

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

The Sikh Times National Daily

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

Vol. 16 No. 196 RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465 New Delhi, Wednesday, 27 November 2024 sikhtimesindia@gmail.com 9654077232 12 pages ₹ 3

US State Department declines comment on disruptions in Indian Parliament

New Delhi, Nov. 26: The US State Department refused to comment on the disruptions in Indian Parliament over the indictment of billionaire Gautam Adani in a US court on charges of bribery.

ment was unsealed in federal court in Brooklyn charging Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani and Vneet Jaan, executives of an Indian renewable-energy company with conspiracies to commit securities and wire fraud and substantive securities fraud for their roles in a multi-billion-dollar scheme.

Constitution powerful tool to protect poorest section of society: Rahul

New Delhi, Nov. 26: The Congress on Tuesday urged citizens to protect the ethos of the Constitution and said the struggle to defend India's inherent philosophy must be reinvigorated and reignited in the 75th year of its adoption.

foremothers and forefathers is the lifeblood of our nation. It guarantees us social, economic and political rights. It constitutes India into a sovereign socialist democratic republic," he said.

vision and wisdom," he said. Kharge said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Babasaheb Dr BR Ambedkar, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr Rajendra Prasad, KM Munshi, Sarojini Naidu, Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and several eminent personalities were not just revered national icons but inspiring personalities who became the torchbearers of hope for generations together.



Supreme Court rejects plea for reverting to ballots in elections

New Delhi, Nov. 26: The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition seeking to revert to ballot paper voting in elections in the country.

widows. "Why are you getting into this political arena? Your area of work is very different," the bench retorted.

corruption and this year (2024) in June, the Election Commission announced they had seized Rs 9,000 crore, Paul responded.



Eknath Shinde resigns, Governor asks him to act as caretaker Chief Minister

Mumbai, Nov. 26: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday morning met Governor C P Radhakrishnan here and tendered his resignation following the results of the assembly elections.

of the outgoing Maharashtra assembly ends on November 26. Deepak Kesarkar, who served as a minister in the Eknath Shinde cabinet, told reporters, "The chief minister has tendered his resignation. The governor has asked him to act as a caretaker chief minister."



Independence will be jeopardised if parties place creed above country: Dhankhar

New Delhi, Nov. 26: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday invoked Dr BR Ambedkar to say that "our independence will be put into jeopardy" a second time if parties placed creed above country.



Constitution ingeniously established democracy's three pillars - Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary, each with a defined role - Dhankhar said.

India on arrest of Hindu leader Chinmoy Das in Bangladesh

Bangladesh, Nov. 26: India on Tuesday noted with "deep concern" the arrest and denial of bail to Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das in Bangladesh, and urged authorities there to ensure the safety and security of Hindus and all minorities.

Fight to save democracy, Constitution will continue: Kejriwal

New Delhi, Nov. 26: The AAP has emerged stronger due to its "honesty and love of the people", party supremo Arvind Kejriwal said on the foundation day of the party on Tuesday, asserting the fight to save the Constitution and democracy will continue.

man. "The biggest achievement of the AAP is that we gave an honest model of governance. We provided basic facilities

"Some leaders come to slums for show but later send bulldozers to destroy the homes there. People must be cautious of such hypocrisy," he said.



Constitution 'guiding light', spirit of 'nation first' will keep it alive for centuries: PM Modi

New Delhi, Nov. 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Constitution on Tuesday as a "guiding light" at a time of transformation for India, asserting that his government has strengthened constitutional values by taking a host of welfare measures to bring social and financial equality.

Assembly on November 26, 1949, Modi said their own. This sentiment of 'nation first' will keep alive the Constitution for centuries to come," he said.

event. India is going through a period of transformation and at such an important time, it is the Constitution of India that is



"showing us the way and it is a guiding light for us", Modi said. The prime minister cited a host of his government's welfare measures, including the opening of bank accounts for over 53 crore people, homes for over four crore poor families, the scheme to provide cooking gas cylinders to needy women, and health insurance scheme for the poor among others, to highlight the efforts to boost social and equality envisaged by the Constitution.



## News box

### Building, layout approvals made easy: Andhra Pradesh Minister Ponguru Narayana

**VIJAYAWADA:** Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Minister Ponguru Narayana announced significant reforms to streamline the building and layout approval process. Addressing the media at the Secretariat on Monday, the minister revealed that the State government, led by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has approved key town planning reforms proposed by a designated committee.

The minister stated that buildings up to 15 metres in height will no longer require prior permissions. From December 31, building permissions will be issued through a single-window approval system to simplify the process and avoid delays. To ensure faster approvals, the government plans to integrate the servers of various departments, including Revenue, Registration and Stamps, Fire, Mining, Railway, and Airport authorities, with the Municipal Administration server.

The reforms follow a detailed review of the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department by the Chief Minister, during which recommendations for town planning were provided. Minister Narayana highlighted that seven committees had studied practices in ten states and submitted their findings, which were instrumental in shaping the reforms. The minister explained that building permissions will be issued immediately after applications are uploaded online by licensed surveyors. He warned that surveyors engaging in illegal practices would face severe penalties, including license cancellation.

### Foster+ partners to design iconic towers in Amaravati

**VIJAYAWADA:** Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Ponguru Narayana announced that Foster + Partners, the globally-renowned architecture firm of Norman Foster, has bagged tenders for designing the five iconic towers, including the buildings for the Assembly and the High Court, in Amaravati. Speaking to mediapersons on Monday, he clarified that the architectural firm bagged the tenders for the projects after they were re-issued. Elaborating on the matter, he said, "The tenders for designs bagged by Foster + Partners were cancelled by the previous dispensation, forcing the firm to file an arbitration case. As a result, the State had to pay Rs 9 crore in compensation at the International Arbitration Centre. The re-tendering process was initiated to address the situation. Subsequently, the company once again secured the contract." The Minister asserted that orders for the final designs would be issued soon, paving the way for construction to commence in the capital region. He also stressed that there are no issues concerning the World Bank loan for Amaravati's development. The World Bank has already agreed to release funds in a phased manner to support the construction of projects in the capital city, he pointed out. Highlighting the government's commitment to Amaravati, Narayana stated that the Centre has reaffirmed in Parliament that Amaravati will remain the sole capital of Andhra Pradesh. Steps are being taken to issue an official gazette formalizing this status, he added.

### Replica of Preamble to come up in ten Karnataka cities including Bengaluru

**SHIVAMOGGA:** As part of its efforts to create awareness of the Constitution, the Karnataka government has decided to install replicas of the Preamble in important parks in 10 cities, including Bengaluru.

The Social Welfare Department has taken up this first-of-its-kind initiative to create awareness and spread the message of the Constitution among the public and has set aside Rs 3 crore for this purpose. The replicas will come up in Bengaluru, Shivamogga, Ballari, Belagavi, Davanagere, Hubballi-Dharwad, Kalaburagi, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Tumakuru, and Vijayapura. In a government order, L Narasimhamurthy, Under Secretary, Social Welfare Department, said that each replica will be 10 ft high and 6 ft wide and will be in Kannada and English. Each city corporation has been granted Rs 25 lakh and the BBMP Rs 50 lakh to build the replicas and to take up awareness programmes on the Constitution.

In Shivamogga, the replica will come up at Allamprabhu Freedom Park, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Malleshapp D told The New Indian Express. "The replica will be built using bricks and granite. Shivamogga District in-charge Minister Madhu Bangarappa will lay the foundation stone for the structure on Constitution Day on Tuesday," he said.

The replicas will be inaugurated on Republic Day next year. In June 2023, the State Government issued an order making it compulsory for students in all schools and colleges to read the Preamble of the Constitution daily. All government offices are also displaying a picture of the Preamble. On the International Democracy Day, the State Government organised a mega event to read the Preamble.

# Anganwadi kids play waiting game for book, uniform in TN

**An anganwadi worker that TNIE spoke to said that vacancy is a major factor and workers are unable to concentrate on imparting education activities.**

**COIMBATORE:** Five months after enrolment, lakhs of children in anganwadi centres and kindergarten classes in government schools across the state have not yet got their activity workbooks and uniforms. Activity workbooks, designed by the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) of Tamil Nadu, are provided to children from two to five years of age, based on their age category. Titled "Aadi Paadi Vilaiyadu Pappa," the curriculum aims to create a stimulating environment for the children's holistic development and learning, through activity books, assessment cards, and preschool education kits, etc. These

activities are designed to be taught to children over 11 months. For instance, in November every year, children aged four to five should be able to name vegetables, sketch, and fill in suitable letters in words provided in the workbooks. Similarly, for each month, there are predetermined exercises which the children must be taught. But due to the delay in distributing workbooks, children are missing out on such activities, sources said.

P Kalaiselvi of Podanur told TNIE that her four-year-old child goes to an anganwadi in the locality. She said, "Though the staff members take good care of the children by ensuring that they eat and drink water on time and are safe, the staff do not teach them workbook activities as per the syllabus." She added that if workers taught the activities, the children would learn something new and it would stimulate their thinking.

**'No appointment of anganwadi workers since 2018'**

"As there are no activities related to the workbook, children fail to get proper fundamental education in Tamil letters, numbers, etc. Workbooks should be



provided quickly," said P Kalaiselvi of Podanur. A parent, K Sengodi, whose daughter is studying in LKG at a corporation middle school in Coimbatore told TNIE that uniforms are yet to be provided to the children. An anganwadi worker that TNIE spoke to said that vacancy is a major factor and workers are unable to concentrate on imparting education activities.

"Except in a few places, workers have been forced to manage two or three centres simultaneously. Not only this, we have to cook, register the details of children's attendance, and items received, upload

children's height and weight, go for census work, etc. There is not enough time for us to impart education," she said. Tamil Nadu Anganwadi Oozhiyar and Udhaviyalar Sangam general secretary T Daisy told TNIE that there has been no appointment of new workers since 2018. She said that there are around 18,000 vacancies in 54,000 centres. The state has a total of 1.04 lakh centres, she said. Educationist Su Moorthy told TNIE that the RTE Act mandates that central and state governments provide early childhood care and education.

Only poor children face difficulties and lose equal learning opportunities in getting a proper pre-primary education in anganwadi centres due to various reasons. When children come to primary classes with lack of pre-primary education, we can see differences such as learning loss in them," he said. When asked about the delay in giving uniforms and books, an officer in Coimbatore said they don't know the reason. When contacted, Minister of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment P Geetha Jeevan told TNIE that she would look into the matter.

