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Delhi HC seeks CBI stand on Chidambaram's plea over framing of charges in INX Media case

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, Nov. 18: The Delhi High Court on Monday sought the stand of the CBI on pleas by former Union minister P Chidambaram and his son Karti Chidambaram seeking to defer arguments on framing of charges in the INX media



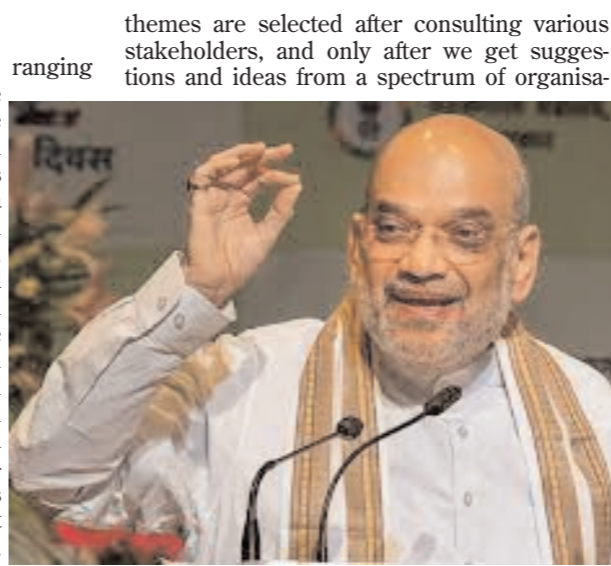
case. Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri issued notice to the investigating agency on the petitions and said "let response be filed". The senior counsel appearing for the two Congress leaders argued that the arguments on framing of charges ought not to commence before the trial court as the investigation was still pending. CBI's counsel said there was sufficient material to show "demand of bribe" and framing of

charges should not be stopped on account of any pending investigation. The CBI had registered its case on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in a Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance granted to the INX Media group for receiving overseas funds of Rs 305 crore in 2007 during P Chidambaram's tenure as finance minister. In the pleas before the high court, Chidambaram and Karti, who were represented by senior advocate Sidharth Luthra and advocate Akshat Gupta, have assailed a trial court order refusing to defer the arguments of charge. Luthra said the chargesheet filed by the CBI in the case was incomplete and the accused persons were yet to be given access to all the material collected by the agency as probe on certain aspects was going on. "You have been doing investigation since 2017. If you choose to be lackadaisical, should I proceed to argue on charge? It can't be an unfair battle," he said. Karti, in his plea, said the necessity of further investigation being concluded before consideration of charge impacts his right to fair trial under Article 21 of the Constitution. "The Ld. Special Judge failed to appreciate that the alleged offence pertains to a period of 2007-08, for which, the said FIR was registered by the CBI on 15.05.2017.

Amit Shah to inaugurate golden jubilee edition of Police Science Conference in Gandhinagar

Simmi Kaur Babbar

Gandhi Nagar, Nov. 18: Themes ranging from community policing to AI in the criminal justice system and from the future of blockchain technology in policing to radicalisation in prisons will be discussed at the 50th All India Police Science Conference in Gandhinagar over the next two days. Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the golden jubilee edition of the conference, organised by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and hosted by Rashtriya Raksha University, an official said on Monday. Experts from various fields come under one platform to find solutions to challenges the law enforcement agencies face at the annual conference, Rekha Lohani, Inspector General in the BPR&D, told media persons. This conference will have eight themes ranging from community policing to AI in the criminal justice system, and from the future of blockchain technology in policing to radicalisation in prisons, Lohani said. "The



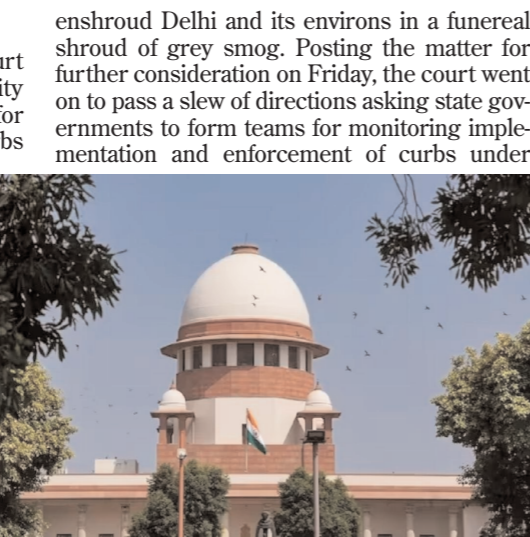
themes are selected after consulting various stakeholders, and only after we get suggestions and ideas from a spectrum of organisations, we collaborate to finalise themes that are deliberated," Lohani added. The application of forensics in new criminal law, policing in smart cities and community policing in tribal and border areas as well as the role of police in disaster risk reduction are among other themes that

will be discussed at the event. Shah will attend the inaugural event as the chief guest with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel as the special guest. He will also release a compendium of a compilation of the best research papers from domain experts on the occasion, Lohani said. "There is a wide spectrum of people who will be participating in each of the sessions to brainstorm over various challenges that law enforcement agencies face. On the sidelines of the conference, we will also organise a police-tech expo in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry," the IG said. As many as 45 companies from the private sector will display equipment and gadgets developed to aid law enforcement agencies in tackling challenges, she added. The conference will bring together around 250 participants from the Central and state police forces, prisons and correctional services, social scientists, forensic experts, academicians and other stakeholders. CBI Director Praveen Sood will be the chief guest for the valedictory function on Wednesday.

Delhi air pollution: SC orders closure of NCR schools, Grap 4 restrictions

Naresh Malhotra

New Delhi, Nov 18: The Supreme Court censured the Commission for Air Quality Management for Delhi and adjoining areas for delaying the imposition of GRAP 3 and 4 curbs. Schools will remain shut in the entire National Capital Region, and GRAP 4 restrictions will remain till further orders, the Supreme Court said on Monday, censuring the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) for Delhi and adjoining areas for delaying the imposition of graded response action plan (GRAP) 3 and 4 curbs. The court's comments came on what is possibly Delhi's worst day in terms of air quality. The 4 pm reading (a 24 hour average) said 494, and while AQI has been higher (497) before, that was with a far fewer number of monitoring stations than in place today. A sudden dip in temperatures, a change in wind direction, a reduction in wind speeds, local pollutants (mostly from vehicles), and smoke and particulate matter from farm fires in Punjab combined to



enshroud Delhi and its environs in a funereal shroud of grey smog. Posting the matter for further consideration on Friday, the court went on to pass a slew of directions asking state governments to form teams for monitoring implementation and enforcement of curbs under

inform it by Friday. GRAP 4 also mandates a ban on entry of heavy goods vehicles (except those carrying essential commodities). States have the option of other measures, including the so-called odd-even scheme (odd numbered vehicles to run on certain days and even-numbered ones on other days). But the fact that CAQM dragged its feet, first over imposing GRAP 3 and then GRAP 4 restrictions didn't escape the court's attention. "It is because of your default that we are facing this situation today," a bench of justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih told CAQM represented by senior counsel Ruchi Kohli as the bench questioned the delay on imposing GRAP 3 curbs, which should have come into effect on November 12. "In such a serious case, how do you wait for three days?" the court asked, and added: "Till further orders are passed by this court, implementation of GRAP Stage 4 will continue even if AQI falls below 450." GRAP 3 restrictions are imposed when air pollution in Delhi falls in 'severe' category (401-450). And GRAP 4 when it crosses 450. The court was informed that the curbs under GRAP Stage 4 have now been imposed in the city.

Foreign cos need Union govt nod to do surveys: Kerala HC

New Delhi, Nov. 18: The Kerala High Court (HC) has held that if any foreign organisation wants to conduct a survey in India, permission from the central government is necessary. The ruling from the HC came while dis-



posing of a plea seeking quashing of criminal proceedings against an Indian company for conducting a survey in Thiruvananthapuram in 2010, which according to the police was aimed at "injuring the emotional feelings of the Muslim community". The survey was conducted by the Indian company - Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) PLC- for US-based Princeton

Survey Research Associates. Rejecting the Indian company's plea to quash the criminal proceedings against it, Justice PV Kunhikrishnan said that if such surveys were allowed to continue, they "will affect the security of our country and importantly religious harmony". "The central government should take it very seriously, and if there is any intention to topple the integrity of our country by conducting such surveys, appropriate steps should be taken in accordance with the law," the HC said in its order of November 4. It also noted that in the instant matter, there was no sanction from the central government for conducting such a survey. The HC was also of the opinion that an investigation by the state police was not enough in the case and directed the investigating officer to forward a report to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) about the probe carried out so far in the case. "The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs will do the needful in accordance with law, and order further enquiry or investigation, if necessary, in accordance with law," it said.

Congress demands home minister Amit Shah's resignation over Manipur violence

ST Correspondent

New Delhi, Nov 18: The Congress party on Monday demanded the resignations of Union home minister Amit Shah and Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh over the continuing violence in the northeastern state that has been torn apart in ethnic clashes since May last year and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the state and call an all-party meeting ahead of the Parliament session that starts on November 25 to restore peace and normalcy. "The Prime Minister had outsourced Manipur to the Union home minister. The singular achievement of the home minister is to protect the Manipur chief minister (Biren Singh). The home minister has not protected the innocent people, the



innocent women and children of Manipur. He should take the responsibility and resign," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said at a press conference in Delhi on Monday. "From May 3, 2023 Manipur has been on fire. PM has visited various countries across the world but has not found any time to visit Manipur. Our first demand is for the PM to visit Manipur before the Parliament session, meet political parties, relief camps," Ramesh added. K Meghachandra Singh, the Congress state unit chief, said, "There is no law and order, no normal human activities in the state. Abduction of innocent civilians and killing—particularly women, children and infants, are increasing. Now, rampant extortions are happening." "PM Modi said in 2017 election rally that "Those who can't ensure peace in Manipur, have no right to govern." I want to ask him, is the double engine government able to maintain law and order? Without Manipur, India can't be the full Union of India. Now, Manipur has become a forgotten state in Modi's India," Singh added. Girish Chodankar, AICC in-charge for Manipur said, "The violence is the tragic by-product of double engine sarkar. It failed to protect, and people are frustrated, and the state has become headless. Retail inflation has crossed 10%. There is a massive job loss, national highway blocking has crossed all limits. People have started attacking Opposition politicians. This is a complete failure of PM and CM."

Jharkhand election is for poor, youth, Hindu pride

Ranchi, Nov. 18: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said the Jharkhand election is for poor, youth, women and Hindu pride. He also accused the JMM-led government of allegedly not fulfilling any promise made during the 2019 elections.

"Chief Minister Hemant Soren is busy talking about his wife, while his wife Kalpana Soren says 'ek hi nara Hemant dubara' (one slogan, Hemant for second time). I want to ask who will talk about youth, women and the poor in the state. This time no Hemant 'dubara' but poor and youth 'dubara'," Sarma said addressing an election rally at Mandu in Hazaribag district. He added, "This Jharkhand election is for poor, women and youth, besides Hindu pride and protection. This election is for Jharkhand's as well as country's development." Attacking Hemant Soren-led government for allegedly not fulfilling its promises, he said that the government had promised to provide five lakh jobs and unemployment allowances. "But, the government did not fulfil its promise. If BJP is voted to power, we will provide 2.87 lakh government jobs and create five lakh job opportunities. We will give Rs 2,000 to graduate and post-graduate level students for two years so that they could carry out their preparations for jobs," he said.

BJP using Article 370 to win polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand: Farooq Abdullah

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Jammu, Nov. 18: The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) onslaught on the Congress over Article 370 of the Constitution is aimed at weakening the opposition party and winning elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, Farooq Abdullah, president of the National Conference (NC) said on Saturday. However, the veteran leader said they will not allow the Congress to be weakened and hoped that the INDIA bloc will emerge victorious in the Assembly polls in both the states. Talking to reporters after attending a private function in Jammu, Abdullah said he has no doubt about the return of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Asked about the statements of Congress leaders that there is no mention of restoration of Article 370 in a recently-passed resolution in the Jammu and Kashmir (J and K) Assembly, Abdullah said they have their own purpose because their party is

under attack from the BJP, with Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah "shouting



repeatedly at them just to win the elections". "They (BJP) are thinking that they will weaken the Congress but we will not allow that to happen," the former J and K chief minister said. "We are hopeful that they (INDIA alliance) will win the elections," he added. On the criticism of Kashmir-based political parties

for allegedly misleading people on the resolution by linking it to Article 370, Abdullah said they are free to raise questions. "Our (election) manifesto is before the public and we are following it," he said. Abdullah responded angrily to a question about the restoration of statehood to J and K and asked, "What type of a response do you want from the Centre to the resolution for restoration of statehood? How long has this (NC) government been formed? Do you want statehood to fall from the sky?" "Statehood will be returned (to Jammu and Kashmir) and I have no doubt over it. Earlier, some people used to say that (Assembly) polls will not take place (in Jammu and Kashmir) but the elections happened. They (BJP) launched a propaganda that they will form the government but what happened?" he asked. On Shah's statement that Modi is determined to amend the Waqf Act despite resistance from key opposition leaders, Abdullah said.

SC Collegium recommends Madras HC Judge D Krishnakumar's name for Manipur HC chief justice

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Nov. 18: The Supreme Court Collegium on Monday recommended appointment of Justice D Krishnakumar, currently serving as a judge of the Madras High Court, as the chief justice of the Manipur High Court. The Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and comprising Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant, took the decision in a meeting held on Monday. A vacancy in the office of the chief justice of the High Court of Manipur would arise consequent upon the retirement of Justice Siddharth Mridul on November 21, 2024. Therefore, appointment to that office is required to be made, the Collegium noted. "It is proposed to appoint Mr. Justice D Krishnakumar, presently serving as a Judge of the Madras High Court, as the Chief Justice of High Court of Manipur with effect from the date on which the incumbent Chief Justice demits office on retire-



ment," it said. "Mr. Justice D. Krishnakumar was appointed as a Judge of the Madras High Court on 07th April 2016 and is due to retire on 21st May 2025. "He is the senior-most puisne Judge in his parent High Court and belongs to a Backward Community. Before his elevation as a Judge of the High Court, he had extensive practice in civil, Constitutional and service matters in the High Court, with

specialisation in Constitutional law," it added. The Collegium noted that Justice Krishnakumar is a competent judge with sound legal acumen and is endowed with high level of integrity and honesty. "While recommending the name of Mr. Justice D. Krishnakumar, the Collegium has also taken into consideration the fact that at present there is only one Chief Justice from the Madras High Court among the Chief Justices of the High Courts. "Having regard to all relevant factors, the Collegium is of the considered view that Mr. Justice D. Krishnakumar is fit and suitable in all respects for being appointed as the Chief Justice of High Court of Manipur," it said. "The Collegium, therefore, resolves to recommend that Justice D Krishnakumar be appointed as the Chief Justice of High Court of Manipur consequent upon the retirement of Mr. Justice Siddharth Mridul on 21st November 2024," it said. The Supreme Court Collegium on Monday recommended appointment of

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News box

Coconut-pluckers to driverless tractors, Krishi Mela in Bengaluru ends on high note

BENGALURU. From per-drop irrigation systems to donkey milk-based soaps and creams, and a coconut plucker stand that can reach up to 80 feet, Krishi Mela 2024 showcased how innovation is transforming agriculture.

On Sunday, the final day, Bengalureans thronged the University of Agricultural Sciences' Gandhi Krishi Vigyana Kendra (GKVK) campus to explore over 700 stalls featuring cutting-edge technologies. The Krishi Mela, held from November 14, saw a total footfall of 34.13 lakh over its four-day span, generating a turnover of 6.17 crore. Throughout the event, attendees enjoyed a total of 53,111 meals.

Farmers were especially captivated by robotic solutions like boom sprayers and automated bird and monkey scarers which use sound to simplify farm work. A significant highlight of the fair was the presentation of a high-tech coconut plucker stand, capable of reaching up to 80 feet. The 'carbon-fibre telescopic plucker' can harvest coconuts and arecanut from tall trees, with the ability to collect up to 70 kilograms of produce at once. The fair also featured a machine capable of producing 300 eco-friendly coconut plates per hour, offering a sustainable solution to the growing problem of plastic waste.

Among the other innovative technologies displayed was 'Nero', which is equipped with in-built sensors that monitor critical environmental factors like soil moisture, temperature, humidity, and overall soil quality. By sending real-time data to a mobile app and indicating through colours, Nero helps farmers manage crop health and make informed decisions about irrigation, pest control, and fertilisation. In addition to the coconut plucker, another standout innovation at the mela was a coconut harvesting drone, designed specifically for coconut trees, which can fly to the top of trees and harvest coconuts with precision.

BDA land goes under hammer, 19 acres fetch Rs 630 crore

BENGALURU. At a recent e-auction held by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), two land parcels totalling 19 acres in Konnadaspura, went under the hammer for Rs 630 crore -- a whopping 250 per cent above the guidance value for the area.

In another development, BDA decided not to go in for the across-the-table sale of its villas, priced at Rs 1 crore and above, at Hunnigere in Dasanapura hobli, due to overwhelming demand from the public, and will e-auction them. A senior official said one of the land parcels measured 11 acres, while the other plot is 8 acres. "The guidance value here is just Rs 3,000 per sqft. At our auction on October 30, we fixed the base price at Rs 6,500 per square feet. We got a good response, with bidder Ananthay Properties quoting Rs 7,500 per sqft. This is 2.5 times the market value and is a crucial source of income for the BDA. We can utilise the money to complete our infrastructure projects," he said. The developer has already paid 25% of the sum and the remaining would be paid shortly, he added.

It is a big plus for BDA, another official said. "Generally, we develop sites into layouts and then sell them to the public. In such instances, we get only 55% of the revenue as the remainder goes into developing the layout, with the required infrastructure. The revenue from direct auction of sites is 100 per cent," he explained.

Hunnigere villas get huge response

Due to overwhelming queries from the public for its villas at Hunnigere, located between Tumakuru Road and Magadi Road, BDA has decided to drop its regular allotment mode of 'First Come, First Serve' for home buyers.

