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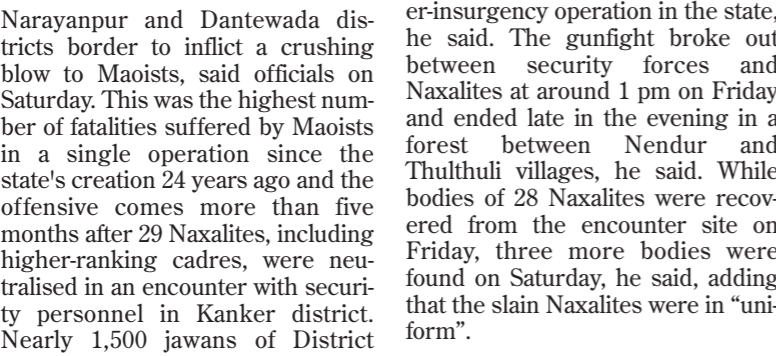
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1,500 personnel behind 48-hour operation against Naxalites

Sanjay Kumar Reserve Guard (DRG) from Dantewada and Narayanpur and Special Task Force were involved in the offensive, Dantewada Additional Superintendent of Police RK Barman told PTI. The crack-down was launched based on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to their company No. 6 and east Bastar division on the hills of Gavadi, Thulthuli, Nendur and Rengawaya villages, he said.



Narayanpur and Dantewada districts border to inflict a crushing blow to Maoists, said officials on Saturday. This was the highest number of fatalities suffered by Maoists in a single operation since the state's creation 24 years ago and the offensive comes more than five months after 29 Naxalites, including higher-ranking cadres, were neutralised in an encounter with security personnel in Kanker district. Nearly 1,500 jawans of District

er-insurgency operation in the state, he said. The gunfight broke out between security forces and Naxalites at around 1 pm on Friday and ended late in the evening in a forest between Nendur and Thulthuli villages, he said. While bodies of 28 Naxalites were recovered from the encounter site on Friday, three more bodies were found on Saturday, he said, adding that the slain Naxalites were in "uniform".

Congress most corrupt party, MVA only knows how to stall development: PM Modi

Thane, Oct 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday called the Congress the country's most corrupt party and asked people of poll-bound Maharashtra to stay miles away from the opposition alliance it leads. Addressing a massive gathering in Thane, where he inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of several projects worth more than Rs 32,000 crore, the PM said the NDA's only focus was development, while the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi only knows to stall such works. "We have to make Mumbai and its metropolitan region (MMR) future ready to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat (developed India). For this, we have to work doubly hard. We have to focus on development and rectify the damage done by previous Congress regimes," he said. Under the present governments at the Centre and in the state, development of MMR was moving at superfast speed, the PM asserted. "The Congress is the most dishonest and corrupt party in the country. Its character never changes. One CM is involved in a land scam, one minister from that party is abusing women and a Haryana leader is caught with drugs. The party promises huge things to

win polls and then loots people after coming to power," Modi said. Citing the toilet tax imposed in Himachal Pradesh, Modi said the Congress is identified with "loot, jhoot, and kushasan" (corruption, lies and mis-governance). He said people of Thane and Mumbai were suffering from problems of population and traffic under Congress regimes, and there was a time when Mumbai's development had come to a halt. "Under our government, 300 kilometres of metro rail network, coastal road, Atal Setu have become reality, which will boost industrial development and generate employment. The Maha Vikas Aghadi only knew to stall work. The Mumbai Metro 3 line work was stopped due to ego and taxpayers' money was wasted as the cost of the project escalated by Rs 14,000 crore," he said. Modi said the metro line 3, the first phase of which he inaugurated at the event, is happening because of the cooperation of the Japanese government. It is a symbol of India-Japan friendship, he added. The MVA, which comprises the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP), also put hurdles in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train and Atal Setu projects and stopped water supply and irrigation schemes in the state, he said. "The MVA is the enemy of development and people must keep the opposition alliance miles away (from power). In Maharashtra, the Congress is showing its true colours. It is opposing the state government's Ladki Bahin Yojana in which women get monthly aid of Rs 1500 as well as distribution of three free LPG cylinders per year," the PM said. Women should be alert about the intentions of the Congress, which will stop work done by the Eknath Shinde government and give money to "dalals" (middlemen), the PM said.



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'Just timepass': Omar on exit poll predictions; BJP remains hopeful of win

Naresh Malhotra Jammu/Srinagar, Oct 5: Most of the exit polls predicted that the Congress-NC alliance has an advantage in the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir but the BJP remained hopeful of forming the government in the Union territory. National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, however, described the exit polls as "just timepass" even though the results are in favour of his party. "I'm amazed channels are bothering with exit polls especially after the fiasco of the recent general elections. I'm ignoring all the noise on channels, social media, WhatsApp etc. because the only numbers that matter will be revealed on the 8th of Oct. The rest is just time pass," Abdullah, a former chief minister, wrote on X. Several exit polls gave an edge to the NC-Congress alliance and predicted that the regional party could emerge as the single-largest party in J&K. Reacting to the exit poll predictions, J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina said his party contested the assembly polls with all its strength. "We are confident that BJP will

emerge as the single largest party when the results are out on October 8," he said. Raina said the BJP leadership that included Prime



Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and party president J P Nadda campaigned for the party and got tremendous support from the people. "BJP will emerge victorious on October 8 and will start working on the formation of the government. We fought the elections on our own strength. Our target is to win the elections with the blessings of the peo-

ple and we will achieve splendid victory," he said. J&K Congress president Tahir Hameed Karra said the Congress-NC alliance is in a comfortable position to form the next government in the Union territory. "This election was primarily to keep the BJP out of the power corridors, restoration of statehood along with land and job guarantees. I am seeing the (Congress-NC) alliance in a comfortable position to form the government," Karra said. He said the mandate of the people is formation of the government against "divisive forces and hatemongers". "People voted for redressal of their genuine grievances as they suffered a lot over the past 10 years with the top echelons of power both in the Raj Bhavan and Civil Secretariat working like kings. The BJP needs to explain to the people what they have done in the past 10 years," Karra said. He said the BJP has no moral right to accuse the NC and Congress of reviving terrorism and said, "Everyone knows that terrorism shifted from Kashmir to the peaceful Jammu region. Only the goal post has changed in the past 10 years." People's Democratic Party (PDP) said the exit polls were not reliable and it was too premature to talk about government formation.

Demolish top 3 floors of Sanjauli mosque: Commissioner's Court

Shimla, Oct 5: The Municipal Commissioner's Court here on Saturday directed the president of Muslim Welfare Committee and Himachal Pradesh Waqf Board to demolish the top three unauthorised floors of the mosque located at Sanjauli area in the state's capital within two months. During the hearing of the case, the Commissioner asked the Muslim Welfare Committee and Waqf Board to bear all the expenses of the demolition. The decision regarding the remaining two floors of the mosque will be taken on December 21. Bhoop Singh Thakur, the advocate who is representing the Himachal Pradesh Waqf Board in the case, told mediapersons that the court has passed orders to demolish the top three floors of the mosque. "We had already offered to demolish the unauthorised floors of the mosque on September 12 and we have no objection with the order. We are ready to demolish the unauthorised floors," said Muhammad Latif, president, Sanjauli Mosque Committee, after the hearing of the case. Advocate Jagat Paul, who is representing the locals, said that the Commissioner - during the hearing - said that as per the memorandum submitted by the president of Muslim Welfare Committee, they had offered to demol-

ish two-and-a-half floors of the mosque, after which the court ordered the demolition of three unauthorised floors. Earlier, the Commissioner also dismissed the application of the local residents of Sanjauli, who wanted to be the third party in the case, after a detailed argument. The case that is being heard in the Commissioner's Court since 2010 came into focus when Hindu outfits started to raise the demand of its demolition after a fight between a local and people of a minority community in Malvana. Hindu outfits have staged massive protests in Sanjauli and across the state through which they demanded that all the illegal mosques within the state should be razed and proper verification of unidentified migrants should be ensured. The Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti that has been vocal against unauthorised mosques in Sanjauli has welcomed the court's decision. However, the committee has made it clear that their movement against the illegal mosque would continue till the structure is not demolished completely. Bharat Bhushan, convener, Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti, in a press statement issued here today alleged that the entire mosque is illegal as it has been constructed on government-owned land.

NIA targets Jaish-e-Mohammad, arrests 1 and questions multiple suspects

ST Correspondent New Delhi, Oct 5: In a massive pan-India crackdown against terrorists' outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at 26 locations in five states and arrested one person and questioned several suspects involved in motivating youth into committing violent terror attacks across the country, according to an official statement. Sheikh Sultan Salah Uddin Ayubi alias Ayubi was taken into custody after searches at 26 locations in Assam, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir, it said. The accused was arrested on account of his incriminatory role in the conspiracy case, said the statement issued by NIA. He will be produced before the NIA special court, Patiala House, New Delhi, it added. The suspects were engaged in radicalising individuals associated with Pakistan-based JeM and were engaged in disseminating terrorist related propaganda, and "radicalising and recruiting youth into the Jamaat outfit" inspired by it, it said. These suspects were involved in motivating the youth into committing violent terror attacks across India, NIA investigations have revealed, according to the statement. The premises searched by NIA were located in Goalpara (Assam), Aurangabad, Jalna and Malegaon in Maharashtra, Meerut and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Baranulla, Pulwama and Ramban in Jammu and Kashmir: During the searches, NIA teams seized several incriminating documents, electronic devices, pamphlets and magazines.

Haryana exit polls: Congress projected to make comeback with 50-plus seats

New Delhi, Oct 5: Several exit polls predicted a clear majority for the Congress in the Haryana Assembly elections, with projection of 55-plus seats for the grand old party in the 90-member Assembly. This will pave a comeback for the Congress in the state after a decade. 'Dainik Bhaskar' predicted the Congress getting 44-54 seats and the BJP 15-29 seats in the 90-member Haryana Assembly. The Republic-Matrise poll put the Congress tally even higher at 55-62 seats as against the BJP's 18-24. The Red Mike-Datansh exit poll gave the Congress 50-55 seats in Haryana and the BJP at 20-25, while Dhruv Research pegged the Congress at 50-64 and the BJP 22-32. People's Pulse exit poll gave the Congress 49-60 seats and the BJP 20-32 seats in Haryana. Most exit polls pegged INLD tally higher than that of the JJP, while others were seen getting up to 10 seats. The exit polls will likely give indications of the Assembly polls outcomes in the Jat heartland. The Election Commission had deferred the Haryana Assembly poll date from October 1 to October 5. The decision was taken following representations by political parties seeking deferment in view of a centuries-old festival of the Bishnoi community.

SC dismisses petition seeking review of its verdict declaring electoral bond scheme unconstitutional

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, Oct 5: The Supreme Court has dismissed a petition seeking review of its verdict declaring unconstitutional the electoral bonds scheme that allowed individuals and companies to make unlimited anonymous donations to political parties. "Having perused the review petitions, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013. The review petitions are, therefore, dismissed," a five-judge Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud said in its September 25 order made public on Saturday. Advocate Mathews Nedumpara and another had sought review of the February 15 verdict delivered in the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha election that had also directed the SBI to furnish details of electoral bonds

to the Election Commission for making the same public. Noting that voters have right to know, a five-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud said the Electoral Bonds Scheme violated Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution which guaranteed right to freedom of speech and expression and included right to information within its ambit. "We are of the opinion that the information about funding to a political party is essential for a voter to exercise their freedom to vote in an effective manner. The Electoral Bond Scheme and the impugned provisions to the extent that they infringe upon the right to information of the voter by anonymizing contributions through electoral bonds are violative of Article 19(1)(a) (right to freedom of speech and expression," the Bench said. The Bench—which also included Justices Sanjiv Khanna, BR Gavai, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra — had said the disclosure of information regarding electoral bonds was necessary to identify corruption and quid pro quo transactions in governance. "Such information is also necessary for exercising an informed vote," it added. Maintaining that "the integrity of the electoral process is a necessary concomitant to the maintenance of the democratic form of government," the Bench said,



Going to Pakistan for SCO meet, not to discuss bilateral ties: Jaishankar

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Oct 5: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday appeared to rule out any bilateral talks with his Pakistani counterpart Muhammad Ishaq Dar during his visit to Islamabad this month to attend a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). India on Friday announced that Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation at the SCO Heads of Government Summit in Islamabad. "I expect there would be a lot of media interest because of the very nature of the relationship," he said at an interactive session. "I do want to say it will be for a multilateral event. I am not going there to discuss India-Pakistan relations. I am going there to be a good member of the SCO," he said. Jaishankar's remarks came following a question on whether he will hold bilateral talks with his Pakistani counterpart in Islamabad. In the address at the event, the external affairs minister said like with any neighbour, India would certainly like to have good rela-

tions with Pakistan, but that cannot happen by overlooking cross-border terrorism. It will be for the first time in nearly nine years India's external affairs minister will travel to Pakistan even as the ties between the two neighbours remained frosty over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Pakistan is hosting the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting on October 15 and 16. The last Indian external affairs minister to visit Pakistan was Sushma Swaraj. She had travelled to Islamabad in December 2015 to attend a conference on Afghanistan. "I am scheduled to Pakistan in the middle of this month for a meeting of the SCO heads of government. Normally the prime minister goes to the high level meeting of the heads of state and one of the ministers goes to the heads of the government

meeting," Jaishankar said. Jaishankar's visit to Pakistan assumes significance as it is seen as a major decision on New Delhi's part. In his address at the Sardar Patel Memorial lecture on governance, Jaishankar said "like with any neighbour, India would certainly like to have good relations with Pakistan." "But that cannot happen by overlooking

cross-border terrorism and indulging in wishful thinking. As the Sardar demonstrated, realism must be the foundation for policy," he said. The decision to send the senior minister is seen as a display of India's commitment to the SCO. The ties between India and Pakistan came under severe strain after India's warplanes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack. The relations further deteriorated after India on August 5, 2019 announced the withdrawal of special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and the bifurcation of the state into two union territories. Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties with India after New Delhi abrogated Article 370. India has been maintaining that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan while insisting that the onus is on Islamabad to create an environment free of terror and hostility for such engagement. Pakistan's then foreign minister Bilawal

Bhutto Zardari visited India in May 2023 to attend an in-person meeting of the foreign ministers of SCO nations in Goa. It was the first visit of a Pakistani foreign minister to India in almost 12 years. "Today, we may be tempted to speculate what Sardar Patel's approach would have been on the Pakistan-related issues that came up in the decade after his passing away," he said. "For example, would he have extended his support to the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960? Or dismissed it like the then Prime Minister, as an issue just about a 'pailful of water' that was negligible in the context of larger international politics?" "There was an equally serious mis-judgement of Pakistan by India. Within our system, Patel was the most forceful advocate of using all avenues of pressure on that country after the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir," Jaishankar said. "His reluctance to take the matter to the UN itself stemmed from the belief that Pakistan was better directly dealt with, rather than in a framework that Pakistan could manipulate," he said.



News box

State allots prime salt pan land to trust for educational institute

Mumbai. The cabinet decided to directly allot prime salt pan land in Wadala to the Veer Savarkar Charitable Trust for a primary and secondary educational institution, a minister in the state said on Friday.

Sources said the 6,320 sq m plot worth Rs 75.5 crore was cleared for allotment as a special case though the revenue and finance departments said the state should follow the 2019 revenue dept policy for govt land. The policy mandates that such plots should be advertised.

The decision was among the more than 30 taken by the cabinet during the day in one of the last few meetings before the declaration of the model code of conduct for the assembly election. The revenue department policy for govt land allotment says only some institutions qualify for "direct allotment". These are renowned organisations, those involved in research activities, those working for the handicapped or financially weak, and educational institutions with domain experience.

In the proposal, the revenue department said that the trust was merely thinking of running a school for poor and disadvantaged students. It said there did not seem to be too many details about the work done by the Veer Savarkar Charitable Trust in the field of education or any special work done by the institution in the field. It said no proposal had been submitted about the plans of the trust to set up a primary and secondary institution.

Maharashtra assembly polls: 1,181 polling booths to be set up in housing societies

PUNE. At least 1,181 polling booths will be set up in housing societies and highrise buildings in Maharashtra, primarily in Mumbai, Thane and Pune, in the ECI's bid to arrest urban voter apathy in the upcoming assembly polls, data shared by election officials has revealed. The officials said 492 polling booths would be set up in the Mumbai suburban areas, followed by 337 in Thane, 256 in Mumbai city and 126 in Pune district.

State election officials said only 150 housing societies had polling booths during the Lok Sabha election in Maharashtra. "The ECI has stressed on assured minimum facilities at all polling booths. In coordination with housing societies and their federations, we have readied the list of polling booths on the society premises. The housing federations' response to the initiative has been good so far," a senior election official said.

State housing federation members told TOI that they had sent out emails to many housing societies after the Lok Sabha election seeking their consent for setting up the booths.

One of the housing societies in Pune that had allowed polling booths on its premises during the Lok Sabha election said while the initiative was good, the election officials should ensure that all the voters staying in the housing complex were listed at the polling booth within the premises.

According to the official, there should be around 950 voters at every polling station in the state, and after rationalisation, additional booths will be added. At present, the total polling stations across state are 1,00,186. In the Lok Sabha election, there were 98,140 polling stations.

Dharavi redevelopment: 'Incentive' FSI of 1.33 for rental housing

MUMBAI. In the case of Dharavi's redevelopment, the state, realising only 50 acres of the 246 acres of salt pan land will be immediately available for rental housing for ineligible residents following litigation, is looking at an alternative by providing incentives in the form of FSI to developers.

To facilitate the process, the state housing department on Friday issued a government resolution allowing the Dharavi Redevelopment Project Private Ltd or DRPPL to purchase land outside the Dharavi Notified Area (DNA) for rental housing. DRPPL will be given an incentive FSI (Floor Space Index) of 1.33 for saleable component in exchange for constructing the rental housing, states the GR.

"The lessees of the salt pans have challenged the decision to hand over land to the Dharavi redevelopment project for rental housing. Practically everything is under litigation except an area of 50 acres. There is already a litigation on ownership of a section of the salt pans between the Centre and state govt," a source said. The land is to be purchased in the name of DRP (Dharavi Redevelopment Project)/SRA (Slum Rehabilitation Authority). The GR states the land should possibly be purchased within 10 kms of the Dharavi Notified Area, adding if the land is not available, then it can construct the rental housing in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, as previously decided. While the Centre recently approved transfer of salt pans to the state govt, which in turn announced transfer to the DRP, unavailability of the entire parcel of salt pans has come as a rude shock to the implementers of the project.

BBMP clears encroachments in Bengaluru's Church Street

"Fifty shops had encroached footpaths. All shop owners have been warned not to encroach on the footpath again," said a senior official.

