasn't pre-planned. It started out and I was in good shape," said Erigaisi.

The Vishy Anand impact Erigaisi said that Vishwanathan Anand was one of the main reasons why many members of the team started to play chess as they wanted to be like the former world champion. Speaking about the Olympiad, the 20-year-old said Anand did have an indirect influence on their performances. "He is one of the main reasons why most of us started playing chess. When we started playing chess, we wanted to be like Anand. It was like an inspiration. So he is the reason why we started and reached the level we are. This Olympiad, he didn't have a direct influence. But definitely, there was a lot of indirect influence," said Erigaisi.

Lenny Yoro reveals why he chose Manchester United: Everything is big here

New Delhi. Lenny Yoro has revealed why he joined Manchester United, claiming that it is the biggest club in the world. Yoro joined United during the summer transfer window, with the Red Devils beating some serious competition for the signature of the young defender. The 18-year-old was being chased by Real Madrid and Liverpool among others, but ultimately he decided to head to Old Trafford. Speaking to TNT Sports and Rio Ferdinand, Yoro claimed that everything is big at Manchester United. The defender even joked that he didn't expect things to be this big at United but said he had no complaints as he feels everything is good at the club.

"For me Man United is the club is the biggest in the world. When I was the young - the players who were here, the history, the fans - everything is big here." "I don't know if I was ready [to expect it to be this big]! But I will not complain, it's really good. The fans, the stadium, everything is good," said Yoro.

What fans can expect from Yoro



Yoro is currently sidelined with an injury he suffered during pre-season with United and is expected to be back around November. When asked what fans could expect from him after he returns, the 18-year-old said that he tries to be intelligent on the pitch and understand the game and the opponent. Yoro also said that at Lille, he would often look at the clips of the opposition strikers to understand their movements.

"I try to be intelligent on the pitch, to play with my head, to understand the game, the opponent. And to be calm. Be calm with the ball, when I defend."

"When I was in Lille, every weekend I was looking at clips of the striker to understand the movements, how he wants to receive the ball. This helps a lot," said Yoro. The French defender is slowly making progress with his recovery as he had posted on social media showing the work he is putting in at the moment.

Gujarat teenager Drona Desai plays marathon 498-run knock in school cricket

Gujarat's Drona Desai made history by scoring 498 runs in an under-19 cricket match, joining an elite list of young cricketers. Drona ensured a dominant victory for St. Xavier's (Loyola) by an innings and 712 runs.

New Delhi. Gujarat teenager Drona Desai etched his name in the record books by scoring a monumental 498 runs for his school, St. Xavier's (Loyola), against JL English School in the Diwan Ballubhai Cup under-19 multi-day tournament. Desai delivers one of the most remarkable individual batting performances in the history of Indian school cricket.

Organized by the Central Board of Cricket Ahmedabad under the Gujarat Cricket Association, the annual Diwan Ballubhai Cup witnessed a stunning innings from Desai, making him only the sixth cricketer

in the country to surpass the 400-run mark in a single innings at the under-19 level. His breathtaking knock, which came off 320 balls, included seven sixes and 86 boundaries, ensuring his team's dominant win by an innings and 712 runs. With this massive score, Desai joins a prestigious list of record-breaking young cricketers, including Mumbai's Pranav Dhanawade (1009*), Prithvi Shaw (546), Dr. Havewalla (515), Chamanlal (506*), and Arman Jaffer (498). Despite the magnitude of his achievement, Desai remained humble. Reflecting on his knock, he revealed he was unaware of just how close he came to the 500-run mark. "I wasn't aware I was so near to 500. There was no scoreboard, and my team didn't inform me. I went to play my stroke and got out, but I'm happy to have made those runs," Desai told Indian Express after the match. JL English School, which played the entire match with just 10 players due to one player's late arrival, found themselves utterly outclassed by Desai's towering innings. His performance was the focal point of St. Xavier's (Loyola) dominance



throughout the match. The victory by an innings and 712 runs ensured a memorable conclusion for Desai's team in the tournament.

WHO IS DRONA DESAI?