Clean-up call: Apartments, corporate offices in Bengaluru receive notices on garbage cess

BENGALURU. Thousands of apartments and corporate offices in the city received notices this week regarding garbage cess from the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) carved out of the BBMP three years ago, to individually handle waste. It has levied a fee to be paid with retrospective effect from April 1. BSWML has also sought details from the owners within 7 days about the total waste generated and the manner in which they were disposed. was given access to a copy of the notice, which specified two different kinds of fee to be paid -- Rs 3 per kg if the apartment has adopted in-situ processing and Rs 12 per kg if the in-situ disposal of waste has not been adopted within its premises. The notice has also mandated the submission of notarised affidavits in case no disposal is done in-house. Those doing in-house processing have been asked to submit annual returns for the fiscal 2023-2024. The notice also stated that it was being issued under section 285 of the BBMP Act 2020, BBMP Stormwater Management bylaws 2020 and under rule 15 (f) of the SWM Rules 2016.

Meanwhile, apartment representatives were aghast over the tone and content of the notice received. Shobha Raghuram, CEO of Saahas Zero Waste, which is a service provider for multiple corporate firms and Tech companies told, "The communication received by our clients is equivalent to a legal notice.

EPS will merge AIADMK with BJP if one more I-T raid is held, says Dy CM Udhayanidhi

Udhayanidhi made these comments while presiding over a mass marriage ceremony organised by the DMK's Chennai north district unit, where he solemnised 48 weddings.

CHENNAI. Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin on Sunday took a jibe at AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami over his 'shifting stance' on alliances ahead of the 2026 Assembly election. Referring to recent I-T raids in Salem, Udhayanidhi said Palaniswami's tone had softened after the raids and quipped that the AIADMK might merge with the BJP if just one more raid is held.

Udhayanidhi made these comments while presiding over a mass marriage ceremony



organised by the DMK's Chennai north district unit, where he solemnised 48 weddings. "Palaniswami seems unsettled by the popularity of our welfare schemes. People are celebrating our initiatives, and the chief minister is receiving widespread

appreciation. This has left the opposition in a state of turmoil," he said.

Responding to the criticism of naming state projects after M Karunanidhi, Udhayanidhi questioned, "If not Kalaignar's name, whose name should we use? He dedicated his life to

Tamil Nadu, working for people until the age of 94. Palaniswami wouldn't approve even if we named schemes after MGR or J Jayalalithaa. Perhaps he would prefer names like Narendra Modi or Amit Shah."

Addressing Palaniswami's recent statements about alliance, Udhayanidhi said, "Three months ago, he categorically denied any possibility of aligning with the BJP. But after the I-T raid in Salem, he is saying it is too early to discuss alliances.

"Taking to X platform in the evening, Udhayanidhi responded to Palaniswami's recent remarks. Addressing the criticism that Chief Minister MK Stalin often praises him, Udhayanidhi said the CM appreciates all ministers. Udhayanidhi said the opposition leader's words reflect frustration over having "no one to praise him" and disappointment that "there's no one left in the AIADMK worthy of praise."

In response to Palaniswami referring to him as a "toxic mushroom that sprouted from recent rain," Udhayanidhi said, "For those who crawl their way to power like cockroaches and venomous creatures, we will always appear as toxic mushrooms."

29 died in ambulance accidents in Kerala last year

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Ambulances are considered to be life-savers where even seconds count. Sirens blaring and lights flickering, they rush through traffic at insane speeds to save a life, but at times lead to fatal outcomes.

According to the State Crime Records Bureau, 29 people died in accidents involving ambulances in 2023 in Kerala. The death toll saw an increase from the previous year from 23 to 29 even as the number of accidents dipped from 169 to 150. In the 150 accidents last year, 117 people sustained grave injuries while 63 suffered minor injuries, the data revealed.

Speeding, as ambulances are generally exempted from traffic rules in emergency situations, and social media reel craze among young drivers are the major reasons for most of the accidents, said healthcare professionals.

The state has 9,964 ambulances registered

with the motor vehicles department (MVD), including 476 under the directorate of health services. But, according to the Kerala Ambulance

injuries. "It is a misconception that all patients should be taken to the hospital at a high speed," says Dr Sunil Kumar, superintendent of the Government

Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram. "In our experience, only 25% of the total people taken on ambulances require critical care. In most cases, ambulance drivers are unnecessarily speeding," he told.

"Another worrying trend is alcoholism among the drivers. Being an emergency service, police will not stop a running ambulance and subject the driver to alcohol test. Apparently, some drivers are misusing this privilege," he said.

KADTA treasurer Muhammed Jaleel said lack of proper training, especially for newcomers, is another major reason for the accidents. "At least 70% of the accidents happen due to rash and reckless driving," he said.



Drivers and Technicians Association (KADTA), only around 5,000 are operational.

Since 2018, there have been 820 accidents involving ambulances, in which 161 people lost their lives and 974 sustained

Sabarimala season: Kudumbashree to roll out eco-friendly 'saree' bags

KOCHI. The Kudumbashree Mission has been conducting a 'Plastic free Campaign' in connection with the Sabarimala pilgrimage for the past several years in which one major initiative was the distribution of cloth bags to cut plastic usage. This time though, it didn't receive any state funding, but the members of the poverty eradication and women empowerment programme are bent on contributing to nature's cause during the two-month long pilgrimage season.

The mission is now set to roll out 'saree' bags and distribute the same to shop owners and pilgrims, thanks to a unique 'saree challenge' to collect 'raw-material' for churning out eco-friendly cloth carry bags. "Unlike the previous occasions, we got no government funding or sponsorships this time and hence we decided to make the cloth carry bags through the 'saree challenge' initiative. The members are visiting each and every house to collect

sarees and shawls that are not being frequently used. Our stitching units then convert the same into carry bags. We intend to distribute the first set of the bags

check posts. The cloth bags will also be distributed to shop owners en route to the holy shrine. "We aim to distribute 200 cloth bags to pilgrims daily. The first lot of 10,000 cloth carry bags will be churned out by this month end," she added.

The 'saree challenge' was originally started during the Onam season as part of efforts to make Pathanamthitta a plastic-free district. However, the initiative failed to make serious headway then and the Kudumbashree couldn't meet the deadline of September 5 to roll out the eco-friendly bags.

Meanwhile, the Kudumbashree is also holding talks with authorities to set up food courts at two places along the Pampa-Sannidhanam trekking path, for the first time. "Since the tendering process of shop outlets was over, we have initiated discussions with the forest department to allot space," said Sreekanth A S, Kudumbashree Programme Officer.



Treat water sources as precious resources

Now the city of Chennai fluctuates between floods and drought. In 2015, we had our worst floods ever, and in 2019, our worst drought on record

Tamil Nadu. I had a magical childhood. In the late 50s, I lived on Nathan's Street on Harrington Road, with just a chain-link fence separating this colony of eight bungalows from the Madras Christian School. Magical, because the colony was filled with kids and we measured the passing of time in the games we played; we had the kite season, the tops season, the marbles season, the cricket season, the hockey season, and of course the rainy season when we frolicked in the muddy waters of Swaminathan Bungalow to catch as many tadpoles as we could.

My most vivid memory of the rains in Madras was being taken to Spurtank Road to watch the Cooum River in full spate. In those days, it seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime event and we were awed by the strength of the water in the river where we would catch tiny fishes every so often.

Today, a combination of unregulated and rapid urbanisation and climate change has resulted in more frequent extreme weather events. Now the city of Chennai fluctuates between floods and drought. In 2015, we



had our worst floods ever, and in 2019, our worst drought on record, when we almost hit ground zero and drew frequent comparisons to Cape Town.

Clearly, we are not managing our water well. The rainfall we receive from the southwest and northeast monsoons is more than enough to meet the city's annual needs—if only we would harvest it rather than flush it down storm water drains to the Bay of Bengal.

As the northeast monsoon looms over the city, floods, like a crying baby, seem to get all the attention. However, the fact is, we need the rains. We are a water-starved city, rapidly depleting our groundwater aquifers. Instead of raising the alarm every time it

rains and scaring every Ram, Meenakshi, and Harini into believing that storm water drains are needed in every corner of the city to carry rainwater away quickly, we should recognise that Chennai is a drought-prone, monsoon-dependent city. We need measures that help slow and retain this precious rainwater to recharge our dwindling aquifers. Solutions for drought will also help mitigate

floods. The opposite is not necessarily true. Focusing on drought management places responsibility on every citizen. Through rainwater harvesting, urban farming on rooftops, tree planting, reducing water consumption at home and work, and recycling water, we can all contribute. When the focus is solely on floods, it becomes the government's responsibility, with the only perceived solution being storm water drains that flush precious rainwater into the Bay of Bengal.

I'm not for a moment suggesting that floods aren't an issue in Chennai—they are. If we continue to encroach on dry lake beds, wetlands, or agricultural lands through

unregulated urbanisation, we'll inevitably face increasing floods.

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News box

Haryana's Jhajjar records AQI at 452, no primary classes in 4 districts

CHANDIGARH. There was no let-up in falling air quality across the national capital region (NCR) on Sunday with 12 districts and cities out of total 14 NCR districts reporting 'severe' and 'very poor' air quality index (AQI) during the day. Consequently, deputy commissioners of four districts in Haryana — Rohtak, Jhajjar, Gurgaon and Sonapat — have ordered to discontinue physical classes of primary students and directed to have online classes instead. Bahadurgarh in Jhajjar district, which shares its border with New Delhi, recorded the highest AQI in Haryana 452 and was classified in the 'severe' category. After Bahadurgarh it was Bhiwani district which recorded the second worst AQI of 426 during the day. Here, the local administration is yet to take a call on students of primary class. Ten 10 districts and cities which reported 'very poor' AQI included Hisar with AQI of 357, Gurgaon 356, Sonapat 350, Dharuhera 347, Jind 326, Ballabgarh 311, Sirsa 301, Panipat 308, Rohtak 305 and Faridabad 300. During the day, these places had touched the highest AQI of 380 to 400 plus, per the Central Pollution Control Board report. GRAP 3 restrictions have been imposed by the Commission for Air Quality Monitoring (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas for the past two days. CAQM has strongly recommended the online classes for primary students to avoid health issues caused by poor air.

Man uses forged docs to buy a luxury car, arrested

Noida. A 38-year-old man was arrested on Friday for allegedly using forged documents to buy a luxury car from a showroom in Sector 5 in Aug last year. The man had booked the car by paying Rs 11,000 online. But when the car was delivered, he issued a check from his bank account which had insufficient funds. DCP Ram Badan Singh said Raj Deb was arrested from his house in Cleo County, Sector 121 on Nov 15 after Tata Motors filed a complaint against him. "During interrogation, it was revealed that Deb had booked a Tata Safari from Sagar Motors in Noida's Sector 5 on Aug 10 last year, by paying Rs 11,000 online. At the time of delivery, Deb and his wife Koyal wrote a cheque to Sagar Motors from their Yes Bank, which was nearly empty. They created a fake message showing a payment of Rs 26,00,000. Later, the company found out the cheque was not cleared," the DCP said. "Raj Deb admitted to defrauding Rana Motors, Noida and Galaxy Toyota in Delhi by issuing similar fake cheques for a Grand Vitara worth approximately Rs 22 lakh and a Toyota Hilux worth about Rs 30 lakh. He assured companies in writing he would pay once he got the registration certificate (RC), to keep them from complaining to the RTO. Once the RC was issued, he would sell the vehicles," the DCP said. The accused was booked under IPC sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery), 468 (forgery), 471 (using as genuine a forged document) and 120B (criminal conspiracy).

For many, the hills are calling as AQI remains 'very poor' for 5 days



Noida. Air quality in Noida improved somewhat on Sunday, but stayed in the 'very poor' category for the fifth straight day — logging 316 compared to 328 on Saturday. While Ghaziabad recorded an AQI of 362, slightly down from 363, Greater Noida saw a surge after two 'poor' days — reaching 362 from 287. But as air quality deteriorated in other parts of NCR, the Commission for Air Quality Management on Sunday evening imposed restrictions under GRAP 4, with effect from Monday morning. According to the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology's bulletin on Sunday, predominant surface winds are likely to come from northwest towards Delhi, with a speed of 6-12 kmph. Mornings are likely to have a cover of smog or shallow to moderate fog, which is expected to clear up as the day progresses. With the AQI deteriorating with each passing day, some residents said they were planning long vacations in the hills to escape the toxic air.

"I've decided to shift from Noida to a hilly village for the next few months. Unfortunately, I've been suffering from a severe throat infection for some time now. The authorities here have failed to come up with an effective plan to control pollution. So, people like us have little option but to escape to areas where we can breathe fresh air in this region," said Pushkar Raj Chandra of Sector 62, Noida. Tushar Kumar, an IT professional, is planning a trip to Nainital. "I don't want my baby to inhale such toxic air. It's very difficult for even us to breathe. We are plan to go to Nainital and stay there until the situation improves here," he told TOI. A Greater Noida resident said increasing pollution had had an effect on her asthma over the years. Pets, too, are bearing the brunt of toxic air. "Pets also suffer from respiratory infections. Three of my rescue dogs developed lung ailments in the past couple of years. I lost one of them this year. Animals that breathe in polluted air are more vulnerable to infections. Just like us humans, they, too, have allergies and skin issues," said Kaveri Rana, who runs an animal rescue centre in Greater Noida. Sector 62, Noida's office and industry hub, was the most polluted in the city, registering a 'very poor' AQI of 384. Sector 1, which covers several industrial and residential sectors, registered 290. In Sector 116, the average AQI was 'poor', at 290. The Sector 125 station, which covers commercial and institutional areas near the Yamuna across Faridabad, saw an average AQI of 298.

Watch out: It's not just fog, crumbling road infra pose accident risk too

Gurgaon. As dense fog envelops the city in winter, crumbling infrastructure adds an extra layer of risk on the roads. With near-zero visibility on some days, broken dividers, illegal speed-breakers, and poles right in the middle of roads potentially pose a grave risk of accidents. For instance, concrete jersey barriers are chipped, toppled, or marred with posters at certain places, making them difficult for unsuspecting motorists to see. Unauthorised bumps add to the challenge, often appearing without any warning. By the time drivers are jolted into awareness, it's too late. One such stretch is Bajghera-Najafgarh Road, close to the Delhi border, which has several speed bumps without markings or signage to alert commuters. Meanwhile, some arterial roads have huge high-tension poles standing right in the middle, posing a severe risk of accidents in low visibility. Civic agencies make no effort to shift the poles falling in the alignment of road construction projects, said residents. Sunil Sareen, deputy convener of Dwarka Expressway Gurgaon Development Association, recounted an incident on the

Sector 102/102A stretch where a car collided with a pole standing in the middle of the road due to poor visibility. "Fortunately, the vehicle wasn't in speed and injuries were avoided. While GMDA is redeveloping this master road, works for which is almost complete, yet there is no sign of shifting poles despite our repeated requests. Similarly, there are poles in the middle of Upper Dwarka Expressway and Bajghera Road which reduce the road width and pose challenges to commuters. We urged the civic authorities to conduct a survey of such structures across the city and shift them to prevent any major mishap," he said. Insufficient streetlights also add to the dangers as dark roads are nearly impossible to navigate safely at night or when there is fog. Branches fallen from trees and debris from nearby construction sites become virtual traps, difficult to spot under foggy conditions. Rajat Srivastava, a resident of Astaire Gardens, said, "In winter, fog can be so dense that visibility drops to just a few metres, leaving drivers with little time to react to things on road. Proper lighting is essential to prevent



such serious mishaps. To add to it all, potholes are not timely repaired and there is haphazard placement of jersey barriers." "Driving during foggy conditions becomes exceptionally challenging in the absence of adequate streetlights. Reduced visibility compels many drivers to resort to using fog lights or high beams but even these solutions do not solve the problem of low visibility," said Nilesh Tandon, RWA president of Fresco. According to experts, govt intervention is necessary to curb the rising toll in road accidents in the city during winter. Sarika Panda Bhatt, a road safety and mobility expert, said, "There is a need to prioritise infrastructure improvements, especially for pedestrians, such as safe

footpaths, zebra crossings, traffic signals, road repairs, street lighting, and clear signage, a implement stricter traffic enforcement, particularly regarding speed limits and drunk driving. Lastly, extensive awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate the public about safe winter driving practices," she said. While fog is a natural phenomena, obstacles on the roads of the city can be cleared easily. Clear lane demarcations are essential for orderly driving, but in some places, these road markings are faded, which adds to the confusion even in clear conditions. Moreover, to date, GMDA has not been able to install the speed limit signages, which is crucial for road safety, despite starting the tender process twice in the past year. The indecision on the part of the metropolitan authority has kept the project in a limbo. Ajay Kumar, deputy commissioner of Gurgaon, assured that efforts to improve the situation are underway. "We have directed the departments concerned to prioritise road safety in view of the fog. We will also conduct review meetings to assess progress."

Irregular waste collection, unswept roads add to residents' woes in Sector 22B

Gurgaon: Residents of Sector 22B have raised concerns over the deteriorating condition of the sanitation in the sector. Garbage piles have accumulated at almost every corner, attracting stray animals that scavenge for food, creating unhygienic surroundings and increasing health risks, they said. Residents noted that garbage collection has been very irregular for the past six months and the roads are often left unswept. According to residents, MCG had awarded the sanitation and road-sweeping work for the area to a new agency in April this year. However, the agency has failed to make any improvements in the cleanliness and upkeep of the sector. "The state of sanitation in our sector has reached an alarming level. The MCG appointed a new agency, but there is hardly any manpower visible on the ground. On any given day, only 4-5 sanitation staff show up for work,



and there is no equipment to properly dispose of the garbage collected from the roads. We raised the issue repeatedly with the civic body, but they turned a blind eye to the situation," said Bhim Singh Yadav, RWA president of Sector 22B. In addition to irregular waste collection, residents have also raised the issue of garbage burning in the area. "In the past 15 days, there were two garbage burning incidents. I even had to douse one of the fires myself. These incidents

are a direct result of the neglect and lack of proper waste management. If the MCG does not address the root cause and ensure regular cleaning and proper waste disposal, such incidents will continue to happen, putting residents' health and safety at risk," Yadav added. Echoing similar sentiments, Poonam Verma, another resident, said, "The garbage piles are not just unsightly but also breeding grounds for diseases. It does not feel like we are living in a sector as the sanitation situation has gone for a toss. Stray cattle and dogs are constantly scavenging through the trash, which only makes things worse." When asked, MCG's senior sanitary inspector Harish Mehta said that the issue would be addressed. "I will get the matter checked and take action to address the problem," he said.

