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ISRO targets December launch for historic space docking experiment

Sanjay Kumar

Chandigarh, Oct 23: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has set December-end as the target for the launch of its



first space docking experiment, which, if successful, would pave the way for future inter-planetary missions and propel it into a select global league of three such operators. A key spin off of this technology would be extending the operational life of existing satellites.

them to remain effective for several more years," Dr KV Sriram, director of ISRO's laboratory for Electro-Optics Systems (LEOS) told The Tribune during his visit to Chandigarh on Wednesday. "Two satellites designated simply as 'Chaser' and 'Target' that have been assembled and integrated by a private firm have been received and would be launched on board a single PSLV-class vehicle, which would couple at an altitude of about 700 km," he said.

India, China revive bilateral ties, aim to resolve border dispute

Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Oct 23: India and China took a significant step towards their bilateral relationship on Wednesday, announcing plans to address the longstanding boundary dispute and promote peace and tranquillity in border areas.

agement from remaining friction spots in Eastern Ladakh and the revival of bilateral relations through dialogue mechanisms. The Ministry of External Affairs said,



"They welcomed the recent agreement for complete disengagement and resolution of issues that arose in 2020 in the India-China

border areas". National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, the special representatives on the boundary question, will meet to explore a fair and mutually acceptable solution. The two nations have exchanged maps detailing their respective perceptions of the boundary in the central sector.

Convene meeting to approve artificial rain plan for Delhi: Gopal Rai

Naresh Malhotra

New Delhi, Oct. 23: Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday said he has written to the central government reiterating his request to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to approve a cloud seeding proposal to artificially induce rain to combat air pollution in Delhi.

ures, including cloud seeding, to mitigate the health risks posed by hazardous smog and pollution levels. He also reminded Yadav of his previous letters dated August 30 and



October 10 in this regard. "Delhi's air quality has already reached alarming levels and the government has implemented the Winter Action Plan from September 25, 2024, to combat pollution. However, in case the situation

worsens, we are exploring alternative solutions for immediate relief," Rai said. Cloud seeding, a process that involves artificially inducing rainfall to wash pollutants from the atmosphere, has been explored by the Delhi government before. However, it requires clearances from various central government agencies, including the Ministry of Defence, Directorate General of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India, he said.

JMM releases 2nd list, Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji to contest from Ranchi

Ranchi, Oct 23: The JMM on Wednesday released its second list of candidates for the upcoming Jharkhand assembly polls, fielding Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji from Ranchi. Maji, who was elected unopposed to the Rajya



Sabha in June 2022, previously served as the chairperson of the Jharkhand State Commission for Women and was the former president of the JMM's women's wing. She had contested the Ranchi assembly seat unsuccessfully in 2014 and 2019. NDA constituent BJP has fielded incumbent legislator CP Singh

from Ranchi. Meanwhile, sources said there was resentment among INDIA bloc constituent Congress over JMM's nominee from the seat. Earlier in 2022, when Maji's name was announced as Rajya Sabha candidate, the Congress maintained that there was "a contradiction between what was discussed in Delhi and the decision that was taken by the JMM".

HC refuses to recall order on consolidating all suits

ST Correspondent

New Delhi, Oct. 23: The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday rejected an application to recall its January 11 order that consolidated all suits of the Hindu side filed in the Krishna Jannabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute of Mathura. Counsel Tasneem Ahmadi, who appeared on behalf of the Muslim side, had sought recall of the order contending that the matter is in a premature stage and cases should not be consolidated before framing of issues and collecting evidence.

Didn't reveal Parliamentary committee proceedings on Waqf Bill: Jagdambika

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, Oct 23: Jagdambika Pal, who heads the Parliamentary committee on Waqf Bill, on Wednesday rejected the Opposition's allegations that he had violated norms by going public about TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee smashing a glass bottle and hurling it at the chair during a meeting of the panel. "I have not revealed any proceedings or deliberations of the committee. I have only made statement about an incident of violence during the committee meeting by a member and his subsequent suspension," Pal said.

Supreme Court finds fault with laws, action by states to curb stubble burning

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, Oct 23: The Supreme Court said that time has come to remind the governments that there is a fundamental right vested in Article 21 of Constitution for citizens to live in a pollution-free environment. The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the states of Punjab and Haryana for not stopping stubble burning, and the Centre for making the Environment Protection Act "toothless", amid worsening air quality in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Augustine George Masih, said, "Despite orders of this court, there is no change



at the grassroots level. We put all concerned to notice that stricter action has to be taken against those responsible for violations." The court found the action by the two states to be an "eye wash" and blamed them for lacking seriousness in

implementing the laws and asked why all cases of stubble burning were not met with FIR and compensation. The bench also directed the Centre to reconsider the paltry sum that was fixed based on an earlier order passed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The court said, "The signal that you are giving them is that if you commit breach, you will go scot-free."

Priyanka Gandhi kicks off poll debut with massive roadshow, files nomination

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

Wayanad, Oct 23: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who kicked off her electoral debut with a massive roadshow in Kalpetta here and filed her nomination for the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll, on Wednesday said she has 35 years of experience in the political arena beginning from the age of 17 years when she campaigned for her late father Rajiv Gandhi in 1989.

myself." Her statement comes a day after BJP's Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll candidate Navya Haridas said she was more experienced in representing people than Priyanka. Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy and other senior party leaders were present on the dais during Priyanka's speech. During her public address, Priyanka further said that she was deeply grateful to Kharge for giving her the "privilege" of being the UDF candidate from Wayanad and "it is my honour to represent you (people of Wayanad), if you give me a chance".



and grateful to you for this support. He (Rahul) is sad to leave you, but I have promised him that I will only strengthen the bond between you and him. "I am here to fight your battles, stand by you

through thick and thin, be your voice, and I will not let you down," she said. Attacking the BJP government at the Centre, Priyanka said that the present times were one where those in power were trying to divide the people who voted them to power. "They do not hesitate to subvert democracy. It is not the politics on which our nation was founded," she said. The Congress leader also said that all religious texts, be it the Bible, Gita or Quran, teaches love, humility and equality. Rahul, who also addressed the gathering, asked the people of the hill region to take care of his sister, Priyanka Gandhi, just as they had protected and looked after him when he needed it most. Rahul, who represented Wayanad from 2019 to 2024, also said that he would be the unofficial MP from the constituency, while his sister would be the official MP. "So, there will be two MPs from Wayanad in Parliament," he said.

and Rae Bareilly constituency this year, decided to vacate Wayanad. Kharge, who also spoke at the event, said that Priyanka is in Wayanad not just to file her nomination, but as a relentless champion for the people of the hill district. "Bless her, and she will deliver the results," he said. After their public address, Priyanka left for the collectorate where she filed her nomination papers in the presence of Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Kharge and AICC general secretary K C Venugopal. Subsequently, Priyanka and Rahul visited the Puthumala mass burial ground and paid tribute to those who lost their lives in the Wayanad landslides. Earlier in the day, she was given a rousing welcome by thousands of UDF workers and supporters as well as members of the general public of all age groups, who were waiting since early morning, carrying placards with Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi's photographs, balloons in the party colours and drum beats. Balloons in the party colours of the Congress and its ally Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) dominated the scene as they were also lined up on both sides of the nearly two kilometer long roadshow route.

News box

Three held for assaulting guard at Mamallapuram



CHENNAI. The Mamallapuram police arrested three people, including two women, on Tuesday on charges of assaulting a private security person at the entrance of Pancha Rathas in Mamallapuram on Sunday evening. The police said that a search is on to nab one more person.

The police identified the arrested as Prabhu Inbadas (41), his wife Keerthana (29), and Shanmugapriya (38). The three of them along with Krishnamurthy (42), Shanmugapriya's husband, were in the car on Sunday.

As they went to Pancha Rathas, security guard Ezhumalai (42) stopped their car from entering a no-entry road. He told them to park at a nearby lot and walk to Pancha Rathas complex. This led to an argument between Ezhumalai and the group. It can be heard in the clip that the group asked Ezhumalai why he hit their car with the plastic pipe which he was using as a staff. The argument soon turned violent and the four people from the car got out, assaulted Ezhumalai, and fled.

By & for women: 250 pink autos to hit Chennai



CHENNAI. The state government will partially fund 'pink autorickshaws' that will be operated by women in Chennai to ensure the safe travel of women and children. The government will provide '1 lakh each as grant to 250 women residing in Chennai to buy CNG/hybrid autorickshaws. Loan will be provided for the rest of the amount required to purchase the vehicle.

Women in the age group of 25-45 can apply for the scheme, and priority would be given to widows and destitute women. The applicants should be residents of Chennai, should have passed the SSLC examination and possess a driving licence.

The release added that eligible women who wish to avail the scheme should send an application to the social welfare officer, 8th floor, Singaravelar Maaligai, Chennai-600001, by November 23. In June, Social Welfare Minister Geetha Jeevan announced the scheme in the Assembly. She had also said the autos would have a helpline and a GPS tracking system monitored by the police department. The minister had also said the pink autos would be functional in railway stations and bus stands in Chennai.

Hoax bomb threat at Kochi airport: X approached for details of two accounts

KOCHI. With four bomb hoaxes reported on flights from Kochi airport in three days, the police have started attempting to collect details of two X handles which were involved in three such threats. Neddumbassery police have approached the social media platform regarding the false messages sent to flight operators on Saturday and Sunday.

According to the police, the first message received on the X handle of Alliance Air was from an account named adamlanza111, claiming to have placed bombs on its Kochi-Bengaluru flight on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday, two threats were issued to the X handle of Akasa Air, claiming that 12 persons carrying bombs were on six of its flights. The hoax was sent from the X account schizophrenial11.

"These two accounts were involved in a majority of the hoaxes received by various flight operators across India. We have approached the platform X, seeking details of these two accounts. The IP address of the device used for issuing the threats has been sought. We suspect the messages were sent by the same person. Also, it is suspected that the accused used a virtual private network (VPN) to access the X account and issue the threats. Most likely, the X accounts were created and threats were issued via mobile phones," a police officer said.

The police will coordinate with other state police forces. "Over 70 flights operating from all major airports in the country received bomb hoaxes last week. Cases have been registered for false bomb threats in other states as well. We are looking to collect information from other state police forces. Also, we are checking similar threats issued to airline companies in the past to know more about the pattern.

As we suspect the usage of VPN in posting threats on X, there is the possibility of someone within the country being behind the act," the officer said. On receiving the hoaxes, a Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) was convened to assess the situation and the threat was classified as "non-specific". On Monday, a passenger was detained after he told security persons that he was carrying a bomb during the security check.

15 CID teams raid eight distilleries in Andhra Pradesh, documents seized

The teams were headed by officers of the ranks of additional superintendent of police (ADSP) and deputy superintendent of police.

VIJAYAWADA. Sleuths of the Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department (APCID) conducted inspections at eight distilleries in the State on Tuesday. As many as 15 teams, comprising 30 CID police personnel, carried out the searches and seized documents related to the production and supply of liquor.

The teams were headed by officers of the ranks of additional superintendent of police (ADSP) and deputy superintendent of police.

Sources in the CID said the raids were conducted based on complaints received over the past few years, alleging irregularities at a few liquor manufacturing units, supply of substandard liquor to outlets

and sale of liquor through syndicates. In Krishna district, searches were carried out at a bottling unit in Auto Nagar, a private distillery in Davuluru village, a bottling plant operating in a biotech manufacturing unit in Gandepalli, and a beverage unit in Chintala Narava village. The sleuths also inspected distilleries and bottling units at Pedavegi in Eluru, Kasimkota in Anakapalli, Renigunta in Tirupati, Koppavaram in East Godavari, Karakambadi and Thimmasamudram in Chittoor, Old Singarayakonda in Prakasam, and in YSR and Nandyal. Officials verified records pertaining to procurement of raw material in distilleries.



Death toll in Bengaluru building collapse reaches five; three remain trapped, 13 rescued

A total of 21 labourers from Bihar, Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, and Yadgir in Karnataka were trapped when the under-construction building gave way.

BENGALURU. The death toll from the collapse of an under-construction building in Bengaluru's Babusapalya has risen to five, with three people still trapped under the debris.

The collapse occurred around 3:40 pm on Tuesday amid heavy rainfall in the city. A total of 21 labourers from Bihar, Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, and Yadgir in Karnataka were trapped when the under-construction building gave way. CCTV footage showed the building's first floor collapsing before the entire six-storey structure leaned and then split into two parts. A night-long rescue operation involving the NDRF, SDRF, police, and fire emergency services is underway to save the trapped labourers. A senior officer told that the death toll has increased to five, with three people still believed to be trapped



inside the collapsed structure. The senior officer added that the building belonged to Muniraju Reddy, a realtor from Andhra Pradesh, who is currently absconding with his mobile phone switched off.

He stated that the police will take appropriate action based on the complaints from the injured once the

rescue operations are completed.

According to police, the deceased have been identified as Harman (26), Tripal (35), Mohammad Sahil (19), Sathya Raju (25), and Shankar. In total, 13 individuals have been rescued, while six are receiving treatment at Bengaluru North and Hosmat hospitals.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who visited the site, indicated that the incident may have been caused by the use of substandard materials. Labour Minister Santosh Lad also visited the site to supervise the rescue operations.

"There are several constructions happening in the city using low-quality materials. I have directed officials to investigate to prevent such incidents from recurring," Shivakumar said.

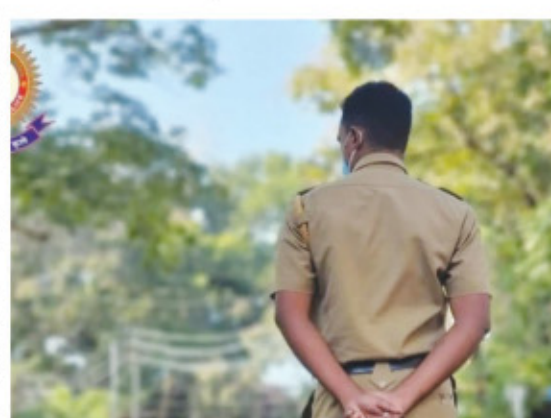
Phone thieves have links with popular retail shops in Mumbai, Delhi: Kerala police

KOCHI. The police investigating the theft of mobile phones during the October 6 concert of DJ Alan Walker at Bolgatty have found that the accused persons have links with some popular smartphone retailers in Mumbai and New Delhi.

The police team will bring two persons arrested from Mumbai to Kochi on Wednesday.

The police have found that two separate gangs based in New Delhi and Mumbai committed the thefts during the concert. Until now, 39 phones have been found to have been stolen. Around 20 phones were recovered from Wasim Ahmed and Athik Rahman who were arrested from Delhi, while three were recovered from Sunny Bhola Yadav and Shyam Baranwal who were taken into custody from Mumbai.

"The accused persons have not divulged information about those who bought the



stolen phones from them. However, upon checking their contacts, it was found they were linked to some popular mobile phone retail firms in Mumbai and New Delhi as well. Our team inspected a mobile phone store at a mall in Mumbai after links of the accused with them came

to light. We suspect the accused persons were supplying phones to these retailers too. We recovered around 20 phones from the two persons arrested from New Delhi, but not all of those phones were stolen from the concert in Kochi. Attempts are being made to trace all the stolen phones," a police officer said. Sunny and Shyam will be brought to Kochi on Wednesday. Police have also moved court seeking the custody of Wasim and Athik. "Four more people have to be arrested. Two of them are from New Delhi and two are from Mumbai. The absconding accused handled the sale of stolen phones. We are searching for them with the help of the Mumbai and Delhi police. A detailed interrogation of the arrested persons will reveal more about other gang members," said the officer.

Telangana aims to recreate 'Miracle of the Han' at Musi

The ministers observed that Telangana's Musi river is somewhere between the Cheonggyecheon and Hangang rivers in terms of its condition, as it requires both revival and development.

SEOUL. For being ranked among the global top five cities in terms of urban competitiveness, Seoul — the capital of South Korea — has undertaken the second phase of its riverfront development, known as the Great Hangang Project (GHP).

The South Korean model bears a resemblance to the Telangana government's approach, as it has set an ambitious target of achieving a two-trillion-dollar economy by pursuing a similar riverfront development project.

A delegation from the Telangana government, led by ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnampalabharani, which also included Chief Minister's adviser Vem Narender Reddy, bureaucrats and elected representatives, went around the Hangang (also known as the Han river) and explored the floating amenities built on it.

A day after studying the Cheonggyecheon river restoration, the delegation examined the Han riverfront development by interacting with local



administration and visiting the riverfront. The ministers observed that Telangana's Musi river is somewhere between the

Cheonggyecheon and Hangang rivers in terms of its condition, as it requires both revival and development.

The Han river flows through the Seoul metropolitan area for around 50 km and is one of the primary reasons the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG), the capital city's civic body, initiated the GHP.

Once polluted, River Han water now fit for drinking

The objectives of the GHP are to enhance the citizens' quality of life by improving the attractiveness of the river and upgrading its riverside amenities while respecting the natural ecosystem.

As part of the GHP, the SMG will also develop various modes of transportation for both pedestrians and public transit users through different projects and create venues for artistic and cultural experiences, such as concerts and festivals. The SMG has set a target to complete the project within the next five years.

While the first phase of the Hangang riverfront development — the Hangang Renaissance Project — was aimed at reviving the highly

polluted river, the second phase aimed to create urban parks in the buffer zone and build floating amenities.

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News box

Water supplier and 2 others arrested for assaulting condo security guards

Gurgaon. A private water supplier and his two associates were arrested for assaulting three security guards at an under-construction condominium on Oct 18. An argument over water supply at the construction site resulted in the altercation. The accused attacked the guards with sticks, threatening to kill them if water was procured from any other supplier. Based on the complaint of Pankaj Tiwari, one of the guards, a case was registered at Rajendra Park police station. The accused—Lala Kataria alias Manish Kataria, Lalit Janghu and Deepak Punia were arrested on Tuesday. Around 10pm on Oct 18, the accused arrived at ATS Homecraft Society's site near Daultabad flyover in Sector 15, Tiwari alleged. "They got out of their vehicle and started attacking me with sticks once I tried to stop them from entering the site. They damaged the furniture in the guard room, sales office, and also the CCTV cameras. When I raised an alarm, two of my colleagues, Sriram Tiwari and Nilesh Dube, came to my rescue. The accused assaulted them too. They left the place only after threatening to kill us if water for the project is procured from anyone else other than Kataria," Tiwari said. A case was registered under sections 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 3 (5) (common intention), 324 (4) (mischief causing damage to the amount of twenty thousand rupees and more but less than one lakh rupees), 333 (house-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint), and 351 (2) (criminal intimidation) of BNS on Oct 19.