## Father, son murdered man in Coimbatore to avenge daughter's suicide

**COIMBATORE:** Two months after a woman killed herself over a failed relationship, her father, along with his son, stabbed the 27-year-old suspected lover of his daughter to death in broad daylight in Coimbatore on Monday to avenge her. The victim, Tamilselvan, son of Mahalingam of Pandalur in the Nilgiris district, was working as a driver at a private hospital at Thudiyalur in Coimbatore city for the past two years. His mother resides in her hometown of Ayyan Kollakondan village near Rajapalayam in Virudhunagar district. According to police, Tamilselvan was in a relationship with Anandhi (25), daughter of Malaikani (45), who belongs to his mother's village, for three years. Tamilselvan was also allegedly involved with another woman from Udumalaipettai in Tiruppur district due to which he deliberately put off marrying Anandhi, the police said. Distressed by



Tamilselvan's reluctance to marry her, Anandhi allegedly died by suicide two months ago. Blaming Tamilselvan for the death of Anandhi, her father Malaikani and her brother Rajaram (25) decided to avenge her. They travelled from Rajapalayam to Coimbatore on a two-wheeler on Sunday. **Cops recover murder weapon from the spot**

On Monday morning, they located Tamilselvan near the hospital where he worked, lured him to a deserted spot, and confronted him. A heated argument ensued, and the father and son allegedly attacked Tamilselvan with a knife, slit his throat and stabbed him in chest and stomach. Tamilselvan collapsed at the spot and the attackers fled the scene on their two-wheeler. Passersby, who found Tamilselvan lying in a pool of blood, alerted the hospital. Medical professionals rushed to the spot but declared him dead. Thudiyalur police secured the crime scene, and sent Tamilselvan's body to Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH) for autopsy. The police also recovered the knife used in the murder. After actively searching for Malaikani and Rajaram, the Tiruppur police caught them and handed them over to the Thudiyalur police. The Thudiyalur police have arrested them for murder and further investigation is on.

## 1.3 lakh children malnourished in Karnataka, over 11,000 classified as severely acute

**BENGALURU:** Over 1.3 lakh children aged below five in Karnataka are malnourished. Of them, 11,674 have been classified as 'severely acute malnourished' (SAM), according to data from the Department of Women and Child Development. This issue is compounded by a Rs 300-crore cut in the 2024 budget for the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, which supports nutrition initiatives. Currently, over 32.91 lakh children aged below five are associated with 65,911 anganwadi centres in Karnataka. The World Health Organisation (WHO) explains SAM as a condition where a child has an extremely low weight compared to their height.



fight illnesses. Experts point out that the number of malnourished children - primarily from poor and marginalised communities - has increased. They stress the need for the government to use anganwadi centres to combat malnutrition. While these centres play a crucial role in building a stronger India by supporting children's physical and academic development, most of them are in poor condition.

Experts highlight that numerous small and cramped centres lack essential facilities such as safe drinking water, proper washing areas, electricity, and basic hygiene practices. The department

recently improved the Anganwadi meal menu by adding nutritious items such as millet laddus and khichdi to promote better health among children. However, anganwadi workers say that many children refuse to eat them, as they do not find the food appealing.

According to Jayanthi N, an Anganwadi worker, in districts such as Yadgir and Kalaburagi, many infants do not receive any complimentary food along with breast milk until they are almost two years old. Parents need to play an active role in caring for their infants. While children may eat together with others in anganwadi centres, it is equally important for parents to ensure that they are fed properly at home. Speaking to TNIE, Nagasimha G Rao, director, Child Rights Trust, emphasised the importance of regular check-ups, the child's diet, and even the mother's diet during pregnancy to effectively tackle malnutrition. The government should consider district-specific menus for anganwadi centres. "In some parts of the state, rice is a staple food, while in others, people rely more on millet or ragi," he said.

## Kochi Infopark's growth trajectory goes up, up and away

**KOCHI:** It's been 20 years since the establishment of Infopark. In the two decades, the IT park in Kochi has grown steadily, from 100 acres with four companies in 2004 to 323 acres housing over 582 companies and 70,000 professionals within its 9.2 million sq ft built-up area by 2024. Infopark's growth gains significance when compared to Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram, which had a running start of 10 years. The IT park in the state capital, which started from two companies, 155 employees and a built-up space of 1.07 lakh sq ft in 1994, has, as of 2024, 768.63 acres with a built-up space of 12.72 million sq ft hosting 490 companies and over 75,000 employees. With the addition of another 300 acres in phase 3, Infopark is expected to see an upward growth trajectory. It all started in 2004, when the state government transferred 100 acres belonging to KINFRA at Kakkannad in Kochi to Infopark Kerala for setting up an IT Park. Infopark started operations by renovating the Standard Design Factory (SDF) Building that existed on the land transferred by KINFRA. Susanth Kurunthil, the CEO of Infopark, told TNIE, "The IT park is on the path of a transition from a real-estate player

to an ecosystem enabler. As Infopark turned 20 this year, we adopted a new logo and fresh tagline to emphasise the transition we are going through."

Susanth credited the skilled talent pool in Kerala, and Kochi being a Tier II city, for the park's growth. "More IT giants like NOV, Strada, HCL Tech, IBM and Baker Tilly-Pierian expanded their operations by setting up new offices on Infopark's Kochi campus recently. The IT product companies show immense enthusiasm to operate from Infopark, which is a good sign. Of course, we are working towards bringing more IT/ITES companies to set up space in Kochi, Cherthala and Thrissur," he said. As for infrastructure development plans, Susanth said, "Construction of premium flexi-workspaces are on at Kochi Metro's Ernakulam South station complex. At the centre of a multi-modal transport hub, this upcoming facility aims to accommodate gig workers, women professionals, and employees of MNCs working from homes in Kerala." Furthermore, UST has laid the foundation stone for its upcoming campus in Infopark. It is expected to be finished in



2027. Another development is the widening of the road to Infopark Kochi Phase 2. Besides its Phase 1 and 2 campuses in suburban Kakkannad, Infopark has satellite centres at Koratty in Thrissur and at Cherthala in Alappuzha. Infopark Cherthala, situated in Pallippuram, was established in 2011, and lies a few km from NH 66; part of the IT corridor. It has one SEZ building (Chaitanya). There are 22 companies and over 250 employees on the satellite campus, which offers both plug-and-play and bare-shell office spaces. Infopark Thrissur situated in Koratty was established in 2009 near NH 544. It consists of nine villas (non-SEZ buildings) and one IT complex (an SEZ building named 'Indeevaram'). There are

55 companies and over 2,900 employees. The campus offers both plug-and-play and bare-shell office spaces too.

### THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published  
Owned by Simmi Babbar

N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar  
Delhi-110009

Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing  
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City  
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)

Corporate Office:  
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,  
Press Area, ITO, New Delhi

Editor-in-Chief  
Gurcharan Singh Babbar

Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517  
Website : www.thesikhetimes.in

Email : sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

### Legal Advisors:

Advocate Mohd. Sajid  
Advocate Dr. A.P. Singh  
Advocate Manish Sharma  
Advocate Pooja Bhaskar Sharma



News box

3 of Pardi gang arrested

Noida: Three men, allegedly part of the Pardi gang, were arrested on Monday. The suspects had been on the run since 2019 and two of them carried bounties of Rs 25,000 each, police said...

Nip in air: 15 shelter homes set up in city, bonfires soon

Noida: With the onset of winter, the district administration has set up 15 shelter homes to provide relief for the poor and homeless in Noida, Greater Noida, and Dadri. A total of 81 designated bonfire spots have also been arranged...



various community centres in sectors 135, 21A, and 12-22. Additional shelters are in Bilaspur, Dankaur, Jewar, and two in Greater Noida at Delta 2 and P13. DM Manish Verma, during a recent meeting, directed officials to ensure proper arrangements...

Smog on the prowl: Speed limits to be reduced on Noida & Yamuna e-ways

Noida: Barely 24 hours after two road crashes left one dead and 15 others injured, some of them grievously, traffic cops have cautioned motorists to drive carefully on the highways and said they will soon reduce the official speed limits of vehicles plying on the Noida and Yamuna expressways...



100 kmph and heavy vehicles at 60 kmph on the Noida expressway and 100 kmph and 80 kmph, respectively, on Yamuna Expressway. Over the last week, visibility across NCR has plummeted to 500-800 metres. On Sunday morning, the 75-year-old daughter of Jagadguru Shri Kripalu Maharaj — died and seven others, including two of her sisters, were injured when a truck crashed into their Toyota Camry and Innova Hycross on the Yamuna Expressway...

Haryana farm fires 40% less than last yr, sharp drop in Punjab too

Gurgaon: As crop stubble burning season nears an end, satellite data shows that at 1,315, Haryana has recorded a substantial decrease in farm fires in the Sept 15 to Nov 25 period this year than in the same period in the last four years. Data compiled by Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI) shows the number of recorded farm fires was 2,278 in 2023, 2,581 in 2022, 6,829 in 2021 and 4,036 in 2020, the last two being pandemic years...



management. It also appointed 10,000 nodal officers and set up dedicated teams to check stubble burning. Govt data suggests much of the straw left behind after paddy harvests was utilised or sold. This year, we started providing machinery to farmers in August. We also prepared a staggered harvesting schedule for paddy. Gram panchayats that achieved zero-burning targets will be awarded Rs 1 lakh or Rs 50,000...

and industries would hardly come to buy stubble. This year, it was smoother," said Rajvinder Singh, a farmer in Kurukshetra. At 201, Jind reported the highest number of farm fires this season, followed by Kaithal (194), Sirsa (147), Kurukshetra (131), Fatehabad (129), Karnal (95), Ambala (91), Sonapat (65), Faridabad (47), Hisar (43), Palwal (38), Panipat (38), Yamunanagar (38), Rohtak (21), Panchkula (19), Jhajjar (11) and Bhiwani (7)...

Woman kills creditor over Rs 10L debt, 3 held

Gurgaon: A woman and two associates were arrested last week for allegedly killing a 52-year-old man and attempting to stage his death as a suicide over an unpaid debt of Rs 10 lakh. Police said Rajendra left his home in Shikohpur village of the city to visit his paying guest facility in Sector 1 of Manesar on Nov 22...

"committee work." "Committee work" is a traditional rotating savings and credit system still used in parts of the country. But Sushma, police said, used the amount for personal expenses. Unable to pay this debt back, Sushma enlisted her business associate Anil (42) and Seema (48) and the three hatched a plan to kill Rajendra. Sushma allegedly promised Seema Rs 50,000 for helping her. Anil provided transportation for Sushma's shuttering business. Sushma asked Rajendra to meet Seema, who — she claimed — would return his money...

said. "Rajendra fell unconscious after drinking the tea, and Sushma strangled him to death with a dupatta," said an officer. Sushma then took Anil's help and parked Rajendra's car on the service lane of the highway. They took Rajendra's body in Anil's car and drove till Rewari, where they dumped it near the Rewari-Narnaul highway. Police arrested Sushma from Manesar and Anil from Charkhi Dadri on Nov 24. Seema was arrested from Dundaheera in the city. Cops seized Anil's car and found Rajendra's hair, gold chain and other documents in it. ACP (crime) Varun Dahiya said the suspects attempted to mislead police by abandoning Rajendra's...