BENGALURU. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) carried out a pavement encroachment clearance operation on Church Street in East Zone on Friday. East Zone Commissioner Snehal R supervised the operation to clear encroachments from footpath. Shop owners were already warned many times not to encroach the footpaths.

Around 50 shops on both sides of Church Street used to display their wares on the pavement and these were cleared. Encroachments were cleared in about one-km of Church Street. Police personnel and BBMP marshals were present to maintain security. "More than 20 gangmen, two tippers and six

tractors were deployed and materials kept on the pavement were seized. All shop owners have been warned not to encroach on the footpath again," said a senior official. The zonal commissioner said cooking food on pavements will adversely affect health and hygiene. Also, using cylinders in open spaces is more likely to cause accidents. Due to the encroachment of the footpaths, people were forced to walk on the road putting them at risk of accidents besides hindering smooth flow of traffic. Hence an effective encroachment clearance operation will be conducted in the eastern zone. Palike reclaims 2.5 guntas of lake land



Based on a complaint, officials of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Lake Division and Revenue Department cleared encroachments and reclaimed 2.5 guntas of lake land at

Kaggadasapura in Bengaluru East. The lake department is now fencing the reclaimed land which is worth over Rs 2 crore.

According to Akshath, Assistant Executive Engineer, Lake Division, Bengaluru East, sheds had come up behind the Muneshwara Temple side of the lake. These were removed using bulldozers. "The recovered land is worth over Rs 2 crore in the current market," said Akshath. He added that fencing is going on for the reclaimed land and the Palike officials are also following up with the Land Grabbing Prohibition Special Court to clear the permanent structures that have come up in the lake area.

Government sanctions Rs 826 crore for H-CITI project

HYDERABAD. The state government on Friday granted administrative sanction of Rs 826 crore for the construction of flyovers and underpasses under Hyderabad City Innovative and Transformative Infrastructure (H-CITI) project. These flyovers and underpasses will come up at the KBR Park entrance junction, Jubilee Hills check post junction, Road No. 45 junction, Filmnagar junction, Maharaja Agrasen junction and Cancer Hospital junction under Engineering Procurement Contract (EPC).

Recently, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy gave the green signal for construction of flyovers and underpasses around KBR park to improve the road network in the city. The junctions have been designed to ensure that the entire area will be conflict free i.e. there will be no signal anywhere around KBR Park and traffic can flow in an uninterrupted manner.



Traffic going clockwise will travel in a series of underpasses while traffic going counterclockwise will use a series of flyovers.

GHMC has also incorporated designs of rainwater retention structures under the underpasses to make sure that these places do not become bottlenecks during monsoon. An official order was issued by the Municipal Administration and Urban

Development (MAUD) department on Friday.

Accordingly, construction of flyover and underpass at Jubilee Hills check post, KBR Park entrance, and Mughda junction near KBR Park will be taken up under Package-1 in EPC mode for Rs 421 crore.

Construction of flyover and underpass at Road No. 45 junction, Filmnagar junction, Maharaja Agrasen junction and Cancer Hospital junction will be taken up under Package-2 in EPC for Rs 405 crore under H-CITI. The expenditure will be met from the state budget allocated in the financial year 2024-25 towards assistance to GHMC under H-CITI.

MAUD has permitted to call tenders for the above works under EPC method and to commence the works simultaneously with acquisition of properties and utility shifting to save delay.

BDA chief cracks whip on staff, seeks daily work report

The commissioner held a meeting on Thursday and clarified that a strict daily tab would be kept on the working of every officer.

BENGALURU. Staff and officials at the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) have been given a reminder to pull up their socks and shed their "laidback" attitude as they are now under watch.

Commissioner N Jayaram has mandated that all engineers and top officers in the department specify details on the work they have put in daily, beginning on October 4. The daily report needs to be submitted in their handwriting to the commissioner's office.

The commissioner held a meeting on Thursday and clarified that a strict daily tab would be kept on the working of every officer. A source privy to the



meeting said engineers in particular are under the lens. "A few of them tend to state that they were on certain inspections, or were involved in identifying or clearing encroachments and take a break from work. Its objective

is to rein in such people and make them accountable during work hours." This would apply to engineers, land acquisition officers, the revenue officers and the Special Task Force (STF) of the authority which would total over 100 staff.

Another official said so far only a monthly report on duty was being dispatched. "Making us submit a daily report would definitely make everyone do some justice to their work," he added. Staff not available when people come to meet them, forcing them to wait for hours, is a common complaint at the BDA head office at Palace Gutahalli.

Secretariat staff flag safety risks as false ceiling falls on employee

The incident happened when the aluminium ceiling along with the tubelight fell on Aji around 2 pm. He was rushed to the General Hospital where he is now out of danger.

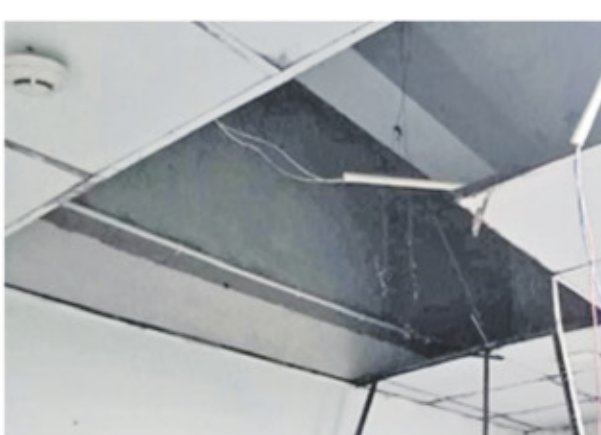
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. In a matter of great concern for people working in the 155-year-old Secretariat building, an additional secretary was injured when a portion of the false ceiling collapsed on him on Friday. The injured is Aji Philip of the Cooperation Department. The incident happened when the aluminium ceiling along with the tubelight fell on Aji around 2 pm. He was rushed to the General Hospital where he is now out of danger.

"Objects weighing five kg fell on the officer's head from a height of three metres. It was only by luck that his life was saved," said Kerala Secretariat Association president Irshad MS.

The office of the additional secretary of the Cooperation Department and a portion of the Law Department function above the old Legislative Assembly building. The incident sparked demands from the employees for a safe working place. "Many

buildings are in dangerous conditions. The fact that Friday's accident took place near a protected heritage building adds to the seriousness of the matter," said Kerala Secretariat Association General Secretary Purushothaman K P. He accused the government of carrying out superficial work without understanding the implications.

"The government, which spends crores on repairs and maintenance of buildings, shows gross negligence in protecting the buildings of the Secretariat. Every day some repair work is being done in the Secretariat. At present, painting and repair work is being carried out," he added. In a statement, Kerala Secretariat Association



said that there were reasonable doubts that the government wanted to keep the building unsafe with superficial works so that they could hand over the entire conservation and restoration works to an agency.

Whodunnit? Bengaluru girl's murder remains a mystery

BENGALURU. Mystery shrouds the death of a 13-year-old schoolgirl in Bengaluru's Jayanagar after an autopsy revealed that she had been murdered. The police are yet to crack the murder case registered more than three months ago.

Gargi Murulidhar, a resident of Ushas Apartment, 16th Main Road, Jayanagar 4 'T' Block, was found dead in her room on May 23. Her mother Shruthi Deshpande, who tried to wake her up in the morning, found Gargi's bed wet, indicating that she had urinated at the time of her death.

Hearing Shruthi's screams, Gargi's father Murulidhar sought the help of two doctors residing in the same apartment. The doctors, who examined Gargi, asked Murulidhar to rush her to hospital. The couple then took Gargi to a private hospital in Jayanagar, where she was declared brought dead. Suspecting foul play in his daughter's death, Murulidhar filed a complaint with Tilak Nagar police. After registering an unnatural death report, the police shifted the body to Victoria Hospital for postmortem.

Death due to asphyxia, says forensic report On July 18, the head of the hospital's Forensic Medicine Department gave a report to the police stating that the "death was due to asphyxia as a result of smothering."

Based on the report, the police registered a murder case on July 18. Even after four months of the girl's suspicious death, the police are yet to crack the case. They, however, suspect that the accused must be known to the victim. "Gargi's father works as a delivery manager with a private company, while her mother is a teacher. Gargi was having summer holidays. On May 22, she visited her grandfather's house in Ashok Nagar.

Was girl smothered with pillow?

Shruthi brought her home after work. Gargi's mother and her aunt took her to the BDA Complex at Banashankari in the evening. After returning home, Gargi is said to have gone to sleep around 10.30pm. Murulidhar, who returned home from office at night, is said to have gone to sleep around 1.30 am on May 23.

Shruthi claims to have first tried to wake up her daughter around 6.15 am. As there was no response, she assumed that her daughter must be sleeping. Gargi did not respond when her mother tried to wake her up again at 7 am," a police officer said. The case has been handed over to the jurisdictional Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP). The police suspect that a pillow might have been used to smother the girl to death.

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News box

Man found dead in drain with throat slit

Gurgaon. A man was found dead with his throat slit in a drain near SGT University in Chandu Budhera, police said on Friday. Around 11 am on Thursday, some locals spotted the body and informed the police, who reached the spot immediately. According to the police, the body had a tattoo written as 'Rohit' on the right hand.

The forensic team collected evidence, and the body was sent for autopsy. "The victim was in his late twenties or early thirties and his identity is yet to be established. We have circulated his photos to all police stations. We are also reviewing footage collected from nearby CCTV cameras to identify the accused," inspector of Rajendra Park police station Ashin Khan said.

Based on the complaint lodged by a local man, we have registered a murder case under Section 103 (1) of BNS, Khan added.

MCG set to enhance maintenance of sewer network, procure machinery

Gurgaon. MCG started procuring machinery to tackle rising cases of sewer overflow from various areas across the city. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 2.8 crore. The corporation also plans to hire a super sucker machine and a jetting-cum-suction machine to carry out the work effectively. An agency will be contracted for one year. The machinery will be used in sectors 9, 9A, 9B, 10, 10A, 36, 37B, 37C, 83, 84, 88, 99 to 104, Udyog Vihar phase-6, Kherki Daula village etc.

"There have been several complaints of the sewer overflow from zone-1, and to address them, we have decided to hire machinery. A tender has also been floated," said an MCG official. The civic body also recently invited bids from private agencies to manage the operations and maintenance of sewer systems in several wards, including 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, and 17, which will cost around Rs 5.7 crore.

According to officials, the selected agency that will be hired for a year will provide two super sucker machines, which is an upgrade from the previous contract that mandated only one machine.

Moreover, the agency will also be responsible for providing three tractor-mounted jetting machines, manhole covers, and frames. They will be tasked with carrying out repairs in all the designated wards.

In 1 month, 298 trucks fined for overloading

Noida. The transport department has seized 233 overloaded trucks and fined 298 vehicle owners for illegally carrying sand, gravel, cement, and other construction materials across the district. The transport department, district administration, and the police jointly launched an enforcement drive last month, during which an eight-member district-level task force was formed to curb overloading, illegal mining, and the open transportation of C&D waste. ARTO enforcement Udit Narayan Pandey said, "Not just overloading, the vehicles were also penalised for faulty registration plates, missing reflectors, no fitness and permit certificates, and unpaid taxes. The violators were fined a combined amount worth Rs 1.27 crore," he said.

Ecotech-1, DND Flyway, Churmurti, Sinsa Cut, Bistrakh, Badalpur, and Knowledge Park were among the areas where the enforcement drive was carried out.

BSP expels bypoll candidate Gautam for 'indiscipline'

Ghaziabad. BSP has expelled Ravi Gautam, barely days after announcing his name as the party candidate for the upcoming assembly bypolls in Ghaziabad. The district party president Dayanand Saini said Gautam was expelled because of "indiscipline".

"There are cases lodged against him (Gautam) as well which prevents him from contesting the bypolls. We are looking for a more suitable candidate," Saini said.

Gautam snuffed a controversy, saying a section of senior party functionaries was acting at the behest of BJP. "They have done it in the past too, replaced candidates in Lok Sabha polls. My expulsion has nothing to do with indiscipline. It has more to do with intra-party wrangling. My community is solidly behind me. I will not hold back, and if the need arises, I will contest as an independent," he said. In the Lok Sabha election earlier this year, BSP had first announced Anashay Kalra, a Khatri Punjabi, as its candidate, but midway through the election, he was replaced by Nand Kishor Pundir. Ghaziabad is one of the 10 assembly seats in UP which will go for by-polls after it fell vacant when Atul Garg moved on to Lok Sabha, winning the parliamentary seat in the general election held earlier this year.

Woman found dead just 300m from workplace

Ghaziabad. A 55-year-old woman was found dead just 300m away from her workplace in Tronica City on Friday. She had multiple injuries on her face and other parts of her body, police said, adding she worked in a thread manufacturing factory in Tronica city. The woman's husband said his wife's workplace is just 800 metres from their house. She usually left around 9am and returned by 6pm daily. "On Thursday too, she left at 9am, and our son also went out with his friends. When he returned around 9pm and did not find my wife at home, he alerted us. She did not use a phone. I also returned from work in



Delhi late at night and we started looking for her. When we did not find her, we informed the police," he said. Around 7.30am on Friday, a local spotted her body and informed her family. "We called the police. Someone had brutally killed her. I have filed a complaint," her husband said. The DCP and the ACP reached the spot with a forensic team and a dog squad to investigate the matter. A senior cop involved in the investigation said a bag with some money and two water bottles were found with the woman. DCP (rural) SN Tiwari told TOI, "The cause of death will be determined after we receive the autopsy results. An FIR has been registered."

Road linking Crossings & NH-9 too narrow, traffic comes to a crawl here

Ghaziabad: GDA has started a survey of a 3km road linking Crossings Republik and NH-9 after traffic cops identified eight chokepoints in the township.

The recent survey by the traffic department has identified a total of 59 traffic chokepoints across the 16 police stations of the district, of which eight — Buddha Vihar, Crossings Republik main gate, Sain Vihar, Dundahera, ABES College service lane, ABES Institute of Technology campus 2 and Sahberi — are concentrated in the area around Crossings Republik. Developed in 2007 under the UP government's integrated township policy, the width of a stretch between NH-9 and Shahberi drain near Crossings Republik was supposed to be 45m as per the layout, but currently, it is only 12m wide. Officials said this was one of the key reasons why the area turned into a bottleneck daily.

"To widen the stretch, the area in and around this stretch needs to be acquired from farmers. GDA has initiated talks with farmers and initiated a survey to widen the road. After the survey, a



consortium of builders under Crossings Infrastructure Private Limited (CIPL) will have to acquire land," a GDA official said. Sumit Agarwal of CIPL told TOI the consortium of developers had acquired land for roads in 2007. "CIPL submitted the land cost to farmers through GDA in 2009-10 but did not get the physical possession of the parcel. We are waiting for the fresh survey reports. Only then we

will be in a position to know how much land will have to be acquired and at what cost," he said. Currently, people access Crossings Republik through two roads — Shahberi Road and NH9. According to residents, the Shahberi Road is too narrow and, because of traffic congestion, high-mast barriers are erected during peak hours, which in turn restrict the entry of school buses. The

other road, NH9, is not feasible for school buses because of the distance. "Every day during peak hours, the road from Shahberi drain to NH9 remains chock-a-block. The problem is as old as the township itself; it has only become more acute in the last few years," said Prabhar Mishra, a resident of CR township. While commuters mostly take a road through Richpal Garhi village, heavy vehicles cannot use it as the stretch is not just narrow, but a part of it is unpaved and remains inundated during monsoon. If developed, the road can provide direct connectivity to Noida and spare residents from using the busy NH9 or congested Shahberi Road. In April, NHAI merged the plinth and removed barricades to link Shahberi road with NH9 near ABES cut, providing residents of Crossings Republik direct access to the speedway and Delhi Meerut Expressway. Another loop, allowing vehicles from NH9 to take a right turn towards the township on the Shahberi road, was also opened.

Plea against S+4 floor policy again: HC seeks govt's reply

Gurgaon. Two weeks after the Haryana govt revoked its decision to pause implementation of the S+4 floor policy, Punjab and Haryana high court has issued a notice to it besides the department of town and country planning (DTCP) and the Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran, demanding responses on the issue following a petition which has challenged the revocation. The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition — challenging the construction of four-floor buildings with stilt parking in Gurgaon — has been submitted by a resident of Sushant Lok. Petitioner Sunil Kumar Singh argues that the state govt's decision to permit these constructions, despite a lack of adequate infrastructure, is detrimental to the city's overall well-being. The PIL was heard on Thursday by a bench led by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, with senior advocate Meet Malhotra representing the petitioner. The bench also agreed to hear a stay application filed as part of the petition, requesting an immediate halt to further four-floor construction approvals. The hearing for both the PIL and the stay application



has been scheduled for Oct 23. In his petition, Singh has highlighted that the Haryana govt had initially set up an expert committee to review the feasibility of four-floor buildings in such cities as Gurgaon, which are already facing infrastructure challenges. The committee had recommended that before allowing additional floor constructions, an audit of the city's infrastructure, including drainage, waste management, roads and public utilities, should be conducted. Despite these recommendations, the state reintroduced the four-floor policy on July 2, 2024 without addressing these concerns. The petition argues that

Gurgaon's infrastructure is already overwhelmed, with frequent issues like overflowing sewage, inadequate waste disposal, poor drainage and deteriorating roads. The city's electricity and water supply systems are strained and the situation will worsen if more multi-floor buildings are constructed without infrastructure upgrades, it says. The petitioner claims that such unchecked construction will eventually turn Gurgaon into an "urban slum," affecting the quality of life for all residents. In addition to the PIL, the Gurugram Citizens' Council and another petition have also raised concerns about the four-floor policy. These cases are expected to be heard alongside Singh's petition. The petitioner's legal counsel has urged the court to impose an immediate stay on the state's July 2 notification, which reopened the portal for approving four-floor buildings. According to the petition, DTCP has already begun approving new construction plans, ignoring the infrastructure concerns raised by both residents and the expert committee.

German shoe brand lays foundation for Rs300-cr factory

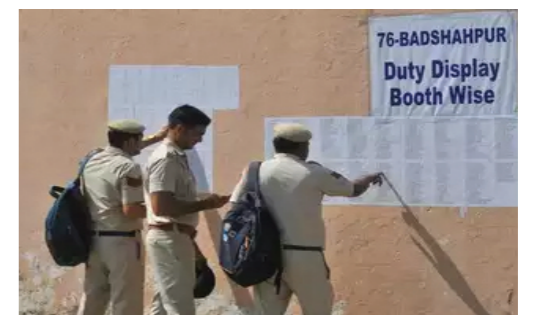
Noida. Foundation stone for a footwear manufacturing plant of a German shoe brand, Von Wellx Germany, was laid in Sector 29 under YEIDA on Friday. The plant, being constructed on 2.5 acres of land, will be established at a cost of Rs 300 crore. YEIDA CEO Arun Vir Singh and Jewar MLA Dharendra Singh laid the foundation stone at a ceremony attended by company partners from countries including the US, Germany, Dubai, the Middle East, Africa, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, China, and Japan.