After Kochi, Aqua Line stns will also offer power banks

Noida: Commuters on Aqua Line trains can now charge their mobile phones on the go. The Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) has hired an agency to provide a power bank facility on a pay-and-use basis starting Wednesday. An NMRC official said that each station on the Aqua Line, which spans Noida and Greater Noida, will be equipped with three power bank vending machines, each with at least 24 slots for mobile power backups. "These on-the-go power banks will be available for use and can be returned to any metro station's power bank vending machines," said the official. A similar facility is already operational at the Kochi Metro. To access the service, commuters must download the mobile app of the service provider, scan the QR code on the machine, and release a power bank. They can use the power bank during their commute and return it at the exit station. Speaking about how daily commuters can benefit from this facility, Dhruv Kumar, a commuter, told TOI, "This is a bustling city, and people are always on the move, whether for work, college, meetings, or social gatherings. Often, phone batteries die while traveling, which can be very inconvenient, especially when we rely on them for staying connected, navigation, payments, etc. Having power banks available at metro stations will make commuting hassle-free and ensure people stay connected."

Man 'beaten to death' after clash; 2 arrested

Noida. Police arrested two persons after a 28-year-old man succumbed to injuries allegedly after a fight over some dispute with his friends in Greater Noida's Dadri area on Monday night. Police have arrested two of the named accused after a case was registered under BNS Section 103(1) (murder). According to a complaint filed by the brother of the victim — Prashant alias Chhotu — he engaged in a fight with Jitendra alias Chinche, Kamal, Anuj and Gabba. Prashant's elder brother later told police the former had a dispute with his friends over "removing the motorcycle" near a liquor shop in the area a day earlier. However, police said Prashant was a "habitual drinker". On Sunday, he got into a fight with the accused, all of whom were his friends. Prashant allegedly suffered minor injuries and went to the police station, but his brother took him away," an official said. On Monday, Prashant went to Jitendra's house in an inebriated state and picked another fight with the accused. He reportedly suffered serious injuries this time and then tried to leave on his motorcycle. "He lost control of his bike near a construction site and fell unconscious. He was taken to a hospital where he was declared dead," the officer said.

Noida DM wants action plan to fix 29 black spots, background checks on school bus drivers

Noida. The Noida DM Manish Verma has directed the three development authorities to prepare an action plan to fix 29 black spots and illegal cuts across the district. The DM, who presided over a district road safety meeting on Tuesday, also asked the transport department to carry out fitness checks of school buses and bar unfit vehicles from plying. He has also asked cops to carry out background checks of drivers and crackdown on overloaded vehicles. Noida, which reported 1,176 road crashes in 2023, saw at least 773 accidents in the first eight months of this year, which is 6.6% more than the 725 recorded in the corresponding period last year. In Sept, the city saw at least 80 crashes, several of these in the 29 black spots — road stretches that see a high number of accidents and fatalities — that have been identified by the traffic police. Some of these busy and crash-prone areas are the busy Rajnigandha Chowk, Sector 21/25 roundabout near Modi Mall, Mahamaya Flyover, GIP Mall, Hajipur underpass, Yamaha Cut in Surajpur, Sector 37, Noida Expressway zero point near Sector 168 and NH-24 zero point in Sector 58. According to officials, at least six of these black spots have been reengineered and revamped recently to reduce accidents and will be struck off the list once a joint team from the administration inspects the junctions and issues a compliance report. Proposals to reengineer the other black spots will be reviewed in the next meeting, Verma said. "Under the School Vehicle Safety campaign, transport and education department officials will have to collaborate to conduct fitness checks of all school vehicles. School buses without fitness certificates will have to be taken off roads."

Tweaks in plan to escalate cost, GMDA wants NHAI to share funds for elevated road project

Gurgaon. GMDA has urged NHAI to share the financial burden of Hero Honda Chowk-Umang Bharadwaj Chowk stretch after changes in the redevelopment plan have led to an increase of around Rs 140 crore in the project cost. The original plan — which included the widening of the 2.2-kilometre stretch and the construction of a single flyover at Umang Bharadwaj Chowk — was initially pegged at Rs 138 crore, fully funded by GMDA. The flyover with three lanes at the intersection, as proposed earlier, included three spans of 30m, 20m and 20m with ramps around 450m in each direction. However, a revised plan now calls for a fully elevated six-lane corridor, pushing the total cost to Rs 280 crore. This difference of around Rs 140 crore is what led to GMDA proposing NHAI partially fund it. The proposal will be submitted to the state govt, which will take it up with the ministry of road transport and highways (MoRTH) for final approval, a GMDA official said. "The revised plan aligns with the city's traffic demands and a fully elevated corridor will help avoid future bottlenecks. We are proposing that NHAI share the financial cost. The



proposal will be submitted to the state govt soon," a senior GMDA official said. An NHAI official, who is privy to the matter, confirmed the same, adding, it is "working on the financial modality" of the project. The matter was also discussed during a review meeting chaired by GMDA CEO A Sreenivas on Monday. The GMDA CEO discussed the obstructions in the project and directed the officials to explore "an alternative land" for the construction of a control room for a

substation, which currently lies in the project's alignment. This project was part of a broader plan, first approved in 2017, to widen and improve the 5.6 km stretch between Hero Honda Chowk and Dwarka Expressway. While GMDA completed its work on the 3-km section between Umang Bharadwaj Chowk and Dwarka Expressway and NHAI operationalised the underpass on the expressway, the work on the 2.2-km stretch between Hero Honda Chowk and Umang Bharadwaj is

yet to take off. The project was originally financed by GMDA, while HSPV was responsible for handing over the land required for the revamp of the 2.2-km stretch. The revamp plan underwent several revisions. Initially, NHAI proposed to widen the road into six lanes with a flyover at Umang Bharadwaj Chowk and the work for this was originally supposed to start in 2019. But later, it was decided that the project would be merged with the Gurugram-Pataudi-Rewari Highway, pushing the start date to Nov 2021 with a deadline of Nov 2023. Later in 2022, Gurgaon MP and Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh insisted on the construction of an elevated road between Hero Honda and Umang Bharadwaj Chowk, citing demand from RWAs and industrial associations. Subsequently, the approval of metro expansion works cast a shadow of doubt on the project. It could not be decided whether at-grade redevelopment works should be taken up; an elevated road along with a metro pillar should be constructed; or a double-decker with an elevated structure and metro on a single pier should be made.

MCG gets 71 complaints, resolves 14 on Day 1 of grievance meet

Gurgaon. On the inaugural day of the grievance redress meeting held at the MCG office, officials took up a total of 71 complaints. Of these, 14 complaints were resolved immediately at the meeting. For the remaining 57 complaints, MCG commissioner Narhari Singh Banger set deadlines for resolution. Following the govt directive, civic body offices are required to organise daily camps to address public grievances. These camps will be conducted at all four MCG offices, one in each zone, and will operate from 9am to 11am every day. The initiative aims to provide a platform for citizens to voice their concerns and have their issues resolved promptly by municipal authorities. The commissioner has directed all officials to be present daily in these meetings

and address the complaints submitted by the residents. Former MCG Councillor Virender Raj raised the issue of water supply to unauthorised colonies under the 900-metre radius of the ammunition depot. "The MCG Executive Engineer has written to the GMDA Engineer to provide a canal-based water connection from the GMDA master line to Noble Enclave. How can authorities supply water to illegal colonies? They have 24x7 water supply as they get illegal connections from the master water line, but people living in authorised areas such as Dundaheera and other sectors are deprived of water," said the former Councillor. He raised the issue in the camp on Tuesday, after which MCG officials were directed to look into the matter.

MCG commissioner said, "These resolution camps will not only bridge the gap between the public and officials but also ensure that grievances are resolved within the stipulated time frame. To maintain a clean and pollution-free city, all citizens must follow the guidelines set forth by the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which has been put into action by the Air Quality Management Commission. "This plan encompasses several key points that everyone should adhere to. Citizens must refrain from burning waste materials. Additionally, during construction activities, proper dust management techniques, such as covering construction materials, debris, and waste during transport, must be employed to minimise the spread of particulate matter."

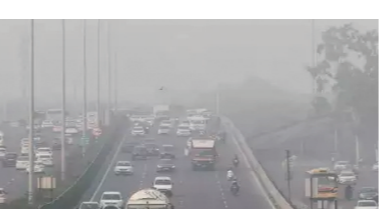
Hry suspends 24 officials for failing to curb stubble burning

Gurgaon. The Haryana govt on Tuesday suspended 24 officials over alleged failure to take adequate steps to prevent stubble burning incidents in their respective areas. The Supreme Court in the last hearing had pulled up the Punjab and Haryana governments for not acting against those found guilty of stubble burning. It also summoned the state chief secretaries to appear before it on October 23 for an explanation. Apart from suspending these 24 agriculture department officials, the Haryana government has so far arrested 18 farmers in the Kaithal district for burning crop residue and has blacklisted around 400 farmers for stubble burning and has barred them from selling their crops at mandis for a period of two years. The arrested farmers were later let off on bail.

The officials, who have been placed under suspension, include agriculture inspectors, supervisors and agriculture development officers from nine districts --Jind, Panipat, Hisar, Kaithal, Karnal, Fatehabad, Kurukshetra, Sonapat and Ambala. There have been over 1500 cases of stubble burning in Punjab so far this season, while this figure for Haryana is around 400 so far. "We are trying whatever we can to keep the stubble burning cases to a minimum level. We are providing resources for farmers which will prevent them from burning crop residue. The action that has been taken against the farmers as well as the agriculture department officials is because they have failed to comply with the directions of the Supreme Court," said an official. The main opposition party Congress has hit out against the BJP govt for taking such action against the farmers. "This is an anti-farmer govt and therefore it is arresting them. It just wants to put up a show in the court that it is doing something to prevent stubble burning by arresting these farmers, but in reality it has failed to prevent and find a lasting solution to this problem," said a Congress leader. Punjab said it had registered 874 FIRs and lodged 471 daily dairy reports

City air 'poor' for 3 days on trot, set to worsen, blame farm fires & wind

Gurgaon. The city's air remained in the 'poor' category for the third consecutive day. The air quality index (AQI) rose to 226 on Tuesday, while it was recorded at 221 on the previous day. Sector 51 station recorded the highest AQI at 256, followed by Teri Gram (240) and Vikas Sadan (197). No data was available at Gwalpahari monitoring station. According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), surface winds with speeds ranging from 4 kmph to 12 kmph are expected in the region for the next six days. The AQI is likely to deteriorate to 'very poor' in the coming days as the prevailing meteorological conditions and calm winds are unfavourable for the effective dispersion of pollutants. "The AQI is likely to deteriorate to very poor in the coming days since the wind



and further to 15% on Thursday," said Shubhansh Tiwari, a research associate at the Centre for Science and Environment. So far this year, the state has recorded 655 cases of stubble burning, releasing particulate pollutants. According to CPCB, the annual average permissible limits for PM2.5 and PM10 are 40µg/m³ and 60µg/m³, respectively. On Tuesday, the PM2.5 level was highest in Sector 51 (203 µg/m³), followed by 189 µg/m³ in Teri Gram, and 181 µg/m³

PM2.5 is predicted to rise to 11% on Wednesday and further to 15% on Thursday. According to an analysis by Climate Trends, a think tank, Haryana and Punjab recorded fluctuations in fire incidents between 2019 and 2023, with notable reductions in 2022 and 2023. The think tank's analysis of satellite data on fire incidents in Haryana showed that the fire counts dropped from 14,122 in 2019 to 7,959 in 2023, with fire activity consistently higher between Sept and Dec. While Gurgaon, Mewat, and Jhajjar showed notable rises, Karnal and Kaithal had approximately 86% and 78% fewer cases of stubble burning, respectively. The report also stated that Delhi's air health was significantly impacted by these fire incidents. On days without fires, the city's AQI averaged 175 (moderate). However, during the same

A grid of legal notices and advertisements. Each notice includes a title (e.g., NAME CHANGE, PUBLIC NOTICE), a brief description of the legal action or information, and contact details for the relevant party. The notices cover various topics such as name changes, property matters, and public information.

News box

US elections: Harris says she's ready if Trump prematurely declares victory, isn't worried about sexism

WASHINGTON. Vice President Kamala Harris said Tuesday that her team is prepared to challenge Donald Trump if he tries to prematurely declare victory in the 2024 election—but she's first focused on beating the Republican nominee.

Harris spoke to NBC News just two weeks before Election Day, as part of a media blitz meant to deliver her closing argument before as many persuadable voters as possible. She said she was not concerned about the role sexism could play in the election, as she stands to be the first woman elected to the White House, and again defended President Joe Biden's fitness for office. Harris said the Democrats "have the resources and the expertise" should Trump try to subvert the election. "This is a person, Donald Trump, who tried to undo the—a free and fair election, who still denies the will of the people, who incited a violent mob to attack the United States Capitol and some 140 law enforcement officers were attacked. Some—were killed. This is a very serious matter," she said. Trump has been criminally charged with trying to overturn the 2020 election and refuses to admit he lost to President Joe Biden. After a failed legal effort to overturn the results, a mob of Trump supporters rioted at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, attacking law enforcement in an effort to stop the certification of the race. At Harris' rallies, some of her supporters chant "Lock him up," something Trump often said about his former Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. Harris often replies: "The courts will take care of that. We'll take care of November."

PM Modi to hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi on sidelines of BRICS summit

KAZAN. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping will hold a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS summit here on Wednesday, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said.

"I can confirm that there will be a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Jinping tomorrow," Misri said at a media briefing. The meeting follows the announcement by India on Monday that both countries had reached an agreement on resolving their standoff in eastern Ladakh.

"Over the last several weeks, Indian and Chinese diplomatic and military negotiators have been in close contact with each other in a variety of forums. As a result of these discussions, an agreement has been made for patrolling arrangements along the LAC leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020. We will be taking the next steps on this," said Misri on Monday, ahead of PM Modi leaving for Kazan.

China on Tuesday confirmed that a deal had been reached. "Over a recent period of time, China and India have kept close communication through diplomatic and military channels on issues related to the China-India border," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing in Beijing. Now, the two sides have reached a resolution on the 'relevant matters', he said. He added that China will work with India to implement it but declined to provide details. Confirming Sinwar's death, Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya said in a video statement on October 18 that the militant group was mourning the loss of its "great leader".

Trudeau's Ministers Junked RCMP Embargo, Gave Classified Information On India To Washington Post

Ottawa, Canada Despite the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) putting an embargo on publicly announcing sensitive information pertaining to India, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's national security adviser and deputy foreign minister went ahead and leaked classified information to US-based newspaper the Washington Post.

Canadian newspaper The Globe and Mail, who first reported the development, also said that actions of Trudeau's top national security and intelligence adviser, and David Morrison, deputy minister at Global Affairs (Canadian counterpart of the Indian ministry of external affairs), are in contrast to how Trudeau said he feels about leaks of classified information. Trudeau had earlier criticized the leaking of classified information about China's interference to The Globe and Mail, calling that leak "a criminal act".

But the leak in India's case, where the Trudeau government cast aspersions that Indian government was involved in homicides in Canada, did not spark any reaction from Trudeau, even in front of the foreign interference committee where he gave a testimonial last week.

McDonald's burgers tied to E Coli outbreak in US that killed 1, sickened dozens



Washington One person died and dozens fell ill from E. coli infections linked to McDonald's Quarter Pounder hamburgers in 10 states, led by Colorado, where 26 people were sickened, the US Centers for Disease Control said on Tuesday.

The E. coli outbreak, linked to one of McDonald's most popular menu items, has sickened 49 people and sent 10 to the hospital, officials say. The strain involved, E. coli O157:H7, can cause serious illness and was the source of a 1993 outbreak that killed four children who ate undercooked hamburgers at Jack in the Box restaurants.

Shares of the world's largest fast-food chain were down about 6% in extended trading. A livestock trader said the outbreak also could pressure US cattle futures on Wednesday by threatening demand for beef. Everyone interviewed as part of an investigation into the outbreak has reported eating at McDonald's before their illness started, and most mentioned eating

a Quarter Pounder hamburger, according to the CDC.

The specific ingredient linked to the illness has not been identified but investigators are focused on fresh, sliced onions and fresh beef patties, the CDC said. Most of the illnesses were reported in Colorado and Nebraska. "The initial findings from the investigation indicate that a subset of illnesses may be linked to sliced onions used in the Quarter Pounder and sourced by a single supplier that serves three distribution centers," McDonald's North America Chief Supply Chain Officer Cesar Pina said in a statement. McDonald's has proactively removed the sliced onions and beef patties used for the Quarter Pounder hamburgers from stores in the affected states while the investigation continues, the company informed the CDC. US food safety attorney Bill Marler, who represented a victim in the Jack in the Box outbreak, said more



cases of illness could surface. Onions have been linked to prior E. coli O157:H7 outbreaks, he said.

According to Marler, a founder of Marler Clark in Seattle, beef contamination is less common due to food safety measures. "You'd have to have multiple restaurants under-cooking the meat," he said.

McDonald's is temporarily removing the Quarter Pounder from restaurants in the impacted areas, including Colorado, Kansas, Utah and Wyoming, it said in a statement, adding it was working with suppliers to replenish supply in the

coming week. Symptoms for E. coli include severe stomach cramps, diarrhoea and vomiting. Most people who suffer an infection will start feeling sick three to four days after eating or drinking something that contains the bacteria, Colorado's public health department said. However, illnesses can start anywhere from one to 10 days after exposure, the department added. In 2015, burrito chain Chipotle saw its sales battered and reputation hit due to E. coli outbreaks in several states. That outbreak was linked to a different strain of E. coli that typically causes less severe illness than E. coli O157:H7. In addition to Colorado, the CDC said small clusters of a few people fell ill after eating a Quarter Pounder in Nebraska, Utah and Wyoming. Kansas, Missouri, Oregon, Iowa, Wisconsin and Montana had one illness apiece.

