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Bomb attack at former Manipur CM Koireng's residence kills 1

Imphal, Sep 6: The rocket which fell on the compound of former chief minister Mairembam Koireng's residence seemed to be an improvised one. An elderly man was killed and five others were injured after suspected militants launched a bomb attack on a residential area of Moirang in Bishnupur district on Friday afternoon, officials said.

Shah at BJP manifesto launch for J-K polls

Jammu, Sep 6: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina, Union Ministers Jitendra Singh and G Kishan Reddy and others release the party's election manifesto ahead of the state Assembly elections, in Jammu on September 6, 2024.

reached Jammu earlier in the day on a two-day visit to kick-start the BJP's campaign for the Assembly polls scheduled to be held in three phases on September 18, 25 and the agenda of the NC and seen the Congress supporting it. I want to make it clear to the whole country that Article 370 and Article 35A have become history and will never make a comeback," Shah said before talking about his party's manifesto.

ments were involved in appeasement. But after 2014, whenever the history of India and J&K will be written, I believe these 10 years will be written about in golden words," he said. Shah added that the past 10 years saw peace, prosperity and development. "The sound of guns and bomb blasts used to be heard in Kashmir for a very long time but everything changed in the last 10 years. A total of 7,217 (terror-related) incidents happened between 2004 and 2014 but the number dropped to 2,272 between 2014 and 2024, marking a 70 per cent decrease.

Shah said. "After 30 years, Kashmir tourism has got a big boost. Nightshows have become the new reality and processions by Shia mourners are being allowed for the first time in more than 32 years. Amarnath Yatra and Vaishno Devi pilgrimage also witnessed record-breaking numbers," he said.



Any BJP candidate will defeat Phogat, Punia in Haryana: Brij Bhushan Singh

ST Correspondent

Gonda (UP), Sep 6: Former BJP MP and ex-WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh on Friday sought to downplay wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia's foray into politics, saying any BJP candidate will defeat them if they contest in Haryana and also offered to campaign in the upcoming Assembly elections should his party allow.

Talking to mediapersons at his residence Vishnoharpur, about 40 km from the district headquarters, he said, "These wrestlers made a name in the sport and became famous on the strength of wrestling. Now after joining the Congress, their name will be erased." Earlier, Phogat and Punia, who were at the forefront of the wrestlers' protest against the then WFI chief Singh, joined the Congress with a vow of "not being scared or backing off".

Karnataka Covid panel mentions irregularities of crores

Bengaluru, Sep 6: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah raised the subject related to Justice Michael D'Cunha commission's report on irregularities during COVID-19 pandemic. File photo Karnataka minister H K Patil on Thursday said the Justice John Michael Cunha panel in its report on the COVID-19 management has mentioned irregularities of 'crores of rupees' during the previous BJP government in the state.

Focus on Rahul Gandhi on his first visit to US as Leader of Opposition

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Chandigarh, Sep 6: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi would visit the United States from September 8 to 10. This is his first visit to the US after this year's Lok Sabha elections, following which he became the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the lower house of parliament.

country's global standing. The ruling party has also argued that domestic disagreements, if any, should be sorted in the country and not raked up on foreign soil. Apart from the expected interest among political observers and the media, what makes this visit interesting is that it precedes Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to the US.



They say that Gandhi has evoked a lot of overseas interest after the party's "good run" in the Lok Sabha elections and him becoming the LoP. The Indian Overseas Congress claims that it has been "bombed with requests" for meetings with Gandhi. Party leaders say that after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the post of the LoP has gained prominence after 10 years, and the "world wants to listen to Gandhi, his views on democracy, Constitution and India's future".

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SC dismisses RG Kar ex-principal's plea challenging HC order

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Sep 6: CBI officials produce the former principal of RG Medical College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh, arrested in connection with the alleged financial misconduct at the establishment, at a City Court in Kolkata, Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2024.

Meenaakshi Arora, who represented Ghosh. Arora said she was not against the probe but was aggrieved by certain adverse remarks made by the high court on a technicality that three PILs were dismissed. The High Court has transferred the investigation to the CBI. At this stage, you have no locus (standi) at all. Akhtar Ali himself may be a subject of inquiry."



linking the alleged irregularities with the rape-murder of a trainee doctor on the hospital campus. As she said the PIL filed by Akhtar Ali - a former Deputy Superintendent of the RG Kar Hospital - was motivated, the Bench said, "We don't have to give Akhtar Ali a clean chit. These are not matters which can be disposed of

transferred by the High Court without giving him an opportunity to present his side. The high court's August 23 order had come on a petition by Ali, who had requested a probe by the Enforcement Directorate into alleged financial misconduct at the hospital during the tenure of Ghosh.

Adani delivers Teacher's Day lecture at Mumbai college that rejected him

Mumbai: Sep 6: Gautam Adani had in the late 1970s applied for admission to a Mumbai college, but his application was rejected. He did not pursue education but returned to business and went on to build a USD 220 billion empire. About four-and-a-half decades later, he was invited to the college to deliver a lecture on Teachers Day. Adani moved to Mumbai at 16 and began working as a diamond sorter. Around the same time in 1977 or 1978, he applied for admission at the city's Jai Hind College. "But they rejected him," said Vikram Nankani, President of the Jai Hind College Alumni Association, as he introduced India's second richest person before the lecture. Gautam had applied to Jai Hind College because his older brother Vinod had studied there. "Fortunately or unfortunately, the college did not accept him and he went on to work full time and pursued an alternative career," Nankani said, declaring Gautam Adani as a "deemed alumni" since he had applied to join. After working as a diamond sorter for almost two years, he returned to Gujarat to run a packaging factory managed by a brother. He never really looked back after he launched his firm in 1998, trading in commodities. Over the next two-and-half-decades, his debt-fuelled companies diversified into ports, mines, infrastructure, power, city gas, renewable energy, cement, real estate, data centres and media. The infrastructure tycoon, who runs 13 seaports in India, operates seven airports, is the largest private player in power, is the biggest renewable energy producer, runs the country's second-largest cement company, is building expressways and re-developing Asia's largest slums, is described by some as the most aggressive of India's new generation of entrepreneur. Delivering a lecture on 'Breaking Boundaries: The Power of Passion and Unconventional Paths to Success', Adani (62) was just 16 years old when he chose to break his first boundary. "I had to do with giving up on my education and choosing an unknown future in Mumbai. People still ask me, why did you move to Mumbai? Why did you not complete your education? The answer lies in the heart of every young dreamer who sees boundaries not as barriers but as challenges that test his courage.

When will full statehood return to J-K, why has security situation deteriorated there: Jairam

Naresh Malhotra

New Delhi, Sep 06: The Congress on Friday took a swipe at Home Minister Amit Shah over the government's policy on Jammu and Kashmir, asking when full statehood would be restored and why the security situation there had "deteriorated under your watch". Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also asked why the Centre was attempting to "infringe" on the Jammu and Kashmir political executive's powers and why the economic situation in the Union Territory had only "declined" since 2019.

the BJP-RSS cabal. "While claiming to have ended special status for Jammu and Kashmir, the government has, in fact, created an extra-special situation of a new and unique political system: one where the state has been downgraded to a Union Territory, elections have been suspended, and all norms of constitutional morality violated," he alleged. In his speech in Parliament on December 11, 2023, Shah said that full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir would be restored at an "appropriate time", Ramesh pointed out. "Five years after being stripped of their statehood, the people of Jammu and Kashmir still lack clarity on what the timeline for this return of statehood is. Based on the experience of the last five years, where assembly elections were delayed on one pretext or the other, the people of Jammu and Kashmir don't buy the Centre's assurance of restoration of statehood," he said. Ramesh

asked if the Home Minister could give a straight answer to the key question of when



full statehood would return. He further said one of the most repeated talking points of "the non-biological prime minister, the self-styled Chanakya, and their ministers" was that the abrogation of Article 370 curbed terrorism in

Jammu and Kashmir. "The mood on the ground, however, is one of anxiety. At least 51 security personnel have been killed to the south of Pir Panjal since 2021, in an area where there were no major incidents of terrorism between 2007 and 2014," he said. "In the last few weeks, it has spread even to neighbouring districts: as evinced by the attack in Reasi on 9th June, the attack in Kathua on 10th June, and in Doda on 11th June," Ramesh said. Infiltration from Pakistan is rising and a palpable sense of insecurity prevails across Jammu and Kashmir, the Congress leader claimed. "The home minister has been conspicuously silent even amidst this surge in terrorism. Why has his government failed to salvage the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir? What is his vision to restore normalcy? Why is the central government consistently lying to the country about the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir?" Ramesh asked. He also questioned why

News box

Sale of ultra-luxury properties across five cities: Mumbai grabs lion's share

MUMBAI. Of the 25 ultra-luxury properties sold across the top five cities in 2024 so far, Mumbai sold 21 units collectively worth Rs 2,200 crore.

Sale of ultra-luxury homes - units priced over Rs 40 crore each - remained strong in 2024 despite spiralling prices, said a report by Anarock. Its latest data released on Thursday finds that a total of 25 ultra-luxury homes were sold in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Gurugram and Bengaluru in the first eight months of 2024 for a collective sales value of Rs 2,443 crore. Pune, Chennai and Kolkata did not record any sales in this price bracket.

Of the total of 25 ultra-luxury homes sold in 2024 so far, at least 20 were high-rise apartments worth about Rs 1,694 crore. The remaining five sales were of bungalows cumulatively worth about Rs 748 crore. At least two separate ultra-luxury home deals collectively worth Rs 80 crore were closed in Hyderabad's Jubilee Hills. Gurugram in NCR witnessed one ultra-luxury home sold for Rs 95 crore, while Bengaluru also closed one deal worth Rs 67.5 crore.

Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock Group, said, "The whole of 2023 saw about 61 deals with a cumulative sales value of approximately Rs 4,456 crore in Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Gurugram. With four months remaining in 2024 and the festive quarter from Oct to Dec ongoing, we are likely to see more such large ticket-size residential deals happening before the year is through."

Andheri's Gokhale Bridge deadline extended to April next year

MUMBAI. The BMC has started moving the second girder of Andheri's Gokhale Bridge, nearly seven months after its partial reopening. The civic body moved 25 metres of the 86-metre girder between Wednesday and Thursday. The BMC has set a new deadline (April 30, 2025) for the full commissioning of the bridge.

BMC said work on the railway overbridge section of the flyover in the second phase is expected to be finished by the middle of Nov this year. "Additionally, the approach road work within municipal limits is planned to be completed by April 30, 2025," said an official. The operation to move the southern iron girder of the bridge, connecting Andheri East and West, started at 10pm on September 4 and continued until 5am on September 5.

BMC said, "After obtaining permission from the Western Railway administration and receiving the next railway block, the remaining distance will be covered. Installing the girder is an extremely challenging task. According to the approved plan and instructions from Western Railway, this work is progressing under the technical supervision of RITES Limited. This work is being carried out after assessing risks and technical aspects and obtaining blocks for railway traffic and power supply. Moving the initial 25 metres of the total 86 metres was challenging, but with its success, moving the remaining distance will be relatively easier."

Badlapur station firing: Accused booked for attempt to murder

NEW DELHI. A 25-year-old man has been charged with attempted murder after allegedly opening fire at two people, injuring one, at Badlapur railway station in Thane district, Maharashtra, on Thursday around 6 pm. The incident, which police said was the fallout of business rivalry, took place at platform number 1 at around 6 pm on Thursday when the suburban station on the Central Railway route was chock-a-block with commuters.

Vikas Nana Pagare, the accused, is now facing charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Arms Act.

Senior inspector Pandhari Kande of the Kalyan Government Railway Police (GRP) confirmed the registration of an FIR against Pagare for attempt to murder. Efforts are underway to determine if more individuals were involved in the shooting besides Pagare.

The entire incident was recorded on cameras, and a video of the event quickly went viral on social media. Following the shooting, Pagare attempted to escape by running towards the railway tracks but was apprehended by policemen on duty with the help of some commuters. The injured person, Shankar Sansare, was immediately taken to a local hospital and treated for gunshot wounds. The second man targeted by Pagare managed to escape unhurt, though his identity has not been disclosed. "The incident was a result of professional rivalry over a TV cable business between the individuals involved," police stated, adding that both the assailant and the duo he targeted have criminal records. Initially, a fight broke out between Pagare and the duo outside the railway station.

Bihar hospital, awaiting inauguration for 10 years, becomes haven for thieves

A government hospital in Bihar, built at a cost of Rs 5 crore and equipped with modern facilities, has become a derelict structure abandoned for almost 10 years even without an inauguration.

Muzaffarpur. A government hospital in Bihar's Muzaffarpur, built at a cost of crores, has become a derelict structure in the middle of a field and a haven for thieves and vandals, as it was apparently abandoned without ever being inaugurated.

The 30-bed hospital, situated on six acres in the Chand Pura area, was built in 2015 at a cost of Rs 5 crore. Although it was equipped with modern facilities, not a single patient was treated there, and the medical devices were left to deteriorate.

As it nears ten years since its construction, the hospital has not been taken over by the health department, and officials allegedly claim to be unaware of the facility.



Meanwhile, thieves have taken away the hospital's windows, door frames, doors, grills, gates, cupboards, electrical wiring, and other equipment, leaving it as a mere skeleton of its former self. Additionally, the building, located in the middle of a field, has

allegedly become a den of anti-social elements, according to locals. The hospital campus includes three buildings -- one for the residence of health workers, one for a testing centre, and the main building. As the hospital continues to deteriorate, residents are forced to travel to the city for better treatment. According to a villager, Sudhir Kumar, the population in the area is around one lakh. "When this hospital was being built, seeing its grandeur, the people around hoped they would no longer have to travel 50 km to the city for better treatment. But this hospital never became operational. The people here face significant difficulty travelling to the city for treatment," Kumar said.

The Sub Divisional Officer (West), Sherya, when enquired about the hospital, said she was unaware of it and termed the situation as serious. She mentioned that the District Magistrate has formed a team to investigate.

"The Civil Surgeon and the Circle Officer are investigating it at their level. Further information about the investigation will be shared with you," she added.

This comes just weeks after reports of a bridge in Bihar's Araria district, which stands in the middle of an open field with no road on either side. The bridge, built at a cost of Rs 3 crore, was intended to connect two villages, but issues regarding land acquisition have left it stranded in the middle of a field.

ED attaches assets worth Rs 55 crore linked to ex-DMK leader Jaffar Sadiq

Chennai. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth Rs 55.3 crore belonging to former DMK functionary Jaffar Sadiq and his associates under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The attached assets include 14 immovable properties, such as the JSM Residency Hotel and a luxurious bungalow, as well as seven high-end vehicles, including Jaguar and Mercedes cars, which the ED claims were acquired through criminal activities. The action follows an investigation into the smuggling of pseudoephedrine and ketamine by an international drug cartel, of which Sadiq is alleged to be the kingpin. The probe, based on investigations by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and

customs, led to searches at 15 locations across Tamil Nadu.

The ED found that Sadiq, along with his brother Mohammed Saleem and others, were actively involved in exporting and concealing pseudoephedrine and other narcotics. Sadiq, who held positions in various firms, allegedly used these entities to channel and launder proceeds from drug trafficking.

According to the ED, the proceeds of the crime were invested in legitimate ventures such as real estate, film production, hospitality, and logistics. The funds were moved through a network of bank accounts controlled by Sadiq and his family, deposited and layered through financiers, and recorded as unsecured

loans in financial statements.

"This entire set up was used to route the Proceeds of Crime (PoC) earned from the illicit drug trafficking," the ED stated.

Sadiq was arrested by the ED on June 26, 2024, and his brother Mohammed Saleem was arrested on August 12, 2024.

"The PoC were channelled into these investments through a network of bank accounts, including those controlled by Sadiq and his family members. The illicit cash was deposited, layered by financiers, and recorded as unsecured loans in financial statements. The funds were used to acquire both immovable and movable assets," the agency added.

The ED stated that further investigation into the case is ongoing.

MK Stalin secures Rs 2,000 crore investment deal for Tamil Nadu with US giant

Chennai. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Trilliant Networks for an investment of Rs 2,000 crore to set up a Development and Global Support Centre and a production facility in the state. Trilliant Networks is a US-based company that provides communications networks software and services, and solutions for advanced metering infrastructure and smart grid, among others.

Stalin, who is on a visit to the US to attract investments to Tamil Nadu, also held "productive talks" with Nike, a Fortune 500 company and a leading global manufacturer of sports footwear and apparel, an official statement said.

The company has already established its distribution and sales centres in Tamil Nadu and has been producing 60 million of footwear annually through its major contract manufacturers- Fengtay and Bouchen.

During the talks between Chief Minister Stalin and Venkatesh Alagirisamy, Chief Supply Chain Officer of Nike and other senior officials of the company, discussions were held on the possibilities of expanding non-leather footwear production in Tamil Nadu.

This would be done by creating an environmental setup for apparel production and establishing a production and design centre in Chennai. The duo also talked about collaborating with the Tamil

Nadu government's 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme, which is a skill development initiative.

Furthermore, the DMK chief also held discussions with Optum, a subsidiary of the UnitedHealth group and a leading company in the healthcare sector offering services in data analytics, pharmacy care services, population health and healthcare delivery.

Stalin met and spoke to Roger Conner, the CEO of Optum Insight, and John Meade, Senior Vice President of UnitedHealth Group. During the meeting, they discussed current operations and collaboration to build a skilled workforce suited for Tamil Nadu's growing healthcare sector.