According to Ashish Jain, CEO of Von Wellx Germany, India, the factory

will have a production capacity of over four million pairs annually. "These products will be exported to more than 80 countries and sold in the Indian market," he said. Jain also announced the group's plans to set up a large footwear ancillary industry within the YEIDA region. This facility will produce components such as outsoles, insoles, interlinings, and other non-leather raw materials. "This will improve the availability of quality raw materials, reduce imports, and boost exports," Jain said, adding that the combined operations are expected to generate direct and indirect employment for

10,000 people. The Von Wellx Germany Group has partnered with Casa Everz Germany and the Delhi-based Iatric Group to establish the factory. The plant will produce a wide range of footwear, including sports shoes, across men's, women's, and kids' categories. The company will also produce footwear for specific needs, including diabetic footwear and orthopaedic footwear. All products will be manufactured using patented technologies and eco-friendly methods, incorporating waste and non-leather materials. Manfred Everz, CEO of Casa Everz Germany, said.

Grover of Congress circulated a video message by party MP Deepender Hooda, who can be seen making an appeal to people to vote for the "face of youth" and for "the development of Gurgaon." Former minister and BJP candidate from Badshapur, Rao Narbir Singh, spent his day holding a series of meetings with party functionaries. "Now that the campaign is over, we are focusing on booth management, which is equally important," he said. His rival Vardhan Yadav of Congress and independent candidate Kumudini Daulatabad also held similar meetings to discuss their strategies for the voting day. Gurgaon has around 15 lakh voters — around 41,000 of them first-timers. Apart from the candidates, the district administration is leaving no stone unturned to increase voter turnout.



Pick-&-drop services to wheelchairs: RWAs step in to boost voter turnout

Gurgaon. As the city gets ready to vote on Saturday, numerous resident welfare associations (RWAs) in high-rise societies have stepped up to ensure a smooth and inclusive experience for the voters. While the election commission increased the number of polling booths within gated societies to 126, up from 52 during the Lok Sabha elections, RWAs have coordinated with the administration to ensure essential services such as water stations and wheelchairs for the disabled and elderly are available at the booths. Booths within gated societies eliminate the need for residents to travel to cast their votes, encouraging them to participate in large numbers.

"A polling booth has been set up at our condominium for the first time and we are working to make sure that all residents, especially seniors and those with disabilities, can vote comfortably. Earlier, we had to go to Dhankot village, which is over 3km away from here, to cast our votes. Now, with setting up of a booth at our condominium, residents of more than half a dozen societies in Sector 102 can comfortably cast their votes

here," said Hari Bhagwan, president of Oyster Grande Condominium Association. To further encourage participation, voter slips were distributed well in advance and messages were sent to residents, informing them about their designated booths. Volunteers have also been deployed at the booths to help guide voters through the process. Around 15.4 lakh voters will exercise their right to vote across the four assembly constituencies in Gurgaon district. Of these, 1.5 lakh voters will cast their ballots at 126 polling booths set up within gated societies. During the 2024 Lok Sabha election, 57,000 people voted at such booths. Among these booths are the four set up on the premises of Malibu Towne's club. "Tents and desks will also be set up outside the club for any last-minute assistance," said Vijay Shiv Nath, Malibu RWA secretary. "From distributing voter slips on time to sending out reminder messages, we have left no stone unturned to ensure a seamless



voting process for the residents. Many people do not cast their votes due to long queues or lack of facilities at booths. But we expect a higher turnout this time as the booths established at our club have air conditioning and proper seating arrangements," said Neehar Ranjan, RWA president of BPTP Astaire Gardens. According to Dharam Veer Singh, RWA president of Mapsko Casabella, their association is setting up a help desk to guide voters and has also arranged for a pick-and-drop service for voters. "We

have arranged for wheelchairs and volunteers to assist voters. We are also offering pick-and-drop services for the residents who have been allotted voting booths a little far from their place of residence," he added. The district administration, too, has urged residents to come out in large numbers to exercise their right to vote. "This time, 126 booths have been set up in high-rise societies. In societies with more than 600 voters, polling booths have been established within the premises. We appeal to all citizens to come out and be part of the democratic process," said deputy commissioner Nishant Yadav. Booths have been set up in societies including Oyster Grande, Roselia, Microtek Greenburg, Vatika City Homes, Carnation Residency, Heritage City, Vipul Greens, Sare Homes, Mapsko Casabella, Orchid Petals, Nirvana Country, and Jalvayu Towers.

News box

US strikes 15 Houthi targets in Yemen, hits military outposts, airport

Washington. The US military said it carried out 15 strikes on Friday against targets linked to Iran-aligned Houthi fighters in Yemen, where residents reported blasts at military outposts and even an airport. Central Command, which oversees US forces in the Middle East, said the targets were tied to Houthi offensive military capabilities, but did not detail whether that included missile, drone or radar capabilities. The Houthis have carried out nearly 100 attacks on ships crossing the Red Sea since November and say they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Israel's year-long war in Gaza. They have sunk two vessels, seized another and killed at least four seafarers. Al Masirah TV, the main television news outlet run by the Houthi movement controlling much of Yemen, and residents said airstrikes were launched at several parts of Yemen including its capital Sanaa and Hodeidah airport. Strikes also targeted the south of Dhamar city and the southeast of al-Bayda province, the channel added. Residents said that the attack on al-Bayda province targeted several Houthi military outposts. The Biden administration has been acting mostly defensively against Houthi strikes in the Red Sea, usually moving to intercept drone and missile attacks against commercial vessels and US warships. It has also struck Houthi military infrastructure with less frequency and avoided broader targets in Yemen, as it seeks to contain fallout from the nearly year-old Israel-Hamas war.

Drought has dried a major Amazon River tributary to its lowest level in over 122 years

MANAUS. One of the Amazon River's main tributaries has dropped to its lowest level ever recorded, Brazil's geological service said Friday, reflecting a severe drought that has devastated the Amazon rainforest and other parts of the country. The level of the Negro River at the port of Manaus was at 12.66 meters on Friday, as compared with a normal level of about 21 meters. It is the lowest since measurements started 122 years ago. The previous record low level was recorded last year, but toward the end of October. The Negro River's water level might drop even more in coming weeks based on forecasts for low rainfall in upstream regions, according to the geological service's predictions. Andre Martinelli, the agency's hydrology manager in Manaus, was quoted as saying the river was expected to continue receding until the end of the month. Water levels in Brazil's Amazon always rise and fall with its rainy and dry seasons, but the dry portion of this year has been much worse than usual. All of the major rivers in the Amazon basin are at critical levels, including the Madeira River, the Amazon River's longest tributary. The Negro River drains about 10% of the Amazon basin and is the world's sixth-largest by water volume. Manaus, the biggest city in the rainforest, is where the Negro joins the Amazon River.

Yep, totally my bad': Ohio teen admits to causing crash that killed 5, forced 500 to evacuate

World. A 17-year-old from Ohio admitted to causing a catastrophic crash on September 29, 2023 involving a tanker truck carrying toxic ammonia, resulting in the deaths of five people. People citing National Transportation Safety Board interview reported that the young driver revealed she was in Illinois that day to visit her mother's boyfriend. While recounting her trip to authorities, she noted that she was driving behind several trucks when she encountered a slower vehicle, which prompted her to accelerate and pass it at high speed. "I was behind this boxy maybe trailer or RV. And he was going super duper slow, so I passed him," she recalled, seemingly unaware of the tragedy that unfolded after that. When asked about the tanker truck, she said, "I heard that maybe it flipped" and went off the road. She claimed not to have seen or heard the crash, merely noticing the emergency vehicles heading in the opposite direction. Dashcam footage would later reveal a different story. The video captured the moment the teen cut off the anhydrous ammonia tanker while attempting to pass at approximately 90 mph. The ensuing jackknife maneuver led the truck to collide with a utility trailer parked just off the highway, puncturing the tank and releasing thousands of gallons of the caustic chemical into the air. This toxic plume forced the evacuation of nearly 500 people for hours. When confronted with the dashcam video, the teen said, "Oh, (expletive). Yeah, Oh, my goodness. Yep, totally my bad. Wow. Holy (expletive)," acknowledging her role in the accident that had devastating consequences. The accident that occurred near Teutopolis, Illinois, resulted in the death of five people including a father and his two children and prompted the evacuation of over 500 residents in the vicinity.

At least 70 dead in gang attack in Haiti, over 6,000 forced to flee



Armed gang members wielding automatic rifles stormed a town in Haiti's key breadbasket region, killing at least 70 people and displacing over 6,000.

Port-au-Prince. Gang members brandishing automatic rifles stormed through a town in Haiti's main breadbasket region, killing at least 70 and forcing over 6,000 to flee, causing widespread shock even in a country grown accustomed to outbreaks of violence.

More people were severely injured in the attack in the early hours of Thursday at Pont-Sonde, in the agricultural region of Artibonite in western Haiti. Gran Grif gang leader Luckson Elan took responsibility for the massacre, saying it was in retaliation for civilians remaining passive while police and vigilante groups killed his soldiers. Some 6,270 people had fled their homes due to the attacks, the UN migration agency said. Most of these are being sheltered by families living in nearby Saint-Marc and other towns, while others are staying in makeshift camps. The gang members set fire to dozens of homes and vehicles, local

authorities said, in one of the deadliest attacks in recent years in the Caribbean nation that has seen many massacres and little justice for their victims. "This odious crime against defenceless women, men and children is not only an attack against victims but against the entire Haitian nation," Prime Minister Garry Conille said on X, adding that security forces were reinforcing the area. A spokesperson for Haiti's national police told Reuters on Friday evening that the director of police in charge of the Artibonite department had been replaced. "For now, reinforcements are at the location to contain the situation and security forces are in control," the spokesperson said. The killings are the latest sign of a worsening conflict in Haiti, where armed gangs control most of the capital Port-au-Prince and are expanding to nearby regions, fuelling hunger and making



hundreds of thousands homeless. Promised international support continues to lag and nearby nations have deported migrants back to the country. "The gang did not meet any resistance," Bertide Horace, spokesperson from the Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission to Save the Artibonite Valley, told Reuters, adding that police officers remained in their station, perhaps thinking they would be outgunned by the gang members. An armored truck stationed in nearby Verrettes also failed to mobilise, said Horace,

adding that two of her own family members were injured during the attack. Many victims were shot in the head as gang members went house to house, Horace said. "They were left to shoot anybody, everybody was running everywhere. They were walking, shooting people, killing people, burning people, burning homes, burning cars." Rights organisation RNDDH said the death toll was likely higher as entire families had been wiped out. "At the time of writing, corpses are strewn on the ground as their loved ones have not yet been able to recover them," it said in a report. RNDDH said rumours had been circulating for two months about a potential massacre in retaliation for residents' help for a vigilante group that was preventing the gang from extorting money on the national highway through the town.

Hamas leader Saeed Atallah killed in Israeli strikes in Lebanon

World. Saeed Atallah Ali, a member of Hamas' armed wing, al-Qassam brigades, was killed in an Israeli airstrike on a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. Three of his family members were also killed in the attack, Reuters reported.

"The Hamas movement mourns the leader of the al-Qassam Brigades, Saeed Atallah Ali, and three of his family members as a result of the bombing of his home in the Palestinian refugee camp in Dawi in Tripoli in northern Lebanon," Hamas media reported. With his killing, Israel has eliminated yet another top leader of the militant group in recent weeks, raising concerns that the escalating conflict in the Middle East could erupt into a full-blown war. The Jewish nation has been carrying out continuous strikes in Lebanon as over 2,000 people have been killed in Israeli airstrikes so far. Furthermore, Israel also began ground incursions into Lebanon to target Hezbollah settlements to wipe out the militant group. In its airstrikes on Hezbollah headquarters in Beirut, Israel

eliminated Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah chief who had been leading the militant group for the last 32 years. Reports also surfaced, claiming Israel



targeted an underground bunker in Lebanon where Hashem Safieddine, regarded as Nasrallah's successor, was holding a meeting with other Hezbollah leaders. In July this year, Israel claimed it eliminated Mohammed Deif, believed to be the mastermind behind Hamas' October

7 attacks on Israel. Deif was killed after fighter jets struck in the area of Khan Yunis in Gaza on July 13 after an intelligence assessment. The elusive Deif had survived seven Israeli assassination attempts. Hamas's political chief Ismail Haniyeh has been assassinated in Iran's capital, Tehran. He was in the capital to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. He, along with a bodyguard, were killed after a guest house they were staying in was struck by a missile. However, Israel hasn't claimed responsibility for the attack.

Notably, Iran launched nearly 200 missiles at Israel following the killing of Hassan Nasrallah. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, while delivering his first Friday sermon in nearly five years, called the attack on Israel "legal and legitimate" and said that the Jewish nation would not "last long".

Israel should hit Iran's nuclear sites first, worry about rest later: Trump

World. Former US President Donald Trump said Israel should target Iran's nuclear facilities in response to the Islamic Republic's recent missile barrage. His remark came after President Joe Biden said that an "all-out war" is unlikely and should be avoided in the Middle East amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. Trump was referring to a question posed to President Biden about the possibility of Israel targeting Iran's nuclear facilities in response to the 200-missile attack. "They asked him, what do

you think about Iran? Would you hit Iran? And he goes, 'As long as they don't hit the nuclear stuff'. That's the thing you want to hit, right?" Trump said. He added, "Isn't that what you're supposed to hit? I mean, it's the biggest risk we have, nuclear weapons." The Republican Presidential candidate for the November 5 US elections said that Biden should have asked Israel to attack Iran's nuclear sites and "worry about everything else later." "If they're going to do it, they're going to do it. But we'll find out whatever their plans

are," Donald Trump added. The 78-year-old's remark came a day after President Joe Biden said that an "all-out war" in the Middle East was unlikely. When asked how confident he was about a massive war breaking out in the Middle East as Lebanon and Iran try to corner Israel, Biden said, "How confident are you it's not going to rain? Look, I don't believe there is going to be an all-out war. I think we can avoid it." When asked if he would send American troops to help Israel, he responded.

European court overturns French ban on plant-based products using 'steak' labels

France A European court on Friday overturned a French government ban on makers of plant-based meats calling their products "steak" or "sausage", which Paris had imposed to protect livestock farmers.

EU members states cannot ban the use of commonly used terms if they do not have legal definitions, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJUE) said in its ruling. France issued decrees in 2022 and February 2024 restricting the use of words including "ham", "steak", "sausage" and "bacon" to animal-based products. Authorities said the rules were needed to avoid creating confusion for consumers. French livestock farmers had long



lobbied for the measure, and their lobbying organisation denounced Friday's ruling. Interbev, which represents France's cattle and livestock industries, said it "deplores this decision that validates the usurpation of natural products to commercialise ultra-transformed foods". Makers of vegetable-based proteins had protested the government's decrees, and France's top administrative court had suspended them while it awaited the CJUE's decision. A preliminary ruling had said that banning use of the words "would seriously and immediately harm the interests of businesses" involved in the plant-based protein industry. "This is a very welcome victory," said La Vie, a French maker of plant-based meats.

Israeli airstrikes in southern Beirut cut off border with Syria



Israel carried out another series of punishing airstrikes Friday, hitting suburban Beirut and cutting off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria for tens of thousands of people fleeing the Israeli bombardment of the Hezbollah militant group.

Beirut, UPDATED. Israel carried out another series of punishing airstrikes Friday, hitting suburban Beirut and cutting off the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria for tens of thousands of people fleeing the Israeli bombardment of the Hezbollah militant group.

The overnight blasts in Beirut's southern suburbs sent huge plumes of smoke and flames into the night sky and shook buildings kilometres (miles) away in the Lebanese capital. Additional strikes sent people running for cover in streets littered with rubble in the Dahiyeh neighborhood, where at least one building was leveled and cars were burned out. The Israeli military said it targeted Hezbollah's central intelligence headquarters around midnight. It did not say who it was aiming for or if any militants were killed in that strike, but it claimed to have killed 100 Hezbollah fighters in the last 24 hours. Lebanon's state-run



National News Agency reported more than 10 consecutive airstrikes in the area. Some 1,400 Lebanese, including Hezbollah fighters and civilians, have been killed and some 1.2 million driven from their homes since Israel escalated its strikes in late September aiming to cripple Hezbollah and push it away from the countries' shared border. And a hospital in southern Lebanon

said it was shelled Friday evening after being warned to evacuate. The Salah Ghandour Hospital in the city of Bint Jbeil said in a statement that the shelling "resulted in nine members of the medical and nursing staff being injured, most of them seriously," while most of the medical staff were evacuated. A day earlier, the World Health Organization said 28 health workers in Lebanon had been killed in the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, Hezbollah launched about 100 rockets into Israel on Friday, the Israeli military said. The Israeli military also said that a strike in Beirut the day before killed Mohammed Rashid Skafi, the head of Hezbollah's communications division. The military said in a statement that Skafi was "a senior Hezbollah terrorist who was responsible for the communications unit since 2000" and was "closely affiliated" with high-up Hezbollah

officials. Thursday's strike along the Lebanon-Syria border, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of Beirut, led to the closure of the road near the busy Masnaa Border Crossing — the first time it has been cut off since Hezbollah and Israel began trading fire almost a year ago. Israel said it targeted the crossing because it was being used by Hezbollah to transport military equipment across the border. It said fighter jets had struck a tunnel used to smuggle weapons from Iran and other proxies into Lebanon. Hezbollah is believed to have received much of its weaponry through Syria from Iran, its main backer. Associated Press video footage showed two huge craters on each side of the road. People got out of cars, unable to pass, carrying bags of their possessions as they crossed on foot. More than 250,000 Syrians and 82,000 Lebanese have fled across the border into Syria during the escalation of the past two weeks.