Why Hasina's missing letter is fuelling a storm in Bangladesh

World After the Prime Minister, it is the President of Bangladesh who's in the eye of the storm. Fresh protests have broken out against President Mohammed Shahabuddin, with angry protesters storming the presidential palace and seeking his removal. The new crisis in Bangladesh is over former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation letter, or the non-existence of it. The Sheikh Hasina regime was toppled by weeks of protests and bloodshed across Bangladesh and the killing of over 300 people. Hasina was forced to flee Bangladesh on August 5 as hundreds of thousands of protesters marched towards her official residence, Ganabhaban. Hasina managed to escape in the nick of time as the mob later ransacked Ganabhaban. She wanted to record a farewell speech but with the sea of

protesters fast approaching Ganabhaban, the army gave her 45 minutes to pack up and leave Bangladesh to save her life.

Those last moments are what have fuelled the latest frenzy. According to reports, Sheikh Hasina, along with her younger sister Rehana, arrived at the helipad at the Tejgaon Air Base, adjoining her official residence. Some of her belongings were loaded onboard. It was reported that she then went to Bangabhabon, the President's house, where she tendered her formal resignation to President Mohammed Shahabuddin. But there is no resignation letter, at least not that President Shahabuddin knows of. That's what Shahabuddin said in an interview with Janatar Chokh. He said that he had only heard that Hasina had resigned, but had no evidence of her resignation. "I tried

[to collect the resignation letter] many times but failed. Maybe she did not have the time," Shahabuddin told Janatar Chokh.

WHY IS SHEIKH HASINA'S RESIGNATION LETTER IMPORTANT

Why Hasina's resignation letter is important is because it legitimises the caretaker government headed by Muhammad Yunus. Otherwise, the government would be likened to being an illegitimate one that grabbed power amid a power vacuum in Bangladesh. Those critical of the government have already started questioning it over Hasina's missing resignation letter. "Sheikh Hasina did not resign from her prime minister post, and she is still alive. Therefore, the Yunus government is illegal," said exiled Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen.

Bangladesh tense as protesters storm President's residence, seek his resignation

World Bangladesh is witnessing renewed tensions after hundreds of protesters stormed Bangabhaban, or the President's residence, in Dhaka on Tuesday night, demanding the removal of President Mohammed Shahabuddin for "lying" about deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation in August. The renewed protests came months after the political crisis in August ended Sheikh Hasina's 16-year reign and prompted her to flee to India. Last week, President Shahabuddin told a local newspaper that he did not have any evidence of Sheikh Hasina's resignation on August 5 and had only heard about it. "I tried [to collect the resignation letter] many times but failed. Maybe she did not have the time," he said.

However, in an address to the public on the night of August 5, Shahabuddin said: "You know Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has tendered her resignation letter to the president and I have received it." On Monday, Asif Nazrul, the Law Affairs Adviser, said the President "lied" and his remarks were "tantamount to violation of his oath of office", adding that there was a constitutional provision to remove him from office.

According to Bangladeshi media outlets, the protests began on Tuesday evening with protesters marching towards Bangabhaban. As more people joined the demonstration, the police resorted to firing stun grenades in a bid to disperse the crowd. But the protesters marched ahead, leading to clashes with law enforcement personnel.

The Daily Star newspaper said that at least five people, including two journalists, were injured, while the police used tear gas and batons against the protesters. Late Tuesday night, Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam -- two of the most prominent figures of the Anti-discrimination Student Movement which spearheaded the campaign to oust Sheikh Hasina -- arrived at the protest site and requested the demonstrators to leave. The Daily Star reported. While Hasnat assured of talking to political parties to choose a new President by Thursday, Sarjis said that if no one was appointed by the deadline, they would also "join you in the streets".

The two student leaders also laid a five-point demand, including the scrapping of Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution. "Our first point (of the five-point demand) is immediate scrapping of the 'promujib (Bangladesh's founding leader) 1972 Constitution' which kept Chuppu (president's nickname) in office," PTI news agency quoted Hasnat as saying. "The (1972) Constitution will have to be replaced by writing a new one against the backdrop of 2024 mass upheaval."

It could take 350 years to rebuild Gaza if it remains under Israeli blockade: UN report

World United Nations agencies have long warned that it could take decades to rebuild Gaza after Israel's offensive against Hamas, one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns since World War II. Now, more than a year into the war, a new report speaks in terms of centuries. The UN Conference on Trade and Development said in a report released Monday that if the war ends tomorrow and Gaza returns to the status quo before Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, it could take 350 years for its battered economy to return to its precarious prewar level. Before the war, Gaza was under an Israeli and Egyptian blockade imposed after Hamas seized power in 2007. Four previous wars and divisions between Hamas and the Western-backed Palestinian Authority in the West Bank also took a toll on Gaza's economy. The current war has caused staggering destruction across the territory, with entire neighbourhoods obliterated and roads and critical infrastructure in ruins. Mountains of rubble laced with decomposing bodies and unexploded ordnance would have to be cleared before rebuilding could begin. "Once a ceasefire



is reached, a return to the pre-October 2023 status quo would not put Gaza on the path needed for recovery and sustainable development," the report said. "If the 2007-2022 growth trend returns, with an average growth rate of 0.4 percent, it will take Gaza 350 years just to restore the GDP levels of 2022."

Even then, GDP per capita would decline "continuously and precipitously" as the population grows, it said. Israel says the blockade is needed to prevent Hamas from importing arms and blames the militant group for Gaza's plight. "There is no future for the people of Gaza as long as their people continue to be occupied by Hamas," Israel's ambassador to the UN,

Danny Danon, said in response to the report. 350 years is more of a calculation than a prediction. Three hundred and fifty years is a long time. It would be as though England and the Netherlands were only now recovering from the wars they fought against each other in the late 1600s. Rami Alazeh, author of the report, said he based the calculation on the decimation of the economy during the first seven months of the war and how long it would take to restore it at the GDP growth rate Gaza averaged from 2007 until 2022. Gross domestic product, or GDP, is the sum total of all goods and services produced in a country or territory. "The message is the recovery in Gaza depends on the conditions in which the recovery would happen," he said. "We're not saying that it will take Gaza 350 years to recover because that means that Gaza will never recover." At the end of January, the World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion of damage — nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the southern border city of Rafah.

Hashem Safieddine, Hasan Nasrallah's likely heir, is dead: Israeli military

Tel Aviv/Jerusalem/Cairo, Israel on Tuesday confirmed it had killed Hashem Safieddine, the heir apparent to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah who was previously killed in an Israeli attack last month on the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group. The military said Safieddine was killed in a strike carried out three weeks ago in Beirut's southern suburbs, its first confirmation of his death. Earlier this month, Israel said he had probably been eliminated. There was no immediate response from Hezbollah to Israel's statement that it had killed Safieddine. Israel has been carrying out an escalating offensive after a year of border clashes with Hezbollah, which is reeling from a spate of killings of its senior commanders in Israeli airstrikes. The group is the most formidably armed of Iran's proxy forces across the Middle East and has been acting in support of Palestinian militants fighting Israel in Gaza.



A relative of Nasrallah, Safieddine was appointed to its Jihad Council - the body responsible for its military operations - and to its executive council, overseeing Hezbollah's financial and administrative affairs. Safieddine assumed a prominent role speaking for Hezbollah during the last year of hostilities with Israel, addressing funerals and other events that Nasrallah had long been unable to attend for security reasons.

Israeli strikes have been pummeling Lebanon's south, eastern Bekaa Valley and southern suburbs of Beirut - all Hezbollah strongholds. The group's fighters have been trying to push back Israeli ground incursions. Israel has so far shown no sign of relenting in its Gaza and Lebanon campaigns even after assassinating several leaders of Hamas and

were killed, including four children, and 60 injured by an Israeli airstrike near Beirut's main state hospital. Blinken faced an uphill struggle on both fronts. He spelt out US hopes that the death of Hamas leader Sinwar - blamed for triggering a year of devastating warfare by planning the deadly militant assault from Gaza on Israeli territory on October 7 last year - will provide a new opportunity for peace. "The Secretary underscored the need to capitalise on Israel's successful action to bring Yahya Sinwar to justice by securing the release of all hostages and ending the conflict in Gaza in a way that

provides lasting security for Israelis and Palestinians alike," the US State Department said in a statement on the Jerusalem meetings. In a statement issued by his office, Netanyahu said Sinwar's elimination "may have a positive effect on the return of the hostages, the achievement of all the goals of the war, and the day after the war".

But there was no mention of a possible ceasefire after a year of war in which Hamas military capabilities have been greatly degraded and Gaza largely reduced to rubble with most of its 2.3 million Palestinians displaced.

South Korea warns it may supply arms to Ukraine amid reports of North Korean troops in Russia

World South Korea has issued a stern warning, suggesting it may provide weapons to Ukraine, in response to reports that North Korea has allegedly sent troops to support Russia in its ongoing conflict. This move is aimed at pressuring Russia to avoid involving North Korean forces in its war against Ukraine. South Korean officials have condemned the alleged deployment of North Korean troops as a "grave security threat" to both South Korea and the international community, describing North Korea as a "criminal group" that forces its youth to serve as mercenaries in Russia's unjustifiable war, as reported by Associated Press. The situation remains tense, with both Russia and North Korea denying the allegations. Ukrainian

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has claimed that 10,000 North Korean troops are being prepared to join Russian forces. South Korea's concern is that Russia may reward North Korea with advanced weapons technology, enhancing its nuclear and missile capabilities, and directly threatening South Korea's security. South Korea's concern is that Russia may reward North Korea with advanced weapons technology, enhancing its nuclear and missile capabilities, and directly threatening South Korea's security. In response, South Korea's foreign ministry called the Russian ambassador to discuss the matter, and Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun stated that South Korea will respond jointly.

News box

23-year-old dies after falling from 11th floor of Uppal mall

HYDERABAD. A 23-year-old woman died after allegedly falling from the DSL Mall, Ramanthapur main road, Uppal, on Tuesday. The deceased, Pinnapati Haritha, a resident of Tukaram Gate, used to work as a customer relations executive at Client Service Solutions. She would go to work around 5 pm and usually return home after her duty the next morning at 4 am. According to the first information report (FIR), the father of the deceased stated that he got a call from her daughter's colleague on Tuesday around 2 am informing him that she had fallen from the building. The police said Haritha fell from the 11th floor of the mall. Meanwhile, Haritha was rushed to a nearby private hospital where she was declared dead. A case under Section 194 (death under suspicious circumstances) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) was registered at the Uppal police station. Further investigation is underway, said the police.

Road rage: Police give clean chit to mayor, MLA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. The Cantonment police, in its report on the road rage incident in Palayam, have said that it could not be confirmed that Thiruvananthapuram Mayor Arya Rajendran and her husband, Balussery MLA Sachin Dev, committed the offences alleged by the KSRTC driver. The police filed the report on Tuesday before the Judicial First Class Magistrate (JFMC), following up on a complaint filed by driver H L Yedu. Sources said the police did not arrest the mayor and her husband for lack of confirmation of the alleged offences. The police said the allegation that the MLA trespassed into the bus was not true and it was Yedu who himself opened the hydraulic door after which the legislator entered the bus. Also, the witnesses did not testify the mayor and her husband used foul language against Yedu, the police report said. However, the police said it managed to identify the fourth and fifth accused, who allegedly took part in the offence committed against Yedu, and a mahasar of the car which the mayor used at the time was prepared. The report also said the CCTV footage of the incident — which happened in front of the Saphalyam Complex at Palayam — were recovered. The case will now be considered on October 29. Yedu had approached the court seeking a court-monitored probe on the case against the mayor, her husband, and three others. The police were reluctant to register the case initially but were finally forced to do so after the magistrate's court intervened. Yedu sought judicial intervention alleging that the cops were not carrying out the probe seriously. When the case was considered on October 10, the police did not present its report. Yedu's counsel said it was because of the strong intervention of the court that the police prepared the report and filed it within 12 days. The road rage incident involving the mayor and Yedu took place on April 27. The mayor, along with her husband and the co-passengers in the car, blocked the bus and entered into a heated dispute with Yedu, alleging that he had made obscene gestures at her from his driving seat. Though Yedu was the first to lodge a complaint, the police registered a case of sexual harassment against Yedu based on the mayor's complaint.

Kerala govt okays Rs 6.64 crore for Responsible Tourism projects

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. In an effort to bolster and diversify the offerings under the Responsible Tourism initiative, the state government has approved Rs 6.64 crore for the implementation of projects at various destinations. The destinations benefiting from the initiative include RT Mission Society Training Centre at Kumarakom and the Bepore Integrated RT Development Project. The Responsible/Resilient Tourism project of RT Mission will get Rs 1.81 crore while approval has been given for Rs 1.15 crore for the implementation of the Bepore Integrated RT Development Project. Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas said with the expansion of RT Mission's activities, the foothold of foreign tourists will go up, providing impetus to the state's sustainable and experiential tourism model. "In 2023, Kanthalloor village in Idukki was recognised by the Union government for its sustainable and inclusive STREET tourism project with the Gold Award for Best Rural Tourism Project. This year, RT projects in Kadalundi and Kumarakom won the national awards for best Rural Tourism and best Agri-Tourism villages respectively," Riyas said in a statement released here. The destinations where the follow-up of RT projects have been planned are Valiyaparamba, Bedadukka, Dharmadam, Pinarayi, Anjarakandy, Kadalundi, Koodaranji, Kooracundu, Nelyadi, Chekadi, Thirunelli, Nelliampathi, Thiruvilwamala, Thrithala, Pattithara, Mahamma, Chembu, Kumarakom, Maravanthuruthu, Kanthalloor, Vattavada, Aranmula, Munroe Island, Anchuthengu, Sambrankodi, Panangad, Vellarada, Amboori and Vithura.

Tourists flee Puri as cyclone Dana inches closer

Nedumbassery police have approached the social media platform regarding the false messages sent to flight operators.



PURI. Puri beach wore a deserted look on Tuesday as most of the tourists left the pilgrim town and headed towards safety in wake of the impending cyclone Dana. Secretary of Puri hotel association Rajkishore Patra said with tourists abandoning their holiday plans, the hoteliers have landed in a tight spot as they have to return the money against cancellation of bookings. "After the cyclone warning, new arrival of

tourists is negligible while those who booked for week-long stays are trying to return. Long queues of tourists are being witnessed at railway booking counters for return tickets. The general occupancy has dropped below 20 per cent," Patra rued. On the day, lifeguards and volunteers were seen advising the remaining handful of tourists not to enter the sea. The district administration also put up red flags on the beach to warn

tourists against bathing in the sea. Fishermen too were asked not to venture into the sea. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) ordered closure of the Sun temple at Konark and the museum ahead of the cyclone. Heavy-duty pumps have been kept ready to drain out water from the Sun temple premises. District fire officer Pravat Kumar Rout said a mock drill was conducted on cyclone preparedness on the day. "We have kept 65 cutter machines including plasma, concrete and hydraulic cutters to clear trees and electricity poles from the roads after the cyclone. Electricity staff are also ready to restore power supply at the earliest," he said. The administration has opened a control room to monitor the relief and rescue operations. The Fire Service department has formed 18 teams to deal with the post-cyclone situation. Emergency lighting systems have been kept in reserve. Government officials have asked to remain alert at their places of duty.

Two flights from Kochi new targets of bomb threats

The bomb threats to IndiGo flight 6E 196 in the Kochi-Bengaluru sector and Air India's Kochi-London (LGW) flight were received on the X handles of the respective airlines.



KOCHI. As the incidents of bomb threats continued to be reported across the country, two flights from Kochi were targeted on Tuesday. The bomb threats to IndiGo flight 6E 196 in the Kochi-Bengaluru sector and Air India's Kochi-London (LGW) flight were received on the X handles of the respective airlines. While the IndiGo flight, scheduled to depart at 11.35 am took off at 12.14 pm, the Air India flight, scheduled at 11.50 am, departed at 12.06 pm. "We received the messages after the departure of the flights. Hence, only regular security checkings were done. The BTACs were convened and the threat to Air India flight was classified as non-specific. In the case of the IndiGo service, the flight landed at Lucknow airport from Bengaluru at 4.16 pm. BTA was held at 4.24 pm and hence it was decided not to assess the threat," a CIAL spokesperson said. The BTACs also decided not to register FIRs.

Russian submarine docks at Kochi Naval Base

KOCHI. A detachment of ships of the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet, including diesel-electric submarine 'Ufa' and rescue tug 'Alatau', docked at Kochi Naval Base on Monday. According to the Navy, the visit includes a meeting with the representatives of the Southern Naval Command and replenishment of supplies. On arrival, the submarine was accorded a warm welcome by the Southern Naval Command. Commanding officer of Ufa Second Rank Captain Andrey Barkov called on Chief Staff Officer (Operations) Commodore Sarvpreet Singh and held discussions on maritime interests. Professional interactions, familiarisation visits and friendly sports fixtures have been scheduled between the two sides as part of the visit. The Navy said the visit of the submarine highlights maritime cooperation between the two navies. Sources said the Russian Fleet is expected to leave Kochi on Wednesday.



The Navy said the visit of the submarine highlights maritime cooperation between the two navies.

When clouds burst and lakes overflow in Yelahanka

Residents of 10 layouts in Yelahanka marooned without food, electricity NDRF, SDRF ferry citizens to safety as apartments flood City gets 23.6mm rain

BENGALURU. A cloudburst over Yelahanka doubled the misery of residents on Tuesday. Already soaked to the bone by incessant rain over the past few days, a heavy downpour left the area inundated. Thousands of residents of 10 layouts and surrounding areas were left marooned, without food, electricity and even internet connection. Surrounded by water from all directions, people had to be rescued in boats. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) swung into action, deploying rescue personnel and boats to ferry citizens to safety.