Drona Desai's extraordinary talent has been evident from a young age. Hailing from Gujarat, Desai began his cricketing journey at the age of seven, drawing inspiration from his idol, Sachin Tendulkar. Over the years, his dedication to the game has earned him recognition, including selection for Gujarat's under-14 team. Desai now has his eyes set on securing a place in the state's under-19

squad. Much of Desai's progress can be attributed to his father's support and the guidance of renowned coach Jayprakash Patel, who has nurtured over 40 cricketers in the region. Desai credits his father for pushing him toward cricket at a young age and his coach for shaping his technical abilities. "My father believed I had the potential to become a good cricketer. He introduced me to JP Sir (Jayprakash Patel), and since then, cricket has been my life.

From grades 8 to 12, I only attended school for exams, focusing entirely on cricket," Desai shared.

With this record-breaking performance, Drona Desai is certain to capture the attention of cricket selectors across the state and beyond. His journey is just beginning, but his marathon innings will undoubtedly serve as a stepping stone towards his aspirations of playing professional cricket. As Desai continues to develop, the cricketing world will be watching this emerging talent with great anticipation.

'Ash anna' bullied, Yashasvi feels like Tendulkar as Team India reaches Kanpur

New Delhi. The Indian cricket team had a fun trip from Chennai to Kanpur as R Ashwin revealed he was being 'bullied' by his teammates while Yashasvi Jaiswal said he felt like Sachin Tendulkar for a moment after his banter with Sarfaraz Khan. India and Bangladesh will collide in the 2nd Test of the series, starting from September 27, Friday. The hosts already have a 1-0 lead in the series after they dominated Bangladesh at the Chepauk in Chennai. Now the action shifts to Green Park in Kanpur as the Indian team made their trip to the city on Tuesday. A video released by the BCCI on Wednesday showed that the mood in the camp was a jovial one as the players were seen having a laugh and cracking a few jokes. It all started with Sarfaraz as he started to chant 'Yashu, Yashu' for Jaiswal. The southpaw commented on it by saying that he has fan following like Tendulkar.

Ashwin was the next man in focus as Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja decided to call him 'Ash anna'. The duo would go on to coin the term 'Ash anna for a reason', much like the famous 'Thala for a reason' phrase famous with Dhoni. Ashwin would go on to say, India vs Bangladesh: Full squads India has gone with an unchanged squad for



the second Test. However, Sarfaraz, Dhruv Jurel and Yash Dayal will take part in the Irani Cup if they're not picked in the lineup for the second Test.

India: Rohit Sharma (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Akash Deep,

Jasprit Bumrah, Yash Dayal. Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (Captain), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumar Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Syed Khaled Ahmed, Jaker Ali Anik

Virat Kohli awkwardly turns down Kanpur hotel staff's handshake

New Delhi. Star Indian batter Virat Kohli was greeted with an overwhelming reception upon his arrival at the hotel in Kanpur, where the Indian team is staying for the second Test match against Bangladesh. Despite his usual approachability, Kohli had to awkwardly decline a handshake from a hotel staff member due to the overwhelming nature of the welcome, but made sure to express his gratitude with a warm "thank you."

Upon entering the hotel, Kohli was greeted by a large crowd, including hotel staff and fans eager to welcome him. In addition to receiving flowers, gifts, and a traditional tilak, the cricket icon was handed a rudraksha, a symbolic gift of blessings. While Kohli is known for his patience and willingness to interact with fans, the situation became slightly chaotic as he was inundated with people eager to meet him. Juggling a bouquet in one hand and his personal belongings in the other, Kohli graciously acknowledged the warm gestures but was unable to accept a handshake from one of the hotel staff. With an awkward smile, Kohli explained, "Sir, 2 hi haath hai (I've only got two hands)," and compensated for the missed handshake with a polite 'thank you' instead. Kohli arrived in Kanpur alongside teammate Rishabh Pant and coach Gautam Gambhir, gearing up for the second Test in the series. Kohli, who had a challenging outing in the first Test in Chennai with scores of 6 and 17, will be looking to return to form as India aims for a strong performance in the series.

Kohli's last appearance at Kanpur's Green Park



Stadium was during India's match against New Zealand in 2021, where he managed only 27 runs across two innings. With his focus now on regaining form, the match presents a crucial opportunity for the former Indian captain as he continues to prepare for a packed cricketing calendar, including India's campaign in the World Test Championship.