Biden says Israel should seek 'other alternatives' to striking Iran oil sites

World. US President Joe Biden on Friday advised Israel against striking Iran's oil facilities, saying he was trying to rally the world to avoid the escalating prospect of all-out war in the Middle East. Making a surprise first appearance in the White House briefing room, Biden added that Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu "should remember" US support for Israel when deciding on next steps. "If I were in their shoes, I'd be thinking about other alternatives than striking oil fields," Biden told reporters, when asked about his comments a day earlier that Washington was discussing the possibility of such strikes with its ally. Biden added that the Israelis "have not concluded how they're going to do" in retaliation for a huge ballistic missile attack by Iran on Israel on Tuesday. The price of oil had jumped after Biden's remarks on Thursday. Any long-term rise could be hugely damaging

for Biden's Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democrat confronts Republican former president Donald Trump in a November 5 election where the cost of living is a major issue. Biden's appearance at the famed briefing room podium was not announced in advance, taking reporters by surprise. He has never spoken there before in the nearly four years of his presidency. It also comes at a tense time as he prepares to leave office with the situation boiling over in the Middle East and political criticism at home over his handling of a recent hurricane that struck the US southeast. Biden said he was doing his best to avoid a full-scale conflagration in the Middle East, where Israel is bombing Lebanon in a bid to wipe out the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah. "The main thing we can do is try to rally the rest of the world and our allies into participating... to tamp

→ **US President Joe Biden on Friday advised Israel against striking Iran's oil facilities, saying he was trying to rally the world to avoid the escalating prospect of all-out war in the Middle East.**

this down," he told reporters. "But when you have (Iranian) proxies as irrational as Hezbollah and the Huthis (of Yemen), it's a hard thing to determine." Biden, however, had tough words for Netanyahu, with whom he has had rocky relations, as he seeks to manage Israel's response following the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel. The Israeli premier has repeatedly ignored

Biden's calls for restraint on Lebanon, and on Israel's war in Gaza, which has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians. Biden deflected a question on whether he believed Netanyahu was hanging back on signing a Middle East peace deal in a bid to influence the US presidential election. "No administration has helped Israel more than I have. None, none, none. And I think Bibi should remember that," Biden said.

"And whether he's trying to influence the election, I don't know, but I'm not counting on that." Biden said he had still not spoken to Netanyahu since the Iranian attack, which involved some 200 missiles, but added that their teams were in "constant contact." "They're not going to make a decision immediately, and so we're going to wait to see when they want to talk," the US leader added.

News box

Telangana HC grants anticipatory bail to HMDA official

HYDERABAD. Justice Juvvadi Sridevi of the Telangana HC has granted anticipatory bail to Sudheer Kumar Madhavaram, Assistant Planning Officer (ATO) of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), in a case involving unauthorised granting of permission for constructions in the buffer zone of Errakunta in Pragathi Nagar, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Nizampet Municipal Corporation. Madhavaram is listed as accused No 4 in the case.

As per the court's directive, the petitioner must surrender before the SHO of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Cyberabad, within two weeks from the date of the order. Upon surrender, the SHO is instructed to release him on bail, provided he executes a personal bond of Rs 20,000 along with two sureties of the same amount. In addition, Madhavaram is required to report to the SHO concerned every Saturday between 11 am and 4 pm for the next eight weeks, or until the filing of the charge sheet, whichever comes earlier. He must also adhere to other conditions under Section 482(2) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhitha, 2023, and fully cooperate with the investigation.

The case relates to the alleged irregularities in granting construction permissions in the buffer zone of the water body, raising concerns about violations of environmental and urban planning regulations.

Kochi Biennale gets generous grant from Jindal group

KOCHI. The chairperson of the Kochi Biennale Foundation, V Venu, said on Friday that Sangita Jindal, chairperson of JSW Foundation, has come on board as a platinum benefactor with a generous grant over a five-year period. He said the MoU between Kochi Biennale Foundation and JSW Foundation marks the beginning of a long-term association of the foundation with Biennale.

The Kochi-Muziris Biennale, the flagship event of the Kochi Biennale Foundation, has won national and international acclaim as India's premier mega-art event, which is uniquely accessible to art lovers and members of the public alike.

"We are delighted to have Sangita Jindal's support and friendship! Over the years she has actively supported the Kochi Muziris Biennale and other endeavours to build the arts ecosystem in the country, more recently with the Hampi Art Labs! We welcome her ideas and visionary courage, and look forward to growing into a new era at the foundation," said Bose Krishnamachari, president of the Kochi Muziris Biennale.

A visionary who believes in the transformative power of art, Sangita set up the Jindal Arts Creative Interaction Centre (JACIC) at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in 1994. She also publishes Art India Magazine, which has been a chronicler of the Indian art scene since 1996. Sangita is an Eisenhower Fellow, serving on the Board of Trustees of the World Monuments Fund - India Chapter and as an Advisor on the Khajuraho Board. She is a member of the Tate International Council, the UN Women Business Sector Advisory Council (BSAC), a governing board member of Mumbai First and a global trustee of 'Asia Society.' She has also been elected as chairperson of the Asia Society India Centre in 2024.

Three devotees killed as load vehicle collides with lorry in Tamil Nadu



THOOTHUKUDI. Three devotees were killed and 11 sustained injuries after the load vehicle they were travelling in collided head-on with a lorry at Kallamozhi on the Tiruchendur-Kanniyakumari road here on Thursday.

While two of the victims, identified as Perumpadaiyan (20) and Krishnapuram (25), died on Thursday night, the third person, A Vadivel (17), succumbed to his injuries at Thoothukudi medical college hospital on Friday.

According to sources, the accident took place while the devotees were on their way back after attending a flag hoisting ceremony, organised as part of Dussehra celebrations, at the Kulasekarapattinam Mutharaman temple. The load vehicle, which carried over 11 youths from Chekkarakudi near Muduvaithanthal, collided with the lorry, which was carrying a group of devotees to Mutharaman temple in Kallamozhi. All the injured persons were shifted to Thoothukudi medical college hospital, sources said.

A case has been registered against lorry driver Mariappan (38) of Alangulam. Many devotees from various districts gathered at Kulasekarapattinam Mutharaman temple for the flag hoisting ceremony.

Study reveals gaps in Bengaluru's public sanitation infrastructure

The study, conducted over one month, surveyed public toilets in a variety of public spaces, including parks, Metro stations, bus stops and marketplaces.

BENGALURU. A recent study has revealed critical gaps in the city's public sanitation infrastructure, and highlighted alarming issues related to accessibility, inclusivity and hygiene.

Conducted by RV University's Centre for Disability Justice and Inclusion (CDJI) and Centre for Gender Studies (CGS), the study, titled -- Flushed Out: Unravelling the Labyrinth of Public Toilets in Bengaluru - A Tale of Access, Equity, and Quality -- noted Bengaluru's rapid population growth, which is currently at 2.94% annually, and stressed the urgent need for adequate public facilities, particularly among vulnerable groups like street vendors and gig workers, who heavily rely on public amenities.

The study, which examined 65 public toilets across various areas, pointed out that while the city has 803 public toilets, key tourist destinations like Cubbon Park and Ulsoor Lake lack these essential facilities outside the premises. It also found that toilets are primarily clustered around commercial hubs such as Commercial Street and Chickpete.

The study, conducted over a one-month period, surveyed public toilets in a variety

of public spaces, including parks, Metro stations, bus stops and marketplaces. In areas where toilets were provided, they were often difficult to locate. For

one, the study stated. Moreover, out of the 65 toilets surveyed, 52 were neither marked on maps nor had any visible directions to guide the public.

The absence of universal symbols and adequate arrows further complicates the situation, particularly for women, the elderly, and disabled individuals who may be uncomfortable asking for directions.

The study also identified that many public toilets were poorly lit or lacked proper locking mechanisms. Inclusivity was another major issue, with only two toilets providing sanitary products, which were only available upon special request from male staff members who would bring them from nearby pharmacies.

The study also found that only 18% of the toilets had dustbins within stalls, leading to improper disposal of waste and blockages in many facilities. Sanitary pad disposal units were rare, and hand-washing facilities were available in only 30% of the toilets.



example, despite the presence of five toilets in Lal Bagh, none were indicated on the entrance maps, forcing visitors to search for as long as 19 minutes to find

Andhra Pradesh minister BC Janardhan Reddy lauds Assam's road mode

After a two-day study tour in Assam, Janardhan Reddy emphasised the advanced technology used for road data collection and urged AP officials to adopt similar systems.

VIJAYAWADA. Roads and Buildings Minister, BC Janardhan Reddy, has hailed Assam's Road Asset Management System (RAMS) as a model of modern road management. After a two-day study tour in Assam, Janardhan Reddy emphasised the advanced technology used for road data collection and urged Andhra Pradesh officials to adopt similar systems to enhance their infrastructure. The delegation, led by the Minister, attended a detailed presentation from Assam's Public Works Department on the State's RAMS implementation, highlighting decades of progress in road construction and maintenance.



On the second day, they observed cutting-edge equipment like the Hawk Eye and Path Runner

vehicles from Australia and the United States, which collect real-time road data, and inspected the Palsbari-Mirza-Chandubi corridor.

Janardhan Reddy also reviewed tools such as the Falling Weight Deflectometer and Ground Penetrating Radar used to assess road conditions. The Minister directed the State officials to prepare proposals for implementing similar systems. High-ranking officials from Andhra Pradesh, including Roads & Buildings Principal Secretary Kanthilal Dande,

participated in the study tour.

Vijayawada cops promote Cyber Citizen App during Navaratri fete

The app features various preloaded videos illustrating the modus operandi of cybercrimes and offering advice on how to avoid becoming a victim.

VIJAYAWADA. NTR District Commissioner of Police SV Raja Sekhara Babu announced that 15 lakh devotees are expected to visit Sri Durga Malleswara Varla Devasthanam during the ten-day Dasara festivities. Seizing the opportunity, he promoted the 'Cyber Citizen' mobile app to raise awareness about cybercrime.

Upon taking charge as District Commissioner, Babu convened a review meeting on cybercrimes and developed the innovative mobile application to educate users about common cybercrime methods. The app features various preloaded videos illustrating the modus operandi of



cybercrimes and offering advice on how to avoid becoming a victim. As part of the campaign, Vijayawada cybercrime police,

along with volunteers, are engaging with temple visitors to explain the app's features and assist them in downloading it.

The police have set up 180 boards and distributed pamphlets around the temple. "We aim to have at least 2 lakh devotees, especially youngsters, download the app to raise awareness among their families," said the Commissioner.

The app, launched in July, saw one lakh downloads by September 30. "We expect 20,000 more downloads during the festival," Raja Sekhara Babu added.

Police investigation into 'robbery' reveals active hawala network in Kochi

The police had doubts about the genuineness of the complaint from the beginning. Confirming their doubts, the probe revealed that it was indeed a hawala money heist.

KOCHI. A police probe into a theft of Rs 80 lakh has shed light on an active hawala network in Kochi. A special team has been constituted under Ernakulam Central Assistant Commissioner of Police C Jayakumar to unearth the entire network.

The theft occurred on September 25, when four persons, who arrived on two motorcycles wearing masks and helmets, stole Rs 80 lakh kept inside a bag and a cover at the rear passenger side of a parked car near the LIC office at Manappattarambu in Kallor.

The money was brought by an Edappally native to be handed over to a person named Sahad, who runs a mobile phone business in UAE. After two days of the incident, Sahad approached the police with a complaint. The police had doubts about the genuineness of the complaint from the beginning.

Confirming their doubts, the probe revealed that it was indeed a hawala money heist.

"When we checked the CCTV cameras in the area, we could confirm that such a theft had happened. There are CCTV visuals of four persons on two bikes in the Manappattarambu area. It is also confirmed that Sahad and his friend had reached the place to collect the money," a police officer said. However, what surprised the police was that the person who was to deliver the money to Sahad is yet to approach the police for his "lost money". Police suspect that there was more than Rs 80 lakh inside the car.

"Interestingly, the person who lost the money has not lodged a complaint. Instead, Sahad who was to receive the money, was the one who came up with the complaint. Our probe indicates the involvement of a hawala network active in Kochi. A special team has been constituted under ACP to probe the incident and bust the entire network," the officer said. Police are also collecting information about the person who sent money to Sahad through the hawala channel.

"It was a planned heist as the accused persons knew that money would be handed over to Sahad at Manappattarambu. Sahad claims that money was sent by his friend in UAE. But we have to verify the amount sent through the hawala channel," he said.

No one has Malappuram district's ownership rights, asserts CPM

The CPM leadership on Friday launched a major offensive, reminding its critics that the district belongs to everyone.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Determined to counter the anti-Malappuram narrative being thrust upon Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the CPM leadership on Friday launched a major offensive, reminding its critics that the district belongs to everyone.

"None has handed over Malappuram district's ownership rights to anyone. The CPM's stance is against both majority and minority communalism," said party state secretary M V Govindan, while briefing the media on the CPM state committee's decisions on Friday.

At the state committee, the CPM approved a document on 'the contemporary political situation and the party position' that observed: "The allegation of an RSS-CPM nexus has been raised against the party to destroy the acceptance the CPM gained among the secular and minority sections of society." The document accused the Opposition and other forces of forming a rainbow alliance

in collusion with a section of media against the second Pinarayi Vijayan government, similar to the liberation struggle against the first Communist government in 1957.

Presenting the excerpts of the document,



Govindan said the CPM is not against believers or non-believers. "Everyone can work in the party. Anvar (Nilambur MLA) who is spreading lies about the party has only the support of Jamaat-e-Islami, SDPI and UDF. Malappuram district belongs to everyone. None has given the ownership rights of the district to anyone. CPM's stance is against both the majority

and minority communalism. It was the EMS government which formed the Malappuram district considering its backwardness. At that time, the Congress had joined with the Jana Sangham to oppose the formation. They alleged that a little Pakistan is going to be formed.

"Once, Muslims and Communists were not recruited to the police. That situation was changed by the EMS government. Malappuram is a centre of the Communist movement. We don't have any misconception that it was under someone else," he said.

Left's stand protecting democracy' Govindan said both Jamaat-e-Islami and Muslim League organise minorities based on the SDPI ideology of minority extremism. "It was swift police intervention that stopped violence between the RSS and SDPI from spreading into communal violence in Alappuzha and Palakkad. The political attack against the CPM proves the party is taking a strong position against religious forces," he said.

Missile strikes, oil shock & threat of war

THE Iran-Israel standoff entered a dangerous phase when Iran fired 200-odd ballistic missiles at Israel. The price of oil surged and international trade faced new worries. The question universally posed is: what next?

Ironically, in October 539 BC, the Persian founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, which ruled for two centuries over today's West Asia and Iran, conquered Babylonia. Amongst his other liberal moves, he released the imprisoned Jews, letting them return to Jerusalem. Two and a half millennia later, their descendants are foes.

The Six-Day War in 1967 ended with Israel occupying the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. The UN Security Council's Resolutions 243 and 338 have been the basis of peacemaking for half a century now.

Former US President Jimmy Carter, just turning 100, enabled the Camp David Accords in 1978, when Israel and Egypt normalised relations. Three years later, Sadat was assassinated. That track was resumed with the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, which led to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shaking hands with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 1993. The Oslo Accords followed. Although the Palestinian National Authority was thus created, it had limited autonomy. The assassination of PM Rabin in 1995 was a setback. A five-year period of self-rule was imposed to enable a settlement of outstanding issues, like the illegal Israeli settlements and holding of elections. But Benjamin Netanyahu becoming Prime Minister in 1996 and the rise of Hamas as a counterforce to Arafat's Fatah hardened the positions.

Netanyahu has been Prime Minister in three phases: 1996-99, 2009-21 and since December 2022. He scoffed at the Oslo Accords and rejected a Palestinian state. In 2005, he resigned from the government of PM Ariel Sharon over Israeli pullback from the Gaza Strip and the relocation of 8,000 Israeli settlers. The vacation of Gaza, though appearing positive, was followed by its encirclement and restriction of free access, even via its coast. Once Hamas won elections there, Israel used it to counter the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Netanyahu fine-tuned this policy after PM Sharon had a stroke in 2006 and his successor faced corruption charges. Israeli rightwing governments benefited from the US getting distracted by 9/11 and Al Qaeda in 2001. Iraq's occupation from 2003, the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War from 2011 and the declaration of the Islamic Caliphate by the ISIS in 2014.

The US President, Barack Obama, tried to break the Iran-Israel logjam by engaging Iran and, ultimately, overseeing a nuclear deal to contain its uranium enrichment programme. However, President Donald Trump reversed this and pandered to Israel by shifting the US embassy to Jerusalem without any precondition about Israel resuming the peace process and Oslo Accords. Netanyahu lost power, facing serious corruption charges and public ire over defying the control of the judiciary. He returned to power in 2022, having cut a deal with extreme right wing parties, suffused with bigotry and anti-Arab politics.

Illegal settlements multiplied in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Authority was compromised and weakened. Gaza was believed to be permanently enslaved and subdued. A serious intelligence failure resulted in Hamas jumping the security fence and killing, raping and abducting Israeli civilians and defence personnel on October 7, 2023. Since then, Israeli defence forces have killed civilians, repetitively displaced Gaza's population and failed to eliminate Hamas or get all hostages released.

Netanyahu's unpopularity rose. His address to both Houses of the US Congress on July 24, 2024 had half the Democrats and Vice-President Kamala Harris missing. At that stage, two-thirds of the Israelis wanted Netanyahu to quit. The ongoing hostilities against Hamas and Hezbollah kept him in power.

A generous gesture on the Rhodes front

TRYSTS AND TURNS: The sixth scholarship for Indian students is sponsored by Radhakrishnan and Rajan families

THE 1953 batch of the Indian Police Service (IPS), to which I belong, is proud to announce that the officer who topped the batch, Raghavachari Govindarajan, will have his name etched in the records of Oxford University's Rhodes Scholarships Trust, along with former President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The ex-President's great-granddaughter, Soumya, and her husband, Govindarajan's son Mukund Rajan, have together contributed a tidy sum of money to Oxford University for instituting the sixth Rhodes scholarship for Indian students. The scholar, to be chosen in 2025, will join Oxford in 2026. Menaka Guruswamy, a senior advocate in the Supreme Court who is known for fighting people's causes pro bono, is the Chairperson of the Indian Chapter of Oxford's Rhodes Scholarships Trust.

Mukund was a Rhodes scholar himself. He was enrolled at Oxford at the same time as Soumya was studying there on another scholarship. They met on the Oxford campus and later married. He joined the Tata Administrative Service and quickly made his mark. Ratan Tata chose him as his principal aide in the chairman's office. A few years after Ratan retired, Mukund left the Tatas and started his own consultancy firm, ECube Investment Advisors Private Limited. When Mukund was Ratan's principal aide, I touched base with him. Later, we met frequently. When I first met Soumya, she was employed in a foreign bank. Later, she set up her own consultancy firm, Wakefield Advisors, which is not only a great success but also helps out in social and charitable causes. In 2021, she figured in Forbes India's list of most powerful women. Had Govindarajan refrained from joining the IPS in 1953, I guess he would have topped the subsequent year's IAS examination and joined the 1954 IAS batch. In 1952, when he and I took the exam, the candidates who had not attained the age of 21 were ineligible for the IAS. Candidates were allowed to compete for the IPS at the age of 20. Both Govindarajan and the No 2 in my batch, Anand Kumar Verma, were 20 when they were selected. Govindarajan retired as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, a post that has been subsumed in the office of the National Security Adviser. He had donned the police uniform only for the first two years of his service, of which one was spent under training at Mount Abu along with 36 other probationers. His elder son, Raghuram Rajan, served as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

The sixth Rhodes Scholarship for Indian students is sponsored by the Radhakrishnan and Rajan families. It will be administered by the Indian Chapter of the Rhodes Trust. Some additional funding required to assure perpetuity was provided by an American Rhodes scholar and his wife, as well as by Oxford University itself. Bill



Clinton was a Rhodes scholar before he was elected US President. Atishi, recently sworn in as the Chief Minister of Delhi, and Peter Lynn Sinai, belonging to my Goan Christian community, were also Rhodes scholars. Sinai stood first in the UPSC civil services examination of 1957 and was allotted the Foreign Service. Isabel Colaco, who stayed in the flat next door to mine in Mumbai and belonged to my community, also studied at Oxford on a scholarship from the university, like Soumya Rajan.