Each downpour has brought a fresh nightmare, filling up lakes in Yelahanka and flooding the localities. The Met department recorded 157mm in Chowdeshwari Nagar, 141mm in Yelahanka, 109mm in Vidyaranyapura, 98mm in Jakkur, and 81.5mm in Kodigehalli. About 3,000 residents of Kendriya Vihar Apartments (KVA), which is affected during every rain, were stranded as the basement was completely flooded, submerging parked vehicles. At least 26 dinghies were pressed into service to evacuate residents. "Due to heavy rain which filled up 10 lakes, 4,000 homes in the area have been impacted. Kendriya Vihar Apartments were severely impacted, and we have deployed boats," BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said. Food, milk and water was supplied to people, and

measures will be taken to restore power and internet, he added. Revenue Minister Krishna Byregowda, who visited the flood-hit areas, said due to the sudden cloudburst, Doddabommasandra Lake reached its maximum capacity for the first time in 18 years and water is overflowing into drains and roads, causing floods. "Due to the cloudburst in GKVK area and Vidyaranyapura, water gushed into Doddabommasandra Lake and caused floods in Tata Nagar, Sarovara Layout and another areas. BBMP is arranging food for the people," said the minister. Girinath said there is a stormwater drain design issue in the outer areas and BBMP will redesign the drains to fix it. Kiran, a resident of Sarovara Layout in Byatarayanapura, said, "From Monday midnight, all residents are awake and inconvenienced. We don't know for how many years we have to face this ordeal whenever it rains."

Lack of heavy duty dewatering pumps challenge for BMC ahead of Cyclone Dana

The BMC may seek commissioning of some of these pumps in localities vulnerable to severe waterlogging.

BHUBANESWAR. With the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) identifying 80 locations vulnerable to waterlogging ahead of Cyclone Dana, shortage of heavy duty pumps for dewatering may emerge as a challenge for the civic body in dealing with the crisis. Sources said the civic body has identified eight more cyclone shelters in addition to 72 others, for rescue of people belonging to low-lying and vulnerable localities. At least 30 of these localities including Jayadev Vihar, Iskon road, Tankapani road, Jagannath Nagar, ITER area and Chintamaniswar face severe waterlogging and urban deluge during heavy rainfall due to encroachment of natural storm water channels and poor drainage system in the city. A senior official from the Fire Services department said heavy duty pumps of around 1,000 to 1,600 litre per minute (LMP) are needed for immediate dewatering of flooded areas. But sources in the BMC said the civic body has four



such pumps while the remaining 32 have lesser capacity. This lack of adequate heavy duty pumps has, meanwhile, posed a challenge for the BMC in tackling possible waterlogging situations that may arise after the cyclone considering the IMD forecast of heavy rainfall in the state. BMC officials, however, said they are well-

prepared to deal with the situation and if need arises, they will seek help of the fire services for commissioning of large pumps in the vulnerable localities of the city. Sources said the Fire Services department in the city has 28 dewatering pumps including 20 heavy duty pumps. The BMC may seek commissioning of some of these pumps in localities vulnerable to severe waterlogging. Meanwhile, keeping in view the cyclone alert, the civic body has operationalised its 24X7 control room with helpline number 1929 to attend distress calls during the crisis. For all drainage-related issues, residents are urged to contact 7809896621. Taking stock of the functioning of the temporary cyclone shelters, mayor Sulochana Das asked all ward officers to remain alert. She also sought cooperation of all corporators in rescue and relief activities in the event the need arises.

Evacuation from low-lying areas in Balasore, Mayurbhanj on focus

The government machinery has been readied in vulnerable areas for evacuation of people.



BALASORE/BARIPADA. As the state braces for cyclone Dana, the Balasore administration has put in place contingency measures for safe evacuation of people from low-lying areas of Baliapal, Basta, Bhograi, Remuna and Jaleswar blocks in the district. Balasore collector Suryawanshi Mayur Vikas said necessary measures have been taken to face the impending cyclone. The government machinery has been readied in vulnerable areas for evacuation of people. At least 144 cyclone shelters and 728 temporary shelters have been readied for people who will be evacuated from the low-lying areas. The district administration has decided to start the evacuation drive from Thursday, he said.

District emergency officer Sai Krishna Jena said three teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and eight teams of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) are ready to deal with the emergencies arising out of the situation. All the officials concerned have also been put on alert and asked to keep a close watch on vulnerable areas. Similarly in Mayurbhanj, the district administration has geared up machinery to tackle the cyclone threat. On Tuesday, Housing and Urban Development minister Krishna Chandra Mahapatra reviewed the administration's cyclone preparedness in presence of Mayurbhanj collector Hema Kant Say, SP Varun Guntupalli and other officials. Collector Say said the district is fully prepared to tackle the situation. Officials have been directed to remain alert and start evacuation of people from low-lying areas if the need arises. More than 280 cyclone shelters are ready to accommodate the evacuated people. One NDRF and six ODRF teams have already been sent to some vulnerable areas. Besides, health, fire services and power supply officials are on their toes to deal with the cyclone threat, he added. On the day, the NDRF team conducted a mock drill on disaster preparedness involving Red Cross and NSS volunteers besides NCC cadets at Baripada.

Dealing with China: Why India should rethink strategy

Signage or pictographic characters of the Mandarin language, the psyche of the Communist dictator as well as actions on the ground by China's highly "controlled state" must be linked together to understand, analyse, anticipate and then deal with the Sons of Heaven, eternally ensconced in the Forbidden City — Beijing. Let's face it, the Communist Party of China (CPC), founded by Mao Zedong, is no run-of-the-mill 1648 Treaty of Westphalia-origin nation state or the so-called model democracy of the West. Since 1949, the CPC is the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the PRC is the CPC. And the primary instrument of the party-state or the state-party is the People's Liberation Army (PLA). All other organs are either subservient to the Communist High Command or owe their influence to the hereditary connect with the CPC. Hence, the imperial tradition of the Chinese Emperor who insisted on the supremacy of the Han, has been continued by the Communist dictator these past several decades. A Communist in name only, the dictator of the CPC state has not even changed the official name of the country, Zhong Guo (Middle Kingdom). Mao was the king, so is his successor Xi Jinping, who claims to be the reincarnation of Mao. However, Xi's task is more than what Mao dealt with — a backward, poverty-stricken and famine-afflicted country, in which he chased his utopian projects of the Great Leap Forward, followed by a demonic Cultural Revolution from the 1950s to 1960s. Xi, however, cannot afford to do the same, being Deng Xiaoping's successor, with a legacy to make China number one in the world. China has to feed, finance and fulfil the desire of her 1.5 billion people so that the dictatorship can maintain its pomp, power, prestige and position. However, the CPC must constantly do something out of the box to keep outsiders as well as all non-Chinese, especially India, on tenterhooks, by creating chaos, confusion and confrontation all the time.

And that's exactly what the world is facing now, in the form of the BRI (the Belt and Road Initiative), CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), and a host of other China-sponsored projects that bear the Chinese brand of imperialism in an effort to influence and imperil five targeted continents — Asia's landlocked terrain and the waterways surrounding Beijing; Africa's mineral and agriculture belts; ports of South America, Europe, South Asia and Australia's raw material and consumer market.

Interestingly, India, since the beginning, has been a steady and stout target of China, whether it is Tibet, territory, trade, terror and now telecom, transport, technology domination as well as its billion-plus consumer market. Moreover, the dragon dictator Mao would feel uncomfortable when compared to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was much more widely known, acceptable and affable and democratic. Mao, on the other hand was often seen as a Communist warlord.

Unfortunately, over the past 75 years India's political leaders and diplomats have never effectively read the mind of the CPC dictator. Successive Indian leaders have offered him an olive branch, their efforts often ending in a fiasco.

What was a mere border and territorial issue of a common Himalayan frontier between India and Tibet for hundreds of years, has become a boundary issue between Bharat and Beijing. Territory expansion has been one of the core issues of the dictator. The CPC's psyche needs to be analysed because China will never accept India as an equal sovereign, just like the West has never recognised Russia as a European state, as was stated by then German naval chief in February 2022 in New Delhi. Of course, the German navy chief was sacked the moment he reached home for making such a politically incorrect statement.

For India, China is a multidimensional threat today in every possible area — economy, politics, commerce, industry, telecommunication, frontier issues, terror and diplomatic ties.

Why Punjab alone can't be blamed for stubble burning

Scientists, policy-makers and the government must engage with farmer leaders and come out with mutually acceptable solutions.

Come October and there is an outcry over the ensuing paddy-straw burning and the consequent air pollution in the national capital region (NCR) and its adjoining areas. Paradoxically, it has been a usual phenomenon for the past couple of years. Earlier, only Punjab used to be blamed for polluting the NCR's air quality. It was conveniently forgotten that the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021, mandates the commission to monitor and manage the air quality in NCR besides Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

However, the CAQM has failed to carry out its mandate as is clear from the rapping it received by the Supreme Court on September 27, 2024. The SC Bench comprising Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih said, "Not a single committee has been formed to tackle the issue. Every year, we witness stubble burning, indicating total non-compliance of the CAQM Act." The Bench further said that the CAQM has been merely a silent spectator. Such an observation by the top court is a serious reflection on politico-bureaucratic will and vision regarding policymaking and implementation thereof.

Significantly, this year, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has also taken a serious note of the recurring phenomenon of stubble burning. Principal Secretary to PM, PK Mishra, while chairing a high-level meeting of task force on air pollution, asked the Delhi-NCR and the states of Punjab, Haryana and UP to implement the anti-stubble burning plans as committed. According to CAQM chairman Rajesh Verma, over 1.5 lakh crop residue management (CRM) machines will be available in Punjab and 90,945 in Haryana. It is learnt that ever since 2018, when the Central Government started providing subsidy to purchase CRM machines, Punjab has been supplied 1,38,022 machines between 2018 and 2023. The target is to provide 36,020 additional machines in 2024. These machines are aimed at in-situ incorporation of the paddy straw. Punjab generated 19.52 million metric tonnes (MMT) of paddy straw while Haryana produced 8.10 MMT, out of which a lion's share is to be managed by in-situ incorporation as per the target. The past experience, however, shows otherwise. The

fundamental question is that why has there been no satisfactory solution to paddy-straw burning and the consequent air pollution? Apparently, deep-rooted reasons behind the problem, knowingly or



it. The launch of the National Hydrogen Mission by India in 2023 is an indicator that hydrogen will become a major future source of energy in the face of limited stocks of conventional sources. There may be a number of other options, including biomass pellets, which can convert agricultural and solid waste into renewable energy, besides being environment-friendly and an alternative to the fossil fuel. There is, thus, a need to have an informed public and scientific discourse on all available options of using agricultural and solid waste, which could be sustainable and environmentally friendly. This will also be in tune with the UN-2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Such a discourse is, however, missing and hence there is no comprehensive policy to use crop residue and solid waste as a source of energy as well as addressing environmental issues. Such an approach would also help the policy makers and the government to understand the phenomenon better and provide practical solutions. The farmers' unions, too, must come forward with their genuine concerns and viable solutions rather than stubbornly supporting stubble burning and opposing alternative uses of crop residue. Scientists, policy-makers and the government must engage with farmer leaders to address their apprehensions and perceptions about the ill effects of alternative uses of agri-stubble and come out with mutually acceptable solutions.

The national and state agriculture policies then must include these agreed upon solutions. Such an approach would help in the effective implementation of the policy. The SC Bench might be having such a policy approach in mind while advising the CAQM for formulating the relevant committees to understand the issue in its entirety and come out with viable policies and a roadmap. It needs to be understood that management of crop residue and solid waste is not an option but a necessary choice as currently it is causing a huge burden on environment, health, law and order and judicial system. Besides, it is demoralising the farmers which could have serious politico-economic implications. All this necessitates a comprehensive, cost-benefit analysis of the existing machine-based CRM and all other available options keeping in mind the huge financial burden.

Ganderbal shocker

Central, UT govts must go all out to

restore peace

THE euphoria over the peaceful conduct of the Assembly elections and the installation of an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir has unfortunately proved to be short-lived. The Ganderbal terror attack, which claimed the lives of a doctor and six labourers at a tunnel construction site, leaves no room for doubt that Pakistan will persist with its nefarious policy of bleeding India — and J&K in particular — with a thousand cuts. It's no less worrisome that this attack took place just days after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had an informal interaction with his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Islamabad.

New Delhi has repeatedly made it clear that talks cannot be resumed unless Islamabad/Rawalpindi turns off the terror tap. But it is no coincidence that the terror attack has taken place in Ganderbal, the constituency of J&K's new Chief Minister



Omar Abdullah. Clearly, Pakistan-backed terror groups are sending the unmistakable message — after targeting the Jammu region in recent months — that the remarkably

peaceful polls in the UT could not have taken place without the Pakistan military establishment's tacit agreement. The terror groups are now turning the spotlight back on Kashmir. The attempt to disrupt an infrastructure project is aimed not just at stalling development in the Valley and scaring away migrant labourers and tourists who have a crucial role in boosting J&K's economy, it is also to demonstrate that no one in Kashmir is fully safe. That's why Central and UT governments need to work in tandem to restore peace and normalcy.

Clearly, Pakistan's army chief, Gen Asim Munir, has a second message to his own government, in response to former PM Nawaz Sharif telling visiting Indian journalists last week, "We have lost the last 75 years and it is important we don't lose the next 75." Which is, that hosting an Indian foreign minister on Pakistani soil is all very well, but the Army cannot be kept out of any conversation with India.

Intel agencies need parliamentary oversight

In stark contrast, intelligence organisations around the world have a solid legal footing

The government's answers in Parliament pertaining to the legal basis of intelligence agencies were intriguing, if not enigmatic. With regard to the Intelligence Bureau (IB), it stated: "The Intelligence Bureau figures in Schedule 7 of the Constitution under the Union List." When pressed that possibly this may not be the correct answer, the government unequivocally reiterated: "The Intelligence Bureau finds mention at Serial Number 8 in the Union List under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution."

Entry 8 in the Union List merely gives the legislative power to enact a statute to bring a Central Bureau of Intelligence, to be called by whatever name (IB or BI), into existence. The mere mention of a subject in the list of legislative powers neither gives an organisation statutory life or legal legitimacy. Had the legislative initiative I had proposed 13 years ago fructified into a law, the unnecessary and avoidable embarrassment that India is being subjected to today with regard to allegations by the governments of Canada and US, could have been very well avoided. We could have argued, and rightly so, that we have a comprehensive, holistic and vigorous external oversight mechanism at the apex level of our national legislature, that is more than competent to exercise 'broad superintendence' over our intelligence structures. Any wild cards or loose cannons could have been effectively proscribed.

In response to a question pertaining to the legal underpinnings of India's external intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), the government did not baffle. It candidly admitted, "There is no separate/specific statute governing the functions/mandate of the R&AW." However, in 2000, following the report of the Task

Force on Intelligence Apparatus, which examined the entire intelligence system in the country, "a formal charter listing the scope and mandate of the R&AW was formally approved by the government of India". In stark contrast, intelligence organisations around the world have a solid legal footing and in most cases are subject to penetrating parliamentary oversight that, if the need arises, goes into operational aspects also in closed-door sessions.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States, created by the National Security Act of 1947, was specifically empowered by the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 to carry out the duties assigned to it by the 1947 Act. The House and Senate intelligence committees in the US are regularly and extensively briefed by the American intelligence ecosystem consisting of 18 organisations, including the military intelligence programme, M15, the domestic intelligence service of the United Kingdom, draws its legal authority from The Security Services Act, 1989, and its sister organisation, MI6 or the SIS, from the 1994 Intelligence Services Act, thereby subjecting its activities to the scrutiny of the British Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee. The Australian intelligence agencies are regulated by the Intelligence Services Act of 2001 and they are accountable to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The Canadian intelligence services are regulated by the Canadian Security and Intelligence Services Act, 1984, and superintended by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. In New Zealand, the Intelligence and Security Act of 2017 is the ground norm and the activities of the intelligence services are

subject to monitoring by the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee. These are the Five Eyes. The Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia



draws its legal basis from the Law on Foreign Intelligence Organs, 1996. Nominal parliamentary control is exercised under Article 24 of the law. The German Federal Intelligence Service, Bundesnachrichtendienst, draws its legal sustenance from the Federal Intelligence Service Law, 1990, as amended in 2016. Its activities are supervised by the Parliamentary Control Commission for intelligence services which, in turn, is empowered by the Act on the Parliamentary Control of Intelligence Activities, 1978, as amended on July 29, 2009.

In Japan, the Public Security Intelligence Agency, which after its reorganisation in 1996 started focusing on foreign intelligence collection, is empowered by the Subversive Activities Prevention Law that came into force on July 21, 1952. The

Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office is another intelligence agency mandated under the cabinet law. Oversight is exercised by the Japanese Parliament Diet through the Board of Oversight and Review of Specially Designated Secrets. All this led to a sustained exercise over a period of two years in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation, wherein a cross-section of stakeholders were extensively consulted to try and conceptualise a law to put the IB, the R&AW and the National Technical Research Organisation on a proper legal footing. There was broad support for the need of such a law within the retired echelons of the intelligence community. There were a few sceptics also. On August 5, 2011, I moved the Bill in the Lok Sabha.

This Bill aimed to regulate the functioning and the exercise of powers of Indian intelligence agencies within and beyond the territory of India and provide for coordination, control and oversight over such agencies. The proposed oversight is robust parliamentary supervision by a Parliamentary Committee consisting of the Rajya Sabha Chairman, Lok Sabha Speaker, Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, one member each from both Houses to be nominated by the presiding officers of the respective Houses as members. This is as responsible a slate of people that you can get in a parliamentary democracy, though it is still heavily loaded in favour of the government if you look at the current cast of eminences.

There was a buzz around the Bill after it was introduced in the Lok Sabha, but the proposed legislation lapsed when I became a minister in 2012.



When life in a metro is taking over your existence too swiftly and your heart strongly desires to escape to a timeless zone for some peaceful self-realisation moments far from the deafening, tainted and fast city life—don't you just wish to time travel to a peaceful world? We don't have a time machine, but we are blessed to have Matheran, which is India's lowest hill station positioned 800 m above sea level in Western Ghats in the Indian state of Maharashtra (90 km from Mumbai). The peculiar thing about this place is its pollution free environment as no motor vehicle is permitted inside the town, making it Asia's only automobile free hill station. Fresh air, picturesque beauty and enchanting landscapes make it a serene place. Most of the tourists unwind themselves during a day trip or a weekend trip, but those who love nature won't mind spending an entire week here.

