

PUBLISHED FROM Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal and Jammu

The Sikh Times National Daily

VISIT: www.thesikhtimes.in Email:sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

Vol. 16 No. 149 RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465 New Delhi, Thursday, 10 October 2024 sikhtimesindia@gmail.com 9654077232 12 pages ₹ 3

Iron angle found on railway tracks near Gwalior amid surge in 'sabotage' attempts

Sanjay Kumar

New Delhi, Oct 9: A driver of a goods train spotted the iron angle lying on railway track near Birla Nagar railway station as the train



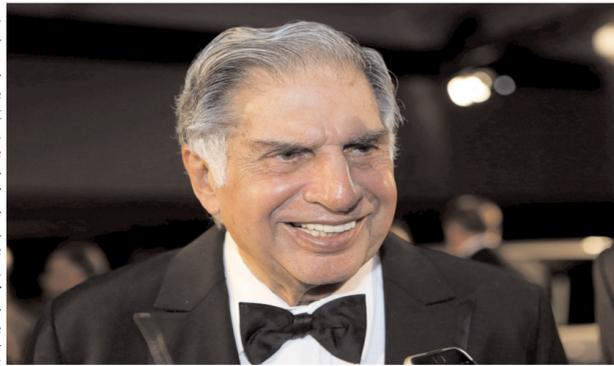
was moving slowly. Authorities have launched an investigation after a square iron angle was found on railway tracks near Birla Nagar Railway Station in Gwalior district early Tuesday morning. A goods train driver spotted the object while the train was moving slowly and informed the authorities. MP Thakkar, in-charge of Government Railway Police (GRP) station,

Gwalior, said the loco pilot raised the alarm around 4:30am. A memo from the Deputy Station Manager at Gwalior Railway Station was relayed to the GRP, which subsequently initiated an investigation. Gear up to prepare for a future brand manager role with MICA's Brand Management and communication course "After that, Railway officials, employees and RPF staff reached the scene of the incident at Birla Nagar Railway station," Thakkar said. "Upon investigation, it was found that the driver of the goods train had given information about placing a square iron angle on the railway track." The situation raises concerns amid a series of similar incidents reported in nearby states. Just days ago, police in Uttar Pradesh arrested a man for allegedly attempting to derail a train by placing iron rods on the tracks in Lalitpur district.

Ratan Tata, former Tata Group chairman, dies at age 86

Simmi Kaur Babbar

Mumbai, Oct 9: Ratan Tata, who ran the conglomerate for more than 20 years as chairman, had been undergoing intensive care in a Mumbai hospital since Monday. Ratan Tata, the chairman emeritus of Tata Sons, has died, the group announced in a statement on Wednesday. He was 86. Ratan Tata, who ran the conglomerate for more than 20 years as chairman, had been undergoing intensive care in a Mumbai hospital since Monday. "It is with a profound sense of loss that we bid farewell to Mr. Ratan Naval Tata, a truly uncommon leader whose immeasurable contributions have shaped not only the Tata Group but also the very fabric of our nation," said N Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons, in a late night statement. Gear up to prepare for a future brand manager role with MICA's Brand Management and communication course On



Monday, the industrialist had in a social media post dismissed speculation surrounding his health and had said he was undergoing routine medical invest-

igations due to his age, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Ratan Tata, calling him a visionary business leader, compassionate soul, extraordinary human being. "Ratan Tata endeared himself to people, thanks to his humility, kindness, unwavering commitment to making society better," PM Modi said in a post on X (formerly Twitter). After graduating with a degree in architecture at Cornell University, he returned to India and in 1962 began working for the group his great-grandfather had founded nearly a century earlier. He worked in several Tata companies, including Telco, now Tata Motors Ltd, as well as Tata Steel Ltd, later making his mark by erasing losses and increasing market share at group unit National Radio & Electronics Company. In 1991, he took the helm of the conglomerate when his uncle J.R.D. Tata stepped down - the passing of the baton coming just as India embarked on radical reforms that opened up its economy to the world and ushered in an era of high growth. Under Tata's leadership, the group launched the Tata Nano, the world's cheapest car, and expanded its software services arm, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), into a global IT leader. Tata stepped down as chairman in 2012 but was later named chairman emeritus of Tata Sons and other group companies, including Tata Motors and Tata Steel. He briefly returned as interim chairman in 2016 during a leadership dispute.

Haryana effect? SP declares six candidates for UP bypolls

Naresh Malhotra

Lucknow, Oct 9: The SP had won Karhal, Sisamau, Phulpur, Milkipur and Katehri seats while it was the runner-up on Mahiwa seat in 2022 UP assembly elections. A day after the assembly poll results of Haryana and J&K were out, the Samajwadi Party on Wednesday announced candidates for six of the 10 Uttar Pradesh assembly seats where bypolls are due later this year. Of these six, five were won by the party in 2022 UP Assembly polls. While SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's cousin Tej Pratap Yadav will be the candidate from Karhal assembly seat, Naseem Siddiqui (wife of disqualified SP MLA Irfan Solanki) will be fielded from the Sisamau seat. Ajeet Prasad, son of Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad, was announced as the candidate on the most sought-after seat - Milkipur in Ayodhya. Gear up to prepare for a



future brand manager role with MICA's Brand Management and communication course The SP also declared Shobhawati Verma as its candidate from Katehri assembly seat. She is the wife of SP MP from Ambedkar Nagar, Lalji Verma. The

we have announced our candidates before other parties. "As per my knowledge, Congress has no claim on these seats. The Congress and SP leaderships are in talks...we have announced seats keeping in mind the 'gathbandhan dharm'. I am sure we will win on all the seats. These are the seats on which either we won or were on number two position. We have always respected the Alliance...the top leadership will decide which of the remaining seats will be given to the Congress," he added On the other hand, UP BJP Spokesperson, Rakesh Tripathi raised questions on the SP-Congress alliance, saying, "It seems the alliance between SP and Congress has hit a rough patch. Or maybe it is the effect of Haryana assembly election results. The SP has announced candidates on seats, which were sought by the Congress for by-polls...I think the SP has shown Congress their place by doing this. BJP workers are all charged up by the Haryana outcome and we will win all the seats in UP bypolls " Katehri (Ambedkarnagar) - SP candidate Lalji Verma had won this seat by bagging 37.78% of the votes while Congress candidate Nishat Fatima got a mere 0.83% votes.

In ECI meeting, Congress flags 99% battery level in EVMs

New Delhi, Oct 9: The Congress delegation handed over a memorandum to the Election Commission officials along with specific complaints from various constituencies in Haryana. Following a meeting with officials from the Election Commission of India (ECI), Congress leader Pawan Khera on Wednesday said they drew the poll body's attention to the electronic voting machines (EVMs) used in the recent Haryana Assembly elections. Congress Spokesperson Pawan Khera addresses the media after a meeting of Congress delegation with the Election Commission over concerns on Haryana Assembly election results, in New Delhi on Wednesday. Congress Spokesperson Pawan Khera addresses the media after a meeting of Congress delegation with the Election Commission over concerns on Haryana Assembly election results, in New Delhi on Wednesday. "We apprised the Election Commission about 20 complaints that have come to us, including seven written complaints from seven constituencies with some EVM machines functioning at 99 per cent battery capacity, while some EVM Machines were functioning below 60-70 per cent battery capacity," Khera told. He said

similar complaints had emerged from 13 other assembly constituencies, vowing to submit these grievances formally to the ECI. "We also told the EC that in the next 48 hours, we will make available to them other complaints that are being compiled," he said. A delegation of top Congress leaders comprising former chief ministers Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Ashok Gehlot and AICC leaders K C Venugopal, Jairam Ramesh, Ajay Malen and Pawan Khera, besides Haryana Congress chief Uday Bhan, met with top Election Commission officials. While ECI officials assured the delegation of a response to their concerns, Khera insisted that "assurances won't work" and called for tangible evidence and explanations to substantiate the integrity of the election process. "We need concrete answers supported and backed by evidence...What has the BJP got to do with it? This is between the Opposition and the Election Commission of India," he said. Congress claimed to have won seats where EVMs reportedly operated on batteries charged to only 60-70% while the BJP won several seats where EVMs showed 99 per cent battery. Earlier in the day, Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition, described the Haryana Assembly

AAP to go solo in Delhi polls, shuns Congress

ST Correspondent

New Delhi, Oct 9: The Aam Aadmi Party will contest the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections alone against an "overconfident" Congress, a party member said on Wednesday. "In Delhi, AAP will contest alone. We are capable of fighting the overconfident Congress and arrogant BJP alone," AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar said. She blamed the Congress for not taking alliance partners seriously in Haryana and ultimately facing a rout due to its overconfidence. "The Congress has had zero seats in the Delhi Assembly for the past 10 years, yet AAP gave Congress three seats in the Lok Sabha polls; still they did not feel necessary to take allies along in Haryana," she said. Kakkar



claimed that Congress thwarted all efforts by the INDIA bloc to forge an alliance in Haryana and "didn't feel it necessary to take its ally along with them." The AAP and Congress failed to stitch up a pre-poll alliance due to differences over seat sharing. While the AAP lost all seats it contested in Haryana, the Congress fell well short of the majority mark, making way for the ruling BJP to return for a third consecutive time. The AAP and the Congress had fought Lok Sabha elections together in Haryana. In the election held earlier in the year, the AAP lost the sole seat it contested and the Congress won five out of 10 seats. Kakkar attributed the AAP's winning one seat in the Jammu and Kashmir to the party's development-driven politics. AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal is scheduled to visit Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, she said. The Aam Aadmi Party registered its first victory in assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday when its candidate Mehraj Malik defeated nearest rival from the BJP in Doda constituency by a margin of over 4,538 votes. "Mehraj Malik is a very hard-working person, and he has been with the party since the time of the movement and struggle," Kakkar said. Malik, a District Development Council member, polled 23,228 votes against BJP's Gajay Singh Rana's 18,690 votes.

Allies mock Congress over Haryana election debacle

Mumbai, Oct 9: The Congress on Wednesday came under severe criticism from its INDIA bloc allies after the party lost the Haryana assembly elections to the Bharatiya Janata Party. While Shiv Sena (UBT) questioned the Congress's decision to go solo in Haryana, the Trinamool Congress accused the party of "arrogance and entitlement". Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut today said the Congress ignored the overtures of smaller parties thinking they could win the elections alone. He also praised the BJP. Participate in the Festival of Gifts & get a chance to win an iPhone 15 and other exciting prizes. "INDIA alliance could not win in Haryana because the Congress felt they would win on their own and they did not need any other partner in power. Congress leader Hooda Ji felt we would win. If they (Congress) had shared seats with the Samajwadi Party, AAP or other smaller parties, the results would have been different. The way the BJP fought the elections is very good. BJP won a lost battle. Everybody believed the Congress was winning but it still lost and the BJP won because it has a systematic system, management, we need it to give to them for this," Raut said.

Maharashtra must follow Haryana in rejecting 'hateful conspiracies of Congress, urban naxals': PM Modi

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, Oct 9: A day after clocking a historic hat-trick in Haryana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a blistering attack on rival Congress and said after Haryana, Maharashtra should defeat its "hateful conspiracies." "Congress adopted all possible tools but Haryana showed that it will not become the target of hateful conspiracies of Congress and its urban naxals...Haryana farmers also showed that they are happy with the welfare policies of the BJP," Modi said. The PM was addressing an event to launch a range of infrastructure projects in poll bound Maharashtra. An unusually ballistic PM singled out the Congress accusing it of playing politics of communalism and casteism. "Congress has always followed the path of dividing people to usurp power. It has become an irresponsible party and keeps inventing recipes

to divide the country. Congress formula is clear: fear monger among Muslims and divide Hindus." Modi said no



Congress leader has ever spoken about castes in Muslim community. "When it comes to Muslim castes, Congress keeps mum but when it comes to Hindu Congress begins by talking about castes. It wants to keep the Hindu

society inflamed so that it can keep reaping political benefits," said Modi, urging Maharashtra to elect BJP and allies to power and follow in Haryana's footsteps. He said Congress treats division of Hindus as its election winning formula in all states. "The Congress is crushing our all-embracing Sanatan traditions," said the PM, adding that the old Congress guard is also feeling helpless at the direction the party has taken. Modi warned that the Congress is going to become the largest hate spewing factory which is why Mahatma Gandhi wanted it wound up. "Congress didn't wind up but is hell bent on destroying India and we have to stay cautious and alert. I am sure Maharashtra, like Haryana, will thwart all conspiracies to weaken the nation. Maharashtra has to vote for BJP Mahayuti," said Modi.

IIT Madras launches cybersecurity centre to boost fundamental & applied research

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Oct 9: The cybersecurity centre will work towards pioneering advancements in blockchain, security for AI models, cryptography, quantum security, and IoT security Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) launched a cybersecurity centre intending to boost fundamental and applied research that drives innovations in the country. CyStar at IIT Madras will develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy to address the emerging cybersecurity challenges driven by AI and the post-quantum era. (File) CyStar at IIT Madras will develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy to address the emerging cybersecurity challenges driven by AI and the post-quantum era. The cybersecurity centre will work towards pioneering advancements in blockchain, security for AI models, cryptography, quantum security, and IoT secu-

ity. The 'Centre for Cybersecurity, Trust and Reliability' (CyStar) was inaugurated in the presence of Prof V Kamakoti,



Director, IIT Madras, Centre Coordinators Prof Shweta Agrawal, Prof Chester Rebeiro and Prof John Augustine, faculty, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Madras and a host of academicians and industry representatives

from India and abroad. "With the growth of cyber threats, not just for financial gains but also targeted sector wise attacks on critical infrastructure, it is very important that we arrive at proactive cyber defence mechanisms to protect our Nation. In this context, such efforts are extremely crucial," said Prof V Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras. The key Research, Industry and Government partners of CyStar include the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Ministry of Education, Vitesco Technologies, Kaspersky, IDBI Bank, LG India, Saptang Labs, Algorand, Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research and National Security Coordination Secretariat among others. "We are happy and excited

to launch this center, which will bring together people with varied expertise to study the complex problem of cybersecurity. Our approach is multi-faceted. We aim to make contributions in domains ranging from fundamental research to real-world applications to fostering start-ups and everything in between," said Centre Coordinator Prof Shweta Agrawal. "India is a federal country with a vast number of highly distributed social and business networks with diverse security needs. CyStar's vision is to empower individuals in this ecosystem to secure their lives and businesses through platforms that are designed with security, trust, and reliability in mind," said CyStar Coordinator Prof John Augustine. "CyStar aims to address critical cyber security challenges in the country through fundamental and applied research, outreach programs, and by fostering industry-academia relationships," said CyStar Coordinator Prof.

## News box

### Class 7 boy falls into open stormwater drain in TN's Karur, dies



**KARUR.** A 12-year-old boy drowned after falling into an open stormwater drain while returning from school on bicycle in Aravakuruchi in Karur district on Tuesday evening.

The deceased M Mohammed Usman was a resident of Habeeb Nagar in Pallapatti in Aravakuruchi. He was a Class 7 student at a government higher secondary school in Pallapatti, said police.

It was raining in Aravakuruchi when he was returning from school. While he was passing through Dindigul road he fell into a two-foot-wide open stormwater drain which was full due to the rain.

A passerby, Jaffer, who witnessed the incident, attempted to rescue the boy but he was swept away by the strong current. Upon receiving information, police and personnel from the fire and rescue services rushed to the scene, conducted a search, and eventually located the boy's body floating in the Nanganchi River, where the drain merges.

Police sent the body to the Aravakuruchi government hospital for postmortem. The Aravakuruchi police have registered a case and are conducting an inquiry.

### Odisha horror: Woman ends life after drowning minor daughters

**JAGATSINGHPUR.** In a shocking incident, a 32-year-old woman allegedly died by suicide after drowning her two differently-abled daughters in a pond of Janardanpur within Kujang police limits here.

The victim, Subhadra Patra allegedly resorted to the extreme measures on Monday following torture over dowry and extreme poverty. Kujang police arrested the deceased's husband Lambodar Parida, treating it as a dowry-related crime.

Subhadra threw her three-year-old daughter Saismruti, and two-year-old Samparna into a pond before hanging herself from a tree. Villagers rushed to the spot and took Subhadra to Kujang community health centre where the doctors declared her dead on arrival. Erasama fire brigade and ODRAF team launched a search and rescue operation in the pond, recovering the bodies of the two young girls over a period of 24 hours.

Sources said, Subhadra was married to Lambodar from Pokhariapada in 2019. During the wedding, the woman's family paid 50,000 along with gold ornaments and other household items as dowry. However, Lambodar's family demanded a motorcycle and an additional 1 lakh which Subhadra's family could not provide due to financial constraints. Aggrieved by this, her in-laws and husband allegedly tortured her.

Subhadra later gave birth to two daughter and both had speech and hearing impairment. This enraged her in-laws and the physical and mental torture intensified. Last week, unable to bear the torture any longer, Subhadra left her in-law's house and went to her parents place, asking them to fulfil their demand. Her family members attempted to mediate and returned her to her in-laws' place.

### Close shave for crew as crane crashes on vessel

**PARADIP.** At least 21 crew members of a vessel had a narrow escape after a shore harbour mobile crane (HMC) collapsed during cargo unloading at Paradip Port here on Tuesday.

Carrying nearly 21,000 tonne of cargo, the vessel, MV AMNSI Maximus, had docked at the multipurpose berth of Paradip Port on Monday. Sources said a shipping services company had deployed its HMC shore crane to unload the cargo, which included limestone and dolomite, from the vessel. During the unloading process, the crane's rope snapped, causing its midsection to collapse on the vessel.

Local workers said the mishap took place as the crane was attempting to lift cargo beyond its capacity. The excessive weight caused the rope to snap, leading to the collapse. The crane's lifting cylinder and parts of the ship were also damaged in the incident.

On hearing the loud crash, panic spread among the 21 crew members on board the vessel. However, they escaped unhurt. The workers too escaped narrowly without any injury.

A senior officer of Paradip Port Trust (PPT) confirmed the incident and said the crane's rope had weakened, resulting in its failure during the unloading process. Port and dock safety officials rushed to the mishap site to investigate the incident.

He further said such mishaps are not uncommon during cargo operations at Paradip Port. While there have been no reports of any casualty, the full extent of the damage is yet to be assessed. The crane's grab also fell into the harbour water. The unloading operation has been suspended since morning.

# 13 years on, six convicted for trying to kill Dalit panchayat president in Tirunelveli

**TIRUNELVELI.** Six persons, including a notorious rowdy, were convicted on Tuesday in the 2011 attempt-to-murder case of an SC woman panchayat president, a case that sent shockwaves across the state. The II additional district sessions court for Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act cases found them guilty. The quantum of punishment for the convicts is to be delivered on Thursday.

The convicts have been identified as Subramanian (60), Sultan Maideen (59), Jacob (33), Karthik (34), Vijaya Ramamoorthy (34), and Praveenraj (32). While one of the accused persons, Natarajan, died, two persons — Ramakrishnan and Santhanamari — were acquitted. The incident related to the case happened on June 13, 2011, when P Krishnaveni (51), the then panchayat president of Thalaiyoothu, was brutally

attacked by a gang after she took steps to construct a public toilet on a poramboke land.

"Despite the lack of sufficient funds with the panchayat, Krishnaveni sought assistance from a private cement company to fund the toilet's construction. She identified a land for the project, but the move was opposed by Subramanian, the then panchayat member, as the land was located near his house. He eventually prevented the construction work of the toilet," said sources.