Gzb lawyers call off strike, may resume if judge not removed

Ghaziabad: Nearly a month after going on an "indefinite protest" against the Oct 29 lathicharge by police on a group of colleagues, who had interrupted proceedings in the courtroom of the district and sessions judge, Ghaziabad lawyers called off their strike on Monday. Ghaziabad Bar Association president Deepak Sharma said they will return to work from Tuesday but continue to boycott the court of the district judge. "A delegation of the Allahabad HC Bar Association had met chief justice of Allahabad HC on Nov 22. The chief justice assured us that our grievances will be addressed. So, for three weeks and Tuesday," he said. Law to be removed, act...

Multiple columns of legal notices including Name Change, Date of Birth Change, and Public Notice sections with various details and contact information.

INDIAN RAILWAYS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAILWAY BOARD) No.2024/RS(E)/TM/2 New Delhi, Dated 20.11.2024 Sub: E-open Global Tender No: 2024-TM-2 closing on 21.02.2025 for Design, Manufacture, Supply, Testing & Commissioning of 41 nos. of 'Ballast Regulating Machine (BRM)' along with Training of Indian Railway personnel and 3 years post warranty AMC.



## NEWS BOX

## Hong Kong's top court rules in favor of equal inheritance and housing benefits for same-sex couples

**HONG KONG.** Hong Kong's top court on Tuesday upheld earlier rulings that favored subsidized housing benefits and equal inheritance rights for same-sex married couples, in a landmark victory for the city's LGBTQ+ community. The Court of Final Appeal's dismissal of the government's appeals ended some yearslong legal battles over the differential treatment facing same-sex couples married overseas under Hong Kong's Housing Authority policies and two inheritance laws.

The unanimous decisions are expected to have a far-reaching impact on the lives of same-sex couples, who have traditionally had fewer rights compared to their heterosexual counterparts in the global financial hub. Chief Justice Andrew Cheung said in his judgement that exclusionary housing policies were argued to be beneficial to opposite-sex married couples because they increase the supply of subsidized housing for them and thereby support the institution of traditional families. But Cheung said authorities failed to provide evidence showing the potential impact on opposite-sex couples if those policies were relaxed. "The challenged policies cannot be justified," he wrote. On the inheritance laws, judges Roberto Ribeiro and Joseph Fok ruled that the disputed provisions are "discriminatory and unconstitutional" in their written judgement. Hong Kong does not recognize same-sex marriage, prompting some couples to marry elsewhere. Currently, the city only recognizes same-sex marriage for certain purposes such as taxation, civil service benefits and dependent visas. Many of the government's concessions were won through legal challenges, and the city has seen a growing social acceptance toward same-sex marriage. In September 2023, the top court ruled that the government should provide a framework for recognizing same-sex partnerships. This ruling, along with other successful legal challenges brought by members of the LGBTQ+ community, made Hong Kong the only place in China to grant such recognition for same-sex couples.

## White Florida woman sentenced to 25 years in prison for shooting Black neighbour in lengthy dispute

**World.** A white Florida woman who fatally shot a Black neighbour through her front door during an ongoing dispute over the neighbour's boisterous children was sentenced Monday to 25 years in prison for her manslaughter conviction. Susan Lorincz, 60, was convicted in August of killing Ajike "A.J." Owens, 35, by firing a single shot from her .380-caliber handgun in June 2023. She had faced a maximum of 30 years behind bars. Circuit Judge Robert Hodges opted for a slightly lesser term amid evidence that Lorincz had been abused as a child and had mental health problems. "The shooting was completely unnecessary in this case," Hodges said during an afternoon hearing. "The shooting, I find, was based more in anger than in fear."

The shooting was the culmination of a long-running argument between the two neighbors over Owens' children playing in a grassy area near both of their houses in Ocala, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Orlando. Prosecutors said Owens had come to Lorincz's home after her children complained that she had thrown roller skates and an umbrella at them, which Lorincz denied. Trial testimony showed Owens, a mother of four young children, was pounding on Lorincz's door and yelling, leading Lorincz to claim self-defense in shooting her neighbor. Lorincz told detectives in a videotaped interview that she feared for her life. She also said she had been harassed for most of the three years she had lived in the neighborhood. Jurors who heard the trial evidence did not agree that the shooting was in self-defense.

## Japanese Bank Employees Vow In Blood Against Embezzlement

**World.** A bank in Japan has implemented an extraordinary policy where employees have signed a pledge in blood, promising to take their lives if found guilty of embezzling funds. A viral post compared the Shikoku Bank's rigorous stance against financial misconduct with the comparatively lenient consequences often observed in other countries. The pledge, deeply influenced by Japan's feudal samurai code, demands a guilty employee return the stolen funds and perform seppuku — a traditional form of ritual suicide.

Outlined on Shikoku Bank's official website in Japanese, the pledge reads, "Anyone employed by this bank who has stolen money or caused others to steal from the bank will pay for it with his or her property and then commit suicide." This pledge dates back to the Thirty-seventh National Bank, which preceded Shikoku Bank.

It adds, "This pledge is part of a document signed and stamped in blood by all 23 employees, including President Miura, of the Thirty-seventh National Bank, the predecessor of Shikoku Bank, to ensure strict handling of banknotes." The bank's website describes the oath as a symbol of ethical conduct and social responsibility, not just as an employee but as a member of society, preserving it as a cherished legacy of Shikoku Bank. On social media platform X, the policy sparked wide-ranging reactions. Now it's clear why they all have so much cash on their balance sheets," a user wrote. Another said that "the pact is some WW2 vibes."

According to History.com, 'seppuku' — commonly known as 'hara-kiri' in the West — is a traditional form of ritual suicide that dates back to Japan's samurai warrior class. The act involved using a short sword to stab and cut open the abdomen, followed by an upward motion to ensure a fatal wound.

# Israelis skipping army duty as fatigue of never-ending war deepens

**World.** A soldier by day, a father by night, Ari Krauss, a reservist in the Israeli military's elite Golan Brigade, would explode underground tunnels in broad daylight. After the sun set, Ari would try to find the network to FaceTime his infant daughter. Ari and other reservists enlisted in the war would turn to the hill in search for a stable network each night. The dual lives of Israeli reservists and their combat fatigue has been documented by The Washington Post. But their lives had looked drastically different just a year ago. The memory looks distant now. Ari used to work for a company, and it was before the October 7 war between Israel and the Palestinian terror group, Hamas started, reported The Washington Post.

When Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, around 1,200 Israelis were killed. The war has lasted for more than a year now. After incessant rocket attacks from Hezbollah, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) conducted



a massive offensive in Lebanon in mid-September. This added another chapter to the Israel-Hamas war. Amid this came two drone and missile attacks from Iran. There could be some relief on the Lebanese front as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has approved "in principle" a ceasefire deal with Hezbollah, a source told CNN. During the war, Ari's brigade wrote to his boss that he would be serving in the army.

**'DISAPPEARING FOR WEEKS OR MONTHS, NO END'**

"Once upon a time, I had my high-tech career and my family life, and I had to strike the balance," said Ari, who spent four months battling with Hamas terrorists. "Now I have to enter into that equation the fact that I am disappearing for weeks, or months, no end." This act of disappearing is not just the story of Ari Krauss but also of the 80,000 Israeli reservists who had to leave their jobs and loved ones to fight for Israel in Gaza and Lebanon. This is because there is more need for soldiers to continue the war but many who have been conscripted are not showing up.

**350,000 ENLISTED OUT OF 10 MILLION ISRAELI POPULATION**

Several people do not show up to fight as they have been traumatised by the war. They are seeking individual and group therapy, reported Le Monde. Even horses are employed for therapeutic healing. They fear for their lives and are traumatised after several months of fighting. The army's

enlistment numbers have decreased by 15% since the war began when different sections had opted to fight for their nation. When a war is not ongoing, Israel retains a small army. It enlists reservists for a war-like situation which is mostly short-lived. In the first few months of the war, over 350,000 Israelis were asked to serve in the country with a population of less than 10 million. Now, more than a year later, reservists prepare videos where they say goodbye to their children and leave bank passbooks for their spouses. This happened to Chava Landau Zenilman, whose husband died fighting the Hamas terrorists, recalled the fear after the attacks.

"We were imagining the terrorists coming into their house, to kill the kids in their beds," she said. Her husband had served before too. This time he had to serve. "These dilemmas are our reality from before, but this war is extreme," she said. She barely ate or slept when he was in Gaza, she said, and tried to keep herself from imagining "the knock on the door".

## 31 Killed In 1 Day After Israeli Strikes, Says Lebanon

**Beirut.** Israeli strikes pummelled south Beirut on Monday, Lebanese official media said, and health authorities reported 31 people killed across the war-hit country, most of them in the south.

Israel's military said in a statement Monday afternoon it had hit "approximately 25 terror targets" belonging to Hezbollah across Lebanon, including in Nabatiyeh, Baalbek, the Bekaa Valley and southern Beirut and the city's outskirts. AFP TV images showed palls of smoke over the capital's southern suburbs after strikes that began in the morning after successive Israeli military warnings to evacuate.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported a fourth wave of Israeli raids in south Beirut on Monday evening, saying "enemy warplanes launched strikes on (the



Haret Hreik and Shiyah" districts. The attacks came after a weekend of heavy raids in the area, despite ongoing international ceasefire efforts. Early Saturday, a deadly strike on central Beirut's densely populated Basta neighbourhood killed at least 29 people, the health ministry said. Israel's army said Monday it had struck a Hezbollah command centre there, though an official with the Iran-backed group denied reports that a senior

member had been targeted. The NNA reported Israeli strikes on Tyre and Nabatiyeh after Israel issued evacuation warnings for parts of the main southern cities. Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli strikes killed at least 31 people on Monday. A statement listed "the casualty toll of Israeli enemy strikes on a number of Lebanese cities and towns" in the east, south and near Beirut, with most people killed in the south and four killed in the east.

**'Dangerous conditions'**

The NNA also reported "a drone strike that targeted a residential complex" in a Druze-majority town on the outskirts of Beirut, without prior evacuation calls. Lebanon's Druze community follows an offshoot of Shiite Islam, and its heartland around Mount Lebanon has largely been spared in the current hostilities.

## Passengers Duct-Tape Unruly Man Who Tried To Open Door Mid-Flight, Attacked Cabin Crew

**World.** Passengers aboard an American Airlines plane to Texas were forced to take matters into their own hands and duct-tape a man who posed a physical threat to flight attendants and attempted to open one of the doors mid-flight. The incident transpired last week when flight 1915 took off from Milwaukee as the unruly man approached the cabin crew and asked to open the aircraft door. After receiving a prompt rejection, the man started growing agitated, according to a reporter issued by the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Department of Public Safety. He then rushed towards the door, hitting the attendant as she attempted to block him. A passenger named Dough McCright, who saw the events unfolding in front of him, quickly assessed the situation and started planning his next move. "I could tell that the conversation was not going very well," Mr McCright told Fox4, adding that the man ignored the flight attendant despite her repeated attempts to reason and talk sense. After the attendant signalled for help, Mr McCright jumped in and addressed the man. "I said, 'Sir, she wants you to go back to your seat. You need to go back to your seat'. He turns and he says, 'I'm getting off this flight! I want off this flight!'"