Another wolf attack in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich, 10-year-old boy injured

A fresh wolf attack occurred in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, on Thursday night, in which a 10-year-old boy sustained facial injuries.

Bahraich. A 10-year-old child sustained serious injuries in a fresh wolf attack on Thursday night in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich, which has seen a series of similar attacks in recent days.

The child was playing outside his home in the Kotwali area when the animal attacked, injuring him in the face. The incident occurred as residents of Bahraich and nearby areas live in fear due to the ongoing wolf attacks. Ten people have been killed and more than 35 injured in these attacks over the past few days.

The Uttar Pradesh government has declared the man-animal conflict as a 'wildlife disaster' affected area and the Forest Minister Arun Saxena

has issued directions to capture the animals. A team of nine shooters have been deployed in the Bahraich forest to shoot the animals attacking the people at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's order. The spate of wolf attacks on humans has baffled experts, as the animals are known to be gentle and docile by nature.

According to Sanjay Pathak, General Manager of UP Forest Corporation, wolves have a tendency to seek revenge if their homes or young ones have been harmed. The villagers' account of a wolf den at a nearby sugarcane field being destroyed in a flood, possibly killing cubs, underscores this argument.



Chennai school faces backlash over speaker's rebirth lecture, MK Stalin reacts

A spiritual speaker was invited to deliver a motivational talk to students but instead focused on spiritual themes like rebirth, karma, and sin. He also got into an argument with a staff member who objected to his speech, a video of which is viral.

► **Speaker blamed children for life struggles on Teacher's Day**
► **Speech included controversial comments on past-life sins and karma**
► **Video of the speech went viral, causing public backlash**

Chennai. A government school in Tamil Nadu's capital Chennai faced intense criticism on social media after inviting a spiritual speaker who discussed rebirth and blamed children for their life struggles on Teacher's Day.

Mahavishnu from the Paramporul Foundation was invited to deliver a motivational talk at a government school in the Mylapore area, but instead delved into spiritual themes like cycle of rebirth, sins and karma, sparking outrage among the public and politicians alike.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, without directly mentioning the now viral video of Mahavishnu's speech, stressed the importance of



scientific thinking, adding that he has ordered the formulation of guidelines in various school programmes to ensure that students get exposure to progressive ideas. "Science is the way to progress," he said.

SPIRITUAL LEADER'S REMARKS STIR ROW
Mahavishnu, during his speech, said,

"Gurukulams were systematically destroyed by the British. Just reading a mantra can cause fire rain, heal one's body, can make you fly, but all these secrets which were written on palm leaves were lost due to British rule."

He further said, "If God was kind, everyone should be born equal. One is born rich while the other is born poor. One is born a criminal while the other is born a hero. Why such differences? What you did in your last birth, you were given this birth."

A school staff member objected to the speaker's comments, stating that he was invited for a motivational talk, not a spiritual discourse.

Crew member dies after 30-foot fall at Kannada film set, case against director

The victim suffered severe injuries from the fall and was taken to the Goraguntepalya Hospital in Bengaluru where, despite the treatment, he succumbed to his injuries on Thursday.



Bengaluru. A crew member died after falling 30 feet from a ladder on the set of a Kannada movie. Mohan Kumar, 30, was working as a 'light boy' on the sets of the film 'Manada Kadalu' on September 3 in Karnataka when the incident happened. Kumar suffered severe injuries due to the fall and was rushed to the Goraguntepalya Hospital in Bengaluru where, despite the treatment, he succumbed on Thursday.

A case has been filed against the director of the film, Yogaraj Bhat, and two others, including the manager, named Suresh, who have been accused of negligence in implementing adequate safety measures during the shoot.

The deceased belonged to Tumakuru district's Koratagere. The incident occurred at the VRL arena situated on the northern outskirts of Bengaluru. Kumar was living with his brother in a Bengaluru neighbourhood and worked as light boys in the film industry.

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NEWS BOX

Kitchen staples dearer: Coriander at Rs 600 per kg, potatoes Rs40

Noida. The prices of all vegetables, especially potatoes and onion, shot up at retail shops during the last week, following a similar trend in the wholesale market. The skyrocketing prices were attributed to the monsoon, which led to supply shortages due to crop damage caused by rain and humidity. At Sector 27's Indira Market, onions were sold at Rs 60 per kg, 50% higher than last week's Rs 40. Potato prices have nearly doubled at Rs 40 per kg compared to around Rs 20 per kg a week ago. Sadanand Sah, a vegetable seller, listed the current prices — cucumbers were being sold at Rs 60 per kg against last week's Rs 40, radish at Rs 60, up from Rs 40, brinjal at Rs 80, up from Rs 60, cauliflower at Rs 120, up from Rs 100, ginger at Rs 160, up from Rs 120, and garlic at Rs 400, up from Rs 300 last week. Meanwhile, the price of tomatoes has decreased from Rs 70 to Rs 50 per kg due to fresh arrivals, while the price of pumpkin has remained constant at Rs 40 per kg for two weeks. "The govt should keep the vegetable prices in check as they affect each household," said Aanchal Kumari, a resident of Sector 26 who was shopping at the Indira Market. Sonu Kumar, another vegetable seller in the Sector 12 market, said that there is a 20-30% price increase in all vegetables due to the monsoon at his store. "We get the vegetables from Azadpur Mandi and Ghaziabad. The prices have increased at the wholesale market as well and this rise is reflecting at the retail shops," he said. The price hike has also devoid customers of complementary coriander leaves and green chillies by the shopkeepers.

Gurgaon's maximum temperature up 2.2°C, rain likely for 3 days

Gurgaon. With no rainfall, the city's maximum temperature rose by 2.2 notches in the past 24 hours. At 34 degrees Celsius, it was 1 degree above normal. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said partly cloudy skies with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers are likely for the next three days. The minimum temperature, meanwhile, dropped marginally from 24.6 degrees Celsius on Wednesday to 24.3 degrees on Thursday, near normal for this time of the year. The humidity level increased to 69% on Thursday, from 45% the day before. No weather alert has been issued. "Scattered light to moderate rain is very likely over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and west Rajasthan this week in isolated areas for the next three days. No heavy rain is likely this week," said an IMD official. The maximum temperature during this period will range between 34 and 35 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature is expected to settle between 25 and 26 degrees. Meanwhile, the city's air quality index (AQI) remained 'satisfactory' at 70 on Thursday.

Lessons from BJP rebellion Cong likely to delay release of first list of candidates

Gurgaon: Congress is set to delay the announcement of its first list of candidates for Haryana elections by at least two days to avoid triggering discontent within party ranks as consultations continue over a possible alliance with AAP. Party sources told TOI that the decision was taken because BJP is grappling with defections and internal strife after it released the party's first list of 67 candidates for polls to Haryana's 90-member assembly. "The Congress high command is treading cautiously to avoid a similar reaction from ticket aspirants. The party is reviewing each constituency and considering all factors before making any announcements," a Congress functionary said on Thursday. Congress, which is riding on a revival wave after bagging half of the parliamentary seats from Haryana in the general election earlier this year, has finalised the names for 66 assembly constituencies. But the remaining seats require further deliberations. On Thursday, Congress in charge for Haryana Deepal Babaria also hinted at the delay and said final decision on ticket nominations might take a few more days. "The delay is also attributed to the ongoing seat-sharing negotiations under the INDIA alliance, which includes the Aam Aadmi Party and other regional parties. Congress is keen on aligning its strategies with alliance partners, and any disagreements or unresolved issues in seat distribution could further postpone the list," the functionary quoted above said. Another faction that is of concern is nominating candidates backed by senior Congress functionaries Kumari Selja and Randeep Surjewala.

Get pollution cert in 3 mths to operate: NGT to hotels, restos & malls

Ghaziabad. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed on Wednesday hospitality establishments — hotels, malls, banquet halls, restaurants with seating capacity of 36 upwards — in the district to obtain consent to operate certificate from the state pollution control board within 3 months or face shut down. The certification allows for the discharge of effluent (sewage or trade effluent) into a sewer or land, as well as the emission of air pollutants. NGT asked the UPPCB to take "punitive, preventive, prohibitive and remedial steps including, assessment and recovery of environmental compensation, expeditiously" against establishments that were previously granted time by it to obtain consent to operate certificate but had not done so. Compliance conditions mentioned in consent to operate certificates must be abided by the establishments and this has to be made sure by the board, it added. The directive came in the wake of an original application filed by environmentalists Pradeep Dahalyia and Prasoona Pant in NGT last year. The duo had alleged that 21 large hospitality entities in the city were not following environmental norms and were causing pollution.

2 cases against him, 1 still in court; yet, he sat on cow protection pane

GURGAON. Anil Kaushik, main accused in the murder of a 20-year-old Class XII student on Aug 24, has been booked in the past in two cases of phone snatching and extortion, contradicting initial claims by cops that he had no criminal history. One of the cases, in fact, has gone to trial. This, evidently, did not come in the way of Kaushik (37) being inducted in the 11-member district cow protection task force in Faridabad. Kaushik also holds an arms licence, but with the announcement of polls on Aug 16, the firearm was deposited in the armoury at the time of the incident, police said. Kaushik was carrying a country-made gun with which he allegedly shot Aryan Mishra, who sustained two bullet injuries, the first when Kaushik and his cow vigilante associates were chasing Aryan's car on the Agra highway from Faridabad to Palwal and the next one when Aryan's car had stopped and the vigilantes shot him again point-blank. Kaushik was accused in a cellphone snatching case registered in 2018 at Mujesar police station in Faridabad. He is among the four accused against whom police filed a charge sheet



in May 2019. The case is currently under trial in the Faridabad district sessions court. Police sources said the other case against Kaushik is on extortion charges. But details were not available. According to Haryana Gau Seva Ayog officials, Kaushik joined the Faridabad district cow protection task force in 2023 as a member. Asked about background checks for non-official members, a senior

member of the Ayog said before an appointment, a police verification is mandatory. "If it was a heinous case, I think they would have flagged it. If it is not a serious allegation, then innocent till proven guilty applies," said the member. According to the FIR in the phone-snatching case, at 10.30pm on June 24, 2018 complainant Chhotu Kumar, an automobile company worker, was

returning home when his phone was stolen. "I was talking on the mobile phone while walking back home. When I reached a chowk behind Mujesar PS, two unknown men suddenly came from behind and snatched my phone," Kumar alleged. A case was registered under section 379A (snatching) of the IPC on July 31. After investigating the case, Gurudutt alias Amit, Kaushik, Rahul and Sushil were arrested in the first week of Aug 2018. In view of the murder case registered against Kaushik now, his gun licence will come under scrutiny. "Once the investigation is completed, we will receive a recommendation to review or suspend the licence. Based on that, we will initiate appropriate action," said a senior police officer. The crime branch has, meanwhile, identified the person from whom Kaushik had procured the illegal firearm and the ammunition that was allegedly used to kill Aryan. "Linking the murder weapon to the accused is crucial to establish culpability. We have identified the gun supplier too," said a crime branch officer.

Eye on core voter base, Congress may field Punjabi candidate from Gurgaon

Gurgaon. In its first list for the upcoming state polls, BJP has placed its bet on Brahmin candidate Mukesh Sharma for the Gurgaon seat, surprising many party workers. While BJP's move is seen as an attempt to appease the Brahmin community, it now faces the challenge of balancing its core Punjabi and Vaishya voter base. In turn, Congress is likely to field a Punjabi candidate to reap benefits from the situation. Sources in the party said Mohit Grover is likely to emerge as the frontrunner if Congress selects a Punjabi nominee. But Grover, despite contesting as an Independent last time, has been relatively inactive in local politics, leading the party to also consider alternatives, including actor-turned-politician Raj Babbar. On the other hand, former CM Bhupinder Hooda's reluctance to launch new

faces in the fray could pose a challenge. Political experts believe the selection by BJP has also upset several BJP hopefuls. Mukesh Sharma previously contested the 2009 elections from the Badshapur seat but faced a heavy defeat. "His selection by BJP from Gurgaon has raised eyebrows within the party. He had contested the 2014 polls against BJP as an Independent. For him, managing disgruntled leaders will be critical, as any Independent candidate could further strain BJP's prospects," said Rahul Dev, a political analyst. In the Lok Sabha elections, Punjabi voters largely distanced themselves from BJP, which could further complicate Sharma's campaign if Congress backs a Punjabi candidate. On the other hand, if the Congress-AAP alliance puts the

Gurgaon seat in AAP's hands, BJP could face a tough challenge from Vaishya leader and former BJP MLA Umesh Aggarwal. Aggarwal had won the 2014 polls from Gurgaon with the highest victory margin in the state. BJP's to field a Brahmin candidate for the first time in ten years has also caused discontent among the Vaishya community. Several ticket hopefuls, including Brahmin leader GL Sharma, Vaishya candidate Naveen Goyal, and Punjabi figures Yashpal Batra and Seema Pahuja, have expressed displeasure with the move. Goyal on Thursday announced he would contest the polls as an Independent, while GL Sharma said he would contest the polls from any constituency if Congress gave him a ticket. This is likely to further strain BJP's prospects.

55% drop from July: Legacy waste processing in Aug lowest this year

Gurgaon: Private agencies hired by MCG treated a mere 53,935 metric tonnes (MT) of legacy waste at Bandhwari in Aug, the lowest amount processed in the past nine months and a 55% decrease compared to the 1.2 lakh MT processed in July. MCG earlier told National Green Tribunal (NGT) that it would clear all legacy waste at Bandhwari by Dec end this year. Meeting this deadline, however, appears to be a daunting task for the corporation, as the daily waste processing capacity has plummeted to 2,000 MT per day, from 4,000 MT a few months ago. According to MCG data, the agencies engaged for legacy waste management at the landfill site processed 69,696 MT waste in Jan, 1.9 lakh MT in Feb, 2.3 lakh MT in March, 2.2 lakh MT in April, 2.5 lakh MT in May, and 3.5 lakh MT in June (see gfx). Meanwhile, the landfill received over 4.1 lakh MT of waste from Gurgaon and Faridabad, the maximum in July (91,550 MT). The corporation has attributed the decline in waste processing to the monsoon.

2 Nigerians among 3 held for drug peddling in Gurgaon

GURGAON. Three people, including two Nigerians, were arrested with 16 grams of heroin on Monday. According to the police, Rajesh Kumar from Farrukhnagar is a local peddler, while Michael (31) and Fred (32) are from Nigeria and came to India on medical visa. One of the foreigners' visa has already expired. A case was registered at Farrukhnagar police station under the NDPS Act. Police said around 10am on Sunday, crime branch officials of Farrukhnagar police station received a tip-off about a peddler reaching Balaji Vatika to meet prospective customers. "Upon reaching the spot, we saw Rajesh coming on a bike from Sultanpur towards Farrukhnagar. As we asked him to stop, he took a U-turn and tried to escape, but we intercepted him," ASI Ram Kumar said. Police seized 16 grams of heroin from accused Rajesh's possession. During interrogation, Rajesh confessed that he had procured the contraband from two Nigerians, Fred and Michael. Based on his confession, the two were arrested from Dwarka on the same day, and the trio was taken on police remand. "Michael came to India in Jan 2024, and his visa has expired. Fred came here one and a half years ago, and he has a valid visa.

faces in the fray could pose a challenge. Political experts believe the selection by BJP has also upset several BJP hopefuls. Mukesh Sharma previously contested the 2009 elections from the Badshapur seat but faced a heavy defeat. "His selection by BJP from Gurgaon has raised eyebrows within the party. He had contested the 2014 polls against BJP as an Independent. For him, managing disgruntled leaders will be critical, as any Independent candidate could further strain BJP's prospects," said Rahul Dev, a political analyst. In the Lok Sabha elections, Punjabi voters largely distanced themselves from BJP, which could further complicate Sharma's campaign if Congress backs a Punjabi candidate. On the other hand, if the Congress-AAP alliance puts the

Name Change I. RUPINAMMA Mother of No. 15320694X Rank-HAV Name- ANNAPUREDDY RANGA REDDY, R/o 1-48, VPO-ODDULAVAGUPALLI, RACHARAL, EDVALLI, PRAKASAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-523538 have changed my name from RUPINAMMA to ANNAPUREDDY RUPINAMMA for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

Name Change I. JAYARAM REDDY Father of No. 15320694X Rank-HAV Name- ANNAPUREDDY RANGA REDDY, R/o 1-48, VPO-ODDULAVAGUPALLI, RACHARAL, EDVALLI, PRAKASAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-523538 have changed my name from JAYARAM REDDY to ANNAPUREDDY RUPINAMMA for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

Name Change I. VEDKUMAR BHAGWANDAS S/O BHAGWANDAS SHARMA residing at SV-1/1706, ELDECO UTOPIA, SEC-93A, NR PARK, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201304 have changed my name to VED BHAGWANDAS SHARMA for all future purpose.