In 1958, five years after Govindarajan and I joined the IPS as probationers at the Central Police Training College at Mount Abu (Rajasthan), a future poet joined the 11th regular recruitment batch. He was Keki Daruwalla, hailing from the tiny but remarkable Parsi community. Keki's family migrated to India from Lahore. He was allotted the Uttar Pradesh cadre but, like Govindarajan, was seconded to the Intelligence Bureau (IB) under the Earmarking Scheme.

The scheme drew upon the most brainy ones in each IPS batch and earmarked them for the IB. They would form the core of the analysts required to sift the grain from the chaff that found its way to the IB every day. Besides reports from men in the field, drawn largely from the subordinate ranks, there were newspaper clippings and

material gleaned from contacts and informers that needed to be digested and screened before the Director briefed the Prime Minister, which he did every day.

R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing) of the intelligence agency was segregated from the IB in 1962 and tasked with external intelligence alone. Both Govindarajan and Keki Daruwalla were assigned duties in R&AW when it was formed. From my batch of 37 officers, four were selected for the Earmarking Scheme. Govindarajan and Anand Verma were first detailed to the IB and later to R&AW. Hari Anand Barari and Ram Kishan Khandelwal stayed on in the IB. Barari became the bureau Director and, on retirement, was appointed Governor of Haryana. Keki's death was widely mourned by poets, especially those who use the English language as their medium of communication. Two eulogies published in the print media moved me literally to tears. Those pieces were not written by his colleagues in the IPS, but by individuals devoted to culture and literature. The IPS fraternity also mourned his death. He brought glory to the service through his poetry. Excellence in intelligence work is, through sheer necessity, kept under wraps. What moved me was that an IPS officer, serving the country in an anonymous capacity, came to the notice of the public because of his excellence in another field.

Doctors targeted

How many more deaths before safety is ensured

THE shooting of Dr Javed Akhtar at a Delhi hospital on Thursday, following the brutal rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata in mid-August, raises an urgent question: how many more doctors on duty must be killed before the authorities take decisive action to ensure their safety? The medical profession, built on the fundamental principle of saving lives, is under siege. Doctors, who work tirelessly and selflessly, often in hazardous conditions, are becoming easy targets for violence. Whether it is the horrifying attack on Dr Akhtar, shot at point-blank range, or the brutal killing in Kolkata that sparked nationwide protests and strikes by doctors, the pattern is clear. A lack of adequate security measures in hospitals is leaving healthcare professionals vulnerable to targeted assaults.

The Supreme Court, while hearing the Kolkata case, expressed grave concerns over the West Bengal Government's slow progress in installing CCTV cameras and constructing basic facilities such as toilets and resting rooms. These are not new demands; they are



essential security measures that should have been implemented long ago. The court even set a deadline of

October 15 for the state to complete these improvements. Yet, progress remains sluggish.

Doctors continue to work under constant fear, forced to protest in the streets instead of focusing on their duties. How many more protests, strikes and loss of lives will it take for the authorities to realise the gravity of the situation? Medical associations across India have repeatedly called for stricter enforcement of safety protocols and enhanced security at hospitals, but these appeals have mostly gone unanswered. Every life lost under such circumstances is a tragic reminder of the failure to protect those who dedicate their lives to saving others. If the safety of doctors is not treated with the urgency it deserves, we risk losing more lives — of both patients and physicians.

AAP thwarts BJP's plan of reshaping the party system

The arrest, release and resignation of Kejriwal as CM are significant developments in construing the emerging party system in the country.

THE recent release on bail of the three arrested Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders — Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh — indicates that the BJP's move to alter the reconfiguration of India's party system has been thwarted for now. Earlier, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, arrested similarly, had been released by the SC. Importantly, the SC had passed strong strictures against the misuse of the central investigating agencies — the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) — by the Union Government in the process. These incarcerations indicate significant processes and trends in the thwarting of the reconfiguration of India's party system which has been going on since 1989, when the decline of the Congress began, following the loss suffered by Rajiv Gandhi in the ninth General Election. The strengthening of the AAP since its founding in November 2012 was an addition to the process of the reconfiguration of the party system. The process has continued through the 10 General Election since, during which the Indian party system has emerged as a federalised bipolar system from a one-party dominant one.

The electoral data of the parties till 2009 indicates a strong one-third presence of the regional/state parties. There was a process of fusion and fission of parties through defections, mergers, coalitions and the creation of new parties. The sixteenth General Election in 2014 returned the one-party dominant system and a decline of the state parties. After 10 years of the majoritarian party system, with subjugated coalition with some state parties, the eighteenth General Election in 2024 introduced a sharp turn. The BJP is still dominant in the NDA, with the JD(U), TDP and JD(S) willingly playing

second fiddle. But a fading Modi sheen and a blurring Hindu-Muslim binary of the BJP could change the equation any time.

The AAP succeeded in being recognised by the Election Commission as a national party following its victory in the Punjab elections and gaining some votes in a few more states. But it lacks a pan-India political and electoral appeal. Pragmatically, it has become party to the coalition process by joining the INDIA, the alliance forged by the Congress. As an INDIA component, the AAP also contested, though unsuccessfully, the Delhi parliamentary seats. However, the contradictory signals emerging from both AAP and Congress in the Delhi Assembly politics, Haryana elections and Punjab raise questions on the party and the emerging direction of the Indian coalition politics. The Congress was in alternation politics in Delhi (with the BJP) and Punjab (with the Shiromani Akali Dal); it would like to regain that position. The arrest, release and resignation of Kejriwal as Delhi Chief Minister are significant developments that deserve to be placed in perspective to construe and situate the AAP in the emerging party system in the country. The party was founded on November 26, 2012 by Kejriwal along with a flock of activists who collaborated with him in the India Against Corruption Movement during 2011-12. The high-pitched movement during the reign of Manmohan Singh's UPA government took Anna Hazare, an ecological and rural reconstruction activist from Maharashtra's remote Ralegan Siddhi village, as its



face. The movement was supported in the background by the BJP and the RSS to discredit and pull down Delhi's Sheila Dikshit and nationally, the UPA government. The strategy succeeded in the long run, but it was Kejriwal, a former Indian Revenue Service officer, who succeeded in forming a party with activist-academic Yogendra Yadav and lawyer Prashant Bhushan, along with several others. It ousted Sheila Dikshit less than a year after its formation during the elections to the Delhi Legislative Assembly and formed the government in coalition with the same Congress that it had ousted. Kejriwal's confused politics from the

opposition space led to his resignation, but he returned in the next 2015 elections, winning 67 of the 70 seats. He has continued with his government-in-perpetual-protest mode since. Significantly, his and the party's emergence was based on the concepts of one leader, 'honesty' and 'difference'. First Anna Hazare was dropped unceremoniously, then Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan were eased out. The Jan Lokpal Act, with an absolutist conception of 'honesty', was criticised by jurist Shanti Bhushan. The first Lokpal, Admiral Ramdas, was soon fired by Kejriwal.

Thus, the AAP emerged as a one-leader, intolerant-of-dissent party. Kejriwal's conflictual strategy had a match in Narendra Modi, who strengthened the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor against the state government to neutralise him. In arresting Kejriwal and other senior leaders, the ED and the CBI were used to demolish the image of the leader and the party. He was eventually released on bail by the SC. It is under these circumstances that he aligned with the INDIA. His resignation and appointment of Atishi as Chief Minister till his return — if they win the next Assembly elections — reflects his control over the party. Thus, in the process of the reconfiguring of the party system in India, the AAP has emerged as a spoke in the wheel. The politics of Kejriwal will be tested in the process.

Indian Fashion Industry 1000 crores in the next 5 to 10 years. Is expected to reach. Today, in addition to designing many options in this field have come before, which show creativity and the chance to make a name..

When it comes to a career in the fashion industry, so that a designer or ramp catwalk model is exposed, but behind the scenes (Back Stage) working days of the demand for fashion professionals - is increasing day . Youth today face fashion styling, photography, choreography, branding, promotions, Garment manufacturing, Mrchedajing, consulting, fashion events such as career options are also managers. Let's take a look at the fashion industry, such as selected options, hot careers for youth who may be:

Fashion Stylist

Bollywood celebrities like Sonam Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor today Magajins ranging from fashion, music videos, TV Commercials models in every major role in new look is the fashion stylist. These range from personal interior, makeup, hair stylist apparel and dominated in the fashion world.

Work Profile: Instituto Marengoni matching the styling and fashion stylist specialization in the Deepali Mathur says Maya luxury brand creative head Outfits from a stylist hairstyle, makeup, accessory and footwear has everything Decide. In addition, during the fashion shows how a Gamrent be displayed, ramp models or actors on how to carry themselves, it is also a stylist decides. During events like the interior, it is also Decide stylist only.

How entries: Styling specialized courses in India are only in selected institutes. Students in the textile, fashion Mrchedajing or undergraduate or graduate course in graphic designing can. In addition, Marengoni Milan, New York's Fashion Institute of Technology or the Instituto de Uropio design diploma or degree course in Fashion Styling may be three years. Yes, with any brand or designer fashion assistant, handyman personal styling, styling and portfolio work experience as interns, etc. is required. Deepali says that youngsters Celeb stylist, personal stylist, fashion editor, photo stylist, stylist Vorderob, TV Commercials, Magazine Photoshoot by both name and can earn money.

Fashion Photographer

Contemporary fashion industry has become as vital as the role of the fashion photographer, as a designer. Especially for the fashion photographer lot of publicity and branding needs. According to one estimate, by 2016 the fashion photography industry is



World of Fashion



expected to maintain a growth rate of 10 percent.

Work Profile: India's famous fashion designer Tarun Thliani, Rakesh Agrawal, Gaurav Gupta, Astha Narang, etc. working with fashion photographer Ashish Sahu, my work according to demand of the client or brand, is to shoot pictures. Well, fashion photographers models, Gamrents, taking photographs of accessories ranging from studio and isolated locations, work on events. Adjust the room lighting, camera settings, ranging portfolio is the full responsibility of their own. Additionally, the model that guides posing in front of the camera or how to be in a show.

How entries: Film and Television Institute of India to become a fashion photographer, National Institute of Design, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan or one-year diploma or specialization course in fashion photography can be.

Some basic technical skills - such as lighting, Fashion Trends and Styles with information - as well as social skills should be. Ashish say that I had a passion for photography since childhood. Atrakt were the glamor industry. So hard work. Today is my identity. Students fashion photographer, magazine photographer or mail

order catalogs can make a career as a photographer. In Startig Stablisd exposure from working as a photographer's assistant.

Visual Mrchedajir

Visual Mcharendajir emerged as a field where you get a chance to express their creativity.

Work Profile: Visual Mrchedajir work is to determine whether any accessory or how Garment displayed in retail stores so that He could Atrakt to customers. Garments in market for accessories and advises clients of the study and how the store can be made Friendly Market.

How Entry: Most companies are Prifr higher secondary level to the diploma holders, who Customer Service, General Retail, Sales, Marketing, or 3 to 5 years of related experience in the field. Some companies, Business, Fashion Design, Fashion Mcharendajing or give preference to those bachelors degree in marketing.

Fashion Mrrrchedajir

Sabharwal worship Mrrrchedajir wanted to pursue a career in the fashion industry fashion, but designers, but as Mrrrchedajir. Thus, PG Diploma in Garment Mrrrchedajing and today with a major brand.

Work Profile: Worship the work Garment Mrrrchedajir take orders, sample preparation, costing and clients to deliver the final product. Designers and buyers reach to buy the outfit is the task of the Mrrrchedajir. They fashion sense, business expertise and strong communication skills are necessary.

How entries: Mrrrchedajir become fashionable in the fashion or PG course can Mrrrchedajing Garment. Fabric fibers, cutting, International Marketing should be aware of.

Fashion Antrepnyor

Antrepnyor become fashion does not need any special qualifications. Candidates who have an understanding of just fashion, visualization power, Imajineshn, stay updated technology, innovative marketing and online Mrchedajing requires knowledge of sense. E - commerce industry, beginning as Antrepnyor may be a little tough, but once you got your brand Stablis fourteen to fifteen million in the year would not be hard to earn.

Ghazal Sharma Director, The Wage Story There are more options ..

Fashion Designer World Dressage unloading ramp models with many other experts have also roll. Some of these are:

1. Fashion Coordinator
2. Pattern Maker
3. Costume Designer
4. Fashion choreographers
5. Retail Managers
6. Brand Managers

Are you an 'overwhelmed

Employee'?

With a cluttered desk and an even more cluttered mind, you too can be classified as an 'overwhelmed employee'.

So, take note before it takes you over! We live in an overwhelmed world with more than what we can handle. Being way too busy has become a way of life; be it due to the excess amount of work we have taken upon us or the way technology is being thrown at us. Such an overdose of work and technology has also led to the creation of a new kind of employee, which is the 'overwhelmed employee'. In a research study conducted on Global Human Capital Trends, 65-75 per cent of the organisations surveyed identified with this issue. With mobile phones, email, text messages, global teams, conference calls, social media, and even watches talking to us, there is so much stuff coming at us. We are constantly flooded and can't get our work done. Does this ring a bell? According to this study, it is noted that information overload and the 247 work environment are overwhelming workers, hence, undermining productivity and contributing to low employee engagement.



It was noted that, more than half (57 per cent) of interruptions at work resulted from either social-media tools or switching among disparate standalone applications. Also, according to the Kleiner Perkins Caufield Byers' 2013 Internet Trends report, the typical user checks his/her phone approximately 150 times every day. Phone checking instils a sense of an inner reward from scoring a personal, newsworthy or gossipy

email or social-media notification. However, this type of smartphone preoccupation is an 'addictive' behaviour it's not only a time waster, it also is a direct contributor to feeling overwhelmed. According to Hema Parikh, director HR, Ajuba Solutions India Pvt Ltd, 'overwhelmed' is a blanket term for employees who

are typically disengaged, underproductive and cynical. "More often than not, these are employees who are easily the best performers, but are on the verge of getting burnt out. In a digitally connected world as ours, employees tend to feel burdened with the sheer amount of information that they are tasked to handle. As a result, it feels like a lot of work is on the plate and employees tend to get stressed out. A simple way of identifying an overwhelmed employee is, reduced productivity, average or poor quality of work, missed deadlines, absenteeism, lower levels of engagement and overall dissatisfaction," she says. Talking about what actually creates an overwhelmed employee, Pavan Choudary, CEO and managing director of Vygon India Pvt Ltd and author of 'How a good person can really win', shares, "The overwhelmed employee's calendar is full. His/her desk is also often overflowing with paper and products. He/she could often miss

deadlines and be late for meetings. To be fair, he/she is often the employee who doesn't know how to say 'no'. Other attributes could be poor time management, uncooperative colleagues, lack of skills which could increase his/her efficiency or personal problems of some sort." This is a critical issue and a coping mechanism for the same becomes a necessity. Companies need a purposeful approach to help employees identify and manage the triggers that lead to the feeling of being overwhelmed. The need of the hour is to simplify the work environment, create more flexible work standards, and teach workers how to prioritise. Workplace distraction is usually inevitable. One way to curb this is by setting clear goals, priorities and deadlines to monitor progress. While managers must avoid micro managing, they must also keep constant open communication with their employees to ensure that the goals are met and that they are available for their team members when teams need their support. On an individual level, it would help if people organise or structure their day into a standard routine, suggests Parikh. "This may seem impossible, considering how much ad-hoc work we face each day, but planning and an organised process helps in prioritising work despite distraction. Last, but not the least, is team work. Team goals and cohesiveness help in delivering best results; it is the team's positive aura that can keep all distractions at bay and help you achieve the desired results," she explains. So, declutter your mind and do away with unnecessary technology at work, as this is the way to step out of the zone of an overwhelmed employee.



Is interest in designing, creatives, Elementary can keep an eye on things close, then designing Watch Future is Bright ..

A growing demand for fashionable watches. The arrival of foreign brands in the Indian watch industry market growth is rapid. Assocham

According to the report, the Indian wrist watch market growth over the next few years will be close to 15 percent of the job opportunities will continue in the years to come. If you have a creative concept designs, then this sector can move forward. It has a regular job, the full scope of own brand is created.

Personal Skills In addition to the creativity and detail orientation Designer Watch, Kwalitij must be something like this:

- Artistic and Scientific Approach
- Knowledge of materials
- Understanding of market trends
- Practical Approach
- Focus on Detailing
- Before Work Research
- Client Dealing Quality

Job Option Titan, Maggima, Sonata, Ajanta are the greatest opportunities for jobs in Indian companies. Watch Indian market has major stakes in small companies. It is also no shortage of options. International level you can work in companies.

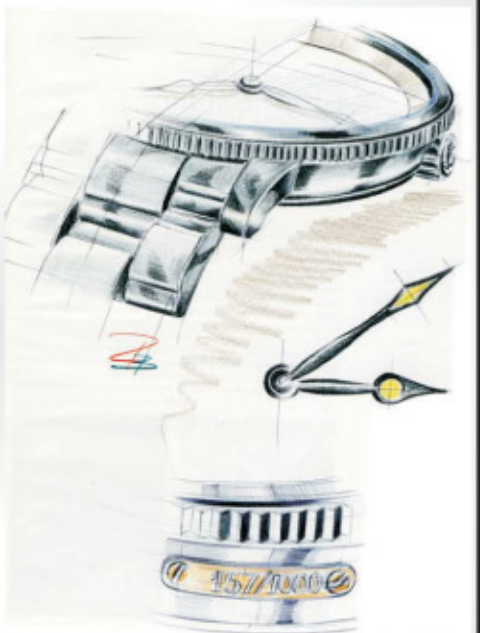
Course Product from a good institute, industrial or accessories can go into this field by designing course. Leading the Field

- Course:
- Diploma in Product Design
- PG Diploma in Product Design
- Bachelor of Design (Accessories)
- Diploma in accessories design

Eljibiliti - Graduate level courses for senior secondary - PG Diploma in design, engineering, technology or architecture degree.