Kohli, who returned to the Indian side after missing the home series against England earlier this year due to the birth of his second child, has been in great form during the 2024 IPL season. Scoring over 740 runs.

England pacer Mark Wood told not to lift kids up after elbow fracture

New Delhi. England fast bowler Mark Wood, 34, has revealed that he has been instructed to avoid lifting his children with his right arm due to a stress injury in his elbow. Wood, a key member of England's bowling attack, has been ruled out for the remainder of 2024 after medical scans confirmed the extent of the injury. Wood, who has played 37 Test matches and claimed 119 wickets, spoke candidly about the injury during an interview on BBC's Test Match Special. "There is nothing I can really do on my right side," said Wood. "I have been told to stop picking my kids up with my right arm. I have to do everything with my left." The injury first came to light during England's Test series against Sri Lanka last month. Initially, Wood was sidelined by a groin strain, but while undergoing scans for the groin issue, his elbow also raised concerns. The scans revealed bone stress in his right elbow,



leading doctors to order further checks to assess whether the injury could develop into a stress fracture. "It was a bizarre injury," Wood said, explaining the unexpected nature of the diagnosis. "I had a bit of a groin tweak and went for a scan with a stiff elbow, which is not uncommon for fast bowlers. I

thought I might need an injection, but they found bone stress in the elbow. I must have been playing with it."

This is not the first time Wood has dealt with elbow issues. He underwent surgery in 2022 for a similar problem, and the latest setback will see him miss key upcoming tours, including England's Test series against Pakistan in October and New Zealand in December. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has confirmed that Wood is aiming to return to full fitness in early 2025. He is targeting England's white-ball tour of India and the ICC Champions Trophy in Pakistan, which begins in February 2025.

England will sorely miss Wood's express pace, which has been a crucial asset for the team, particularly ahead of their Ashes campaign in Australia in 2025-26. As one of the fastest bowlers in the world, Wood's absence leaves a significant void in England's bowling attack.

Learning at every step: Mumbai's Vikrampratap Singh on a mission to best himself

UPDATED. India and Mumbai City FC forward Vikrampratap Singh has set his sights on surpassing his performance from the last Indian Super League (ISL) season. Determined to bag more goals and assists this year, the young forward is keen on ensuring another successful season for his team, despite their bumpy start to the 2024 ISL campaign. Mumbai City FC have long been known for their ability to develop young talent, and Vikram has emerged as one of the brightest stars in their lineup since joining from Indian Arrows in 2020. At just 22 years old, Singh has already made a name for himself as one of the most promising talents in Indian football. But what drives him to keep pushing forward? In an exclusive interview with India Today, the young striker reflected on his journey, starting from his early days at the Chandigarh Football Academy to his breakthrough with Indian Arrows from 2018 to 2020. His transition to

the pressures of playing in the ISL with Mumbai City FC has been a steep learning curve, but one he has embraced with enthusiasm and determination. The beginning of my journey at the Chandigarh football academy showed me the open world of football. As we all know, a lot of players have made it big from there and played with the Indian team. That time gave me the idea of how I need to plan my journey. Once I saw my senior players there, who went on to play for the U-19 Indian team, and that is when it sparked in me that I have to make it to the national team. I started with U-14, the U-16 and then U-19 to 23. Then I went to Indian Arrows, and there I had the clear aim that I want to play the ISL," Vikram said. One of Vikram's primary motivators has been his dream of representing the Indian national team, which he realised when he made his senior debut under former coach Igor A timac at just 21. His impressive



performances with India's U-19 team had already attracted attention from several ISL clubs, and his promotion to the senior squad was a moment of personal triumph. "I believe that I did manage to perform well, which gave me the chance to play for a club like Mumbai City FC. This was a different experience altogether. Playing for a senior side after having played majorly at the youth level, is different and difficult. So there was some struggle initially for one year. But I

have always tried to learn something new each year and improve myself more and more."

The 2024 goal remains clear

Despite Mumbai City FC's shaky start to the 2024 ISL season, Vikrampratap Singh insists that the team's ultimate objective remains unchanged—winning the league. He remains confident, refusing to let outside criticism affect his focus, and is determined to play a crucial role in helping his team lift the trophy again. "This is just the start. Everyone knows what we as a team can do and achieve. Think about this. The next match, if we win, that will turn into a not a bad start right? With one draw and just one loss on us..."