Name Change I. HIRANSHU S/O MOHAN LAL R/O HOUSE NO. 10, RANGALIA (05), RATHWAS, MEWAT Nuh, Haryana-122105, Have Changed My Name To HIRANSHU KUMAR For All Future Purpose

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE The Sr. Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work. 1 Name of work: Annual track zone work for 2024-25 in the section of SSE/P/Way/ Delhi under ADEN/DLI. 2 Approx. cost of work: Rs 1,59,99,442.48/- (Rupees One Crore Fifty Nine Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Four Hundred Forty Two and Forty Eight Paise Only). 3 Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs 2,30,000.00/- (Rupees Two Lakh Thirty Thousand Only) 4 Cost of tender document Rs. 0.00/- 5 Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender 27.09.2024 at 15:00 Hrs. 6 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen www.ireps.gov.in 7 Allocation 04-200-32

Name Change I. C. MURALEEDHARAN PILLAI father of NO-15690163W Rank- HAV Name- SREJITH M residing at VILL-KUNNATOOR, PO-PUTHANAMBALAM, TEH-KUNNATOOR, DIST-KOLLAM, KERALA-691533 have changed my name from C MURALEEDHARAN PILLAI to MURALEEDHARAN PILLAI for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1958 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1961 vide affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

Name Change I. PEDDA MALLAIAH Father of No. 16117508X Rank-HAV Name- NAVEEN PUJARI, R/O KATAPURA, KATAPUR, TADVAI WARANGAL, ANDHRA PRADESH-506344 have changed my name from PEDDA MALLAIAH to POCJARI MALLAIAH for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1951 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1962 vide Affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

Name Change I. TRINAYANI wife of NO-8431819K Rank-NK Name- BISWANATH MONDAL R/O VPO-KALUJI, TEH-BASIRHAT, DIST-NORTH 24 PARAGANAS, WEST BENGAL-743427 have changed my name from TRINAYANI to TRINAYANI MONDAL for all future purposes, in my husband's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 09/11/1987 instead of my correct date of birth as 19/11/1987 vide affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER Name of Work with its location: 30-ELECT-05-T-R1-24-25-E3 Electrical work in connection with conversion of fuel mechanism system in existing DG sets installed at Rail Bhawan, NRM & Moti Bagh as per instructions of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI. Approx Cost of the works Rs. 107.54 lacs Address of the office Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi Bid Security Rs. 2,03,800.00 Date & Time of Submission of Tender 03.10.2024, 12:00 Hrs. Opening of Tender 03.10.2024, 12:00 Hrs. Website & Notice Board www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi 2772/2024

Name Change I. HARICHANDRA is a legally father of No. 14819654W Rank HAV/MT Name TALEKAR BHAGAVANT HARISHCHANDRA Unit-528 ASC(BN) presently residing at VILL-KEM, TEH-KARSHITRA, DIST-SOLAPUR, MAHARASHTRA, PIN-413223, have changed my name from HARICHANDRA to HARICHANDRA JANARDHAN TALEKAR for all future purposes, vide affidavit No IN-DL48938512344073W dated 04.09.2024. before Notary Public Delhi.

Name Change I. SHAIKESH Ranjan S/O Moti Prasad R/o A-301, Dharam CGHS Ltd, Plot No-18, Dwarka, Sector-18A, South West Delhi-110075, Have Changed My Minor Daughter Name Astha To Astha Ranjan For All Future Purpose

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Uday Verma is the owner of Freehold Residential Property Bearing 1729, on First Floor, area measuring 155.09 sq. mtrs. & 10 mtrs. Undivided land share in Khassra No. 28, Situated in the Gali No. 4, Govind Pur, Ext. Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019. By Virtue of Gift Deed dated 04.09.2024 as Doc No. 2024/101/6263, Vol no. 18080 Page No. 23-36 SR-V Delhi, in the Chain Documents below mentioned document not available i.e. SMC of Late Mr. Shanti Lal Verma died on 16.09.2004 & Original Man Partition Deed Dated 27.03.2014 executed and between by Mr. Rajeev Verma s/o Late Mr. Shanti Lal Verma, now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property, and same has been finance by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd. Branch Faridabad Haryana. If any person is having objection right of claim against the said property, contact to undersigned along with supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone, Thereafter no claim shall be entertained. [NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA] Advocate F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 0955871432

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE The Sr. Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work. 1 NIT- 54 Name of work:- Balance work of limited height subway at level crossing no- 19 on DSA-SMQL-SRE section and at level crossing no- 20 on GZB-SRE section under Sr. DEN-II. Approx cost of work:- As per NIT or IREPS Earnest Money to be deposited :- As per NIT or IREPS 2 Date & Time of opening of tender. 01.10.2024 15:00 Hrs. 3 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen www.ireps.gov.in • The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 128-W/280/E-Tender Notice/NIT-54-24-25-W-II Dated -01.10.2024 2806/2024 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2779/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE Information is given to general public at large that our client Mrs. Kamlesh W/o Mr. Ombr Singh is the owner of Freehold Residential Northern Western Portion of Plot No. RZ-P-1, area measuring 32 Sq. Yds., i.e., 26.8 Sq. Mtrs., out of Khassra No. 226, 227, Situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Nasirpur, Delhi, State Delhi Colony Khasra on west Sagarpur New Delhi-110046. By Virtue of Sale Deed dated 25.12.2023 duly registered in the office of SR- South West, Kapashera, Vide Doc. No. 2023/16/1/51518, Vol. No. 12724, Book No. 1, On Pages 39-54, dated 25.12.2023, in the Chain Documents below mentioned document not available i.e. Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Praveen Singh, died on 29.11.2011, now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property, and same has been finance by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd. Branch Kalkaji, Delhi. If any person is having objection right of claim against the said property, contact to undersigned along with supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone, Thereafter no claim shall be entertained. [NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA] Advocate F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 0955871432

Lost & Found I. Sonia Choudhary W/o Vikas Choudhary R/o LCG-502B, Laburnum, Sushant Lok-1, Sector-28, Gurgaon, Haryana, hereby in general inform that my Original Allotment Letter of Property bearing 1 Acre Plot No. 116 at Dundahera Industrial Complex, Gurgaon, has been lost somewhere in Lajpat Nagar, Delhi and report lodged via LR No: 2091662/2024 dt. 05.09.2024. If someone may find, please return to the above address & M.: 9810101088.

Name Change I. PULLAMMA Mother of No. 16117508X Rank-HAV Name- NAVEEN PUJARI, R/O KATAPURA, KATAPUR, TADVAI WARANGAL, ANDHRA PRADESH-506344 have changed my name from PULLAMMA to PUJARI PULLAMMA for all future purposes in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1963 instead of my correct date of birth as 11/01/1950 vide Affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY Corrigendum to Tender Notice Dated: 05.09.2024 Sr. DEE/Chg/DLI office tender notice for the following work due for opening on 05.09.2024 at 15:00 hrs. Due to some technical issue the Tender Document could be updated partially. Corrigendum in tender is not being allowed by IREPS Site for upload the Tender Document. Hence tender is cancelled. S. No. Bid Number Description of work Tender Document Cost by online Contact Value (Rs.) Earnest Money (Rs.) Period of completion 1. 30-Elect-3T-Chg-2024-25 Upgradation of mandatory facility of pre-cooled cur battery charging (PCBC) points at ACC/NDLS of Electrical Coaching DLI Division under DRM LS Plan Head-42 (2023-24). Rs. 00 Rs. 80,46,325/- Rs. 1,60,900/- 04 Months SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2769/2024

Name Change I. NIMA SANTHOSH Wife of JC-314451K Rank-NB SUB Name- SANTHOSH KUMAR VN Presently residing at SANTOSH BHAWAN, VILL-PANTHALACHI, PO-KALLIYAL, TEH-NEDUMANGADU, DIST-THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA-695574 have changed my name from NIMA SANTHOSH to NIMA K L for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change I. RAJALAKSHMI wife of NO-15793321A Rank-NK Name- RAJAGOPAL P R/O HNO-143, VILL-M NAGLAPURAM, PO-NENMENI, PS-IRUKKANGUDI, TEH-SATTUR, DIST-VIRUDHUNAGAR, TAMIL NADU-626202, have changed my name from A RAJALAKSHMI to RAJALAKSHMI A for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change I. KHUSHI BHARDWAJ D/O PAWAN KUMAR SHARMA R/O L-47/A, RAMA PARK ROAD, MOHAN GARDEN, UTTAM NAGAR, DELHI-110059, I have changed my name from KHUSHI TO KHUSHI BHARDWAJ for all future purpose.

Name Change I. A RAJALAKSHMI wife of NO-15793321A Rank-NK Name- RAJAGOPAL P R/O HNO-143, VILL-M NAGLAPURAM, PO-NENMENI, PS-IRUKKANGUDI, TEH-SATTUR, DIST-VIRUDHUNAGAR, TAMIL NADU-626202, have changed my name from A RAJALAKSHMI to RAJALAKSHMI A for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 06/09/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

News box

Joe Biden's son Hunter pleads guilty in \$1.4 million tax evasion case

World Hunter Biden, son of U.S. President Joe Biden, pleaded guilty to federal tax charges on Thursday, a surprise move that avoids a potentially embarrassing trial weeks before the U.S. presidential election. Biden had been set to stand trial in a Los Angeles federal courthouse on criminal charges of failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes while spending lavishly on drugs, sex workers and luxury items. Judge Mark Scarsi told Biden he faces up to 17 years in prison and up to \$450,000 in penalties. He set sentencing for December 16. Defendants who plead guilty in criminal cases typically work out an agreement with prosecutors beforehand, hoping to receive a lower sentence in exchange for avoiding trial. That did not appear to be the case here.

Earlier in the day, Biden had offered to plead guilty to the charges but avoided admitting wrongdoing, an unusual legal manoeuvre called an "Alford plea." Prosecutors opposed that move. After a break, Biden's lawyer, Abbe Lowell, told the judge that he would plead guilty, despite having no prior agreement with prosecutors that would ease his sentence. In a statement after the hearing, Biden said he pleaded guilty to spare his family from having to sit through a trial that would have aired messy details from a period of his life where he was suffering from drug addiction. "For all I have put them through over the years, I can spare them this," he said. He added that he had paid back his taxes. Lowell told reporters afterward that Biden might appeal his sentence. He did not answer when asked why Biden waited until the trial's opening day to plead guilty.

Bangladesh: Hindu boy accused of blasphemy, thrashed by mob inside police station

New Delhi A 15-year-old Hindu boy named Utsav Mondal was brutally beaten by a mob inside a police station in Bangladesh after he was accused of making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad on social media.

The incident took place on Wednesday night in the Sonadanga residential area of Khulna.

Local media reports initially suggested that Mondal had succumbed to his injuries, but Khulna Metropolitan Police's Deputy Commissioner (South), Mohammad Tajul Islam, later confirmed to India Today that the teenager is alive and receiving treatment.

He is admitted to an army hospital and is out of danger," Islam said. The incident occurred around 11:45 PM when a group of local madrasa students brought Utsav to the police station, accusing him of posting "objectionable comments" on Facebook about the Prophet. Tensions escalated quickly as more students and members of the Imam Association gathered outside the police station, demanding immediate and severe punishment for the boy. Mohammad Tajul Islam recounted the sequence of events, stating that initially, the students demanded that Utsav be judged according to their own laws, which involved execution. The deputy commissioner assured them that a case would be filed under existing laws, but this did not satisfy the crowd. The situation turned volatile as the number of protestors swelled to nearly thousand by evening, creating a highly charged atmosphere outside the police station.

China's Xi promises \$50 billion for Africa over next three years

BEIJING. Chinese leader Xi Jinping pledged on Thursday more than \$50 billion in financing for Africa over the next three years, promising to deepen cooperation in infrastructure and trade with the continent as he addressed Beijing's biggest summit since the Covid pandemic. More than 50 African leaders and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres are attending the China-Africa forum, according to state media. African leaders already secured a plethora of deals this week for greater cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, mining, trade and energy. Xi hailed ties with Africa as their "best period in history" as he addressed the leaders at the forum's opening ceremony in Beijing's ornate Great Hall of the People on Thursday.

"China is ready to deepen cooperation with African countries in industry, agriculture, infrastructure, trade and investment," he said.

"Over the next three years, the Chinese government is willing to provide financial support amounting to 360 billion yuan (\$50.7 billion)," Xi said. More than half of that will be in credit, he said, with \$11 billion "in various types of assistance" as well as \$10 billion through encouraging Chinese firms to invest.

He also promised to help "create at least one million jobs for Africa." Xi pledged \$141 million in grants for military assistance, saying Beijing would "provide training for 6,000 military personnel and 1,000 police and law enforcement officers from Africa." Guterres told the forum that growing ties between China and Africa could "drive the renewable energy revolution".

"China's remarkable record of development -- including on eradicating poverty -- provides a wealth of experience and expertise," he said.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi hailed the summit as a "complete success" at a joint news conference with his Senegalese and Congolese counterparts later on Thursday.

Brazilian court orders two slaughterhouses to pay for Amazon reforestation

A court in Brazil has convicted two beef slaughterhouses guilty of buying cattle from a protected area and directed them to pay \$764,000 for causing environmental damage and reforestation of the Amazon forest.

Brasilia A judge in the Brazilian state of Rondonia has found two beef slaughterhouses guilty of buying cattle from a protected area of former rainforest in the Amazon and ordered them, along with three cattle ranchers, to pay a total of \$764,000 for causing environmental damage, according to the decision issued Wednesday. Cattle raising drives Amazon deforestation. The companies Distriboi and Frigon and the ranchers may appeal. It is the first decision in several dozen lawsuits seeking millions of dollars in environmental damages from the slaughterhouses for allegedly trading in cattle raised illegally in a protected area known as Jaci-Parana, which was rainforest but is now mostly converted to pasture. Four slaughterhouses are among the many parties charged, including JBS SA, which bills itself as the world's largest protein producer. The court has not decided on the cases involving JBS. Brazilian law forbids commercial cattle inside a protected area, yet some 210,000

head are being grazed inside Jaci-Parana, according to the state animal division. With almost 80 per cent of its forest destroyed, it ranks as the most ravaged conservation unit in the Brazilian Amazon. A court filing pegs damages in the reserve at some \$1 billion.

The lawsuits are based on transfer documents first reported by the Associated Press that show cattle going directly from protected areas to slaughterhouses. The documents were filled out by the illegal ranchers themselves. Part of the decision is a collective penalty of \$453,000 against the five defendants, who are linked to one farm. The money will be used to reforest 232 hectares (573 acres) of what is now pasture there. "When a slaughterhouse, whether by negligence or intent, buys and resells



products from invaded and illegally deforested reserves, it is clear that it is directly benefiting from these illegal activities," according to a part of the original complaint which Judge In's Moreira da Costa sustained in her ruling. "In such cases, there is an undeniable connection between

the company's actions and the environmental damage caused by the illegal exploitation." Frigon and Distriboi did not respond to questions sent by email. In a filing, Frigon argued the state of Rondonia allowed ranchers to sell the cattle and said there is no relation between buying beef cattle and deforestation. In filings, Distriboi also denies any wrongdoing.

JBS also did not reply to a request for comment.

Rondonia, on the border with Bolivia, is the most badly deforested state in the Brazilian Amazon. In the past few weeks, most cities have been covered by thick smoke from wildfires, a sign of rampant deforestation. The situation is so dire that its main airport in Porto Velho was closed for seven consecutive days.

JD Vance says school shootings are 'fact of life,' calls for better security

Phoenix. Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance said Thursday that he lamented that school shootings are a "fact of life" and argued the US needs to harden security to prevent more carnage like the shooting this week that left four dead in Georgia. "If these psychos are going to go after our kids we've got to be prepared for it," Vance said at a rally in Phoenix. "We don't have to like the reality that we live in, but it is the reality we live in. We've got to deal with it." The Ohio senator was asked by a journalist what can be done to stop school shootings. He said further restricting access to guns, as many Democrats advocate, won't end them, noting they happen in states with both lax and strict gun laws. He touted efforts in Congress to give schools more money for



security. "I don't like that this is a fact of life," Vance said. "But if you are a psycho and you want to make headlines, you realise that our schools are soft targets. And we have got to bolster security at our schools. We've got to bolster security so if a psycho wants to walk through the front door and kill a bunch of children they're not able." He called the shooting in

Georgia an "awful tragedy," and said the families in Winder, Georgia, need prayers and sympathy. Earlier this year, Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, toured the bloodstained Florida classroom building where the 2018 Parkland high school massacre happened. She then announced a program to assist states that have laws allowing police to temporarily seize guns from people judges have found to be dangerous. Harris, who leads the new White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, has supported both stronger gun controls, such as banning sales of AR-15 and similar rifles, and better school security, like making sure classroom doors don't lock from the outside as they did in Parkland.

Putin backs Harris for US president, with wry smile

MOSCOW. Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday he supported Kamala Harris in November's US presidential election, an apparent wry remark that led to a renewed call from Washington for the Kremlin to "stop interfering". Putin was speaking a day after the United States issued indictments accusing Moscow of vote interference. The Kremlin leader frequently comments on political and social issues in the United States, often in a mocking way. He said last year that the US political system was "rotten" and that Washington could not lecture other countries about democracy. US officials have repeatedly warned of efforts by foreign powers to meddle in the upcoming US election, accusing Moscow of seeking to influence US ballots dating back to the 2016

contest between Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton. "Firstly, (US President Joe) Biden recommended all his supporters support Mrs Harris," Putin said during a question and answer session at Russia's Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. Biden withdrew from the race in July amid concerns about his age and health, endorsing Vice President Harris to top the Democratic Party's ticket. "Here, we are going to do that too, we're going to support her," Putin told the audience, with a wry smile. "She laughs so contagiously that it shows that everything is fine with her," the Russian leader said. (Former US President Donald) Trump has imposed as many sanctions on Russia as any president has ever imposed before, and if Harris is doing well, perhaps she will refrain from

such actions." Responding to Putin's comments, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby on Thursday urged the Russian leader to "stop interfering" in US elections. "The only people who should get to determine who the next president of United States is are the American people, and we would greatly appreciate it if Mr. Putin would, a) stop talking about our election, and b) stop interfering in it," he said. In February, Putin backed Biden over Trump, calling the current president more "predictable". The White House called on Putin to "stay out" of US elections in response. Trump has said he will end the Ukraine conflict within "24 hours" if he is re-elected and has praised Putin as a "very smart cookie" who had repeatedly outsmarted the United States.