Salary • Junior Designer starting salary is 4 to 5 lakh per annum. • Experienced Designer annual salary of Rs 10 to 14 lakh.

Watch Designer Give The Perfect Look



- Those working abroad is between 18 to 22 million annual salary.
 - Top Institutes
 - National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad
 - www.nid.edu
 - National Institute of Fashion Technology
 - www.nift.ac.in
- High Salary Job** Watch several large foreign companies have launched their products in the Indian market. Indian companies are not far behind in technology, but when it comes to designing, so that foreign companies will have the edge. Dealing with the situation and maintain the lead in the market for designing, Indian companies also have begun to point to strengthen its product. Designers should watch good players on high salaries are higher. Watch Designing Field is the right time to go.

'Cultural sensitivities taken into account for Lakshmi Bai statue': MCD to Delhi HC

The court reviewed an appeal from the Shahi Idgah Managing Committee, which sought to stop the statue's installation, arguing that the Mughal-era park was mainly used for offering prayers.

NEW DELHI: The city authorities on Friday assured the Delhi High Court that cultural sensitivities were considered during the installation of a statue of Maharani Lakshmi Bai at Shahi Idgah Park, located in Sadar Bazar. The counsel for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) informed the court that the statue had been positioned in a corner, nearly 200 meters from the Idgah wall, with a partition wall constructed to maintain respect for the surrounding environment. The Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) senior counsel echoed this, assuring the court that the "sentiments of the community are being respected." The court was reviewing an appeal from the Shahi Idgah Managing Committee, which had earlier sought to prevent the installation

of the statue. The committee argued that the park, a historical Mughal-era property, was primarily used for offering prayers (namaz). The court was informed that the



statue had already been installed, leading a bench headed by Chief Justice Manmohan to encourage a peaceful resolution. The bench suggested that representatives from the

committee visit the site to see how the statue was positioned, stating, "Take a small delegation to show them the area." A team of three representatives from the panel was given permission to visit the location, and the court scheduled the next hearing for October 7. In a hearing on October 1, the HC questioned the opposition to installation of the statue, emphasising that Maharani Lakshmi Bai was a historical figure rather than a religious one. It had cautioned against allowing the matter to become a source of unnecessary tension.

It said Lakshmi Bai, as a national hero, should be respected without dividing history along communal lines. Previously, a single judge had dismissed the panel's plea, which claimed the Shahi Idgah Park was Waqf property and that the installation of the statue encroached upon it.

Dubai link in drug bust, LOC issued against Delhi businessman

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has issued a look-out circular (LOC) against a Dubai based businessman of Indian origin who is suspected of being involved in the drug cartel whose contraband worth Rs 5,000 crore was busted in the city just a couple of days back, a senior police officer said on Friday. The suspect, Virender Basoya, is believed to be staying in Dubai.

According to the officer, the accused was allegedly running the racket with the help of Tushar Goyal and Jitender Gill alias Jassi, who are now both arrested. On Wednesday, in what is being termed as the biggest haul of drugs in recent years in the national capital, the Delhi Police have busted an international drug cartel and seized the contraband whose value in the international market is estimated at more than Rs 5820 crore.

Goyal, who owns the godown, was arrested along with Himanshu Kumar (27) and Aurangzeb Siddiqui (23) of Delhi and Bharat Kumar Jain (48) of Mumbai on the same day.

On Thursday, the police's Special Cell nabbed Jassi from Punjab's Amritsar. The officer said that Jassi, a UK-based NRI, had come to India to supervise the drug cartel's operations in the country but was planning to escape after the arrest of four members. On Friday, he was produced before the court from where he was sent for ten days of police custody for further interrogation.

Delhi High Court seeks report from Kalkaji temple a day after electrocution death

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court (HC) has asked for a comprehensive report from Mahant Surendra Nath of the Kalkaji Temple regarding the management of the events during Navratri celebrations. This comes in light of a tragic incident in which a 17-year-old boy lost his life due to an exposed wire at Navratri celebrations.

Justice Prathiba M Singh stressed the need for improved safety measures, recalling that similar incidents have plagued previous festivities.

"Every year, we must reiterate the importance of proper management to prevent such tragedies," she remarked. Additionally, the HC highlighted ongoing issues regarding the temple's administration, noting that the court-appointed administrator has not been compensated and that there is currently no one overseeing temple operations. The Mahant, who is recognised as the 'baridar', has been instructed to provide details on the measures implemented to handle the expected crowd during the festivities. The Delhi Police have also been directed to submit a report concerning the recent fatality. The standing counsel has been tasked with filing a status update, with the next hearing scheduled for Monday. A 17-year-old boy was electrocuted and at least seven people were injured in a stampede that followed during Navratri celebrations.

Girls cycling back home from school molested by 4 bike-borne men in UP

Two Class 8 girls were harassed in broad daylight by four bike-borne men in Deoria, Uttar Pradesh, while returning home from school. The incident was captured on CCTV.



New Delhi: Two Class 8 girls were harassed in broad daylight by four bike-borne men while returning home from school in Uttar Pradesh's Deoria. The shocking act was caught on a CCTV. The girls, who were on bicycles, lost balance and fell. One of the boys then attempted to drag one of the girls towards a nearby paddy field. Terrified, the girls screamed for help. One of them managed to escape, while the other fell while trying to flee through the fields.

Hearing their cries, local residents rushed to the scene, prompting the four motorbike riders to flee. The girls were on their way home after taking an exam. The entire incident was captured by a CCTV camera installed in a nearby house.

Deoria Superintendent of Police (SP) Sankalp Sharma said, "We have received a report of two girls being harassed and followed by motorbike riders. Based on this, a case has been registered under relevant sections of the law. Five police teams have been formed, and we are reviewing the CCTV footage. The culprits will be arrested soon".

Poverty led father to 'poison' four daughters in Delhi's Rangpuri

NEW DELHI: The ongoing investigation into the suicide of a family of five in southwest Delhi's Rangpuri area revealed that Heera Lal's wife's death and subsequent financial crunch allegedly forced him to kill his four daughters before taking his own life.

Heera Lal and his daughters allegedly died by suicide at their home. The reasons were unraveled after a probe by the police. The father had been working as a carpenter in Indian Spinal Injury Centre, Vasant Kunj since 1996 earning a monthly salary of Rs 38,000. After his wife passed away in August last year, he stopped going to work. "An inquiry conducted from Indian Spinal Hospital revealed that the deceased hadn't returned to work despite receiving repeated notices, and had not borrowed any money from anyone in the past year. He was the sole earner of the house and as struggling financially," Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rohit Meena said, adding that his deceased had only a small amount in his bank account, less than Rs 250.

Information gathered from the neighbours, colleagues and family members revealed that Heera Lal was reticent and introverted. He preferred to be alone and did not engage in conversations with others. As per the officer, his colleagues viewed him as a calm, god-worshipping man. During the investigation, the police analysed Heera Lal's movement using CCTV footage. One clip showed that on September 24, at 7:15 pm, the now-deceased came from Purana Kuan and Mata Chowk side carrying blue color polythene and reached his home around 7:20 pm. In another CCTV footage, he was seen purchasing worship materials such as dhoop batti, kalawa thread, incense stick and other things from a shop namely Tiwari General Store some days before the incident.

When the police questioned the departmental store owner, he stated that Heera Lal had come to his shop on September 21 and paid him Rs 60 as pending payment.

Delhi metro services on Yellow Line to be hit on Sunday for maintenance work

The disruption will affect services until 6:40 am, with adjustments in train schedules and station closures. First trains will depart later than usual.

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Metro train services will be briefly disrupted on the Yellow Line (Samaypur Badli to Millennium City Centre Gurugram) on October 6, 2024 (Sunday) because of planned maintenance work at Vishwavidyalaya Metro Station.

The disruption will affect services until 6:40 am, with adjustments in train schedules and station closures. On Sunday morning, the first trains will depart later than usual. The first train from Vishwavidyalaya to Millennium City Centre Gurugram will leave at 6:45 am, instead of the usual 6:00 am. Similarly, the first train from Kashmere Gate to Samaypur Badli will begin its journey at 6:52 am,

instead of 6 am, according to the official X handle of DMRC. However, normal train services will continue to remain available on the



remaining major section of Yellow Line from Millennium City Centre Gurugram to Kashmere Gate and Samaypur Badli to Vishwavidyalaya stations. During the maintenance

work, the train services will be available at a frequency of 10 minutes and thereafter, a regular Sunday timetable will be followed for the rest of the day. The statement by the DMRC read, "To avoid any inconvenience to passengers during these early morning hours on October 6, announcements will also be made at the stations and inside the trains on Yellow Line about the destination of trains and respective platforms for change over during this maintenance period." According to a report, on August 20, the DMRC had set a new record with 77.48 lakh daily passenger journeys. This measure of journey or line utilisation reflects the number of corridors passengers use to reach their destinations.

Delhi govt school students to teach dropouts under Ullas programme

NEW DELHI: Students from the Delhi government schools will volunteer to teach functional literacy to people aged 15 and above who have missed out on formal education, an official said on Thursday. The programme Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram - 'Ullas' (New India Literacy Programme) aims to empower individuals by providing them with essential skills for reintegration into society, said State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Joint Director Nahar Singh. Singh said the students will first undergo training under the programme, adding the training will

cover foundational literacy and numeracy, reading and writing as well as vocational, legal and financial literacy. He highlighted that after completing their training, the students will guide illiterate individuals, offering them a chance to improve their literacy skills. "Basic knowledge of reading and writing is essential for independence," Singh said, adding many adults still rely on others to fulfil their reading and writing needs. He said this initiative will help boost the students' knowledge, enhance their social skills and cultivate a spirit of service. To facilitate the programme,



the Delhi government plans to set up camps throughout the national capital. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has developed a variety of academic

resources, including curriculum materials, teaching-learning resources and sample papers. Singh further said many individuals drop out of education midway to support their families and this programme provides them with a second chance to restart their educational journey. The initiative will utilize hybrid volunteerism, with training sessions, orientations and workshops offered both face-to-face and online. All teaching materials and resources will be made accessible digitally to registered learners and volunteer teachers, he added.

Delhi villagers to launch indefinite protest at Jantar Mantar to highlight civic woes

Overflowing drains and unsanitary conditions have made life increasingly difficult for the rural population.

NEW DELHI: The national capital villagers are set to launch an indefinite sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar starting October 6 against the lack of basic facilities in the villages, where residents face deteriorating living conditions, Chaudhary Surender Solanki, head of Palam 360 which represents Delhi's rural communities, announced on Friday. Solanki said that the city's villages are suffering from severe civic issues, including waterlogged streets, broken roads, inadequate sewage systems, and poor garbage disposal. Overflowing drains and unsanitary conditions have made life increasingly difficult for the rural population. Addressing a press conference here, he underscored that despite numerous long-standing concerns, the problems of the villages remain unresolved, leaving residents with no choice but to live in compromised conditions. "The movement to address the problems of Delhi's rural belt will continue until all our



issues are fully resolved," Solanki stated. He described the villages as areas that have become "neither urban nor rural," comparing them to slums due to the lack of proper development and infrastructure. While the villagers had earlier expressed gratitude to Delhi Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena for accepting two of their demands - reopening the mutation process and lifting restrictions on electricity meter installations - Solanki said the remaining issues are

critical and require immediate attention. The list of unresolved demands includes ownership rights for poor farmers under Section 74/4, alternative plots for those whose lands have been acquired, and ownership rights for ancestral properties under the Swamitva Scheme without stamp duty. Villagers are also calling for the development of their areas into "smart villages" as part of the 2041 Master Plan and amendments to the land pooling policy. Additionally, they seek the repeal of Sections 81 and 33, the withdrawal of legal cases under Section 81, and a halt to sealing and demolition drives by the MCD. Solanki clarified that the protest is not aimed at any political party but is focused on holding accountable those who neglect the problems of Delhi's rural areas. The indefinite protest follows a Mahapanchayat held on September 15, where villagers vowed to act if their remaining issues were not resolved.



Recipe: Mutton stew

When raindrops are falling pitter-patter and you are in a mood for something really nourishing and hot, nothing can beat the aroma and taste of home-made mutton stew. And just in case, you think it takes hours to make this delicious stew, you couldn't be more wrong! It's a simple dish and even an amateur cook can make it.



Ingredients:
 Fresh mutton: 1 kg.
 Coarsely chopped onions: 4
 Finely chopped garlic: 1 tablespoon
 Badi elaichi: 2
 Cinnamon stick: 2
 Peppercorns: 8 - 10
 Bay leaves: 2-3
 Ghee: Two tablespoons
 Salt: To taste
Method:
 Wash the mutton and put it in a pressure cooker, along with all

the ingredients (except ghee). Add one and a half glass of water, put the lid and pressure cook on slow flame for 12 minutes. Close the gas and open the cooker when it cools down. Check if the mutton is done and the onions have turned into thick paste, clinging to the meat with gay abundance. If there is extra water left, let it evaporate on slow flame. Add desi ghee just before serving and enjoy the exotic aroma and amazing taste.

Preparation time: 30 mins
 Cooking time: 45 mins
 Marinade mutton in spices overnight
Ingredients
 Mutton: 1kg
 Basmati rice: 500gm
 Cumin (jeera): 1 tsp
 Whole garam masala: 2 tsp
 Garam masala powder: 2 tsp
 Boiled egg for decoration (optional): 2
 Rose water (optional): 1 tbsp
 Garlic-ginger paste: 2 tbsp
 Golden-fried sliced onions: 2 cups
 Mint leaves: 1 bunch
 Curd: 2 cups
 Cashew nuts (optional): 50gm
 Turmeric powder: 1 pinch
 Saffron: 1 pinch
 Coriander leaves: 1 bunch
 Salt: As per taste
 Kashmiri red chilli powder: 1 tsp
 Oil: 5 tbsp
Procedure:
 The Marinade -- Wash mutton (I prefer the raan or hind leg of a goat, for biryani). Pat dry and add garam masala, salt, ginger-garlic paste, red chilli paste, and two cups of curd. Put it in a clean film pastic bag and keep it in the refrigerator to marinade overnight.

Directions:
 -First boil the water, add oil, salt and half-cook the rice.
 -Next fry thinly sliced onions until golden brown. Add 1/3 of the golden-brown onion to the mutton marination and rest keep aside.
 -Now in a handi (deep pan) add the marinated mutton in the bottom and top it of with half cooked rice, add mint leaves, coriander leaves and top it up fried onions. In a separate bowl, add some

Recipe: Hyderabad mutton Biryani

A legend from the kitchens of the Nizam of Hyderabad, the kachche gosht ki biryani, also known as the Hyderabad mutton biryani or is a spicy, fragrant and colourful variant of biryani in India. The traditional style of making the biryani by cooking the raw meat with spices for couple of minutes and then covered with rice and kept on dum until done.



warm milk to soak saffron. Once the milk soaks the colour of the saffron, add it to the handi.
 -Cover the handi or pan with a airtight lid or add sticky dough to the edges and cover it with a lid. Cook for 45 min.
 -Add rose water and garnish with sliced boiled eggs.
 -Serve hot with raita and mirchi ka salan.



Parvathy Omanakuttan's Chicken Biryani

My earliest memory of food: The way my mother used to feed me as a toddler. The stories and excuses she would make to ensure I finished the meal!

My favourite recipe: Chicken biryani made by my mom.

I love cooking: But I don't know if I could cook 3-4 times a day, like my mother. Cooking to me is therapy. But I guess it's very different when one has to cook daily.

When I have the kitchen to myself, I like to cook: Oats and eggs.

Special meals I prepared for my loved ones: I cooked a proper Kerala meal for my dad when my mom was away. The last time I cooked was a few weeks ago, when my friends came over to my place. I made pomfret fry and prawn curry, Kerala style.

Men who cook are irresistible: I would love my man to cook and surprise me from time to time! Cooking together could also be a lot of fun.

On shoots, I prefer eating healthy and homemade food: I stay away from oily, spicy and hotel food. If I have to order, I go for fruits, dal and rice.

Best meal I have eaten till date: The food at Golden Dragon, Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, is out of the world. I



am yet to eat Chinese as good as that.

Chicken Biryani
INGREDIENTS: Basmati rice: 2 cups, Chicken pieces: 34 kg, Milk: 12 cup, Yogurt: 1 cup, Onion (sliced): 3, Ginger paste: 1 tsp, Garlic paste: 12 tsp, Green chilli paste: 1 tsp, Tomato puree: 12 cup, Red chilli powder: 2 tsp, Turmeric powder: 1 tsp, Roasted cumin powder: 1 tsp, Garam masala powder: 2 tsp, Green cardamom powder: 12 tsp, Coriander powder: 1 tsp, Coriander leaves: 2 tsp, Oil: 7 tbsp, A pinch of saffron, Salt to taste.
METHOD: Mix tomato puree, yogurt, ginger garlic paste, green chilli paste, red

chilli powder, turmeric powder, roasted cumin powder, garam masala, coriander powder and salt. Mix well. Marinate the chicken pieces in this mixture and keep aside for a few hours. In a pan, heat oil and fry the onions until golden brown. Add the marinated chicken and cook for 15 minutes. In a pressure cooker, add 4 cups of water to the rice. Mix saffron in milk and add to it. Add cardamom powder and the chicken pieces. Pressure cook the rice. Mix gently. Garnish with green coriander leaves and serve hot.

Recipe: Kesar Milk Badam

In its hot and cold avatar, Milk Badam can leave you rejuvenated in any season. And a dash of kesar (saffron) will add to your craving. Here's how you can make it all by yourself.



Ingredients:
 100 grams of almond
 50 grams of pista
 1 litre milk
 Sugar (as per taste)
 Powdered cardamom

Pinch of saffron (kesar)
 5 rose petals
 1 table spoon of cream
How to prepare it:
 - First boil the milk for sometime and let it get thick.
 - Along with it, grind the almonds and pistas. When it's powdered, add cream to it to prepare a paste. Remember soaking almonds for sometime as it's important that they get soft.
 - Now add sugar, powdered cardamom and rose petals. The paste has to be blended well.
 - Now, take the heated milk and mix the stuff in it. Churn it for some time.
 - Those looking to down it hot can simply go ahead, whereas those preferring cold can refrigerate it for some time.
 - Sprinkle saffron over it.

Restaurant Review: Yum Yum Cha

So soon on the heels of Tian at ITC Maurya, it seems that modern Southeast Asian has become a trend.

Decor

It is the tiniest little eatery in this - or any other - mall but so cleverly has the theme been executed and so intelligent the planning of the facilities that all you notice are the bright colours and playfulness of the mainly Japanese theme. Origami is the theme of the eatery, executed in paper-like metal brightly painted. It is on the ceiling in a collage, on the shelves in charming accessories, even on staff uniforms and napkins as embroidered motifs. The best part about Yum Yum Cha is the food and kudos to Varun Tuli to have managed the feat of making a one-of-a-kind menu and executing it to perfection in a diminutive kitchen.