They added on the day of the incident, as Krishnaveni was returning home from her panchayat office in an autorickshaw, a group of armed men, including Subramanian, ambushed her. "Before Krishnaveni could get down from the vehicle, the assailants attacked her with sickles, causing severe injuries. She lost part of her right

ear and two fingers, and sustained deep cuts on her shoulder and neck. The attack left her in a pool of blood, and she was later rushed to Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital, where she underwent months of treatment. She was further transferred to Stanley Medical College Hospital in Chennai for a surgery," sources added.

The investigation of Thalaiyoothu police revealed that Subramanian, irked by Krishnaveni's persistence in getting the public toilet constructed, had conspired with his accomplices from various BC communities including the rowdy, Jacob, to murder her. The case was widely reported, causing widespread outrage across Tamil Nadu, with political parties staging protests demanding swift justice. Judge K Sureshkumar found the six accused persons guilty.



## Haryana setback prompts Congress to rethink strategy in Kerala

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** The electoral setback in Haryana and loss of ground in Jammu and Kashmir has come as a jolt to the Congress and UDF which are eager to return to power in Kerala. For the grand old party, the debacle has come at a time when it is putting high hopes on revival after its spectacular performance in 2024 Lok Sabha election in the state and its commendable performance at the national level.

The Congress has been looking to regain the support of the Christian-Muslim minority communities in the state so as to repeat the LS poll success in the coming LSG and assembly elections.

Similar to its recent strategy in the Haryana polls, the Congress has been banking on the anti-incumbency factor against the two-term LDF government and its CM Pinarayi Vijayan. However, in view of the Haryana setback, Congress leaders in Kerala have realised that a mere favourable political situation is not



enough to win an election in the new era. "Overconfidence is dangerous," CWC member Ramesh Chennithala, who is in Maharashtra for election preparation meetings, told. "Electioneering is a different thing. I have told this to our leaders in Maharashtra," he said. He added that there is no guarantee that a party will win the elections based on favourable political

conditions alone.

"A good candidate, evaluation of each constituency based on its specialties and many other things are crucial in winning the elections," Chennithala said. The Haryana verdict has indeed come as a severe jolt to Congress leadership in the state.

A section of leaders who have a difference of opinion with the style of functioning of Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan are wary there are similarities between the party's strategies in Kerala and the one that failed in Haryana. "Here too we are waiting to cash in on the anti-incumbency factor," a KPCC executive member told.

"The Haryana lesson teaches us that mere character assassination of a popular leader will not help win the hearts of people. The Congress-UDF has failed to take up a significant issue or subject after the K-Rail protest which had enjoyed popular support," he said.

## Steps taken to speed up cases in revisional courts: Govt to HC

**CUTTACK.** The Orissa High Court has expressed satisfaction over the new guidelines drawn up by the government to deal with the 1.31 lakh cases pending before the 40 different revisional courts for land disputes in the state.

Accordingly, the single judge bench of Justice BP Satapathy on Monday disposed of the petition regarding inordinate delay in admission of matters in the revisional courts. The petitioner Guruprasad Mohapatra, a resident of Odagaon area in Nayagarh district, alleged that petitions filed in 2022 were yet to be taken up for admission.

The high court was informed about the new guidelines by additional chief secretary Revenue and Disaster Management department Deoranjan Kumar Singh and member Board of Revenue CJ Venugopal in their respective affidavits filed in pursuance to the court's order issued on



September 25. The two affidavits said as per the new guidelines all the revisional courts shall hold courts for a minimum period of three days in a week, so as to streamline the functioning and reduce the pendency of cases thereby. Adequate number of law officers will also be appointed in the revisional courts. "The presiding officers and court officers shall ensure admission of at least 50 old cases per day till completion of the process of admission of all old cases and

simultaneous admission of new cases will be taken up within six months," the affidavits stated. The presiding officers shall also take steps for analogous hearing of cases having similar prayers within a time bound manner, the affidavits stated while assuring to give natural justice to petitioners in old cases and remove defects within a month.

Endorsing the measures spelled out in the two affidavits, Justice Satapathy expressed hope that the authorities will ensure implementation of the steps planned to reduce the huge backlog of cases. Earlier, the member Board of Revenue had filed an affidavit stating that 1,31,532 cases in the matter of Orissa Survey & Settlement Act, 1958 and Orissa Consolidation of Holdings & Prevention of Fragmentation of Land Act, 1972 were pending before the revisional courts.

# Cracker blast in Tiruppur house: Infant among three killed, 15 injured

According to the authorities, licence for the unit expired last December and Saravanakumar applied for renewal in July.

**TIRUPPUR.** Three persons, including a 10-month-old girl, were killed and 15 others injured on Tuesday after firecrackers, being illegally made for use in temple festivals, exploded inside a house in Pandian Nagar in Tiruppur town. Police have detained the house owner Karthik and his brother-in-law V Saravanakumar, the man behind the unauthorised cracker unit.

While two of the deceased were identified — Kumar (39) of Elumathur, in Nambiyur, Erode district and 10-month-old Alia Shirin from Pandian Nagar — the third, a woman, remains unidentified. Police suspect she might be the wife of Kumar.

According to police, the two-floored house where the explosion took place is owned by Karthik from Ponnammal Nagar in Pandian Nagar. Three rooms on the first floor were rented out to knitwear workers from Bihar and Odisha. Karthik lived on the ground floor with his wife Sathyapriya and their

two college-going sons. Karthik's brother-in-law Saravanakumar of Irungalur, in Nambiyur, Erode district, owns a firecracker manufacturing unit in the same area, sources said. According to the authorities, licence for the unit expired last December and Saravanakumar applied for renewal in July. However, he allegedly continued to manufacture firecrackers illegally and sold them for use in temple festivals in nearby villages, sources said. He used Karthik's house for this purpose and sent workers there everyday, they added.

On Tuesday morning, Karthik, his sons and the knitwear workers had gone out for the day, while Sathyapriya was at home. Kumar was engaged in making the firecrackers at the ground floor of the house when around 11.55 am they exploded. In the impact of the blast, the grocery store in front of the house was completely destroyed, and all houses



within 100m of the blast sustained damage. Thirumuranpoondi police and fire and rescue services personnel from Tiruppur North and South stations rushed to the spot and embarked on rescue operations. Kumar and Sathyapriya, who had been trapped were rescued after a two-hour effort. Both sustained serious injuries. Alia

Protest turns chaotic: UDYF leaders, including Mamkoottathil, Firoz, arrested in Thiruvananthapuram

**The UDYF leaders and supporters led a protest march from Spencer Junction to the assembly when the police blocked them in front of the War Memorial.**



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** Tense situation prevailed in the capital city for close to an hour in front of the assembly complex following the protest march by United Democratic Youth Front (UDYF) leaders and their supporters demanding the resignation of the CM.

The police hurled four tear gas shells and unleashed 10 rounds of water cannons at the protesters. As many as 35 UDYF leaders and supporters were arrested. They include five women, Youth Congress state president Rahul Mamkoottathil and Youth League state secretary PK Firoz.

The UDYF leaders and supporters led a protest march from Spencer Junction to the assembly when the police blocked them in front of the War Memorial. Rahul and Firoz led the march highlighting the CM's controversial remark on Malappuram, the criminalisation of the police and also the ADGP-RSS meeting.

Initially, the police used water cannons against protesters from just one vehicle. But when the protesters numbering over 100 kept on throwing themselves against the barricades and hurling stones, footwear, sticks and even fruits, the police brought in a second water cannon and unleashed a jet of water at them.

The remanded women protesters include Muslim Youth League state secretary K Fathima Thahiliya, YC vice-president V K Shibina, YC state general secretaries Shamla Kasim and B S Subija, and YC Thiruvananthapuram district secretary Beena Mol. They were produced in court and sent to jail.

### THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published  
Owned by Simmi Babbar  
N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar  
Delhi-110009  
Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing  
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City  
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)  
Corporate Office:  
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,  
Press Area, ITO, New Delhi  
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

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News box

Ahirwal show set to give Inderjit bigger say in state affairs

Gurgaon. He did not contest the assembly election, but proved he is the most powerful leader in the Ahirwal region. BJP's performance in the south Haryana districts of Gurgaon, Mahendergarh and Rewari — where the party won 10 of 11 seats — once again highlighted Rao Inderjit Singh's influence over the region.

Yadav, according to analysts, lost Nangal Chaudhry despite being an MLA from there during the past two regimes. Internal rift is said to have hit him hard. Yadav is known to be close to former CM Manohar Lal Khattar. At 74, Inderjit, who has said earlier in meetings that "people want to see me as CM", is expected to be in the thick of things during govt formation.

72-yr-old killed for asking man not to drink in park, 1 held

Noida. Two months after a 72-year-old retired CDA officer was shot dead at a greenbelt near his residence in Greater Noida West, police have finally solved the blind murder case and arrested the accused on Tuesday.

Police identified the accused as Malkit Singh, aka Loliya Don, a 32-year-old resident of Geeta Colony in Delhi who has a history of criminal activity.

Hari Prasad, who hailed from Agra, had retired as a senior auditor from the Controller of Defence (CDA) in 2015. At the time of the incident he was residing in Stellar Jeevan Society in Greater Noida West with his elder son, Praveen Kumar. Prasad had left home for his regular walk on Aug 7, when some of the guards spotted his body on a bench around noon.

At the time, Prasad's family had no clue as to what could have happened. Over the course of the past two months, cops questioned over 60 people and checked CCTV footage from around 800 cameras to trace the suspect. Eventually, they were able to create a sketch of the accused based on witness accounts and available evidence, which finally led them to Singh.

According to DCP (Central Noida) Shakti Mohan Avasthy, Malkit Singh was passing by Surajpur when he stopped at the park near Prasad's society. He was consuming alcohol on a bench when Prasad approached him and told him not to drink there.

Prasad hauled abuses at him and kicked his bottle, which enraged Singh. Singh approached Prasad from behind and shot him using a pistol he was carrying at the time. He then took Prasad's mobile phone and fled the spot. Police recovered Prasad's stolen phone along with the pistol and cartridges used in the crime from Singh's possession.

After frog leg, now dead spider in samosa from RNE sweetshop

Ghaziabad. A man who had bought samosas from Shri Dhara Dairy, a local sweetshop in Ghaziabad's Raj Nagar Extension, allegedly found a dead spider in the fillings of the snack. Samples were collected by the Food and Drugs Safety Administration department on Tuesday.

In a similar incident in Sept, a customer had allegedly found a 'frog's leg' stuffed inside a samosa he purchased from a popular sweet shop chain in Nyay Khand. Officials thoroughly examined the confectionery items and procured two samples for further analysis.

"We have taken action against the owner for maintaining unsanitary conditions during food processing and manufacturing. We discovered flies swarming around the milk and curd products. We also imposed a fine on the shop owner, and a case will be filed against him in the ADM city court," said assistant food commissioner Arvind Yadav.

Soon, 3 multi-storey car parks to come up in city

Noida. Noida Authority is set to address the city's parking challenges by introducing an automated puzzle parking system — for the first time in the city — beginning with a facility outside its Sector 6 office. The first phase will feature a five-floor structure accommodating up to 50 vehicles.

Haryana election result: BJP takes Gurgaon 4-0 with 49% vote share

GURGAON. Waterlogging to waste, the city's festering civic problems did not show up in the assembly poll results on Tuesday, with BJP improving its tally from 3-1 in 2019 to a whitewash this time in the four assembly seats that are part of Gurgaon district. In doing so, BJP not only wrested Badshapur, the largest constituency in Haryana which is also the main city seat, it also bagged 49% of the district's vote share, eight percentage points more than what it polled in 2019.

joined the election fray after the death of her husband earlier this year. Kumudini managed the third place — with 30,885 votes. Congress, which received just 10,610 votes in Badshapur in 2019, jumped to 84,798 votes, but debutant Vardhan Yadav still ended up a distant second. For Congress, the contest was very different from that in the Lok Sabha polls merely four months ago, when it wrested five of 10 seats from BJP.

In the Gurgaon assembly seat, Congress was pushed to the third place. Mukesh Sharma of BJP received 1.2 lakh votes, defeating Independent candidate and party rebel Naveen Goel by 68,045 votes. Congress's Mohit Grover managed 46,947 votes. In Gurgaon, too, Congress doubled its vote share. The party garnered around 20,000 votes in the past state polls in 2019 and 2014.



both BJP and Congress would have had higher numbers were it not for Goel, who secured 54,570 votes. In the run-up to the polls, Goel was a major cause for concern for BJP, which feared a considerable dent to its vote share from him. BJP's victory margin in Gurgaon seat was the highest among all four constituencies in the district.

Congress's Pearl Choudhary — by 46,530 votes. Bimla took the lead from the morning itself, with the margin growing wider as the day progressed. Pearl secured 51,989 votes, nearly three times what the Congress candidate secured in 2019 (18,994). In Sohna, political analysts had given Congress the upper hand during campaigning. But the results ended in favour of BJP here too, with Tejpal Tanwar defeating Congress rival Rohtas Khatana by 11,817 votes.

Tank water under scanner after 400 fall ill at condo, 10 kids in hosp

Noida: More than 400 residents of Supertech Ecovillage 2 in Greater Noida West, many of them children, fell ill allegedly after consuming contaminated water since Monday morning with many complaining of nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Residents claim the society's tanks were cleaned recently but suspect that chemicals may not have been flushed out properly, leading to widespread illness across the 12 towers of the society.

The health department chipped in on Monday evening and set up a medical camp at the condominium after nearby pharmacies fell short of necessary medicines. Abhishek Singh, a resident of Tower C4, said his two-year-old son was admitted to intensive care at Yatharth Hospital after his health worsened on Tuesday morning. The child was taken to the hospital's OPD with a high-grade fever and nausea.

"But his health deteriorated, and he began having seizures. So, the doctors at the hospital admitted him to ICU for special care," Singh said. Abhishek's son is not alone. Currently, more than 10 children are admitted to various hospitals. Abhiram Singh, who lives in Tower C3, said his three-year-old son has been suffering from diarrhoea, fever and nausea since Monday and has been admitted to Surbhi Hospital since.

"He was crying all day. What if something bad happens to him? Who will take the responsibility? How can these people be so irresponsible?" she asked. Dr Jetavya Kushwaha, a paediatrician who runs a clinic at the society's marketplace, told TOI that since Monday evening a significant number of children had come in for a consultation with a similar set of symptoms — loose motion and vomiting.

A few also had high-grade fever. "All the children were from Ecovillage 2. By Tuesday morning, the symptoms were also visible among adults. I am told many have visited local pharmacies and hospitals for consultation today," he said. Alok Singh, a resident of Tower C7, said his family of four endured discomfort throughout Monday night. "We usually don't eat anything from outside. On Monday too, dinner was homecooked and simple. But we all experienced a severe stomach ache and nausea. We consulted a doctor on Tuesday," he said.

Initially, most families thought these were isolated cases of dysentery or other stomach ailments, but as messages started circulating on the society's WhatsApp group, they realised the source of the contamination could be common — water. YG Estate, a private firm that is responsible for the society's maintenance for the last four years, told TOI that their team inspected the water tanks in all the towers soon after residents' complaints started to pour in.

"The health department has collected water samples and sent them for testing. If any deficiency is found, it will be rectified. Action will also be taken against staffers if found negligent," Azeem, the society's maintenance team manager, said. GNIDA provides water to Ecovillage 2. With hundreds of residents switching to packaged water, many local shops and grocery delivery apps on Tuesday said they had run out of stock.

"As the water might be the source of contamination, I ordered two bottles of packaged water yesterday. But since this morning, due to heavy demand, the delivery apps have gone out of stock. We have no idea how to deal with this situation. It is so traumatising," Malika, a resident of B4 tower, told TOI. The homemaker said her eight-year-old daughter could not attend school for the last two days due to severe stomach ache. "Whatever I feed her, she is vomiting and crying. Since Monday, she has been on ORS and medicines," she added.

Rajat, who lives in the same tower, said there has been complete chaos in the society since Tuesday morning. "On a weekday, most like me stayed home

After the incident, Prasad's family had no clue as to what could have happened. Over the course of the past two months, cops questioned over 60 people and checked CCTV footage from around 800 cameras to trace the suspect. Eventually, they were able to create a sketch of the accused based on witness accounts and available evidence, which finally led them to Singh.

NAME CHANGE I, hitherto known as GAZAL SINGHAL D/O ANIL KUMAR SINGHAL R/O A-112, GURANWALA TOWN PART-1, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110009 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GAZALLE SINGHAL.

NAME CHANGE I, PALLVI W/O SAURABH SAINI residing at A-102, FIRST FLOOR DEFENCE COLONY - 110024 have changed my minor daughter's name from PARTHAVI to PARTHAVI SAINI for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE I, NIRAJ DEVI wife of NO-16120537X Rank-SFR Name-NETRAPAL R/O KHEDA BHAGOUR, MANKENDA, AGRA, UTTAR PRADESH-283102 have changed my name from NIRAJ DEVI to NEERAJ DEVI for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 09/10/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, JC-333748A, Rank-SUB, Name-SABLE SANJIV TEJRAO S/O TEJRAO NAMDEO SABLE residing at VILL- PREM NAGAR KRISHNAPURI, TEH- PACHORA, DIST-JALCANDI, MAHA- RASHTRA-424201 have changed my mother's name from SUREKHA to SURYAKALABAI TEJRAO SABLE for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 09/10/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE I, Swate Kumar w/o Ashwani Kumar R/o House No. E-77 W-246 Gunjank Pura Jail Road, New Delhi-110059 have changed my name from Swati Nagar Motla to Swate Kumar for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Yashpal S/o-Sant Lal R/O Flat no.104,ugf, plot no.26 and 27, Gahlan Residency-II, Block-A, Kakrola Chandra Park, Dwarka Sector 15, po: Kakrola south west Delhi -110078 have changed my name from Yashpal to Yashpal Gumber for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Shashi W/o-Yashpal Gumber R/o Flat no.104,ugf, plot no.26 and 27, Gahlan Residency-II, Block-A, Kakrola Chandra Park, Dwarka Sector 15, po: Kakrola south west Delhi -110078 have changed my name from Yashpal to Yashpal Gumber for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Lalit Kumar S/o- Lekhraj Gill R/O D-12 T/F Flat no.9 back portion, Khanpur extn Drambekar Nagar, South Delhi-110062 have changed my name from Lalit Kumar to Lalit Gill for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Yashpal S/o-Sant Lal R/O Flat no.104,ugf, plot no.26 and 27, Gahlan Residency-II, Block-A, Kakrola Chandra Park, Dwarka Sector 15, po: Kakrola south west Delhi -110078 have changed my name from Yashpal to Yashpal Gumber for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Mohd. Ayyub & Mohd. Din were the absolute owner Sale Deed Dated 06.05.1998 duly registered in the office of SR-12 Ghaziabad, Vide Doc. No. 1092, Vol. No. 467, Book No. 1, Page No. 147-150, Dated 06.05.1998, hereafter Mohd. Din died and after death Mohd. Din executed sale deed his wife Mrs. Mustakima in favour of Mr. Rahimuddin now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property and Samir Property is Finance by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd. Branch: Buri, Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by any one. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

NAME CHANGE I, LALITA DAHIYA W/o PRADEEP KUMAR R/O B-33, Sarai Pipal Thala Extn. Adarsh Nagar, Sharjah Pur, North West Delhi-110033 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as CHAMAN KHAN ur RAJU KHAN in my Aadhar card-644117589067. The actual name of my father is CHAMAN KHAN, which may be amended accordingly.