Motor broken, Sushant Lok 2 faces severe water shortage 10 days on

Gurgaon: The demand for water has gone down with the onset of winter but its crisis in Sushant Lok-2 shows no signs of abating. For the past 10 days, over 1,000 families in blocks A and A1 have grappled with severe water shortages due to a malfunctioning motor. According to residents, the numerous complaints they have made to MCG regarding the issue have fallen on deaf ears. "I have visited the Samadhan Shivir five times and urged the municipal corporation to provide a permanent solution to the problem. I have asked them for proper equipment and machinery to ensure a smooth supply of water, but to no avail. Even the stopgap arrangements are unreliable, with the motors malfunctioning frequently. MCG does not even respond to complaints promptly," said Vinita Sinha, RWA president of blocks A and A1. The



colony, situated at the end of GMDA's water supply network, has long struggled with low water pressure and residents have blamed MCG for its failure to implement an efficient last-mile water distribution system. The tubewell, they say, served as a source to fill the supply gap. They also pointed out the situation is likely to become even more concerning with the onset of summer, when the demand for water goes further up. Digvijay Singh, RWA vice president, said, "People expect regular water supply, especially during winter. It is difficult for us to explain to

Farm fires down since '20, but NCR's air not cleared as much

Gurgaon. Instances of stubble burning have come down in Punjab and Haryana, but they haven't succeeded in clearing Delhi-NCR's air substantially — suggesting that local sources have a significant contribution in pollution. Data shows that farm fires in Punjab and Haryana have reduced 40% and 23%, respectively, over the past four years. But air quality has shown only a 5% improvement in Delhi during this time. In numbers, incidents of crop burning came down from 13,218 to 2,587 in the period between Nov 1 to 11 in the past

and 80,098 in 2020. Palak Balyan of Climate Trends agreed that the reduction in incidents of stubble burning did not have the desired effect on NCR's air. "Stubble burning is not the only source of air pollution, especially during winter. If we analyse data in the first 11 days of Nov, we can clearly see that farm fires haven't impacted air quality to that extent. In winter, meteorological conditions and local factors such as road dust, construction activities, heavy vehicles, and waste burning are responsible for

and affiliated with Morgan State University, posted on X that while farm fires had come down over the past few years, aerosol loading, or pollutants, in the atmosphere had increased or remained near stable compared to previous years. It is true that fires in Haryana are at their best levels. However, stubble burning in Indian Punjab and the Pakistan side have contributed immensely to degrading the regional air quality," he told TOI. Piyush Bharadwaj, an air quality scientist at the Centre for Study

Public notice section containing various notices regarding name changes, public information, and legal matters. Includes notices for Mahavir Prasad S/O Tiak Raj, Pradeep S/O Kishan Chand, Prem Lal S/O Ram Sevak, Rajesh Kumar S/O Ram Chand, Rajesh Kumar S/O Ram Chand, and others.

Public notice section containing various notices regarding name changes, public information, and legal matters. Includes notices for Demsat Kipgen S/O Hemjangan, Archana W/O Anil Kumar Shukla, Rajesh Kumar S/O Ram Chand, and others.

Public notice section containing various notices regarding name changes, public information, and legal matters. Includes notices for Rajesh Kumar S/O Hemjangan, Archana W/O Anil Kumar Shukla, Rajesh Kumar S/O Ram Chand, and others.

Public notice section containing various notices regarding name changes, public information, and legal matters. Includes notices for N Swathi, Nandiyala Chandra Sekhar, Nandiyala Rama Subamma, and others.

Advertisement for Indian Railways, Government of India (Bharat Sarkar), Ministry of Railways (Rail Mantralaya). Includes contact information for the Railway Board and details about a tender for rail maintenance.

NEWS BOX

Two killed, 9 wounded in shootings in New Orleans near parade route

NEW ORLEANS. New Orleans police were investigating after two people were killed and nine others were wounded in two separate shootings Sunday along a parade route, authorities said. Officers responding to reports of gunfire shortly after 3:30 p.m. along an avenue in the St. Roch neighborhood found eight victims with gunshot wounds, according to a news release from the New Orleans Police Department. All eight were hospitalized in unknown condition. About 45 minutes later, police received another report of gunfire on the same avenue, about half a mile (.8 km) to the north. One person died at the scene and another died at a hospital, the news release said. A third victim was driven to a hospital in a private car and is in stable condition, police said. The shootings occurred in the area where a "second line," a celebration following a parade, was taking place, officials said.

As China cracks down on bookstores at home, Chinese-language booksellers are flourishing overseas

World. WASHINGTON — Yu Miao smiles as he stands among the 10,000 books crowded on rows of bamboo shelves in his newly reopened bookstore. It's in Washington's vibrant Dupont Circle neighborhood, far from its last location in Shanghai, where the Chinese government forced him out of business six years ago. "There is no pressure from the authorities here," said Yu, the owner of JF Books, Washington's only Chinese bookseller. "I want to live without fear." Independent bookstores have become a new battleground in China, swept up in the ruling Communist Party's crackdown on dissent and free expression. The Associated Press found that at least a dozen bookstores in the world's second-largest economy have been shuttered or targeted for closure in the last few months alone, squeezing the already tight space for press freedom. One bookstore owner was arrested over four months ago.

The crackdown has had a chilling effect on China's publishing industry. Bookstores are common in China, but many are state-owned. Independent bookstores are governed by an intricate set of rules with strict controls now being more aggressively policed, according to bookstore owners. Printing shops and street vendors are also facing more rigorous government inspections by the National Office Against Pornography and Illegal Publication. The office did not respond to interview requests from The Associated Press. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement to , said it was not aware of a crackdown on bookstores. Yu isn't alone in taking his business out of the country. Chinese bookstores have popped up in Japan, France, Netherlands and elsewhere in the U.S. in recent years, as a result of both stricter controls in China and growing Chinese communities abroad. It's not just the books' contents that are making Chinese authorities wary. In many communities, bookstores are cultural centers where critical thinking is encouraged, and conversations can veer into politics and other topics not welcomed by the authorities.

Biden authorizes Ukraine to use US-supplied longer range missiles for deeper strikes inside Russia

MANAUS. President Joe Biden has authorized Ukraine to use U.S.-supplied missiles to strike deeper inside Russia, easing limitations on the longer range weapons as Russia deploys thousands of North Korean troops to reinforce its war, according to a U.S. official and three other people familiar with the matter. The decision allowing Kyiv to use the Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMs, for attacks farther inside Russia comes as President Vladimir Putin positions North Korean troops along Ukraine's northern border to try to reclaim hundreds of miles of territory seized by Ukrainian forces. Biden's move also follows the presidential election victory of Donald Trump, who has said he would bring about a swift end to the war and raised uncertainty about whether his administration would continue the United States' vital military support for Ukraine. The official and the others knowledgeable about the matter were not authorized to discuss the U.S. decision publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's reaction Sunday was notably restrained. "Strikes are not made with words," he said during his nightly video address. "Such things are not announced. The missiles will speak for themselves." Zelenskyy and many of his Western supporters have been pressing Biden for months to allow Ukraine to strike military targets deeper inside Russia with Western-supplied missiles, saying the U.S. ban had made it impossible for Ukraine to try to stop Russian attacks on its cities and electrical grids.

Zelenskyy's statement came shortly after he posted a message of condolence on Telegram following a Russian attack on a nine-story building that killed at least eight people in the northern city of Sumy, 40 kilometers (24 miles) from the border with Russia. Russia also launched a massive drone and missile attack, described by officials as the largest in recent months, targeting energy infrastructure and killing civilians. The attack came as fears are mounting about Moscow's intentions to devastate Ukraine's power generation capacity before the winter. "And this is the answer to everyone who tried to achieve something with Putin through talks, phone calls, hugs and appeasement," Zelenskyy said. The comment appeared to be a dig at German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who spoke Friday with Putin in the first such call with a sitting head of a major Western power in nearly two years.

Canada: India's consulate in Vancouver hold consular camps without any disruption

Toronto. India's consulate in Vancouver organised two consular camps at gurdwaras in British Columbia (BC) without any report of disruption by pro-Khalistan elements. The camps were organised on Saturday and Sunday at the Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara in Abbotsford and the Khalsa Diwan Society's Ross Street Gurdwara in Vancouver on November 16 and November 17, respectively. A total of 709 life certificates were provided to pensioners who visited the two camps, according to India's consulate in Vancouver. This was the second camp held at the Vancouver gurdwara this month. Prior to hosting a camp on November 2, the society had obtained an injunction from a judge of the British Columbia Supreme Court prohibiting protesters from going within 50-metre of the gurdwara. The camps at the gurdwaras in BC were in contrast to the cancellation of two that were scheduled to be held over the weekend at Hindu temples in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Last Monday, the temples, the Brampton Triveni Mandir and the Toronto Kali Bari



announced that they were cancelling the consular camps they were to host. These were to feature officials from India's consulate in Toronto. On November 10, the secessionist group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) had, in a statement, warned that it would "target" Indian officials at the camp that were scheduled to be hosted at the Triveni Mandir and the Kali Bari on November 16

and November 17, respectively. Tensions were prevalent in the area as pro-Khalistan elements staged a violent attack on the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton on November 3. In the aftermath, there was a protest staged outside a gurdwara in Malton. There was also a rally outside the Hindu Sabha temple on November 4 to demonstrate community solidarity.

However, incidents of violence were reported from these events and, till date, several persons have been arrested or charged in this connection including the Canadian organizer of the so-called Khalistan Referendum, Inderjeet Gosal. On Tuesday, Peel Regional Police (PRP) said that it was in touch "with the Consul General of India, as well as places of worship and community centres to work collaboratively to mitigate risks for the community". It added, "Given the current tension in the community and a shared interest in maintaining public safety, the organisers agreed that Consular Camps be postponed to a later date to allow for tensions to ease and limit any negative impact on the community." The Peel region, which included Brampton and Mississauga, appears to be an exception when it comes to these camps being held as scheduled. On November 10, similar camps were held in Edmonton, capital of the province of Alberta, and in Saskatoon and Regina in the province of Saskatchewan.

Biden's Big Move Before Trump's Takeover, Lifts Restrictions On Ukraine's Use Of US Weapons

World. In a significant shift in U.S. policy, the Biden administration has lifted longstanding restrictions on the use of American-supplied weapons by Ukraine, allowing Ukrainian forces to strike deeper into Russian territory. The move is expected to have major implications for the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has already seen heavy fighting for over a year and a half.

Key Policy Shift: Ukraine to Use Long-Range Missiles

Sources familiar with the decision say that, for the first time, Ukraine will soon carry out long-range strikes on Russian military targets well beyond its borders, using U.S. weapons, including ATACMS rockets. These missiles, which have a range of up to 190 miles (306 km), are seen as a crucial tool for Ukraine to disrupt Russian military operations far from the frontlines.

The decision, which marks a notable departure from previous restrictions, comes as Ukraine has long pressed for

more advanced weaponry to bolster its defense efforts and target Russian positions deep inside occupied territories. Despite concerns from some U.S. officials over the potential escalation of the conflict, the change could provide Ukraine with a strategic advantage at a critical moment in the war.

A Critical Moment Before Trump's Takeover

The timing of the announcement is significant, as it comes just months before President-elect Donald Trump takes office on January 20.

While Trump has been vocal in his criticism of U.S. military and financial aid to Ukraine, this policy shift under President Joe Biden could reshape the strategic landscape in the months leading up to Trump's administration. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly requested more flexibility in the use of U.S. weapons, arguing that the ability to target Russian military infrastructure

deeper into Russian-held territories would improve Ukraine's chances of weakening Russian forces and securing a more favorable outcome. The policy change also comes as Russia has escalated its military efforts, including the deployment of North Korean ground troops to supplement its forces in Ukraine. This development has raised concerns in Washington and Kyiv, as it signals further intensification of Russia's military campaign. The Biden administration's decision to lift the restrictions on Ukrainian weapon use is seen, in part, as a response to these increased threats and a bid to counter Russian advances.

Despite these gains, some U.S. officials have expressed doubt that loosening restrictions on weapons use will significantly alter the war's overall trajectory. However, others argue that giving Ukraine more firepower could enhance its negotiating position, particularly if ceasefire talks are initiated in the future.

PM Modi arrives in Brazil to attend G20 Summit

RIO DE JANEIRO. Modi arrived in the South American country after wrapping up a "productive" visit to Nigeria, where he held bilateral talks with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and interacted with the Indian community. Announcing Modi's arrival in Brazil, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a post on X, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi lands in the vibrant city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to attend the G20 Brazil Summit." It also shared pictures of Modi's welcome at the airport. Announcing his arrival, Modi said in a post on his official X handle, "Landed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to take part in the G20 Summit. I look forward to the summit deliberations and fruitful talks with various world leaders." In Brazil, he will attend the 19th G20 Summit as a member of the Troika along with Brazil and South Africa. Alongside Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Joe Biden will be among the leaders attending the Rio de Janeiro summit on November 18-19. In the third and final leg of his trip, Modi will visit Guyana from November 19 to 21 at the invitation of President Mohamed Irfaan Ali.



It will be the first-ever visit of an Indian prime minister to Guyana in more than 50 years.

Modi said in his departure statement on Saturday, "This year, Brazil has built upon India's legacy. I look forward to meaningful discussions in keeping with our vision of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. I will also use the opportunity to exchange views on furthering bilateral cooperation with several other leaders." Induction of the 55-nation African Union as a permanent member of the G20 and managing to produce a leaders' declaration overcoming deep divisions over the Ukraine conflict were seen as major milestones of India's G20 presidency last year.

During his visit to Nigeria, Modi was conferred with the country's national award, the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON), making him only the second foreign dignitary to receive the distinction. This was the 17th international award conferred on Modi by a country. Queen Elizabeth II is the only other foreign dignitary to be conferred with the award.

Modi's visit to Nigeria was the first trip to the West African country by an Indian prime minister after 17 years.

11 Killed, 48 Injured In Israeli Strikes On Lebanon's Tyr Region



Tyr. At least 11 people were killed and 48 injured in Israeli strikes in Lebanon's Tyr region, AFP reported, quoting Lebanon ministry. The strikes in the Tyr region come weeks after Israel had conducted earlier military operations in the area. According to Al Jazeera's prior reports, the late October strikes caused damage to several heritage sites and left 16 people injured. These recent attacks follow an Israeli

airstrike in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, which killed Hezbollah's media relations chief, Mohammed Afif, on Sunday, the Times of Israel reported. In a post on the social media platform, X, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also confirmed the death of "Chief Propagandist and Spokesperson of Hezbollah, Mohammed Afif". According to the IDF, "Afif was a senior Hezbollah military operative, in

contact with senior officials and directly involved in advancing and executing Hezbollah's terrorist activities against Israel". IDF also noted that "Messages broadcasted by Afif to the Lebanese media glorified and incited terrorist activities against Israel, and he was responsible for numerous psychological terror operations against the Israeli public". Afif's impact on the terrorist organization proves that he was directly involved in Hezbollah's terrorist activity against the State of Israel", the IDF further added. The strikes in Tyr and the death of the Hezbollah spokesperson come in the wake of the attack at Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's home on Sunday.

Three suspects were arrested for throwing flares at Netanyahu's residence. Earlier in October, Netanyahu's private residence was targeted by a Hezbollah drone. Images published in Israeli media showed cracks in a bedroom window where the drone struck but failed to penetrate.

Israeli strike on northern Gaza kills at least 30 Palestinians

BEIRUT. An Israeli strike early Sunday in Beit Lahya in northern Gaza killed at least 30 people, the director of a hospital there told The Associated Press. Hosam Abu Safiyya with Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahya also said there were dozens of wounded, and others likely were still under the rubble. Fleeing residents told the AP that houses were hit. "Tonight we did not sleep at all," said one fleeing Beit Lahya resident, Dalal al-Bakri. "They destroyed all the houses around us. ... There are many martyrs." A woman, Umm Hamza, said the bombing had escalated overnight. "It's cold and we don't know where to go," she said. Israel has been carrying out continuous attacks in northern Gaza, not sparing schools, hospitals and refugee camps, with many calling it part of an attempt to "ethnically cleanse Palestinians" of the region to establish illegal settlements.

Israel has killed at least 43, 736 Palestinians since the beginning of its recent war on Gaza, including more than 17,000 children and at least 11,400 women. Israel has also killed more than 180 journalists and over a thousand healthcare workers in Gaza. Meanwhile, an Israeli airstrike on

central Beirut killed Hezbollah's chief spokesman Sunday, an official with the Lebanese group said. The latest in targeted killings of senior Hezbollah officials came as Lebanese officials considered a United States-led cease-fire proposal. Israel also bombed several buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs, where Hezbollah has long been headquartered, after warning people to evacuate. Mohammed Afif, the head of media relations for Hezbollah, was killed in a strike on the Arab socialist Baath party's office in central Beirut, according to a Hezbollah official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Afif had been especially visible after all-out war erupted between Israel and Hezbollah in September and the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike. Last month, Afif hastily wrapped up a press conference in Beirut ahead of Israeli strikes. There was no Israeli evacuation warning before the strike near a busy intersection in central Beirut. An Associated Press photographer at the scene saw four bodies and four wounded people,



but there was no official word on the toll. People could be seen fleeing. There was no comment from the Israeli military. "I was asleep and awoke from the sound of the strike, and people screaming, and cars and gunfire," said Suheil Halabi, a witness. "I was startled, honestly. This is the first time I experience it so close." The last Israeli strike in central Beirut was on Oct. 10, when 22 people were killed in two locations. Hezbollah began firing rockets, missiles and drones into Israel after it began

its brutal war on Gaza. Israel launched multiple airstrikes on Lebanon and the conflict steadily escalated, erupting into war in September. Israeli forces invaded Lebanon on Oct. 1. Hezbollah has fired dozens of projectiles into Israel daily and expanded their range to central Israel. The attacks have killed at least 76 people, including 31 soldiers, and caused some 60,000 people to flee. Israel's Magen David Adom emergency service said a teenager suffered blast injuries Sunday in Upper Galilee. Israel's military said about 15 projectiles had entered from Lebanon following sirens in the Galilee areas. More than 3,400 people have been killed in Lebanon, according to the Health Ministry, and over 1.2 million driven from their homes. It is not known how many of the dead are Hezbollah fighters. Lebanon's army, largely on the sidelines, said an Israeli strike on Sunday hit a military center in southeastern Al-Mari, killing two soldiers and wounding two others. There was no immediate Israeli comment.