Singapore jails Gurkha Contingent officers for running unlawful cross-border money transfer services

Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) Brian Tan told the court that sometime in or before June 2021, Pratik began offering a money remittance service to the other GC officers within their camp.

SINGAPORE. Five officers from the Gurkha Contingent (GC), Singapore's most trusted police force division, were sentenced to jail terms after they pleaded guilty to operating unlawful cross-border money transfer services, with each man's case involving transactions between SGD 1,03,473 and SGD 2.86 million. They were given jail sentences on Thursday after they pleaded guilty to charges under the Payment Services Act (PSA). The Straits Times reported. The Gurkha officers from a special unit of the police force are deployed in sensitive areas here. Officer Sitaram Tamang's case involved over SGD 2.86 million in total and he was sentenced to five months in jail.

The 40-year-old had pleaded guilty to a charge under the PSA involving nearly SGD 1.6 million. Three other charges were also considered during sentencing. Dik Bahadur Gurung, 32, was sentenced to 14 weeks in jail after he pleaded guilty to two

charges relating to more than SGD 1 million in total. Ganga Prasad Rai, 43, pleaded guilty to two charges involving more than SGD 6,00,000 and was sentenced to 10 weeks in jail. Ashok Kumar Thapa Magar, 39, and Mingmar Sherpa, 44, pleaded guilty to one charge each under the PSA. Mingmar's case involved nearly SGD 4,72,000, and he was sentenced to seven weeks in jail, while Ashok, whose case was linked to more than SGD 1,03,000, was ordered to spend four weeks behind bars. The prosecution said that a sixth man, Pratik Tamang, 41, is linked to some of the charges. He joined the GC in 2004 and returned to Nepal in February 2022 after his retirement. He is still at large, according to the Straits Times. Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) Brian Tan told the court that sometime in or before June 2021, Pratik began offering a money remittance service to the other GC officers within their



camp. According to court documents, he later recruited Ganga and Dik to work with him. He also engaged Sitaram to help him collect the money. Pratik was already in Nepal when Sitaram worked with him between February and July 2022 to provide an unlawful payment service in Singapore. DPP Tan said, "Under the arrangement, GC officers looking to remit money from Singapore dollars to Nepalese rupees (NPR) from Singapore to Nepal would contact Pratik via his

mobile number." After informing Pratik of the amount in dollars that they were looking to remit, Pratik would first transfer the equivalent amount in NPR to the remitters' beneficiaries in Nepal. "He would then ask the remitters to contact Sitaram in Singapore to transfer the equivalent value in dollars to Sitaram's bank account linked to the payment platform PayNow. Nearly USD 1.6 million involving 111 deposits went through the bank account. After that, Sitaram would arrange to hand over the remittance monies in dollars to Pratik, either by PayNow transfers to the latter's bank account or in cash to Pratik's friends. Between February and July 2022, Ganga engaged in a conspiracy with Sitaram and Pratik to offer a cross-border money transfer service. Ganga then collected more than SGD 2,43,000, which he handed over to Sitaram.

Feeling the heat as Earth breaks yet another record for hottest summer

The northern meteorological summer — June, July and August — averaged 16.8 degrees Celsius (62.24 degrees Fahrenheit), according to Copernicus. That's 0.03 degrees Celsius (0.05 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the old record in 2023.

World Summer 2024 sweltered to Earth's hottest on record, making it even more likely that this year will end up as the warmest humanity has measured, European climate service Copernicus reported Friday. And if this sounds familiar, that's because the records the globe shattered were set just last year as human-caused climate change, with a temporary boost from an El Nino, keeps dialing up temperatures and extreme weather,

scientists said. The northern meteorological summer — June, July and August — averaged 16.8 degrees Celsius (62.24 degrees Fahrenheit), according to Copernicus. That's 0.03 degrees Celsius (0.05 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the old record in 2023.

Copernicus records go back to 1940, but American, British and Japanese records, which start in the mid-19th century, show the last decade has been the hottest since regular measurements were taken and likely in about 120,000 years, according to some scientists. The Augusts of both 2024 and 2023 tied for the hottest Augusts globally at 16.82 degrees Celsius (62.27 degrees Fahrenheit). July was the first time in more than a year that the world did not set a record, a tad behind 2023, but because June 2024 was so much hotter than June 2023, this

summer as a whole was the hottest, Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo said. "What those sober numbers indicate is how the climate crisis is tightening its grip on us," said Stefan Rahmstorf, a climate scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research, who wasn't part of the research.

It's a sweaty grip because with the high temperatures, the dew point — one of several ways to measure the air's humidity — probably was at or near record high this summer for much of the world, Buontempo said. Until last month Buontempo, like some other climate scientists, was on the fence over whether 2024 would smash the hottest year record set last year, mostly because August 2023 was so enormously hotter than average. But then this August 2024 matched 2023, making Buontempo "pretty certain" that this year will end up hottest on

record. "In order for 2024 not to become the warmest on record, we need to see very significant landscape cooling for the remaining few months, which doesn't look likely at this stage," Buontempo said.

With a forecasted La Nina — a temporary natural cooling of parts of the central Pacific — the last four months of the year may no longer be record-setters like most of the past year and a half. But it's not likely cool enough to keep 2024 from breaking the annual record, Buontempo said.

These aren't just numbers in a record book, but weather that hurts people, climate scientists said. "This all translates to more misery around the world as places like Phoenix start to feel like a barbecue locked on high for longer and longer stretches of the year," said University of Michigan environment dean and climate scientist Jonathan Overpeck.

News box

Major Maharashtra dams 100% full, for first time since 2018



MUMBAI. For the first time since 2018, all major dams in the state have filled up in monsoon and have nearly 100% water stock, officials said.

Water Resources Department officials said Jayakwadi dam in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar has over 95% live storage, indicating drought prone Marathwada region may not have water supply problems this year. Bhatsa and Vaitarna dams, which supply water to Mumbai, also have close to 100% water stock.

"This is the first time since 2018 that almost all dams in the state have 100% water stock. Around a month ago, Ujani dam in Solapur had almost zero water stock, but after good rainfall in catchment areas, the level has touched 100%.

Even in Marathwada, Jayakwadi dam has 95.6% water stock which has come as a big relief. Koyna dam has 100% water stock. This is the first time in recent years that water stock is at 100% across all major dams," said D Kapoor, additional chief secretary, WRD.

Decision soon on Hatkeshwar flyover bid

Ahmedabad. At a meeting held on Thursday, the standing committee deliberated on measures to address the problem of waterlogging in various areas of the city and the demolition of Hatkeshwar flyover.

Standing committee chairman Devang Dani said, "Waterlogging issues arose at locations such as Madhumalti housing scheme and Makarba police headquarters. All the officials have been directed to examine these spots and create an action plan within the next 50 days to prevent waterlogging in these areas."

He said that an agency has finally placed a bid for the project involving demolition and reconstruction of the Hatkeshwar flyover. Three previous attempts to secure a contractor for this purpose had been unsuccessful. The process of finalizing the bid is expected to conclude in 15 days.

Besides, in response to requests from local residents for improved lighting in specific locations, the authorities have commissioned the installation of 3,000 additional streetlight poles. Directions have been given to initiate the required tendering procedure for the same.

Dani said that complaints have been received that nearly 20% of the installed CCTV cameras in the city are non-functional. Officials have been directed to ensure all cameras are operational. Penalties will be imposed on contractors in case of negligence, he said. Authorities have directed the departments concerned to carry out thorough cleaning operations immediately after monsoon. Instructions have also been given to commence road resurfacing work in accordance with the approved tenders, as soon as the rain subsides. Additionally, taking advantage of the dry weather conditions at present, road repair work has been ordered and instructions have been issued to initiate preparations for Ganesh visarjan.

Decision on bid for Hatkeshwar flyover demolition likely in 15 days Ahmedabad's standing committee addressed waterlogging issues and the demolition of Hatkeshwar flyover. Officials are directed to create an action plan within 50 days for affected areas.

Guj trio in Indian team for Asian table tennis championship

Ahmedabad. Three Gujarat paddlers — Olympians Harmeet Desai, Manav Thakkar and southpaw Manush Shah — have been named in the five-member men's Indian team for the 27th Asian Table Tennis Championships, scheduled to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan from October 7 to 13.

The men's team, led by seasoned A Sharath Kamal, also has G Sathiyam in their line up to make the Indians a formidable force at the Championships.

After debuting in Olympics at Paris 2024, both Surat boys-Harmeet and Manav-are exuding confidence. "Playing against the best at the Olympics in Paris has instilled a lot of self-belief in me," the 31-year-old Harmeet said.

"I learnt a lot from my Paris sojourn and I am a better version of myself today," the 24-year-old Manav said. A good performance at the Asian Championships in Astana is key for the Indian team as it serves as a crucial qualification event for the World Table Tennis Championships and the Asian Games.

Men's Team: A. Sharath Kamal (Captain), Manav Thakkar, Harmeet Desai, G. Sathiyam, Manush Shah; Reserve Players: SFR Snehit and Jeet Chandra.

Are Haryana regional parties fighting for their existence?

With the influence of national parties in Haryana continuing to dominate, it is a stiff challenge ahead for the regional parties to stay relevant in the upcoming Assembly polls.

Chandigarh. The influence of national parties in Haryana continues to overshadow regional parties, with Congress and BJP dominating the 2019 Assembly elections. Congress secured 36.49 per cent of the vote, while BJP garnered 28.08 per cent. The Jananayak Janata Party (JJP) emerged as the third-largest party, winning ten seats with 14.80 per cent of the vote.

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), once a dominant regional force, saw its popularity wane after the formation of JJP. Internal disputes within the Chautala family were blamed for INLD's downfall. In the 2019 elections, INLD's vote share dropped to 2.44 per cent, winning only one seat, while JJP played the role of kingmaker.

Although the JJP initially looked poised to replace the INLD, internal divisions led to its decline. By 2024, four of its ten MLAs joined the BJP, while others sought Congress tickets. Only Dushyant Chautala, his mother Naina Chautala, and one other MLA remain with JJP.

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections reflected the declining popularity of both JJP and INLD. JJP's vote share plummeted to 0.87 per cent, while INLD's dropped to 1.74 per cent. The



Jat community, once the core vote bank of these parties, shifted its support to Congress. In a bid to survive, INLD formed an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), while JJP joined hands with the Azad Samaj Party (ASP), which would contest Haryana elections for the first time. JJP has promised 20 seats to ASP, and Chautalas will select their candidates. However, the BSP's influence in Haryana has been minimal, with its vote share declining to 0.16 per cent in 2019.

According to Professor Gurmeet Singh, a political analyst from Punjab University, both JJP and INLD are fighting for survival and positioning themselves as

kingmakers in the upcoming elections. However, their popularity is on a continuous decline.

"Whatever may be claimed, the reality is that the popularity of both these parties is continuously falling. Both parties are contesting the elections with the thought that if they are not in a position to form the government, they will at least be successful as kingmakers," said Professor Gurmeet.

Experts predict that the 2024 Haryana Assembly elections will see a direct contest between Congress and BJP, with regional parties struggling to stay relevant. Professor Singh noted that the INLD, which once posed a strong challenge to national parties, lost its footing after its disintegration.

Historically, regional parties in Haryana have struggled to maintain power. INLD, led by Om Prakash Chautala, managed to serve a full term only once between 2000 and 2005. The political landscape in Haryana has now shifted significantly, with regional parties marginalised and fighting for their existence.

HC starts proceedings in PIL against Chd add'l public prosecutor

Chandigarh. The Punjab and Haryana high court has initiated proceedings in a PIL seeking the removal of Charanjit Singh Bakshi as the additional public prosecutor of Chandigarh and senior panel counsel of the Centre. The petition filed by Sanjeev Kochhar and Thakur Amandeep Singh challenged Bakshi's appointment, citing alleged gross misconduct and legal disqualifications. Representing the petitioners, advocate Sumit Mehta and his legal team presented the case before the high court. The petition contended that Bakshi allegedly secured his appointments through fraudulent concealment of serious misconduct, including the unauthorised recording of court proceedings and the manipulation of judicial records. Advocate Mehta emphasized the gravity of these allegations, claiming that Bakshi's actions not only violated the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, but also undermined the integrity of the judicial system. In a hearing presided over by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Anil Kshetarpal last month, the court stated that while the petition appeared lacking in immediate substance, the serious nature of the allegations warranted a detailed response from Bakshi. As a result, the court issued a notice to Bakshi and his appointing authorities, demanding their replies by September 23. In his arguments, advocate Mehta outlined Bakshi's disqualification based on two successive criminal contempt proceedings. According to the petition, Bakshi was found guilty of making unauthorised recordings of judicial proceedings, a violation that should have rendered him ineligible to hold public office under Section 34(1) of the Advocates Act, 1961, and related high court rules.

ED raids relative of ex-RG Kar principal, 2 other locations in Bengal

Kolkata. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday carried out search operations at multiple locations in West Bengal's Howrah, Sonarpur and Hooghly in connection with the alleged financial scam involving RG Kar Medical Centre and Hospital.

In August this year, a 31-year-old trainee doctor was brutally raped and murdered at the government-run RG Kar Medical Centre and Hospital, triggering nationwide protests.

According to sources, one of the places that the central probe agency was raiding in Hooghly included the premises of a relative of RG Kar Medical Centre and Hospital's ex-principal, Dr Sandip Ghosh.

Last week, the central agency filed a case against alleged financial irregularities at the RG Kar Medical College. The case was registered on the basis of the Central Bureau

of Investigation's (CBI) FIR, which named Dr Ghosh in connection with its probe into the doctor's murder.

In the FIR, the CBI has slapped criminal conspiracy, cheating, and dishonesty along with Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with the financial misconduct at RG Kar Medical College. The cases account for cognisable offences and are non-bailable in nature.

Dr Ghosh served as the principal of RG Kar Medical College from February 2021 until September 2023. Although he was transferred in October 2023, he inexplicably resumed his role at the hospital within a month. He remained in this position until the day of the brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor. On September 2, the CBI arrested Dr Ghosh in the corruption case, and he was later sent to the probe agency's custody.



5 of family, including child, dead in multi-vehicle collision in UP's Barabanki



Five members of the same family, including a child, died and three others were critically injured after a speeding car collided with two vehicles in Barabanki.

Barabanki. Five people of the same family, including a child, died after a speeding car hit two other vehicles in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki at midnight on Thursday. Three of the injured are said to be in critical condition.

The incident occurred on the Mehmoodabad road when a high-speed car heading towards Lucknow first hit an autorickshaw and then collided with another car coming from the opposite direction. Due to the impact, the second car was flung into a nearby pond.

Three people died on the spot, while two others died during treatment as locals conducted a rescue operation. All the victims were in the autorickshaw, heading to attend a relative's funeral.

The victims have been identified as Irfan, Wahidun Nisha, Azim Ahmed (alias Buddha), Tahira Bano, and Sabreen --all from the same family in Barabanki district. Three others, including the car driver Vivek, were injured.

- Victims were heading to relative's funeral
- Speeding car hit their autorickshaw and another car
- One car was thrown into a pond

2 students dead in Karnataka school bus crash, 3 children lose limbs



A Loyola School bus carrying 40 students collided with a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus in Raichur district. Two students were killed and three others lost their limbs.

Raichur. Two students died, and three others lost their limbs after a Loyola School bus carrying 40 students collided with a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus in Raichur district on Thursday. According to Raichur District Commissioner Nitesh K. KSRTC has announced Rs 5 lakh compensation for the families of the deceased students and Rs 3 lakh for those injured in the accident.

A total of 17 students were injured and are receiving treatment at a private hospital, while 23 others are being treated at a private hospital in Manvi Taluk.

"The Loyola School bus changed lanes due to potholes, leading to a collision with a KSRTC bus coming from behind. The impact was severe, resulting in the death of two students and causing three others to lose their limbs. The rising number of accidents is alarming," said Traffic and Road Safety ADGP Alok Kumar, as quoted by.

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai prayed that the children who died in the accident should find eternal peace. Taking to X, he said, "I am deeply saddened to learn about the horrific road accident today near Kappal in Manvi Taluk in Raichur district, involving a school bus and a transport bus. Urged the government to promptly announce relief measures for the students killed in the accident, Bommai said, "The government should take all necessary steps to provide appropriate treatment for the injured."

Her dreams brutally killed: Kolkata doctor's mother writes note on Teachers' Day

Kolkata. "Because she got good teachers like you, she was able to become a doctor... However, her dreams were brutally strangled," the mother of the trainee doctor who was raped and killed at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata wrote in a heartfelt letter on Teachers' Day.