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INTRODUCTION OF NEW EXPRESS TRAIN BETWEEN DELHI JN. AND GODDA

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways will introduce the regular run of Train No. 14050/14049 between Delhi Jn. and Godda Stations as per following dates, time-table and stoppages :-

Table with columns: Train No., ARR., DEP., STATIONS, ARR., DEP. for Train No. 14050 and Train No. 14049. Stations include Delhi Jn., Tundla Jn., Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone, Gaya Jn., Koderma Jn., Jamua, New Giridih, Madhupur Jn., Sisidih Jn., Deoghar, Kakni, Hansdih, and Godda.

Days of run : 14050 from Delhi Jn. on every Monday from 14.10.2024 and 14049 from Godda on every Wednesday from 16.10.2024.

Accommodation : 1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper and General.

Inaugural Timings :- This express train will be inaugurated on 09.10.2024 at 15:00 hrs from Delhi Jn. to Godda as Special Train No. 04050 and will pick up its regular Commercial run from Delhi Jn. on 14.10.2024.

For detailed information, please call RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

RailMadad Helpline No. 139. Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in. Download RailMadad app. Northern Railway Always at your service. Serving Customers with a Smile.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that Mr. Dinesh Kumar intends to purchase the built-up third floor, with roof terrace rights, property bearing No. 3148, measuring 17.5 sq. meters (i.e. 51.42 sq. meters), Kharsa No. 642, situated in the area of Village Chandrawali, also known as Shahdara, in the abadi of Gali Ganga Ram Teliwara, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110032 from Mrs. Anjali Jindal. The entire property was originally owned by Mahender Pal Sharma, Mr. Rajender Prasad, Mr. Surender Sharma, and others through a Partition Deed dated 26.10.1983. Mr. Mahender Pal Sharma, Mr. Rajender Prasad, and Mr. Surender Sharma executed a Gift Deed dated 17.03.2020 in favour of Mrs. Latta Sharma. Subsequently, Mrs. Latta Sharma sold the property to Mrs. Anjali Jindal through a Sale Deed dated 25.08.2021. Prior to the Partition Deed dated 26.10.1983, Mr. Rajender Prasad appointed his brother, Mr. Surender Kumar Sharma, through a General Power of Attorney, dated 27.04.1993. However, Mr. Rajender Kumar Sharma executed the Gift Deed dated 17.03.2020 in his own self. It should be noted that if Mr. Rajender Kumar Sharma executed a Power of Attorney on 27.04.1993, it would be considered null and void. The property is being financed by Hero Housing Finance Limited, located at their Laxmi Nagar Branch, New Delhi. If any person(s) objection & regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 10 days from the date of the Notice in writing. The said objection may be kindly sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and by E-mail, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.

[NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA] Advocate, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 9555871432

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NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

Stores Tender Notice No. 52/2024-2025 dt. 17.09.2024 at S.No. 01. Sub:- Supply of Metal Cutting Gas. Ref:- Tender No. 14240839 Due on 09.10.2024 published vide tender Notice No. 52/2024-2025 at S.No. 01. The following Amendment is issued against the subject tender. Due date to be read as 18.10.2024 instead of 09.10.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 311724

News box

7 killed after Israeli strikes hit residential building in Syria's Damascus

Cairo. An Israeli airstrike targeted a residential building in the Mezuzah suburb west of the Syrian capital Damascus, killing seven civilians and injuring 11 others, Syrian state media reported on Tuesday. Preliminary reports said the seven civilians included women and children, state media reported citing a military source, adding it also caused "grave" material damage on private properties in surrounding areas. As per the cited source, the airstrike was conducted by three missiles coming from the direction of the Golan Heights. State media earlier reported that Syria's air defences had intercepted "hostile" targets in the vicinity of Damascus. Israel has been carrying out strikes against Iran-linked



targets in Syria for years but has ramped up such raids since last year's October 7 attack by Palestinian terrorist group Hamas on Israeli territory that sparked the Gaza war.

Ceasefire demand shows Hezbollah is on backfoot, getting battered: US

World Hezbollah's call for a ceasefire on Tuesday shows the militant group is on the back foot and "getting battered," US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told a regular briefing on Tuesday. Hezbollah's deputy leader Naim Qassem said in a televised address on Tuesday the Iran-backed group's capabilities were intact, and its fighters were pushing back Israeli ground incursions, despite the "painful blows" inflicted by Israel in recent weeks. Qassem said the group supported the efforts of Lebanon's Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, to secure a ceasefire, without providing further details on any conditions demanded by Hezbollah. For a year, you had the world calling for this ceasefire, you had Hezbollah refusing to agree to one, and now that Hezbollah is on the back foot and is getting battered, suddenly they've changed their tune and want a ceasefire," Miller said. "We continue to ultimately want a diplomatic solution to this conflict," Miller said. Asked if the United States was talking to Berri about efforts in Lebanon to choose a new president, Miller said US officials were having conversations with different players inside Lebanon, often through intermediaries. "Those are ongoing," Miller said. "I don't think it's productive for me to read them out publicly."

Israel's offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon has prompted a renewed bid by some Lebanese politicians to fill a two-year presidential vacuum, an effort to revive the paralyzed state as it grapples with an escalating conflict.

Four mayors in Mexico ask for protection after another was beheaded

MEXICO CITY. Four mayors in Mexico have asked federal authorities for protection after a colleague was beheaded last week in the southern state of Guerrero, officials said Tuesday. Mayor Alejandro Arcos had been sworn into office less than a week before. Federal Public Safety Secretary Omar Garcia Harfuch said four mayors requested protection on Monday, a day after Arcos' remains were found. The requests came from Guerrero and another violence-plagued state, Guanajuato. The situation in Guanajuato is



so bad that ahead of the country's June elections, at least four mayoral candidates were killed. Garcia Harfuch did not say why the mayors asked for protection. He also didn't give much detail on the investigations into Arcos' killing, saying only that the mayor had left his staff behind to attend a private meeting just before his death. Arcos had told local media he needed more protection, but Garcia Harfuch said no formal request had been received. State and federal governments can offer mayors bulletproof vehicles, additional bodyguards and emergency alert systems. The state capital, Chilpancingo, is dominated by two warring drug gangs, the Ardillos and the Tlacos. One staged a demonstration of hundreds of people, hijacked a government armored car.

Brazil lifts ban on Elon Musk's X after complying with Supreme Court demands

Sao Paulo. The Brazilian Supreme Court's Justice Alexandre de Moraes on Tuesday authorised the restoration of social media platform X's service in Brazil, over a month after its nationwide shutdown, according to a court document that was made public. Elon Musk's X was blocked on August 30 in the highly online country of 213 million people — and one of X's biggest markets, with estimates of its user base ranging from 20 to 40 million. De Moraes ordered the shutdown after a months-long dispute with Musk over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation. Musk had disparaged de Moraes, calling him an authoritarian and a censor, even though his rulings, including X's suspension, were repeatedly upheld by his peers. Despite Musk's public bravado, X ultimately complied with all of de Moraes' demands. They included blocking certain accounts from the platform, paying outstanding fines and naming a legal representative in the country. Failure to do the latter had triggered the suspension. "The resumption of (X)'s activities on national territory was conditioned, solely, on full

compliance with Brazilian laws and absolute observance of the Judiciary's decisions, out of respect for national sovereignty," de Moraes said in the court document. "X is proud to return to Brazil," the company said in a statement posted on its Global Government Affairs account. "Giving tens of millions of Brazilians access to our indispensable platform was paramount throughout this entire process. We will continue to defend freedom of speech, within the boundaries of the law, everywhere we operate." Just two days before the ban, on August 28, X said it was removing all its remaining staff in Brazil "effective immediately," saying de Moraes had threatened with arrest its legal representative in the country, Rachel de Oliveira Villa Nova Conceição, if X did not comply with orders to block accounts. Brazilian law requires foreign companies to have a local legal representative to receive notifications of court decisions and swiftly take any requisite action — particularly, in X's case, the



takedown of accounts. Conceição was first named X's legal representative in April and resigned four months later. The company named her to the same job on September 20, according to the public filing with the Sao Paulo commercial registry. In an apparent effort to shield Conceição from potential violations by X — and risking arrest — a clause has been written into Conceição's new representation agreement that she must follow Brazilian law and court decisions, and that any legal responsibility she assumes on X's behalf requires prior

instruction from the company in writing, according to the company's filing. Conceição works for BR4Business a business services firm. Its two-page website provides no insight into its operations or staff. "Something great is or its way," the top of the site's main page reads in English. Its other page is an extensive privacy policy. At three of its listed Sao Paulo offices receptionists told the AP that the company's offices are empty and employees work remotely. Neither Conceição nor BR4Business returned multiple phone calls and emails from the AP. There is nothing illegal or suspect about using a company like BR4Business for legal representation, but it shows that X is doing the bare minimum to operate in the country said Fabio de Sa e Silva, a lawyer and associate professor of International and Brazilian Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

Afghan man, planning attack on US election day in November, arrested

An Afghan man was arrested for plotting an attack on US election day. He conspired to carry out the attack with another Afghan national.



Washington. An Afghan man has been arrested for allegedly plotting to carry out an attack on US election day on behalf of the Islamic State group, the Justice Department said Tuesday. Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi, 27, was arrested on Monday in the western US state of Oklahoma and has been charged with attempting to provide material support to IS. "The Justice Department foiled the defendant's plot to acquire semi-automatic weapons and commit a violent attack in the name of (IS)

on US soil on Election Day," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement. US voters go to the polls on November 5. The Justice Department said Tawhedi was arrested after he "allegedly took steps to liquidate his family's assets, resettle members of his family overseas, acquire AK-47 assault rifles and ammunition, and commit a terrorist attack in the United

States." It said he conspired to carry out the attack with another Afghan national, a juvenile who was not named but was identified in court documents as his brother-in-law. According to the criminal complaint, Tawhedi entered the United States on September 9, 2021 on a special immigrant visa. It said an FBI "confidential human source" contacted Tawhedi after he recently advertised the sale of his family's personal property on Facebook. The FBI source said he needed a computer for a gun business he was starting and Tawhedi expressed interest in purchasing two AK-47 assault rifles and ammunition, according to the complaint. On Monday, Tawhedi and the juvenile met with "FBI assets" at a rural location in Oklahoma and purchased two AK-47 assault rifles, 10 magazines, and 500 rounds of ammunition, it said.

FBI arrests Afghan man who officials say planned Election Day attack in the US

WASHINGTON. The FBI has arrested an Afghan man who officials say was inspired by the Islamic State militant organization and was plotting an Election Day attack targeting large crowds in the US, the Justice Department said Tuesday. Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi, 27, of Oklahoma City told investigators after his arrest Monday that he had planned his attack to coincide with Election Day next month and that he and a co-conspirator expected to die as martyrs, according to charging documents. Tawhedi, who arrived in the U.S. in September 2021, had taken steps in recent weeks to advance his attack plans, including by ordering AK-47 rifles, liquidating his family's assets and buying one-way tickets for his wife and child to travel home to Afghanistan,

officials said. The arrest comes as the FBI confronts heightened concerns over the possibility of extremist violence on U.S. soil, with Director Christopher Wray telling The Associated Press in August that he was "hard pressed to think of a time in my career where so many different kinds of threats are all elevated at once." "Terrorism is still the FBI's number one priority, and we will use every resource to protect the American people," Wray said in a statement Tuesday. An FBI affidavit does not reveal precisely how Tawhedi came onto investigators' radar, but cites what it says is evidence from recent months showing his determination in planning an attack. A photograph from July included in the affidavit depicts a man investigators

identified as Tawhedi reading to two young children, including his daughter, "a text that describes the rewards a martyr receives in the afterlife." Officials say Tawhedi also consumed Islamic State propaganda, contributed to a charity that functions as a front for the militant group and communicated with a person who the FBI determined from a prior investigation was involved in recruitment and indoctrination of people interested in extremism. He also viewed webcams for the White House and the Washington Monument in July. Tawhedi's alleged co-conspirator was not identified by the Justice Department, which described him only as a juvenile, a fellow Afghan national and the brother of Tawhedi's wife.

Netanyahu's 'take back your country' message to Lebanon amid Hezbollah conflict

Calling Lebanon "once the pearl of Middle East known for its tolerance and beauty", Netanyahu urged the people to take back their country, which "Hezbollah has turned into a stockpile of ammunition and a forward Iranian military base".

World Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a direct appeal to Lebanon amid the ongoing conflict with the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group. Calling Lebanon "once the pearl of Middle East known for its tolerance and beauty", Netanyahu urged the people to take back their country, which "Hezbollah has turned

into a stockpile of ammunition and a forward Iranian military base". The Prime Minister's appeal on Tuesday came hours after Israel expanded its ground operations in southern Lebanon, deploying more troops to begin "limited, localised, targeted operational activities" as part of the Jewish nation's 'Operation Northern Arrows' against Hezbollah. In his video address, Netanyahu said, "This is a message to the people of Lebanon. Do you remember when your country was called the pearl of the Middle East? I do. So, what happened to Lebanon? A gang of tyrants and terrorists destroyed it. That's what happened." "Lebanon was once known for its tolerance, for its beauty. Today, it's a place of chaos, a place of war," he added. He also warned the people of Lebanon to save their nation "before it falls into the abyss of a



long war that will lead to destruction and suffering like we see in Gaza. It doesn't have to be that way." "Now you, the Lebanese people, you stand at a significant crossroads. It is your choice. You can now take back your country. You can return it to a path of

peace and prosperity. If you don't, Hezbollah will continue to try to fight Israel from densely populated areas at your expense. It doesn't care if Lebanon is dragged into a wider war." He also reiterated his vow to eliminate Hezbollah and claimed to have killed thousands of its militants, including former chief Hassan Nasrallah and his likely successors. "Israel has decided to put an end to this. We've decided to do whatever is necessary to return our people safely to their homes. Israel has a right to defend itself. Israel also has a right to win! And Israel will win." Hezbollah however, has remained defiant despite Israel's steady advances and unabated strikes against Lebanon since the past three weeks that have led to deaths of over 1,400 people and displaced another 1.2 million.

US scrambled to urge Putin not to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, Woodward book says

WASHINGTON. Months before Russia's war in Ukraine, the United States had intelligence pointing to "highly sensitive, credible conversations inside the Kremlin" that President Vladimir Putin was seriously considering using nuclear weapons to avoid major battlefield losses, journalist Bob Woodward reported in his new book, "War." The US intelligence pointed to a 50% chance that Putin would use tactical nukes if Ukrainian forces surrounded 30,000 Russian troops in the southern city of Kherson, the book says. Just months before, in the far northeast, Ukrainian troops had stunned the Russians by recapturing Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, and were pivoting to liberate Kherson, strategically located on the Dnieper River

not far from the Black Sea. National security adviser Jake Sullivan stared "with dread" at the intelligence assessment — described as coming from the best sources and methods — in late September 2022, seven months after Russia's invasion, the book says. It caused alarm across the Biden administration, moving the chance of Russia using nukes up from 5% to 10% to now 50%. According to Woodward's account, President Joe Biden told Sullivan to "get on the line with the Russians. Tell them what we will do in response." He said to use language that was threatening but not too strong, the book says. Biden also reached out to Putin directly in a message, warning of the "catastrophic consequences" if Russia used nuclear weapons. The famed Watergate



reporter's latest book also details Donald Trump's conversations with Putin since leaving office, Biden's frustrations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and more. The Associated Press obtained an

early copy of Woodward's book, which is due out next week. The book provides intriguing inside details about the U.S. assessment of the possibility of Putin deploying nukes, but the Biden administration's concerns that Russia might use tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine were not secret. From the president on down, numerous officials warned Putin against it. Putin and other Kremlin voices also have frequently threatened the West with Russia's nuclear arsenal. In a strong, new warning to the West late last month, Putin said any nation's conventional attack on Russia that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

Hurricane Milton strengthens into a Category 5 as Florida prepares for evacuations

World Floridians warned 'you are going to die' if they don't evacuate as Milton nears, screamed The Guardian headline on Wednesday morning. Storm-battered Florida braced for a direct hit from Hurricane Milton which strengthened back to a Category 5 storm Tuesday, as US President Joe Biden begged residents to flee what he warned could be the worst natural disaster to hit the state in a century. As the second huge hurricane in as many weeks rumbled toward Florida's west coast, a sense of looming catastrophe spread as people raced to board up homes and flee. "It's a matter of life and death, and that's not hyperbole," Biden said from the White House, urging those under orders to leave to "evacuate now, now, now." Biden's warning came amid a bitter pre-election quarrel, with his Democratic vice president Kamala Harris castigating her rival Donald Trump for peddling false claims that recovery efforts after the first storm, Hurricane Helene, were diverted away from Republicans. As of Tuesday, Milton returned to the maximum Category 5 designation, generating maximum sustained winds of 165 mph (270 kph), the National Hurricane Center said. "Fluctuations in intensity are likely while Milton moves across the eastern Gulf of Mexico, but Milton is expected to be a dangerous major hurricane when it reaches the west-central coast of Florida Wednesday night," the NHC said. Governor Ron DeSantis, at a news conference, ticked off town after town and county after county that are in danger. "Basically the entire peninsula portion of Florida is under some type of either a watch or a warning," he said. Airlines put on extra flights out of Tampa, Orlando, Fort Myers and Sarasota, as highways clogged up with escaping traffic and gas stations sold out of fuel.

News box

LPG blast: 25-year-old woman, live-in partner severely injured in Chennai



**CHENNAI.** A woman and her live-in partner sustained severe burn injuries after the LPG cylinder in their house at Kuberan Nagar in Madipakkam exploded due to an alleged leak on Monday evening. The Madipakkam police said the woman, Vincy Flacida (25), suffered over 90% burns and the man, Manikandan (30), 45%. The Madipakkam police said both the injured are employees of a national bank in Guindy, and have been in a live-in relationship since a few years. They said the cylinder exploded after Vincy tried to turn on the stove. Manikandan sustained injuries while trying to rescue her. The police rushed them to a nearby hospital, and were later taken to Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital for further treatment. Quoting the doctors, the police said Vincy's condition is critical while Manikandan is responding well to treatments. Further probe is on.

Johns Hopkins keen on its centre in KWIN City: MB Patil

**BENGALURU.** Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil has said that US-based Johns Hopkins University is keen on setting up its higher education institution at KWIN City (Knowledge, Well-being and Innovation City) at Doddaballapur here. Patil, who is in the US, held a meeting with the officials of the university on Monday and explained to them about his vision to make Karnataka a global leader in research, healthcare and higher education sectors, and welcomed the university to play a pivotal role in this transformation. Patil also interacted with representatives of US institutions such as Carey Business School, Bloomberg School of Public Health and the School of Medicine. He held a series of meetings with leaders of healthcare, aerospace, defense and higher education sectors in the US on having partnerships with Karnataka through investments. Patil met representatives of GE Healthcare and L3 Harris Technologies. During his meeting with Dave Johnson, vice-president, L3 Harris Technologies, Patil informed him about the steps taken to promote aerospace and defense industries in India, particularly in Karnataka. He reiterated his government's commitment to providing all support to L3 Harris for its investment plans in Karnataka. The minister invited L3 Harris to the "Invest Karnataka Summit 2025" in Bengaluru. Patil's meeting with Andrew Quinn, executive director, International Trade and Policy, GE Healthcare, focussed on manufacturing medical devices in Karnataka, using the state's robust infrastructure and talent pool.