Top 10 places to visit in Matheran

What to see

There are many places to visit in Matheran, such as Sunset Point, Sunrise Point, Louisa Point, Echo Point and Honeymoon Point. Also popular are Charlotte Lake, King George Point, One Tree Hill Point, Alexander Point and Panorama Point that compel you to appreciate nature even more. Hand-pulled rickshaws and horses are used as modes of transportation inside the town. One man quoted INR 600 (negotiable) for a horse for 3 hours for around 10-15 sightseeing points. We thought of not doing things in a hurry and hence decided to walk on foot so that we can closely interact with the place. Horses are a good option if you are in Matheran just for a day or you want to visit some place too far with a steep hike. Mainly old people are seen availing the facility of hand-pulled rickshaws.

How to reach

Mumbai is the nearest metro city to Matheran. You can take a local train till Neral (don't get confused with Nerul—another station in Mumbai—as the two are very far from each other). After reaching Neral, you can either opt for a toy train or a shared taxi to reach Matheran. Both these options cost almost the same (INR 70), but with a trade-off between an enjoyable experience and time. Toy train takes almost 2.5 hours while halting at various small stations. It provides a closer view of varying landscapes on one side and mountains on the other. On the other hand, taxi takes a maximum of 20 minutes to reach the town. I enjoyed the experience of toy train while going to Matheran, and decided to save time by taking taxi while heading back to Mumbai. A compulsory tax of INR 50 is levied on every visitor, and it has to be paid while entering the town.

Panorama Point

Panorama Point is the most exciting and the farthest viewpoint in Matheran. It is almost 7.5 km away from the marketplace. Taking a horse is probably the best. Another option is to take a toy train from the marketplace to the next station, but you will be required to walk at least 2 km. Horse ride takes 45-60 minutes to transport you from your hotel to this fairyland. The path is little bit rocky and hence, your back might start hurting after a while, but it's an unforgettable odyssey—you go through the forest hearing singing birds, breeze and horse's clip-clop, while having occasional glimpses of varying landscapes. The views from Panorama Point are incredibly stunning and beyond my words. This point offers a 360-degree view of Matheran and surrounding areas. You can also spot Sunset Point from here. Being remotely located, this point is even more secluded than Honeymoon Point. You can lie down in the lap of nature and thank god for introducing you to this heaven on earth. This place is also a good picnic spot and a photographer's paradise. One can click multiple panoramic pictures here without any intervention. Spend some time

admiring some mesmerising views, while inhaling fresh air that is a rarity in cities. Panorama Point also serves as a good sunrise and sunset point. People often trek to this place from their hotel at dawn to see the sunrise. Don't forget to carry your Matheran's entry ticket along as you'll re-enter the town after returning from Panorama Point.

Alexander Point

Alexander Point is almost 1.5 km from the marketplace (a 20-minute walk), and is easy to reach in terms of distance, navigation and slope. It's a very pleasant walk from one's hotel to this point as you walk through woods, on a very narrow path over red soil, interacting with green trees. The peak offers good views of other points of the region and the valley below. I will call this point as a bigger version of Sunrise Point (Khandala Point) because it gives the same view as Sunrise Point, but comparatively has ample space. No doubt that it is more crowded as compared to other places because it's quite close to the toy train station. Alexander Point has some snack stalls that serve fresh juice, soda and Maharashtrian snacks to satiate your hunger. During the peak season, there is zip-lining option available from here to Rambaug Point, costing INR 350-500 per head. I am very cautious about the safety measures taken by adventure sports organisers. I saw a few Europeans doing it and they told me that Matheran's zip-lining is quite safe as compared to a few popular tourist destinations in Europe.

One Tree Hill Point

One Tree Hill Point is almost 4 km away from the marketplace, taking around an hour to walk up to this place. It's better to take a horse or a hand-pulled rickshaw. This point is named as One Tree Hill Point because a tree stands right on the top of the peak, and there is no other vegetation around except some grass. This beauty is at its best in the monsoon season. Some other tourist group told us that this is the southernmost tip of Matheran. The view from this peak is really spectacular as you can see Karjat, Mumbai-Pune highway,

Panvel city, Chowk village and a few other vantage points of Matheran. To get the best view of this peak, walk all the way to the edge and then only you'll be able to notice that why this point is called One Tree Hill. There is a trekking path from Ambewadi to One Tree Hill Point, which is pretty easy and can be done by beginners also. It takes almost 3.5 hours to climb up and 2.5 hours to descend. I'll advise to avoid this trek during monsoons or hire a guide.

King George Point

King George Point is almost 2.7 km (a 40-minute walk) from the marketplace. It takes around 10 minutes to walk here from Charlotte Lake. Many people say that it's a sin to go to Matheran and come back without visiting this vantage point. The sight from this peak is really majestic as it offers a picturesque view of the lake and waterfalls, and a large valley surrounded by three hills. The view is mesmerising and nature lovers can definitely sit here for hours. People prefer to come here in groups in the evening, take a walk, watch the sunset and enjoy baked corn with a cup of ginger tea. Sounds amazing, isn't it!

Charlotte Lake

Charlotte Lake is almost 2.5 km away from the marketplace, which is approximately a 35-minute walk. Although the walk is a bit tiring, the breathtaking view and cold breeze take away all the fatigue. There is a little waterfall near the lake which is a treat for the eyes during monsoons. During other seasons, either it is dry or the water is too less. Clear lake water, green backdrop and flawless waterfall look amazing. For a moment, you would certainly think of owning a house at a place that would offer such view. Lake area has got amazing birdlife and we got to know this when we met some passionate bird photographers here. Some people also like to visit Pismath Temple, which is situated to the left of the lake. You should stay here to watch the sunset because it looks stunning when the red-golden light reflects on the water. Locals told us that this lake supplies drinking water to Matheran and hence, swimming, fishing and boating are

strictly prohibited. Any activity that tends to contaminate the lake water is banned. Nonetheless, it is a good picnic spot; just make sure that you don't leave any wrapper or garbage behind. It can be quite a hike while going back to your hotel, so if you are tired, take a horse or hand-pulled rickshaw.

Honeymoon Point

Honeymoon Point is very tranquil and offers a wonderful view of Matheran's splendid mountains. From here, one can see Prabal Fort, various valleys accommodating civilisations and a beautiful sky that changes colours at dusk. The view of mountains from Honeymoon Point is such that you would call them 'Indian Grand Canyon'. There is no factual explanation as to why this point has been named Honeymoon Point. I brainstormed and came up with a few reasons. One hypothesis says that this place is a little secluded because you actually need to cross some bushes to reach here. Second is that it offers a romantic view. Both facts are good enough to name this peak as Honeymoon Point. My group spent perfect 30 minutes of mindfulness hearing nothing but the sound of air and leaves, which left us rejuvenated. It was like meditation. Not many people visit this point, so you spend undisturbed moments lying down and gazing at the sky while talking to your partner. Some people even enjoy picnicking here. Make sure that you carry your trash with you and dispose off in a dustbin. This point is very close to Louisa Point and Echo Point; and similar to them, it is a very good subject to be captured through lens as it is rarely crowded. Hence, it gives the freedom to amateur photographers to experiment with different angles and lenses to capture a variety of pictures and improve their skill.

Echo Point

Echo Point lies in the vicinity of Louisa Point, which can be seen from here. As the name suggests, you hear your screams and yells echo at this peak. High-pitched kids are a common sight here. We even saw adults going crazy to hear their voice back. We got to know about it when a group of almost 20 screaming people captured my attention. Funny, isn't it? The vantage point offers the best view of the Western Ghats and is very crowded during daytime. So, it's advisable to visit here early in the morning. One of the best experiences we had here was crossing the valley by zip-lining. Mostly, zip-lining is offered by some local tour operators during the peak tourist season. There are a few stalls here that offer a variety of local food like vada pav and kandha poha, along with bottled water and soda. So, it's good to relax here for a while and admire nature in its full glory.

Louisa Point

Louisa Point is almost 1.5 km away from the marketplace and will take around 20 minutes to reach here on foot. If it's a clear sunny day, this place will offer you breathtaking views that will

compel you to settle down here for a moment. This is a unique point in Matheran as it offers two different picturesque views. From one point, you can see the sky touching the mountains and a civilisation located far in a valley. If you visit during monsoon, you'll also be captivated by waterfalls. Another view is of Lake Charlotte that looks like a diamond necklace when seen from here. Louisa Point also offers a clear view of Prabal Fort. All these different views are intriguing and one can spend hours gazing at them. We sat there, soaked in the beauty of the place and relishing moments of silence.

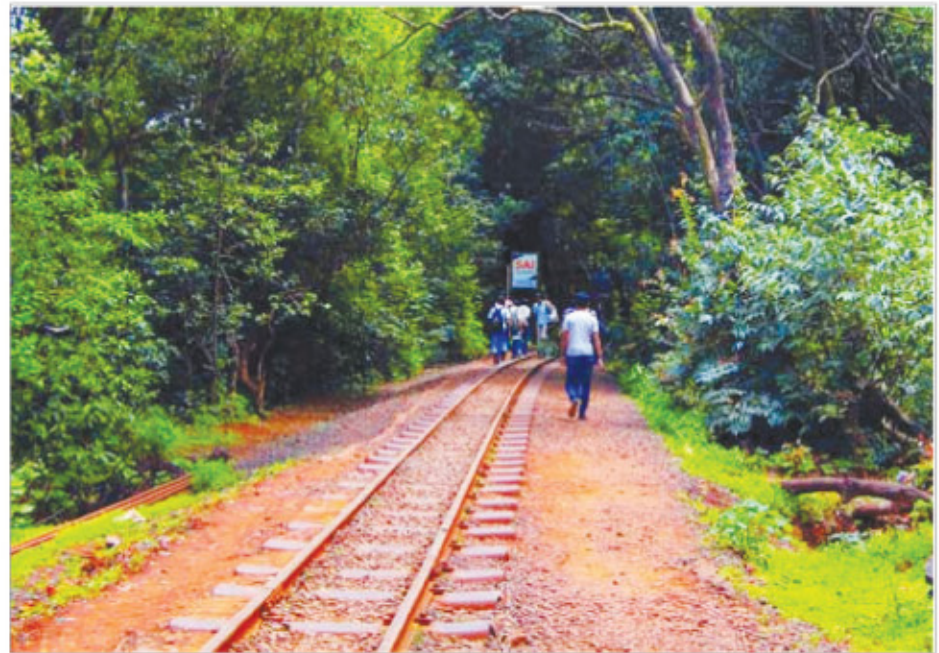
This place is known as a photographer's paradise in Matheran because it offers panoramic views of mountains, peaks, valleys, lake and waterfalls. In most of the travel portals, blogs and magazines, Matheran has been represented by using Louisa Point's pictures. During the peak season, photo points are a little crowded and sometimes you need to be patient for your view to be 'people free', but all your waiting time is worth those beautiful, dreamy and wallpaper pictures. Some people also stay at Louisa Point to watch the sunset.

Sunrise Point

Sunrise Point, also known as Khandala Point, is located alongside the marketplace. This place is serene in the morning as very few people are able to make it to the sunrise. Sitting here quietly works wonders as you hear the chirping of birds, sound of breeze striking against trees and music composed by tree leaves. Our ancestors used to say that when you see a rising sun, it gives you tremendous energy. Sun rising above glorious mountains with golden reddish sky forming the backdrop unquestionably make for a beautiful sight and give you positive energy. I did yoga at sunrise for 20 minutes and definitely felt very energetic that day as compared to other days where I follow a different lifestyle. It's 5-15 minutes' walk from the marketplace, depending on the location of your hotel. Ask some local person or the receptionist of your hotel about sunrise time for the next day, before you go to bed at night. Sunrise time mentioned on the internet



can be wrong sometimes and you obviously don't want to miss this sight. Videos recorded at sunrise are just perfect and can be used in any of your travel videos. I ended up with a shaky sunrise video because my view was obstructed by other photo enthusiasts and hands started trembling after a couple of minutes. So, I recommend taking your tripod along, if you intend to record the sunrise. While heading back to your hotel after seeing the sunrise, I would propose to indulge your taste buds in lip-smacking breakfast that has kandha poha and jalebi.



"Abetting Crime": Centre Blasts 'X' After 100 Flight Bomb Threats In A Week

Muslim men can register more than one marriage, rules Bombay High Court

The court was hearing an application filed by a Muslim man who sought to register his third marriage with a woman from Algeria in February 2023.

New Delhi: The Bombay High Court has ruled that Muslim men can register more than one marriage as their personal laws entitle them to have four wives at a time. The court was hearing an application filed by a Muslim man who sought to register his third marriage with a woman from Algeria in February 2023 but was rejected on grounds of a marriage act in Maharashtra. The Thane Municipal Corporation refused to issue the couple their marriage certificate on the basis that under the Maharashtra Regulation of Marriage Bureaus and Registration of Marriage Act, the definition of marriage contemplates only a single marriage and not multiple unions. During



the hearing on October 15, a High Court bench comprising Justices BP Colabawalla and Somasekhar Sundareshan termed the authority's refusal as "wholly misconceived" and said the Act does not bar Muslim men from registering more than one marriage since the same is permitted under Muslim personal law. "Under the personal laws for Muslims, they are entitled to have four wives at a time. Once this is the case, we are unable to accept the submission of the authorities that, under the provisions of the Maharashtra Regulation of Marriage Bureaus and Registration of Marriages Act, only one marriage can be registered, even in the case of a Muslim male," it said. "There is absolutely nothing in this Act to indicate that the personal laws of Muslims have been excluded." The bench also highlighted that the Thane Municipal Corporation had registered the petitioner's marriage with his second wife. The couple was asked to submit all relevant documents within two weeks after the municipal body claimed that they had not them while trying to register their marriage. The court said that once the documents were submitted, the municipal body would have 10 days to either issue a marriage certificate or refuse following a personal hearing. Until then, no coercive steps should be taken against the petitioner woman whose passport expired in May this year, it ordered.

Joint Secretary Sanket S Bhondve chaired a virtual meeting with representatives of airlines and social media platforms such as X and Meta

New Delhi: Amid a barrage of bomb threats received by airlines over the past few days, the Union Ministry of Electronics and IT today blasted social media platform X (formerly Twitter) through which many of these hoaxes were circulated.

Joint Secretary Sanket S Bhondve chaired a virtual meeting with representatives of airlines and social media platforms such as X and Meta. The official said that the situation amounts to "X abetting crime" and questioned its representatives on the steps taken to stop such alarming rumours from spreading, sources have said. More than 120 flights operated by Indian carriers have received bomb threats over the past few days. Even yesterday, 30 flights operated by IndiGo, Vistara and Air India received such threats. The airlines said they followed standard operating procedures; authorities were alerted and security protocols were followed. During a briefing on the



situation on Monday, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said the government is trying to tackle it without compromising passengers' safety. He added that those circulating such hoax threats will face tough action, including being put on a no-fly list. The government plans to amend the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act so that action could be initiated for offences when an aircraft is on the ground.

Currently, the aviation security norms largely cover in-flight offences.

"We are trying to make amendments and the legal team has worked on it... We need consultations with other ministries also... we are definitely pushing forward to have changes in the Act also so that it addresses offences that happen when the flight is on the ground and also make it cognizable offence," he said. Asked if there could be a conspiracy behind the barrage of threats, the minister said a thorough investigation was underway.

"Without investigation, we cannot put out any pattern... let us wait for the completion of the investigation," he added. The threats have created panic among the passengers and set off alarm bells for security agencies. Several flights, including international ones, have been diverted after the threats. We are keeping ourselves dynamic and not rigid... assessing and learning from what is happening. Everything is taken on a case-by-case basis. Based on our learning, we are trying to assess the situation," the minister said.

"Wasn't Aware Permission Needed": Delhi Lt Governor To Top Court On Tree Felling

The court had asked VK Saxena to explain what steps were being taken to fix responsibility for the alleged illegal felling of over 600 trees.

New Delhi: Delhi Lieutenant Governor Mr Saxena said in his affidavit he had visited the Ridge area where a medical facility is set to come up for the CAPF, on February 3. During this visit, he took

permission was needed to fell trees there, the affidavit read. The Lieutenant Governor said he was made aware about it only on March 21 after an application was filed by DDA seeking permission for the felling of trees for the project.

"As regards the fact that the actual act of felling of trees had commenced on or about 16.02.2024 was brought to the notice of the undersigned vide letter of Vice Chairman, DDA dated 10.06.2024," the Lieutenant Governor said. The affidavit identified the officers responsible for the tree felling as Manoj Kumar Yadav, the DDA executive engineer



"After being chased, the driver and the liquor trader left the tanker on the national highway and fled," said Vijay Shekhar Dubey, Assistant Excise Commissioner. The seized liquor was made in Arunachal Pradesh. The local trader who had smuggled in the liquor is being identified and raids are on to arrest him, the official said, adding that a case has been registered against him. The sale of liquor is banned in Bihar, due to which people resort to innovative ways to source alcohol. Smugglers often come up with new ways to transport liquor - sometimes in ambulances and trucks. There have been instances where smugglers have built compartments inside petrol tanks to store liquor bottles.

Not Oil, This Tanker In Bihar Has 200 Boxes Of Alcohol Hidden Inside

New Delhi: An oil tanker was found carrying liquor in Bihar, officials said on Wednesday. About 200 beer crates were found in the Hindustan petroleum tanker and brought to the excise police station. The Nagaland-registered tanker was seized from Muzaffarpur while the smugglers fled. Officials said the excise department had received a tip about the liquor consignment, after which they formed a team to arrest the smugglers. The officials set up a road blockade, seeing which the smugglers turned the tanker towards a national highway.



The seized liquor was made in Arunachal Pradesh. The local trader who had smuggled in the liquor is being identified and raids are on to arrest him, the official said, adding that a case has been registered against him. The sale of liquor is banned in Bihar, due to which people resort to innovative ways to source alcohol. Smugglers often come up with new ways to transport liquor - sometimes in ambulances and trucks. There have been instances where smugglers have built compartments inside petrol tanks to store liquor bottles.

"Mere Eyewash": Supreme Court Raps Punjab, Haryana Over Stubble Burning

New Delhi: The Supreme Court grilled the central - and Punjab and Haryana - governments on Wednesday as arguments over states' non-compliance with, and failure to enforce, anti-pollution measures, rolled into yet another hearing, even as air quality in Delhi and the national capital region remains 'very poor' and prompts concern over the risk of increased respiratory diseases.