In an open letter, the mother of the victim thanked all the teachers for helping her daughter achieve her dream of becoming a doctor. "I salute all her teachers on behalf of my daughter. She had a dream of becoming a doctor since childhood. You were the driving force behind that dream," she said.

"My daughter used to say, 'I don't need money. I just want lots of degrees next to my name. And may I heal as many patients as possible'," she wrote.

The body of the 31-year-old doctor was found at the seminar hall of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9, sparking nationwide protests. Doctors across the country also went on strike demanding safety at workplaces.

A civic volunteer attached to the Kolkata Police, named Sanjay Roy, was arrested a



day later. The case has been handed over to the CBI even though protests have refused to die down.

'ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO DESTROY ALLEVIDENCE'

Speaking on the day of the incident, the victim's mother said her daughter had served many patients in the hospital, but she was brutally killed by miscreants while on duty.

"Even on that day, when she went out of the house, she served many patients in the hospital. However, her dreams were brutally strangled. The dream of becoming a gold medalist in MD, written that night,

remains elusive. Even after this heinous incident, all arrangements were made to destroy all the evidence by the hospital authorities and the administration," she said.

A diary found near her body revealed that she harboured dreams of winning a gold medal and other big honours in the medical field. There have also been allegations that renovation work was ordered near the crime scene to destroy evidence - a charge refuted by the government. India Today has exclusively accessed a letter written by Sandip Ghosh, former RG Kar Hospital principal, on August 10 to the PWD, asking them for renovation and reconstruction of on-duty doctors' rooms in all departments of the institution.

Seeking justice for her daughter, she further said, "As the mother, I humbly request all medical college teachers, doctors, health authorities, nursing staff to bring forward any information and evidence regarding the incident. The silence of some good people emboldens criminals."

Chinese handshake costing Pak dear in Balochistan

RECENT attacks on multiple targets in Pakistan's Balochistan province mark an escalation in hostilities. The attacks were a consequence of festering problems and the damage to Balochistan's sociocultural and economic fabric. A major reason for the attacks was the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) desire to run an ambitious communications corridor from Xinjiang to Gwadar through Balochistan, a move not supported by residents of the province.

A close ally of China for decades, Pakistan has sought to use the Chinese largesse to address many of its problems. While their India-centred agenda has several convergences, Pakistan hoped that China would align with it against India. A review of the period since 1947 reveals that while China's diplomatic and military support to Pakistan may have been overtly nuanced on occasions, its covert facilitation and huge military supplies are central to Pakistan's operational capability and vital for Pakistan's missile, nuclear and submarine development. Unfortunately, strategic relations between unequals demand concessions from the less strong partner. From the act of ceding the Shaksgam valley of Kashmir to China in 1963, based on a specious boundary settlement, to the hosting of the CPEC and virtually surrendering control of northern Gilgit, the list of Pakistan's strategic giveaways to China is long. Enabling the Chinese to reach the high waters of the Arabian Sea through the Khunjerab Pass on the Karakoram mountains up to the port of Gwadar has been one of the major giveaways. This mega plan promises to transform Pakistan with a goal of 2.3 million jobs, 2-2.5 per cent additional growth and an enormous upgrade of road, rail, industrial and electrical facilities. For China, its 12,000-km oil transportation journey from the Gulf gets reduced to 2,395 km, with a saving of about \$2 billion a year (according to present estimates). It also negates China's Malacca dilemma and furthers its ambition to have a base in the Arabian Sea. The heart of the CPEC projects lies in Balochistan, a province that has never been integrated and remains restive. For the Balochis, their identity, autonomy, human rights abuse by the Pakistani state and the extraction of economic gains without returns remain major troubling issues.

Historically, Pakistan has chosen alliances mostly based on security and development-related priorities. The country's engagement with the US has given it a slew of advantages. Pakistan's centrality to the conflicts in Afghanistan, coupled with its own convoluted priorities, however, left it more divided, scarred and economically deprived. Its flawed vision of using covert entities to get leverage in Afghanistan and seek strategic depth has unravelled. Consequently, insecurity prevails in the region, including Afghanistan. In its pursuit of powerful allies like the US and China, Pakistan has neglected to integrate the western provinces and their people. A complex and twisted issue that has fomented resentment among Afghans, Pathans and Balochis is the Punjabi centralism and exceptionalism. Further, Pakistan has always preferred to use military force to deal with resistance movements instead of focusing on reconciliation. This has caused the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Baloch movements to converge in resisting the Pakistani approach.

In February 2022, then Pakistani Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad officially acknowledged this reality. Later, in November 2022, ill-fated talks with the TTP collapsed. Five main Baloch nationalist groups have seldom been approached for reconciliation. The brutal killing of Akbar Bugti, a Baloch leader, in 2006 by the Pakistani army marked a definitive break for the Balochis. For Pakistan, pursuing powerful and demanding foreign powers while letting deep internal fractures widen is hardly strategic wisdom.

At 11,317, the year 2009 saw the highest number of fatalities because of internal conflict in Pakistan. The number slumped to 365 in 2019 due to military measures and its focus on Afghanistan.

Assembly polls ignite J&K's hopes for restoration of statehood

After years of Central rule, there is a strong desire among people to elect a government that can represent their voices.

THE three-phase Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), starting on September 18, are historic, being the first after the state became a Union Territory (UT). The last Assembly elections were held in 2014 under entirely different political circumstances. As a UT, J&K has undergone significant changes since August 5, 2019. The Reorganisation Act, 2019, implemented following these changes, has resulted in new constituencies, based on the recommendations of the Delimitation Commission. The UT is abuzz with political activity. Participants include traditional regional parties, some separatist organisations, and even individuals charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu Kashmir, banned under Section 3(1) of UAPA, has fielded candidates in Kulgam, Pulwama and other areas of South Kashmir. Sugra Barkati, daughter of jailed separatist leader Sarjan Barkati who was the face of the 2016 protests in South Kashmir, had last week filed nomination on his behalf, which was rejected. Barkati may now contest from the Ganderbal Assembly seat in Central Kashmir. The brother of Afzal Guru, a convict in the Parliament attack case, may also contest. Engineer Rashid brought noticeable changes to the politics of the Valley. There was already a strong sentiment in his favour, but it remains uncertain whether a similar sentiment will be seen again. If Rashid is released from jail, he might create an impact that could benefit his Awami Ittehad Party candidates. However, without him, the main contest seems to be between the Congress-National Conference (NC) alliance and the BJP, with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) following behind. In this year's parliamentary election, the Congress-NC alliance secured over 41 per cent of the votes, while the BJP received 24 per cent and the PDP 8 per cent. Whether the same pattern will be observed in the Assembly elections remains uncertain. In the parliamentary elections, people in Jammu had voted for the BJP in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, dissatisfaction was seen among

party workers when they protested against the first list of candidates. The BJP had to withdraw the list and release a new one.

As political parties prepare for the elections, their manifestos continue to echo familiar promises. The NC has once again included autonomy as one of its key promises. However, despite an absolute majority in the past, the party could not fulfil this promise, even after passing a resolution in the Assembly in 2000. Similarly, the PDP has also promised to pursue the restoration of J&K to its 'original status' and to establish full connectivity across the Line of Control for trade and social

Congress are expected to have an advantage, and the PDP may also see gains. There is, however, some residual dissatisfaction with the PDP due to its earlier campaign against the BJP in 2014, and then its subsequent coalition with the same party. The NC appears to be the party that has made the most gains in the last four to five years.

There had been a consistent demand for the restoration of statehood before the elections. There is a widespread perception that unless the Central Government restores statehood, the next government may find it hard to address the aspirations of the people. Nevertheless, the formation of a local government will be a crucial first step toward raising voices and passing resolutions in the Assembly that could eventually lead to meaningful change. This election is seen as a clash between pre-2019 and post-2019 politics. Despite this, many across J&K, regardless of their identity, want statehood to be restored. Therefore, there is interest in parties, alliances or ideologies that promise a quick restoration of statehood.

The elections are expected to see a considerable increase in the voter turnout. Factors that previously discouraged participation, such as boycotts and threats from terror groups, are now largely absent. People are not likely to vote based on what is offered in party manifestos but rather to restore democracy in the region. After years of direct rule from New Delhi, there is a strong desire among the people to elect a government that can represent their voices.

Some narratives at the national level had suggested that Governor's rule was beneficial and welcomed by the people. While it is true that there was widespread resentment against earlier state governments, as well as corruption and backdoor appointments in the government machinery, it is not a corollary that the people desire continuous Governor's rule, regardless of how effective it may have been in the past. Given the current political scenario, there is a high possibility of a coalition government being formed.



exchange. Both the NC and PDP have called for resuming talks with Pakistan.

The manifestos of the NC and the PDP are almost similar. However, Mehbooba Mufti has added the "resolution of the Kashmir issue" to the PDP's manifesto promises. What this means and how she intends to achieve it remains unclear though. Engineer Rashid's party has promised to prioritise "land security," and address the "issue of prisoners in various jails across the country."

In the Kashmir valley too, the BJP faces major challenges. While its ally Sajjad Lone of the People's Conference performed well in the parliamentary elections, others did not achieve success. Traditional regional parties like the NC and

India's export hurdles

Need to wrest the initiative from rivals

THE World Bank's (WB) latest India Development Update has some good news to offer: The Indian economy continues to grow at a healthy pace despite challenging global conditions. The WB has upwardly revised the growth forecast for the country's economy to 7 per cent from the earlier projection of 6.6 per cent in the current financial year. The not-so-good news is that India is losing out to competitors like Vietnam and Bangladesh among low-cost manufacturing export hubs. As per the WB, India needs to diversify its export basket and leverage global value chains to reach its \$1-trillion merchandise exports goal by 2030.

The report's unwritten message for India is that there is no room for complacency on the trade front. It is obvious that the 'Make in India' push is not really translating into a 'Make for the world' success story. And what won't be music to the Modi government's ears is the fact that the nation's share



in the global exports of apparel, leather, textiles and footwear has declined from 4.5 per cent in 2013 to 3.5 per cent in 2022. The corresponding share of Bangladesh

touched 5.1 per cent in 2022, while that of Vietnam reached 5.9 per cent. No less worrisome is India's increasing trade deficit (the difference between imports and exports) with China. Amid the military stalemate in eastern Ladakh, Beijing is upstaging Delhi with its no-holds-barred economic muscle-flexing. From umbrellas to musical items and toys, there is no stopping the influx of Chinese goods into India.

Political and economic instability in Bangladesh has given India an opportunity to regain lost ground. The key is to reduce production costs and improve productivity without compromising on quality. Considering India's reluctance to be part of mega trade blocs, a greater emphasis on bilateral Free Trade Agreements with Western and Gulf nations is the best bet to counter the Vietnamese-Chinese challenge.

Old wine in a new biotech bottle

Biotechnology for Economy, Environment & Employment Policy silent on timelines, investments

CLIMATE change, energy transition, waste management, sustainability, agricultural productivity, the need for new health tools and much more. India can not only address these pressing challenges through the application of biotechnology but can do so while generating jobs and contributing to the national economy. This is what the Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment (BioE3) Policy released by the government on August 31 would have us believe. The only caveat is that the policy is silent on the timeframe, the quantum of investment and human resources required, the possible number or types of jobs that will be generated and the pathway to achieve the goal. The 'vision' of the policy is to "set Bharat at the forefront of the future that is more sustainable and responsive to global challenges by accelerating and harnessing biomanufacturing solutions that encompass diverse bioeconomic activities while safeguarding environmental and climate impacts." The 'goal' of the policy is "to fast-track innovation-to-technology" by weaving together fragmented activities under the umbrella of biomanufacturing and to incentivise "concrete options to build a sustainable future". The overall 'objective' is to present a framework to ensure the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and accelerate the development and production of bio-based high-value products. While presenting the policy, Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Secretary Rajesh Gokhale declared that the goal was the 'industrialisation of biology' and making India a global leader in this field. If one cuts the fluff, all that the policy document indicates is the government's intent to promote biotechnology-based industry and the use of new tools like digitalisation, artificial intelligence and machine learning. If that is so, there

is nothing new here because the last policy document the DBT released in 2021 — National Biotechnology Development Strategy (2021-25) — said precisely the same thing but it was backed with timelines, financial targets and clear pathways. The goal set in 2021 by the DBT was to develop a biotechnology-led 'knowledge and innovation-driven bioeconomy' and make India a 'global biomanufacturing hub' by 2025. This was to be achieved by building a skilled workforce and enabling infrastructure for industry like bio-foundries, and incentives to the industry for developing and producing affordable products. The thrust areas identified in 2021 were climate change, food security, green energy, waste management, etc. The list has been repeated in the 2024 document, but the DBT has cleverly made no mention of previous policies and strategies to avoid questions being asked about missed goals. The only follow-up action since 2021 is a new scheme to promote bio-foundries announced in the 2024-25 Budget.

In the past four decades, biotechnology has demonstrated its potential in applications ranging from new vaccines and novel crop varieties to environmental cleanup using microbes. Indian policymakers recognised its potential early on, establishing a dedicated government department for its promotion in 1986. The DBT, in its formative years, focused on building research and education capabilities, which has made India a significant player in this field. However, the biotech-based industry was slow to pick up due to reasons such as a lack of venture capital and an enabling environment. Whatever industry developed was not a result of the DBT's programmes. The poster boy of the Indian biotech industry, Biocon, predates the formation of the DBT, and other pioneers like Shantha Biotech and Bharat Biotech took root with the help of risk

financing by another government body, the Technology Development Board.

In the 2000s, the governments of Karnataka and then undivided Andhra Pradesh rolled out their policies that gave incentives to the biotech industry. The success of the Genome Valley and the IKP Knowledge Park in Hyderabad are shining examples



of a state-sponsored technology cluster developing with the active participation of the private sector. It was only in 2012 that the DBT established a commercial arm for industry promotion — the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council. The government should boost the industrial base in biotechnology by leveraging existing strengths and learning from the experience. However, the new policy does not mention successful models like the Genome Valley or IKP Knowledge Park. Instead, it has rehashed the same

concept and given it a new name (Mulankur Bio-Enabler Hub). These hubs, the policy says, will 'augment discovery and translational research' and 'support facilities for pilot scale and pre-commercial scale research'. This is what the functional technology clusters are doing and have successfully incubated firms that have grown to become billion-dollar companies. While unveiling a grand utopian vision of solving all problems, the policy underplays the key role of regulation (it calls regulation a 'roadblock'), the need to invest in developing technical manpower and boosting state funding for fundamental research. Regulation is critical as biomanufacturing is all about genetically modified and other organisms. At present, regulation is fragmented and opaque. The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill has been in cold storage since 2013. Before embarking upon building a large-scale biotech industry, it would be prudent to develop a robust, autonomous and statutory regulatory system.

The DBT Secretary talks about a 'new industrial revolution' fuelled by biotechnology, like the much-celebrated IT Revolution. He should remember that the communication revolution was triggered not by a policy but by the government's resolve to develop a digital telephone exchange from scratch with a committed investment and a tight deadline. In the same way, it was the state-promoted Software Technology Parks scheme that led to an exponential growth of the software industry and the IT Revolution. Decisive government actions are more important than policy pronouncements.



17 ways to do up your

Living Room

'My place has everything that a party house needs'

About A Boy is a film about a guy who has not worked a single day. He gets royalty out of a song that his dad sang. But what is really cool about him is his apartment. Punit's apartment is inspired by that. Like the character in the film, Punit too, would like to be self-sufficient in life

"I wake up in the morning and go down to the second floor for breakfast to my parents' place (Punit stays on the 22nd floor) or the breakfast comes up. They have started teasing me that this is why I meet them. Then lunch comes up and for dinner, I usually go down."

"My kitchen is totally stocked with ingredients and everything required to cook, though it has never been used. I also have a fully stocked bar even though I don't drink. And, surprisingly, my dad stocked it up for me."

"When my dad came to see my place for the first time, he opened my room and died of shock seeing the fully open shower. He said, 'What if someone opens the door and sees you?' To make it worse, I had put a blue light in the shower. I can see the world taking a shower from inside, though the world cannot see me from outside. He found it ridiculous and could just not get it. Manish (Malhotra who is Punit's chacha) came and said, 'I thought it will be cool, but the bathroom is too sexy.' It was too much for him to handle. My grandfather came in and said, 'How will your wife take a bath here when you get married?'"



Interior expert Raseel Gujral lists simple fun ways to do up your living room.

Personality

I want to walk into a space that makes me sigh! The living room should be designed in such a way that it speaks to you with volume and personality.

Unusual pairing

The rush of being surprised by unexpected beauty. For example a beautiful antique in an otherwise contemporary living room setting is something unexpected.

Art talks

Nothing can replace the timeless appeal of original art. Exquisite pieces of art can hold an entire space together. Touch of unapologetic glamour Glamour needs no justification. Every living room should have a hint of glamour — need not be loud, just a touch of Venetian glass can change the look of a room!

Colour

Colour is oxygen — it makes you breathe. Each colour makes you feel different — it lights up your life!

Transform the mundane The layering of materials can transform the simple to the sublime. An intricately worked on carpet in an empty space can transform the otherwise mundane area to something interesting. A simple sofa with exotic cushions can change the look of your living room.

Sense of origin Never lose it. When you fill your room with furniture it should not shout but should have gentle flavours.

Conversation pieces Key pieces should anchor a space, not let it float away. You may have a small room and fill it with a hundred small pieces. Visually it's unappealing and your pieces do not get noticed either. Have one large painting or one large sculpture in the room instead.