Wait ends, Cauvery Stage V launch on Oct 16



**BENGALURU.** The Stage V of the Cauvery project, which will supply drinking water to 110 villages under the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on October 16, said DCM DK Shivakumar. This project has been undertaken at a cost of Rs 4,336 crore in partnership with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). It can be recalled that in 2014, the government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah formulated and launched this project to provide adequate water to the villages newly added to Bengaluru. This project will supply additional 775 MLD of water to Bengaluru city and Cauvery water will be supplied to every corner. "50 lakh people will benefit from this," said Shivakumar. Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) Chairman Ram Prasat Manohar personally gave an invite and invited the CM. DCM said that he personally visited TK Halli recently, and gave necessary suggestions and instructions to the authorities for the speedy implementation of the said project. He said that Cauvery water will be adequately supplied to the houses of various villages of Bommanahalli, Byatarayanapura, KR Puram, Mahadevapura and RR Nagar assembly constituencies.

BJP vows legal, political support against Waqf Board's Munambam claim

**KOCHI.** The Minority Morcha on Tuesday took out a march to the Waqf Board office in Kaloor against the alleged claim made by the latter which will lead to the displacement of around 600 families at Munambam. BJP state president K Surendran inaugurated the march. Speaking on the occasion he said the BJP would provide political and legal protection to the people who are facing the threat of displacement from the land bought by their forefathers in Munambam three generations ago due to the illegal claim of the Waqf Board. "It is said the Congress and the opposition leader will solve the problem. However, at the core of these problems lies the Waqf Act enacted by Congress in 2013. The BJP government introduced the Waqf Act Amendment Bill in Parliament to protect the people from the looting of Waqf properties by religious leaders and

Congress leaders in the name of religion. The Bill will be passed with a large majority in the winter session of Parliament," he said. "Congress was always with its Muslim vote bank,"



Surendran pointed out. "When the Popular Front criticised the Pala Bishop and demanded prayer rooms for Muslim students in Christian schools, no Congress leader came forward to say that this was a threat to a secular community," he added.

Six interstate burglars involved in 35 cases arrested by Cyberabad police

**HYDERABAD.** The sleuths of Cyberabad CCS on Tuesday arrested six members of two interstate house burglary gangs that were allegedly involved in 35 burglary cases across Telangana and an automobile theft case. The accused were nabbed by the cops on two different occasions. Five of the accused were previously arrested by different police stations and sent to jail, the cops noted. Observing that the number of house burglary cases were high, the police formed special teams to trace the two gangs, who hail from Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. They also visited Dhar to collect information. "These criminals have formed themselves into two gangs, each gang consisting of six members, and visited Telangana on different occasions from 2020 to September 2024," the police said. "They target a locality, conduct recce during the daytime and then hide in thick bushes. After consuming alcohol, they enter the locality at night and commit the offences between 1 to 4 AM," said Rajendranagar DCP Ch Srinivas.

Hyderabad Bangalee Samity's 83rd Durga puja to feature Governor's visit



**HYDERABAD.** 'Maa aschen'. Every Bengali feels an array of beautiful emotions when they hear these words, which herald the arrival of Maa Durga. On these lines, Hyderabad Bangalee Samity (HBS), the oldest and largest Bengali cultural organisation in Hyderabad, has announced six days of Durga Puja celebrations at NTR Stadium. The festivities begin from Panchami on October 8 and conclude with Dashami on October 13. A highlight of Durga Puja is the Ashtami Puja, considered the most auspicious day of the festival. For Bengalis, Ashtami represents the triumph of good over evil and is a day of deep spiritual devotion. This year marks the 83rd Durga Puja hosted by HBS, a legacy rooted in tradition, culture, and community spirit. Each day will begin with tithi-appropriate pujas. This year's celebration will be marked by the visit of the Governor of Telangana, Jishnu Dev Varma, who will be attending the Durga Puja on October 11 to seek the blessings of Maa Durga. Dr Mamidi Harikishna, Director of Language and Culture, will also seek blessings on the same day.

Yellow alert issued in six districts in Kerala as heavy rainfall predicted

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** The IMD has declared a yellow alert for Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki and Thrissur districts on Wednesday due to heavy rainfall prediction. According to their prediction, rain or thundershower is most likely to occur at most places in the state till October 14. Fishermen are advised not to venture into the sea during the period. IMD has also predicted the formation of a low-pressure area in south-eastern and east-central Arabian Sea due to the trough running to

a cyclonic circulation, on Wednesday. It is likely to move northwestwards and intensify further into a depression over the central Arabian Sea during the subsequent three days. The recent rains are due to the active spell of Southwest monsoon in the state. Koilandy recorded extremely heavy rainfall of 22cm on Tuesday followed by heavy rainfall in Vadakara (11cm), Lower Sholayar (10cm), Kozhikode (9cm), Irikkur (8cm), Mahe and Cheruvanchery (7cm each). IMD issued an orange alert in Malappuram and Kannur on Tuesday.



Thiruvananthapuram court hands 35-year jail term to man for abusing brother's granddaughter

Court imposes 11.05L fine, to be given to child, failing which accused will serve addl jail term

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** The Thiruvananthapuram Fast Track Special Court on Tuesday sentenced a 62-year-old man to 35 years of rigorous imprisonment for the sexual abuse of the five-year-old granddaughter of his younger brother. Delivering the sentence, Justice R Rekha handed him a combined jail term of 102 years under various sections, which shall run concurrently. The court also imposed a total fine of Rs 1.05 lakh. The judgment stated that the actions of the accused were extremely cruel, deserving no mercy. Given the nature of the crime, the judge emphasised that the accused must face the maximum possible punishment. The court ordered that the fine amount be given to the child. Or else, the accused will have to serve an additional two years and three months in prison, the judgment said. The incident that led to the case happened



between November 2020 and February 2021. The accused is the elder brother of the child's maternal grandfather. The crime happened when the child visited the accused's house to play, during which he assaulted the child on three separate occasions. When the child cried in pain, the accused threatened her with further

harm if she told anyone of the assault. However, the child's grandmother overheard her saying to her mother about the misdeeds of the accused. On further questioning, the child revealed the abuse. When the grandmother examined the child, she found severe injuries. The family immediately consulted a doctor and informed the Kadinamkulam police. The medical examination confirmed the injuries. Special Public Prosecutor R S Vijay Mohan and Advocate R Y Akhilesh represented the prosecution. They examined 14 witnesses and submitted 24 documents and three pieces of evidence. Sub Inspector Deepu K S and Inspector Bins Joseph from the Kadinamkulam police station carried out the investigation. The court also directed the Legal Services Authority to provide the child compensation.

Kochi Corporation to introduce NFC Emergency ID cards for senior citizens



**KOCHI.** What if a senior citizen goes out alone and suddenly becomes unconscious or develops a serious health issue? The Kochi corporation is planning to roll out Near Field Communication-enabled (NFC) Emergency Identity cards for the geriatric population in the city to help the elderly avail quick help in such situations. As per the project blueprint, which has been developed by the corporation in association with voluntary organisations such as MAGICS and the Indian Medical Association (IMA), the specially-designed emergency identity cards can be used to store medical and contact information of senior citizens, which medical professionals can access in an emergency. "The project is part of the age-friendly initiatives being implemented by the Kochi corporation, which goes a long way in making the life of senior citizens hassle-free. It now awaits the nod of the steering committee and the council," Mayor M Anilkumar said. "The NFC technology-enabled identity cards will also be helpful for those suffering from diseases like dementia. In normal situations, anybody can rush a senior citizen to a nearby hospital but the medical professionals would not know their medical history or the medicines they are taking or whether they are allergic to a particular medicine," said Dr Praveen G Pai, chairman, MAGICNSNGO. The Centre of Excellence for Developing Age-Friendly Communities (CEDAC), functioning under the corporation, is slated to implement the first-of-its-kind initiative in the country. "The project is in the pilot phase, with the NFC cards being provided to 100 persons, including councillors, to test the functional efficacy" he said. Explaining the functioning, Dr Praveen said all the details in the identity card can be accessed when the card comes in contact with a smartphone. "NFC technology enables the same. We're using the existing technology appropriately to extend care to senior citizens. Directions for the use of the cards will be written on them. Also, the information stored can be updated anytime. It will also help the police contact the relatives of such patients," he added.

Karnataka HC: Placing undertrial in 'andheri cell' unknown

**BENGALURU.** The Karnataka High Court observed that the axe that needed to have fallen on actor Darshan for allegedly sitting with a rowdy, Wilson Garden Naga and others, sipping coffee and smoking a cigarette in the Central Prison in Bengaluru, had been extended to another accused, Pradosh S Rao, in the Renukaswamy murder case, though he was away from the company. The court directed the prison authorities to shift him from Belagavi Central Prison's 'andheri cell' to Central Prison in Bengaluru. "Placing an undertrial prisoner in such a cell is unknown to law, unless grave circumstances are ensured. Shifting of undertrial prisoners cannot be at the whim and fancy of the prosecution and such orders, when sought, magistrates ought to apply their mind. If shifting had to be done at all, it could be shifting of Darshan, as he was at the scene, in the company of others, sipping coffee and holding a cigarette. The petitioner, who is away in some cell, is penalised for Darshan's act," said Justice M Nagaprasanna. It was alleged that



Pradosh was housed in an 'andheri cell' -- a cell with darkness for 15 hours -- and was made to sit in front of the camera for eight hours, on the score that he was under observation. Therefore, Pradosh approached the high court, questioning the order dated August 27, 2024, passed by the 24th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate in the city, to shift him from the central prison of Bengaluru to the Central Prison at Belagavi. Quashing the order, Justice M Nagaprasanna observed that there was no independent reason to shift the petitioner, particularly to

an andheri cell, as there was no allegation against him that he had indulged in certain acts. It has undoubtedly affected the right of the undertrial prisoner who is shifted, and should be re-shifted, the judge said, citing a judgment of the apex court. The State Public Prosecutor defended the action of shifting the petitioner on the ground that the name of the cell is 'andheri', and it is rather surprising that instead of a number given to the cell, the name 'andheri' is given. Making clear that the order would not benefit any other accused in the crime, the court said the impugned order is undoubtedly passed without giving any opportunity to the petitioner to file his objections, if any. On the ground that the photograph showing Darshan sipping coffee and holding a cigarette would demoralise witnesses and provide room for suspicion on differential treatment being given to Darshan, undertrial prisoners were sought to be transferred from the central prison at Bengaluru to a different prison.

## China ups the nuclear ante

FOR some time now, China has been signalling a change in its nuclear weapon policy. It usually makes no announcements or declarations. But, on September 25 — for the first time since 1980 — China tested a long-range strategic missile whose dummy warhead landed in the South Pacific Ocean, near the city of Bora Bora in French Polynesia, over 12,000 km away. In this case, China actually announced the test and provided the required notification to the sea and air traffic control. Most Chinese missile tests take place within Chinese territory, with missiles being fired into the Taklamakan desert in Xinjiang. According to the Chinese, the missile fired by the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) was part of a "routine arrangement in our annual training plan" and fell in an "expected area" in the sea. The statement said it was "in line with international law and international practice, and is not directed at any specific country or target."

They said they had notified countries concerned about the test in advance and it was confirmed by the Philippine authorities that two NOTAMS (notice to airmen — sea and air navigational warnings) were issued prior to the launch. Analysts said the missile was in all likelihood fired from the Hainan region and passed through north of the Philippines. The US said it had received "some advanced notification" of the test. Japan complained that it had not been warned about it. The missile in question could be the DF-31AG, China's long-range weapon that can reach targets in the US. It is capable of being fired from mobile transporter-erector-launcher systems. There is a great deal of speculation as to why the Chinese conducted the test the way they did. It came amidst rising tensions among Japan, the Philippines, China and the US. Chinese and Philippine vessels have been involved in multiple collisions near Sabina Shoal, just 86 km from the Philippines' west coast; in June, there was an encounter at the Second Thomas Shoal nearby. Another factor may have been the recent US decision to deploy its new mid-range missile system known as the Typhon in the Philippines for an exercise; according to reports, the system remains deployed there. This may also be related to the large-scale purges that shook the Chinese rocket force on account of corruption. Last December, China had announced the dismissal of nine senior military officials of the PLA, many of them senior officers of the PLARF, for "serious violations of law and discipline" — a phrase used to refer to corruption. So, this could be seen as a reassurance of sorts for the Chinese public. Officially, China maintains a "no first use" policy relating to nuclear weapons, which it announced at the time of its first nuclear test in 1964. It has since reaffirmed this in its 2015 and 2019 defence white papers. India, too, has such a policy, which is based on not being the first to initiate a nuclear strike, and relying on the concept of assured retaliation. But unlike India, China has been expanding its nuclear arsenal rapidly. The 2023 China military power report of the US said Beijing had 500 operational nuclear warheads in May last year as compared to 400 the year before. The US believes that China will have more than 1,000 warheads by 2030 and is accelerating its intercontinental range ballistic missile programme. The US had disclosed the size of American holdings as of September 2023 — 3,748 warheads that are in the process of being modernised. According to the Pentagon, the PLA is implementing a Launch-on-Warning posture under which a warning of a strike leads to a counterstrike before the enemy weapons actually land. This posture is similar to that of the US and Russia, but not the Indian one, where you first sustain a strike and then hit back.

In 2021, observers detected three vast missile silo fields under construction in north-central China, where hundreds of additional long-range missiles could be deployed. Though commercial satellite imagery has provided substantial detail on these silos and their rapid construction, the Chinese Government has chosen not to comment on them.

## How the IAF has strengthened India's strategic edge

As the IAF celebrates its 92nd anniversary, the challenges it faces include increasing combat potential.

AS the IAF completes another year of service to the nation, it is time to reflect on its achievements over the past year and the challenges that lie ahead as it moves forward in its centennial decade.

With just six aircraft and a handful of 'Hawai Sepoys' or 'airmen', the Indian Air Force took birth on October 8, 1932, just about two decades after the first manned airplane flight. The ninety-first anniversary of the IAF was celebrated at Prayagraj on October 8 last year, with an air power display and an impressive parade that mesmerised the audience in Allahabad, which is also home to the Central Command of the IAF.

In keeping with its recent tradition of dedicating a theme for itself every year to focus on its operational preparedness and training, the IAF had decided on 'Air Power Beyond Boundaries' for itself for the year 2023-24. On the Air Force Day last year, flashfloods in the Teesta river caused mayhem and destruction across Sikkim and West Bengal, disrupting communications, destroying roads and other infrastructure and leading to loss of precious lives across the two states. The IAF promptly swung into action, deploying its Chinook and Mi 17-1V helicopters, carrying out rescue and relief operations, dropping medicines, essential supplies and communication equipment and using its Garuda commandos to facilitate the evacuation of more than 1,700 people, including tourists and foreign nationals. From November 12 to 28 last year, in response to the Silkyara tunnel collapse in Uttarakhand, the IAF deployed its heavy lift C-17 Globemaster and C-130J Hercules aircraft to transport equipment and personnel, apart from Mi 17 and Chinook helicopters to evacuate rescued personnel to the nearest medical facility.

erving as the first responder when an earthquake struck Nepal in the first week of November 2023, the IAF launched a C-130J Hercules aircraft with essential supplies, providing medicines, relief material and trained personnel to assist in disaster relief. India also provided more than 70 tonnes of humanitarian aid and relief material to the people affected by the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict by sending two C-17 aircraft on October 22 and November 19, 2023; these landed at the El-Arish airbase in Egypt, close to the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza strip. Last year, the IAF participated in various bilateral and multilateral exercises — from Red Flag in the USA to Eastern Bridge with Oman, Pitch Black with Australia, Udara Shakti with Malaysia, Garuda with France and Desert Knight with UAE. All these exercises had other air forces participating, along with the forces from the host countries. The eagerness for the air forces of the countries across the world to participate in exercises with the IAF



bears testimony to its professional acumen and the growing heft of India as a nation in the emerging world order. The IAF also carried out Exercise Vayushakti on February 17, 2024, at the Pokhran range wherein it demonstrated its offensive capability by carrying out live firing that was witnessed by a diverse audience comprising the diplomatic corps of friendly foreign countries. The exercise witnessed the participation of the indigenous Tejas Mk1 aircraft and Dhruv and Prachand helicopters, apart from Jaguars, Rafale, Mig 29, Su 30 MKI, Mirage 2000, Hawk, C-130J, Apache and Chinook, which carried out day and night operations. Our indigenous surface-to-air weapon systems — Akaash and Samar — demonstrated their ability to track and shoot down intruding aircraft. It demonstrated the ability of the IAF to deliver weapons with precision on designated targets simultaneously from a number of bases. Under Exercise Gagan Shakti 2024, which commenced on April 1 this year, the entire air force was mobilised for operational contingencies in two phases, simulating the emergence of threats that might emerge from a two-front situation. With extensive flying day and night, with large force engagement exercises, the IAF tested all the key features of airpower: speed, precision, flexibility, reach and responsiveness, along with sustaining a high tempo of operations 24x7 for 10 days. The IAF successfully carried out the largest multilateral exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' that witnessed the participation of 11 countries with their flying assets and 27 countries as observers from nations representing all the continents. The exercise was carried out in two phases at Sulur and Jodhpur air bases and more than

1,000 sorties were flown, with the chiefs of many air forces also participating in the exercise. This exercise tested the mettle of the IAF in planning and executing an international exercise. It also demonstrated its indigenous defence capabilities on the sidelines with an international defence exposition at both the venues. The IAF is celebrating its ninety-second anniversary this year. It commenced with a scintillating airshow at the Marina Beach in Chennai on October 6, with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin as the chief guest. A rare treat for Chennaiites, the Marina Beach, one of the longest beaches in the world, was an ideal venue for air display and provided an unobstructed view for the enthusiastic crowd. It is set to enter the Limca Book of Records for being the largest gathering at an air display. Air Chief Marshal AP Singh PVSM, AVSM, the new Chief, would review the ceremonial parade and address all air warriors at Tambaram Air Force Station, also in Chennai, on October 8. The IAF theme for the forthcoming year is 'Bhartiya Vayusena: Sashakt, Saksham aur Atmanirbhar' ('Strong, Capable and Self-Reliant'), emphasising the focus on self-reliance and modernisation. The challenge for the IAF involves increasing its combat potential with faster induction of Tejas Mk1A, aerial refuellers, airborne early warning and control aircraft, indigenous weapons and radar systems and operationalisation of secure communications with software defined radios (SDR) and operational data link (ODL). The IAF is in top gear, and will continue to serve the nation in keeping with its motto of 'Nabha Sprisham Diptam' ('Touching the sky with glory'). The Indian industry, however, needs to change gears to match the pace and keep up.

## Farmers lose out

It cannot be business as usual

FEW would be surprised by the revelation that farmers in India get only about one-third of the final selling price of fruits and vegetables. Many would put the figure even lower than what a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) research paper indicates. Wholesalers and retailers pocket almost two-thirds of what consumers pay. For the three principal crops, the study puts the farmers' share at 33 per cent for tomato, 36 per cent for onion and 37 per cent for potato. The stark anomaly is attributed to the lack of an efficient supply chain and marketing system. The perishable nature of the crops, shortage of storage facilities and the large number of intermediaries are persistent bottlenecks. The bust-and-boom cycle symbolises the structural inefficiencies. Farmers resort to distress sale and even dump crops in anger when prices drop far below production costs. In the lean season, when the prices shoot up, they do not benefit much.