A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka, Justice A Manuallah, and Justice AG Masih, dismissed as "mere eyewash" the Punjab and Haryana governments' efforts to stamp out farm fires - i.e., farmers burning agricultural waste - that contribute to toxic air smothering Delhi annually. The state governments were questioned over the lack of



prosecution, or even imposition of commensurate financial penalties, of farmers violating the law, and, in the case of Haryana, even suggested the failure to enforce was a "policy devised by you" to favour some farmers over others.

The top court also rapped the union government over "toothless" environmental protection laws, observing that laws meant to control pollution, specifically the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) Act of 2021 had been passed sans the administrative machinery to ensure implementation. It was also pointed out that Section 15 of the Environmental Protection Act - which covers penalties for violating anti-pollution laws - had amended so "procedure for imposing penalty cannot be followed". Section 15 was the "only section for enforcing the EPA", it was pointed out, to which Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the centre, said it would be "fully operationalised" in 10 days. Not a single prosecution... Punjab was the first to feel the court's wrath, with Justice Oka doubting its claim that 44 people had been prosecuted. "Your Advocate-General said nothing was done..." the court told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Punjab government, "... not a single prosecution." The court was told that 11 lakh had been recovered, as fines, from 417 people violating the stubble burning laws, but declared itself unhappy at the "nominal" amounts charged.

Will take you to task: Supreme Court blasts Centre as Delhi air quality worsens

Delhi pollution: The Centre assured the Supreme Court that rules would be finalised within 10 days and the Environmental Protection Act would be made fully operational.

New Delhi: Noting the rampant stubble burning in neighbouring states, leading to pollution in Delhi, the Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Centre for rendering the Environmental Protection Act "toothless" through amendments. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre, assured the court that rules would be finalised within 10 days and the Act would be made "fully operational". "We will take the Union of India to task... it has not created any machinery. The Environmental Protection Act has become toothless. You have got rid of punishment and replaced it with a penalty by amending Section 15 and the procedure to be followed for imposing a penalty cannot be followed," the Supreme Court said.

The ASG said showcause notices have been to the secretary (environment) and additional chief secretary (agriculture) of both Punjab and Haryana. "Within 10 days, Section 15



will be fully operationalised," the ASG said. "If these governments and you (Centre) were seriously ready to safeguard the environment, then everything would have been done before amendment to Section 15. This is all political, nothing else," the court said. The air quality in the national capital was recorded in the "very poor" category, with several areas falling into the "severe" zone on Wednesday. During the onset of winter, burning of crop residue in Haryana and Punjab is seen as a major factor contributing

to the rise in pollution levels in Delhi. Turning its attention to Punjab and Haryana, whose chief secretaries were present, the Supreme Court dismissed their efforts to weed out farm fires as "mere eyewash". In the last hearing, the top court had lambasted Punjab and Haryana for failing to take penal action against those violating the ban on stubble burning. The top court noted that not a single prosecution had been made by Punjab and pulled up the chief secretary for giving a false statement to the Advocate General of Punjab.

"You must answer why you gave a false statement to the Advocate General of Punjab that a request has been made to Central Government for funds for tractors and diesel for farmers. We will issue contempt. We are not leaving you," the court said. To this, advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Punjab, said, "We will be taking stringent action as we proceed forward."

Secularism means live and let live, says Supreme Court in Madrasa Act case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court of India has reserved its judgement on the challenge to the striking down of the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 by the Allahabad High Court. The court emphasised that "secularism means to live and let live," highlighting the importance of accommodating diverse religious instruction in education. During the hearing, the High Court noted that the education provided under the Madarsa Education Act, 2004 is "certainly not equivalent" to that in other state-recognized educational institutions, raising concerns about the quality and universality of madrasa education. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, leading the three-judge bench, remarked, "Ultimately, we have to see it through the broad sweep of the country-religious instructions are there in Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, etc. The country ought to be a melting pot of cultures, civilisations, and religions." He added, "To throw out the act is like throwing out the baby with the

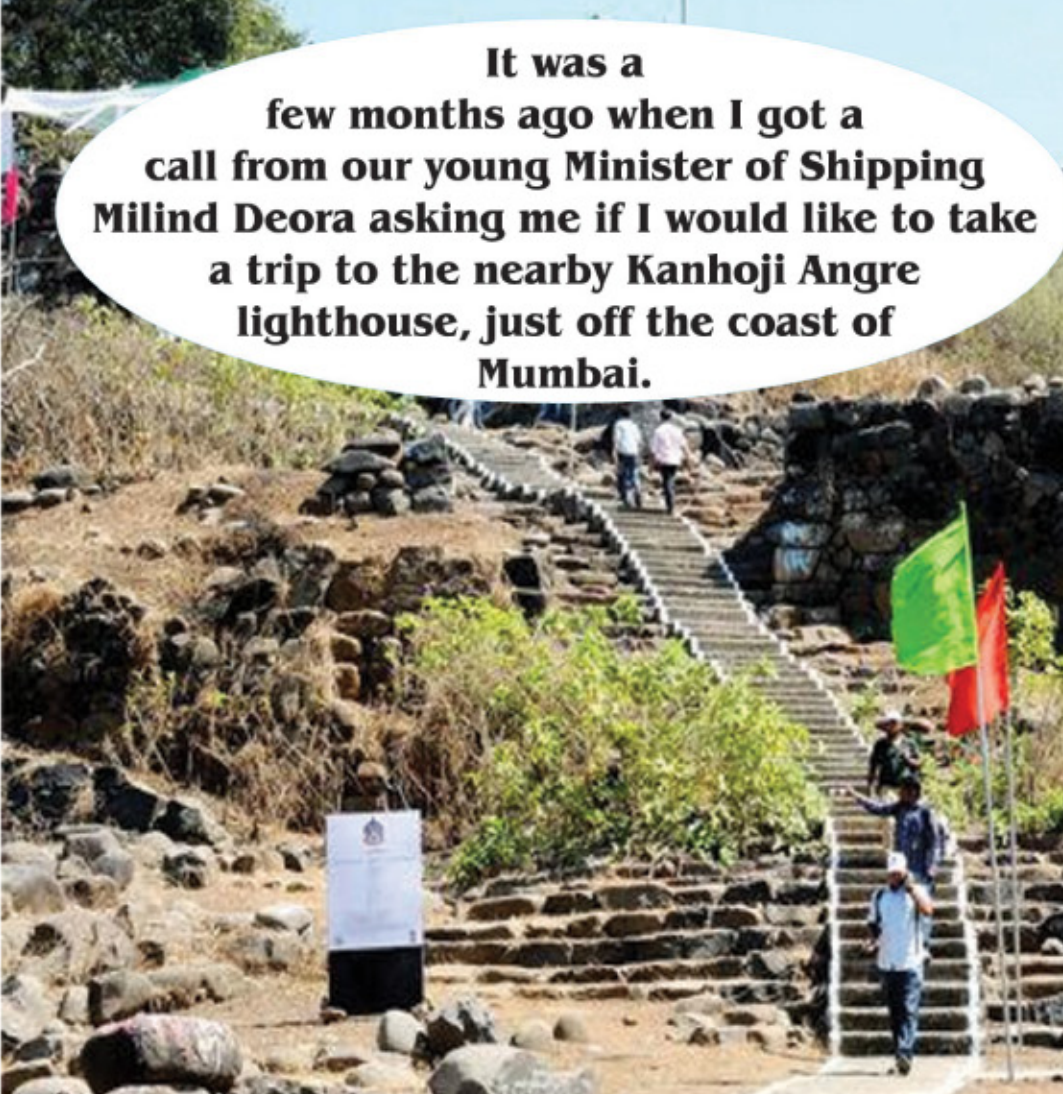


bathwater." Justice JB Pardiwala addressed arguments made by senior advocate Gurukrishna Kumar, stating, "The study of religion is therefore not prohibited by the Constitution, and this is where your argument that they are being deprived of mainstream education fails." Kumar argued that the madrasa syllabus primarily consists of theological studies, stating, "What is provided as syllabus and course content is only a sprinkling of secular education." Chief Justice Chandrachud responded to concerns about religious

education, asserting, "Firstly, religious instructions are never an anathema in our country... In India, can we say that the meaning of education cannot include religious instruction? It's essentially a religious country." Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi highlighted the importance of Article 28(2), which allows religious instruction under charitable trusts. He contended that striking down the Madrasa Act would violate fundamental rights by removing religious instruction opportunities. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud noted, "If a student wants to voluntarily obtain instructions, then it is covered under 28(3)... but you cannot compel the student." Senior Advocate Madhavi Divan, representing an intervenor, argued that madrasa education undermines the promise of quality education guaranteed under Article 21A of the Constitution, stating, "While one has the freedom to take religious instruction, it cannot be accepted as a substitute for mainstream education." Senior Advocate Swarupama Chaturvedi, representing the

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), emphasised that madrasas should not be viewed as substitutes for mainstream education. In response, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud asked, "Has NCPCR banned other religious institutions or not? Is it NCPCR's position that young children should not be deprived of religious instruction?" The Chief Justice further enquired, "Have you issued instructions against sending children to monasteries? Why is your focus only on madrasas? Has NCPCR taken a stance that this is contrary to fundamental values?" Chaturvedi indicated that she would seek instructions and file a statement accordingly. Justice JB Pardiwala also questioned NCPCR, asking, "Has NCPCR studied the entire syllabus? It seems you are captivated by the term 'religious instructions'-the entire foundation of your arguments is flawed. There are no instructions. There is a crucial distinction between the religious instruction referred to in Article 28 and the medium through which education.

Mumbai to get India's first lighthouse tourist destination



It was a few months ago when I got a call from our young Minister of Shipping Milind Deora asking me if I would like to take a trip to the nearby Kanhoji Angre lighthouse, just off the coast of Mumbai.

He wanted to examine whether we could make the lighthouse into a tourist destination and asked if the Times of India would support the initiative. So we agreed to meet at 6 am at the Gateway of India and took a 40-minute boat ride to the island. Throughout the way, we could not help but marvel at the fact that our sea looked as beautiful as any other part of the world, but it was just that we had not seen its potential, as a country, to exploit it for tourism.

I was excited with the possibility of we Indians also getting an experience in our country that we otherwise, only see as tourists in other countries. Months after our visiting the island, the Ministry of Tourism has finally given its consent to the Ministry of Shipping and jointly, they have started to develop three lighthouses, that they have identified, into tourist destinations — Kanhoji Angre in Mumbai, the Dolphin's Nose in Vishakhapatnam and Mahabalipuram lighthouse about 40 kms south of Chennai. The first to be launched would be, of course, the one in Mumbai. We bring you excerpts of our exclusive conversation with the two ministers:

Dr K. Chiranjeevi, union Minister of state for tourism
Have you visited any of the international lighthouses?

Once as a brand ambassador of a beverage brand, I was supposed to shoot an ad in South Africa in a lighthouse. But I couldn't make it due to my tight schedule, but thanks to the graphics the ad showed me in the lighthouse and it looked



fantastic. Now, once these lighthouses are built, Milind and I can actually stand on the lighthouse and give a shot.

Are you enjoying being a minister as much as you enjoyed being an actor?
I enjoyed being an actor in the 30 years of my film career. After that, I think venturing into politics is a way to give back. I used to do some philanthropic work but with the political platform, I can contribute in a bigger way. On the lighter side, as an actor, your acting hours are limited but as a minister, it is unlimited. I remember when the Prime Minister appointed me, he said, 'We have rightfully chosen you as a tourism minister as you have enormous experience and you have gone all over the world as an actor, so you know how to enhance, uplift and encourage our tourism sector. You can be a brand ambassador for your ministry.' Our three big constraints for building tourism are connectivity, hygiene and the safety and security of our tourist places. Many countries find it difficult to get a visa and would like us to give them a visa on arrival. When I

went to Spain, the tourism minister told me a lot of people want to come to India as they love Bollywood, but they don't have direct flights and find it difficult to get visas on arrival. That is currently offered to only citizens of nine countries. I am in talks with the home ministry to extend it to about 40 countries.

Your favourite holiday destination?
Internationally, I love going to Switzerland. I went there many times for my shooting and I loved the Alps, the tranquility, cleanliness, the greenery and the warmth of the people there. In India, there are lots of places that I love, but my favourite is Kashmir. Till the terrorism problem happened, for almost a decade, every summer I would be shooting there. I also like Goa, as it is happening and is lively and affordable. My family would always join me in the summer holidays when I shot in Kashmir.

A few months back, my family members went to Jammu and Kashmir for a holiday. I had planned to go but could not. They said they missed me as they got nostalgic remembering the times and places where they jumped, slid and sledged as kids. Just hearing this from them made me so happy.

Do you miss being a part of the film industry?
If Charan (Ram Charan) was not there, I would have missed it. But I have no regrets since he took over and I feel connected to films through him. He is hard-working and focused and I am happy that he is no longer the brat that he was as a child.



Milind Deora, Minister of state for shipping
What excited you to develop these lighthouses?
Our ministry runs 180 lighthouses along the coastline of India. They are important navigational tools for ships, but I realised that they can become important tourist destinations. And of the three we have identified, India's first will be developed just off the coast of Mumbai. It's a unique lighthouse and you have to sail to the island that makes it attractive for tourists. It's a historical island with a fort built around it by Kanhoji Angre. We feel that the partnership with the ministry of tourism should have happened a long time ago. But, better late than never.

These are beautiful assets waiting to be exploited for tourism. When I studied in Boston, I saw that the entire east coast of America has a number of lighthouses. It adds a full maritime experience and Europe and US do it naturally and very well. If we can recreate that in India, we can attract a lot of tourists both from India and abroad. Mumbai is one of the best coastal cities and this is the most underutilised asset we have. We live in Mumbai, but don't even know what it is like to go to the sea. People around the world appreciate it, look after it well and even exploit it as a government. To me, it is exciting, personally and professionally.

Your favourite holiday destination?
Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It's just by default that I have become minister of shipping, but I love the sea, I love swimming and diving.

Rediscovering the wonders of Pune



University of Pune
History: The main building of the University of Pune was made in 1864. During the British Raj, it was the official residence of the governor of Bombay and post-independence, the building was restored for academic and official purposes.

Heritage and history have always been a part of the city's charm. Over the next few days, we will showcase what we believe to be our city's 15 wonders. We have also organised visits to some of these heritage destinations.

Nana Wada
History: The Nana Wada, built in 1780, adopting Gothic structures, used to be the home of Nana Saheb Phadnavis, an influential minister and statesman of the Maratha empire during the Peshwa administration. This wada is a large six-quadrangled, perimeter-protected construction. Back then, the Krishna river used to flow beside the Nana Wada, which had steps leading to the river. The Nana Wada has been a preferred location for many Bollywood filmmakers to shoot their movies. Mrityudand, Goonj Uthi Shehnai, Jis Desh Me Ganga Rehata Hai, and Swades are a just a few such examples.

Inspired by Prince Albert Osborne's house on the Isle of Wight, it was built at a cost of around 1,75,000 Sterling Pound, which was nearly six times the amount raised by the sale of the previous Governor's residence.

To see: A little ahead of the building is a small pond, with a stone prison right in the middle of it. During the British era, crocodiles were kept in the pond that surrounded the prisoners in their cells. The University can be visited between 8 am-6 pm with prior permission.

Parvati
History: Located at a height of 2,100 feet above sea level, Parvati is one of the highest points in the city and gives an excellent panoramic bird's eye view of Pune. The Parvati houses a temple complex and one needs to climb and a total of 103 steps to reach the top. The main temple was built by Shrimant Nana Saheb Peshwa in 1749 and was visited by the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, during his visit to India in 1875. Apart from its historical importance, it is also a hot favourite among fitness enthusiasts, who come here daily for their morning and evening walks.

To see: Among the things to look out for are the few temples behind the Nana Wada that have beautiful Peshwai pictures on their walls. Another interesting thing is a huge bell housed in the temple premises which was won by the Peshwas in the war of Vasai in 1707 against the British. Nana Wada can be visited from 11 am to 6 pm daily.

The complex also has a museum housing artefacts from the Peshwa period. The Parvati gates are open for the general public from 5.00 am to 8.00 pm.

Its cobbled streets, beautiful monuments, streets filled with music and art and charming old square make it a wonderful option for an enchanting history rich getaway.

How to get there
By Air
All leading airlines fly from Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai to Krakow, via Frankfurt, Moscow, Berlin or several other destinations in Europe. It also has a direct connection to several European cities and would make a good base for exploring the rest of the continent.

By Bus
Buses and trams make it easy to travel around Krakow, though you can happily walk for large parts of the city. You can buy tickets at ticket machines or on board. Keep change handy. For ease of travel, pick up the Krakow Tourist Card that gives you free travel on buses and trams. It comes in 60zł and 80zł denomination with two or three day validity. http://www.krakow.pl/english/6243,artykul.krakow_tourist_card.html

Where to stay
There are enough stay options in Krakow. You can choose from star hotels to boutique hotels, apartments and hostels. I stayed at the Sheraton, which gives a wonderful view of the river and castle. For apartments, check out www.apartmentcrakow.com. For Dorm accommodations, try The Secret Garden Hostel (www.thesecretgarden.pl). You'll also find well known chains like Novotel and Radisson and Ibis.

Food
There are lots of options. Try a traditional Polish Milk Bar or a traditional brewery for the authentic local experience. If you can afford it, try a restaurant called Wierzynek. It's been around since 1364 (really) and hosted royal banquets!

Places of Interest
Plenty! Though it saw the worst of Nazis, Krakow was fortunate to not be completely destroyed during WWII. The Old Town is a historic location, as is Kazimierz (former Jewish Quarter). Old Town must visits include the majestic Wawel Castle, Cloth Hall (a merchant's market since the middle ages), St Mary's Basilica and the Town Hall Tower. The Royal castle on Wawel Hill includes a Cathedral as well, apart from other treasures inside its fortified walls. Kazimierz has a sad history as Jews were persecuted here by the Nazis during World War II. A large number of Jews were saved by the businessman



Krakow: Cultural capital of Poland

Krakow is the cultural capital of Poland. It's history goes back to the 4th century. It is considered one of the most beautiful cities of Eastern Europe and is on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Oskar Schindler, made famous in the movie Schindler's List. You can now visit Schindler's Enamelware Factory in Kazimierz. Kazimierz is also home to several churches, synagogues and museums and makes for a good walking tour.