Let your experiences and travels talk There is no substitute to personal style. Your living room should reflect it in the things that you pick on your travels! It



Find your own inspiration

Fashion, art, life — everything is a stimulus. One is inspired by books, clothes, fashion shows etc. This inspiration should be brought in to your rooms.

Dare to differ

There is nothing more boring than the black dress syndrome. Do not follow the herd. Do up your house differently. Paint a wall in a deep mahogany!

Minimalism

Today to be minimal means leaching every bit of personality. Minimalism is in! Do not do anything over the top. Your room should be simple and sophisticated. Minimalist interiors don't necessarily mean everything is stripped down. It

means everything serves a specific function.

Lift your spirits Details. Ones that make you fall in love over and over. Fill your room with little things that give you joy. It can be a simple photo frame, a beautiful vase, anything that lifts your spirit!

Surprise yourself

The compulsion to constantly surprise yourself. The furniture you place in the living room should have a story, so every time you walk in, it should surprise you. A thing of beauty is a joy forever Buying objects of beauty — is beginning a love affair, every time. The joy of finding something new and bringing it home — like picking up a lamp in an antique market.

Change is good

The drama of everyday life. Keep changing the look of your home. Paint a sculpture an electric red this will add drama! Lighting The play of light and shadow — in pattern and history. Place your pieces in such a way that the light and shadow will form designs in your room.



A good night's sleep is very essential for a healthy life. It is not just the number of hours that plays an important role in ensuring a good sleep but also the level of comfort that depends on the mattress that you choose to relax on.

6 simple tips to choose a

Mattress

three important attributes of a mattress. In India, most customers tend to prioritise the cost of the mattress over other components and end up complaining later.

Test before you finalise

Once you've made up your mind on a particular mattress, try lying down on it for at least 10 to 15 minutes. This will help you check for its comfort and reliability. Do not hurry with the big purchase and let not your decision be only influenced by the salesman.

Check for all options and variations

Check whether the mattress is firm, stylish and accompanied with a pillow-top the brand promises to offer. Do not settle for anything mediocre.

Shop at a real mattress store

Avoid shopping from department stores. Salespeople at a mattress store are usually more trained and skilled enough to help you with the correct choice.

Do not forget to check the warranty

A good mattress will have a minimum of a 10 year 'full' replacement or a 'Non-prorated warranty'.

Mattresses are not the same for every person; some are designed to cushion your stiff back while others provide support according to a person's height, age or weight. We generally do not pay much attention to these factors before buying a mattress; but neglecting such concerns can affect our sleeping habit. Puneet Verma, General Manager of a US-based mattress firm and store (with several branches in many cities in India) shares some guidelines on what to keep in mind before selecting a

mattress:

Age of your existing mattress

If you've been having trouble sleeping, the problem might not be your mattress, but its age. Every mattress comes with its own expiry date. After a certain period of time, mattresses no longer retain their original comfort quality. This is the time that you should consider changing your mattress to prevent further troubles to your body.

The three S's

Softness, support and size are



NMC Withdraws Guidelines About Sodomy, Lesbianism As Unnatural Sexual Offences

NMC will release the revised guidelines under Competency Based Medical Education Curriculum in due course.

New Delhi. The National Medical Commission on Thursday withdrew and cancelled guidelines under the Competency Based Medical Education Curriculum in which it had reintroduced sodomy and lesbianism as unnatural sexual offences in the forensic medicine and toxicology curriculum for undergraduate medical students. The guidelines were issued on August 31. "It is informed that the Circular of even number dated 31.08.2024 thereby issuing Guidelines under Competency Based Medical Education Curriculum (CBME) 2024, stands 'withdrawn and cancelled' with immediate effect. The above guidelines will be revised and uploaded in due course," the National Medical Commission



(NMC) said. Besides sodomy and lesbianism, the NMC had brought back topics such as the hymen and its type, and its

medico-legal importance in addition to defining virginity and defloration, legitimacy and its medico-legal importance. These subjects were done away with in 2022 in accordance with a Madras High Court directive. The revised curriculum under forensic medicine and toxicology also includes "Describe legal competencies including Bharatiya Nagarika Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA)" besides "Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), Civil and Criminal Cases, Inquest (Police Inquest and Magistrate's Inquest), and cognisable and non-cognisable offences". It talks about discussing sexual perversions, fetishism, transvestism, voyeurism,

sadism, necrophagia, masochism, exhibitionism, frotteurism and necrophilia. However, distinctions between consensual sex between queer individuals have been removed, a source said. The amended curriculum has done away with the seven-hour training on disability. At the end of teaching-learning in forensic medicine and toxicology, the student should be able to understand the medico-legal framework of medical practice, codes of conduct, medical ethics, professional misconduct and medical negligence, conducting medico-legal examination and documentation of various medico-legal cases and understand latest Acts and laws related to medical professional including related court judgments, the NMC said in its document.

Congress's fresh charge on Sebi chief: Got rent income from company under probe

Congress's Pawan Khera alleged that Madhabi Buch gave one of her properties on rent to a Mumbai company whose affiliated firm was under probe by Sebi.



New Delhi. Intensifying its attack on Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, the Congress on Friday alleged she received rental income from an entity affiliated with a Mumbai company that the markets' regulator was investigating for various cases, including that of insider trading.

Addressing a press conference, Congress leader Pawan Khera said, "This is not just conflict of interest, but a case of out-and-out corruption. Is it ethical, is it legal?" Khera alleged that Buch gave one of her properties for rent in Mumbai in 2018-19 to Carol Info Services Ltd for Rs 7 lakh. Then, Buch was a full-time member of Sebi. He said that Carol Info Services Ltd was affiliated to Wockhardt Limited, which is being investigated by Sebi in several cases, including one of insider trading. The Congress leader claimed that Madhabi Buch received Rs 2.16 crore from Carol Info Services Ltd as rent from 2018-19 to 2023-24.

Naveen Patnaik's party expels Rajya Sabha MP for 'anti-party activities'

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Friday announced that the party has expelled its Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar for 'anti-party activities'.



New Delhi. Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Friday expelled its Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar for 'anti-party activities', after he resigned from the Upper House earlier today.

"Shri Sujeet Kumar, MP, Rajya Sabha representing Biju Janata Dal is expelled from the Party with immediate effect for anti-party activities," former Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik said in a statement. Patnaik added, "He has let down the Party which sent him to Rajya Sabha and hopes and aspirations of people of Kalahandi district". In his resignation letter to the Rajya Sabha chairman, Kumar said he took the decision "consciously". His resignation has been accepted by Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar with immediate effect.

"I take this opportunity to express my profuse gratitude to you for the opportunities provided to me to raise issues of public importance, and of my state Odisha, in the House," the resignation letter reads.

Kumar's resignation comes a month after another BJD member, Mamata Mohanta, resigned from both the Rajya Sabha and the BJD. She was later elected unopposed to the Upper House as a BJP MP.

Chinks in INDIA bloc? AAP's Delhi MLA joins Congress

Rajendra Pal Gautam, a prominent Dalit leader and MLA from Delhi's Seemapuri, joined the Congress today. The development comes amid ongoing alliance talks between the AAP and Congress for the upcoming Haryana assembly polls.

New Delhi. In a setback to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), former Delhi cabinet minister Rajendra Pal Gautam joined the Congress on Friday. Gautam, a prominent Dalit leader and MLA from Seemapuri, joined the Congress in the presence of party leaders KC Venugopal, Devender Yadav, and Pawan Khera. The development comes amid ongoing alliance talks between the AAP and Congress, both members of the INDIA bloc, for the upcoming Haryana assembly polls.

Gautam's switch is also a significant gain for the Congress in Delhi, as the Grand Old Party looks to reclaim its lost voter base ahead of Assembly elections in the national capital next year.

WHO IS RAJENDRA PAL GAUTAM? A lawyer by profession, Rajendra Pal Gautam joined AAP in 2014 and was elected as an MLA from the Seemapuri constituency in the 2020 Delhi



Assembly polls. Gautam's political career has been marked by his activism for Dalit rights. He was a key figure in the AAP government, holding various portfolios including Social Welfare, SC & ST, Water and Cooperative Societies. In October 2022, Gautam resigned as a cabinet minister in the Delhi government after facing criticism for attending a mass conversion event where around 10,000 people converted to Buddhism. The BJP had accused him of "insulting

Hindu Gods and Goddesses" and demanded his removal by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Gautam had apologised and shared his resignation letter on social media.

The Delhi Congress had accused the AAP government of being "anti-Dalit" and maintained a supportive stance towards Gautam, criticising the ruling party for seeking his resignation. Gautam's departure from the AAP is the third high-profile exit from the party in recent times, following the exit of MLA Kartar Singh Tanwar and ex-Minister Raaj Kumar Anand. This series of defections may weaken the AAP's position ahead of the crucial Delhi Assembly elections.

The Congress, on the other hand, has gained a prominent Dalit leader, which could bolster its support among the community.

Supreme Court Issues Notice On 65% Bihar Quota, No Stay On High Court Order

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday issued a notice to the Centre and the Bihar government on a petition challenging the High Court's order striking down a hike in reservation in Bihar to 65%, but has not imposed a stay for now.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal, which is the principal opposition party in Bihar, had moved the top court against the Bihar High Court's verdict on the increased reservation, legislation for which was passed after a caste survey last year. Reacting to the developments in the Supreme Court, the RJD said it will continue to fight for reservation and the "rights of the

deprived". "Supreme Court issues notice on RJD's petition against Patna HC order quashing Bihar Reservation Amendment Act.

RJD will keep fighting for the reservation and rights of the deprived and the neglected on the streets, in the House and in the courts," the party wrote in Hindi in a post on X while also hitting out at Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the BJP. The quota was increased from 50% to 65% for Backward Classes, Extremely Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Scheduled Tribes (STs) through amendments to the reservation laws. The bills proposing

the amendments were passed unanimously in the Bihar Assembly and legislative council and the hike in reservation was meant to apply to educational institutions as well as government jobs in the state. After petitioners approached it challenging the constitutional validity of the amendments, the High Court had ruled on June 20 that they were "ultra vires" of the Constitution, "bad in law" and "violative of the equality clause".

The bench said it saw "no extenuating circumstance enabling the state to breach" the 50% cap on reservations laid down by the Supreme Court in the Indra Sawhney case of 1992.

Congress, Sharad Pawar's NCP Name LGBTQ Activists For Key Posts

This follows Congress's poll promise to bring in a law to legalise civil unions between same-sex couples.

New Delhi: The Congress this week set up a new internal group to promote LGBTQ rights while Nationalist Congress Party - Sharadchandra Pawar has named a person from the community as its spokesperson, in the first such political recognition after many setbacks. The Supreme Court in 2018 decriminalised homosexuality but greatly disappointed the LGBTQ community last year when it declined to legalise same-sex marriage and left it to parliament to decide. The central government has also said the legislature is the right platform to rule on the contentious issue, and this week invited the public to share views on how best to ensure that policies for the community are inclusive and effective.

Same-sex relations are mostly taboo and the government told the Supreme Court last year that such marriages were not "comparable with the Indian family unit concept of a husband, a wife and children". Congress, whose political clout has risen after doing much better than expected in the April-June general election, this week named LGBTQ activist Mario da Penha as the head of its new unit for the community under its All India Professionals' Congress division.

This follows Congress's poll promise to bring in a law to legalise civil unions between same-sex couples. Da Penha said on X it was the "only representative framework for queer people within any recognised national political party in India". Anish Gawande, who last month

became the first person from the community to become the spokesperson for the opposition Nationalist Congress Party - Sharadchandra Pawar, said da



Penha's appointment was "a major moment for queer inclusion in Indian politics". Gawande earlier said on social media of the Nationalist Congress appointment: "If

you'd told me ten years ago that it would be possible to be out and in Indian politics, I would have scoffed in disbelief." The central government says it has taken a host

of measures for the community, which includes enabling same-sex couples to access government food programmes as families, open joint bank accounts and choose each other as nominees, and seek medical and other care without discrimination.

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment said in a statement on Sunday it had invited inputs from the public to ensure that policies and initiatives for the community are inclusive and effective. It did not mention any law to recognise marriages between same-sex couples. A spokesperson for the ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

With Vinesh Phogat Set To Join Congress, Cousin Babita Phogat Has A Message



New Delhi. Former wrestler and BJP leader Babita Phogat on Thursday said how the "party is bigger than the individual and the country supersedes everything", amidst reports that fellow wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, who is her cousin, and Bajrang Punia are set to join the Congress ahead of the Haryana Assembly elections.

"Party is bigger than the individual and country is bigger than the party. This is my party's message to everyone! I stand by the decision of the top leadership of my Bharatiya Janata Party. Being a dedicated party worker, I will continue to discharge all the responsibilities given by the organisation," Babita Phogat, who has not figured among the party candidates for the October 5 polls, said in a post on X.

Babita Phogat also expressed gratitude to the people of her constituency Charkhi Dadri, saying: "People who always gave me their infinite love and blessings like their daughter and sister. I will always be ready to serve you in the future as well. Jai Hind, Jai Bharat."

According to reports, Olympians Vinesh Phogat and Punia will be joining the Congress on Friday, ahead of the Haryana Assembly elections. It is expected that Vinesh Phogat will contest the election from Haryana's Julana seat which is held by the Jannayak Janta Party's Amarjeet Dhandra.

The development comes mere days after the two wrestlers met with the party's leader, Rahul Gandhi on September 4. Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, along with Sakshi Malik, were among the wrestlers who protested against then BJP MP and Wrestling Federation of India President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, for allegedly intimidating and sexually harassing several women wrestlers.

This issue is said to have resonated during the Lok Sabha elections and is likely to be a key issue in the Haryana Assembly polls.

5 ways to organise your Book shelf

1. Categorise it alphabetically:

One of the best ways and the most common method of organising your book shelf is by arranging the books according to the alphabets. You can either do it by the author's first or last name or by organising it according to the book title.

2. According to genre:

This is the easiest way to organise your books and also find them when you are looking to read a particular genre. Make separate shelves for comedies, classics, thriller, suspense etc.

3. Colour coded:

You can turn your book shelf into a giant rainbow by arranging them according to the colour of the book. For example, if most of your books are black and white, you can create a monochrome section.

4. Arrange according to publications:

If you do not wish to mix your books, the ideal way to arrange them is by separating them according to the publisher. You can build different sections for each publisher, so that you do not get confused while arranging your books.

5. According to emotions:

You don't have to ideally follow the usual method of arranging books. You can do it a bit differently. If there are books that have been gifted to you by friends and family, you can make a separate section for them and label it accordingly. While the books that you have bought for yourself can be organised in another section and labeled.



If you're a bookworm and not a particularly organised person, you're sure to have tons of books lying around the house. It is easy to segregate your book collection in an organised and functional manner, this not makes your work easy but also makes your work and space a lot more clear and consistent. Here are a few ways you can organise your book shelf

How to clean a paddle brush

How to have a neat, clean and hygienic paddle brush for an everyday use.

Ask any women and her biggest nightmare will be a bad hair day. And to steer clear away from these real nightmares women resort to many helping tools and techniques. However, the most trusted helping tool is the paddle brush. But have you ever realized that these brush apart from giving our hair luster they consume a lot of dust, oil, moisture and germs as they are always kept in open. It's mandatory to clean up your paddle brush twice every month for a lustrous and healthy hair. Here are some tips:



1. Take a pen/pencil and start sliding it in the paddle brush under the accumulated hair. Slowly pull up until the hair starts to loosen; slowly remove the hair. Keep on repeating until your brush is clean.

2. Once you are done doing that, take a big bowl in which the bristles can be completely soaked. Now add some warm water in the bowl with a teaspoon of baby/mild

shampoo and stir well. Now soak the paddle brush in it for about two hours. It will remove the dust, oil and all the unwanted particles.

3. Remove the brush and rinse off the remaining water and pat it dry or dry it with the help of a drier.

4. Once dried, again soak your brush in a bowl filled with warm water and a pinch on baking soda for an hour. This works as a disinfectant.

5. Pat dry your brush and once it's completely dried you have a brand new brush there

How to manage your daily chores

Not everyday would you like to get involved in cleaning up act at home that involves you spending most of the time doing up the chores. Here's how to go about handling your daily chores wisely that would allow you spend more quality time with your loved ones:

Plan the day's activities: This sounds like chalking out a school time table, but planning out in advance makes your life simpler. Taking from giving a particular time slot to washing clothes to arranging the utensils in the kitchen, allotting a set time to a set activity can take away the hassle of piled up and pending work.

Do not postpone things: Unless it is unavoidable, take up activities as per the plans. If you keep postponing doing things, the work load will multiply the next day. Sticking to a time table is always better.

However, altering the time table to suit your work and home requirement also can be tried.

Club events: If on a shopping trip, club the allied activities like going out for a lunch before or after the shopping or picking up essential things for home needs can be thought upon. This will not only save you making another trip on another day, but also enable you spend some more quality time with family.



Uncluttered space:

One fundamental rule of having a happy, inviting space is to have uncluttered space. Clutter gives a feel of stress to the space. Nobody likes to see piles of clothes, stacks of bills, magazines, books lying here and there. Keep your space uncluttered and bring in a sense of happiness.