In contrast, egg suppliers get 75 per cent of the final price.

For poultry meat, farmers and aggregators receive for 56 per cent of retail price. For cereal and dairy products, farmers receive around 70 per cent. Studies over the years have advocated more investment in research and development, irrigation and logistics. The RBI paper suggests reforms in marketing of vegetable and fruit crops, and their necessity cannot be overstated; it is imperative to create more storage facilities. A pragmatic outlook is the way forward. The authorities must take note of the farmers' concerns — the push for private mandis, for instance, remains a contentious issue — and build consensus on systemic changes. It must no longer be business as usual. Tying demands such as assured price in political knots is to no one's advantage. Work out bipartisan arrangements based on the simple logic that the farmer must not lose out.

## Local solutions are key to global challenges

The 21st century paradigm of governance has too much 'I' and too little 'we' and too many silos, with too little collaboration.

THE United Nations, set up after World War II to prevent further wars, has failed to prevent the unfolding carnage in West Asia, which could lead to another world war. The World Bank, IMF and WTO have been unable to solve the global problems of climate change and inequitable finance and trade systems. The present architecture of the global institutions is based on the principle of vertical hierarchical control. Powerful nations on the top set the rules for the economic, political and environmental management systems around the world. A new architecture is required. It should be based on the principles of local management of complex systems and lateral cooperation among stakeholders to solve systemic problems that cross the boundaries of nations and cities.

Various combinations of the following three forces are leading to the breakdown of the governance systems: the concept of the sovereignty of the national governments, which is enshrined in the UN Charter; the rise of individual rights as an ideology; and the pressures of the global problems of climate change and societal and economic pathologies represented in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which cut across national boundaries.

The misalignment of the boundaries of the natural environmental systems, ethno-cultural social systems and constitutional governance systems is the root cause of the breakdown of global governance. Oceans separate continents and within the large Euro-Asian land mass, mountain ranges isolate the Indian subcontinent. The river systems on the continents define other natural boundaries. Ethno-cultural civilisational systems correspond

roughly with these natural geographies. Governance jurisdictions have been redrawn over the centuries, crossing natural boundaries following wars spurred by religious and ethnic differences and ambitions of competing leaders. The seventeenth century Westphalian Peace Treaty sought to end wars in Europe by establishing the principle of inviolable national boundaries. The UN Charter is founded on this principle, according to which, countries should not interfere in others' internal affairs. Nevertheless, since the founding of the UN, western powers have created new countries which do not correspond with the natural geographical and ethno-cultural boundaries. For example, Pakistan and India, and Israel and Palestine.

Others, like Yugoslavia and Sudan, have been divided in attempts to align governance with ethno-cultural realities. A war is underway to create new boundaries between the Ukrainians and Russians. The break-up of nations is justified by the principle of preservation of historical identities and the rights of all people to become what they want to be. Individual rights can translate into extreme liberalism, when individuals are given the freedom to change their histories and be whoever they like to be, including whatever sex they choose. 'I' can never be separated from 'we', as the African expression 'ubuntu' says ('I am because you are'). Individual identities cannot be divorced from the collective identities. The rights of individuals cannot be separated from the rights of the collectives in which they live.

The wellbeing of individuals depends on the wellbeing of their societies and environments.

Medical science has established that social and environmental conditions impact the health of individuals significantly. Bringing about improvements in social and environmental conditions is a less costly and more sustainable



solution for improving the citizens' health than doing so by the high-tech medical solutions focused on the biology of individuals.

These scientific insights call for changes in the designs of public policies and measurements of their outcomes. The policies should focus on the interventions in the conditions of social, environmental and economic systems in which citizens live rather than on the benefits to individuals. The impacts of public policies should be measured by how much they strengthen the local communities rather than by counting the individual beneficiaries of the government and philanthropy programmes. The top-down institutional structure

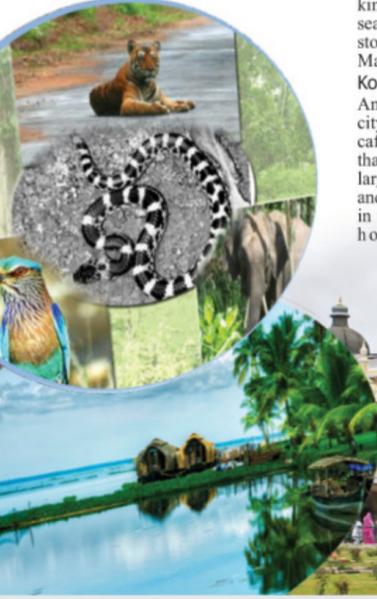
of governance has failed because it is not based on the systemic view of the global problems. There are 17 SDGs. They are interlinked. None can be solved by itself. Moreover, they are not manifested in the same way everywhere. The problems of environment and climate are not the same in Alaska and Barbados, nor in Uttarakhand and Kerala. The livelihood problems of the slums of New York are different from those of rural Bihar. Therefore, all problems must be solved locally. Forecasters estimate that the SDGs will be achieved only by 2087 if we persist with the present top-down and siloed approach of problem-solving. The aim was to achieve them by 2030. Everywhere, problems of at least seven of the 17 SDGs must be solved urgently. Let's do the maths. There can be 94 million different combinations of seven problems from a set of 17! Clearly, the one-size solutions developed by global climate scientists and health experts will not fit the local realities everywhere.

The 21st century paradigm of governance has too much 'I' and too little 'we' and too many silos, with too little collaboration. The prevalent way of organising on scale breaks up the systemic problems into parts, to be managed by specialists. Solutions arrived at in silos often harm the other parts of the system. Solutions to grow the economy with man-made infrastructure destroy the environment. Solutions for increasing the productivity of agriculture by applying more chemicals and replacing farmers with machines reduce the productivity of the soil. So, more chemicals are required, in a deathly spiral for the earth.

# Go tripping around Mysore

## Wayanad

Located between the Kannur and Kozhikode districts in Kerala, Wayanad is a sparkling green emerald sprawled across the slopes of the Western Ghats. The monsoons persevere here—the rainy season starts in June and lasts all the way till mid November—during which the already lush landscape takes on an even more vibrant shade of green, and everything is washed squeaky clean. The most enjoyable way to experience it is by checking into a jungle resort—even better if it has a treehouse. During the occasional dry spells in between, venture out and enjoy everything else the region has to offer. Wayanad ploughs tourists with some interesting prehistoric archaeological sites, tea plantations and thick



forests, and is home to some of the oldest (and most insulated) tribes in India.

## Kumarakom

Part of the Kuttanad region, picturesque Kumarakom is an archipelago scattered on the eastern edge of the Vembanad Lake. This area's natural splendour and way of life were vividly described in Arundhati Roy's Man Booker Prize-winning, 'The God of Small Things'. Kumarakom has a string of luxury resorts including the Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom Lake Resort and Vivanta by Taj - Kumarakom, located right on the backwaters and guests can rove about the canals on boating and fishing trips. The 14-acre Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is an ornithologist's paradise and home to egrets, darters, herons, herons, waterfowls and kingfishers. The sanctuary also welcomes seasonal guests including the elusive Siberian stork, between the months of November and May.

## Kochi

Ancient meets contemporary in Kochi, a lively city at just an hour's drive from Alleppey. Posh cafes sit right by the side of Chinese fishing nets that were installed here in 1350 AD; India's largest man-made island is a major attraction and so is the Paradesi Synagogue that was built in the year 1560. St Francis CSI Church once housed the

remains of Vasco da Gama and is also the oldest European church in India. Kochi also hosts the world famous Kochi-Muziris Biennale, an event that sees much of the city turning into an art exhibition ground. With its potpourri of history, culture, arts and the great Kerala cuisine, Kochi makes for a perfect short trip from Alleppey.

## Coonoor

An erstwhile summer refuge to the British, Coonoor retains its colonial tinge to this day, with its club culture, well established boarding schools, sophisticated architecture and a distinct plantation lifestyle. Travellers love this tea town for its relatively quieter environs as compared to Ooty, and if you're drawn to the outdoors, here are our top picks for how you can fill your days.

## Bandipur National Park

Bandipur National Park one of the most stunning National Parks in India. Situated between the picturesque Western Ghats next to the

Mysore-Ooty highway in Karnataka, the Park was once the private hunting reserve for the Maharaja of Mysore. It's now home to elephants, gaurs, tigers, sloth bears, muggers, Indian rock pythons and Dhols. The park was established in 1974 as a tiger reserve under Project Tiger and has a good number of Tigers. Birds like the jungle fowl and green pigeon are also found here.

## Ooty

The most famous hill station south of the Vindhyas, Ootacamund's resplendent tea plantations and red-roofed bungalows still carry echoes of its colonial past. Originally a densely forested area in the Nilgiri mountains, it was converted into a summer retreat for the British in the 19th century. The undeniable natural beauty of Ooty (as it's universally referred to) and its misty green trails continues to draw visitors every year. Ooty is pleasant all year round, but the summer months are the high season. If you want to avoid the crowds and don't mind a drizzle then head here between August and November, when the rains turn the hills a luxuriant green.

## Kozhikode

Less-known than the backwaters of central Kerala, the backwaters around Kozhikode are also not as touristy and consequently much less crowded. Houseboats can be hired at the pier near the Purakkattiri Bridge on the Ullery-Perambra road, 10 kilometres outside Kozhikode. The prettiest routes wind along the Canoly Canal, Kallai River and Elathur. An excursion to the scenic Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary, set amidst hillocks and by an estuary, is highly recommended. The sanctuary comprises of a group of small isles where the Kadalundi River meets the Arabian Sea, and is home to over 100 species of native birds and 60 kinds of migratory birds.

## Hogenakkal Falls

Experie

**With the places to visit near Mysore as stunning as the city itself, you will have plenty to choose from. While there is no comparing the wonderful Hogenakkal Falls that is just a drive of 4 hours away, Bandipur National Park too is quite alluring for nature lovers. Kerala aficionados can drive off to Kochi, Wayanad or the startlingly scenic Kumarakom. Ooty, Kozhikode and Coonoor are quite popular with anyone seeking a solitary getaway. Most of these places are quite accessible via road and make for a perfect trip to Mysore and around.**

nces like coracle rides (round wickerwork boats called parisals by the locals) and medicinal baths make Hogenakkal Falls literally a much more immersive experience than other large waterfalls in the country. Leading up to the Falls the Cauveri River flows through a forest known for naturally growing herbs which many believe gives the water curative properties. The Falls are located a short drive (150 kilometres) from Bangalore along NH7 on the border of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

## Top 5 places to visit in

# Dooars

With an unspoilt terrain and the mighty Himalayas forming a stunning backdrop, Dooars is a paradise for nature lovers. Many may not be aware of the fact that there are many places to visit in Dooars. Duar means door in Bengali and this region has been aptly named Dooars or Duars as it is the door to Bhutan and North East India. Veined by mighty rivers like Teesta, Torsa, Murti, Jaldhaka, Dyna and Sankosh, the region is blessed with dense forests and exotic wildlife. Nature lovers would have an unforgettable time in this region exploring its rich flora and fauna as well as beautiful landscape.

From the rippling rivulets of Jhalong and the picturesque valleys of Buxa with forests marked by walking trails to the riverbeds at Jaldapara and the lush greenery of Gorumara National Park, these places are a treat for the eyes. These parks, however, remain close during the monsoon season. Travellers coming to this stunning place around November-December can be a part of Raas Mela which is one of the ancient fairs held here. As per the Bengali calendar, the day of full moon (Purnima) in the month of Kartik marks the beginning of the fair. So plan your trip to this lesser-known gem to create memories that can be cherished for a lifetime.

## Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary

Not too far from Gorumara National Park lies Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary, another hidden treasure of Dooars. A drive through some of the verdant tea gardens in the undulating plains of Dooars will take you to Chapramari. The area derives its name from two words—chakra (referring to a variety of fish found in north Bengal) and mari (meaning plenty). Covering an area of 9.6 sq km, the sanctuary boasts of a diverse range of flora and fauna that delights nature lovers.

Chapramari was declared a national reserve forest in 1895 and later, renamed as a wildlife reserve in 1939. After a few decades, in 1998, it was designated a wildlife sanctuary. The region is famous for its elephants that can be spotted easily. In addition, gaur is commonly found here. The sanctuary is also inhabited by Royal Bengal tiger, boars, deer, leopard, reptiles and various other animals. If you love birdwatching, do remember to carry a pair of binoculars to catch a glimpse of colourful birds like parrot, kingfisher and green pigeon, among many others. For accommodation, there are just a few options available in the area. Hence, whenever you visit Dooars, spend some time in this peaceful retreat in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas.

## Buxa Tiger Reserve

A beautiful location in the lap of nature interspersed with the River Jayanti, mountains and dense forests—that's Buxa for you. The area is however more popular for Buxa Tiger Reserve, which is one of its kind in eastern Himalayas. Situated in Alipurduar, the reserve actually consists of the former Buxa Forest Division and a part of the Cooch

Behar Forest Division. It was set up in the year 1983 and was given the status of a national park in 1992.

The reserve's rich biodiversity has been attracting tourists for years now and has become a popular escape for tired souls who love to relax in the lap of nature. The area, approximately 760 sq km, encompasses a mix of different types of forests—riverine, savannah, evergreen, sal and others. The topography and climate not only supports a rich variety of plant species but also animals. Visitors can spot mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fishes, such as tigers, civets, red jungle fowls, leopards, elephants, gaurs, porcupines, rhesus macaque, mahseer, tortoise and butterflies.

Buxa is also an absolute delight for birdwatchers. Birds like red stars, wagtails, fork-tails, ibisbill, great pied hornbills, and the trans-Himalayan migratory goosander can be spotted here. A number of migratory birds too make Buxa their temporary home, such as gargani teal, common teal, white-eyed pochard and the large whistling teal at the Narathali Lake. The black-necked crane, which is a rarity in India, can be spotted in Buxa during winters. Besides, visitors can also explore other attractions of the region, such as

Buxa Fort, Jayanti and Rajabhatkhawa. For accommodation, homestays and resorts are available in the region. Buxa Tiger Reserve, a peaceful retreat, is definitely a not-to-miss attraction during a visit to Dooars.

## Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary

The area derives its name from a lake named Rasikbil in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. The lake is surrounded by low water land or marshland, which provides appropriate dwelling atmosphere for birds. Rasikbil is one of the five such low water lands in the area, others being Neeldaba, Bochamari, Shankhadanga and Raichangmari. No wonder, the area attracts a lot of migratory birds year-round, besides being home to several other resident birds. So, if birdwatching is one of your favourite hobbies, then you would love your visit to the magnificent Rasikbil Bird Sanctuary. Do remember to carry a pair of binoculars so that you can easily spot some exquisite species of birds such as cormorants, ibis, parrots, owls and storks. You can also catch glimpses of water birds like lesser whistling teal, shoveler, wigeon duck, small blue kingfisher and gadwall. Apart from birdwatching, you can choose to indulge in other activities as well. Travellers often opt for boating in the lake and nature walk in the forests. They also visit the aviary and tortoise rescue

centre, deer park, python house, crocodile rehabilitation centre and leopard house in the vicinity. A day spent at such places provides an insight into the ways of animal rescue and rehabilitation. Rasikbil, a paradise of winged beauties, can be reached by road from Cooch Behar and Alipurduar.

## Gorumara National Park

Situated along the banks of the River Murti and Raidak, Gorumara National Park is one of the most popular attractions in Dooars. The area of the park, which is around 80 sq km, encompasses grasslands and forests. Since 1895 it was a reserve forest but years later, it was given the status of a wildlife sanctuary in 1949. Furthermore, in 1994, the park was declared a national park which is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna. It is specially known for being home to the great Indian rhinoceros. Other prominent animals that can be spotted here are elephant, leopard, hornbill, king cobra, Indian python and gaur, to name a few. Travellers can choose between elephant safari and jeep safari to explore the park. They can even climb atop the watchtowers (Methla, Chukchuki, Chandrachur and Jatraprasad) to spot the inhabitants of the park with the help of binoculars.

One of the most popular tourist destinations in Dooars, Gorumara National Park attracts a lot of tourists round the year. The park's green forests, tall elephant grasses, streams and beautiful landscape provide shelter to several mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians. Gorumara National Park is also a birders' paradise. If you are a birder, you will have a great time spotting and photographing birds like hornbill, woodpecker, ibis, drongo, minivet, and pheasants. The ruddy shelduck, also known as the Brahminy duck, migrates to the park during winters. Beautiful butterflies

can also be spotted in the jungle, along with night hunters like owls and nightjars.

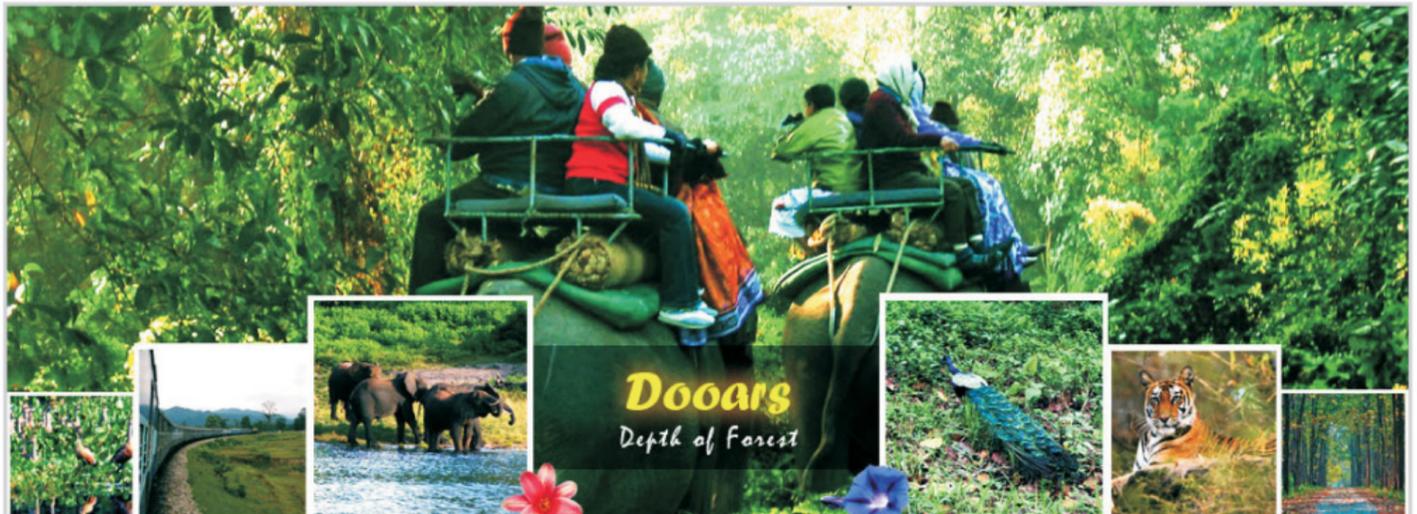
Preferably visit the park during winters as it is considered the best time for coming here. While you can choose from a number of forest rest houses at Gorumara for accommodation, Lataguri, the nearest town offers several accommodation facilities. The nearest railhead is New Jalpaiguri and the nearest airport is Bagdogra. Gorumara National Park can also be reached by road from Siliguri, which is around 72 km away.

## Jaldapara National Park

Situated on the banks of the River Torsa, Jaldapara National Park is one of the popular places to visit in Dooars. Before 1800, when the place was inhabited by Toto and Mech tribes, it was known as Totopara. The sanctuary was established in 1941 with an aim to protect Asiatic one-horned rhinoceros, and was eventually declared a national park in the year 2012.