News box

Hyderabad Valves conference concludes



HYDERABAD. The third edition of the Hyderabad Valves, established in 2019 with the mission to advance non-surgical methods of valve replacement such as TAVI, TMVR, and TPVR, concluded on Sunday. The event was dedicated to the memory of Professor Alain Cribier, a pioneer who performed the world's first transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) in 2002 and devoted his life to training colleagues worldwide in this transformative technique. The professionals connect, share, and learn from pioneers in the field. Leading cardiovascular surgeons and interventional cardiologists from India and beyond guided the two-day program, featuring in-depth discussions on 12 complex structural heart cases. The highlights of Hyderabad Valves 2024 included over 25 live case studies from around the world, with six cases broadcast from Apollo Hospitals, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. The agenda covered advanced topics such as TAVR with various valve platforms, TAVR Valve-in-Valve with valve fracture techniques, TMVR with LAMPOON, BASILICA, and more.

15-year-old dies by suicide at Nemom

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. A Class 10 student died by suicide at his house at Nemom after his grandmother reprimanded him for using mobile phone during studies. The deceased is Ananthu Krishnan, 15, a student of Victory VHSS, Nemom. Nemom police said the incident occurred on Sunday morning. Ananthu's parents are separated, and he was living with his aunt and grandmother at Nemom. A police source said that on Sunday morning, after returning from kalariyayattu class, Ananthu went to his room to study. His grandmother went upstairs to hang washed clothes when she found Ananthu immersed in his mobile phone, which was hidden inside his book. She scolded the boy and snatched the phone from him. However, later when his aunt checked him, she found him dead in his room. After inspecting the room, police suspect that Ananthu might have tried to just scare the family members by staging a suicide attempt, unfortunately leading to his death. Nemom police have registered a case under Section 194 of BNS for unnatural death.

Zookeeper loses battle to cancer

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Krishnakumar, a well-respected zookeeper at the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo died on Sunday after battling cancer. The 47-year-old Vattiyoorakavu Manikanteswaram native, who had been working in the city zoo since the last 16 years as a daily wage labourer, had been battling cancer for the last several years. But that did not deter him from discharging his duties. When his health started deteriorating, the authorities urged him to work as a crowkeeper, relaxing the workload. "Krishnakumar was a selfless human being who was fully dedicated to his work. He also used to take care of the spotted deer and the aviary. But his deteriorating health prompted him to take over the role of crowkeeper as a good population of crows come to raid the food served to the animals. His role had been to shoo away those crows which pestered the Barasingha deer, also known as swamp deer, spotted deer and other animals," M Rajeev, one of his colleagues, told. Since he had exceeded his age, Krishnakumar had been unlucky not to have a permanent job at the zoo. His body was brought to the zoo office on Sunday afternoon where the staff paid their last respects to him.

Painting contest held in honour of Sugathakumari's 90th birthday

KOCHI. The 'Sugatha Prakrithi' All-Kerala Nature Painting Competition was held at the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium in Kochi, as part of the 90th birth anniversary celebrations of the renowned poet and environmental activist Sugathakumari. The competition saw students grouped into five categories. Children from LKG to Class 4 were given the theme 'Nature', students in Classes 5 to 7 were tasked with painting scenes near a waterfall, while Classes 8 to 10 focused on depicting 'An Evening by the Seaside'. Higher Secondary students were assigned the theme 'Natural Disasters'. Students from LKG to Class 4 were allowed to use any medium, while those from Class 5 onward were required to use watercolour or acrylic paints. The competition offered prizes for the top three winners: first prize - Rs 10,000, second prize - Rs 5,000, and third prize - Rs 2,500. In addition, mementoes and certificates will be awarded to the winners and three consolation prize recipients.

Kerala Maritime Board looks to tap tourism potential of Valiyathura

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. The ambitious plan of the Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) to tap Valiyathura's tourism potential is moving forward steadily. The plan is to bring in private investment to develop a parcel of land close to the Valiyathura Pier and the beach that is in the KMB's possession. Built in 1956, the pier had been a big tourism draw for years. However, after it collapsed partially in March, the pier was closed to the public and the local fishing community. Now, ahead of calling for the Expression of Interest (EoI) for developing the land and pier, the KMB recently invited tenders to rope in an agency to survey the land in its possession at Valiyathura. "The location has immense tourism potential. We possess around 4.5 acres of land there. However, to invite the EoIs, we need to survey the place and ascertain the exact area of land available for development. We need to provide specific idea about the land, its location and its distance from the sea," said a senior KMB official. Though the board had initially planned to invite global tenders immediately after the Lok Sabha elections, it has now decided to take things slow fearing local resistance. "We are preparing the document for inviting EoIs, and will be able to invite tenders within two months. There are other issues that could arise later, when the



project takes off. Hence, we have decided to hold a meeting of stakeholders," said the official. Officials said the area is majorly used by the local fisherfolk. "We need to find an alternative pathway. A lot of issues could arise. When we give the area to a private party, there will be restrictions. Before launching the project, we need to take the local community into confidence. We will make a request to the government so that people's representatives and

representatives of the local community can hold talks for avoiding future problems," said the official. Nearly eight months since the partial collapse of the Valiyathura pier in March, the government has been unable to conserve the structure, which serves as a testament to the maritime heritage of the capital. Rough waves have split the 214-m-long pier into two. As per the study carried out by IIT Madras, the pier's restoration will be a very expensive affair.

Duped staffers testify against Byrraju's firm

HYDERABAD. All India Professional Congress held a public hearing on Sunday in which hundreds of Brane Enterprises Private Limited (BEPL)—a city-based IT company—employees deposed against the firm. There have been allegations that the company, owned by Satyam (Byrraju) Ramalinga Raju, cheated over 3,000 employees. The employees present in the hearing expressed concerns regarding their employment and wages. It is learnt that the BEPL arbitrarily terminated around 1,600 employees through emails. The contents of emails included: "Brane may terminate your employment forthwith (or) terminate by giving one (1) month notice (or) by paying one (1) month gross salary in lieu of notice. Therefore, your last working day at Brane will be 2nd September 2024." However, most of the present and former employees of BEPL have not received their rightful salaries for months altogether. One of the terminated employees told TNIE that she had yet to receive the salary for over two and a half months despite being terminated in September. She lamented that with arbitrary termination from her employment, she is unable to find a job. "I have been giving interviews, but getting rejected for not having adequate work experience," she said. Another employee, who was deposed in the public hearing, said that he is still on the company payroll and has yet to receive the salary of the past six months. Meanwhile, IT Minister D Sridhar Babu has assured them that the Congress would try to address the issue, as their party's affiliated wing at the national level has taken up the issue. He stated that the government would engage in dialogue with the employer and to understand and resolve the issue.

Over 3K child marriage complaints in TN last year; 1,995 were stopped

CHENNAI. Tamil Nadu received a total of 3,049 child marriage complaints in 2023, with an average of nearly eight cases being reported to social welfare department on a daily basis. While 1,995 of these marriages were successfully stopped, 1,054 were carried out. Despite over a thousand marriages being reported, only 808 first information reports (FIRs) were registered, majority of which were for marriages that had already taken place, a petition filed under RTI Act revealed. Dindigul district led the state in the

number of complaints received (175 cases), while Namakkal recorded the highest number of child marriages conducted (117). Western districts occupied at least three spots in the top five for both the highest number of marriage complaints reported and the most child marriages conducted. Followed by Namakkal, most marriages were conducted in Erode (62), Cuddalore (56), Dindigul (54) and Coimbatore (46). As regards the districts where most complaints were received, Dindigul was followed

by Namakkal (171), Theni (161), Cuddalore (150) and Salem (143). In Tiruchy district, 103 complaints were received of which 48 marriages were conducted. However, only four FIRs had been registered. "We see a significant number of child marriages among marginalised communities and tribal groups in districts like Erode. Many of these go unreported, and it is crucial that special attention is given to these regions," said G Karuppusamy of READ NGO, which works with children in Erode. Activists also claimed that the actual number of child marriages in Tamil Nadu is likely to be much higher. Child marriage is not just a legal violation but an emotional, physical and psychological abuse which deprives children of their childhood. Activists have stressed on the need for better coordination across departments and a microscopic approach to eradicate the menace. The state, however, is yet to release a standard operating procedure to tackle the issue. A committee was formed in 2021 to address

gaps in the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Child Marriage Rules, particularly around the roles of stakeholders and government departments. "Child marriages stem from complex social, cultural and economic factors. Authorities have to identify and address the specific causes in each block and district which report high number of such marriages," Karuppusamy said. He added that the centre has been cutting budget allocation for children's welfare in the past 10 years and the burden on the state is increasing.

Plummeting salt prices leave Andhra ryots in distress

GUNTUR. After pouring months of strenuous work in preparation of salt pans, the efforts of the salt farmers is likely to go in vain as the prices took a plunge recently, leaving the cultivators in deep worry. The cultivation of salt is a long process, which commences with farmers repairing embankments, stamp the ground, and overhaul the electric motors, before pumping in water with high concentration of salt into these pans. Usually, salt production continues till July from December, provided suitable conditions such as absence of heavy rainfall during the period. Many salt farmers store their produce till the completion of monsoon and the advent of winter season to leverage the rise in prices. However, their hopes of making hay while the sun shines took a turn when the prices dropped by Rs 80 per quintal in a few weeks span.

Their hopes of reaping a decent profit on their back-breaking labour look bleak as the prices are expected to drop further in next few weeks, exacerbating the situation. It is pertinent to know that the salt produced in Chinaganjam region of Bapatla district has high demand in Godavari districts as the mineral is used extensively in shrimp production and processing. According to local farmers in Chinaganjam, over 1 lakh quintal of salt has been produced, stored and is ready to be sold. The prices a few weeks ago was Rs 450 per quintal, however, it took a nose dive to Rs 370 within weeks. Shedding light on the reasons behind the sudden drop in prices, K Venkat Rao, a local salt farmer, said that every year, the salt prices shoot up after Diwali. With favourable conditions for salt cultivation, the production in Tamil Nadu continued till the end of

September, an unusual scenario. Currently, it is being imported into the State and is sold at lower prices, resulting in a cascading effect on the price of local produce. Additionally, the erratic rainfall during May this year and the recent floods caused substantial damage to the salt bunds. "Most of the farmers expected high profits this season and hoped that they can take up repair works of bunds with the income, before the starting cultivation again in December. However, with drop in prices, and no facilities to store it for prolonged periods, the farmers are in distress," he added. Over 15,000 people in the Chinaganjam region are dependent on salt cultivation. The farmers are urging the State government and officials to take necessary action to provide subsidies and interest free loans for salt cultivators and assist them in mitigating losses.

Men at Vellore jail face hours-long lines for loo

VELLORE. The queue for toilets begins at 2 am at the Vellore Central Prison with only three usable toilets available for each block housing 70 male prisoners, inmates told TNIE. As a result, inmates wait over two hours every morning to access the facilities. On the one hand the prison manual says prisoners must arise at 5.30 am, on the other All India Committee on Jail Reforms recommends a toilet-prisoner ratio of 1:6. With the jail in compliance with neither, inmates wake up hours earlier just to use the toilets. One former inmate, who was released in July, told TNIE that it was a daily ordeal for all the inmates of the prison. "When I would wake up, there would be at least 30 people in my block already waiting in line for hours to use the toilet," he said. According to officials, the prison, which is the second largest in Tamil Nadu, houses as many as 1,078 male inmates and has three blocks each for convicts (blocks 1, 3, and 4) and remand prisoners (blocks 5, 6 and 7). Block 2 is currently closed for repair work. Each block has two dormitories with a capacity of 60 inmates, but, over 70 people are often lodged in each. "We are compelled to stand in line for an hour to access the unsanitary toilets without any proper mug. I go to sleep early just to avoid the queue in the morning," said a remand prisoner, on a condition of anonymity. For this reason, the prisoner said, a 65-year-old inmate in his block developed severe health issues. "The elderly inmate had to go without relieving himself for long periods, which led to him developing a urinary infection. I eventually had to take him to the hospital," he said. Although there are 24 additional toilets outside each block, they lie in disuse. "I lodged multiple complaints about the toilet situation during my time in the prison, but there was no response from the authorities. Repairing these 24 toilets would help ease the burden," said another recently-released inmate. Sources said inmates hesitate to complain over fear of reprisal. The complaint box is located next to jailer's room and not in each block, they added. Meanwhile, it is not just prisoners who suffer; there are no separate toilets for prison staff either, sources said. Staff are forced to use the toilets allotted to doctors and psychiatrists inside the prison. According to the Model Prison Manual, 2016, the Ministry of Home Affairs mandates that prisoners should be provided with accommodations that maintain hygienic conditions and personal cleanliness, alongside adequate clothing and necessary equipment for daily life. "Complaint boxes provided in three places for inmates" The guidelines in the Model Prison Manual, 2016, stress that these provisions are essential for safeguarding dignity of all inmates. Asked about the issue, Vellore central prison superintendent A Parasuram said there are enough toilets available for remand prisoners and convicts.

Vasippu Iyakkam turns kids bibliophiles: Scheme to include English books, cover all govt schools

CHENNAI. The School Education Department has scaled up its Vasippu Iyakkam (reading movement) initiative to cover all government schools in the state. Under this, every classroom has been stocked with a collection of over 120 Tamil books tailored to different reading levels for instilling the habit of reading among students. So far, 1.3 crore books have been distributed across the state. To further enhance language skills of students, the department plans to translate these books into English. Last year, the initiative was implemented in government schools in 11 blocks of 11 districts on a pilot basis. The department initially developed 53 books, designed for four distinct reading levels - Nulai (Enter), Nada (Walk), Oodu (Run), and Para (Fly). The books at the beginner level (Nulai) contain pictures and a single line of text, while those at the Nada level feature illustrations alongside a paragraph of text. Each book is kept concise with only 16 pages, making it easier for children to complete them. This year, 77 new books have been added to the collection. The department plans to bring out 250 books

under the scheme. "While books are provided to every class, special focus is given to students from Class 4 to 9. Teachers are instructed to utilise the library period each week to ensure that

and a handbook have been issued to help teachers. "In schools where the scheme was piloted last year, many students have already made reading a daily habit. We also encouraged students and teachers to write their own stories and received 1,300 submissions. Eight of the new books created this year feature these stories," the official added. Plans are also underway to develop books based on comics, he added. S Madasamy, a former coordinator of the Arivoli Iyakkam who is now part of the initiative, said, "The programme can make a big impact, especially in schools where teachers are proactive. The books under this scheme have simple vocabulary, which will help create more avid readers and budding storytellers in the future." 11 new books released Chennai: Palli Kalvi Paathukaappu Iyakkam, in collaboration with Bharathi Puthakalayam, released 11 children's books, each costing just '20, on Sunday. The books were released by former chief secretary V Irai Anbu and Model Schools member secretary R Sudhan.



Subathu & John Masters

"From the beginning whatever I was supposed to be doing, at least half of me was engaged in watching the slant-eyed men... small and cheerful... had the air of so many gambolling bull-pups, independent, good humoured. I was determined to go to the Gurkhas." — John Masters

On reading the brief account in The Tribune last month of the regimental reunion at Subathu (Himachal Pradesh) celebrating 127 years' glorious legacy of service to the nation by 4th Gorkha Rifles, my instant reaction was to WhatsApp a veteran Gorkha, "Gen Sandhu, wasn't John Masters from 4 GR?" Prompt came the response: "Yes sir, he was from 2/4 GR."

John Masters was born in Calcutta in 1914 with a century-old indelible genetic imprint to serve in the Gentleman Officers' brotherhood of the Indian army — in the footsteps of his great grandfather, two uncles and father, that is, 8 King's Royal Irish Light Dragoons, 34 Sikh Pioneers, 119 Hyderabad Infantry and Commanding Officer of 16 Rajput, respectively! His grandfather had been the Headmaster of La Martiniere School, Calcutta, and his great-uncle had discovered the tea plant growing wild in Assam in 1847!

Leaving nothing to chance, the baby was enrolled for schooling in Wellington from where he entered the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst; "...being then a few months past my 18th birthday, my suitcases and trunks lay at the wide steps. The Sergeant said, 'What's your name, Sir?' I said, 'Masters, Sir.' He said, 'Don't call me SIR, Sir. Call me Staff, Sir.' 'Mr Lord Greenleaf, you look like a bloody monkey on a stick...!' We looked at one another out of the corners of our eyes and trembled in our huge hobnailed boots." Masters toiled hard, standing first in military history, first in map reading, second in military law and overall topping the merit list of cadets for the Indian army, symbolised by the award of an engraved sword; "...my superiors kept showering congratulation upon me... The General stopped his car, leaped out, and pressed me warmly by the hand... the Adjutant momentarily shifted his gaze and said, 'Good show, Masters'... Lesser officers wobbled off their bicycles to clap me on the back." Yet, the 4th Gorkhas would not accept him without sending for and sizing him up! So the Adjutant had to formally escort him before the Commanding Officer, who said graciously that "...he was pleased I had come to the battalion and hoped I would like it and do well". However, as Masters stepped out to face his platoon, he "was floundering about like a blind puppy... not at all used to being an officer... could not open my mouth to give an order..."

But all that embarrassment was forgotten when he was "ceremonially dined-in" in the Regimental Officers' Mess in the evening. Once every one had assembled and Masters being the 'guest' in his soldierly life on this special occasion, the Commanding Officer, Lt Colonel David Murray, DSO, MC, said, "Good evening Masters, what would you have?"

"A gimlet, please, Sir."