**Investigation underway**

As the situation escalated, Mr McCright grabbed the heckler from behind and held him back. Several other passengers, including one Charlie Boris, came to aid Mr McCright in pinning the man. The two men, alongside another passenger, dropped the heckler to the ground and taped his hands and feet while holding him for the last half an hour of the flight. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have started their probe into the incident. The accused has not been charged with a crime but was taken to a hospital for mental health evaluation. He has not been named by the authorities so far. The safety and security of our customers and team members is our top priority and we thank our team members and customers for managing a difficult situation," read a statement by American Airlines.

# Kash Patel top choice to be Trump's FBI or Justice Department pick: Report

**The interest in Patel, following the selection of John Ratcliffe as CIA director and Tulsi Gabbard as director of national intelligence, reflects the US President-elect's urge to appoint allies to key law enforcement and intelligence roles.**

**WORLD.** Donald Trump is weighing to push for his controversial adviser Kash Patel, an Indian-origin former Republican House staffer, to head the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as a clear indication of his vow to fire the incumbent Director Christopher Wray before his 10-year term with the agency completes and replace him with one of his MAGA (Make America Great Again) campaign loyalists. The

Guardian reported, while citing two sources familiar with the matter, Trump's transition team is conducting interviews for the role on Monday night at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida. This came after US Vice President-elect JD Vance, in a now-deleted social media post, revealed that he and the President-elect had been interviewing candidates for the role of FBI Director. Simultaneously, Patel's name is also under consideration for a high-profile position at the US Justice Department, top transition sources told Axios.

The interest in Patel, following the selection of John Ratcliffe as CIA director and Tulsi Gabbard as director of national intelligence, reflects the US President-elect's urge to appoint allies to key roles in law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Trump's interest in the FBI has long been evident. In 2017, he fired James Comey as director, citing Comey's refusal to shut



down an investigation into possible ties between Trump's campaign and Russia. Since then, Trump has frequently expressed frustration over what he sees as disloyalty within the bureau, including from its current director, Christopher Wray. Patel, a former aide to Representative Devin Nunes and a key figure in Trump's circle, has gained significant support among Trump's

allies, strengthening his prospects for key roles. Known for his aggressive self-promotion and outspoken criticism of the so-called deep state, Patel has become a prominent candidate for high-ranking roles in law enforcement and national security.

While his name is being considered to lead the FBI, speculations were running high that Patel may get the role of CIA director in the past. However, the position went to John Ratcliffe, another Trump loyalist. Patel's loyalty was on display during the criminal investigation into Trump's handling of classified documents. Initially, he refused to testify before a federal grand jury in Washington, invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. He eventually testified only after then-Chief US District Judge Beryl Howell granted him limited immunity at the Justice Department's request.

## 5 killed in Pak as Imran Khan's supporters march to Islamabad, clash with police

**World.** Five security personnel were killed, and dozens, including police officers, were injured in Pakistan as supporters of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan marched toward the capital on Monday and continued their protest on Tuesday. As the protesters vowed to push further, the government deployed the army in Islamabad. The protest march spearheaded by Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, which began on Sunday and reached Islamabad by Monday evening, witnessed clashes with police and security forces. On Tuesday, the protesters resumed their march to the D-Chowk, close to several strategic buildings in the capital, where they plan to gather. According to local media reports, one police officer was fatally shot, and four paratroopers were run over by protesters. Dozens were injured as the city witnessed heightened tensions, a series of violence, attacks on police and torching of vehicles as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers advanced towards the capital.

Imran Khan, the PTI chief, had issued a "final call" for nationwide protests starting Sunday, rejecting what he described as a "stolen mandate". The party urged the public to join the demonstrations to "break the shackles of slavery". Protesters, led by Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Bushra Bibi, began their march toward Islamabad on Sunday. The government blocked highways using shipping containers, concrete barriers, and barricades. However, protesters used lifting equipment and heavy machinery to remove the obstacles, pressing forward toward the national capital, leading to violent clashes.

Provincial police chief Usman Anwar confirmed that one police officer was shot dead, at least 119 others were injured, and 22 police vehicles were set on fire in clashes near Islamabad and across Punjab province. Two officers remain in critical condition. Imran Khan's also claimed injuries among its supporters. Some miscreants drove their vehicle over rangers on Srinagar Highway, killing four of them and injuring another five, security forces told Pak broadcaster Geo TV. According to reports, the government tried to convince the PTI to end its protest or agree on a venue away from the city to stage a protest. However, Bushra Bibi rejected the proposal and insisted on progressing to D-Chowk.

The government is planning stringent actions, with Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi warning the former ruling party of serious "consequences" if they enter the high-security zone.

Imran Khan has been implicated in numerous cases since his government was removed through a no-confidence motion in 2022. He has been in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since last year, facing, according to his party, more than 200 cases. He has been granted bail in some, convicted in others, and hearings are ongoing for additional cases. Khan's party secured the most seats in the February general elections, despite running as independents after being denied an election symbol. The PTI leader has claimed that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its coalition partners, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), "stole the mandate" to seize power at the federal level.



## News box

## No money for bond, Koppal villagers still in jail

**KOPPAL:** Marakumbi's 98 villagers have got bail in Dalit atrocity case but most of them are still in jail. Reason: Many families are struggling to arrange Rs 50,000 for a bond that should be submitted to Dharwad High Court to get bail. In some families, 2-3 members are in jail. There is tension in the village which is wearing a deserted look. Many families in Marakumbi are working as daily wagers and they cannot forgo even a day's salary as they are all dependent on daily wages. Now, they have to arrange Rs 50,000 for bond. Some people are selling their gold ornaments while some are planning to raise hand loans. Nagamma (name changed), an elderly woman and a resident of Marakumbi village, is now sitting at home with no option. His only son, who was also a daily wager, is in jail now. She asked many people for money. Many elderly people in Marakumbi village are striving hard to bring out their family members from the jail. As of Monday, some family members have arranged money and have also met lawyers but still many families are trying to arrange money. Marakumbi villagers were arrested on October 23 and were sentenced to life imprisonment in a Dalit atrocity case. Later, on November 13, all 98, except accused 1.

## First container hospital inaugurated in Parvathipuram-Manyam district

**PARVATHIPURAM MANYAM:** In a major step towards improving healthcare in tribal areas, the Parvathipuram-Manyam district administration launched its first prefabricated health sub-centre, 'Giri Arogya Kendra,' in Salur mandal on Monday. Tribal Welfare Minister Gummadi Sandhya Rani inaugurated the centre at Karadavalasa village under the Tonam primary Health Centre (PHC). Designed to make healthcare accessible in remote hilly regions, the initiative aims to end the reliance on makeshift stretchers, known as 'doli,' for transporting patients during emergencies. The Giri Arogya Kendra will serve over 2,000 residents across Karadavalasa and 10 neighbouring villages in Salur and Pachipenta mandals. The initiative addresses the chronic lack of healthcare access in a district marked by poverty and poor road connectivity. Despite 75 years of independence, many tribal villages in Salur, Pachipenta, Kurupam, Jiyammavalasa, Gummalaxmipuram, Seethampeta, and Makkuvu mandals remain without proper roads, often leading to fatal delays in emergencies.

District Collector A Shyam Prasad explained that these health centres are equipped with four beds, medical testing facilities for 14 conditions, including malaria, dengue, HIV, and tuberculosis, and 105 varieties of essential medicines. Additionally, medical officers from PHCs will conduct weekly outpatient visits, while 104 mobile medical units will operate twice a month. The Collector emphasised the initiative's transformative potential, stating, "The centre will replace the need for doli journeys by bringing healthcare closer to tribal communities. The facility is equipped to manage conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and anaemia, offering medicines, iron injections, and routine immunisation."

## Andhra Pradesh police launch manhunt to trace film director Ram Gopal Varma

**VIJAYAWADA:** Prakasam district police launched a manhunt to trace film director Ram Gopal Varma (RGV) after he failed to appear before the police for questioning in connection with a case pertaining to social media abuse. Searches were conducted at RGV's office and residences in Hyderabad on Monday. A team of Maddipadu police visited RGV's office in Navanirman colony, Jubilee Hills. Cops also carried out searches at his Shamshabad and Shadnagar farmhouses. Based on his tweet, a team was also sent to Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

"Since he failed to appear before the investigation officers twice, Prakasam SP instructed Maddipadu police to arrest him following due procedures," said a senior police official on the condition of anonymity. In a complaint, TDP mandal secretary Muthanapalli Ramalingaiah accused the film director of allegedly posting photographs of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and their family members in an "indecent" manner on social media. Subsequently, Maddipadu police booked a case against RGV and served notices on him to appear for investigation on November 19.

## RGV ready to appear for questioning virtually

On the request of the film director, police gave him more time and instructed him to appear for questioning on November 25. With the director reportedly going off the radar from Saturday, police launched a manhunt to trace him. Speaking to mediapersons in Hyderabad, RGV's legal counsel Bala said the film director was willing to appear for questioning in virtual mode. Maintaining that there was no requirement for physical appearance for questioning in connection with cases filed under the Information Technology Act, Ram Gopal Varma's advocate pointed out that provisions under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) allows probe in hybrid mode for "small cases" such as the one in which the director has been booked.

## Police disrupted Thrissur Pooram, Thiruvambady Devaswom tells Kerala HC

**KOCHI:** The Thiruvambady Devaswom has informed the Kerala High Court that the devotees who came to participate, witness, and celebrate Thrissur Pooram were prevented, and the festival abruptly brought to a grinding halt by the police personnel deployed at the venue. Last week, the Cochin Devaswom Board had told the HC that certain actions of the Thiruvambady Devaswom during the pooram had given rise to suspicion that those were aimed at aiding certain political parties in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections. Girish Kumar, secretary of the Thiruvambady Devaswom, stated in the affidavit that the 'ezhunnellippu' procession was disrupted by the police. "The public and devotees who had come to participate in the festival were prevented from doing so, and the festival was abruptly brought to a halt. Roads leading to the Swaraj Round were blocked, denying people the opportunity to view or participate in the 'ezhunnellippu'. Additionally, the 'Madathil Varavu' procession was reduced to a simple ritual due to unnecessary police intervention," he said.

The affidavit further alleged that the police used physical force against members of the public and pooram



enthusiasts, leading to widespread discontent. The situation escalated to the verge of mob-like unrest, which was averted only by the timely intervention of Thiruvambady Devaswom authorities.