Food
 Order at least one basket of dim sum, because from the paper-thin wrappers to the fresh fillings with satisfying textures, they are miniature masterpieces. Prawn & curry (285 for 4 pieces) features crunchy prawn bits contrasted with a teaspoon of a fragrant gravy. Unusual and brilliant. Nigiri sushi (885 for 8 pieces) is served on a miniature tree, a delightful touch. While most of the nigiri and maki is traditional, the hotate mentoyaki (385) has never been done before in Delhi: a slice of scallop, topped by cod roe and glazed with mayo. However, it is the seafood salad (485) that is the most brilliantly presented dish in the restaurant. It

looks like a giant futomaki, complete with a smear of flying fish roe on top. Made of a million flakes of crab, tuna and scallop, it is tasty, rich and subtle all at once. The nabe, called paper hot pot on the menu is a must have, if only for the sheer novelty value. Paper 'cups' are set atop a spirit lamp and brought to your table filled with soup and the ingredients of your choice, while noodles are served separately. Delightful even for a finicky child and deliciously spicy to please every palate, do not miss this section.
Plus and minus
 They don't believe in saying no, whether you ask for half portions or customisation. Be prepared for lightning-quick service as they are under pressure to turn the tables rapidly because of the waiting crowds.

Restaurant Review: The Square (Global)

DECOR

Novotel's The Square is grandly spacious. Standardized interiors, themed around red, brown, wood and marble, give the guests from across the globe a feeling of coming home. A small curved alcove holds treasures like salads and desserts, while a live counter has expert chefs dish up the different cuisines. The place is brightly lit and is beside the pool.

FOOD

Food wise, a lot of effort has gone into keeping things authentic and at the same time using locally sourced ingredients. The buffet spread is

impressive, and one can stop counting after the 20-mark. Playing it safe, we begin our meal with the mezze platter. It is colourful, and has some wellput-together tastes and textures. We loved the Lebanese Za'atar bread. It was soft, and easy to eat. Opting for Indian food, we sample the tan doori aloo chatpate. The salt reaches the core and it is well-cooked. Before getting into the main meal, we try the som sam Thai from Asian section of the menu. The grated raw papaya which was made tangy had that spicy crunch with chilli and peanuts. The flavours of the

tom yum soup were all there, but the prawn was a little overdone. For mains, we stuck to Indian, going with the melt-in-the-mouth Nihari gosht made by Chef Asif who belongs to the famous Imtiaz Qureshi family. He also serves a mean Awadhi dum biryani and dum ka murgh. The subz nargisi pulao is vegetarian and comes with its accompaniments. We end the meal with black sticky rice pudding. Thankfully it is not too sweet and carries the right balance of flavours. One could alternatively opt for a gooey hot chocolate pudding, which has the right balance of sweet and chocolate.

IndiGo system slowdown: Long queues at airports



NEW DELHI. IndiGo passengers are facing long waiting at airports for check-ins and baggage drops on Saturday as India's biggest airline (by domestic market share) is facing a network-wide system outage. "We are currently experiencing a temporary system slowdown across our network, affecting our website and booking system. As a result, customers may face increased wait times, including slower check-ins and longer queues at the airport. Our airport team is available and fully dedicated to assisting everyone and ensuring a smooth journey. Be assured, we are working diligently to restore stability and normalcy as quickly as possible."

PM Internship Scheme: 50 more companies join the initiative

NEW DELHI. The government's PM Internship Portal has seen a remarkable uptick in internship listings, with over 2,200 opportunities currently available as of 3 pm on Friday, sources aware of the development confirmed. This follows the onboarding of 50 new companies, in addition to 111 that joined on Thursday.

Prominent firms such as Britannia, HDFC Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Max Life Insurance, and Alembic Pharma have already onboarded the PM Internship Scheme via the online portal solely dedicated for this initiative. PwC and Godrej are exploring the PM internship scheme for their participation. Additionally, as per sources, state-owned Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) plans



to onboard 977 interns across various trades in its plants, while Jindal Steel & Power (JSPL) is set to register for the scheme, aiming to enrol nearly 500 interns. Public sector banks are also in the process of joining the initiative, further expanding the scope of available internship opportunities. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has developed the online portal, which is slated to open for candidates on October 12.

Telcos asked to act against spammers

NEW DELHI. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Friday issued a warning to telecom service providers, urging them to step up their efforts against spammers.

The telecom sector regulator noted that following its directive, telcos have blacklisted over 680 entities involved in spamming activities, and 1.8 million numbers associated with such practices have been disconnected. "TRAI has issued strict instructions to service providers to act swiftly against spammers. As a result, service providers black-listed more than 680 entities and disconnected 18 lakh numbers during the last one and half month," said TRAI on a social media post X. Last week, to address the misuse of URLs in messages, the telecom regulator issued a directive, instructing all telecom carriers to block any traffic containing URLs, APKs (Android Package Kits), or OTT (Over-The-Top) links that have not been whitelisted. This directive is set to be implemented by October 1, 2024. Before the regulatory body enforced the new rule, previously, links in SMS messages could lead to unknown sources, posing threats of financial loss or privacy breaches. Under the new rules, any link received via SMS will be from a verified source, enhancing user security.

Crude rises as investors see retaliation from Israel

NEW DELHI. India will nearly double per capita income in the next five years and will see steepest rise in living standards for its citizens, along with reduced inequality on account of the reforms undertaken by govt, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday.

"While it took us 75 years to reach a per capita income of \$2,730, as per IMF projections, it will take only five years to add another \$2,000. The upcoming decades will see the steepest rise in living standards for the common man, truly making it a period-defining era for an Indian to live in," she said at the Kautilya Economic Conclave. She said India can also gain from the dynamic geopolitical situation, which are seeing a reorientation of the global supply chain. "India also finds itself amid a global geopolitical re-positioning. This re-positioning can act as a structural force to India's advantage by creating robust supply chains with countries with strategic congruence. India benefits from the new international order, which is reshaping better to reflect the power distribution of today's world."

FM said that India's young population, strong growth in consumption, the innovation boom and a strong financial system will help India grow faster. Sitharaman also flagged the challenges confronting India, including the geopolitical risks in a "fragmented and fractured world where several persistent conflicts may worsen".

Sitharaman also flagged the challenges confronting India, including the geopolitical risks in a "fragmented and fractured world where several persistent conflicts may worsen".

Travelling behind the curve: Despite the outbound rush, why India's foreign tourist arrivals are yet to touch pre-Covid levels

New Delhi The post-pandemic surge in international travel is a nearly global phenomenon and the story is not too different when it comes to Indians travelling overseas, with outbound Indian travellers' numbers having exceeded the pre-Covid levels. The picture, however, is not as exciting when it comes to foreign travellers visiting India. In what continues to be a cause of concern for the country's tourism industry, foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) are yet to catch up with the pre-pandemic levels. In the first half of 2024, 47.78 lakh foreign tourists visited India, 9.1 per cent higher on the year, but 9.8 per cent lower than the corresponding period of 2019, which was the last full year before the Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic, per data from the Ministry of Tourism. India has evidently lost some of its sheen even as the world is witnessing a period of the so-called 'revenge travel' after the pandemic.

In contrast, Indian nationals' departures from the country in the six months ended June rose 12.3 per cent over the corresponding period of 2019 to 1.50 crore. On a year-on-year basis, the

departures were higher by 13.7 per cent. India's official tourism statistics are released with a lag and June 2024 is the last month for which the data is publicly available. Industry watchers attribute the divergence in trend between foreign tourist arrivals into India and Indians travelling overseas to a combination of reasons, which include subdued tourist footfalls from Bangladesh and China. While Bangladesh, which accounts for the highest number of FTAs into India, has been grappling with a financial crisis that has seemingly impacted travel demand there, absence of direct flights between India and China has evidently dented the number of Chinese nationals travelling to India.

Also Read | Indians spend 3.5 times more on foreign travel than they did 5 years ago
The other major factor that appears to be at play is other countries in Asia attracting more travellers with easy visa regimes and more value-for-money propositions for tourists. These include some emerging destinations—particularly in Central Asia and Eurasia—that are rapidly growing as international tourism destinations.



Festive offer

"Countries such as Qatar, Dubai, Vietnam and Sri Lanka are drawing tourists with more affordable options and favourable visa policies. These destinations have exceeded their pre-Covid levels, with FTAs in Qatar up 47%, Dubai 11%, Vietnam 4% and Sri Lanka 0.2% in the first half of the current calendar," CRISIL Market Intelligence and Analytics said in a recent note. It added that aggressive campaigns by emerging destinations such as Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan are competing for tourist spends.

In fact, the number of Indians travelling to such destinations has also shot up significantly in the post-pandemic period.

This trend itself lends credence to the argument that the growth being charted by these geographies in terms of international tourist interest has likely hurt foreign tourist arrivals in India. Besides simple visa rules and easy connectivity, most of these emerging destinations have an added allure: they cost nearly as much or only moderately higher than a holiday at a popular domestic destination. And Indian airlines are taking notice, increasing the number of routes as well as frequency of flights.

In July, the Indian Express had reported a surge in the number of Indians travelling to Silk Road countries such as Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia, and Southeast Asia's latest tourism hotspot, Vietnam. Before the pandemic, these destinations largely attracted more discerning travellers from India. But now, with a combination of enhanced direct flight connectivity, swift and hassle-free visa regimes, and relatively more affordable prices than the conventional tourist destinations.

Forex reserves hit all-time high of 704.89 billion

With this, the RBI has amassed a whopping \$113 billion to the reserves in the 12 months period ending September 27.



central bank more potential firepower to influence the rupee," BofA said in a note earlier in the day, adding the monetary authority "seems relaxed about holding larger forex reserves, owing to its desire to build buffers against contingent external risks."

India has the world's fourth-biggest foreign reserves as rising overseas inflows into the nation's stocks and bonds have helped the Reserve Bank boost its stockpile to a record high.

The amount provides stability to the rupee against external shocks, with the RBI using its reserves to limit extreme swings in the currency hovering near a record low, BofA said.

According to the weekly statistical supplement released by the RBI, foreign currency assets were up by \$10.4 billion to \$616 billion. Expressed in dollar terms, foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

MUMBAI. The country's forex reserves hit all-time high of \$704.89 billion, up a whopping \$12.5 billion in the week to September 27, the Reserve Bank said on Friday, something that can assuage a fraught market following the heightened tension in the Middle East. With this, the RBI has amassed a whopping \$113 billion to the reserves in the 12 months period ending September 27. The \$12.5 billion accretion is the largest weekly addition so far. In comparison, this is nearly three times the GDP of Pakistan and makes it the world's fourth largest. The

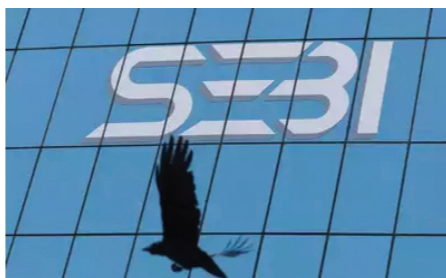
massive rise in reserves was led by a surge in foreign currency assets and gold reserves, while Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) increased and the IMF reserve position saw a slight dip. The RBI continues to intervene to manage market stability. In the previous reporting week the reserves stood at \$692.3 billion.

The massive jump has Wall Street brokerage Bank of America Securities forecasting the reserves to touch \$750 billion by March 2026. "The foreign exchange reserves will likely rise to \$745 billion by March 2026, giving the

NSE, ex-MD settle case with Sebi for Rs 643 crore

MUMBAI. NSE and nine of its former senior executives, including earlier MD Vikram Limaye, have settled a case with Sebi over allegations that brokers bypassed a trading access point to enable faster trades for Rs 643 crore. This is the largest settlement order in Sebi's 36-year history. In addition to the settlement amount, eight officials have been asked to perform at least 14 days of pro bono community service.

Sebi has been investigating NSE's trading access point (TAP) architecture and network connectivity for nearly a decade. The probe focused on whether trading members bypassed TAP, the handling of a 2013 complaint, and whether NSE's lapses led to securities law violations. According to the order, NSE, on behalf of the applicants, remitted the settlement amount on Sept 25, 2024. The former executives



involved include NSE's ex-chief technical officer Umesh Jain, GM Shenoy, chief information security officer Narayan Neelakantan, chief regulatory officer V R Narasimhan, head of regulatory affairs Kamala K, VP of the business solutions group Nilesh Tinaikar, former senior VP of operations Mayur Sindhaw, and former key employee R Nandakumar. Shenoy has been excluded from the community service order. The key

charge was that NSE failed to take adequate measures to prevent trading members from bypassing TAP. The complaint and TAP deficiencies were not reported to NSE's Standing Committee on Technology, even after Sebi's 2015 circular on cybersecurity. Additional allegations included delays in appointing a chief information security officer, failure to implement encryption in TAP, and the omission of the chief technology officer as key management personnel, potentially violating Sebi's circular.

TAP was an IT system deployed by NSE on trading members' servers to manage connections and trades. Despite the introduction of alternatives like 'Trimmed TAP' in 2013 and 'Direct Connect' in 2016, TAP remained in use until 2019 for equity and 2020 for securities lending and borrowing.

Markets record biggest weekly fall since June 2022; investors lose Rs 17 lakh crore

After selling shares worth Rs 15,243 crore on Thursday, the highest in a single session in four years, the FIIs sold another Rs 9,896.95 crore worth on Friday

NEW DELHI. Indian equity markets registered their biggest weekly decline this week in more than two years (since June 2022) as foreign institutional investors (FIIs) pressed the selling button to bet on China and Hong Kong amid rising tension in the Middle East which is posing inflationary challenges to the global economy following a sharp surge in oil prices. The big correction has resulted in the benchmarks—BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty50—shedding up to 4.5% during the week ending October 4. It was in the week between June 6 and 10, 2022 when the benchmarks had registered a bigger fall as Nifty50 had then declined by about 5.6%. Investors lost a whopping Rs 17 lakh crore this week as the combined market capitalisation of BSE-

listed companies, which stood at Rs 478 lakh crore as of closing last Friday, came down to Rs 461 lakh crore this Friday.

The local indices ended lower for the fifth straight session on Friday with Nifty briefly falling below the 25,000 level intraday. At close, the Sensex was down 808.65 points or 0.98% at 81,688.45, and the Nifty was down 200.30 points or 0.79% at 25,049.80.

After selling shares worth Rs 15,243 crore on Thursday, the highest in a single session in four years, the FIIs sold another Rs 9,896.95 crore worth of shares on Friday, taking the last four sessions combined selling to about Rs 40,000 crore. Chinese stimulus a magnet for FIIs "FIIs are moving money from expensive India to cheap Hong Kong on expectations that the monetary and fiscal stimulus being implemented by the Chinese authorities will stimulate the Chinese economy and improve earnings of Chinese companies. It remains to be seen how this Chinese recovery hopes play out," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. The Hang Seng index has risen more than 30% in the last one month while the Shanghai Composite Index has



jumped more than 20% in just 5 sessions. Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking, said that the ongoing geopolitical tensions have driven crude prices higher, dampening hopes for a rate cut by the RBI in the upcoming policy meeting. "Additionally, noticeable selling by foreign investors is adding to the market's strain. While there may be a pause or slight rebound after the recent slide, the overall bias will remain negative unless Nifty decisively reclaims the 25,600 level," added Mishra. Crude prices have risen by \$7 per barrel in the past 7 days during which Israel bombed a bunker in Beirut and killed Hezbollah supreme Hassan Nasrallah and Iran

retaliated against Israel by launching a missile attack. Experts fear that if the two regional powers in Western Asia continue to attack each other, oil prices may surge even higher.

What lies ahead

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, expects markets to consolidate next week amid cautiousness due to fear of increasing tensions in West Asia. "With the start of the earning season next week, stock-specific action will continue. Also, the focus will remain on interest-sensitive stocks amid the RBI policy meeting next week. Although rate cut is not on the table, commentary will hold great importance," added Khemka.

Real estate stocks were the most affected lot this week with the Nifty Realty index plunging nearly 8.7% this week. Nifty Financial Services fell 6.2% while Nifty Auto declined 5.7%. About 42 stocks in the Nifty 50 pack fell this week.

Index heavyweights - Reliance Industries—fell about 9% while HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank plunged about 5% each.

NEWS BOX

Hockey India League 2.0: A glorious return after 7 years with a historic first for women

New Delhi. In 2017, hockey fans in India were given a big jolt when Hockey India decided to shut down the Hockey India League. The competition, which certainly had its inspiration from the famous Indian Premier League, started in 2013 and captured the imagination of the fans. The Indian team stars were rubbing shoulders with some of the big names in hockey as they put aside their national rivalries for some time and came together with the goal of winning the HIL title. However, things will come to a halt in 2017 for different reasons. While the hockey calendar was considered to be the main factor for HIL going on a hiatus. The arrival of the Hockey Pro League was another factor but the financial constraints for franchises, according to reports, also played a role in the league going away from the fans. But now, HIL is back in a new and improved avatar. And this time, the women's stars will also be back on the turf.

The revamped league was rolled out to the fans on October 4, Friday. The eye-catching news



was the introduction of the Women's HIL, which will be simultaneously with the men's edition. There are going to be 8 teams in the men's one and 6 in the women's edition, meaning that the action is going to be scintillating. Apart from this, the focus on developing young talent will see each team have 4 U-21 players in their squad of 24. There will be 16 Indian players in each team and 8 foreigners. But the biggest factor we could see when the announcement was made the amount of groundwork which has been done by Hockey India before they decided to bring back the league from dead.

Learning from the mistakes of the past

While the announcement was being made a proud Dilip Tirkey, Hockey India president and Bhola Nath Singh, Secretary General, revealed how they went to the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and blocked in a window for the league. FIH would grant the wish and gave them the window from December 28 to February 5 for the next 10 years. Apart from this, they have also decided to have just 2 cities to host both leagues for now.

India would like to forget T20 World Cup match vs New Zealand: Jemimah Rodrigues

New Delhi. India batter Jemimah Rodrigues said that the team would like to forget their Women's T20 World Cup 2024 opener against New Zealand. India fell to a shock loss against New Zealand, who had lost 10 games in a row before this. The Harmanpreet Kaur side failed to chase down 161 runs on Friday, October 4, and were bowled out for just 102 runs in Dubai.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Jemimah said that India needed to pick themselves up quickly and show the character that this team had. After losing to NZ, India have an uphill task of beating Australia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, if they are to qualify for the semi-finals of the tournament. "Today would be the game we'd like to forget. This is a World Cup and we need to keep moving on and picking ourselves up - we can't say stuck on this



game. We need to pick ourselves up and show the character of this team," Rodrigues said in India's post-match press conference. Women's T20 World Cup, IND vs NZ: Match Report

"Going forward I think we need to have the right approach because the tournament's not over. We need to take some positives from this game and a lot of learnings from this game," she further added. On the day, none of India's batters showed up against New Zealand. Jemimah was not happy with her performance as well and stated that it was her responsibility to handle the innings after India had lost Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma and Harmanpreet Kaur for just 42 runs inside the powerplay.