"Orderly, yota gimlet, yota gin-mixie-vermouth-cherry," "Hazaar Sahib," said the Orderly, amiably. Only after that did the rest of the officers ask for their drink. Masters had been tutored at Sandhurst about the customs and traditions of the Officers' Mess and remembered that on the conclusion of the dinner service, the 'guest' had to make the first move to leave the Mess. So, he went up to the Commanding Officer and "thanked him for the regiment's hospitality, stiffened to attention, and said, 'Good night, Sir.'" But the ribaldry that followed after the Commanding Officer's departure was the true measure of the acceptance of Masters into their fold; "...hard fingers were rubbing brandy-butter into my hair and stuffing Christmas pudding into my ears. Oh, ecstasy, I was accepted! Not until that moment did I feel that I had truly joined the regiment." Masters, on his part, spared no effort to further the glory of 4 GR as he emerged from WW-II a battle-hardened and proud recipient of the DSO, OBE and three Mentioned-in-Dispatches! And on the flip side, he had also shot a tiger that had strayed into regimental lines at Bakloh, the preserved skin of which is on display in the Garrison Officers' Mess at Subathu to this day!

Tree saviour stands tall

In the pre-Independence era, Sengodan, the great-grandfather of my colleague Kayal Kanni, saved a majestic tamarind tree from doom in Kokkalai village, Salem (Tamil Nadu). The unique way this gentleman safeguarded the tree from the axe reads like a scene...

In the pre-Independence era, Sengodan, the great-grandfather of my colleague Kayal Kanni, saved a majestic tamarind tree from doom in Kokkalai village, Salem (Tamil Nadu). The unique way this gentleman safeguarded the tree from the axe reads like a scene out of a thriller novel.

As Sengodan dozed off one afternoon, approaching footsteps shattered the tranquillity. Five Gounders (higher-caste Hindus), maybe six, arrived with men and axes to chop down the tree in a neighbourhood inhabited mainly by lower-caste Hindus. They ignored the tree's long-term benefits, their only focus being road widening and getting timber.

The commotion jolted Sengodan, known for his gentle nature and profound love for trees. The giant tree, a living memory of his childhood and the joyous celebrations in his community, held a special place in his heart. The thought of losing his cherished 'green friend' caused him unbearable anguish. Fuelled by his deep reverence for nature and the environment, Sengodan exited his house to confront the men. Sengodan told them to leave the tree alone. When the latter showed a deaf ear and didn't heed him, an enraged Sengodan planned his next move. He brought out his wooden cot, secured it to the tree, and made himself comfortable. He also kept a razor-sharp sickle beside him, warning that anyone who attempted to bring down the tree would lose their head. The Gounders, surprised by his audacity, insisted that he depart, but Sengodan stood his ground. The unexpected act of defiance by a lower-caste Hindu astonished them. Through his actions, Sengodan exhibited a fearless and unwavering commitment to the cause of resistance.

An identical sight greeted the Gounders when they returned the next day — the cot tied to the tamarind tree and a determined Sengodan sitting on it. Despite their attempts to persuade him, their efforts were in vain. Inspired by their hero's bravery, the other community members rallied around him. They formed a human shield around the tree to prevent anyone from cutting it down. The frustrated Gounders tried hard to win over the villagers. But the latter stood firm. Up against a united force, the Gounders abandoned their plans. Sengodan and his community members displayed solidarity, a testament to their strength and unity. Following the incident, Sengodan's reputation soared, earning him the status of a hero! Thanks to his valiant efforts, the tamarind tree still stands tall and robust. Only a tiny



part of the hollow trunk, a scar from past battles, has come off. Today, bustling shops surround the tree, and people gather under its shade to socialise, play, or enjoy a refreshing drink. With its sprawling branches and vibrant foliage, the tree is a sanctuary for birds and squirrels. They find solace in its sturdy limbs or feast on the delicious fruits it bears. The tree has become a symbol of the community's resilience and their commitment to preserving their environment. Sengodan's legacy lives on in Kokkalai. His glorious deed inspired his community

members to brave the odds. The magnificent, century-old tamarind tree symbolises the community's victory over adversity, a legacy they carry forward. It shows their strength, unity and dedication to safeguarding their environment for future generations. Sengodan's actions have left an indelible mark, a beacon of hope for the future of environmental conservation.

Different versions of a past self

It is still too early to tell if this was a mistake or not. A few days back, after a gap of almost 50 years, I went inside a house that we had lived in when I was a child. One had seen it from the outside several times, but this was the first time one had gone in. The opportunity seemed too good to pass. It was between occupants. Apart from some bags that the new occupant had sent ahead, it was quite empty. A visit was very kindly arranged and I was left on my own to wander through rooms that one had once known so well. It was evening and fairly dark. My hand moved instinctively to where one knew the light switches were. Everything seemed the same, and yet different. A couple of new rooms had been added; the service staircase by the kitchen had been removed. The polished or varnished wood had given way to white paint. Apart from a dumbwaiter, the pieces of furniture that had come with the house were gone. Half a century is, after all, a long time. Several people had lived there before us, and several had come after. Why did I go there? Was it because the opportunity presented itself? That may or may not be. There had been times earlier that one could have done so. Perhaps, it was a moment of weakness, or perhaps of strength that one felt one could deal with the weight of memory that those rooms carried. Not quite, but this was vaguely similar to my relatives of the post-Partition generation who had had occasions to visit their old homes across the border. Many, like my father, chose not to. For my father, the answer was, as usual, direct and simple: "That time is over. I have many happy memories and I would like those to remain as they are." Another relative widened the scope of explanation: "We are Punjabis and we live in the moment."

AFSPA returns

A setback on the road to peace in Manipur

THE reimposition of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in Manipur marks a sombre turn in the state's struggle for stability and peace. After years of gradual reduction in AFSPA-designated areas, recent escalations have led the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to reinstate the Disturbed Areas status in the jurisdiction of six police stations across the state. This decision reflects the grim reality that, despite past gains, Manipur's path to peace remains perilously uncertain. AFSPA is controversial due to its broad powers, which allow the armed forces to act with significant immunity. This, in turn, has created an environment of mistrust between civilians and the military. In Manipur, its presence has often been linked with allegations of human rights violations, further complicating the peace process in a region where historical grievances already run deep.

While the MHA has cited 'volatile' conditions and "active participation of insurgent groups in heinous acts of



violence", the decision to reintroduce AFSPA as the most effective approach to quell these issues is questionable.

The state's challenges extend beyond insurgency and violence. Ethnic divides, regional grievances and economic stagnation have contributed to the unrest.

Manipur's people, including the Kukis and Meiteis who are mainly embroiled in the conflict, deserve a future free from violence and repression. To achieve this, the Central government must prioritise non-military solutions, promoting dialogue, economic investment and social programmes that address the underlying issues fuelling the unrest. Enduring peace in Manipur will not come from the barrel of a gun but from comprehensive efforts to bridge divides and build trust. Reimposing AFSPA may restore order, but it is a step backward in the quest for sustainable peace.

Nest assured, feathered guests in the house

Nesting is one of the most intriguing facets of a bird's life and is, perhaps, as diversified as the creatures themselves. From a scrape in the ground lined with straw (quail) to a hole drilled into a tree (woodpecker) to...

Nesting is one of the most intriguing facets of a bird's life and is, perhaps, as diversified as the creatures themselves. From a scrape in the ground lined with straw (quail) to a hole drilled into a tree (woodpecker) to an intricately-woven hanging mass of grass (weaverbird), bird nests come in all shapes and sizes. Evolution has taught birds to locate their nests at places suited to their habits and to design them to safeguard their broods. Bird habitats are spread over forests and woods, deserts and scrubs, orchards and croplands, lakes, rivers, seas and seashores. However, a few avians, the so-called commoners like pigeons, sparrows and mynas, having lived in close association with humans over the ages, have developed such an affinity to and dependence on us that they are perfectly at home in our homes! Whereas the feral pigeons you see around your homes may not actually be the 'wild' Rock Pigeon listed in a bird guidebook, the House Sparrow and the Common Myna, which may have found a place to nest in the gap beneath the roof-ridge or in the wall-crevice of your house, are of the true wild variety, I assure.

Another bird species which has made the human house its home is the swallow. The Barn Swallow, named so because of its habit of making nests in the barns, is the most abundant and widely distributed swallow species in the world. Thought to have evolved from once nesting in the caves, to presently nesting almost exclusively in man-made structures, the Barn Swallow breeds only in the Himalayas and Northeast India. We, in Kashmir, regard the Barn Swallow, Katij in Kashmiri, as the harbinger of summer, and, not so long ago, every other household in the countryside would boast of an active swallow nest in



the season. Come spring, our elders would open the windows of their houses, then chiefly made of wood and unbaked bricks, so the birds could make sorties with the mud pellets collected from a nearby puddle and stick them to a rafter or a cross beam in the attic, or even to the ceiling in the living room, to shape a cup-like nest for the season. Although the meshed window frames have lately deprived the swallow an entry into most of Kashmiri houses, the name Katij underlines their utility as swallow abodes. Modern

architecture may have kept the swallow out of our houses, but it has not discouraged other bird species from exploring them for a space for themselves. Last summer, on a sunny April morning, I was alerted by a noisy bird activity outside my house, which is situated in a busy suburb. I found a Blue Whistling Thrush squabbling with a dove and violently chasing it away. I noticed some twigs on the ground just outside the main door and looking up found some grass strings hanging from the windowsill on the first

floor. Now, I could see what the commotion was all about. A pair of Eurasian Collared-Dove, a summer visitor to my place, was attempting to make a nest over the windowsill which the thrush, a resident species, was resisting. More such squabbles saw the doves eventually give up. As I noted in the coming days, the Blue Whistling Thrush didn't build a nest of its own at the place, but instead utilised it as a roost. I felt sorry for the dove couple but was sure they would have found an alternative site to raise their family.

This summer, I was awakened by some mumbling bird calls. I was surprised to find a Collared-Dove resting over a bundle of twigs atop the chandelier hanging from the roof of my balcony. The floor was littered with twigs and straw that the bird had accidentally dropped while arranging them on the chandelier to build its nest. There had apparently been no defiance from the thrush this time round. I watched the dove pair give final touches to the nest. One of them, most likely the male, brought the nest material and the other arranged it on the chandelier. Within three days, the nest was ready for the female to lay eggs and settle to hatch them. In about two weeks, I could hear the first 'food-begging' calls of the hatchlings and over subsequent days watched the parents bring morsels to feed them. On a sunny afternoon, a week later, the two fledglings finally flew out, leaving the empty nest dangling on the chandelier. There was no way to find out whether this was the same dove pair which had been chased away from my house by the thrush last year. However, the hospitable Kashmiri in me was finally satisfied to have hosted a guest this year. I have cleaned my balcony floor, but left the twigs on the chandelier untouched.

Superfoods For the face

5 superfoods for a beautiful face

Every skin has a story to tell. The outside coat reflects the inside reality. While consuming the right foods and avoiding the wrong ones can make or break a skin, using the right foods on the surface of the skin can also do wonders. And it gets better if they are superfoods with enhanced capability. So, don't just stuff your face with these wonder foods, do some face-timing with them for a healthy skin inside out.

Gritty glow

The best thing about oats as a beauty product is that it works for all skin types. Oatmeal face packs are brilliant for skin whitening and lightening. One can use honey and almond milk as combinations for a good oatmeal pack. Since oatmeal is gritty in nature, it makes a good scrub for the face or when bathing. Best for Acne-prone skin, as it absorbs oil from the skin's surface.

Soothing agent

Using cool green tea bags on the skin has been proved to reduce the damage of sunburns and overexposure to ultraviolet light, which, in turn, reduces skin ageing and increases collagen in skin. Cool two used green tea bags in the fridge for 30 min and use on tired eyes. Also brewed green tea or ground leaves can be used in DIY face masks or rinses. Best for Removing puffy eyes, dark circles, as it's rich in vitamin K.

Natural hydrator

Chia seeds are rich in fibre, protein, vitamin E and omega fatty acids. Chia seeds is an important ingredient for many hydrating creams and serums. Ground chia seeds mixed with melted coconut oil is a great skin serum. Best for skin hydration. -Inputs from Dr Apratim Goel, dermatologist & laser surgeon, Dr Soma Sarkar, dermatologist.



popular over the last few years. Avocado battles dry skin and adds moisture because it contains vitamins A and E, both of which have antioxidant properties. Best for Fighting dry skin, ageing, and lackluster skin.

Age busters

Acai berries are an excellent source of antioxidants and their anti-ageing properties help prevent free radicals from attacking and damaging your cells. Mix a cup of mashed strawberries with acai berry powder and apply on clean, damp skin for great results. Best for Fighting signs of ageing as the berries have anti-ageing properties.



Tone up

Apple cider vinegar is extremely good at removing dead skin and also makes for a great toner. Mix 1 tbsp of apple cider vinegar with two cups of water and store it in the fridge. Use 2-3 drops of this potion as a toner every night before bedtime to tighten up your skin. Best for Removing dead skin and toning.

Masked beauty

The healthy properties of avocado have made avocado face mask treatments very

6 common beauty mistakes and how to fix them



Are you making these mistakes?

There are many thoughts running through our head every time we do our make-up. Be it getting ready for work or going out for a party, we're all in a hurry and running behind schedule most of the time! In this rush, we tend to miss a few steps and even make few common beauty mistakes—which can break your look. Here, we've listed 6 such mistakes along with few hacks to fix them.

Wrong shade of foundation

Ending up with the wrong shade of foundation, which is way too dark on your skin, is a problem most of us have gone through. In order to lighten it out, mix a little face moisturizer with your foundation and to get the shade you desire.

Neglecting the neck

The most BASIC and frankly the most careless mistake that people make is ignoring the neck. Always blend your foundation and setting powder, past your chin and down to your neck. This will ensure an even-toned complexion and no traces of the outrageous foundation line.

Shadow under your eyes and on your cheeks

A lot of times while doing eye make-up like smokey eyes or glitter art, the sneaky little eye shadow particles settle into the creases under our eyes and even cheeks. In such a situation, try to place a tissue under your eyes before you start to catch any fallout.

Overdoing the blush

The right amount of blush can add color to your cheeks and brighten up your face. On the contrary, we've all been guilty of dramatizing the blush a little too much. Smooth it out by taking a clean brush or sponge, dipping it in translucent powder and dabbing it on your cheeks to blend the excess.

5 DIY hacks to get rid of dark elbows and knees



5 home remedies to treat dark elbows and knees

Embarrassed because your elbows and knees look dark and scruffy? Well, when pigmentation occurs on these areas of the skin, scrubbing the affected area with soap might make things worse for you. In fact, all you need to do to get an even skin tone try

your hand at some home remedies that will help you lighten the dark skin of your of elbows and knees. Here's a look at five natural ways you can deal with this problem.

Lemon

Lemon being a natural bleaching agent helps in making the skin tone even. Apply the juice of a lemon on these areas, massage gently, leave on for

10 minutes, rinse with warm water. Repeat this for a couple of weeks and see the difference.

Aloe vera

Aloe vera helps make the skin supple. Break open a fleshy aloe vera, and apply the pulp on rough skin. Leave on for about 20 minutes and rinse with cold water. Top up with a aloe moisturiser.

Coconut oil

To soften rough skin, massage the affected areas with coconut oil, and then go for a warm shower. Do not apply soap, just pat dry. You can squeeze in a few drops of lemon juice, too.

Curd

Curd is known to be a good moisturiser. But not many know that sour curd can also help lighten one's skin tone. Add a teaspoon of vinegar and gram flour to sour curd, and apply the mixture. Rinse after 15 minutes with warm water.

Baking soda and milk

Mix baking soda with milk to get a thick paste. Apply the paste on your elbows and knees and rinse after five minutes. Do this once a week for two months.

How Attack On Hmar Village In Manipur's Jiribam By Suspected Meitei Militants Sparked New Cycle Of Violence

New Delhi: One of the worst cycles of the Meitei-Kuki ethnic violence in Manipur since May 2023 began on November 7 in Jiribam district, 220 km from the state capital Imphal, on the interstate border with Assam. At least 19 people have died, including 10 Kuki men who the police have called "militants", in less than two weeks. The Kuki tribes claim the 10 men were "village volunteers". His multi-ethnic district, where a National Highway akin to a lifeline for Manipur passes through to reach Assam (and hence the rest of the country), had been violence-free for over a year until June, when the body of a Kuki teen was found in a river. Kuki civil society organisations had alleged a Meitei armed group killed the teen and dumped him into the river. Then the body of a Meitei man was found, allegedly killed by a Kuki armed group in a retaliatory strike. In both the cases and the many thereafter that shattered whatever semblance of peace Jiribam had, the police have not conclusively found the accused. All that remained were videos on



social media, voice messages on WhatsApp groups, photos, screenshots, etc that claimed they were what really happened among the many 'truths' competing for takers. While some of these viral content can be cross-checked to a high level of accuracy, most are simply unverifiable. Real people died, but narratives went on gliding smoothly through the airwaves.

November 7 Attack On Hmar Village

The macabre murders of six members of a Meitei family - including an infant, a two-

year-old boy, and an eight-year-old girl - by suspected Kuki militants in Jiribam appeared to be the closing of the cycle of violence that began on November 7, when a woman from the Hmar tribe, mother of three little children and school teacher, was allegedly raped, shot in the leg, killed and set on fire by suspected Meitei militants in Jiribam's Zairawn village.

The suspected Meitei militants set fire to several structures, including the school teacher's house, which stood at the end of a row of houses in Zairawn village, eyewitnesses who claimed they ran to a nearby tree line and saw the burning houses told. Her house was the last to be attacked, they said. The autopsy report said the school teacher's body was burned 99 per cent. It noted horrific injuries, including broken bones and a separated skull. Samples to check for sex assault could not be taken as "the body parts were completely charred and not recognisable", according to the report. The rape allegation was made by her husband in a first information report

(FIR). NDTV is not disclosing her name owing to the rape allegation, as a Supreme Court order bans revealing the identity of a rape victim or a survivor, so do Section 72 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) and other Kuki civil society groups have alleged the Meitei armed group Arambai Tenggol (AT) was involved in the November 7 night attack. The AT calls itself a "volunteer" group, and claims to have taken up arms to defend the Meitei community due to alleged inaction by security forces in Meitei villages near Kuki-dominant foothills. The Kuki tribes also have armed "village volunteers" who the Meiteis accuse of working with well-trained and heavily armed Kuki militants.