Spanning over an area of 216.5 sq km, the park boasts of verdant grassland with patches of riverine forest and belts of tall grass. At an altitude of 61 m in the foothills of Eastern Himalayas, this park is mainly savannah forest and is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna. Along with one-horned rhinoceros, various mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds dwell here, such as elephant, leopard, Bengal florican, peacock, python, cobra and around eight species of fresh water turtles.

A fun way to witness the wilderness of Jaldapara National Park is by elephant safari. Another way to explore the flora and fauna of the region is to opt for jeep safari. For a close encounter, you can climb any of the many watchtowers in the park. There are various tourist lodges and guests houses available in the region for accommodation of tourists coming to visit Jaldapara National Park.



**Dooars**  
Depth of Forest

# BJP's New Haryana MLA - Sunil Sangwan, Jail Officer Who Gave Ram Rahim 6 Paroles

**The actress, who is a Jew of Indian origin said that she lost her first cousin and her brother-in-law in a crossfire in Sderot during the attacks on Israel last year.**

**New Delhi:** The BJP has a new MLA in Haryana's Dadri - Sunil Sangwan, the ex-Haryana prison official who granted parole - six times - to Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim. Sangwan narrowly defeated the Congress' Manisha Sangwan - the margin was 1,957 votes. This is the first time the BJP has won this seat. In 2014 it was won by Somveer Sangwan, an independent candidate earlier with the party, and Rajdeep Phogat of the Indian National Lok Dal claimed the seat in the 2009 election.



Ram Rahim was given a 21-day furlough last month - his 10th in the past two years. His parole was red-flagged by the Congress, which told the poll panel his release by the Haryana government would violate the Model Code of Conduct in place during an election.

Rahim is supposed to be serving a 20-year sentence in a jail in Haryana's Rohtak. He was released on October 2 - three days before

voting in Haryana - after which newspaper reports emerged of his followers, spread across six districts, being told to vote for the BJP. The Dadri victory was one of 48 by BJP candidates that enabled the party to pull off a thrilling comeback Tuesday evening to win a third straight Assembly election in the heartland state.

The Congress had raced into an early lead and even crossed the halfway mark - 46 seats - at

one point. But by 10 am the numbers had reversed and it was the BJP in front. The ruling party then pulled away to record a historic hat-trick; this is the first time any party has won three consecutive Assembly elections in the state. The Congress was left fuming and searching for answers amid claims of tampering with the EVMS, or electronic voting machines. The party also questioned the Election Commission over "an unexplained slowdown in updating of results" on its website for two hours till 11 am. The charge was dismissed; the EC said it "unequivocally rejects attempt to surreptitiously give credence to irresponsible, unfounded, and uncorroborated malafide narratives".

Eventually the BJP finished with 48 of Haryana's 90 Assembly seats in its pocket. The Congress, shaken by an internal squabble between Bhupinder Hooda and Kumari Selja, over ticket distribution and who would become Chief Minister, if the party won, finished with 37 seats.

## Adani Airports Partners With Thales To Enhance Indian Flying Experience

**New Delhi:** India's largest private airport operator, and global tech leader Thales, have announced a strategic collaboration aimed at revolutionising airport operations and enhancing passenger experience across India. Thales will provide integrated solutions focused on three core areas: smart airport security, biometric passenger journey, and operational efficiency.

Since early 2024, Thales has deployed its Fly to Gate biometric system at seven AAHL airports, offering touchless, facial recognition-based ID verification, drastically reducing the need for physical documents and cutting passenger processing times by up to 30%. The system, aligned with the government's DigiYatra initiative, enhances security while simplifying



travel. "We are delighted to strengthen our partnership with Adani Airport Holdings Limited to bring innovative technology solutions to revolutionise airport operations and the passenger experience in India. Our Fly to Gate biometric solution for DigiYatra and the smart Airport Operation Control Centre (APOC) will enable AAHL to streamline operations and also ensure a secure and simplified journey for millions of passengers. Together, we are committed to support India in its vision of becoming the largest aviation market in the world by 2047," said Ashish Saraf, VP and Country Director for India, Thales.

AAHL has extended the partnership to implement an Airport Operation Control Centre (APOC) across all its airports. This cloud-based platform will centralize operational data, using automation, big data analytics, and AI to boost airport management and security. The APOC will enhance efficiency by predicting resource shortages and streamlining workflows.

The seven airports currently using Fly to Gate technology are Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Jaipur, Lucknow, Mangaluru, and Thiruvananthapuram. This partnership positions AAHL to support India's goal of becoming the world's largest aviation market by 2047.

## Goods Train Collides With Cement Slabs Kept On Tracks In UP's Raebareli

**Delhi:** A goods train collided with cement slabs kept on the tracks in Uttar Pradesh's Raebareli on Wednesday, making it the most recent incident in a spate of suspected attempts to derail trains. The incident occurred in Raebareli's Laxmanpur, where it is suspected that three slabs kept in a nearby field were pulled and brought on the track. However, no major accident was reported after the collision.

Over the past month, incidents where objects have been allegedly placed on rail tracks to hamper train operations have been reported from Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Police



arrested a man last week for allegedly trying to derail a train by placing iron rods on the railway track in Uttar Pradesh's Lalitpur district, while major accidents were averted after gas cylinders were placed on tracks in Kanpur. At least 10 detonators were found on a railway track in an attempt to blow up the train carrying Army personnel in Madhya Pradesh's Burhanpur district. Meanwhile, three wagons of a goods train derailed between Misrod and Mandideep stations near Bhopal.

Cement blocks were found on the tracks in Rajasthan's Ajmer district, while two persons were arrested for allegedly placing an iron rail piece on a railway track in Gujarat's Botad district.

## Anil Vij Sings This Rafi Classic As BJP Heads For Haryana Hat-Trick

**Delhi:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) chargesheet filed in the rape and murder case of a second year post graduate trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital has detailed the circumstances, nature of injuries, cause of death and evidence available against the accused. The CBI had on Tuesday submitted the chargesheet at a special court in Sealdah. It charged Sanjoy Roy, who used to work with Kolkata Police as a contractual staff, with the rape and murder of the on-duty woman doctor. The statements of about 200 people were recorded in the chargesheet, according to CBI sources. As detailed in the chargesheet, the CBI has largely followed the Kolkata Police's line of investigation and has relied on digital and material evidence collected by them along with to establish Sanjoy Roy's presence at the scene of crime at the time of the alleged rape-murder. CCTV footage has been used to establish the timings of his movement from 3.34 am onwards on the day of the crime (August 9), when he was seen at the entrance of the trauma centre building.

At 4.03 am, the accused was seen "wearing a T-shirt and jeans, holding a helmet in his left hand with Bluetooth neckband earphones around his neck, moving from the right side of the camera towards the ward", as per the CBI chargesheet. At 4.32 am, he was seen emerging from the ward on the third floor, helmet in his left hand, but without the neckband earphones around his neck. The CBI further mentioned, "A Bluetooth neckband earphone was seized by local police from the scene of crime on 09.08.2024." This was used as a crucial piece of evidence by the Kolkata Police to nail and arrest Sanjoy Roy a day after the crime. The Customer Acquisition Form and Call Detail Records of the mobile number belonging to Sanjoy Roy also corroborated his presence at the hospital at the time of the crime, as per the chargesheet.

Apart from earphones, physical evidence listed by the CBI included the victim's mobile phone and laptop, accused's mobile, accused's blood sample and blood and viscera examined during the autopsy. The chargesheet said the evidence was sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory Kolkata, New Delhi and Chandigarh. Further, forensic experts studied jeans, underwear, brassiere, kurti, blanket, bedsheets, a piece of cloth, synthetic cotton, nail cuttings and scrappings, blood sample, lip swab, endocervical swab, vaginal swab and pubic hair combing.

## Army commanders to hold top security conference along China border in Sikkim

**Sources told India Today that the conference will be addressed by several key figures, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.**

**New Delhi:** All senior commanders of the Indian Army will be convening in Sikkim for a crucial conference. This meeting, scheduled for October 10-11, marks the first time top Army officials will gather at a location near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. The conference will be addressed by key figures, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, sources told India Today. The discussions will focus on pressing security concerns, particularly the ongoing situation along the LAC, with special attention to the sensitive regions of



Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, where frequent stand-offs and face-offs between Indian and Chinese forces have occurred. This meeting

also serves as the inaugural conference for General Upendra Dwivedi, who assumed the role of Chief of Army Staff on June 30, 2024.

Recently, General Dwivedi described the border situation with China as "stable but not normal," reflecting the complexities of the ongoing tensions, which have persisted for four years, entering their fifth winter. The second phase of the conference is expected to take place in New Delhi on October 28-29. Commanders will also analyze lessons from recent global conflicts to better equip the Indian forces, considering the challenges faced by different arms of the Army. As the Army leadership comes together to address these critical issues, the focus remains on ensuring the security and stability of India's borders amid evolving geopolitical dynamics.

## Facing strong anti-incumbency in Haryana, BJP turned to RSS for help

**New Delhi:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has achieved a significant milestone by securing a historic third consecutive term in Haryana, a victory attributed largely to the revitalising efforts of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). This comes after a challenging phase for the party, which saw it lose five Lok Sabha seats and experience a decline in voter support. The BJP's popularity took a hit during the 2020-2021 farmers' agitation, leading to increasing discontent among grassroots workers and local leaders. An internal RSS survey in August revealed that the Haryana government, under then Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, was losing its sheen, prompting a call for a change in leadership and strategy. The BJP sought assistance from the RSS to rebuild trust with rural voters and activate its grassroots machinery.

A crucial meeting on July 29 in New Delhi brought together key figures, including RSS joint general secretary Arun Kumar,

Haryana BJP Chief Mohanlal Bardoli, and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The discussions focused on revitalising party engagement at the grassroots level. Important decisions were made regarding candidate selection, improving relations with rural voters, promoting beneficiary schemes, and coordinating efforts between party workers and candidates. In early September, the RSS launched a rural voter outreach programme, deploying at least 150 volunteers to each district. This initiative aimed to strengthen connections with rural communities and address the growing anti-incumbency sentiment against the BJP government. The outreach programme emphasised activating local party workers and leaders, transforming negative perceptions into positive support for the BJP. Meanwhile, political commentator Rajat Sethi, while speaking to India Today TV's News Director Rahul Kanwal, while reacting to the BJP's

outreach programme, said, "Nothing works better than a simple admission of folded hand requests."

"The problem he (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) was facing was his cadres not coming in full swing. More than 16,000 meetings were done by the RSS. They went door-to-door, word was spread by the RSS instead of BJP cadres. At the end of the day, it's about knocking at every door with a folded hand and requesting a vote," Sethi said. The RSS also advised the BJP to consider candidates with strong voter support from various parties. This strategic shift aimed to engage disillusioned voters and create harmony between turncoats and existing BJP workers. Additionally, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini was tasked with enhancing his visibility among rural voters, particularly in his own constituency of Ladwa, where he faced backlash. Saini met with khap and panchayat leaders who had expressed

dissatisfaction with Khattar's administration. Discontent among MLAs regarding Khattar's unavailability was also addressed, with the RSS suggesting a more hands-on approach from Saini to bridge the gap between the government and the party's grassroots.

**How did RSS and BJP bridge the communication gap in Haryana?**

The RSS's management structure proved instrumental in this effort. Volunteers were directed to collaborate with mandal karykarts and local panchayat-level workers through chaupals to ensure effective voter outreach. Between September 1 and 9, the RSS conducted around 90 meetings in each Assembly constituency and nearly 200 meetings with party workers and rural voters, aiming to reinforce party unity and strategy. Senior RSS officials acknowledged that the combined dissatisfaction among the public and party workers contributed.

## FedEx's advisory after journalist's digital arrest ordeal

**Fraudsters impersonating employees of courier companies to lure the victim into transferring money has emerged as a worrying trend. FedEx has issued an advisory on how to deal with such scams.**

**New Delhi:** Fraudsters impersonating employees of courier companies like FedEx to lure the victim into transferring money is the latest scam that has emerged as a worrying trend across the country. Despite several advisories, people falling victims to the 'FedEx courier scam' remains unabated. Amid an increasing number of courier scams, FedEx has advised individuals receiving suspicious calls or messages to refrain from sharing personal information and report to the cybercrime department. "FedEx does not request personal information through unsolicited phone calls, mail, or email for goods being shipped or held, unless requested or initiated by customers. Individuals should immediately contact the local law enforcement authorities within the vicinity or report to the cybercrime department of the government of India," FedEx said in a statement.



employee, who claimed her Aadhaar number was linked to a parcel containing drugs. While the journalist saw through the scam, several people have fallen prey to it and lost lakhs of rupees.

**WHAT IS FEDEX COURIER SCAM?**

The fraud begins with a phone call from someone claiming to be from FedEx customer service. The scammer informs the unsuspecting caller that a package linked to their Aadhaar number has been seized by the Mumbai customs department as it contained illegal items like narcotics and banned drugs. Even before the victim could come to terms with it, the fake FedEx representative

transfers the call to an alleged senior officer of the Mumbai Police Cyber Cell. In some cases, the scammers also contact relatives or friends of the victim and tell them that he/she has been linked to a money laundering case. It is here that fear psychosis kicks in. The victim then receives a video call from an individual posing as a police officer, who demands sensitive information like Aadhaar details and PAN card number. Exploiting fears of legal repercussions, the victim is then asked to transfer money. Once it is done, the fraudsters disappear. In certain cases, the victims are "digitally arrested", where they are forced to stay visible over video calls with the fake police officer until the money is transferred. The whole operation is done meticulously. The scammers also use studios to replicate police stations or government offices. They also wear uniforms similar to those of police officers.

**BURGEONING CASES**

Several victims around the country have reported having lost large sums of money to such courier scams.

# The best places for Skiing in India



With the increasing popularity of winter sports, there are plenty of destinations offering skiing in India, along with snowboarding and trekking. Come winter and the picturesque Himalayas turn into a white wonderland. Carpeted in layers of fresh snow, they have some of the highest ski slopes in the world. Equipped with good accommodation, training centres and instructors, these ski towns in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Kashmir are ideal for an adventurous getaway. From the magnificent high-altitude snowy landscapes of Gulmarg to the more gentle slopes around Narkanda and Solang Valley, there are a range of options to choose from.

## Kufri

If you're visiting Kufri during the winter, it's the best time for a spot of skiing. For

beginners, there are several gentle slopes to ease into things, while the pros can flaunt their skills down the slope from Mahasu. The government offers a number of ski courses ranging from a day to several days—ski equipment is available for hire as well—where experienced instructors teach you the ropes. A relatively new winter sport, tobogganing has recently gained popularity in Kufri, and is a favourite with tourists who want to enjoy sliding down the slopes without too much skill.

## Solang Valley

Around 13 kilometres away from Manali, this pretty valley is a popular spot for adventure sports, especially skiing. Situated between Solang village and Beas Kund, it offers panoramic views of the surrounding snow-capped mountains and glaciers. In summer, it

has facilities for paragliding, zorbing, mountain biking and horse riding. In winter, especially between January and March, it is used for skiing, snowboarding and sledging. It also hosts a winter skiing festival. The Directorate of Mountaineering & Allied Sports in Manali also organises basic, advance and intermediate level courses in skiing. For the less-adventurous, there are also plenty of walking trails all around.

## Gulmarg

If you're looking for a destination which is as breathtakingly beautiful as it is adventurous, then look no further than Kashmir. The Kashmir valley is considered heaven on earth, and when it's blanketed in snow, it exudes a charm few other places do. The tiny and isolated hill village of Gulmarg is situated at the western extremity of the Himalayas in a subsidiary range called the Pir Panjals. Lying about 50 kilometres from Srinagar, it can be easily accessed by tourist buses, taxis and even by air. Owing to its location, Gulmarg gets some of the heaviest snowfalls in the Himalayas and has earned the distinction of being the best ski resort in the country. So once you've feasted your eyes on all the beauty, immerse yourself in some activity by hitting the slopes.

Catering to both beginners and pros, skiing here can be one of the most powerful experiences. For the more mild adventure enthusiasts, there's the option of sledging, cable-car rides and snowboarding. Ski season starts mid-December and lasts till the beginning of April. As for accommodation, there are various options. From state-owned huts and cottages, and beautifully appointed mid-range hotels like Nedous Hotel, to luxury accommodation at Hotel Highlands Park, there's something to suit every budget.

In addition, Gulmarg offers several other sites of interest for tourists. It has the highest golf course in the world, the frozen Alpine lake of Alpather, the Baba Reshi shrine and the Gulmarg Biosphere Reserves.

## Auli

A picturesque destination located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, Auli is another well-known skiing destination in the country. Visit during the months of January to March when temperatures plummet to -4 degrees, and ski enthusiasts gravitate to indulge in the winter sports. You can get a flight till Dehradun, which is the state capital and closest airport, and proceed by road which is well connected with frequent buses, hired jeeps and taxis. There are a good range of budget and deluxe hotels available for tourists to stay, so accommodation won't be a problem. Not only is Auli a great place to partake in skiing, it's also a good option for beginners looking to learn the ropes.

Offering excellent snowy slopes and the very best skiing facilities, you can join one of the skiing courses where professional instructors teach you everything from the basics upwards. If you're not big on the sports, there's the option of some fabulous treks which take you

through hot springs, ancient temples, untarnished nature and some magnificent views of the taller Himalayan peaks. For your stay, choose between budget options such as the state-run GMVN guesthouses or book yourself a luxurious stay at the Cliff Top Club hotel.

## Narkanda

Perched at a height of 2708 m on NH-22, Narkanda is famous for its apple orchards as well as its skiing. The best season for skiing is between January and mid-March, when Narkanda is carpeted with thick snowfall. Situated only 65 km from Shimla, it is a quick and convenient winter getaway from Delhi and a popular skiing hotspot.

The slopes around the hill station offer beautiful views of snow-covered forests and mountains. The main skiing area is in Dhumri, whose gentle slopes are ideal for beginners. Most hotels run by HPTDC along with the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports offers courses in skiing with qualified instructors, along with rental equipment.



# Things to do in Shillong

## The abode of clouds



The city of Shillong is often considered to be a place where nature is in its primal beauty; where clouds and the sun express their own camaraderie through a vivid interplay of sunshine and shadow; where the colonial remnants meet the upsurge of modern day influence and where music runs through the veins of everyone you come across. So naturally, there is a lot to see in Shillong, which is, by the way, true to the core; but to tag the city as merely a 'places to visit paradise' would be sheer injustice to the lesser known opportunities for action and adventure. Things to do in Shillong can be turned into a full-fledged vacation idea rather than just a part of the itinerary.

Embark on a musical journey in the city often referred to as India's Rock Capital and a watchful stroll along the narrow alleys is a good start to have. Extend your sojourn and see names like Lou Majaw, Afflatus and Soulmate in their own territory. For the ones who like things ready-on-a-platter, we suggest you visit Shillong during any music concert. Once your thirst for melody is quenched, time for some water rappelling at the Elephant Falls; golfer or non golfer, Shillong Golf Course is one place you would not want to miss out on; take a leisurely stroll along the Wards Lake and indulge in water activities like boating, skiing and rowing at the Umiam Lake.