The affidavit also claimed that the police did not permit authorised personnel and workers of the devaswom, including licensed fireworks handlers, to access the 'magazine' for arranging fireworks. "No untoward incidents or crimes occurred during the pooram that necessitated such police action. The actions of the police were unnecessary, baseless, and without valid reasons," stated the affidavit. It added that the mahouts and their

helpers were physically prevented from taking palm leaves to feed the elephants. This incident, the affidavit noted, was widely circulated on social media.

Though the HC had banned wearing footwear inside the temple, policemen were seen doing it. The devaswom was not aware of whether any duty briefing was conducted on the previous day by the police chief.

"But the action of the police, which was unnecessary and without any valid reasons, reveals that the policemen acted arbitrarily and in an immature manner which could be due to their inexperience and lack of knowledge about pooram and its rituals," it stated.

## KSPCB to extend BRSR guidelines for companies

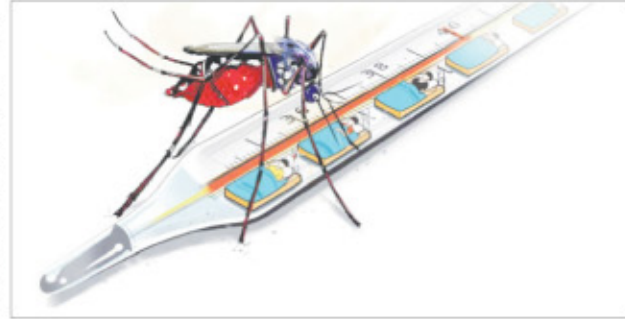
**BENGALURU:** The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) is set to extend the guidelines of Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) to all companies, irrespective of their turnover. A senior KSPCB official told, "We are taking a policy decision to broaden the implementation of BRSR report guidelines. The Central government has outlined a climate action plan, requiring each government department to address climate change locally. Karnataka, including Bengaluru, has been experiencing worrisome weather conditions- prolonged spells of drought, short intensive rain spells, urban flooding and water crises. To address these challenges, KSPCB has initiated groundwork to develop tools and mechanisms for all companies, industries, apartments and commercial complexes to implement BRSR guidelines, irrespective of their turnover."

The official also noted that discussions with the environment department and state government are also being held. The initiative aligns with recommendations made by the Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI) during the recent interaction of KSPCB and EMPRI with stakeholders at the 'Sub-National Climate Action and Monitoring- Developing Policy Insights for Karnataka State Action Plan on Climate Change' (KSAPCC) that was held in the city.

A senior researcher from EMPRI explained that the BRSR report currently applies to companies with a turnover of Rs 150 crore or more. These companies are required to establish baselines for effective measures to be taken to mitigate climate change including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, afforestation, use and reuse of water, waste management and so on. Presently, the top 100 companies listed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) are mandated to adopt these environmental measures and disclose their efforts publicly. Further, the KSPCB official said customised tool kits are necessary, along with a committee or an institution to monitor, and develop protocols and will have to work on the SEBI guidelines.

## Tamil Nadu: Covid antibodies may neutralise dengue virus

**CHENNAI:** A seroprevalence study conducted by the State Public Health Laboratory, Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine during Covid-19 in December 2021 has shown that the dengue disease burden was low during that period, possibly due to the IgG antibodies for Covid-19 that causes SARS CoV-2 virus having a neutralising effect against the dengue-causing virus. The officials said further study is needed to prove the possible viral interference between SARSCoV-2 and dengue virus. The authors said the 2021 study will be helpful for the public health



officials to focus on one particular infectious disease during an outbreak, rather than focussing on less important ones. The state-wide cluster-randomised community-based study conducted by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, led by Dr T

S Selvavinayagam, who is also the chief author, was published this month in PLOS Global Public Health, a journal for public health research. In the study, the dengue burden in the community was found out by the seroprevalence. The study also found out the percentage of people in the population who have anti dengue antibodies, Dengue IgM which shows an ongoing infection at the time of study, and Dengue IgG antibodies, which shows past infection.

The study found that the seroprevalence of dengue was very low in the community with 4.12% for Dengue IgM and 6.4% for Dengue IgG. Similarly only 3.76% of the female Aedes mosquito pools were positive

for dengue virus. In comparison, a similar study conducted by ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai in 2017, showed Dengue IgG to be very high at 77%.

The anti-SARS-CoV-2 IgG antibody level meanwhile remained high (87.3%) during the 2021 study. The researchers said during Covid-19 when they saw low dengue cases, they thought it could be due to under-reporting of cases. While there were a few studies earlier that said dengue cases were low during Covid-19, DPH officials said this is the first study to prove dengue cases were low in both humans and mosquitoes.

The researchers said this could be because of Covid-19 antibodies blocking the entry of dengue virus. Further, studies needed to prove this hypothesis, they added.

## TN plans to study substance abuse among youth soon

**CHENNAI:** The Department of Children Welfare and Special Services will soon carry out a study to assess the prevalence and extent of substance and alcohol use among adults aged between 18 and 25 in the state. The study, funded by the central government under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), is carried out to help the department with policy making and start de-addiction programmes. The study will focus on identifying the types of substances consumed, as well as the socio-economic and demographic profiles of users. It will also map hotspots where substance and alcohol use is prevalent and formulate evidence-based prevention policies and programmes. According to officials from the department, the findings will serve as a baseline for establishing de-addiction centres in identified hotspots. "The health department is conducting similar large-



scale surveys in the state, which are yet to be completed. Based on recommendations from the Government of India and consultations with various stakeholders, we found the 18-25 age group to be most vulnerable to substance and alcohol use. However, we will also take the findings of the health department surveys on the subject," said an official from the

department. The department plans to hire an external agency to carry out the study. "Once an agency is selected, we will explore the possibility of expanding the study to include those aged 10 to 18, subject to fund availability. This is also crucial as many juvenile delinquents are reported to frequently use drugs or alcohol," the official added. According to a national level survey carried out by the central government in 2018 under NAPDDR, 14.2% drink alcohol in Tamil Nadu of which 4% are dependent. Among men aged 10-75, 28.5% drink alcohol.

The national average of these numbers are 14.5% and 27.3% respectively. About 37 lakh people in the state need help for alcohol problems, the study had said. While the 2018 study can be used for broader details, we are doing demographic-specific studies to create an action plan to battle drug usage among children and young adults, added officials.

## LDF suffered significant vote loss in Wayanad, trailed NDA in 171 booths

**KOZHIKODE:** The LDF suffered a significant vote loss in the Wayanad Lok Sabha by-elections, marking a major setback to the ruling government. For the first time, the LDF trailed the NDA in 171 booths across all three assembly constituencies - Mananthavady, Kalpetta, and Sultan Bathery. Adding to the embarrassment, the LDF failed to secure a lead in Thirunelli, the home panchayat of its own minister, O R Kelu, where Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi maintained a lead of 241 votes. The LDF's defeat was comprehensive, as it failed to register a majority in even a single municipality or the 23 panchayats in the district. In Sultan Bathery municipality, UDF candidate Priyanka Gandhi secured a decisive victory with 14,315 votes, while NDA's Navya Haridas claimed second position with 4,217 votes, narrowly surpassing LDF's Sathyam Mokeri, who garnered 4,136 votes. The NDA outperformed the LDF by 81 votes and secured a lead of 135 votes in the 104th booth, despite trailing in 17 other booths. The LDF faced a significant setback here, with about 10,000 votes remaining unpolled. In Poothadi, the UDF maintained its



dominance with 10,116 votes, but the NDA demonstrated a strong presence by securing 4,106 votes, leading the LDF by 296 votes, which managed only 3,810. A similar pattern was observed in Pulpally, where UDF led with 9,542 votes, followed by the NDA with 3,118 votes and the LDF trailing by 2,921 votes. The trend continued in Mananthavady, the constituency of Minister O R Kelu, where the LDF fell to third place in 39 booths. Similarly, in Kalpetta, the LDF was relegated to third place in 35 booths, marking one of their worst performances

in the history of the constituency. The defeat has triggered significant discontent within the LDF as it grapples with the implications ahead of the local body elections. Analysts and party insiders attribute the failure to a lacklustre campaign, minimal involvement of influential CPM leaders, and an inability to capitalise on issues like Rahul Gandhi vacating the constituency. Leaders have expressed frustration over the lack of strategic planning and pointed out the need for introspection.

## Officials, politicians facilitate sand smuggling in Bhadrachalam: Locals



**KHAMMAM:** With sand smuggling allowed to grow unchecked across Bhadrachalam, residents are accusing officials and political leaders, from the ruling and opposition parties, of allowing the illegal operation to flourish in the temple town. Rampant sand smuggling can be seen in the Godavari river near the bridge at Sarapaka, on the outskirts of Bhadrachalam. Smugglers, reportedly operating with the support of ruling party leaders, illegally transport sand using tractors at night, the locals explained. Despite repeated complaints from residents, no effective action has been taken to curb the illegal sand mining, the locals said.

G Ranga Rao, a resident of Burgampad village, alleged that some officials are complicit in the smuggling operations, as such large-scale activity would be impossible without their cooperation. He also claimed that leaders from both ruling and opposition parties are involved in the illegal transportation of sand.

## Environmental concerns

Meanwhile, the residents have raised concerns about large holes being dug under the bridge, which poses a threat to the structural integrity of the bridge pillars. These activities are not only endangering the old and new bridges leading to Bhadrachalam but also causing environmental damage, they added.

N Krishna, a resident of Burgampad, highlighted that the smugglers are creating deep holes near the bridge pillars and transporting sand using tractors. B Shankar, a resident of Sarapaka, added that heavy earthmovers are being used for the excavation, making the situation more dangerous for the bridges. The locals have pointed out that smugglers have been aggressive in defending their operations. A few days ago, they allegedly attacked a revenue inspector from the Burgampad mandal revenue office who tried to stop the sand-laden tractors.

At this juncture, the residents are appealing to the state government to take immediate measures to stop the illegal sand transportation and ensure the protection of the bridges and the surrounding environment.



## Mastering the art of leadership



Leadership is the expected set of actions of a human being or a human institution that is characterised by assiduous adherence to values and principles of progress. A leader is supposed to show true direction to his team in the pursuit of a charted goal and demonstrate by personal example through action consonant with those values and principles. Leaders motivate and inspire.

Good leaders are passionate about their mission and create the same passion in their followers or team members. A true leader commands the respect of his team members, who follow him with zeal and not out of fear. Leaders are supposedly the torchbearers of the norms, rules and values that drive an institution. They become the focal points of determined, collective action. They spearhead concerted action, formal or informal.

The quality of leadership refers to the type of actions and behaviour that are exhibited by those in positions of power and authority over others in formal or informal institutions.

Thus, the role actions of a father as the head of a family, principal of a college, captain of the national cricket team, chairman and managing director of a public sector undertaking, CEO of a corporate business house, general of the Army or the prime minister of a country, when subjected to scrutiny, will bring out the qualitative aspects of their leadership.