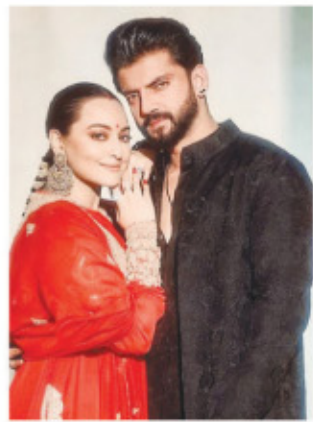
There is no pressure. We have all felt last year what it is like to play till the very end and win. You feel satisfied with the work you have put into the entire season. All of us want to do it again.

Sonakshi Sinha

Flaunts Her Sindoor in New Photos with Hubby Zaheer Iqbal: 'Laal Hai Mere Dil Ka...'

Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal are painting social media red! The couple, who got married earlier this year, shared happy photos on Instagram. In the pictures, the actors were seen wearing matching red outfits. Sonakshi opted red kurta with palazzos which she completed with a red dupatta. Meanwhile, Zaheer rocked a red kurta, jacket and a pair of white pants. While their happy smiles were contagious, fans also noticed Sonakshi proudly flaunting her sindoor. Sharing the photos, Sonakshi wrote, "Laal hai mere dil ka haal ??." Check out the photos below:

Fans took to the comments section and showered her with love. "Areh yrr ek hi toh dil hai kitni bar jitoge??" a comment read. "Looking gorgeous in this ek chutki sindur.. ??," added another. "Red never looked betterrrrr," a third comment read.



Sonakshi married Zaheer on June 23 after dating for seven years. Although it has been a few months, Zaheer confessed she forgets that they are married now. Speaking with ETimes, Zaheer shared that he often has to remind himself of the fact that he is now married to the

Heeramandi actress, as he would refrain from holding her hands in public.

"I still keep forgetting that I'm married to Sonakshi like when we go out in public, I'm like I can't hold her hand, and then I realise 'ab to shaadi ho gayi'," said the Notebook actor. Meanwhile, Sonakshi added, "It feels like nothing has changed between us. It still feels like how we felt when we began dating seven years back. The two still compete to impress each other. Zaheer mentioned, "We always try to one up each other. There's an ongoing battle between us as to who loves the other person more. I think that is the best thing that can happen to the couple, when you are trying very hard from morning till night to convince them that you love them more, and they are like, no, they love you more!"



All You Need To Know About Fabulous Lives Vs Bollywood Wives Season 3, Release Date Revealed



Netflix has officially revealed the release date for the much-awaited third season of Fabulous Lives Vs Bollywood Wives. Mark your calendars as season 3 will start streaming on October 18. This season, fans will see the return of the original cast members Maheep Kapoor, Neelam Kothari Soni, Seema Sajdeh and Bhavana Pandey. But that's not all. Some new faces from Delhi's high society will also join the fun, including jewellery designer Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, daughter of Bollywood legends Neetu and Rishi Kapoor and sister of Ranbir Kapoor. Also joining the cast are Shalini Passi, an entrepreneur and the wife of PASCO Group's Sanjay Passi and Kalyani Saha, founder of Rezon Luxury Silverware. Netflix shared the big news on Instagram with a caption that read, "Get ready besties, the OG gang is back with a new season! Aur saath me aa rahe hain new faces all the way from Delhi with even more drama. Fabulous Lives vs Bollywood Wives Season 3 arrives on 18 October only on Netflix!"

Karan Johar, the executive producer of the show, earlier mentioned, "After the success of the first two seasons, the challenge for both the teams, at Dharmatic and Netflix, was to figure a way to give fans a season that has everything they love about the show and also manages to take them by surprise. So this season, the Bollywood Wives will step out of their comfort zone as they enter a new city and face off with Delhi's best-known divas. What happens when the bling of Delhi excess battles it out against the swag of Bollywood star power." The addition of Delhi's elite personalities expands the series beyond its Mumbai-centric narrative. Long-time viewers can expect to see more of the enduring friendships that have been at the core of the show, along with plenty of fresh drama. The first two seasons were instant hits, offering viewers a peek into the extravagant and sometimes chaotic lives of Bollywood wives. Featuring appearances by Bollywood icons like Shah Rukh Khan, Gauri Khan and Ranveer Singh, the show quickly became a favourite for fans of celebrity culture.