## Take a stroll around Wards Lake

Located in the midst of the colonial era Shillong, Wards Lake is a popular hangout place for the tourists and locals alike. Unlike the Umiam Lake, this one is more planned and all the facilities have been provided keeping in mind requirements of the leisure traveller. The entire area is adorned with flower beds, beautiful trees, lovely high lands and a bridge. Seekers of tranquility will have their share of personal space amid a growing city; nature lovers can admire the man-made corner for the greens and photography enthusiasts will not mind spending some time in Wards Lake. Extend your walk towards the northeast direction of the lake and after about 15 minutes you will arrive at the Shillong Golf Course which with all its greenery and pine trees!

## Boating at Umiam Lake

Located in the midst of the colonial era Shillong, Wards Lake is a popular hangout place for the tourists and locals alike. Unlike the Umiam Lake, this one is more planned and all the facilities have been provided keeping in mind requirements of the leisure traveller. The entire area is adorned with flower beds, beautiful trees, lovely high lands and a bridge. Seekers of tranquility will have their share of personal space amid a growing city; nature lovers can admire the man-made corner for the greens and photography enthusiasts will not mind spending some time in Wards Lake. Extend your walk towards the northeast direction of the lake and after about 15 minutes you will arrive at the Shillong Golf Course which with all its greenery and pine trees!

## Golfing in Shillong Golf Course

Courtesy its past as the British capital of the then undivided Assam, Shillong has the imprints of the days bygone; Shillong Golf Course is one of them. But it will be sheer injustice to the magnanimous entity if we box it up only as a colonial remnant and a place for the professional players to test their skills. The 18-hole course is a green paradise with grass spread across like carpet with trees standing like watchful protectors. The lush green hills that form the backdrop of



beautiful pine and rhododendron trees add to the splendor of the landscape. Be a part of the golf tournaments that are held on this venue to be one with the surroundings and its legacy.

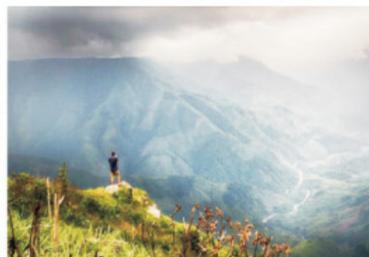
## Musical sojourn

Shillong is the unofficial but undisputed rock capital of India with a legacy of musical heritage that runs through the veins of every Shillong dweller. Music is in the air of this beautiful city and get ready to bump into at least one good musician with his instrument hanging on the shoulder in any corner of Shillong. The influence of metal and rock sound is prominent in Shillong music scene but let's not undermine the rich local musical flavours that are equally rich in tone and texture. Shillong is home to India's first and

most prominent all-female band Afflatus and the famous Lou Majaw. Few of the bars and pubs are known for their live band performances with famous local bands like Soulmate and Prisoners of Chaos weaving their magic. And if you have had enough of indoor performances, maybe you should visit Shillong during a music concert. Indian and international musicians gather in those concerts and cast a spell of melody on the audience leaving them wanting for more.

## Waterfall rappelling at Elephant Falls

Elephant Falls is the combination of three small torrents that form a strong stream that adorns the fern-covered rocks. The place got its name in the colonial era when the Englishmen spotted a giant rock resembling an elephant near the fall. The rock got destroyed during an earth quake and the Englishmen left the country but the name stayed. Due to its origin in three streams, the water force of Elephant Falls is one to reckon with which offers ample opportunities for adventure sports like waterfall rappelling. For starters, you can try rappelling from the height of 40 ft and don't worry; you will be well harnessed under expert surveillance. Climb down from your starting point and feel the immense water pressure on you while you struggle to find your footing in the slippery rocks.



## Stock market rally: Sensex surges 600 points as RBI holds repo rate

**New Delhi.** Benchmark stock market indices rallied after RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the monetary policy committee decision to keep key interest rates unchanged for the 10th consecutive time on Wednesday.

The S&P BSE Sensex added 591.46 points to 82,225.81, while the Nifty50 gained 197 points to 25,210.15 as of 10:55 AM. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has adjusted its stance to a neutral position. Shaktikanta Das said five members of the 6-member MPC voted in favour of keeping the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5%. After evaluating the macroeconomic conditions and future outlook, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided, with 5 out of 6 members in agreement, to maintain the policy rate at 6.5%," he said.

Anu Aggarwal, Head of Corporate Banking, Kotak Mahindra Bank said that the RBI's shift to a 'neutral' stance marks a pivotal step in its approach, providing more flexibility in navigating the evolving economic conditions. With food inflation easing and the monsoon being favourable, this change signals optimism for India's inflation outlook. Globally, trends such as the US Federal Reserve's rate cut and easing monetary policies further support this shift. By adopting a more neutral position, the RBI is positioning itself to respond dynamically to future developments, while continuing to foster economic stability and long-term business confidence," she added.

## Gold, silver price : Yellow metal records dip, silver trades higher on MCX

**New Delhi.** Precious metals showed mixed trends in the Indian markets today. Gold is trading on the lower side of the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) while silver prices have recorded a hike on Wednesday, October 9.

Gold futures, maturing on December 5, 2024, stood at Rs 75,143 per 10 grams, after recording a dip of Rs 18 or 0.02 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 75,161. Meanwhile, silver futures, due on December 5, 2024, witnessed a hike of Rs 371 or 0.42 per cent and were retailing at Rs 89,100 per kg on the MCX against the previous close of Rs 88,729. The price of gold varies for different regions in the country based on certain parameters such as the excise duty, making charges and the state taxes.

### GOLD, SILVER PRICES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET

Gold prices were subdued on Wednesday as investors strapped in for minutes from the Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting for insights into the U.S. central bank's interest rate trajectory, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, held its ground at \$2,619.75 per ounce by 0255 GMT, while, U.S. gold futures gained 0.1% to \$2,638.20.

## Magicpin largest food delivery app on ONDC

**BENGALURU.** Food delivery app magicpin has touched nearly 1,50,000 daily food and logistics orders on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), becoming the largest food delivery seller app on the network. Since joining the ONDC network in March last year, magicpin has grown, expanding its restaurant partnerships from 22,000 to 70,000 as of September 2024. Anshoo Sharma, CEO & Co-Founder, magicpin said, "In the last 15 months, we have touched double-digit market share in major cities, with more than 10% market share in key markets like Delhi or Bengaluru in terms of overall food delivery." He added that on ONDC, they have reached 1.5 lakh daily orders for food delivery and logistics. Of this, about 90% of food orders from prominent buyer apps such as Paytm, Tata Neu, and Ola are now fulfilled by magicpin. Recently, the company announced an investment of Rs 100 crore to onboard 1 lakh new restaurants and cloud kitchens on ONDC. The funds are invested towards offering onboarding incentives like zero commission, zero onboarding fees, major discounts and free home delivery for customers by newly partnered restaurants. Advisory directs airlines to inform their flight crews about the risk of a jammed or restricted rudder control system and implement necessary mitigations

### Advisory mandates

Advisory mandates the suspension of Category III B operations, which include low-visibility landings and autoland procedures, until further notice

## No impact due to advisory on Boeing 737 planes

**NEW DELHI.** Akasa Air said on Tuesday there will be no disruptions to its flight operations due to the latest advisories issued by the DGCA regarding potential risk of a jammed rudder control system in Boeing 737 planes. The airline operates a fleet of 25 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. "Akasa can confirm that there will be no disruptions to our flight schedule as a result of the latest DGCA /Boeing advisories," the spokesperson said in a statement. On Monday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued an advisory to Indian airlines operating Boeing 737 planes regarding the potential risk. A recent probe report by the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) highlighted safety concerns involving Boeing 737 aircraft equipped with Collins Aerospace SVO-730 Rudder Rollout Guidance Actuators. Against this backdrop, DGCA came up with the advisory. In August, Boeing informed affected operators of 737 planes about potential condition with the rudder rollout guidance actuator. The rudder rollout guidance actuator helps align an airplane's rudder with its nose wheel during takeoff and landing.

# A driver's test for autonomous vehicles A leading expert says US should have one

**ANN ARBOR, Mich.** At a time of growing concern about the safety of self-driving vehicles, a leading expert is calling on the federal government to develop a national driver's test that such vehicles would have to pass before they could travel on public roads. Such a regulation would set minimum standards to ensure that the vehicles display basic skills and competence in traffic situations where their manufacturers want to use them, said Henry Liu, who leads the University of Michigan's autonomous vehicle testing center. "Ensuring safety is important for consumers, for autonomous vehicle developers, for the federal government as well," Liu said in an interview. "The federal government has the responsibility to help set the minimum standard, to help provide guidance in terms of safety testing."

In recent years, autonomous vehicles have been involved in a number of high-profile crashes, and surveys have revealed widespread public uncertainty about their safety. Successful testing of the vehicles' ability to master a variety of traffic



situations, Liu suggested, would strengthen the public's confidence in them. Liu said significant research is still needed before autonomous vehicles could be rolled out safely nationwide. But he said he agreed with their manufacturers that in the long run, self-driving vehicles could potentially save lives and improve the efficiency of the nation's transportation system. At present, no specific federal regulations cover self-driving vehicles, and only a few states have their own such requirements. The National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration, which is part of the Department of Transportation, has been gathering data about crashes involving autonomous vehicles. But it has so far issued only voluntary guidelines that don't include driving tests. Messages were left Tuesday seeking comment from the Transportation Department. Self-driving cars still must meet federal safety standards that apply to all passenger vehicles, which means the government investigates them only after serious incidents. "Our current safety regulation for vehicles is reactive, so we depend upon self-regulation," Liu said. At the University of Michigan testing center, Liu runs a mock town, called Mcity, containing a traffic light and a roundabout that is used by companies and the government to test self-driving vehicles. A regulation, or perhaps a voluntary test, is needed because "we don't want to create a public hazard," said Liu, who made his remarks Tuesday and announced that Mcity can now be used by researchers remotely. Liu suggested that a

driver's test should be able to determine whether a self-driving vehicle can make a left turn at an intersection without the protection of a traffic light with a green arrow. He said it should also ensure that the vehicle will halt at a stop sign and detect and yield to a small pedestrian crossing a road. A test, he said, would prevent a poorly performing robot vehicle from being turned loose on society, much as a human driver's test would keep an incompetent driver off the road. But he acknowledged that no test could prevent all crashes involving self-driving vehicles.

The driver's tests, Liu said, would help robot vehicle developers "so that when they are moving in to deploy into the US, into certain cities, they will face less resistance from the cities." Tesla CEO Elon Musk has long complained that federal regulation is impeding innovation. Tesla is developing a robotaxi system called "Full Self-Driving," but the robotaxis cannot drive themselves, and Tesla owners who use them must be ready to intervene at any time.

## Hyundai Motor IPO opens on October 15: All you need to know

**New Delhi.** The initial public offering (IPO) of Hyundai Motor India, the country's second-largest carmaker, is set to launch India's biggest on Tuesday, October 15. Hyundai Motor India aims to raise Rs 27,855 crore, making it the largest IPO in the history of the Indian stock market. The subscription for the IPO will close on Thursday, October 17. The company is offering its shares in the price range of Rs 1,865-1,960 each. Investors can apply for a minimum of seven equity shares, and multiples thereof. The minimum amount of investment required by retail investors is Rs 13,720. The IPO will be an offer for sale (OFS) by Hyundai Motor Company, its South Korean parent, which plans to offload up to 14.21 crore equity shares. At the upper price range of Rs 1,960 per share,

IPO allocation details The Hyundai Motor India IPO includes a reservation of 7.78 lakh shares for eligible employees, who will receive a discount

of Rs 186 per share. The IPO has allocated 50% of the net offer to qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), 15% to non-institutional investors (NIIs), and the remaining 35% for retail investors.

### Allotment and listing

Kotak Mahindra Capital, JP Morgan India, Citigroup Global Markets India, HSBC Securities & Capital Markets, and Morgan Stanley India Company are the lead managers for the IPO. The registrar for the issue is Kfin Technologies.

The allotment of shares for Hyundai Motor IPO is anticipated to be finalised on Friday, October 18, 2024. The shares are likely to be listed on both the BSE and NSE, with a provisional listing date of Tuesday, October 22. Hyundai Motor India, established in May 1996 and headquartered in Chennai, is part of the Hyundai Motor Group. Hyundai Motor Group is the world's third-largest auto manufacturer in terms of passenger vehicle sales. The company's Indian

subsidiary is involved in the production and sale of various vehicles, including sedans, hatchbacks, SUVs, and electric vehicles (EVs). Additionally, it manufactures key parts such as engines and transmissions. The Indian arm of the company will not receive any direct proceeds from the IPO, as the funds raised will go to its parent company in South Korea. Hyundai Motor India's shares will give the company a market valuation of Rs 1.6 lakh crore.

### Company operations and reach

Hyundai Motor India has a strong presence in India with 1,366 sales points and 1,550 service locations spread across the country. The company has sold nearly 12 million vehicles in India and exported cars to markets like Africa, the Middle East, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. It operates through 363 dealer companies to distribute and sell vehicles in India. Popular Hyundai models in India include the Grand i10 NIOS, i20, i20 N Line.

## Not applying for benefits under EV policy: BYD



**NEW DELHI.** Chinese electric vehicle (EV) giant BYD said on Tuesday that they are not applying for benefits under the new EV policy which was introduced earlier this year by the central government to attract global brands, particularly Tesla. "Representatives of our company, who have a good idea about that policy went in, went

through that. The final conclusion... is that we have decided that, no, we are not ready to implement this policy in the short term. So, we are not applying," said BYD India Head of Electric Passenger Vehicles Business Rajeev Chauhan. Under the new EV policy, foreign carmakers will be allowed to import a limited number of cars at a lower customs/import

duty of 15% on vehicles costing \$ 35,000 and above for five years. The carmaker, however, will have to commit a certain amount of investment and meet localisation norms among other things. When asked about the automaker's intention to set up a local manufacturing unit in India, Chauhan said that having a facility gives some advantages, but BYD India is not there yet. "We are, I can confidently say that in the short term, we are not doing that," he added. According to reports, BYD is keen on making cars in India but is yet to receive positive feedback from the Indian government. BYD, in partnership with an Indian firm, last year submitted a \$1 billion investment proposal to build EVs in India. However, the proposal remains stuck given India has increased scrutiny of investments from China following a border clash between the troops of the two nations in 2020.

# RBI raises UPI Lite, UPI 123Pay limits at MPC: How it affects your wallet

**RBI MPC meeting: The central bank raised the transaction limits for two key UPI services—UPI 123Pay and UPI Lite—offering more convenience for millions of users.**

**New Delhi** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced significant changes to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system during its latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The central bank raised the transaction limits for two key UPI services—UPI 123Pay and UPI Lite—offering more convenience for millions of users. "UPI has transformed India's financial landscape by making digital payments accessible and inclusive through continuous innovation and adaptation. To further encourage

wider adoption of UPI and make it more inclusive, it has been decided to enhance the per-transaction limit in UPI 123Pay from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000; and increase the UPI Lite wallet limit from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 and per-transaction limit from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000," said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. The RBI has increased the per-transaction limit for UPI 123Pay from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000, doubling the cap for feature phone users. Additionally, the limit for UPI Lite wallets has been raised from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000, aimed at simplifying small-value digital transactions for users. These moves are designed to improve the accessibility and efficiency of digital payments across the country, particularly for those without smartphones or access to high-speed internet.

### What is UPI 123Pay?

Launched in March 2022, UPI 123Pay was created by the RBI and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to help the 400 million feature phone users in India access digital payments. Unlike regular UPI services, which



require smartphones and internet access, UPI 123Pay enables users with feature phones to make transactions through simple methods. This innovation supports the government's goal of financial inclusion by providing digital payment solutions for a larger population. UPI 123Pay works through four methods: IVR (Interactive Voice Response): Users can call a pre-set number and follow voice prompts in multiple languages to complete a payment. Missed Call Transactions: Users place a missed call to a merchant-specific number. They receive a call back to authenticate the payment using a UPI PIN. App-based Payments for Feature Phones: A simplified UPI app that

provides basic functionalities, such as sending and receiving money. Proximity Sound-based Payments: This feature allows users to tap their phone on a merchant device, using sound waves to facilitate contactless payments.

### How to Set Up UPI 123Pay

Feature phone users can set up UPI 123Pay by dialing \*99#, choosing their bank, and following the instructions to link their account. Users will need their debit card details to create a UPI PIN, after which they can start making secure, internet-free transactions.

UPI Lite was introduced to make small-value transactions more convenient. With the wallet limit now increased to Rs 5,000, users can store money directly on their devices. This feature eliminates the need to access a bank server for every transaction, speeding up payments for everyday purchases, such as groceries or transport fares. UPI Lite is expected to make frequent small transactions easier, especially in areas with limited internet connectivity.



**New Delhi.** The past few months has seen a slump in the price of pulses in the wholesale market. However, this has not brought cheers to the consumers since the fall in prices is not reflected in the retail market. Data shows that the price of pulses such as Tur and Urad in major mandis fell by almost 10% in the last three months due to increasing acreage of Kharif pulses this year.

Current sowing area for Kharif pulses exceeds last year by over 7% and crop condition is found to be better. "Prices of Tur and Urad in major mandis had declined, on an average, by almost 10% during the last three months, but retail prices have not seen a similar decline," said Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs. "When it comes to Chana, the decline in mandi prices have been observed in the past one month, but retail prices continue to be on the higher side," Khare further said.

She pointed out the diverging trends between wholesale mandi prices and retail prices are indicative of increasingly unwarranted margins that retailers are extracting out of the market dynamics. "The trends are being closely tracked and necessary measures will have to be initiated if the divergences are found to be widening," Khare said. For this, Khare chaired the meeting with Retailers Association of India (RAI) and major organized retail chains to discuss efforts to keep pulses prices stable to consumers in festive season. In this meeting, attended by officials of RAI and representatives from Reliance Retail Ltd., Vishal Mart, D Mart, Spencer and More Retail, where she advised RAI to coordinate with NCCF and NAFED in the distribution of Bharat Dals, especially Bharat Masur Dal and Bharat Moong Dal, to widen and deepen the coverage and reach of Bharat Dals among consumers. In respect of availability position, Khare informed that Kharif Urad and Moong have started arriving in the markets while imports of Tur and Urad from East African countries and Myanmar are arriving steadily to augment the domestic production.

## NEWS BOX

## India's Rishabh Pant will have a big Border Gavaskar Trophy: Shane Watson

**New Delhi.** Former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson has claimed that Rishabh Pant is set to have a big series during the Border Gavaskar Trophy down under, starting from November. Watson felt that if Pant and Jasprit Bumrah could give the Aussies some big challenges at home if they're in form during the series, Pant made a sensational return to red-ball cricket during the series against Bangladesh, where he scored a blazing hundred in the second innings of his return match in Chennai. The 27-year-old was brilliant behind the stumps as well during the series. Indian fans would remember Pant's heroics down under, especially during the famous win in Gabba during the 2020-21 series. This made Watson pick the wicketkeeper as a key player for India. Speaking on the sidelines of the launch of the International Masters League in Mumbai, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo, the former Aussie all-rounder said that Pant would have great memories of Australia and said his knock in Gabba was special. Watson feels that Pant has returned as a better player before he was



forced to take a break due to his car accident. He's [Pant] obviously got great memories from his last tour that he had from a batting perspective in Australia," Watson said. "That innings he played at the Gabba was something very special. So knowing that he's come through his challenges in the last couple of years to be able to come back as an even better player than what he left off, I think he's going to have a big series."