The quality of leadership depends on how these leaders play their respective roles and how assiduously they adhere to the defined principles and values attached to those roles, in line with institutional objectives. Leadership, therefore, refers to the qualitative actions of those in commanding positions in reference to defined or believed institutional objectives and the values outlined in line with them.

Good leadership brings out the best in people. A true leader demonstrates the practice of principles prescribed in the preamble of his institution. Leadership is about motivating and developing people, not just administering them. Leadership is about refining the character of people, not just making them work like robots or machines. Leadership is about earning respect and the natural following of people, not just their obedience. Leadership is exemplified by the famous poem of Lord Tennyson, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' in which 600 soldiers of a military platoon were led by their commander into the enemy territory booming with canons and a sure mouth of death. The poet rightly named them 'noble six hundred' towards the end of the poem. Good leadership makes the followers selfless and altruistic in the performance of their avowed tasks.

World history is replete with incidents of great leaders who have motivated and galvanised the people for causes—great or small, noble or ignoble. Napoleon Bonaparte, Mao Tse-Tung, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and many others are examples of the working of this power of leadership. Professional leadership in the corporate world is exhibited by executives who develop one-to-one understanding with their juniors and can get the best out of them in terms of work output and efficiency. Good leaders are focused on the development of their juniors and facilitate their ascent on the corporate ladder.

They are flexible and open-minded and not dogmatic and bookish. They are more customer-oriented than target- or result-oriented. They are more concerned with value addition than with the achievement of numbers in production or sales. They treat employees as human beings rather than machines working for profit. Towards people, they have a more humanistic approach than an overly commercial approach.

The ingredients of good leadership can similarly be understood in the context of a family, a school, a college, a government, a labour union, an Olympic squad, a national defence outfit or a space exploratory mission.

## How Opposition lost the Maharashtra plot

**THE Congress got it wrong in Maharashtra from the outset. Seasoned party leaders who were appointed observers for the Assembly polls had no proficiency in the Marathi language, a prerequisite in the state. This galaxy of leaders told the party...**

THE Congress got it wrong in Maharashtra from the outset. Seasoned party leaders who were appointed observers for the Assembly polls had no proficiency in the Marathi language, a prerequisite in the state. This galaxy of leaders told the party top brass that Maharashtra was heading for a hung House and that the Congress should make arrangements to shift MLAs of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) to Bengaluru to avoid poaching and horse-trading. Three prominent hotels in Congress-ruled Karnataka were booked, while a chartered plane was on standby to airlift MLAs in the evening on November 23. All these preparations proved to be needless.

The enormity of the defeat of the grand old party and its allies — the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar) and the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) — is glaring because INDIA leaders, both collectively and individually, had not anticipated such a result. Most of the internal surveys had given the MVA an edge over the BJP-led Mahayuti, predicting 140-plus seats for the alliance in the 288-member Assembly. Party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi had asked observers Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel and G Parameshwara to head for Mumbai on the counting day so that talks on government formation and other issues were handled promptly. The performance of the Congress and its allies in Maharashtra is a sad commentary on the Opposition that failed and faltered at every stage of electioneering. Apart from fielding a battery of outsiders as campaigners and observers, the grand old party did little to build a narrative or counter Mahayuti's high-pitched campaign that stoked fear and insecurity. As an alliance, the MVA trio was simply missing from the ground. In most constituencies, the entire campaign revolved around the candidate rather than his/her party or the MVA. There were reports that over 50,000 RSS workers were going door to door, focusing on Dalits, Adivasis, OBCs, Marathas and others; they claimed that the majority community's interests were under threat and there was no move to change any constitutional provisions relating to caste-based quota in jobs and educational



institutions. Union ministers Kiren Rijju and Bhupendra Yadav coordinated closely at block and polling booth levels. Interestingly, the RSS leadership asked its cadre to deliver Maharashtra in a grand manner as a 'gift' or a souvenir in the run-up to the organisation's centenary. The main INDIA parties had no control over smaller outfits such as the Samajwadi Party (SP), Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen. The 'others' bagged a staggering 17 per cent of the votes; the difference of nearly 11 percentage points in the vote share of the MVA and Mahayuti was just too big. The presence of SP candidates had an adverse impact as reckless Muslim clerics started making tall claims about promises of job quota for Muslims and exemplary punishment for those accused of blasphemy. While mischievous elements indulging in blasphemy or threatening public order deserve no sympathy or leniency, the rule of law entails that punishment can be delivered through the due process. In a nutshell, blasphemy was not a poll issue, but the BJP-Sena network feverishly circulated video and audio clips of Maulana Sajjad Nomani and others to instil a sense of insecurity.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who never shies away from speaking his mind, came up with the "bateinge to kateinge" slogan, which was

later improvised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "ek hain to safe hain". It was baffling that the MVA and non-Mahayuti parties, in order to get the support of Muslims in 40-odd Assembly seats, ended up helping the BJP, even though the majority of the Muslim votes would have easily come their way. The MVA strategy was questionable. For the Congress, poll strategist Sunil Kanugolu, enjoying ministerial status in Karnataka, had reportedly begun preparations in January this year. Kanugolu had stayed away from the Congress' Lok Sabha campaign in order to focus on Maharashtra. Congress managers gave him a considerable amount to run the campaign. More than money, much like in the case of Haryana, Kanugolu was given a free hand. It is an open secret that his inputs and selection of party nominees had come under scrutiny during the Haryana Assembly polls. Yet, Rahul Gandhi and AICC functionaries let him run the Maharashtra campaign. Accountability and transparency have always been in short supply in the Congress. The party panels appointed to look into the factors for the party's defeat in November-December 2023 Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are yet to submit their reports. The minutes of the Udaipur Chintan Shivir, held in May 2022, are still 'locked' in Jai Ram Ramesh's laptop without any deliberations in the Congress Working Committee. The grip of Ramesh, KC Venugopal, Randeep Singh Surjewala and Kanugolu over the organisation is so strong that it has started questioning the credentials of the Gandhis and Kharge. The presence of Priyanka Gandhi as an MP is unlikely to usher in reforms and restructuring of the AICC secretariat, though many Congress insiders have great expectations from her. Intrigue has always been an inseparable part of politics. But it requires talent to execute a plan to bring leaders of potential as AICC observers for Maharashtra and then blame them for the loss. Only past masters of palace intrigue could think of this and get away with it. In this context, the Maharashtra polls show why the Congress cannot revitalise itself as long as there is a coterie that does not want the Rahul-Kharge team to be successful. It may sound bizarre, but it's not beyond the realm of possibility.

## Maha triumph

**THE pro-incumbency factor proved decisive as the BJP-led Mahayuti recorded a thumping victory in Maharashtra and the JMM-helmed alliance retained power in Jharkhand. INDIA, the Opposition bloc, managed to withstand the saffron onslaught in Jharkhand, but the stunning debacle in...**

THE pro-incumbency factor proved decisive as the BJP-led Mahayuti recorded a thumping victory in Maharashtra and the JMM-helmed alliance retained power in Jharkhand. INDIA, the Opposition bloc, managed to withstand the saffron onslaught in Jharkhand, but the stunning debacle in Maharashtra — a politically far more important state than the other one — must have hurt badly. For the BJP, which has developed a knack for winning elections against heavy odds, it was a dream outcome in one state and a disappointing one in the other.

Perhaps even die-hard supporters of the BJP would not have anticipated the magnitude of the triumph in Maharashtra. Less than six months ago, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — comprising the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar) and the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) — had outclassed the BJP and its allies in the Lok Sabha elections



in the state. That impressive performance had raised the MVA's hopes that it could pull off a similar feat in the Assembly polls. The alliance was undone by

overconfidence and disunity, with the Congress failing to learn any lesson from the Haryana shocker. In contrast, Mahayuti went all out to woo voters; welfare schemes such as the women-centric Ladki Bahin Yojana worked wonders. Moreover, the split in the Shiv Sena and the NCP paid the BJP rich dividends. It's now up to the victorious alliance to ensure that government formation takes place smoothly, unlike the chaos and uncertainty witnessed after the BJP-Shiv Sena combine won the 2019 elections. The Jharkhand verdict is an endorsement of CM Hemant Soren's tribal-friendly policies. The corruption charges levelled by the Enforcement Directorate against him cut no ice with voters, who resisted the lure of electing a 'double-engine' government. The Congress has done enough to stay in power as a junior ally of the JMM, but the rout in Maharashtra has undermined its position as INDIA's pre-eminent party.

## Agnipath shadow over India-Nepal defence relations

**CHIEF of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Upendra Dwivedi's five-day visit to Nepal (November 20-24) — during which the honorary rank of General of the Nepal Army was conferred on him — was marked by efforts to improve military cooperation between...**

CHIEF of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Upendra Dwivedi's five-day visit to Nepal (November 20-24) — during which the honorary rank of General of the Nepal Army was conferred on him — was marked by efforts to improve military cooperation between the two countries. Sadly, unlike the pre-Agnipath times, the occasion attracted only routine attention in that country. A diplomatic void was created when India introduced restrictive terms of engagement under the Agnipath scheme in 2022, different from the traditional long-term service and pension in place since 1947. Nepal signalled its disapproval of the new arrangement, even as both sides have maintained a "diplomatic lull", pushing the Indian Gorkha Brigade towards a cul-de-sac. Not a single Nepali Gorkha has been recruited since the Covid-19 pandemic. Strangely, Gen Dwivedi arrived at Tribhuvan International Airport in a Bhutan Air flight; in better times, chiefs would come in an IAF aircraft. Still, pomp and ceremony were provided by the Nepal Army. Its second Brahmin Army Chief, Gen Ashok Sigdel, hosted a private dinner for the Dwivedis. Nepali Army Chiefs have traditionally been Ranas, Chhetri Thapas and Thakuris. President Ram Chandra Paudel conferred the honorary rank of General on Gen Dwivedi, a ritual introduced in 1969 by then Army Chief, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, popularly known as Sam Bahadur. He created a Gorkha cell in the Army headquarters and initiated welfare measures, including treks by young Gorkha officers to recruitment areas of Nepal. Gen Sigdel will shortly visit New Delhi for an 'exchange ceremony' and will be feted just like Gen Dwivedi. Gen Dwivedi also flew to Pokhara, the hub

of Gorkha ex-servicemen, who number 1.25 lakh. He addressed Gorkha veterans about welfare measures, steering clear of Agnipath. He flew to Muktinath Temple, where he rang the Bipin Bell installed by late COAS Gen Bipin Rawat, who was from the Gorkha regiment. Gen Dwivedi's predecessor, Gen Manoj Pande, when asked by Indian journalists after a similar visit to Nepal in 2023 about the future of Gorkha recruitment, had said: "If Nepal does not send Gorkhas, their vacancies will be given to others (non-Gorkhas)". That is precisely what is happening to fill the manpower shortfall from Nepal in 39 Gorkha battalions with Kumaonis, Garhwalis, Nagas and other hill tribes. A Gorkha battalion has 60 and 40 per cent Nepali and Indian-domiciled Gorkhas, respectively. In Pokhara, I met several ex-servicemen who expressed concern over the OROP (One Rank, One Pension) — which, after the five-year review, has increased the pension mainly below and including Havildar rank — and Agnipath. They want their wards to join Agnipath as the last resort — due to 25 per cent re-enlistment even after four years' engagement — saying: "Something is better than nothing". A few even suggested taking the matter to court. Delegations of ex-servicemen have presented petitions to Chief District Officers in 77 districts of Nepal and met ministers who have maintained silence on Agnipath. Nepali journalists asked me how the stalemate could be broken. My view is that Nepal and India should immediately start a dialogue on Agnipath — which neither side has raised during bilateral talks. I suggested that India should make an exception for Nepal — ideally exempt it from



Agnipath (as certain specialists in technical and medical units have been) or at least raise the terms of engagement for Nepali Gorkhas to seven years and 50 per cent retention. A general review of Agnipath is in progress.