Wieliczka Salt Mines: Built in the 13th century, these were one of the oldest salt mines still in operation until 2007. You can see statues, chapels and other things crafted out of rock salt.

Krakow offers some interesting tours. One is a cycling tour of the city (<http://www.cooltourcompany.com/>). The other is a communist tour of Krakow as it was a East European communist hub. Try http://www.crazyguides.com/krakow_tours/. They take you in a cool communist era vehicle called Trabant, making it complete. You can also do a tour of the Jewish

quarter and some of these are free!
More than the sights, the best experience in Krakow is to park yourself in the old town square, in one of the many open air restaurants and hear music being played and take in the general joie de vivre.
Visit Planty Park and play chess on one of the available boards. You can also catch festivals, fireworks and other events by the river.

Closure Line
Though not on top of the regular Indian travel list, Krakow is a wonderful getaway that is rich both in history and the relaxed yet lively experience it offers. Make this part of your Europe itinerary and you won't regret it.

Sensex, Nifty gain in early trade; Zomato jumps 2%, Paytm gains 5%

New Delhi Benchmark stock market indices opened the trading session on a positive note on Wednesday despite volatility keeping Dalal Street investors on the edge.

The S&P BSE Sensex was up 162.52 points to 80,383.24 at 9:57 am, while the NSE Nifty50 rose 46.45 points to trade at 24,518.55. Most other broader market indices were also trading in the green, but with marginal gains. This shows that investors are trading cautiously amid volatility. The Nifty IT index was among the top gainers among sectoral indices, while Nifty Bank and Nifty Financial Services also rose. Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj-Auto, HDFC Bank, and Adani Enterprises were the top five gainers on the Nifty50. On the other hand, the top losers were NTPC, Power Grid, M&M, Eicher Motors and Sun Pharma. Bajaj Finserv and Bajaj Finance rose after the latter reported its Q2FY25 results a day ago. Zomato shares also rose nearly 2% after the company reported strong results in the second quarter. Paytm shares also jumped nearly 5% after reporting a net profit in Q2. Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, "The ongoing trend of largecaps outperforming mid and smallcaps is likely to sustain, going forward. FII selling and the countervailing trend of DII buying is likely to continue." "This will impart strength to largecap financials, particularly banking stocks like HDFC, ICICI, Axis and Kotak which are fairly valued in this market with elevated valuations. Investors need not rush to buy the beaten down mid and smallcaps since there is more pain left in this segment where valuations continue to remain very high," he added. "There can be individual cases of sharp rebounds in this segment. Zomato's Q2 results indicate continuing acceleration in revenue and profitability. This is a stock to watch."

SC sets aside NCLAT order stopping insolvency proceedings against ed-tech firm Byju's

NEW DELHI. The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal's verdict that had stopped insolvency proceedings against embattled ed-tech firm Byju's. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud also reversed the order of the NCLAT approving Byju's Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). It directed the cricket board to deposit the settlement amount of Rs 158.9 crore with a committee of creditors. The bench, also comprising justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, delivered its verdict on an appeal by US firm Glas Trust Company LLC against the NCLAT order.

Observing that the NCLAT did not apply its mind while closing the insolvency proceedings against the ed-tech major, the bench ordered fresh adjudication in the case. The NCLAT, on August 2, granted relief to the embattled ed-tech firm by setting aside the insolvency proceedings against it after approving its Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the BCCI.

The NCLAT verdict had come as a huge relief for Byju's, as it had effectively put its founder, Byju Raveendran, back in control of the company's finances and operations. However, the relief remained short-lived as the top court, on August 14, termed the NCLAT verdict "unconscionable." It also stayed the operation of the NCLAT order while issuing notices to Byju's and others on the appeal of Glas Trust Company LLC, the ed-tech firm's US-based creditor, against the judgement of the insolvency appellate tribunal.

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Centre exempts parboiled rice, husked brown rice from export duty



NEW DELHI. The government has exempted parboiled rice and husked (brown) rice from export duty. Export duty has been reduced from 10 percent to 'nil' on parboiled rice, husked (brown) rice and rice in the husk (paddy or rough), said a late night notification issued by the finance ministry on Tuesday. The duty cuts are effective from October 22. Sources said the Election Commission's clearance has been obtained on this duty cut, subject to the condition that no political mileage is derived out of the same. Jharkhand and Maharashtra are going to polls next month. Last month, the government had exempted non-basmati white rice from export duty. It had also reduced the levy on parboiled rice, husked (brown rice), and rice in the husk (paddy or rough) to 10 per cent, from 20 per cent earlier. Separately, the minimum export price for basmati rice was scrapped to boost outbound shipments and enhance farmers' income.

Increased retail presence in derivatives a matter of concern: Sebi official

India accounts for largest volume of F&O globally, more than 50% of F&O volumes globally are done in India.

Mumbai Sebi Wholtime Member Ashwani Bhatia on Tuesday warned against the increased retail participation in the derivative segment (futures & options) and other risky products. "While it is encouraging to see increase of retail investors in securities market, increased retail participation in derivative segment and other risky products is a matter of concern," Bhatia said. Close to 93 per cent, or 9 out of 10 individual traders, in the equity F&O segment incurred losses, with aggregate loss exceeding Rs 1.8 lakh crore between FY2022 and FY2024, Sebi data shows. India accounts for largest volume of F&O globally, more than 50%

of F&O volumes globally are done in India. "This crown is worn by India, and this is a crown we do not wish to wear," Bhatia said while speaking at the Morningstar Investment Conference. F&O cannot be a national pastime, we need to do serious investing and investors should participate in wealth that is being created in the country through pooled vehicles like mutual funds or directly," he said. Sebi had recently released a set of six measures to strengthen the equity index derivatives, also known as equity futures & options (F&O), framework. The norms include raising the entry barrier by increasing the contract size and upfront collection of option premium. Bhatia said Sebi is planning to come out with a discussion paper in a bid to tighten the regulatory framework for IPOs of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The Sebi move follows huge subscription and listing



especially the number of times IPO issues are oversubscribed and the way market making happens the way underwriting happens," Bhatia said.

According to G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, with structural reforms, India has become far more efficient economy, without leakages, and with a strong digital infrastructure which no other country in the world has. "India has pursued a very different model versus other Western nations. In India we have created a digital layer on top of which we have allowed the private sector to compete, everyone is competing in the marketplace and huge innovation is taking place," Kant said. The Bank of International Settlement has said what India has achieved in the last 7 years, it would have normally taken India 50 years had it not been for what we have achieved in digital infrastructure, Kant said.

gains by SME IPOs in the last few months. "What we have seen is pretty disturbing," he said. "There's concern regarding the IPO participation, particularly in SME IPO by Indian investors, which has raised concerns for us. SME listings are closely monitored by exchanges and SEBI to ensure they don't engage in irrational exuberance price manipulation or fraudulent trade practices," he said. We don't feel very comfortable about what's going on -

India remains world's fastest-growing economy; inflation likely to drop to 4.4% in FY24-25: IMF

WASHINGTON. India remains the largest growing economy in the world, a senior official from the International Monetary Fund said, observing that the country's macroeconomic fundamentals are good. "India is said to remain the largest growing economy in the world. We project growth at seven per cent in FY24-25, supported by recovery in rural consumption, as there have been favourable harvests. Inflation is expected to decline to 4.4 per cent in FY24-25, despite some volatility as food prices normalise," Krishna Srinivasan, Director for the IMF Asia Pacific Department, told PTI in an interview on Tuesday. In terms of other fundamentals, he said, "despite elections, the fiscal consolidation remains on track. Reserve position is pretty good. Mamentals, generally speaking, for India are good." He suggested that the country's reform priorities post-eacro fundlections need to be in three areas. "One is, there's an issue about creating jobs in India and so on. In that context, I think implementing the labour codes, which were approved in 2019-2020, are important because they will allow the labour markets to be flexible while

giving social protection to workers," he said. "The other thing is, if you want to be competitive, you also have to remove some of the trade restrictions you have right now. Because in India what's happening is, you know, when you liberalise trade, you allow the productive firms to survive. There's greater competitiveness and that by itself can, you know, create jobs. I think it's important that there's more trade restrictions removed," he said. "And finally, I would say continue with the reforms on, you know, beefing up the infrastructure, be it physical infrastructure or digital infrastructure, and this is a key achievement, and it continues with that. But going beyond that, I would say you have to focus on agriculture and land reforms. You have to think in terms of strengthening education and skilling," he said. Emphasising the need for investment in skilling the workforce, Srinivasan said, "In an economy which can generate a lot more jobs in the services sector, having the right kind of skills is important. So, investing in education, skilling the labour forces is very important." "Strengthening a social safety net is another reform.

Finally, I would say that talking to people, you still have a lot of red tape and so on. Improving the business environment will be important aspects. These are some of the reforms which I think I would prioritise," Srinivasan said in response to a question. Sharing some examples of red tape in India, he said, some investors feel that entering the Indian market, setting up an investment some way, or getting a tract of land for big investments can be a problem. Some also mentioned that if you want to shut down and you want to exit, that could also be a problem. "These are just two examples. But I would say that the labour market, you know, the labour codes are still a deterrent. These are the kinds of reforms which you need to address going forward," he said. Observing that the unemployment rate has declined to 4.9 per cent, he said the labour force participation and the employment-to-population ratio has been increasing. "For instance, from 56.4 per cent for labour market participation and employment-to-population (which) is about 53.7 per cent, those have gone up since the 40s. They were there before."

BSNL not to raise tariff in near future, says CMD

The statement holds significance as all private telecom operators, including Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, collectively raised their mobile plan tariffs by up to 25%.



NEW DELHI. State-owned telecom company Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has said that it won't increase tariffs in the near future even though all its private peers have raised tariffs by up to 25%. "We can clearly say we are not going to increase our tariffs in the near future. Today, BSNL's prime interest is to see that its consumers are happy and to win their confidence. We don't see any need for tariff hikes now," said Robert Ravi,

Chairman and Managing Director of BSNL. The statement holds significance as all private telecom operators, including Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, collectively raised their mobile plan tariffs by up to 25%. Following this tariff hike, telcos lost subscribers substantially, with many users switching to BSNL. Notably, BSNL increased its subscriber base for the first time in recent years.

According to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Bharti Airtel lost 1.69 million subscribers, Vodafone Idea 1.4 million and Jio lost 758,463 subscribers. In contrast, BSNL added an impressive 2.94 million new subscribers in July 2024, making it the only telecom operator to do so. The telecom company on Tuesday unveiled its new logo.

"BSNL aims to be at the forefront of technological innovation. BSNL will establish 1,00,000 4G sites by mid-2025 and has plans to upgrade in the future. Our hope is that BSNL will always be at the forefront of tech innovation," said Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister of Communications.

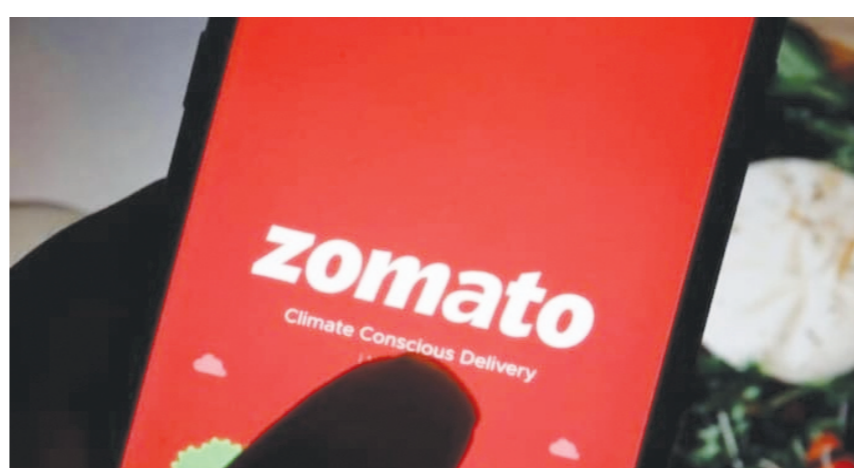
The company also announced the launch of fiber-based intranet TV service, which offers over 500 live channels and Pay TV through its FTTH network.

book. He also highlighted the successful integration of Cigniti, which has outperformed expectations in terms of synergies and margin expansion. Coforge's workforce grew significantly, increasing by 5,871 employees to a total of 32,483. The company's attrition rate improved, dropping by 130 basis points year-on-year to 11.7%. The headcount boost included 4,430 employees from the recent Cigniti acquisition, while 1,441 employees were added organically. Employee benefit expenses rose 35% year-on-year to Rs 1,910 crore. Despite the strong performance, the company's EBIT margin slipped by 14 basis points, landing at 11.4%. Coforge's board also declared a second interim dividend of Rs 19 per share, with the record date set for October 11. Coforge shares have delivered over 53% returns in a year. Year-to-date, Coforge shares have risen 22%. The company currently has a market capitalisation of over Rs 50,000 crore.

Zomato shares recover after falling 5% after Q2 results. Should you buy

Zomato share price: The early selloff was driven by mixed brokerage insights, despite an overall bullish outlook on the stock.

NEW DELHI. Zomato shares faced volatility in early trade as they initially declined by nearly 5% due to profit booking a day after reporting its Q2FY25 results. However, Zomato's share price rose to Rs 260.15 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) by 10:22 am, after hitting a day low of Rs 242.45. The food delivery giant's profits for the quarter surged 389% to Rs 176 crore compared to Rs 36 crore in the same period last year. Revenue rose by 68% to Rs 4,799 crore, driven by improved margins in the food delivery segment and the rapid expansion of its quick-commerce business, Blinkit. The early selloff in Zomato's



shares was driven by mixed brokerage insights, despite an overall bullish outlook on the stock.

ZOMATO SHARE PRICE TARGET

Brokerage firm Nuvama has raised its target price to Rs 325 (from Rs 285) and maintained a 'buy' rating. They pointed out that Blinkit's dark store expansion is progressing faster than expected, although profitability may be delayed due

to higher initial costs. Nuvama believes this aggressive approach is necessary for maintaining Zomato's competitiveness in the quick-commerce sector. HSBC also holds a positive outlook, maintaining a 'buy' rating with a target price of Rs 330. The brokerage said that while Zomato's food delivery business met expectations, Blinkit exceeded projections. They see Zomato's recent fundraising efforts as

crucial for staying ahead in a competitive market.

Nomura has raised its target price from Rs 280 to Rs 320, reiterating a 'buy' recommendation. They highlighted Zomato's focus on quick-commerce growth, especially through Blinkit, and expect a neutral EBITDA in the near term. Despite some concerns about profitability in the near term, Zomato remains well-positioned in both the food delivery and quick-commerce markets, with several brokerages forecasting strong growth and improved margins over the next few years.

Zomato's stock recovery and strong Q2FY25 results indicate positive momentum, backed by a growing quick-commerce business and sustained food delivery margins.

While some analysts remain cautious due to competitive pressures, the majority of brokerages maintain a bullish outlook, forecasting significant upside in the stock price. Investors should weigh both the long-term potential and short-term challenges as Zomato continues to navigate a highly competitive landscape.

NEWS BOX

Vinicius Jr. is going to win Ballon d'Or: Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti

New Delhi Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti heaped praise on Vinicius Jr, calling him "extraordinary," after the Brazilian forward delivered a second-half hat-trick to lead a stunning comeback against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Tuesday. Real Madrid, initially trailing 2-0, roared back to claim a dominant 5-2 victory, thanks in large part to Vinicius' brilliance.

Speaking at a press conference after the match, Ancelotti expressed his confidence that the 24-year-old will soon be recognised as the best player in the world. He added that he fully expects Vinicius to win the prestigious Ballon d'Or award at the upcoming ceremony on Monday, October 28. "What I can say is that it's rare to see a player who plays a second half like Vinicius did. And not because of the three goals but because of his character; he's extraordinary," Ancelotti said. "Vinicius is going to win (the Ballon d'Or), not for what he did tonight, but for what he did last year. These three goals are already going to count for next year's Ballon



d'Or, that's for sure. He is a player who gets whistled at because he can make a difference."

"We lived it calmly"

Despite being 2-0 down at half-time, Ancelotti said that the team was calm in the dressing room and they changed the system to play with more intensity. The Madrid boss admitted his side was timid in the first half and the second period saw them have more quality. "We lived it calmly, calmly (over the break). We changed the system and came back playing more intensely," Ancelotti said. "Talking about scoring three goals might have seemed utopian, so we talked about small details like passing well, winning duels... We had to win the dynamic of the game and from there you start to win the game." "We were timid in the first half, we weren't intense on the ball and in the second half we did better with more quality, more pressure. It was the best second half of the season." "We have to learn from what we did in the second half. The aim is to start the game and not wait for them to put two past us. I don't think we can play 90 minutes with the intensity of the second half but we can be more balanced."

Gautam Gambhir backs under-fire KL Rahul: Social media scrutiny does not matter

New Delhi, Head coach Gautam Gambhir backed KL Rahul to return to his best amid his indifferent run of form. Rahul looked out of sorts in the opening Test against New Zealand at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru where he got scores of 0 and 12. In both innings, it was fast bowler William O'Rourke who accounted for his wicket. Thereafter, Rahul was greeted with criticism for not being able to perform to expectations. But Gambhir was clear-cut in saying that because of backlash on social media, India would not undermine the value that Rahul brings to the fore with his experience. Gambhir praised Rahul for his 43-ball knock of 68 against Najmul Shanto's Bangladesh at the Green Park in Kanpur.

"Social media does not matter one bit. What



the team management and leadership group thinks is very important. He is batting really well, had a decent knock in Kanpur (against Bangladesh on a difficult wicket)," Gambhir said in the press conference before the second Test, starting October 24 at the MCA Stadium in Pune.

'Rahul has capability of scoring runs'

Gambhir, who went through the rigours of playing for India from 2004 to 2016, said that representing a country at the highest level comes with the pressure of getting 'judged'.

"I am sure he would be knowing that he has to score big runs and he has capability of scoring runs. That's why he has been backed by the team... Ultimately, everyone is judged. International cricket is all about being judged," Gambhir added. India lost the opening Test by eight wickets after getting bowled out for 46 in their first innings..