Watson feels Pant, Bumrah going to be key Watson went on to praise Bumrah as well and tipped the pacer to be very effective in Australia. "Also, Bumrah is someone who in Australian conditions - well, in all conditions really - he's so good. [With] his ability to be able to just take wickets and get batters out, he's going to be very effective in Australia as well. So those two guys, if they have big series, they can really provide Australia some big challenges," said Watson. Both Pant and Bumrah have great records while facing Australia. The wicketkeeper has scored 624 runs to his name from 12 Test innings in Australia with a strike rate of 72.13. Bumrah has picked up 32 wickets from 7 matches down under at an average of 21.25.

## Hardik Pandya's 'swag' return: RP Singh warns fans not to get too excited

**New Delhi.** RP Singh has warned fans not to get too excited about Hardik Pandya's 'swag' return to the Indian team during their win in the first T20I against Bangladesh. Hardik was in top form during the match as he scored 39 off just 16 balls and bowled 4 overs and picked up a wicket while conceding just 26 runs.

The all-rounder was in aggressive mode with the bat and played some innovative shots that captured the imagination of the fans. Speaking in a virtual press conference by JioCinema and Sports18, said that judging the all-rounder based on his performance against Bangladesh might not be the right approach as the visitors failed to put up any challenge in the end. "Judging someone's true form based on a performance against the Bangladesh team might not be the right approach, in my opinion. The way Bangladesh is playing right now, they are not performing at their best. Hardik has undoubtedly done well, and he is certainly capable of such performances—he's shown it before. But using this as a benchmark



against this particular team might not be the best idea." "The real test will come when there's better competition, where the stakes are higher. Sometimes, in the back of your mind, you already know you're going to win the match easily, so you play more freely while building and finishing an innings. Bangladesh didn't create that challenging situation," said Singh.

## IND vs BAN 2nd T20I: Preview

He has worked on his fitness and bowling Singh would say that the good thing to see was Hardik bowling 4 overs consistently and putting work on his fitness. "The good thing about Hardik Pandya is that he is bowling four overs consistently. There's always been that question mark over whether Hardik can bowl four full overs, and he's handling that well. His batting has always been good. He has worked on his fitness and his bowling, completing his overall performance. But based solely on this Bangladesh team's performance, I don't think we should get too excited just yet because the real tests are still to come," said Singh.

## T20 World Cup 2024: Before front of camera, behind the scenes

**DUBAI.** It could have been chaos given the situation surrounding India's next fixture at the ongoing T20 World Cup (Sri Lanka). However, the team opted to choose calm in the practice session at the ICC Academy on the eve of probably one of the most important fixtures of this tournament.

Firstly, a bit of context.

After the 58-run loss against New Zealand, India faced Pakistan to not just earn their first win and take two points from the match but to also try to get a boost to their net run rate. The first part did happen. However, the boost to the run rate never came.

On top of that, there was a massive injury scare with captain Hermanpreet Kaur leaving the field due to injury. The list of problems looked as big as the desert surrounding the country. But there was a light at the end of the tunnel once captain Kaur was declared fit. Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana informed that in the press conference. "She is doing fine and she will be fine for tomorrow (Wednesday)," Mandhana said. While the captain was able to make a recovery, questions over Pooja Vastrakar's return to the playing XI reminded. "Pooja, I think the medical team

is still working on her. So, the update will come only tomorrow during the match. I think the only person who wasn't available for the last match was Pooja. Everyone is fit and ready to play. So, there are no availability issues for anyone else," Mandhana mentioned. When asked about the run rate coming into the picture as a buzzword right from the moment India suffered a loss against New Zealand, Mandhana explained why the team put that added pressure behind to just concentrate on winning against Pakistan.

"It definitely was the last match, but as I said, the conditions are a lot different to what you expect as a batter so you are probably thinking to get that run rate high and also you have to win the match first. That's the first priority for us. So, I think it's a balance between trying to find out what's the best for the team. Of course, you know in the last match I couldn't start off fine but then later on I consumed a few dot balls which was a little irritating for me but I think having said that as batters we have to be smart. We can't just go out there thinking that 'oh we are going to take on this bowling lineup and we are just going to cruise' because of course



the conditions and the outfield is a lot different. We have to keep that net run rate in mind. But first winning the match. And then going on and thinking about the net run rate. The group is definitely a bit tricky. I think it's just the start. We don't want to go ahead thinking a lot about what will happen. One day at a time. And if at all tomorrow there's a place where we think about the net run rate, we'll be trying to get it. The win is the priority."

That is what was on display in the practice when almost every member of the team except Kaur showed up for practice. Mandhana spent an extended amount of time discussing her bat flow with head coach Amol Muzumdar, who also helped

Richa Ghosh with the high catching under lights. Almost every player in the squad including the likes of Dayalan Hemalatha and Yastika Bhatia, who have not gotten the opportunity to be part of the playing XI, also freed their arms while facing net bowlers. However, it was Jemimah Rodrigues who batted the most under the lights. During the end of the practice session, she did get hit by a ball, but she was at her cheerful best as the support staff was looking after her.

The most important sign for Indian fans was that one of their most consistent pacers, Vastrakar, gave her best in the nets as she bowled for a while and even batted for a bit. The fixture against Sri Lanka is a must-win for both sides if they are to remain in contention for the semi-final spot. Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu put it best. "I know that tomorrow's game is really crucial for India and Sri Lanka. So, the best team will win and if we can keep it simple," she said. And that's the truth of the matter. Whoever keeps their head down and nerves managed will stay alive in the group of death.

## Liverpool's Ibrahim Konate ready to support player strike over hectic schedule

**Liverpool defender Ibrahim Konate has become the latest player to support a strike over the hectic football schedule. The ongoing season has seen an increase in games due to the remodelled European competitions and international matches.**



**New Delhi.** France and Liverpool defender Ibrahima Konate has joined the growing chorus of footballers voicing concerns over the increasingly congested fixture schedule, stating on Tuesday that he supports players' right to strike over the issue. His comments follow similar warnings from other top players and managers who have been critical of the relentless football calendar.

Last month, Manchester City's Rodri hinted that footballers could stage a strike if scheduling demands were not reduced. Shortly after his remarks, Rodri sustained a season-ending anterior cruciate ligament injury, further intensifying discussions about player welfare and the risks posed by such a gruelling schedule. Speaking to the

reporters, as quoted by Reuters, the Liverpool defender said that the players will be together if there is a strike. "If this dynamic continues and the players decide to bang their fists on the table then we're all in this together," Konate, 25, told reporters when asked about whether he supported a strike. "If tomorrow there's a movement that will lead to understanding, I'll be part of it. And I think all the players will follow suit."

This season, all three major European club competitions have been expanded to include 36 teams, exacerbating the situation. In July,

global soccer players' union FIFPRO announced it would lodge a complaint with EU antitrust regulators, challenging FIFA's international match calendar.

England leads European leagues in terms of back-to-back fixtures, recording 87 last season, with Premier League teams averaging just 67.3 hours of recovery time between matches—one of the shortest in Europe. Konate felt that the hectic schedule is a subject that shouldn't be neglected as there is often news of clubs not wanting players to report to national duty as there is a fear of injury. "It's a subject that shouldn't be neglected," Konate added. "You hear some clubs prefer their players to (not report for international duty) but you have to understand that too, there are so many games."

"The players are on the club's payroll, even if the national teams are just as important." Once the current international break comes to an end, Konate and Liverpool will be in action in 7 games across 3 competitions with tough matches against Chelsea, Arsenal, Aston Villa lined up in the Premier League and Champions League games against Leipzig and Leverkusen.

## IND vs NZ: Kane Williamson set to miss start of series due to groin injury

**New Delhi.** Kane Williamson's departure to India has been delayed, and he is expected to miss the opening Test in Bengaluru due to a groin strain sustained during the recent series against Sri Lanka. New Zealand Cricket confirmed the news in a media release on Wednesday, October 9, noting that Williamson will need to undergo rehabilitation before joining the team in India. New Zealand selector Sam Wells expressed optimism about Williamson's chances of returning later in the series, once his recovery is complete. Wells said that the advice they got was to let the star batter rest and rehabilitate rather than taking a risk of aggravating the injury.

"The advice we've received is that the best course of action is for Kane to rest and rehabilitate now rather than risk aggravating the injury. We're hopeful that if the rehabilitation goes to plan Kane will be



available for the latter part of the tour." "While it's obviously disappointing to not have Kane available from the start of the tour, it provides an opportunity for someone else to play a role in an important series," said Wells. Williamson has played 13 Tests

against India and has scored 871 runs at an average of 37.87. During this time, he has scored 2 hundreds and 5 fifties from the 24 innings against India. In Williamson's absence, Mark Chapman, uncapped at the Test level, has been called up as cover. Chapman, a key player in New Zealand's limited-overs squads, boasts an impressive first-class average of 41.9 with six centuries, including a standout performance against India A in 2020. Last season, he scored 245 runs in three Plunket Shield matches, highlighted by a knock of 123 against Otago Volts. Additionally, Michael Bracewell will be part of the squad for the first Test before returning home for the birth of his second child. His place for the remainder of the series will be taken by Ish Sodhi.



was neither a mid-on or a mid-off position. The on-field umpire was surprised when he turned back and saw a fielder standing right behind him. Labuschagne then changed his mind, pulled the fielder by his trouser, and moved him to the left of the umpire.

Ingls, who was batting on 83, did not let his concentration be affected by Labuschagne's antics on the field. The Queensland captain bluffed the batter by bowling a bouncer, but Ingls was up to the mark, ducking beneath the flying ball. It was an entertaining three-over spell on Day 1 by Marnus Labuschagne, who is known for his weird on-field gestures. The Queensland captain bent his back and bowled a barrage of bouncers in a bid to break the partnership. He bowled three overs in the spell and two of them were maidens.

## Saskia Horley's remarkable path: From Sydney suburbs to Scotland's T20 World Cup

**It has been years since that episode aired, but Horley still gets plenty of questions about the experience of meeting her hero, even from her Scotland teammates.**

**DUBAI.** Saskia Horley started playing football and cricket in her backyard with her dad while growing up in Sydney. She was a part of the Gordon Women's Cricket Club while playing some football for Northern Tigers FC. One thing led to another and she got to feature in an episode of the series called "Undercover Coach" by Disney Channel in Australia, where an international

athlete would coach the young player for a day. Naturally, Horley's coach was dual international Ellyse Perry, who had represented her national side in both sports at that time. It has been years since that episode aired, but Horley still gets plenty of questions about the experience of meeting her hero, even from her Scotland teammates.

And she never shies away from answering. "People still ask me about it to this day, even on this team so it's great," Horley told this daily before the World Cup. "I love it when it's brought up. It was an experience that I was very grateful to have that a lot of people didn't have the opportunity to do that. It's going to be fun to see Pez around the hotel. I was a very young child at that point, but different now," she added. Starting with the domestic setup in New South Wales, Horley took a decision to represent her mother's heritage through the Scotland national team. Despite not knowing the players, it didn't take her a lot of time to find a bond with her



Scotland teammates. "The moment I first saw the girls in that first training it was a great feeling. I met Rachel Slater first who was the best person to meet in that instance because it was just going to be so relaxed and we got along well. It is an amazing group to be a part of and everyone's so welcoming to new girls and it's a really good group," Horley cannot stop smiling while talking about her teammates.

After playing alongside Abtaha Maqsood in the English domestic setup in Sunrisers,

Horley knew about her a bit, but then captain Kathryn Bryce has been someone who has looked after her. "It's outstanding. I hadn't come across Bryce before just because I was so far away from Scotland. She is a great leader on the field. It is nice to have someone have your back in any sort of situation without her even needing to tell you. Abs (Abtaha) is outstanding. I think she's like a silent assassin and doesn't get to show too much emotion sometimes I think but her passion and pride for Scotland is something you can see from miles away which is special," she added. When asked about her wish list, Horley cheekily said she wants to score at least a run and take a wicket. In the first match against Bangladesh in Sharjah she ticked both of those boxes. Even her best individual bowling figures came in Scotland's World Cup opener. "I would like to score at least one run. Love to take wickets because it would be really fun. I think to take in the whole experience and."

National Film Awards

# Mansi Parekh

In Tears As She Receives Best Actress Award From President Droupadi Murmu

President Droupadi Murmu led the 70th National Film Awards ceremony today, October 8, 2024, at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, where she honoured the winners for their contributions to Indian cinema. Among the highlights, she presented the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award to veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty, celebrating his decades-long career. President Murmu also awarded Rishab Shetty the Best Actor award for Kantara, while Nithya Menen and Manasi Parekh shared the Best Actress title for Thiruchitrambalam and Kutch Express. The Best Feature Film award went to Aattam, while Gulmohar was named Best Hindi Film. The President celebrated the diversity and achievements of Indian cinema across multiple languages and regions during the ceremony.

It was a deeply emotional moment as Mansi Parekh walked up to the stage to receive the Best Actress award at the 2024 National Film Awards. Overcome with emotion, she could barely hold back her tears. As she stood before the audience, the weight of her achievement seemed to sink in, and she broke down in front of the packed hall. President Droupadi Murmu, who presented the award, gently placed a hand on her shoulder, offering a comforting pat and quiet words of reassurance. Mansi, though visibly overwhelmed, smiled through her tears, her face beaming with gratitude.

In an exclusive interview with News18 Showsha last year, Manasi emphasised the importance of bringing Gujarati cinema into the mainstream and expanding its reach to a broader audience. "I think to gain more popularity, Gujarati cinema should explore so many more concepts and so many more stories. There are incredible geographical locations in Gujarat. For example, when we shot Kutch Express in Kutch, we tried to show Kutch as it has never been shown before in any Hindi or Gujarati film. Similarly, people have a very stereotypical notion of what Gujarati movies are or what Gujarati people are like. I think our movies should try to break those stereotypes and should try to bring out those stories to the mainstream for us to reach a wider audience," she said.



Sanjay Leela Bhansali Says He "Froze" When He Met Deepika Padukone For The First Time: 'So Much Beauty...'



Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Deepika Padukone have delivered some of the biggest hits in Bollywood. The actor-director combo has worked on three films together which were grand and opulent. In a recent interview, the director spoke about his reaction when he met the actor for the first time. He recalled being frozen and mesmerized by her beauty. In a conversation with The Hollywood Reporter, Sanjay Leela Bhansali spoke about how he met Deepika Padukone for the first time at her house. He recalled that the actor opened the door for him and he was taken aback by her beauty. He said, "I met Deepika when I went to her house for the first time, she opened the door. I froze by the beauty of the woman, by the eyes, when I realized that there's so much of subtlety, so much of fragility, there's so much of beauty. She started talking, and I realized her voice was beautiful."

Bhansali added that it was in that instant that he knew he could "mould" Padukone to become the character that he had in mind for his film. The director continued, "Then I realized I was at the right place at the right time because I knew this girl would be moulded, would be taken somewhere. It's your instinct of how you connect. Your soul has to connect to their soul." Bhansali and Padukone's first film was Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela. The movie also marked the first time Padukone shared the screen with Ranveer Singh. Apart from them, the movie also starred Supriya Pathak, Richa Chadda, Sharad Kelkar, Gulshan Devaiah, Barkha Bisht Sengupta, and Abhimanyu Singh. After Ram-Leela, they worked on Bajirao Mastani. This film also saw Padukone and Singh share the screen. Their last film was Padmaavat which was released in 2018. The movie starred Padukone, Singh, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Jim Sarbh in important roles. On the work front, Padukone will be next seen in Singham Again. The Rohit Shetty directorial is all set to release in theatres on November 1. The movie boasts of a star-studded cast which includes Singh, Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Tiger Shroff, Arjun Kapoor, and Akshay Kumar. Meanwhile, Bhansali is currently working on Love And War which will star Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, and Ranbir Kapoor.

Why Did Dhanush And Aishwarya Skip Court Hearing? Here's An Update



Rajinikanth's daughter Aishwarya and popular South actor Dhanush are in the process of getting a divorce. Although the couple was spotted together a number of times after their separation announcement, Dhanush and Aishwarya's divorce case has been going on in the Chennai Family Court ever since. They were also seen at their kids' special occasions in school. Moreover, Dhanush had wished Aishwarya for her directorial film, Lal Salaam, on X. But now, it seems like a breath of fresh air for the duo's fans as they somehow skipped appearing before the court for the latest hearing on their divorce case. According to a report by ETimes, even after the estranged couple had mutually filed for divorce in the Chennai Principal Family Court, they were found absent in the last hearing due to reasons best known to them. Their case was brought before Judge Subadevi at the Chennai Family Court, who, after considering Dhanush and Aishwarya's absence, postponed the hearing to October 19. The judge allowed both parties more time to prepare for the significant step in their lives. This drew much attention to the proceedings, leaving everyone speculating about their reconciliation.

Dhanush and Aishwarya previously elated their fans with their brief social media interaction in September 2024. Aishwarya took to her Instagram handle and shared images from one of her vacations with her kids, Yathra and Linga. The series of snaps showed the trio engaging in fun photo sessions and other such love-filled activities. It also featured Aishwarya relaxing while sipping over coffee and a few more images. Sharing them, she wrote, "Mirroring memories... Reflecting happy randomness.... Lots of laughter, steps, coffee and ice cream. Just living moments.... cannot lie... I just forgot to post about my beautiful July! Konjam (little) late ..but like always said better late than never! #sharinghappiness." Soon after she posted the pictures, her estranged husband, Dhanush's reaction to the post, grabbed the attention. He was amongst the ones who liked her post.

Going back to Dhanush And Aishwarya's love story, they tied the knot in 2004 after dating for quite some time. Their union was celebrated and loved by both the families and their huge fanbases. Together, the couple is blessed with two sons, Yathra and Linga.

# Raashi Khanna's 'Graycious' Blazer Look Can Be Your Next Corporate Party Outfit



Raashi Khanna is a well-known name in the Indian film industry. She made her debut with the 2013 Bollywood film Madras Cafe. In 2018, Raashi made her Tamil debut with the Imaikka Nodigal, in which she shared the screen alongside Atharvaa Murali, Vijay Sethupathi, Anurag Kashyap and Nayanthara. Besides being a popular face in the acting industry, she is also an active social media user and has more than 11.3 million followers. Raashi recently shared a picture on her Instagram handle that created a massive storm on social media. The pictures were widely shared by his fans. In the viral post, she was wearing a grey coloured suit. Raashi opted for heavy makeup along with perfectly drawn eyebrows and eyelashes. She looked elegant wearing pink lipstick which nicely matched her outfit. She captioned the post, "Graycious me is grayteful for this suit!" The pictures went viral soon after it was posted, garnering millions of views. It was liked by more than 6.23 lakh users. Thousands of users also commented on the post. One user commented, "After seeing the pictures, my heart stopped beating," while another user wrote, "You look gorgeous and beautiful." A third user commented, "You Actually Look Good In the Suit." Several other users commented with heart and fire emojis to express their love for the actress. Raashi often creates storms on social media

with her posts. Recently, the actress posted some pictures in which she was seen wearing a red colour glittering jumpsuit. Those were likely taken during the shooting of the International Indian Film Academy Awards in which she delivered a gracious dance performance. Sharing the photos she wrote. "A



whirlwind of emotions and poses as I geared up for the IIFA stage!" The actress will be soon seen in the upcoming film The Sabarmati Report directed by Ranjan Chandel and Dheeraj Sarna which is expected to hit the theatres on November 15. It will feature Vikrant Massey, Ridhi Dogra, Nazneen Patni and Sundip Ved in prominent roles. The story of the film talks about the Godhra train burning incident that took place in 2002.