'Won't Be Invited To Bollywood Diwali Parties': Swara Bhaskar's Biggest Fear Before Marrying Fahad Ahmed



Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal's marriage is not the first interfaith marriage in Bollywood. Swara Bhaskar garnered the headlines on social media last year when she married political activist Fahad Ahmed. The actress is known for films like Raanjhana and Tanu Weds Manu. Famous for expressing her unfiltered opinions about Indian politics and other pressing issues, the actress recently opened up about the thoughts she battled with before accepting her feelings for her now-husband. One of the biggest fears of the actress was that she would not be invited to Bollywood parties after her marriage. Swara Bhaskar told why she married Fahad despite all these fears and the battles she fought before tying the knot.

The actress answered all these questions during a conversation with Amrita Rao and RJ Anmol's show 'Couple of Things.' She said that she met Fahad during a protest in Mumbai.

The Tanu Weds Manu actress further said that they were not ready to believe that there could be something between them but people around them always suspected different. "There came a time when I started fearing society. I am not the kind of person who thinks about what society will think, but then I don't know what happened. I started thinking about people. What will family and friends say," said Swara Bhaskar.

The actress further talked about her biggest fear. She said, "I was afraid that if I married Fahad, Bollywood people would not invite me to parties. I could not understand why this was happening to me. I was raising slogans for secularism and on the other hand, all this was going on in my mind."

Facing the marriage dilemma with Fahad, the actress Swara Bhaskar talked to her uncle about this and understood that Fahad was her best choice. The actress said that her uncle explained to her that if you found all the qualities you liked in Fahad in another person, who would also match all your other practical conditions, would you consider him? And I unknowingly said, 'No...'. The actress further said that she was scared for no reason. She loved her man because of his identity and vice-versa from him.

Mrunal Thakur's Rendition Of This 49-year-old Marathi Song Viral



Mrunal Thakur, a talented Marathi actress, has successfully carved out a space for herself in Bollywood with her powerful performances that have won the hearts of many. Known for her impactful acting, she consistently receives praise for her work in films. In addition to her acting career, Mrunal is quite active on social media, regularly engaging with her fans by sharing photos and videos. Recently, she posted a video of herself singing a Marathi song, which has quickly gone viral, further showcasing her multifaceted talent and connecting with her audience. Mrunal Thakur recently shared a captivating video on Instagram of herself singing the Marathi song Ek Lajara Na Sajara Mukhda. The video quickly went viral, showcasing her beautiful voice and musical talent. In the clip, Mrunal's team is also seen supporting her, adding a heartwarming touch to the performance. The heartfelt rendition has resonated with audiences. The original song is 49 years old and was sung by actor-singer Arun Sarnaik and singer Usha Mangeshkar.

Recently, the actress also shared vibrant pictures from her new photoshoot. In the photos, Mrunal Thakur dazzles in traditional Indian attire, wearing a rust-orange frock suit complemented by a heavily embroidered dupatta. She enhances her look with a green chooda (traditional bangle) and an elegant nose ring, adding a unique flair to her ensemble. In other snapshots, Mrunal showcases her charm with a beautiful 'gajra' made from various flowers, highlighting her grace and beauty distinctly. The collection also features candid poses of her smiling elegantly, capturing her joyful spirit. One particularly enchanting moment shows Mrunal enjoying the shower of marigold petals, creating a captivating and festive atmosphere that adds to the charm of the entire setup.

Mrunal Thakur began her acting career in 2012 with the television show Mujhse Kuchh Kehti... Yeh Khamoshiyaan, marking the start of her impressive journey in the entertainment industry. She gained recognition through popular TV series such as Arjun and Kumkum Bhagya and showcased her dancing skills by participating in Nach Baliye 7. Transitioning to films, Mrunal has starred in several acclaimed movies, including Super 30, Batla House, Dhamaka, Sita Ramam, Pippa, and The Family Star.