Agnipath does not create a level playing field for Nepali Gorkhas. Nepal's economy is small; its nationals have been barred since the 1970s from joining India's paramilitary forces, which have reserved jobs for demobilised Indian Agniveers. Nepal fears that demobilised soldiers will be an easy catch for dormant insurgent groups. In Nepal's Parliament, former ministers called India's unilateral alteration to the terms of engagement a violation of the 1947 tripartite treaty on recruitment between Nepal, UK and India, which legally it is not. India could have been gentle and diplomatic about the bolt from the blue. A Nepali ex-serviceman, who is also a politician, told me that India wants to terminate recruiting foreign nationals into its Army to undo the

colonial legacy and also have leverage with Nepal. Many believe NSA Ajit Doval was the architect of the project. Nepali communist politicians have long wanted to stop recruitment in foreign armies, and as they represent the majority in Parliament, Agnipath appears to be a closed issue. This is not the first time India has sought to stop Gorkha recruitment. In the 1970s, a proposal was mooted but quickly rejected by then PM Indira Gandhi on the recommendation of then Army Chief Gen GG Bewoor, who belonged to 11 Gorkha Rifles. The present Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan, was also with Gorkha Rifles. The Nepal Army celebrates its Raising Day annually in Delhi, recalling joint India-Nepal military activities with an audio-visual presentation including PM Modi's 2014 statement in Nepal's Parliament: "In all the wars India has fought, Nepalis have shed their blood." His words are the greatest tribute to Nepal and its Gorkhas. But the Agnipath scheme is a rollback of that strategic sentiment. Some former Indian ambassadors to Nepal have asserted, many of them in writing, that Gorkha ex-servicemen in Nepal constitute a pro-India constituency at a time when China is buying up strategic space with Left-leaning Nepali governments. Gorkha ex-servicemen, at times, have acted as a foil to anti-India sentiments. The recruitment of Nepali Gorkhas is not simply the hiring of foreign soldiers but creating a strategic bond between two sovereign countries and providing a foundation for defence cooperation between their armies, which the two Army Chiefs periodically sanctify. Gen Dwivedi just did this. But with Nepal, India's political leadership needs to go beyond rituals.



## 5 ways to get back to normal life after having a

# Baby

Having babies is surely one of the best experiences in the world, as they say, there's no greater feeling than motherhood.

However, with parenthood, come responsibilities, most of which cannot be shared. Mothers have to invest a great deal of time and energy with the newborn, while fathers feel to have been ignored by their wives. Here's how you can strike a balance and live life your way, even after babies.

### Go out on coffee or dinner dates with your spouse

Make sure you do not give up on spending quality time with your spouse, as the newborn will take up a lot of your time. Making it a routine won't be possible since kids don't have a fixed routine either, but you can

always sneak out for a while, when he/she is asleep. You can always use your balcony as a perfect setting for long night chats over coffee, or a cozy candlelight dinner whenever you have reliable help to take care of your kid for a while.

### Catch up on some gossip while shopping with your girlfriends

Nothing beats an afternoon of shopping followed by loads of juicy gossip over sumptuous lunch. It doesn't have to be dragged for hours, even three- four hours of outing with your friends will rejuvenate you. You must understand that although taking care of your baby is

important, it is equally important for you to stay fresh and excited about motherhood, than being tired and hassled.

### Never think of giving up your career

After a maternity break, you wouldn't feel like joining back soon since your baby needs you a lot this time, you can try working from home. If your employer is considerate enough, you can opt for a work-from-home set up, if not take up some freelance assignments. Your career is your high-point, even if you are a woman; get out of home and look at new opportunities.

### Make your baby nanny and

### grandparent-friendly

This will prove to be of great help, since the kid won't be too dependent on you, which will ensure you have enough time for yourself. Moreover, he/she would also learn values from the grandparents. This will also help you when you start working full-time or have to go on social outings without your baby.

### Indulge in quality 'me' time

Do anything you love, read, listen to music, yoga or simply 'do nothing'. Spend enough time, just for yourself, this will help you de-clutter and start afresh. Indulge in 'me' time more often, since a happy you will keep everyone around happy.

# Kids with disability don't affect couple's Divorce Risk

Couples raising a child with developmental disabilities do not face a higher risk of divorce, especially if they have larger families, as compared to those couples raising typically developing kids, new research has found.

Parenting a child with a developmental disability involves challenges and rewards that are unique to each family and prior research has shown that parents of a child with a developmental disability tend to experience greater marital stress compared to peers raising typically developing children. As a result, there has been "a conception that, in general, parents of children with disabilities are more likely to experience divorce, and we wanted to test that assumption", said first author of the study Eun Ha Namkung from University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the US. The team used data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study that has been following more than 10,000 men and women who graduated from

Wisconsin high schools in 1957 and some of their siblings for more than 50 years.

The researchers found that about 22 percent of parents with a child with developmental disability experienced divorce over the span of the study.

They also found that among couples with children without any disabilities, the risk of divorce was lowest for couples with one child and increased with each successive child.

In contrast, the risk of divorce for parents of children with developmental disabilities remained unchanged with increasing family size.

"Our results clearly show that the effects of having additional children are different for families of individuals with developmental disabilities compared to the effects on the general population," said Namkung. He suggested that "other children in the family may be a vital support system for parents coping with the care of a child with a developmental disability".



## How to have a pet-friendly Diwali

While you might be planning on having a blast during Diwali, it's your pet who will suffer from all the noise pollution during the festival.

No matter how happy-go-lucky your pet is, he or she will end up hiding somewhere in the house for fear of those noisy crackers. This Diwali, ensure that you take care of your pets so that they stay protected.

### Stay Around them

One of the best means to make pets feel comfortable is to not leave them alone as the sudden noise caused by firecrackers can scare them or cause discomfort. Anchal Animesh Devjani, who has two Labradors, of two months old each, said, "My pets are still young, so I am going to take special care of them. In our colony other residents also have pets, so we are going to take special care not to burst crackers inside the colony premises and will avoid creating any unnecessary noise that would alarm our pets. Even the children in our society will be using only phuljhadi or a chakri." Supriya Pathak, another dog lover who owns three pets — one German Shepherd, one Labrador and one Pomeranian, said, "We have an underground room in our apartment specially constructed for the dogs. During a festival like Diwali, we take them to this room where we have a play area built for them. Either someone from my family or I always takes care of them." Rashmi Raja who owns a six-year-old pug, said, "A festive day like Diwali also means one has to be more attentive towards one's pet."

For my pet's sake There are some people who prefer a cracker-free Diwali. Pradeep Tiwari who owns a three and a half year old German Shepherd, said, "Ever since Sheru became part of our family, we have not burst crackers in order to ensure that he is comfortable. We keep the windows closed to create a protected environment and never leave him unattended." Meghna Kumar who owns a Pomeranian, said, "My Pom, Goli, is very disciplined. She feels comfortable with my mom and stays with her during the festive period. However we only buy a packet of phuljhadi and chakri so that our pet is not hassled by the noise. In fact Goli sits besides my mom while we burst the



crackers. We ensure that she remains at a specific distance to avoid accidents."

### Feed them and keep them in a protected room

Most festivals bring in lot of engagements that might lead to pets staying unattended at times. So it is essential to ensure that the pet does not starve while you are busy attending to guests. Dr Parag Pandya, a veterinary surgeon, said, "It's better to feed the pet ahead of the celebrations. Pets are not habituated to sudden loud noises and are taken by surprise on occasions like Diwali. Pets should be fed in a room where windows are closed so that they have no fear of loud noise. It is advisable to allow pets to get acquainted with the surroundings."



# Power with Parliament: Supreme Court upholds 'secular', 'socialist' in Preamble

► **The Supreme Court rejected petitions challenging the inclusion of 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble, affirming Parliament's authority to amend the Constitution under Article 368.**

not warrant detailed adjudication as the flaws and weaknesses in the arguments were evident and manifest. The court noted that the expressions 'secular' and 'socialist', along with the word 'integrity', were incorporated into the Preamble through the Forty-second Amendment Act of 1976.

"Article 368 of the Constitution permits the amendment of the Constitution. The power to amend unquestionably rests with Parliament and extends to the Preamble. Constitutional amendments can be challenged on various grounds, including violations of the basic structure doctrine. However, the fact that the Constitution was adopted, enacted, and given to themselves by the people of India on November 26, 1949, does not limit or restrict the power conferred under Article 368," the court said.

The court further addressed the argument regarding retrospectivity, noting that if such an argument were accepted, it would equally apply to amendments made to any part of the Constitution. It emphasised that



Parliament's authority under Article 368 is incontrovertible and unchallenged. The bench also observed that while the Constituent Assembly initially did not include the terms 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble, the Constitution is a living document, and Parliament has been empowered to amend it in accordance with Article 368. Highlighting the delay in filing the petitions, the court pointed out that the challenge came 44 years after the words 'socialist' and 'secular' were added to the Preamble. It noted that these terms have since been widely accepted, with their

meanings clearly understood by "We, the people of India". The court stated that the additions to the Preamble have neither restricted nor impeded legislation or policies pursued by elected governments, provided such actions did not infringe upon fundamental or constitutional rights or violate the basic structure of the Constitution. "There is no legitimate cause or justification for challenging this constitutional amendment after nearly 44 years," the court remarked. Regarding secularism, the court explained that India has developed its unique interpretation, where the State neither supports any religion nor penalises individuals for practicing their faith. This principle is enshrined in Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution, which prohibit discrimination on religious grounds while ensuring equal protection of laws and equal opportunities in public employment. The Preamble's original ideals—equality, fraternity, justice (social, economic, and political), and liberty (of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship)—align with this secular ethos.