Houses Set On Fire

The 31-year-old teacher taught at Jiribam's Hermon Dew English Junior High School, 400 metres from a heap of burnt wood, bent metal and ashes, or what is left of a place that she once called home when she was alive.

Gujarat Medical Student, Made To Stand For Hours, Dies. 15 Seniors Blamed

Senior police officer KK Pandya said Anil Methania's father had filed a complaint and a case of accidental death had been registered.



New Delhi: A first-year student of a Gujarat-based medical college has died allegedly after he was made to stand for three hours as part of a ragging exercise by seniors. Anil Methania was among several first-year students enrolled in GMERS Medical College and Hospital in Dharpur Patan this year. It is alleged that third-year students at the hostel made them stand for three hours at a stretch for an "introduction". "Introduction" or "intro" is a word frequently used for ragging activities on residential campuses during which seniors harass freshers.

It is alleged that after standing for three hours, 18-year-old Anil collapsed and became unconscious. He was hospitalised and he recorded a statement with police that he was made to stand for three hours. He died soon after.

The body has been sent for autopsy and its report is likely to provide more information on the cause of death. Anil's cousin Dharmendra said the family stays in Gujarat's Surendranagar district -- over 150 km from the college in Patan. "We received a call from the college yesterday and were told that Anil collapsed and has been hospitalised. When we reached here, we came to know that third-year students ragged him. We want justice," he said.

Hardik Shah, the dean of the medical college, said, "As soon as we came to know that he had collapsed, we hospitalised him. He told police that he was ragged and made to stand for three hours. We have informed the cops and the family and will try to take strict action." Senior police officer KK Pandya said the student's father had filed a complaint and a case of accidental death had been registered. "The autopsy has been conducted and the medical report has been asked to submit a report on the incident. Based on the findings, we will take further action," he said. Asked about the ragging angle, the senior officer said, "We have asked for detailed information from the college on this point too." News agency PTI later reported that 15 senior students have been named in the FIR.

Higher education regulator University Grants Commission has banned ragging in every form on educational campuses and affiliated institutions have been asked to take strict action against those found guilty of ragging or abetting ragging.

Vikas Yadav to court: Exempt me from physical appearance

NEW DELHI: Vikas Yadav, a former officer of India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), accused by the US of involvement in a plot to assassinate Khalistani terrorist Gurbat Singh Pannun, informed a Delhi court that his life is at risk from dangerous elements. Citing these threats, Yadav requested exemption from physically appearing in an extortion and kidnapping case in which he is an accused. The court approved his plea, with the next hearing scheduled for February 3, 2025. Arrested in December 2023 by the Delhi Police Special Cell in the case, Yadav was released on bail earlier this year. Represented by advocates RK Handoo and Aditya Chaudhary, Yadav asserted he faced "serious threats" due to the widespread disclosure of his personal details. "False and frivolous allegations have been leveled against the applicant and the particulars of the applicant such as his residence, his background along with his photographs have been published all over the world, exposing the applicant to serious threat to his life from nefarious elements," read his application in Patiala House Courts.

The plea further stated that threat to the life of the applicant is clear, present, grave, imminent and potential and physical appearance of the applicant before the court is likely to lend an opportunity to annihilate the applicant. In October, Yadav was charged by the United States as a co-conspirator in a plot to assassinate Gurbat Singh Pannun. Another Indian national, Nikhil Gupta, had already been indicted in the same case. Strongly denying the allegations, Yadav has maintained that he is being unfairly targeted and made a scapegoat.

Thermal power plants: A pollution worry for Delhi

NEW DELHI: Emissions from Delhi-NCR-based 12 coal-fired power plants are more deadly than the emissions from the burning of paddy straw in Punjab and Haryana. Thermal power plants (TPPs) produce multiple times more dangerous particulate matter and Sulphur Dioxide (SO2) than burning agri-residue does. According to a new analysis of sources of deadlier particulate matter and a comparison between NCR-based TPPs emissions and paddy straw burning emissions in Punjab and Haryana highlights the scale of SO2 pollution.

Thermal power plants in NCR emit 281 kilotonnes of SO2 annually—16 times more than the 17.8 kilotonnes emitted by burning 8.9 million tonnes of paddy straw. Notably, crop residue burning causes a seasonal spike in Delhi-NCR pollution; however, the TPPs cause persistent year-round pollution. It underlines a lopsided action against farmers while TPPs get free-wheeling leniency. There are 11 coal-based TPP within a 300 km radius of Delhi and one outside—Goindwal Sahib Power Plant in Punjab which is also considered while making decisions about TPP. According to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) estimates, 281 kilotonnes of SO2 were released by NCR's TPP for the period between June 2022 and May 2023. CREA advised that installation of flue gas desulfurisation (FGD) technology would reduce emissions from 281 kilotonnes to 93 kilotonnes in the NCR, representing reductions of 67%. These achievements underscore the effectiveness of FGD technology.

Only Mahatma Gandhi TPS and Dadri TPP (five out of six units) have so far been installed, FGD subsequently registered the lowest reduction in emissions. With only two of these completed FGD installations in NCR, the pace of adoption remains insufficient. According to CREA, data on FGD installation progress for all power plants in India has not been updated since November 2023 on the CEA website, with the latest available status data only from October 2023. Another CREA study shows that over 96% of particulate pollution from coal-fired power plants in NCR is secondary in nature, primarily originating from SO2.

Further, a study from IIT Delhi highlighted that FGD systems can reduce SO2 concentrations by 55% within 60-80 km and sulfate aerosol concentrations by 30%, extending up to 100 km from the thermal power plants. However, the Energy vertical of the NITI Aayog recently recommended that there was no further requirement of FGDs as their SO2 emissions do not contribute to air pollution.

Expedite Beant Singh's killer's mercy plea: Supreme Court to President's Office

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday ordered President Droupadi Murmu's office to take a decision on the mercy petition of the death-row prisoner Balwant Singh Rajoana within two weeks. Rajoana was convicted in the 1995 assassination of then Punjab chief minister Beant Singh. "In spite of the matter being specifically kept today, none appeared for the Union of India. The bench assembled only for this case," the court said.

"On the last date, the matter was adjourned to enable the Union to take instructions from the office of the President as to when the mercy plea will be decided. Taking into consideration that the petitioner is on death row, we direct the secretary to the President of India to place the matter before the President with a request to consider the same within two weeks from today," it added. The court said that it would consider the mercy petition of Rajoana if the President's office does not make a decision on it. "We clarified that in the event no decision is taken, we will



consider prayers made by petitioner for interim relief," the court said, Live Law reported. The court has listed the case to be heard on December 5.

Earlier in September, the court sought responses from the Centre and the Punjab government on the matter. The Punjab chief minister and 16 others were killed in a blast at the civil secretariat entrance in Chandigarh on August 31, 1995. A special court

sentenced Rajoana to death in July 2007.

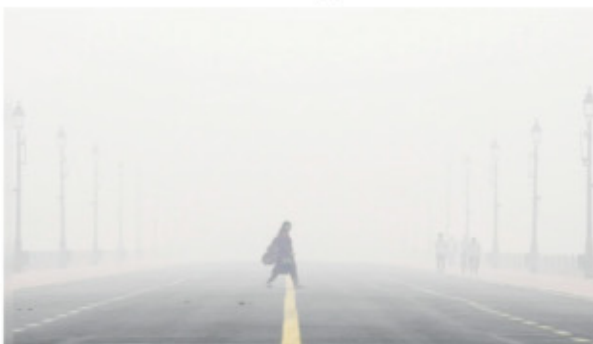
Rajoana said that the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee filed a mercy petition under Article 72 of the Constitution on his behalf in March 2012. On May 3 last year, the Supreme Court declined to commute his death sentence, directing the competent authority to address his mercy plea.

"How Can You Wait?": Supreme Court Pulls Up Authorities As Delhi Gasp

The bench of Justice AS Oka and Justice AG Masih asked the authorities why GRAP 3 was implemented three days after the AQI crossed the 300 mark

New Delhi: As Delhi's air quality plunged to the 'severe-plus' category this morning, the Supreme Court today pulled up authorities over the delay in implementing tough restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to tackle the capital's bad air days.

The court also told the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the national capital region and the Delhi government that restrictions under Stage 4 of GRAP -- implemented after Air Quality Index crosses the 400 mark -- must not be relaxed without its permission even if AQI drops below 300. The bench of Justice AS Oka and Justice AG Masih asked the authorities why GRAP 3 was implemented three days after the AQI crossed the 300 mark. When the Centre's counsel replied that they were tracking whether the AQI dips, the court said, "Once it reaches, it has



to be invoked... how can the applicability of stage 3 be delayed anyhow... how can you wait for three days?"

The court then said, "We are making it very clear that you will not go below Stage 4 without our permission now even if AQI goes below 300, that is the order we are proposing." The matter will be taken up again later in the day. CAQM has a four-step Graded Action Response Plan to tackle

Delhi's bad air days. GRAP 1 is invoked when the AQI is in poor category. Under this category, water is periodically sprinkled on roads, open burning of waste is banned and use of diesel generators is restricted. Under GRAP 2, enforced when AQI crosses the 300 mark, water is sprinkled on roads daily, uninterrupted power supply is ensured so that use of generators can be avoided, parking charges are hiked to discourage private transport and service of CNG and electric buses and Metro are stepped up.

The next stage of curbs, GRAP 3, is enforced when AQI crossed 400. Polluting vehicles in Delhi and other cities in the National Capital Region are banned and governments may take a call on online classes for primary students. Mining, stone-crushing and construction/demolition activities are prohibited under GRAP 3.

Kailash Gahlot joins BJP, counters AAP: Didn't take decision in one day

In his resignation letter addressed to AAP's National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, Gahlot cited unfulfilled promises and recent controversies as reasons for stepping down.

New Delhi: Former Delhi Minister and AAP leader Kailash Gahlot joined the BJP on Monday (November 18) a day after resigning from the AAP over "embarrassing controversies". He joined the BJP in the presence of Union Minister

Manohar Lal Khattar, Jay Panda, Dushyant Gautam, Harsh Malhotra and other BJP leaders.

Kailash Gahlot, after joining the BJP, clarified that his decision was not made overnight. Rejecting the AAP's claim that he quit under pressure, Gahlot said that the party had strayed from its core values and ethics. "I didn't join BJP due to any external pressure, but because AAP had compromised its ideology. I initially joined AAP to serve the common people, but now, the party has become disconnected from its original mission, with its leaders transforming from 'aam' (common) to 'khaas' (elite)," the former Delhi minister said. He further criticised the Delhi government's focus on fighting with the Centre, asserting that such a stance would hinder real progress for the city. Kailash Gahlot said, "I believe that true development for Delhi can only happen if we work shoulder to shoulder with the central government. That is why I



have joined the BJP today. I am inspired by PM Modi's vision and will continue to work under the guidance of senior BJP leaders, fulfilling my responsibilities with honesty."

Gahlot resigned on Sunday. In his resignation letter addressed to AAP's National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, Gahlot cited unfulfilled promises and recent controversies as reasons for stepping down. Gahlot, the MLA from Najafgarh and once a close aide of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, resigned from the council of

ministers with immediate effect. Later, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi accepted his resignation.

The former AAP leader had expressed dissatisfaction over the party's inability to deliver on key promises made to the people of Delhi. In his letter, he highlighted the failure to clean the Yamuna River despite it being a major election pledge. "We promised the people a cleaner Yamuna, but we have failed to deliver on that commitment," he wrote. In the letter, he also addressed the controversy surrounding Arvind Kejriwal's new official bungalow. Gahlot said, "There are several embarrassing and bizarre issues like Sheeshmahal, which have now led people to question whether we still believe in being the party of the common man." The resignation of Gahlot, a key minister in the Kejriwal government, comes as a significant setback for the Aam Aadmi Party, especially ahead of the Delhi polls likely to be held in February.



Bad beauty habits to fix now

Pause and take a look at your daily beauty ritual. Time to bring it back on track if the don'ts overpower the dos. It's natural to pick a bad habit or two even when it comes to beauty. But not many of us are aware of these. Says Narcis Jordan, a beauty professional, "Poor hygiene could lead to severe skin and hair infections. Following a beauty routine according to your skin and hair type is not enough, you need to make sure that you are doing it the proper and healthy way." There's more...

Sleeping with make-up on

Beauty experts have often spoken about the harmful effects of sleeping with make-up on. Nevertheless, many still forget to cleanse their face before going off to bed. No matter how tired you are, make sure to remove each and every trace of make-up before you retire for the night. It can clog your pores and can cause acne breakouts. It can also make your skin look dull due to the product buildup.



Beauty advice: Make-up professional Meghna Butani says, "Use a make-up remover to clean your face thoroughly, before washing it off with water and cleanser. You can use unscented baby wipes to remove your eye make-up. Make sure to apply night cream after that."

Touching your face too often

A common mistake that most women make, consciously or unconsciously, is to keep

touching their face throughout the day. Touching your face consistently can lead to a buildup of dirt and oil from your fingertips to your face; this will clog your pores and cause breakouts.

Beauty advice: "Sanitise your hands if you've been outdoors or to the washroom before you touch your face. Further, you need to make a conscious effort to remember

that touching your face too often can lead to a buildup of dirt on your face," adds Jordan.

Throw away old make-up

Make-up expires with time. Once opened, make-up products become susceptible to contamination and can also collect bacteria. Using old make-up items can cause blemishes and also lead to skin irritations.

Beauty advice: Always remember to throw away eye and face make-up products like mascara, kajal, foundation and compact which have been used for more than six months.

Overdoing the tweeze

Dermatologist Dr Aparna Santhanam says, "You might not have enough time to visit the salon, but plucking away uneven or extra hair with tweezers could be harmful for your facial skin. Do you know that too much tweezing of your eyebrows can completely change the look of your face? For example, if you have thin eyebrows and keep plucking it, it can make your face look larger



and older than you actually are."

Beauty advice: If you feel that you have unwanted hair around your eyebrows, stick to just plucking one or two. Further use a thin comb to shape your eyebrows and use a little bit of gel to shape them properly.

Clear off dirty make-up brushes

More often than not, one forgets to clean the make-up brushes on a daily basis. Think about all the surfaces your make-up brush comes in contact with — bathroom countertops, inside of your make-up bag etc. They breed bacteria, if you do not clean them properly. They will irritate your skin and also cause itching and burning eyes. Apart from this, using dirty brushes may also impact the look of your make-up. The application of your foundation or compact will not be smooth as it's supposed to be.

Beauty advice: Clean your brush at least once a week. Wash them with water and shampoo and lay them flat to dry out in the sun. However, you must never blow-dry these brushes, else they might stay damp.

Skincare for working Women



The facial skin is the most sensitive and deserves the highest attention. These days due to exposure to pollution, climatic changes and stress the skin loses its sheen very easily. Investing in a planned beauty treatment that works deep from within can be very helpful in such cases. Opting for therapies using organic products like argan oil, goji berry extract, avocado oil, gold elements etc over a couple of months show a lot of positive results.

The beauty of using organic products is that they blend with the body's natural system, supporting the skin in its regeneration process. Organic facial helps in fighting dead skin cell and reveal the new skin underneath, leaving the skin visibly lighter. Thus, washing your face with homemade ingredients is the best way to care for your skin.

Argan Oil is another ingredient used extensively for the skin, hair and body. Extracted from the magical Argan tree, it is the best secret weapon for red-carpet like radiance. Its deep conditioning properties works wonder on the entire skin. A lot of celebrities vouch for Argan oil for their perfect and blemish-free skin. After all, there is nothing more beautiful than having a naturally glowing skin for a woman.

Spa therapies

you must try before your wedding day



Heading towards your big, D-Day soon? The run-up to it is bound to be full of stress, to-do lists, shopping trips and more. And in all that, it's important to find the time to recharge, lose the fatigue and get prepared for your wedding day. To help you unwind, it's a good idea to chalk up trips to the spa for a mix of massages for your pressure points, body wraps, facials and other relaxation therapies. Here's more...

Skincare facials

Signature facials are definitely a part of the list. "Brides love the 'blue diamond' facial, with mineral ingredients and thermal spring water, which gives a brightening and even tone skin effect," says Husnavaz Dastur, spa director at a hotel at Lower Parel. And grooms get pampered, too. "Popular for men are facials that use

minerals to remove dead skin cells and clarifying masks. You also have eye treatments that are part of the facial," she says.

One of the best ways to de-stress is via an Ayurvedic massage, which effectively drains away toxins and restores the energy balance in the body. The masseur uses vigorous strokes (not painful) in order to balance the energy centers. There's a lot to try — Abhyanga, a hot-oil massage, Shirodhara, where herb-infused hot oil is dripped onto the forehead or Tanlepa, an oil massage followed by a wrap. There's also an international blend to help you relax and get shipshape. Says Gunjan Chawla, spa director at a five-star hotel at Juhu, "We do an odyssey, a total indulgence trip, which is an hour-long

massage followed by a scrub and a facial that enhances one's glow. Brides-to-be also love the Mediterranean sojourn — a luxe scrub with marine salt, brown sugar and lemon that softens the skin and the Egyptian one, where you relax in a milk bath with brown algae extracts and gold flecks, that lends the body a silky smoothness." And to bust fatigue, opt for a de-stress massage. Says Nalini Naegamvala, "This is a scalp, neck, shoulder, hand and foot massage that eases away aches. It's a lunchtime regimen that can be done without taking off the clothes or having a shower."

Skin pampering soaks for the bride and couple-to-be are also big on the agenda. Informs Dastur, "In demand are 'royal baths' that use rose bath salts, crystals with rose oil and coloured flower petals and Moroccan lamps — all of which go to enhance the whole experience. So it's really a colour therapy experience, which is very popular, now." Traditional herbal baths are also a great option. They offer a tranquil and beautifying experience. "You can use herbs such as triphala churna or mulgari churna which are added to water or milk and poured over the person. Not only does it help with skin disorders but it is also

cooling and refreshing," says Nitin Rajen, ayurvedic spa co-ordinator.

One of the biggest skin woes is tanning and roughness on the skin of the feet. Spa foot therapies are now as exotic as it gets. You can choose from a variety of foot treatments — with roses, chocolate, peppermint oils, Mandarin oranges, lime and honey.