Let your space be unobstructive:

For creating a comfortable environment, the space needs to have a sense of free flow. The idea is to make moving through your home — getting from the front door to the seating areas, the dining space, the bathroom and more — obstacle-less. Don't put huge, bulky furniture all over the place so that no one can squeeze through, and don't put too many floor pillows so that your guests will have difficulty in navigating.

Bring in your personality:

Your home should reflect your distinct personality. When people visit your house, they should be able to strike a connection with your personality. The essence lies in creating a space that feels like you. So, make all efforts to bring in different facets of your personality in your decor. Sprinkle unique design details around the house. For this, you need not spend a fortune. Push your creative boundary and indulge in some DIY projects.

Let your house smell fresh:

Good fragrance is heady. So make sure that your house smells nice. Keep some nice floating aromatic candles in the house. And of course nothing can beat the smell and aesthetics of fresh flowers.

A touch of green:

Having green space in your home makes it definitely a space worth visiting again and again. So, create your own green space no matter how small/ big your house is. If you want to extend a 'green' welcome to your guests then put some potted plants at the entrance/hallway.



Five ways to create an inviting Space

Having a home that is inviting — that welcomes visitors with a touch of warmth and lingers in the minds of guests long after they have left your home— definitely makes for an enjoyable and memorable place. Here are five simple ways to make your space inviting



Rekha Jhunjhunwala-backed Bazaar Style Retail lists a flat on Dalal Street

NEW DELHI. Shares of Bazaar Style Retail, backed by Rekha Jhunjhunwala, made a flat debut on the stock exchanges on Friday, listing at Rs 389 on both BSE and NSE.

Before its listing, the company's shares were trading at a premium of 12% over the issue price in the grey market. Bazaar Style Retail's IPO received strong interest from investors, with an overall subscription of nearly 41 times by the time it closed. The company intends to use the IPO proceeds to repay debt and for general corporate purposes. Based in Kolkata, Bazaar Style Retail is a value fashion retailer, holding the largest retail presence in Eastern India and leading the organised value retail market in West Bengal and Odisha.

Goldman Sachs gives SBI 'sell' rating with revised target price. Know why

New Delhi Goldman Sachs downgraded its outlook for the State Bank of India (SBI), cutting its earnings estimates for FY25 and FY26 by 3% and 9%, respectively. The brokerage highlighted a growing risk-reward imbalance, driven by challenges in sustaining return on assets (RoA). Goldman Sachs forecasted that RoA would fall below 1% by FY26, down from 1% in FY24. The revised target price indicated a 9% downside from SBI's current trading level of Rs 818.60. The downgrade was due to concerns over lower net interest income and higher loan loss provisions. Goldman Sachs noted increasing credit costs because of rising slippages in MSME, agricultural, and unsecured loan portfolios.

Despite this, SBI's shares had a slight increase of 0.26% on Thursday. Analysts from Axis Securities viewed SBI as a strong player in the banking sector, aligning well with India's economic growth. The analysts highlighted SBI's focus on increasing deposits and shifting assets from investments to loans. This strategy was expected to improve its Loan-to-Deposit Ratio (LDR) and maintain its margin at 3.2% in the medium term.

Axis Securities also pointed out SBI's healthy Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) and adequate capitalization, forecasting that the bank would maintain a RoA of 1-1.1% over the next few years. In Cred Equities remained optimistic about SBI, maintaining it as a high-conviction stock and setting a target price of Rs 1,100 for the shares.

Unsold passenger vehicle inventory rises to 7.8L units: FADA

NEW DELHI. Despite an assurance by carmakers to cut down dispatches, top dealer association body FADA said inventory levels at passenger vehicle (PV) showrooms remain at alarming levels, with stock days now stretching to 70-75 days. Inventory totalling 7.8 lakh vehicles, valued at an alarming Rs 77,800 crore. The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) on Thursday alleged rather than responding to the situation, PV makers continue to increase dispatches to dealers on a month-to-month basis, exacerbating the issue. "FADA is raising SOS signals as PV sales fell by 3.46% MoM and 4.53% YoY in August. Even with the arrival of the festive season, the market remains under significant strain due to delayed customer purchases, poor consumer sentiment and persistent heavy rains. Inventory levels have reached alarming levels, with stock days stretching to 70-75 days and inventory totalling 7.8 lakh vehicles, valued at an alarming Rs. 77,800 crore," said FADA President, Manish Raj Singhania. FADA said dealers must act swiftly to stop taking on additional stock to protect their financial health. OEMs, too, must recalibrate their supply strategies without delay, or the industry faces a potential crisis from this inventory overload, it said. At the end of July, FADA had said inventory level units had surged to 67-72 days, 730,000 units or Rs 73,000 crore worth stock. Carmakers, however, have pegged the number much lower at 400,000 units. Partho Banerjee, senior executive director, marketing & sales of Maruti Suzuki, on Sunday said their network stock, at the beginning of August was 38 days, has come down to 36 days.

Banker warns of systemic risk arising from flight of bank deposits to Mfs

MUMBAI: A veteran banker on Thursday expressed concerns over the present trend of deposit flight out of banks, saying that if the trend, especially in the Casa segment, is not arrested there could be systemic risks down the line. Seeking active participation of the government and the regulator to arrest the flight of money into non-banking assets like equities and mutual funds, IBA chairman MV Rao said if the present trend needs to be contained to avoid systemic risk.

Addressing the IBA-Ficci organised national banking summit here on Thursday, Rao, who also heads the public sector Central Bank of India, said, "Our analysis of mutual fund investors has found that as much as 99% of them are not analysing the technical or fundamentals of their investments but they are following some group."

After six-seven years when the cycle turns, definitely this will have a lot of systemic risk that may come out of. Because mutual funds invest in companies or stocks and they don't make provisions unlike banks which must make provision of 20% even to AAA-rated investments. He further elaborated saying with the current generational shift, cultural changes also happen. The earlier culture of security is moving now to securitisation. People who are now keeping deposits are in the higher age group while the younger lots are moving to become investors. Admitting that the return given by mutual funds are higher, he said restricted rate of interest for many banking assets/products vis-a-vis mutual funds don't have restrictions. Going forward we cannot dictate the customer but give customer higher returns. Today, on average money lying in savings account will fetch one a meagre 2.75% to 5% if the amount is higher than a threshold like 1 lakh or above and mid-term fixed deposits will fetch 6.

Government starts selling onions at Rs 35/kg in Delhi and Mumbai. Check details

The National Cooperative Consumer's Federation (NCCF) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation have started selling onions at Rs 35 per kilogram through special vans in Delhi and Mumbai.



NEW DELHI. With onion prices soaring 47% higher than last year, the government has stepped in to stabilise costs. The National Cooperative Consumer's Federation (NCCF) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation have started selling onions at

Rs 35 per kilogram through special vans in Delhi and Mumbai. The NCCF and NAFED, which are managing a 4.7 lakh tonne onion buffer stock for the government, will handle the retail sales through their stores and mobile vans. Onions will be sold at 38 retail locations in Delhi-NCR, as well as in Parel and

Malad in Mumbai. Onions will also be available at subsidised rates on e-commerce platforms and outlets of Kendriya Bhandar and Mother Dairy's SAFAL in key consumption areas. Currently, retail onion prices in the national capital exceed Rs 60 per kilogram, depending on quality and

location. Following the launch, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi announced that the government will expand and diversify the quantity and distribution channels for onions in response to price trends. More cities will be included soon, with the second phase starting next week, covering major cities such as Kolkata, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, and Raipur. A nationwide sale is scheduled to begin in the third week of September.

The government currently holds a buffer stock of 4.7 lakh tonnes of onions from the Rabi crop to manage prices. The Price Stabilisation Fund, launched under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to intervene when essential commodity prices rise. Joshi assured that this move would bring relief to consumers nationwide. As of September 4, the average onion price was Rs 49.21 per kilogram, up 47.29% from Rs 33.41 per kilogram a year ago. Wholesale prices have also surged, with the all-India consumer wholesale price at Rs 4,158.

Boss Packaging Solutions makes debut on NSE SME at 25% premium

New Delhi Shares of Boss Packaging Solutions made a decent debut on the stock exchange today, after seeing massive bids earlier. The stock was listed at Rs 82.5 on the NSE SME, marking a 25% premium over its IPO price of Rs 66. The Rs 8.41 crore SME initial public offering (IPO) was available for subscription between August 30, 2024, and September 3, 2024, with each share priced at Rs 66. Boss Packing Solutions, which supplies packaging machines, labelling, capping, and filling equipment, had an issue size of a little over Rs 8 crore. Yet, it received bids worth Rs 1,073 crore.

During the three-day bidding period, the IPO saw strong demand, with overall subscriptions reaching 136.21 times. A total of 16.45 crore equity shares were bid for, compared to the 12.08 lakh



shares available. The retail investor category was subscribed 165.29 times, while the 'others' category saw a subscription of 103.80 times. Boss Packaging Solutions Limited's IPO offered 12.74 lakh fresh shares, raising Rs 8.41 crore. The funds from the IPO were intended for purchasing new

machinery, meeting working capital requirements, and covering general corporate expenses to help the company expand and boost its production capabilities.

Retail investors had to apply for a minimum of 2,000 shares, which required an investment of Rs 1,32,000. High Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs) needed to apply for a minimum of two lots, or 4,000 shares, with an investment of Rs 2,64,000. The company's financials are not particularly strong, with profits remaining flat for both 2022-23 and 2023-24, according to the company's Red Herring Prospectus (RHP). The company is based in Ahmedabad and operates out of a modest 500-square-yard facility. Its net debt has also increased, rising by 82% to Rs 3.06 crore in 2023 from Rs 1.64 crore the previous year.

Government may slash fuel prices as global oil prices fall: Report



New Delhi. The government is considering a reduction in fuel prices in response to a significant drop in global crude oil prices, according to a Business Today report. Global crude oil prices have recently fallen to their lowest levels in nine months, which has improved profit margins for Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). This development opens the door for potential savings to be passed on to consumers. The decline in oil prices, now at their lowest since January, has prompted discussions among key government officials. With Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana approaching, the government sees this

as an opportunity to offer relief to the public. Ongoing inter-ministerial talks are focused on how to best utilize the drop in global oil prices to benefit consumers, while also considering the financial health of OMCs. On Wednesday, US crude oil prices fell by over 1%, dropping below \$70 per barrel. Brent crude prices also decreased by \$1, reaching \$72.75 per barrel. These price drops have led to speculation that the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, known as OPEC+, might delay planned production increases, originally scheduled to start next month.

A significant factor in the recent price drop is the return of Libyan oil to the global market. Additionally, OPEC+ plans to reverse some of its voluntary production cuts starting in October, while non-OPEC countries have increased their oil output, further exerting downward pressure on prices.

US crude oil prices dropped by more than 1% on Wednesday, falling below \$70 per barrel. Brent crude prices followed suit, falling by \$1 to reach \$72.75 per barrel.

Goldman Sachs has projected that oil prices could range between \$70 and \$85 per barrel in the near term. Even if the current lower prices are temporary, a stabilisation of crude prices around \$85 per barrel would allow the government to request state-owned fuel retailers to maintain steady retail prices. In March, just before the general elections, the government reduced petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2 per litre. A further reduction in fuel prices now would provide much-needed relief to consumers, who continue to face high fuel costs.

India's household food spending dips to less than 50%: Report

The change in spending, highlighted in a recent report by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), signals a shift in how Indian families allocate their monthly budgets.

NEW DELHI. For the first time since India's independence, food spending has dropped to less than half of household expenses. This change, highlighted in a recent report by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), signals a shift in how Indian families allocate their monthly budgets. The report suggests that people, especially the poorest households, are now using their saved money to add more variety to their diets, including milk, fruits, eggs, and meat. The decrease in food spending has been mainly driven by government schemes that provide free wheat and rice, making essential grains available at no cost to many families. The report notes that for the first time in



modern India, average household spending on food has fallen below 50% of total monthly expenses. This shift is being seen as a significant change in spending habits, particularly in rural areas.

Changes in food expenditure
The EAC-PM working paper reveals that spending on cereals, a staple food category, has reduced notably, especially among the poorest 20% of households. This drop in cereal spending is seen as a direct result of the government's food security programmes, such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). This scheme, which

provides free grains to around 800 million people across the country, has played a key role in reducing the burden of food costs for households. The report shows that the money saved from spending less on cereals has allowed families to diversify their diets. More people are now buying milk, fruits, eggs, fish, and meat, which were previously considered luxury items for many low-income households. "This change is more noticeable in the poorest households," the report said. "The free grain distribution has acted like an expansionary policy, enabling families to shift their spending from basic cereals to

more nutritious and varied food options."

The issue of anaemia and iron intake

Despite this improvement in dietary diversity, the report also points out that efforts to boost iron intake have not yielded the desired results. Anaemia remains a widespread issue in the country. The paper suggests that the government's approach to fortifying cereals with iron, while simple to implement, may not be enough to combat anaemia effectively. "Improving iron intake and reducing anaemia might require promoting more diverse diets, rather than relying on fortification of cereals alone," the paper mentioned. The report also highlights improvements in dietary diversity across states and Union Territories. Northeastern states like Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Tripura have seen some of the most notable gains.

In other regions, states like Bihar and Odisha have made good progress in improving micronutrient intake through diverse diets, though states like Rajasthan have only seen minor changes. The rise in dietary diversity, especially for the poorest 20%, shows that better infrastructure, transport, and storage have made items like fruits, milk, eggs, and meat more accessible and affordable.

NEWS BOX

US Open: Aryna Sabalenka ready for Final after 'missed opportunity' last year

Aryna Sabalenka is determined to make the most of her second consecutive US Open final appearance after narrowly missing out on the title last year. The Belarusian tennis star revealed her resolve to "give it her all" in the upcoming final, reflecting on last year's disappointment where she lost to Coco Gauff despite winning the first set. Sabalenka secured her spot in the 2024 US Open final by defeating USA's Emma Navarro 6-3, 7-6 (7-2) on September 5 at the Arthur Ashe Stadium in a thrilling semi-final clash. In her post-match press conference, Sabalenka expressed her eagerness to make amends for last year's heartbreak and finally clinch the hard-court major. She emphasized her readiness to put everything on the line in what promises to be a high-stakes final. Sabalenka's road to the final was marked by her powerful and consistent play, which was on full display against Navarro. The Belarusian, known for her aggressive baseline game, managed to keep the pressure on Navarro throughout the match, particularly in the second-set tiebreak where she dominated to secure her place in the final. "Yeah, I had really tough lessons here in the past. I think I had so many opportunities here, but I didn't use them for different reasons. I wasn't ready. Then I got emotional. Then I just couldn't handle the crowd. I felt like I just missed the opportunity. Every time I'm coming back here, I have this positive thinking, like, 'Come, on, maybe this time'," Sabalenka said. "Every time I'm hoping that one day I'll be able to hold that beautiful trophy. You know, like tough losses never make me feel depressed, like, not thinking like of not coming back on the tournament. It only motivates me to come back and to try one more time, try harder, and work harder on some things which maybe didn't work in the past. I'm still hoping to hold that beautiful trophy," Sabalenka added. In the final, Sabalenka will face Jessica Pegula, who earned her spot by defeating the world number one, Iga Swiatek, in their semi-final clash. With Pegula being the home star, Sabalenka also revealed that she is not worried to face the Arthur Ashe crowd going against her in the final. "Yeah, you're cheering for her, but how can they help her to win the match? Only if I let them get into my head and only if I'm gonna just lose myself, you know, get crazy...So, yeah, that's the trickiest is the loudness of how loud it can be on this stadium,"

Harshit Rana's 'flying kiss' celebration returns after Gaikwad's wicket

New Delhi Indian pacer Harshit Rana's iconic flying kiss celebration made a return on Day 1 of the Duleep Trophy tournament. His infamous send-off has been the talking point since IPL 2024 and Harshit brought it back again. Harshit, while playing for India D, got the wicket of India C captain Rituraj Gaikwad. During the 7th over of India C's first innings, Harshit bowled a short of length delivery outside the stumps and Gaikwad edged it only to be caught at the slips. India D erupted in celebrations and Harshit Rana gave his infamous 'flying kiss' gesture. However, this time it was not directed towards the batter he dismissed but to the dressing room. Gaikwad managed to score just five runs in 19 balls in his short stay at the crease. Earlier, Harshit also dismissed opening batter Sai



Sudharsan for just seven runs from 16 balls. Harshit provided his team just the kind of start which they needed as India C were reduced to 14/2 in first seven overs. Interestingly, Harshit's flying kiss celebration caught everyone's attention during the IPL 2024 when he was representing KKR.

Harshit's flying kiss celebration
When Harshit faced ban for his send-off He gave a flying kiss send-off to Mayank Agarwal after dismissing him during KKR vs SRH match on March 23. Later, the KKR fast bowler Harshit Rana was suspended for a match and fined 100 percent of his match fee for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct for the second time in the IPL 2024 season. Harshit's second offence came during KKR's win against Delhi at Eden Gardens on April 29. He came up with an animated gesture towards DC's Abhishek Porel after getting his wicket. Later, the KKR team's co-owner Shikhar Khan asked the entire squad to give a flying kiss as part of their celebration on lifting the ICC trophy. Meanwhile, Harshit will be aiming to impress the selectors and offer his contention for the upcoming big home season. He was selected in the T20I squad for Zimbabwe and ODI squad for the Sri Lanka series.