LeBron, Bronny James make history as NBA's first father-son duo to play together

LeBron and Bronny James became the first father-son duo to play NBA together

LeBron gave his son advice on the bench before stepping onto the court together

Lakers secure a 110-103 victory over Timberwolves with LeBron scoring 16 points

New Delhi Basketball great LeBron James and his son, Bronny James, scripted history on Tuesday night as the first father-son duo to play together in the league. The Los Angeles Lakers' home crowd erupted when the two checked into the game simultaneously with just four minutes left in the second quarter, marking a milestone not just for the Lakers, but for basketball as a whole. LeBron, already recognized as the NBA's all-time leading scorer and one of the greatest players in the sport's history, had started the game and logged 13 minutes



before teaming up with his 20-year-old son. Bronny, a second-round draft pick by the Lakers in the 2023 NBA Draft, was thrust into the spotlight, sharing the court with his legendary father in a moment both had dreamed about for years.

TNT cameras captured LeBron giving his son advice on the bench before they stepped onto the court together. "Y'all ready? You see the intensity, right? Just play carefree, though," LeBron told Bronny, encouraging him to

focus on effort rather than the pressure of the occasion. Over the two-and-a-half minutes they shared on the floor, LeBron missed two perimeter shots before finishing with a powerful dunk, while Bronny grabbed an early rebound but missed a tip-in attempt. Bronny's first NBA jump shot, a 3-pointer, fell just short, but his presence alone generated another loud ovation from the fans when he was substituted out with 1:19 remaining in the second quarter.

Though Bronny did not return to the game, the Lakers won 110-103 over the Minnesota Timberwolves. LeBron, who finished with 16 points, shared an on-court interview with his son before the two exited the arena, stopping in the tunnel to hug LeBron's wife and Bronny's mother, Savannah James, in an emotional moment for the family.

Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr., who were the first father-son duo to play together in Major League Baseball, were court-side for the Lakers game, witnessing history repeating itself in a new sport. The Griffey family had played 51 games together with the Seattle Mariners in 1990 and 1991, even hitting home runs in the same game. Before tip-off, the Jameses and the Griffey family shared warm moments and photos during pregame warmups.

LeBron, who has now started his record-tying 22nd NBA season, first expressed his dream of playing alongside his eldest son a few years ago, when Bronny was still in high school. That dream came closer to reality after Bronny played one season at USC and was drafted by the Lakers. "It's been a treat," LeBron said earlier on Tuesday. "In preseason, the practices, just every day... bringing him up to speed of what this professional life is all about."

If you enjoyed Kanpur, have to endure Bengaluru 46-all out: Gautam Gambhir

India coach Gautam Gambhir defends the team's aggressive approach despite a loss to New Zealand in the Bengaluru Test. Gambhir emphasizes the importance of aiming for a win, even after being bowled out for 46 runs.



New Delhi. India coach Gautam Gambhir has defended his side's approach after their loss to New Zealand in the Bengaluru Test. The Indian team was bowled out for 46 runs in the first innings on day one, which proved to be the turning point in the game. Despite the hosts putting up a solid performance with the bat in the second innings, New Zealand went on to win the match by 8 wickets. The loss came days after India played aggressive cricket in the Kanpur Test against Bangladesh where they were able to finish the game in the last 2 days after rain played a part in the first three. Speaking at the pre-

match press conference, Gambhir talked about the loss and said that they would have to accept defeats like in Bengaluru moving forward. The India coach pointed out how his side was looking to win the match despite 46 runs in the first innings. Gambhir said that India had no intention to play out the last 2 days and look for a draw as they wanted the win. The India coach said that this is the brand of cricket they want to play going forward. That's why we call cricket, or rather sports in general, a great leveler. If you enjoy days like we had in Kanpur, then you also have to accept days like the one we had in Bengaluru. But the good thing was that even after being bowled out for 46, we were still looking to win the Test match. That was important, and that's the kind of cricket we want to play. "I had said earlier that our first option is always to win, and the second option is a draw. If you look at

the second innings as well, there was no intention of just playing for two and a half days. We were thinking about how we could win the game. In fact, if you ask me, we were probably 100 runs away from making the match. So, I don't think many teams would think that way after being bowled out for 46, when they still had to bat for more than two and a half days. But that's the quality of cricket we want to play going forward," said Gambhir.

Selecting playing XI for India anywhere is a good headache. There are a few tough calls that India would have to make for the Pune Test, with Shubman Gill, Sarfaraz Khan and KL Rahul in a shootout for a spot in the playing XI. Gambhir said that picking a playing XI for India anywhere in the country is a 'headache' due to the talent available at their disposal. "Look, selecting the playing XI for any Test match in India is a headache because of the amount of talent we have, whether it's in domestic or international cricket. So, it's not just that it's challenging here; it's a good challenge, in fact. When you have good talent coming in and there's competition for spots, it's always a good thing. This means Indian cricket has a strong foundation and is at a good level. I don't think the challenge will be any different in Pune compared to other places; it's always difficult everywhere," said Gambhir.

Mikel Arteta concerned after Riccardo Calafiori joins Arsenal injury list

New Delhi. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta faces mounting concerns ahead of the club's critical Premier League clash against Liverpool, as left-back Riccardo Calafiori becomes the latest addition to an expanding injury list. During Arsenal's 1-0 Champions League win over Shakhtar Donetsk on Tuesday, Calafiori was forced off in the second half after twisting his right knee, leaving Arteta with more selection headaches. Calafiori joins a growing list of key players who are sidelined, including captain Martin de Gea, Bukayo Saka, and defender Jurrien Timber. The Italian defender's injury is particularly worrying, as Arsenal are already struggling with a depleted squad. "He felt something and couldn't continue playing," Arteta said post-match. "It's a bit of a worry." While Arsenal secured the win through an own goal by Shakhtar goalkeeper Dmytro Riznyk, the



injury news overshadowed the result. Calafiori's departure was another blow to an Arsenal defense already stretched by the absence of William Saliba, who will miss the Liverpool match due to suspension after receiving a red card in the recent 2-0 loss to Bournemouth. de Gea remains sidelined with an ankle injury suffered last month, and his absence on Sunday looks almost

certain. Meanwhile, there is growing uncertainty surrounding Saka's availability. The star winger injured his hamstring while on England duty and has missed Arsenal's last two fixtures. "He wasn't able to train yet, so it's unlikely," Arteta admitted when asked about Saka's chances of playing against Liverpool. Despite the mounting issues, Arteta provided some relief by confirming that Ben White, who was substituted at half-time against Shakhtar, had not sustained an injury. "It was my decision to take him out. He had a yellow card, and we've played enough with 10 men in recent games, so I didn't want to take any chances." Arsenal's performance against Shakhtar reflected the growing fatigue within the squad. Although they dominated possession and missed several clear chances.

LSG to release KL Rahul, retain Mayank Yadav ahead of IPL 2025 auction: Sources

New Delhi, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) are expected to part ways with their captain KL Rahul following a disappointing IPL 2024 season, where he was unable to guide the team to the playoffs. Rahul, who has been a key player for the franchise since its inception in 2022, is unlikely to be retained after leading the side in three seasons, with mixed results. Despite leading LSG to playoff qualifications twice, his form has dipped, and the management appears to be moving in a new direction. According to sources, LSG's management has had extensive discussions about Rahul's future with the team, ultimately reaching a consensus to part ways. A source close to the franchise was quoted saying, "We have discussed KL's role with the team management multiple times, and there is consent that we will move forward without him." Rahul, one of the most experienced Indian batters in the league, will likely be one of the high-profile names in the upcoming

IPL 2025 mega auction. His strike rate in recent seasons has been a point of contention. While he scored 616 runs in 2022 at a strike rate of 135.38, his form dipped in the following season, where his strike rate fell to 113.22. The 32-year-old managed 520 runs at a strike rate of 136.13 in the 2024 edition, but a mid-season injury in 2023 raised concerns about his consistency. So far, Rahul has played 132 IPL matches, amassing 4,683 runs with a strike rate of 134.61, including four centuries and 37 fifties. Despite his strong track record, the franchise seems prepared to move on and explore other options. While Rahul is expected to be released, the franchise is reportedly keen on retaining three key players: pace sensation Mayank Yadav, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, and West Indies' wicketkeeper-batter Nicholas Pooran. Mayank Yadav, who has emerged as a valuable asset for LSG, is set to be retained at a significant price. Yadav's raw pace,



which often clocks over 155 kmph, has left opposition batters struggling. Although he only played four matches in the 2024 season before being sidelined by injury, he impressed with seven wickets, including notable performances against the likes of Cameron Green. Following his T20I debut for India against Bangladesh, Mayank's value has skyrocketed, and LSG is expected

to keep him for around Rs 11 to Rs 14 crore. Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, another young talent, is also on LSG's retention list. The former world No. 1 T20I bowler had a relatively quiet season in 2024, taking 10 wickets in 14 matches, but his potential and previous success make him a vital part of LSG's plans. Bishnoi is set to receive a significant pay raise, having previously earned Rs 4 crore as an uncapped player. Nicholas Pooran, who served as the team's stand-in captain during one match in the previous edition, is also likely to be retained. The West Indian wicketkeeper-batter played a crucial role in the middle order and provided much-needed stability with the bat. LSG is reportedly prepared to retain Pooran at a hefty price, reflecting his value to the team. Despite the decision to release KL Rahul, there is speculation that the franchise may bid for him again at the auction, albeit at a more balanced price. Rahul's experience and



Matthew Bacon, who picked up a five-wicket haul, dismissed Bowes in the 39th over.

Glad it was my day

"It might sink in over the next day or two, but obviously a great day here at Hagley and a good occasion to do something special," Bowes said after his innings. "These things happen naturally, organically. You do not plan for it or try to do it, so I am glad it was my day. Probably not (hit the ball) consistently that well, so it was nice to get most of them out of the middle and hit it around the park," Bowes added. Bowes' knock paid rich dividends as Canterbury won the match by 240 runs after bowling the opposition out for 103 in 24.5 overs. In two games thus far in the Ford Trophy, Bowes has scored 253 runs at an average of 25.3 and a strike-rate of 159.11. Bowes has played six ODIs and 11 T20Is for the Black Caps with two half-centuries to show for his efforts.

Seema Sajdeh

Recalls Getting Creepy Message From '100 Year-Old' Man



Since the release of Netflix's reality show Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives, it has become a hot topic of conversation. This season, Seema Sajdeh, a fashion designer and ex-wife of Sohail Khan, revealed that she has moved on from her difficult divorce and is currently dating her ex-fiance, businessman Vikram Ahuja. In addition to this surprising revelation, Seema made headlines for another reason. Recently, the cast of Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives, including Maheep Kapoor, Bhavana Pandey and Neelam Kothari, participated in an interview with Fever FM. During a light-hearted rapid-fire segment, Seema was asked to share the weirdest or creepiest direct message (DM) she had ever received. After a moment of reflection, she recalled a bizarre incident where an unknown sender reached out with an unusual proposal, stating that they wanted to "keep" her and even quoted a budget for it.

"This dude offered to... basically, he had given me the budget for a month," revealed Seema, which left her friends in utter shock. She mentioned that the guy looked like he was '100 years old.' "It was creepy... He basically said, 'I will be happy to keep you, but this would be the budget'. The budget was around \$7000-8000... I saw the face and had a heart attack," Seema mentioned. The conversation took a hilarious turn when Maheep asked if the man was offering that amount for a day or a month. Seema said, "Maheep! I didn't have a conversation with him." Speaking of Seema Sajdeh, she eloped with Sohail Khan and married him in 1998. After welcoming two sons, Nirvaan and Yohan, and spending two decades together, the couple ultimately decided to part ways. In one of the episodes of the latest season of Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives, the fashion designer confided in her elder son about her new chapter in life, revealing that she is dating someone. Seema confirmed that she is seeing her ex-fiance, Vikram Ahuja, whom she was engaged to before her decision to elope with Khan.



Dalljiet Kaur Denies Stirring Up Controversy In Personal Life For Bigg Boss: 'Maine Apni Zindagi Tabah...'

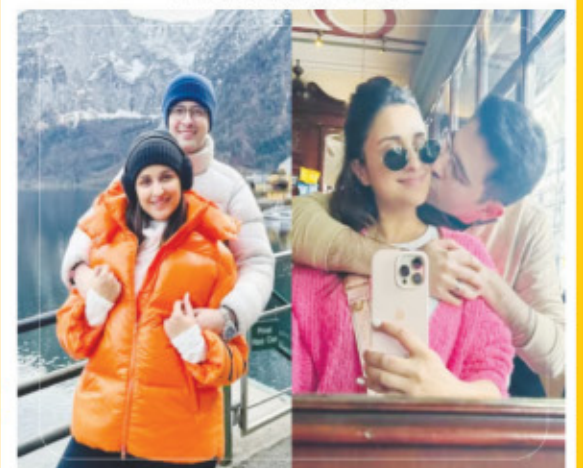


Dalljiet Kaur found herself at the center of controversy following her separation from Nikhil Patel. Their messy breakup included a slew of accusations and some whispers suggest she's been trying to grab headlines for her potential appearance on Bigg Boss 18. In a cheeky response to the rumours, Dalljiet laughed off the idea that she would sabotage her own life just to get on a show she's already done. In a chat with Pinkvilla, Dalljiet said, "Dude, I went to Bigg Boss. Maine socha ye achha hain, maine apne zindagi ko tabah kiya taa ki mein Bigg Boss jau, bhoor gaye kya mein gayi thi. Aur mein actor achhi hu. Mein kahni ro deti, cheekh deti, mein aaj tak apni details nahi di. Agar galti se de du... (I will ruin my life so that I can go to Bigg Boss? Did you forget that I went there? And I am a good actress. I could have easily cried or shouted, but till now, I haven't shared my details. If I accidentally do...)"

Dalljiet said that if she wanted to create drama on Bigg Boss 13, she totally could have, but she stayed quiet then, and is still quiet now. "The point is mein chup hu, waha pe bhi chup thi chahe mein nikli aur jo bhi ho, matlab jane ke liye kuch facade karna, mere paas toh golden opportunity thi, mein jaake aa gayi, mein Bigg Boss 13 mein thi aur mere friends bhi the. Taab Bigg Boss 13 kitna hit hone wala bahar nahi pata tha. Arti meri dost thi pehle, Rashami thi, mere paas toh safety net tha. Mein wahi pe kisiko pakad ke shuru kar deti aapna dukh gaane."

Dalljiet Kaur and Nikhil Patel confirmed their separation amid accusations from Dalljiet that Nikhil cheated on her. The couple faced challenges with their blended family dynamic after Dalljiet returned to India with their son, Jaydon, leaving Nikhil in Kenya. Their relationship had begun to deteriorate, leading to this decision.

Raghav Chadha Drops Unseen Photos On Parineeti Chopra's Birthday, Calls Her 'Most Precious Gift'



Parineeti Chopra is celebrating her birthday today and getting wishes from all corners. Priyanka Chopra also wished the actress on social media. But her husband Raghav Chadha's birthday wish grabbed her attention. He dropped unseen photos on her birthday and penned a special note. Taking to his Instagram handle, Raghav Chadha wrote, "Your laughter, your voice, your beauty, your grace—sometimes I wonder how God fit so much magic into one person... As you grow more stunning and wiser on your birthday today, I hope all your dreams come true. You, Paru, are my most precious gift and I'll keep doing everything I can to make you smile even more. Happy birthday, my princess!" Parineeti also reacted and wrote, "Ragiiiiiiiiiii! Priyanka shared a picture of Parineeti and wished her on her birthday. Taking to Instagram Stories, Priyanka Chopra shared a selfie of Parineeti Chopra. The picture showed Parineeti donning a black swimsuit and was clicked after she took a dip in the ocean. Parineeti had let her hair loose and she wore sunglasses as she enjoyed her beach holiday. Fondly calling her 'Tisha', Priyanka wrote, "Happy birthday Tisha. Sending you lots of love on your special day." She also added a heart and kiss emoji along with tagging Parineeti.

Parineeti was recently in Delhi to celebrate her first Karwa Chauth with her husband and family. On the work front, she was last seen in Imtiaz Ali's Amar Singh Chamkila where she starred alongside Diljit Dosanjh. She played the role of Chamkila's wife, Amarjot. She has not announced any new project as of now. This year, Parineeti headlined numerous articles because of her critically acclaimed performance in the Netflix original Amar Singh Chamkila (2024), starring opposite Diljit Dosanjh. Earlier this year, in an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Parineeti talked about how getting work in Bollywood does not depend only on merit. "Getting work in Bollywood doesn't only depend on merit or acting, you have to be in cliques and camps to get roles. I am not present at the right place at the right time. I am not getting papped every day," she said. She further talked about how B-town parties are a big stage for casting opportunities.

Shruti Haasan

Exits Adivi Sesh's Dacoit: A Love Story Amid Creative Differences



Shruti Haasan is currently making headlines for his upcoming projects like Salaar 2, Coolie and Chennai Story. A recent report suggests that the actress has walked away from one of her other upcoming projects, titled Dacoit: A Love Story. The upcoming action drama film is directed by Shaneil Deo and is said to feature Shruti alongside Adivi Sesh as the main lead. The latest buzz indicates that the actress has reportedly walked away from the project, with creative differences between Shruti and the makers cited as the main reason for this major decision.

Some other reports have also claimed it was Adivi Sesh's alleged control of the project's dimensions led Shruti Haasan to exit it. There has been no official confirmation from either Shruti Haasan or the filmmakers regarding these claims. The film had already built excitement among the viewers with the teaser, released in December last year. The film is said to revolve around two estranged lovers who are forcibly reunited, setting off a chain of events involving a series of robberies that ultimately change their lives. A recent report says the scenes involving Shruti Haasan and Adivi Sesh are going to be scrapped and the Dacoit team will freshly shoot the scenes on Sesh and another actress (replacement). Shruti never had any issues creatively or with the production house; the actress even said that she has the highest regard for Sesh, but the reason for her exit from the film remains a mystery. Meanwhile, the makers of Dacoit have already approached a couple of actresses as replacements. They are also considering Bollywood actresses and the name would be out very soon. Despite losing out on Dacoit, Shruti's other projects remain in the pipeline, including the promising film Coolie, starring Rajinikanth and others. The film's cast was announced recently. It appears to be on track for its release.

Apart from her professional life, Shruti Haasan often grabs attention for her personal life. For the uninformed, she dated Shantanu Hazarika for several years before news of their breakup surfaced on social media. The actress has not publicly commented on the matter.