"I know with my game I'm ready to bat anywhere the team wants me. Today, because I was batting well, I had some form in the warm-up games, it was my responsibility to make sure we built a partnership after losing wickets," Jemimah said.

India will bounce back: Fielding coach Munish Bali lifts spirits after tough loss

India lost to New Zealand by 58 runs in their opening match of T20 World Cup
Fielding coach Munish Bali tried to lift the mood in the dressing room
India were bowled out for 102 in Dubai

New Delhi. Fielding coach Munish Bali tried to lift the morale in the Indian dressing room after the former finalists slumped to a big loss in their first match of the Women's T20 World Cup to New Zealand in Dubai on Friday, October 4. India were comfortably outplayed by 58 runs as their hopes of reaching the semi-final from a tough group took a huge blow. Munish Bali kept the mood in the dressing room light while presenting the fielding medal, which has become a customary event for Indian men's and women's teams at major tournaments. After presenting the medal to Jemimah Rodrigues for her electric presence on the field, Munish



said he is confident of India bouncing back like how they buckled up after a few fielding lapses early in the innings. India dropped New Zealand opener Suzie Bates when wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh failed to collect a simple catch in the sixth over. However, they buckled up and saved a handful of runs on the field. Jemimah Rodrigues, Smriti Mandhana, Pooja Vastrakar and Shreyanka Patil guarded the boundary rope well, diving across the field to save crucial runs for the team. "Tough luck girls, I know it was not an ideal start, it's not the start that we wanted.

We will bounce back. The way we fielded, if we erase the sixth over, where we did two errors, after that, we came back into the match. Well done!" he said. "Smriti Mandhana and Shreyanka Patil, excellent catch. Pooja Vastrakar, excellent efforts, fielding around and diving. Three brilliant saves in the boundary. Like how we bounced back in fielding, let's bounce back in the next game," he added. Despite India's fielding brilliance, New Zealand posted a daunting total of 160 on the board after captain Sophie Devine smashed a 37-ball 56. In response,

India's batting lineup struggled to cope with the New Zealand pace attack. The Indian innings was derailed early by spinner Eden Carson, who removed both openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana. This double blow set the stage for a challenging chase, which was further complicated when Harmanpreet Kaur, batting at number three for the first time in 18 months, fell for a 14-ball 15 inside the powerplay. The loss of these key wickets left India reeling, and despite some resistance, they were eventually bowled out for 102 in 19 overs.

The New Zealand bowlers were instrumental in securing the victory, with Rosemary Mair being the standout performer. Mair picked up four wickets for 19 runs, while Lea Tahuu took three wickets for 15 runs. Carson's early double strike also played a crucial role in stifling India's chase.

India's decision to go in with a batter short also seemed to backfire, as they lost six wickets for just 60 runs, highlighting the depth and balance issues in their batting lineup. The likes of Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma, who were expected to make significant contributions, were unable to stabilise the innings against the relentless New Zealand bowling attack.

Temba Bavuma proud of team's mature performance after 174-run win vs Ireland

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma was proud of his team's clinical and mature performance in the 2nd ODI match vs Ireland.
South Africa beat Ireland by 174 runs, courtesy of Tristan Stubbs incredible hundred.



New Delhi. South Africa captain Temba Bavuma was proud of his team's maturity after 174-run win against Ireland. South Africa took an unassailable lead in the 3-match ODI series with a strong batting performance led by Tristan Stubbs in Abu Dhabi on Friday, October 4. Speaking after the match, Bavuma lauded Stubbs and Kyle Verreynne for finishing off the match well and said that these kinds of series will help South Africa make their playing pool deeper. "It was very mature and clinical (the

performance) and it was a big improvement from the first game and the kind of performance we would like to see. We spoke about the first 10 overs and swing and obviously with Stubbs and Verreynne taking it deep and then a nice finish towards the end. On all fronts, the guys have put up their hand and showed that they can do the job and that is what you want in a team. Want to have depth and it also puts pressure on the incoming guys as well," Bavuma said after the 2nd ODI. Tristan Stubbs scored an unbeaten career-best 112 from 81 balls as South Africa thumped Ireland by 174 runs to clinch their three-game One Day

International series with a game to spare in a hot and humid Abu Dhabi on Friday. After electing to bat, South Africa posted 343 for four in their 50 overs, propelled by Stubbs' maiden ODI century and 67 from 64 balls by Kyle Verreynne as the pair put on 103 for the third wicket. South Africa have a concern over captain Temba Bavuma, who retired hurt following a fluent 35 with a soft tissue injury in his arm, making him a doubt for the two-Test away tour of Bangladesh that starts on October 21. Ireland could not lay a platform from which to build in their reply and were bowled out for 169, some respectability brought to the score by a 52-run last wicket stand between Graham Hume (21) and number 11 Craig Young (29 not out), who now has the highest score in this series for Ireland. Seamer Lizaad Williams took three early wickets and finished with figures of 3-36, the pick of the South African bowlers for the second game in a row. South Africa have rested several of their regular players for the series.

Haryana Election: Manu Bhaker votes for first time, sends powerful message to youth

Paris Olympics double medallist Manu Bhaker cast her vote for the first time in the ongoing Haryana elections. Bhaker sent a powerful message to the youth urging them to vote for the future of the country.



New Delhi. Paris Olympics double medallist Manu Bhaker voted for the first time on Saturday, October 4. The 22-year-old Bhaker, who is currently on a break from sports, voted in the Haryana assembly elections. After casting her vote, Bhaker sent out a strong message to the youth of the country, asking them to do their duty and make sure that they play an active part in choosing the leaders of the country. Bhaker, who is currently on a break after bronze medal wins in Paris Olympics, said that

small steps led to big goals and it was important for the country's youth to vote for their favourable leaders, who they felt could bring a change. "I think it is our responsibility being the youth of the country that we vote. Whoever according to you is the best candidate, is the best leader, you should go vote for them. Our small steps lead to big goals and the development is in our hands, because our chosen leaders will only fulfil our dreams," Manu Bhaker told

ANI in an interview. "This is the first time that I voted. I was quite excited and I am glad I've gotten that out of the way now," she further added. While she is away from shooting Manu Bhaker has been active in her social duties as the youth of the country. Bhaker recently hit back at social media trolls with a scathing post on X on September 25. Bhaker slammed the trolls who criticised her for wearing her Olympic medals in every promotional event that she went to. Despite the abuse and mockery, Bhaker had opted to remain quiet this long, but finally broke her silence via her social media account, stating that she wore those medals with pride and it was a way of sharing her journey with her fellow Indians. The two bronze medals I won at the Paris 2024 Olympics belong to India. Whenever I am invited for any event and asked to show these medals.



agreed that the Indian youngster was always funny. BGT 2018-19: Best Sledging Moments In the same video, Pant clarified that he never sledges with a particular purpose but does it because he enjoys it. He also revealed that during the team's meeting with the Australian Prime Minister, even the PM recognised him, saying, "You're the one who sledges." One of Pant's famous sledges came in the 2018-19 BGT, when he took on then-Australia captain Tim Paine and mocked him by calling him the 'temporary captain'. "We have got a special guest here. Have you heard the word temporary captain ever? You [Jadeja] don't need anything to get him out. Come on lads. He loves to talk, that's the only thing he can do. Only talking talking," Pant sledged from behind the stumps which was picked up by the stump mic.

A New Goal: PR Sreejesh times his transition from player to mentor perfectly

Noida. After a storied career guarding India's goalpost, PR Sreejesh has officially stepped into a new role. No longer clad in the goalkeeper's gear that became his second skin for over 15 years, Sreejesh has swapped the action-packed turf for the sidelines, taking on the role of Director and Mentor for the Delhi SG Pipers, one of the franchises in the newly-revived Hockey India League (HIL), starting December 28. For someone who spent years donning the pads and helmet with unwavering commitment, this transition marks a significant shift. But for Sreejesh, the move was a natural evolution—one that he had been preparing for long before his retirement. "It's not a preparation of one-and-a-half months; it's a preparation of the last few years," he told IndiaToday.in. "Coming out of the system is tough. Getting out of the player's mentality is really tough." Hockey India League 2.0: All you need to know The decision to leave behind his playing days didn't come easily, but it was carefully timed. Fresh off the high of securing his second Olympic medal with

the Indian men's team at the Paris 2024 Games, Sreejesh had the option to continue competing. Yet, he chose to walk away when the world was still applauding his brilliance. Somewhere in my mind, I wanted to play one or two more seasons of the Hockey India League. But I wanted people to remember me finishing on the top note. Paris was the best," he said.

Sreejesh's retirement, and his decision to not participate in the HIL player auction, signalled that the curtain had closed on one phase of his career—but it also opened the door to an exciting new opportunity.

'I NEEDED TO MOVE ON'

The return of the HIL after a seven-year hiatus had tempted Sreejesh to lace up his boots once more. Initially, he had even signed up for the player auction, before reconsidering and pulling out. "After consulting with everyone—my coaches, my well-wishers, my family - we all came to the conclusion that I had my best time in Paris and I needed to move on," Sreejesh explained. It was at that crucial moment that tennis



legend Mahesh Bhupathi, CEO of the SG Pipers group that owns the Delhi franchise, stepped in. Bhupathi's approach couldn't have been better timed. "At the right time, Mahesh bhai approached me with this offer. He said the right things, and I was convinced that this is the right platform," Sreejesh recalled, his excitement for the new role evident. "I think HIL is the right platform for me to test myself and mature into a different

challenge. I am looking forward to it, let's see where it goes in the next three years."

AMATCH MADE IN SPORTSMANSHIP

Working with Bhupathi, another athlete who understands the pressures and demands of elite sport, was part of the reason Sreejesh was drawn to the Delhi SG Pipers.

Bhupathi himself echoed that sentiment, revealing that their shared background as top-level athletes helped build mutual trust. "I think we are both athletes; that definitely played a big part in it," Bhupathi said. "I gave him comfort on our vision. I think it fits right in with what he wanted to do in his second innings as well." Sreejesh had reportedly received offers from several franchises, but Delhi felt like the right fit. "Everyone wants experts," he said, referring to the wave of interest from other teams. "Initially, I declined all the offers because I thought I was going to play the Hockey India League. Then, when I made the decision [to retire], Mahesh bhai was there right in front of me. It was easy for me to work with another sportsperson."

Alpha, the first female-led film in Yash Raj Films' Spy Universe, will be released on December 25, 2025.



Alia Bhatt

And Sharvari Wagh's Spy Thriller Alpha Gets A Release Date



Yash Raj Films has officially revealed the release date for Alpha, the much-anticipated action entertainer led by Alia Bhatt and Sharvari Wagh. Alpha will mark the first female-led film in the YRF Spy Universe. The film is scheduled to hit theatres on December 25, 2025. YRF's official social media channels shared the news along with a striking poster. "On Christmas 2025, #ALPHA will rise! Get ready for an action-packed holiday... 25th Dec, 2025," Yash Raj Films wrote. Alia Bhatt and Sharvari Wagh will portray super agents in the action-packed thriller film. Reportedly, joining them will be Bobby Deol as the main antagonist and Anil Kapoor. Hrithik Roshan is also expected to make a cameo. Directed by Shiv Rawail, Alpha is an exciting new entry in Yash Raj Films' Spy Universe which includes popular hits like Salman Khan's Tiger, Shah Rukh Khan's Pathaan, and Hrithik Roshan's War. Alia also shared the announcement on her Instagram Stories. Meanwhile, Sharvari posted the film's poster, featuring its theme music.

In July, a brief teaser was released, revealing the title of the film alongside a powerful voiceover by Alia explaining its meaning. In the video she posted, Alia said, "Greek alphabet ka sabse pehla akshar, aur hamari program ka motto. Sabse pehle, sabse tez. Sabse veer. Dhyam se dekho toh har sahar mein ek jungle hein. Aur jungle mein humesha raaj karega... Alpha (The first letter in the Greek alphabet, and the motto of our program. The first, and the fastest. The bravest. Pay attention and every city is like a jungle. The one who will rule that jungle is... Alpha)." The teaser showed the design of Alpha and ended with the announcement: "Filming now." Ever since the teaser announcement, Alia and Sharvari also shared a playful behind-the-scenes moment. In August, Alia dropped a photo that featured her with Sharvari. In the photo, both actresses are standing with their backs to the camera, forming a heart shape with their arms above their heads. They appear to be in a scenic outdoor location with a misty, forested backdrop and a flowing river. The caption read, "Love, ALPHA!"

Mohanlal, Mammooty Pay Homage To Mohan Raj With A Heartfelt Message



Malayalam actor Mohan Raj, who is popularly known by his stage name Keerikkadan Jose, passed away at his residence on Thursday, September 3. He took his last breath at the age of 70. He was undergoing treatment for multiple illnesses at his home in Kanjiramkulam, Kerala, as per media reports. He gained huge fame after he played the role of Keerikkadan Jose in the film Kireedam. The film starred Mohanlal, Parvathi, Jagathy Sreekumar, Murali, Jagadish and Yada Krishnan in prominent roles. Several well-known faces of the film industry paid homage to the great actor. Actor Mohanlal shared a special post on his Facebook handle along with Mohan Raj's photo to pay tribute to the legendary star. He wrote, "To be called and known by the name of the character is a blessing that only an actor who has the great gift of acting success gets. Beloved Mohan Raj, who played the immortal character of Keerikkadan Jose in Kireedam, has left us. I still remember him standing in front of the camera with his head held high as Sethu's opponent, like it was yesterday. A tearful farewell to my dear friend who maintained goodness and gentleness in his personal life," when translated to English. Actor Mammooty also shared a picture of Mohan Raj on Facebook to pay tribute to him. Posting the picture, Mammooty captioned it, "Tributes to Mohanraj," when translated to English. Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan and Saji Cheriyan, Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs, Government of Kerala, extended their heartfelt condolences mentioning that his passing away is a big loss to the Indian film industry. Mohan Raj has been an active face in the Indian film industry for more than three decades. He is known for his villainous roles. Before coming to the entertainment industry, he worked as an Assistant Enforcement Officer in the Enforcement Directorate. While he was working with the central government department, Mohan Raj was offered the role of Keerikkadan Jose. He accepted the role without taking permission from his senior officials, as per government norms which led to his suspension from service. In 2015, he took voluntary retirement from his service to pursue acting.

Kareena Kapoor Khan

shares unseen pictures with sister-in-law Soha Ali Khan on her birthday: 'Smart, funny, loving, caring...'



Kareena Kapoor Khan shares an amazing bond with Saif Ali Khan's sister and actor Soha Ali Khan. On Soha's birthday, Kareena shared a reel featuring unseen photos of their good times together. Kareena posted Soha's birthday reel with the caption, "Smart, funny, loving, caring, workout maniac, gluten free, chocolate cake, beautiful sister in law. Happy Birthday Soha Love you lots ??@sakupataudi." Kareena Kapoor Khan also posted a click on her Instagram story where she can be seen planting a kiss on Soha Ali Khan's face. "Love and hugs," wrote Kareena.

In September this year, Soha Ali Khan had expressed love for 'bebo bhabhi' on her birthday. Soha too had shared a series of photos with her sister-in-law and wrote, "Whether its work or play no-one does it better than you @kareenakapoorkhan. Happy birthday bebo bhabhi, love always." We have often seen Kareena and Soha together on vacations, dinner nights and also on play dates with their kids, Taimur Ali Khan, Jeh Ali Khan and Inaaya Naumi Kemmu. Soha Ali Khan, in an old interview, opened up about her pregnancy journey, where she shared how her sister-in-law Kareena Kapoor Khan was very supportive. Soha had revealed that Kareena would send her food and also helped her with diet and nutrition and advised her to do yoga. Bebo also gave Soha a few books on pregnancy and parenting. Soha told Elle India, "She was the most excited for me, and her enthusiasm helped me a lot." Soha's sister Saba Pataudi too shared a childhood photo with the birthday girl and wrote, "To my BABY sister. Wishing you life's best! Love U brat! ALWAYS HAVE YOUR BACK! Happy birthday." On her special day, Soha Ali Khan shared a video from one of her gym sessions and captioned it, "Another year of Meeeeeeeeeeeeeee??."

Asha Negi

On Facing Backlash For Her Breakup With Rithvikk Dhanjani: 'I Still Get So Many Gaalis...'

Asha Negi is a popular name in the television world. She has created a special place in the hearts of her fans. She became a household name after starring in the show Pavitra Rishta. Fans loved her onscreen chemistry with Rithvikk Dhanjani and then with time they even started dating in real life. But destiny has some other plans and the couple decided to part ways. However, it did not go well with her fans. In a recent conversation, Asha revealed that she still receives gaalis from her fans for the breakup. In a chat with Hauterrfly, Asha said, "People are loving your chemistry so it just happens. That's why, I think, in television people get coupled up pretty fast," she said. When asked about how she got over her break-up with Rithvik since it was a long-term relationship, Asha said, "There is a lot of grief, of course. And then, you have to handle everything because families are involved and if you are an actor, then there are so many people, fan clubs... I still get so many gaalis and so does he," she shared.



Rithvikk and Asha met on the sets of the popular television show 'Pavitra Rishta', in which Asha played Archana's (Ankita Lokhande) daughter Purvi, while Rithvik essayed the role of business tycoon Arjun. Their onscreen chemistry was appreciated by the fans. The show also starred late actor Sushant Singh Rajput and was his claim to fame before he made a move to the Hindi film industry. Rithvikk and Asha dated each other for a couple of years before they parted ways, breaking the hearts of their fans. They announced their break-up in 2020 during the Covid pandemic, a period

which tested many relationships of varied nature. However, Rithvikk and Asha remain on good terms with each other. Rithvikk is currently rumoured to be dating Krystle D'Souza. On the work front, Asha Negi is currently seen in Honeymoon Photographer. The six-episode show, directed by Arjun Srivastava, also stars Sahil Salathia, Apeksha Porwal, Rajeev Siddhartha, and Rituraj Singh. Honeymoon Photographer revolves around the story of a newlywed couple, Adhir Irani (Sahil Salathia) and Zoya Irani (Apeksha Porwal), on a trip to Maldives. Everything seems well until the groom is found dead and buried on a beach. Soon, his friends, family and spouse come under the radar of the police as the primary suspects in Adhir's murder.