It's not just for the bride alone. The trend is to round up the gals and head to the spa. The therapies have now translated into girl getaways to places like Goa and Maldives before the big day. "Each spa has a curated menu designed to ensure that the bride and her friends feel rejuvenated. Popular now, are massages using heated coconut sticks and organic scrubs made from pineapple and papaya, followed by lunch, yoga and meditation," says Lyle Lewis, general manager at such a facility.

Check into a salt room

One of the latest wellness trends, this uses one of nature's most basic ingredients — salt, which is anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory. Say hello to the 'salt therapy'. Opened at Horniman Circle in Mumbai, you check into the salt room here and breathe in the grain. This helps combat respiratory ailments and leaves you feeling calm and refreshed. Salt also acts as a cleanser on the skin and gives it a glow.



Forex kitty drops by USD 6.477 billion to USD 675.653 billion

NEW DELHI. India's forex reserves dropped by USD 6.477 billion to USD 675.653 billion for the week ended November 8, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the forex reserves had dropped by USD 2.675 billion to USD 682.13 billion. The kitty, which had hit an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September, has been declining for multiple weeks. For the week ended November 8, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 4.467 billion to USD 585.383 billion, the data released on Friday showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves decreased by USD 1.936 billion to USD 67.814 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 60 million to USD 18.159 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was also down by USD 14 million to USD 4.298 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

Foxconn tells India recruiters: Nix marital status in iPhone job ads

New Delhi. Apple supplier Foxconn has ordered the hiring agents that help recruit iPhone assembly workers in India to remove age, gender and marital criteria as well as the manufacturer's name in job advertisements, according to three people familiar with the matter and almost a dozen ads reviewed by Reuters. The moves follow a Reuters investigation published June 25, which found that Foxconn excluded married women from jobs at its main India iPhone assembly plant, though it relaxed the practice during high-production periods. Foxconn, which employs thousands of women at the iPhone factory at Sriperumbudur, near Chennai, outsources recruitment of assembly-line workers to third-party vendors. These agents scout for and screen candidates, who ultimately are interviewed and selected by Foxconn.

For the June story, Reuters reviewed job ads posted by Foxconn's Indian hiring vendors between January 2023 and May 2024 which stated that only unmarried women of specified ages were eligible for smartphone assembly roles, contravening Apple and Foxconn anti-discrimination policies. Days after the story's publication, Foxconn HR executives instructed many of the Indian vendors to standardize recruitment materials in accordance with templates provided by the company, two of the three hiring agency sources told Reuters. They also told the vendors not to speak to the media, these people said.

At a meeting in late June, Foxconn HR executives cited media coverage of the company's hiring practices and "warned us not to use Foxconn's name in any ads going forward, and told us our contracts would be terminated if we did," one agent said. The instructions for ads were: Don't mention the unmarried requirement, don't mention age, nor male or female either," said the person, who like the other sources spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of backlash from Foxconn. Foxconn did not respond to Reuters questions about its directives to recruiters, nor whether it had ended restrictions on the employment of married women for iPhone assembly roles. Apple declined to comment on similar questions. Both companies have previously said that Foxconn hires married women in India.

After slow start to capital expenditure in FY25 due to elections, Capex recovery likely in H2FY25, but 40-52% push needed to meet targets

NEW DELHI. After a slow start to capital expenditure by both states and the Centre during the ongoing financial year 2024-25 that has been primarily attributed to the general elections earlier this year, a pickup in the second half of the fiscal is predicated on an increase in government spending. This expected pickup comes amid concerns over a general moderation in domestic consumption demand and flagging of other growth indicators. While a belated government spending push would be a major impetus to flagging economic momentum, the prospect of getting government spending up to speed could mean a daunting 40-52 per cent increase in government capex during October-March, the second half of the financial year, to come anywhere close to the budget targets. Given the likely contraction of over 10 per cent in the capex in the first half of FY25, states would require an over 40 per cent expansion in capex during the remaining six months to meet their budget targets. As per rating agency ICRA, data for 15 major states shows that the combined revenue receipts, revenue expenditure and capex are required to expand by 30 per cent, 26 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, in the second half (H2) of FY25, to meet the budgeted target for the fiscal. The flagging pace of capex has also been a concern for the Centre, which has already nudged departments and ministries to speed up the pace of spending in the ongoing quarter as much as possible. The government has nudged the ministries to expedite the pace of capital expenditure to avoid bunching up of capex in the January-March quarter, with the government expected to relax the cash management limits for the last quarter. As per the latest data by Controller General of Accounts, the Centre's capital expenditure during September stood at Rs 1.14 lakh crore, down 2.4 per cent from the year-ago period. Cumulatively, during April-September, the first half of the financial year, capex was down 15.4 per cent year-on-year to Rs 4.15 lakh crore. The second half of the financial year will pose a challenge to the Centre as capex will have to grow by 52 per cent to achieve the FY25 Budget target of Rs 11.11 lakh crore. States are facing a similar challenge to boost their capex. The combined capital spending and net lending of 15 major states declined by 7.5 per cent in H1 FY25 as against a 21 per cent year-on-year expansion pegged in the budget

Boeing issues layoff notices to 400-plus workers as it begins drastic cuts

Boeing announced in October that it planned to cut 10 per cent of its workforce, about 17,000 jobs, in the coming months.



NEW DELHI. Boeing has delivered layoff notices to more than 400 members of its professional aerospace labour union, part of thousands of cuts planned as the company struggles to recover from financial and regulatory trouble as well as an eight-week strike by its Machinists union. The pink slips went out last week to members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, or SPEEA. The Seattle Times reported. The

workers will remain on the payroll through mid-January.

Boeing announced in October that it planned to cut 10 per cent of its workforce, about 17,000 jobs, in the coming months. CEO Kelly Ortberg told employees the company must "reset its workforce levels to align with our

financial reality". The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, or SPEEA, union said the cuts had affected 438 members. The union's local chapter has 17,000 Boeing employees who are largely based in Washington, with some in Oregon, California and Utah. Of those 438

workers, 218 are members of SPEEA's professional unit, which includes engineers and scientists. The rest are members of the technical unit, which includes analysts, planners, technicians and skilled tradespeople. Eligible employees will receive career transition services and subsidised health care benefits for up to three months. Workers will also receive severance, typically about one week of pay for every year of service. Boeing's unionised Machinists began returning to work earlier this month following the strike. The strike strained Boeing's finances. But Ortberg said on an October call with analysts that it did not cause the layoffs, which he described as a result of overstaffing. Boeing, based in Arlington, Virginia, has been in financial and regulatory trouble since a panel blew off the fuselage of an Alaska Airlines plane in January. Production rates slowed to a crawl, and the Federal Aviation Administration capped production of the 737 MAX at 38 planes per month, a threshold Boeing has yet to reach.

Gold prices fall further as demand weakens. Check latest rates

New Delhi. Gold prices in India have continued to decline, falling to Rs 74,970 per 10 grams as of 10:30 AM, according to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association. This marks a drop of Rs 1,220 from last Monday, with prices nearing the lows seen as of September 20, earlier in the year. The precious metal has seen a decline in November as demand for gold weakens globally. Gold prices reached an all-time high of Rs 81,500 per 10 grams on October 23, just before the festive season. However, prices started slipping after 31 October, when they were recorded at Rs 78,670 per 10 grams. The drop came as demand softened after the festive period.



global market movements, where gold prices have also seen a decline. Globally, gold prices have been affected by a strong US dollar and eased political uncertainty after the US elections. The current price is \$2,580 per ounce, according to the World Gold Council. Gold, often seen as a hedge during times of global conflict or economic uncertainty, has become less attractive as the dollar strengthens and equity markets perform well. The global dip aligns with the declining trend in India, with prices close to the lows recorded on 19 September. Silver prices have followed a similar trend. In India, silver is priced at Rs 89,280 per kilogram as of 6:55 AM. Futures for December 5 are trading at Rs 88,505 per kilogram on the MCX.

Since then, gold prices have been

hovering around levels last seen in September, reflecting a subdued domestic demand. The futures prices for December 5 contracts stand at Rs 74,031 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX). The shift in investment focus towards equities, driven by stronger fund flows, has reduced the demand for gold as a safe-haven asset. This trend mirrors

strengthens and equity markets perform well. The global dip aligns with the declining trend in India, with prices close to the lows recorded on 19 September. Silver prices have followed a similar trend. In India, silver is priced at Rs 89,280 per kilogram as of 6:55 AM. Futures for December 5 are trading at Rs 88,505 per kilogram on the MCX.

Anil Ambani's Reliance Group sets up centre to push 2030 growth strategy

New Delhi. India's net oil and gas import bill for the first seven months of the current financial year (FY25) rose by nearly 15 per cent year-on-year primarily on the back of higher import volumes of crude oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and petroleum products amid rising demand and stagnant domestic production, per latest data from the petroleum ministry. Lower value of the country's petroleum product exports also contributed to the expansion in the net oil and gas import bill. India's net oil and gas imports in value terms for the April-October period were at \$79.3 billion, up from \$69.2 billion a year ago, per provisional data from the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the oil ministry. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil with an import dependency level of over 85 per cent. It is also a large consumer of natural gas and depends on imports to meet over half of its demand. Oil and gas imports have the highest share in India's overall merchandise import bill. Petroleum product exports are among India's top merchandise exports in value terms. Heavy dependence on imported crude oil makes the Indian

economy vulnerable to global oil price volatility, apart from having a bearing on the country's trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, rupee's exchange rate, and inflation. The government



wants to reduce India's reliance on imported crude oil but sluggish domestic oil output in the face of incessantly growing demand for petroleum products has been the biggest roadblock. India's crude oil imports for April-October rose 3.5 per cent year-on-year to 140.2 million tonnes, while the oil import bill for the period rose 7.6 per cent to \$81.7 billion, according to the PPAC data. The country's oil import dependency for April-October was 88.1 per cent, up from 87.6 per cent in the year-ago

period. Domestic crude oil production was down nearly 3 per cent at 16.7 million tonnes. LNG imports for April-October in value terms rose 17.1 per cent year-on-year to \$8.9 billion due to a 22.2 per cent increase in imported LNG volumes to 22,085 million standard cubic metres (mscm). The growth in LNG imports was fuelled by rising consumption amid flat domestic natural gas production. Much of the incremental gas demand in the current fiscal came from gas-based power plants as electricity demand surged during the peak summer months. Import dependency in the case of natural gas was at 51.3 per cent for April-October, up from 46.7 per cent a year ago. Domestic natural gas output for the period was 1.6 per cent higher at 20,948 mscm. The government wants to increase the consumption and share of natural gas in the country's primary energy mix, even though it would lead to higher gas imports. Natural gas is far less polluting than conventional hydrocarbons like crude oil and coal, and is usually cheaper than oil. It is also seen as a key transition fuel. To be sure though, the government has also been pushing India's oil and

interrupted by a market holiday. For investors to qualify for the dividend, they must own the stock before the ex-dividend date. Shares bought on or after the ex-dividend date will not be eligible for the declared dividend.

DIVIDEND YIELD

Over the past year, MRF has distributed an equity dividend of Rs 200 per share. At the current share price of Rs 1,20,551.75, the dividend yield stands at 0.17%, reflecting its consistent, albeit modest, returns for shareholders.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

In the second quarter of FY25, MRF recorded a 20% decline in standalone net profit, which fell to Rs 455 crore compared with Rs 572 crore in the same period last year. However, revenue from operations grew by 11% year-on-year, reaching Rs 6760 crore in the July-September 2024 period. The tyre manufacturer's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) stood at Rs 974 crore, down 14% from Rs 1129 crore in the previous year.

Margins also saw a contraction, dropping to 14.4% from the earlier levels, reflecting challenges in managing costs and maintaining profitability.

MRF SHARE PERFORMANCE

On Thursday, MRF shares ended flat, closing at Rs 1,20,662.55 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The stock has seen limited movement recently, even as market participants track the dividend announcement and its financial results.

Sensex, Nifty fall as market bloodbath continues. 4 things investors should know

Stock market correction: Sensex and Nifty have entered a correction zone, marked by a drop of more than 10% from their recent highs. The sell-off has rattled retail investors, many of whom are now asking a pressing question: Has the market bottomed out, or is there more pain ahead?

NEW DELHI. Domestic stock markets continued their downward slide on Monday, with benchmark indices struggling to find footing amidst relentless selling pressure. The Sensex fell over 500 points during early trading, hovering just above 77,000, while the Nifty50 slipped below 23,400.

The broader market also faced significant declines, extending what has now become the steepest correction phase in four years. For context, the Sensex and Nifty have entered a correction zone, marked by a drop of more than 10% from their recent highs. The sell-off has rattled retail investors, many of whom are now asking

a pressing question: Has the market bottomed out, or is there more pain ahead?

WHY ARE MARKETS FALLING?

The downturn can largely be attributed to multiple factors, including sustained selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs). November alone has seen FPIs withdraw Rs 29,533 crore, adding to total outflows of Rs 1.25 lakh crore since Nifty's peak in September. Rising US bond yields, weak corporate earnings, and global economic concerns have further dampened sentiment. "Relentless FII selling, earnings downgrades, and the consequences of the Trump trade are weighing on the market," says Dr. V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. "Sentiments have turned negative, and investors should exercise caution at this stage."

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Sameet Chavan from Angel One points out that the markets are breaking key support levels with no significant interim recovery. "Despite oversold conditions hinting at a possible bounce, traders should remain cautious. The next support zone lies around 22,800-22,700," he



SHOULD INVESTORS WORRY?

For retail investors, the current market scenario can be unsettling, but experts suggest maintaining a long-term perspective. Vijayakumar recommends focusing on sectors showing resilience, such as digital companies and high-quality banking stocks. "Large-caps like RIL and Eicher are holding their ground," he adds. Sameet Chavan cautions against bottom-fishing in small and mid-cap stocks, which have faced intense selling pressure. Instead, he suggests gradually accumulating quality stocks in well-established sectors once market conditions stabilise.

WHEN WILL STOCK MARKET BLOODBATH END?

Pinpointing the exact market bottom is difficult. While technical indicators hint at a potential bounce, global factors like rising bond yields and FII outflows suggest the recovery may take time. Investors are advised to stay patient, avoid panic selling, and focus on building a diversified portfolio with a long-term horizon.

NEWS BOX

Vaughan shocked over India's reluctance to play intra-squad game before Perth Test

Former England cricketer Michael Vaughan is shocked at India's reluctance to play intra-squad matches ahead of the opening Test match vs Australia. India opted out of a match vs India A ahead of the Perth Test. Captain Rohit Sharma revealed that the players would be able to train for more hours if they do match simulations instead of an intra-squad game. However, the reason did not impress Michael Vaughan. Speaking on Fox Cricket ahead of the opening Test match in Perth, Vaughan has questioned India's readiness. Vaughan has pointed at the fact that India might be undercooked mentally ahead of their first game against Pat Cummins' side. "I can't get my head around a team like India only wanting to play an intra-squad game leading into a series against Australia in their own backyard," Vaughan told Fox Cricket.

BGT: Updates from India match simulations "I just can't see how you get yourself in that competitive mindset of consequence by playing an intra-squad game. Time will tell.



I'm surprised that this Indian side didn't want at least one game of cricket, and the WACA's the perfect venue because it's a similar pitch to Optus (Stadium), so you get used to the bounce," he further added. India have a selection headache with Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill unavailable for the opening Test match at Perth, which starts on 22 November. While Sharma is currently on paternity leave, Shubman has a fractured thumb. The team will hope that the youngsters step up to the occasion like they did last time on the tour of Australia. India might call upon the likes of Abhimanyu Easwaran and Nitish Kumar Reddy, and hand them debuts in Perth. The first Test match between India and Australia begins on 22 November. The match will be played at the Optus Stadium and will kick off at 7:50 AM IST.

Virat Kohli always steps up in Australia: David Warner warns hosts ahead of 1st Test

New Delhi. Former Australian opener David Warner has issued a warning to the Pat Cummins-led side ahead of the Perth Test, saying that Virat Kohli always steps up in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under. In a column for the Herald Sun, Warner highlighted the threat posed by Virat Kohli, despite the Indian batter's current slump in form. "This is the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, and we know Virat always steps up in Australia," Warner wrote. "He embraces the challenge like almost no one else who has ever visited our shores. There's no better way for him to silence the critics than by scoring big runs here. I'm genuinely worried for the Australian cricket team that he's going to come out and pile on some runs." Kohli's



recent numbers have been uncharacteristically poor. Across 19 Tests in 2023, he has scored just 488 runs at an average of 20.33. With only two half-centuries in 25 innings and the highest score of 76, the year has been a far cry from his peak years when he dominated international cricket. Despite his struggles, Kohli's history in Australia has been remarkable. In Test matches on Australian soil, he has scored 1,352 runs in 13 games at an average of 54.08, including six centuries. Known for thriving in challenging conditions, Kohli has often risen to the occasion against Australia, earning their respect and caution.

For Kohli, this series is about more than runs; it is about reaffirming his place as one of the greatest Test batters of all time. Between 2016 and 2019, Kohli was in a league of his own, amassing 4,208 runs at an average of 66.79 in 43 Tests. His tally included 16 centuries, seven of which were double hundreds, setting a record for the most double centuries by a Test captain. However, since 2020, his form has dipped. In 34 Tests, Kohli has scored 1,838 runs at an average of 31.68, with only two centuries to his name. This series presents an opportunity for him to turn things around on a stage where he has historically excelled. Warner's warning comes as Australia prepares for a gruelling series against a team led by Rohit Sharma but bolstered by Kohli's presence.

Nations League: France grab top spot after Italy win, England earn promotion

UEFA Nations League: Adrien Rabiot scored a brace to help France beat Italy 3-1 and finish top of their group above Italy, while England defeated the Republic of Ireland 5-0 to secure their return to League A.



New Delhi. France claimed a dramatic 3-1 victory over Italy in Milan to secure top spot in UEFA Nations League Group A2, as Adrien Rabiot's double and a Lucas Digne-inspired masterclass propelled Les Bleus to glory. Elsewhere, England and Norway celebrated promotion to League A with emphatic performances against the Republic of Ireland and Kazakhstan, respectively.