Pickleball Boom: The trendy, social sport is winning hearts in India too

Pickleball is booming worldwide, and India is no exception. Once played in parking lots and alleys, it's now entering the professional era. Pioneers Sunil Valavakar and Manish Rao, in conversation with IndiaToday.in, highlight the sport's rapid growth and its ability to transcend age groups and make a meaningful impact on enthusiasts' lives.

New Delhi. Ajit Pal Singh, a software engineer from Noida, first discovered pickleball through an Instagram reel. The clip showed a game that looked like a mix of tennis and badminton, piquing his curiosity. A quick Google search later, he was hooked. Six months on, Singh and three friends became regulars at a popular pickleball centre in Noida, playing almost every weekend. For early pioneers like Sunil Valavakar and Manish Rao, spreading the word about pickleball in India was a challenge. But today, the game is rapidly capturing the attention of urban India, drawing in players aged eight to 80. It's the hard to escape the growing popularity of pickleball. You must

have seen Andre Agassi or Leonardo Di Caprio playing pickleball. Even Novak Djokovic, who once hinted that pickleball posed a threat to tennis, was seen trying his hand at the sport at an exhibition event before the 2023 US Open. In India, the sport has found fans in Bollywood actors and sports icons alike. It's no surprise: pickleball is among the fastest-growing sports worldwide, and India is no exception. Rajat, a 23-year-old finance professional, was introduced to the sport by Singh. He now makes a 50km trip from Gurugram to Noida every weekend to play. "It's less strenuous than tennis and a bit different from badminton," Rajat says. "The sound of the paddle hitting the ball reminds me of cricket. As a cricket lover, I enjoy it a lot. It's become a weekly affair." Pickleball's simple learning curve, social nature, and low physical impact have contributed to its widespread popularity. Its accessibility makes it appealing across age groups, and it's being embraced both recreationally and competitively.

APANDEMIC BOOM

The pandemic provided an unexpected boost for pickleball. It proved to be a "blessing in disguise" for the sport. People gravitated to the sport during lockdowns due to its ease of setup and suitability for socially distanced play. It became a common sight in alleys and parking lots across cities. In the United States of America, pickleball



surged so much that tennis courts were repurposed for it, as four pickleball courts can fit into one tennis court. More courts meant more players and more revenue, catching the attention of investors and sports equipment manufacturers like Selkirk, which started sponsoring players.

India saw a similar boom after the pandemic. A pickleball tournament with prize money worth USD 100,000 was held as recently as August 2024. India has been hosting major tournaments and Indian pickleball players have begun to win medals in prestigious overseas competitions. An Indian Premier League-styled league for pickleball is also set to start by the end of 2024 or early 2025.

THE BASICS OF PICKLEBALL

- 1. Pickleball Equipment**
Paddle: A solid paddle, larger than a ping-pong paddle but smaller than a tennis racket, made of wood, composite, or graphite.
Ball: A lightweight plastic ball with holes, similar to a wiffle ball, which travels slower

than a tennis ball.

2. Court Dimensions
The court measures 20x44 feet, same for singles and doubles.
A 7-foot no-volley zone near the net, called the "kitchen", prevents volleys unless the ball bounces.

3. Gameplay
Objective: Hit the ball over the net into the opponent's court without return. The serve is underhand and must bounce before being returned. The serving team can only score points; games go to 11 points, with a 2-point win requirement.

4. Serve and Return Rules
Double-bounce rule: Both teams must let the ball bounce once after the serve before volleys are allowed.

PICKLEBALL'S ORIGINS AND ARRIVAL IN INDIA

Pickleball originated in Bainbridge Island, Washington, in 1965. Three friends -- Pritchard, Bill Bell, and Barney McCallum-created the game using makeshift equipment, and it quickly gained local popularity. In India, the credit for introducing pickleball goes to Sunil Valavakar, the founder of the All India Pickleball Association (AIPA). Valavakar first encountered the sport when he went to British Columbia as a Project Supervisor for an Indo-Canadian Youth Exchange Program of the Government of India in 1999. There, he was hosted by a sports enthusiast.

PM Modi praises Kapil Parmar for 'special' Paralympics Judo bronze medal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed Kapil Parmar's historic bronze medal in Judo at the Paris Paralympics, marking India's first-ever Judo Paralympic medal and celebrating the inspiring journey of the visually impaired para-athlete from Madhya Pradesh.



Paralympics. The 24-year-old visually impaired para-athlete from Shivori, Madhya Pradesh, secured the bronze in the men's -60kg J1 event at the #Paralympics2024! Best wishes for his endeavours ahead, "Parmar, who had already made a name for himself by winning a silver medal in the same category at the 2022 Asian Games, showcased his prowess by defeating Venezuela's Marco Dennis Blanco 10-0 in the quarterfinals. His journey to the Paralympics was not without challenges. As a child, Parmar suffered a severe electric shock after accidentally touching a water pump while playing in the fields, leaving him in a coma for six months. Despite this life-altering experience, Parmar's triumph at Paris turns out to be one of the key highlights of India's Paralympics 2024 campaign.

Congratulations to Kapil Parmar, as he becomes the first-ever Indian to win a medal in Judo at the Paralympics. Congrats to him for winning a Bronze in the Men's 60kg J1 event at the #Paralympics2024! Best wishes for his endeavours ahead, "Parmar, who had already made a name for himself by winning a silver medal in the same category at the 2022 Asian Games, showcased his prowess by defeating Venezuela's Marco Dennis Blanco 10-0 in the quarterfinals. His journey to the Paralympics was not without challenges. As a child, Parmar suffered a severe electric shock after accidentally touching a water pump while playing in the fields, leaving him in a coma for six months. Despite this life-altering experience, Parmar's triumph at Paris turns out to be one of the key highlights of India's Paralympics 2024 campaign.

New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended heartfelt congratulations to Kapil Parmar on his remarkable bronze medal victory in Judo at the Paris Paralympics. In a special post on his official X account, PM Modi hailed Parmar's achievement as a "special medal" win for India, celebrating his historic accomplishment as the first-ever Judo medallist for the country at the

Vikram Rathour, Rangana Herath to help New Zealand prepare for Test season in Asia

New Delhi Former India batting coach Vikram Rathour and legendary Sri Lanka spinner Rangana Herath have joined New Zealand team to help them prepare for their upcoming Tests in Asia. Notably, New Zealand will take on Afghanistan in a one-off Test from September 9 in Greater Noida, India and will further lock horns with Sri Lanka and India for five Tests. Ahead of a crucial Test season in Asia, New Zealand Cricket have secured the services of Rathour and Herath to help them succeed in the alien conditions. Rathour, who was recently part of the Indian coaching staff as batting coach under Rahul Dravid, will be with the team for the one-off Test against Afghanistan. On the other hand, Herath will be with the team till the two-match series against Sri Lanka beginning from 18th September. The former left-arm spinner has joined the team in place of former Pakistan spinner and coach Saqlain Mushtaq, who was expected to take up the role earlier but pulled out to take up a position with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). New Zealand Head Coach Gary Stead expressed excitement on the joining



of the two new members and said that both will add on to the knowledge and skill set of the team. "We're really excited to introduce Rangana and Vikram into our Test group. Both men are held in high regard in the world of cricket and I know our players are really looking forward to the opportunity to learn from them," said Stead in a media release. Stead banking on Herath's

experience to succeed in Sri Lanka. Further speaking ahead, Stead mentioned how Herath's influence will massively help their left-arm spinners Ajaz Patel, Rachin Ravindra and Mitchell Santner in the Sri Lanka series. "For our three left-arm orthodox spinners in particular, Ajaz, Mitch and Rachin, having the chance to work with Rangana across three Tests on the sub-continent will be hugely beneficial. Rangana has taken over 100 Test wickets in Galle which is the venue of our two Tests against Sri Lanka and so his knowledge of that venue will be priceless," he added. Meanwhile, New Zealand are currently ranked on the third spot in the World Test Championship standings with three wins from six matches having a points percentage of 50%. The upcoming Tests against Sri Lanka and India are extremely crucial for the Blackcaps to climb higher on the table or maintain their position.



end this way? We'll miss you a lot. See you soon." In Copa America competitions, Di Maria experienced the agony of near victories, finishing as a runner-up in 2015 and 2016, before finally achieving glory in 2021. His decisive goal against Brazil at the Maracanã Stadium secured the long-awaited continental trophy, cementing his status as one of Argentina's most iconic players. During the tribute ceremony, the entire Estadio Mas Monumental erupted in a standing ovation for Di Maria. The players formed a guard of honor for him and his family before lifting him high into the air in celebration. The ceremony featured a video montage with messages from former greats and Messi himself, all acknowledging Di Maria's exceptional career with Argentina.

Duleep Trophy: Anantapur stadium packed, Chinnaswamy stands in Bengaluru empty

Duleep Trophy: Huge crowd turned up at the Anantapur stadium in Andhra Pradesh for India C vs India D match. Meanwhile, the stands at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru were empty.

Patel playing a heroic knock of 86 runs while also picking two wickets. The fans also seemed excited over the start of India's home season. The Duleep Trophy matches will be hosted in Bengaluru and Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur. Hence, M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, Rural Development Trust Stadium and ACA ADCA Ground in Anantapur are the venues of the matches. The Day 2, being Friday, saw huge crowds turning up in stadiums to cheer for the players. However, it was the Rural Development Trust Stadium in Anantapur, which saw fans arriving in huge numbers to fill-up the stands. The Anantapur stadium is hosting the India C vs India D clash with players like Rituraj Gaikwad, Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel, Devdutt Padikkal and Arshdeep Singh participating. The fans flocked to the stadium to support the star



players. **The craze among Anantapur crowd** Meanwhile, the M Chinnaswamy Stadium is hosting India A vs India B with stars like Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant, Kuldeep Yadav, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shivam Dube playing. However, there was not as much

crowd in the Chinnaswamy stands, despite the participation by many star players. The fans on social media also urged BCCI to hold more games in Rural Development Trust Stadium, seeing the craze among localities. **More matches in Anantapur?** Earlier, there was a stampede-like situation at the Anantapur stadium as people arrived in big numbers to get the tickets of the Duleep Trophy matches. The Anantapur crowd also showcased their passion for cricket. Spectator interest perks up significantly once domestic matches are taken to smaller towns. The rising stars also look forward to a change in the monotony of playing before empty stands by performing in front of packed stadiums. Anantapur stadium lived up to that expectation this Friday and the numbers are only expected to increase over the weekend.



Shweta Tiwari

Unbuttons Her Shirt, Looks Hottest In Pink; New Photos Go Viral

Who would believe that Shweta Tiwari 42 and a mother of three? The actress, popularly known for her role as 'Prerna' in the hit show Kasautii Zindagii Kay, often drops pictures of herself on social media, leaving everyone stunned. On Thursday too, Shweta took to her Instagram handle and shared a series of photos which are now setting fire online. In these latest photos, Shweta Tiwari was lying on a bed in an unbuttoned pink shirt. She left her tresses open and opted for minimal makeup. The actress' hot avatar and seducing looks left everyone gasping for breath. Check it out here: [Link](#)

and added another. Those eyes," a third comment read. Shweta Tiwari became a household name after she was featured in the popular daily soap Kasautii Zindagii Kay. She is also known for shows like Hum Tum and Them, Main Hoon Aparajita, Mere Dad Ki Dulhan, Indian Police Force, Parvarish - Kuchh Khattee Kuchh Meethi and Begusarai among others. Shweta will also be playing the role of an intelligence officer in Ajay Devgn's Singham Again. Recently, in an exclusive conversation with News18 Showsha, Shweta confirmed that she will soon be collaborating with Karan Johar. She spilled the beans on her next with the filmmaker's production house and said, "I'm doing Dharma Productions' upcoming web series. In that, I play a don-like character who wears a saree and smokes cigarettes (laughs). It was a very challenging role and that's why I wanted to do it." Though she remained tight-lipped about other details, Shweta shared that she's ready for smaller roles in this new chapter of her career. "I've always told myself - 'do what you like.' I've been a lead face in television but when I'm stepping out and foraying into something else, I want to explore different parts. I know that I've to accept smaller roles if I want to work with a certain director or an actor. I want to make my debut in different avenues every five years," she added.



Krushna Abhishek Says His Relationship With Kashmera Started With a 'One Night Stand': 'We Were Not Serious'



When Kashmera Shah marked her 18 years of togetherness with Krushna Abhishek earlier this year, she penned down an emotional note on social media and revealed how a lot of people initially thought that their relationship would not last long. Now, in an interview, Krushna has jokingly revealed that their relationship started only as a 'one night stand'. Krushna Abhishek was speaking to ETimes when he recalled how happy he was when he started to date Kashmera. "Kash was a hot, sexy and popular actress working with Shah Rukh Khan and Jackie Shroff. I was a newcomer then. The age difference was not important. I connected with her and enjoyed flaunting her as my girlfriend, saying, 'Dekho main Kashmera Shah ko date kar raha hoon'," he said.

The actor, known for his appearances on Kapil Sharma's comedy shows, revealed that they first met on a film set in Jaipur. He admitted that they were not serious about each other initially and thought that their dating would not last long. However, things changed with time and they became each other's best friends. "I first met her on a film set in Jaipur, where we were casually introduced and eventually became friends. One day, she called me to her room for dinner, and that's how our relationship started...with a one-night stand (laughs). Funnily, the joke we share is how, after that one dinner, I just stayed back with her!" he said. "Initially, we were not serious about each other, we travelled and had a good time for many years. When we started dating, we were not thinking of marriage and felt it would end in a few months. But I was always happy around Kashmera. We are each other's best friends. People often joke about how Krushna likes two things: Kash and cash!" the actor added.

When Sobhita Dhulipala Said She 'Looks Forward To Motherhood': 'By Being Coupled You Feel...'



Sobhita Dhulipala has caught everyone's attention after she recently got engaged to Naga Chaitanya. Fans are eagerly awaiting any news about their wedding. Amid this, an interview with the actress from earlier this year has got fans buzzing. In the interview, Sobhita said that she is looking forward to motherhood next in life. She asked about the meaning of life for her, Sobhita told ABP News, "I don't think life can have a purpose. I do think that we come between two shores. There is a river, and life is that boat that passes from one shore to another. So I feel like in life, whatever you do, do it and enjoy it, but there is a certain detachment I feel towards everything. I can't be too detached, because then we won't have any ambition. But somewhere I walk the tightrope between being a little disconnected and doing my own thing."

"From life, what do I seek? To be honest, I think the experience I look forward to is motherhood, whenever that happens. I feel it would be amazing," she added. Sobhita also spoke about balancing parenthood and a career. "We don't pick between taking care of our parents and going for a job. So I feel my role as a daughter and my role as a sister, my role at work as a professional and my role as a wife will work in parallel," she said. "I feel like even if someone is not very financially secure, very often, by being coupled, you feel like you have a partner who will support you. There are women who do a lot, and there are many stories of men who also support their wives in doing whatever they want to do. So I don't think it's this or that. I am very pro-balance. I have things that I'd love to experience, and I love to hit certain goalposts, but my idea of success is not vertical; it's more horizontal," the actor added.

Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala got engaged last month. The couple was dating for almost two years before they announced their engagement. Making their relationship public, the couple shared a poetic message, quoting, "What could my mother be to yours? What kin is my father to yours anyway? And how did you and I meet ever? But in love our hearts are as red earth and pouring rain: mingled beyond parting." This verse from Kurunthogai, translated by A.K. Ramanujan, beautifully encapsulates their love.

Natasa Stankovic

Looks Her Sexiest Best In White Outfit After Returning To Mumbai

Natasa Stankovic is currently enjoying some quality time in India. On Thursday afternoon, the actress took to her Instagram handle and dropped a couple of pictures which are now setting fire online. In these latest clicks, Natasa was seen flaunting her curves in a white thigh-high slit gown which had feathers all over. She opted for matching heels, minimal accessories and left her tresses open. Needless to say, the actress looked prettiest as always. Soon after the photos were shared online, fans rushed to the comments section to compliment the actress. While one of the users called her "hottest", another wrote, "You are gorgeous". Several others also dropped fire emojis in the comments section. Check it out here: [Link](#)

Natasa Stankovi, who lives in Serbia after her separation with cricketer Hardik Pandya, returned to Mumbai earlier this week with their son, Agastya. On Wednesday too, Natasa was snapped by the paparazzi as she stepped out for dinner with her friends. She looked effortlessly chic in a black strappy, pleated long dress. Natasa Stankovi, who lives in Serbia after her separation with cricketer Hardik Pandya, returned to Mumbai earlier this week with their son, Agastya. On Wednesday too, Natasa was snapped by the paparazzi as she stepped out for dinner with her friends. She looked effortlessly chic in a black strappy, pleated long dress.



Natasa and Hardik, who tied the knot in May 2020 and renewed their wedding vows according to the Hindu and Christian rituals in February 2023, confirmed their separation in July 2024. They

issued a joint statement and mentioned that it was a "tough decision" for both of them and added that they will continue to co-parent their son, Agastya. Later, a report by Times Now claimed that Natasa and Hardik parted ways because the cricketer was "too full of himself". "He was too flamboyant for her, too full of himself. Natasa could not handle it anymore. She realised that there was a major gap between how they were as people. She tried to match it up to him but it made her feel uncomfortable. This was a never-ending process so it became tiring after a while. Natasa was not able to keep pace hence she decided to take a step back," a source cited by the portal claimed.