FRANCE OUTCLASS ITALY

France needed a two-goal win to overtake Italy, and they delivered in style at San Siro. Adrien Rabiot opened the scoring with a powerful header from Lucas Digne's

pinpoint corner in just the second minute. France doubled their lead when Digne's stunning free-kick ricocheted off the crossbar and deflected into the net off Italy goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario.

Italy responded swiftly, with Andrea Cambiaso volleying in Federico Dimarco's cutback to keep the hosts in contention before halftime. However, France sealed the result in the 65th minute as Digne set up Rabiot again, this time with a pinpoint cross, to restore their two-goal cushion. The win pushed France to 13 points, finishing ahead

of Italy on goal difference. Both teams had already secured quarter-final spots, but the victory ensures France avoid heavyweights like Spain, Germany, and Portugal in the next stage. France coach Didier Deschamps praised his squad, saying: "Winning here against an Italian team full of confidence is a great performance. It shows the depth and spirit of this group."

ENGLAND SEAL PROMOTION

England stormed back into League A with a 5-0 demolition of the Republic of Ireland at Wembley. Despite a goalless first half, the

hosts ran riot after the break, with five different scorers making a dominant display in Lee Carsley's final match as interim manager.

Harry Kane opened the floodgates with a penalty following Liam Scalls' second yellow card. Goals from Anthony Gordon, Conor Gallagher, Jarrod Bowen, and Taylor Harwood-Bellis - the latter two scoring their first international goals - underlined England's superiority.

NORWAY CRUSH KAZAKHSTAN

Erling Haaland stole the show in Oslo, netting a hat-trick to propel Norway to a 5-0 victory over Kazakhstan and secure promotion to League A. The striker, now leading the Nations League scoring charts, was ably supported by Alexander S. Iroth and Antonio Nusa, whose curling strike capped off a resounding win.

ISRAEL BEAT BELGIUM

In a dramatic turn of events in Budapest, debutant Yarden Shua struck late to secure Israel's first group win with a 1-0 upset over Belgium. Despite the victory, Israel was relegated due to an inferior head-to-head record, while Belgium survived by the narrowest of margins. The result adds pressure on Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco, whose side managed just four points in a disappointing campaign.

Doug Bracewell tests positive for cocaine, handed one-month ban from cricket

New Delhi. Former New Zealand fast bowler Doug Bracewell has been handed a one-month ban from cricket after testing positive for cocaine. The 34-year-old was found to have used the banned substance following a stellar performance in a domestic T20 match for Central Districts against Wellington in January 2024. Bracewell's on-field efforts in that game earned him man-of-the-match honors, as he took 2/21, smashed an unbeaten 30 runs off 11 balls, and made two catches to secure a six-wicket win for his team. The Sport Integrity Commission (Te Kahu Raunui) confirmed that Bracewell's cocaine use occurred outside competition and was unrelated to his performance in the match.

Consequently, he was initially handed a three-month ban, which was reduced to one month after successfully completing a treatment program. The sanction, backdated to April 2024, means Bracewell has already served his



suspension and is now eligible to return to cricket. Sport Integrity Commission chief executive Rebecca Rolls emphasized the need for athletes to act as role models. "Athletes have a responsibility to set a positive example, especially for the tamariki and rangatahi who look up to them," she said. "Recreational drugs, including cocaine, are illegal and dangerous. Their use is a serious issue, and we are committed to addressing it with sports organizations and athletes." New Zealand Cricket (NZC) chief executive

expressed disappointment but reaffirmed the organization's commitment to supporting Bracewell. "Doug accepts full responsibility for his error of judgment," said the NZC chief. "We will continue to provide support for him as he moves forward, fully aware of our expectations." Bracewell's career has been marred by off-field incidents. He has a

history of drink-driving convictions, beginning at 18 years old in 2008, with subsequent offenses in 2010 and 2017. The most publicized incident involved Bracewell driving under the influence after learning that dogs had killed his pet cockatoo, an episode that led to significant public and legal scrutiny. Despite these setbacks, Bracewell has had a noteworthy cricketing career, representing New Zealand in 28 Tests, 21 ODIs, and 20 T20Is since his international debut in 2011.

BGT Recap: When Maxwell mocked Kohli's shoulder injury only to receive fiery sendoff

New Delhi. The 2017 Border-Gavaskar Trophy series was filled with drama, but one of the most talked-about moments came during the third Test in Ranchi. Indian captain Virat Kohli had injured his shoulder while fielding during the Test match, forcing him to stay off the field for a while. This injury became the target of Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, who mocked Kohli in an on-field incident that grabbed headlines. The incident happened in the first innings, Kohli injured his shoulder while diving to save a boundary. The injury was serious enough to keep him off the field for a significant part of the match. As India batted after Australia's first-innings total of 451, Maxwell, fresh off scoring his maiden Test hundred, made a spectacular dive near the boundary to save runs. Immediately after, Maxwell theatrically clutched his shoulder, mimicking Kohli's injury. The gesture was clearly aimed at mocking the Indian skipper, and it didn't go unnoticed. The act was caught on camera and quickly went viral, which added more fuel to the already intense rivalry.

When Kohli hit back at Maxwell

Kohli, known for his fiery demeanour, did not immediately react but bided his time. In Australia's second innings, when Ravindra Jadeja bowled David Warner for just 14 runs, Kohli seized the opportunity. He celebrated by aggressively patting his own shoulder, mimicking Maxwell's earlier gesture. The crowd erupted, and it was evident that Kohli had delivered a pointed response. BGT recap: Recalling Steve Smith's brainfade in the post-match presentation after the final Test, Kohli didn't hold back. He made it clear that his camaraderie with the Australian players was over, saying, "I've been proven wrong. The friendship with the Australian team is no longer there." This was a direct response to the series' sledging and on-field antics, including Maxwell's mocking act. Another intense chapter to rivalry. The shoulder saga became a symbol of the mind games and sledging that defined the series. While the Australians downplayed Maxwell's actions as light-hearted.

Jannik Sinner caps golden year by beating Taylor Fritz to ATP Finals glory

New Delhi. Home favourite Jannik Sinner made history on Sunday, becoming the first Italian to win the prestigious ATP Finals title after a commanding 6-4, 6-4 victory over Taylor Fritz. The world number one, who lost in last year's final to Novak Djokovic, delivered an almost flawless performance to secure the coveted trophy in front of his adoring home crowd. In a repeat of the 2024 U.S. Open final, Sinner maintained his dominance, finishing the week undefeated and without dropping a set. His stellar performance was rewarded with a prize of \$4,881,500, marking the pinnacle of a spectacular season. The match was a showcase of Sinner's precision and poise. The 23-year-old Italian broke Fritz's serve with a sublime drop shot to take a 4-3 lead in the first set, before wrapping it up with



his 10th ace of the match. The American, who made history by becoming the first U.S. player to reach the ATP Finals since James Blake in 2006, struggled to maintain consistency against the relentless Sinner. In the second set, Fritz faltered again, hitting a forehand long to surrender his serve, allowing Sinner to seal the victory in just 85 minutes. "It's amazing. Just an amazing week. For me, it's a first title in Italy, so it means so

much to me," Sinner said after the match, visibly emotional. "I'm very happy about that, it's very special. I just try to understand what works best for each opponent, try to play the best tennis possible. That was the key; I played a high-level tournament from my side. At times I couldn't play better, so I'm very happy." Sinner's 2024 season has been nothing short of extraordinary, despite facing an anti-doping controversy that briefly clouded his achievements. On the court, however, he has been almost unstoppable, winning 26 of his last 27 matches and capturing eight titles, including the ATP Finals. His win in Turin also marked his 70th victory of the season, making him the first player since Ivan Lendl in 1986 to win the ATP Finals without dropping a set.

R Ashwin has taught me a lot: Nathan Lyon praises 'incredible' India spinner

New Delhi. Australian veteran Nathan Lyon says he has learned a lot from 'smart' Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin ahead of the first Test of the five-match series in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Their rivalry, which began in the 2011/12 series, has evolved into one of the most fascinating contests in modern Test cricket, with both spinners achieving significant milestones in their careers. Lyon, who will face Ashwin once again this summer, reflected on their shared journey, noting that both bowlers made their Test debuts in the same year and reached the milestone of 500 Test wickets last season. However, it is Ashwin's dominance over Lyon in the 2020/21 Border-Gavaskar Trophy that stands out. Ashwin outperformed the Australian spinners during that series, with Lyon only claiming nine wickets at an average of 55.11, while Ashwin was a key figure in India's memorable series victory. "Ash is an incredible bowler," Lyon told Fox Cricket. "I've gone head-to-head

with him for basically my whole career, so I've learned a lot from Ash. He's an incredibly smart bowler, and he's able to learn and adapt very quickly, and I think the best bowlers in the world are able to do that." Lyon's praise for Ashwin comes as no surprise, given the significant influence Ashwin has had on his own career. The 36-year-old Australian acknowledged Ashwin as one of his most influential mentors, particularly during his preparations for tours to India. Lyon has often studied footage of Ashwin's performances on the subcontinent's spin-friendly pitches to understand his strategies and improve his own game.

"He's taught me a lot," Lyon admitted. "I'm a big believer that the players you compete against are your best coaches. I've watched a lot of his footage heading over to India, the way he goes about it here in Australia, and see if I can pick up anything." Both bowlers have excelled in their respective crafts, with Lyon generating overspin and bounce on



Australian pitches, while Ashwin has honed his ability to bowl relentlessly with subtle variations, including his famous carrom ball. The contrasting styles of the two spinners make their head-to-head battles even more intriguing for fans. Reflecting on his success on pitches that are less conducive to spin, Lyon jokingly referenced Indian star Ravindra Jadeja's close watch on media reports, adding, "I know Jadeja reads all of this stuff, so I can't really share all my secrets." However, Lyon did offer insight into his own approach: "My big thing is spinning up the back of the ball and getting bounce,

but it's a hard craft to be able to do that in Australia. Your margin for error is extremely small." As the series approaches, Lyon also acknowledged the challenge of facing a world-class Indian side. Despite Australia's recent victory over India in the World Test Championship final, Lyon emphasized that India has had the upper hand in recent Border-Gavaskar series, with the Australians unable to claim a Test series win in India in nearly a decade. "India's got the wood over us in the past few series, but if you're looking at the World Test Championship (final) in England, we were able to beat them there, and I know that should give us a bit of confidence heading into this summer," Lyon said. The Australian spinner is determined to turn the tide this summer, recognizing that while India remains a formidable opponent, his team has the potential to achieve something special. "I feel like we're on the journey to becoming a great team."

Splitsvilla Fame

Kashish Kapoor

To Quit Salman Khan's Bigg Boss 18 For A Whopping Rs 2 Cr? What We Know



It's been almost 2 months in the Bigg Boss 18 house and the drama has been non-stop. From fights over food and coffee to a physical clash between Avinash Mishra and Digvijay Singh Rathee, the house has been full of chaos. In last night's episode (November 16, 2024), Salman Khan addressed the tense relationship between ex-Splitsvilla contestants Kashish Kapoor and Digvijay and brought up Kashish's talk about quitting the show. Salman showed a clip of an interaction between Kashish and Digvijay, who have had a rocky past. The wildcard contestants, who claimed to hate each other, had a big fight when they entered the show. The clip raised questions about their true intentions, leaving everyone surprised.

Kashish Kapoor hinted at quitting the show if offered Rs 2 crore. After her conversation with Salman Khan, she spoke to Chahat Pandey, questioning his comments, saying, "Aur aise bolna ki jo game quit karte hai woh life mein aage nahi badh pate hai, yeh kya baat huye? Aur agar yaha par bhi paiso ki baat kar rahe hain na, agar denge mujhe 2 Crore toh mai le kar chali jaungi. Nahi farak padhega mujhe." For those unaware, Kashish Kapoor from Splitsvilla X5 sparked a major controversy by opting to take Rs 10 lakh instead of competing in the finale with her show partner, Digvijay Singh Singh. Her decision resulted in Digvijay's automatic eviction from the competition. Kashish Kapoor's choice to take the money instead of competing in the finale with Digvijay has divided fans. While some supported her decision, many expressed anger, accusing her of betraying her partner and undermining the spirit of the competition. The backlash was so severe that Kashish publicly defended her actions, saying that the decision wasn't easy and that she felt it was the best choice for her. Bigg Boss 18 airs on Colors TV and is available for streaming on JioCinema.



Akshay Kumar Reveals Twinkle Khanna Once Called His Film 'Bakwas': 'That Producer Never Worked...'



Akshay Kumar and Twinkle Khanna are known for their playful and candid relationship, and the actor recently opened up about how honest Twinkle is when it comes to critiquing his work. In a conversation where Ajay Devgn also shared insights about his family's feedback, both actors highlighted the importance of hearing the truth, no matter how blunt. Akshay shared with Hindustan Times, "I don't take my wife for screenings so I have to sit with her and show her the film. And it falls in my ears, 'sht scene hai, yeh bekaar hai.' She will say it is very bad, the climax is very long, and the remarks keep on coming. The first time I took her for my trial, the producer came and asked how she found the film, she called it bakwas (terrible). That producer never worked with me again."*

Despite the harsh critiques, Akshay admires Twinkle's honesty. "But I envy her for speaking her mind. Whenever she likes something, she praises it. She was very happy with *Khel Khel Mein*, even though it didn't work, it was a hit film in my heart," he added. Ajay Devgn echoed similar sentiments, revealing that his wife Kajol and their children, Nysa and Yug, are equally straightforward with their opinions. "Kajol and the children are also similar. With the newer generation, we upgrade ourselves, and we know the mindset, so we learn what is working. Where they have to criticise they do it, and thank god there is an invention called Airpods, after a point you can wear them and they can keep speaking," he said humorously. Ajay also shared that his children often correct him on Gen-Z lingo. "Nysa lectures me on these things, and Yug does too," the actor admitted. Meanwhile, Akshay Kumar is currently one of the busiest actors in the industry, with several films lined up, including *Housefull 5*. Amid this, reports suggest that the actor is planning to bring back the sequel to the hit comedy-drama *Bhagam Bhag*.

Allu Arjun And Rashmika Mandanna Head To Patna For Grand Pushpa 2 Trailer Launch



The trailer for *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is set to be unveiled in Patna this Sunday with a lot of excitement, and actors Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna are on their way to join the grand event. The film's official Instagram page shared the news, posting a picture of the stars standing in front of a private jet. Allu sported a white t-shirt with the film's title emblazoned on it, while Rashmika looked cute and cozy in a comfy tracksuit. The caption of the image read, "Pushpa Raj Srivalli... Icon Star



@alluarjunonline & @rashmika_mandanna take off to Patna for the massive *Pushpa2TheRule* Trailer Launch Event". Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna starrer *Pushpa 2* trailer is all set to release today. A grand event will be held in Patna and actors will be seen gathering for the trailer release. Ahead of it, Allu Arjun shared a new poster which has further increased the excitement level among the fans. Many were seen dropping fire emojis in the comment section. The film is releasing on December 5. Taking to his Instagram handle, Allu Arjun shared the poster which shows him holding two axes and in a fierce avatar. "#Pushpa2TheRuleTrailer out Tomorrow at 6:03 PM," read the caption. As soon as he shared the poster, fans flooded the comment section. One of the fans wrote, "Waiting". Another wrote, "Excitement level." Many have also shared heart emojis. Rashmika Mandanna also shared the poster. The first part of the film reported a box office collection of more than Rs 350 crore, becoming one of the year's highest-grossing films. The trailer and songs released have already received a good response from the audience. Directed by Sukumar, it stars Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, Fahadh Faasil, Sreeleela and Prakash Raj in leading roles.

Shruti Haasan

REACTS To Nayanthara's Open Letter To Dhanush, Aishwarya Rajesh Supports Lady Superstar



Nayanthara vs Dhanush Controversy: Several Tamil actresses such as Shruti Haasan and Aishwarya Rajesh, who have worked with Dhanush, have reacted to Nayanthara's explosive open letter to Dhanush. On Saturday, Nayanthara rocked the Tamil film industry after she called out Dhanush. The actress said Dhanush, who had produced *Naanum Rowdy Dhaan*, has sued her for Rs 10 Cr for using a behind-the-scenes footage in her upcoming documentary. Her statement shed light on the struggles she has been facing while procuring permissions from the actor. In the statement, she took a jibe at him as well, seemingly calling him a hypocrite. The letter has gone viral and several actresses who have worked with Dhanush have reacted to the same. Shruti Haasan, who has worked with Dhanush in 3 (*Moonu*), hinted that she is team Nayanthara by 'liking' the actress's post.

Nayanthara's life. The documentary will also shed light on her love story with Vignesh Shivan, which began on the sets of *Naanum Rowdy Dhaan*. Nayanthara, in her open letter, accused Dhanush of not responding to her NOC request to use footage from the film in the documentary. She added that after the team decided to forgo the usage of footage from the film and use a behind-the-scenes video which is freely available online, Dhanush sued her for using the footage without his permission. "What's even more shocking is your legal



Other Dhanush's co-stars such as Aishwarya Rajesh (*Vada Chennai*), Aishwarya Lekshmi (*Jagame Thandhiram*), Nazriya Fahadh (*Naiyaandi*), Anupama Parameswaran (*Kodi*), Parvathy Thiruvothu (*Maryan*), Manjima Mohan (*Nilavuku Enmel Ennadi Kobam*), and Gouri G Kishan (*Karman*) have also showed their support to Nayanthara by 'liking' her post. Parvathy also shared the post on her Instagram Stories and saluted Nayanthara. Nayanthara is set to release her documentary, '*Nayanthara: Beyond The Fairy Tale*' is set to release on Netflix on November 18. The documentary is set to show the highs and lows of

notice after the release of the trailer of the Netflix Documentary. We were startled to read those lines wherein you questioned the usage of some videos (just 3 seconds) which were shot in our personal devices and that too BTS visuals that are already very much publicly present on social media and claimed a sum of Rs.10 crores as damages for the mere 3 seconds. This is an all time low from you and speaks so much about your character. I wish you were half the person you portray to be on stage in audio launches in front of your innocent fans but clearly you do not practice what you preach, at least not for me and my partner," Nayanthara said in her statement.