**New Delhi.** The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain petitions challenging the inclusion of the words 'socialist' and 'secular' in the Preamble to the Constitution of India through the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act of 1976. A bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna observed that the writ petitions did

## Stray Bull Injures 15 In Uttar Pradesh, Caught After 3-Hour Chase

**New Delhi:** In Jalalabad, a town in Uttar Pradesh, people are petrified of bulls. They have seen the horror unfold - a stray bull chasing people, hitting them with horns and picking and throwing them. Though the bull is caught, the fear resides within. Are you wondering, what happened? In Jalalabad town, a bull was seen following a man, in the middle of traffic. The bull hit the man from behind, making him fall to the ground. Before he could get up, the bull hit him again on his hips. He jumped, rolled and fell flat on the ground. The



man was injured in the eye. In a now-viral video, the man is visibly injured, with blood around his left eye. He is not alone. The bull entered the streets, caused a stampede and attacked and injured 15 people. After an hour of horror, the Jalalabad Municipal Council laid a trap to catch the bull. However, it managed to dodge the Municipal Council's vehicle and escape. But the efforts to catch hold of the wild bull continued for three hours till it was finally caught. In a similar incident earlier this month, a bike rider was injured after a bull ran into the bike near Supertech Oxford Square, Sector 16-B in Greater West. A video of the incident, which went viral, showed a biker riding in his lane at a decent speed. Suddenly, a black bull comes in front of the bike and hits it with his head. The biker loses control of the vehicle and falls.

## Delhi had no 'good' air day this year, none expected until December-end

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi breathed its cleanest air this year in August when the average Air Quality Index (AQI) was 52. Yet, it fell short by two points required for a 'good' day, as per national standards. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), a 'good' air day is when the AQI is below 50. Delhi has not had a single 'good' air quality day so far this year. With the current pollution levels and the air quality fluctuating between 'severe' and 'very poor' so far this month, it is unlikely the Capital will have a good day before next year. On Monday, after a brief respite, Delhi's AQI returned to the 'very poor' category from 'poor' by noon. With an AQI of 349, the city was the second most polluted, closely behind West Bengal's Durgapur (AQI of 360). Notably, this is the first year after 2018 when Delhi recorded no 'good' air days. There were no 'good' air days in 2016, too. Since 2016, the lockdown year of 2020 saw the highest number of five 'good' air days — one in March and four in August. However, by 2021, this number had come down to one day in October but improved a tad to three 'good' days — one in September and two in October — in 2022. However, 2023 saw only a single clean-air day, in September. Delhi reports the cleanest air during the monsoon season compared to the rest of the year, according to CPCB data. This explains the concentration of 'good' air days between August and October. Meteorological factors can lead to a lowering of pollution levels in pre-winter months. According to the India Meteorological Department data, Delhi received no rain so far this month. In contrast, there were four rainy days in 2023. Further, since 2016, there have been instances of November rain in 2018, 2019 and 2020. As per AQI trends over the past 10 years, the AQI at best has fallen to around 130, and not less in November and December. As a result, the year-end months record only 'moderate', 'very poor', 'severe' and 'severe plus' AQI days.

## Sambhal violence Godhra-like conspiracy, arrest Samajwadi MP: Union Minister

**NEW DELHI:** As the political blame game over the violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal amid a mosque survey intensifies, Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Tuesday said that the incident is part of a larger conspiracy and called for the arrest of Samajwadi Party MP Zia-ur-Rahman Warq. He compared the incident to the 2002 Godhra train torching, which killed 59 Hindu pilgrims and karsevaks. "This incident happened because of the opposition. It is a pre-planned strategy by the opposition, similar to the Godhra incident. This was not just an attack on the survey team but an attack on the Constitution of India and democracy," the Union Minister of Textiles said. He further alleged, "They want to burn the country. They want to turn Sambhal into Bangladesh. Those who died were shot by the attackers, not the police. This has been confirmed by the post-mortem report. The country won't tolerate this," Singh said. He also demanded the arrest of Sambhal MP



and Samajwadi Party leader Zia-ur-Rahman Warq, who has been named as the primary accused in a case related to the violence that killed on Sunday. Why are Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi silent on this incident?" he asked. On the Samajwadi Party's plan to send a 12-member delegation to Sambhal, Singh described it as an attempt at provocation. "An attempt is being made to provoke once again by sending a political delegation to Sambhal. Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi always indulge in politics over such incidents," Giriraj Singh said. Massive violence broke out on Sunday when a large crowd opposed a court-ordered

survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid. The survey was initiated based on a complaint claiming that an ancient temple had been demolished to build the Mughal-era mosque. The mob clashed with police, pelting stones, and the police opened retaliatory fire, leading to over three hours of chaos. Police allege that Samajwadi Party MP Warq incited the violence, citing his remarks two days before the incident. However, Warq and his party rejected the allegations. Warq claimed the survey was conducted without prior notice and accused the district administration and police of being responsible for the violence. The district authorities and police have denied these allegations, asserting that advance notices were issued on time. The Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP and the Yogi Adityanath government of "creating the riots" to divert attention, while the BJP claimed the opposition has been inciting violence.

## After SC rap, Delhi Police urge people to avoid firecracker use in wedding season

**The Supreme Court had pulled up Delhi Police for failing to implement the firecracker ban completely in the national capital.**

**New Delhi.** Even as the Supreme Court said on Monday that emergency measures under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to deal with air pollution in Delhi will continue for the time being, Delhi Police officials said they are sensitising people against the use of firecrackers in the ongoing winter wedding season. "We are sensitising the public and briefing owners of marriage venues and banquet halls to avoid firecrackers," Ankit Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka, said. Other police officials said they have yet to receive any formal complaints about the use of firecrackers during weddings in the national capital. Delhi's air quality index (AQI) has fluctuated between the 'very poor' and 'severe' categories ever since the GRAP-IV was enforced on November 18. And despite the ongoing ban on firecrackers in

the national capital, fireworks have lit up skies this wedding season. "The widely publicised ban on the storage, manufacturing, and sale of firecrackers... is a total failure. The bursting of firecrackers can be heard by an ordinary person so the enforcement agencies must be aware of them too. Why are these rules and laws not being effectively enforced?" Mohan George, former additional chairman of Delhi

Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), said. "We always impose a blanket ban but it is a total failure if we do not enforce it... These violations continue in wedding venues but if police cannot hear them (firecrackers), it is shocking," George added. Earlier this month, the Supreme Court had directed the Delhi police commissioner to take effective steps to implement an October 14 Delhi government order regarding a complete ban on all categories of firecrackers — including their manufacture, storage, sale, and bursting, as well as online sales and delivery in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi — until January 1, 2025. The Supreme Court had also pulled up the Delhi Police for failing to implement the firecracker ban completely in the national capital. "We find that the Delhi Police have not taken the implementation of the said order seriously."

## "Ego Issues": Top Army Officer's Controversial Review Of Women Colonels

**New Delhi:** Nearly two years after the Army promoted 108 woman officers to the rank of Colonel after Supreme Court's landmark judgment, a top general has listed "mundane ego issues" and "lack of empathy" among what he calls "serious concerns" in his review of eight Colonel-rank women officers under his command. Lieutenant General Rajeev Puri, who completed his tenure as commander of 17 Mountain Strike Corps on November 20, has written to General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, Lt General Ram Chander Tiwari, listing findings of a vastly critical "in-house review". Defence sources, however, have told that the Army is committed to the induction of women officers and that the senior officer's suggestions are meant to improve training standards. Lt General Puri has pointed to "serious concerns regarding interpersonal relations" and a "lack of tact and understanding" among the Colonel-rank women officers. The report also noted an "exaggerated tendency to complain" and

"mundane ego issues which spiral out of control". Woman officers now command units such as air defence, signals, ordnance, intelligence, engineers and service corps. Lt General Puri has said that the Colonel-rank women officers have a "my way or highway kind of approach to decision making" and are "not trained to be commanders". "During the last one year, there has been an increase in the number of officer management issues in units commanded by women officers. These are indicative of serious concerns regarding interpersonal relations. Most cases pertain to lack of tact and understanding of the personal requirements of unit personnel, especially officers. The emphasis is more on conflict termination through might, rather than conflict resolution through mutual respect. A prejudice and mistrust was evident in few of the cases in the recent past," the senior officer wrote in the letter dated October 1. This, he said, was leading to "high levels of stress in the units. Lt



General Puri also highlighted "an uncontrollable urge to make derogatory statements regarding junior officers to usurp credit rather than attributing it to subordinates and encouraging them is routine". He also noted a "serious misplaced sense of entitlement" in some women officers and said they sought "immediate gratification for minor achievements". A Supreme Court in 2020 cleared permanent commission for women in the Army and paved the way for them taking up command roles. In

February last year, a special selection board was put together to promote 108 women officers to the rank of select-grade colonel. In his letter, Lt General Puri has called for a focus on "gender neutrality" instead of "gender equality" to address the concerns he has raised about the Colonel-rank woman officers. The senior officer noted that the postings of these women Colonels did not expose them to command roles. The woman officers have not been exposed to operational tasks and this has led to a "lack of understanding of hardships and resultant lack of compassion for the troops involved in these tasks". Explaining the factors that contribute to this approach, Lt General Puri has written, "The desire to prove oneself in a field which was supposed to be a male bastion is likely a driver behind the over-ambitiousness in some women COs... In order to be perceived as strong individuals and avoid being judged as soft-hearted, women COs handle HR issues with a firmer hand than their male counterparts."

From Arun Jaitley to Ajay Maken, here are a few former DUSU presidents who made it big in politics

**The presidency of the Delhi University Students' Union has served as a launchpad for many political leaders in the national capital.**



**NEW DELHI:** From Arun Jaitley to Ajay Maken, the presidency of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) has served as a launchpad for many political leaders. Jaitley, the late veteran BJP leader, was elected DUSU president in 1974 during the politically charged Emergency era. An Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) candidate, his tenure was marked by a resistance against authoritarianism. Decades later, as Union finance minister, Jaitley spearheaded transformative economic policies, including the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Six years after he won the president post at DUSU in the 1970s, Jaitley joined the BJP. Another ABVP stalwart, Vijay Goel, who served as DUSU president in 1977, also carved a niche in Delhi's political scene. Goel was the former Union sports minister and a four-time Member of Parliament.

The younger generation of ABVP leaders includes Nupur Sharma, who was DUSU president in 2008. Sharma became the BJP's spokesperson but was suspended from the party over her alleged comments on the Prophet. From the Congress-backed National Students' Union of India (NSUI), Maken stands out as a trailblazer. After serving as DUSU president in 1985, Maken rose through the ranks to become a Union minister by holding charge of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty in 2012-13. Maken was elected as a member of the Delhi Assembly after he won the DUSU president post in 1985. In recent times, Rocky Tuseed, who won the DUSU presidency in 2017 as an NSUI candidate, was given a ticket to contest the Delhi Assembly election from the Rajinder Nagar constituency in 2020. Though he finished third behind the Aam Aadmi Party's Raghav Chadha, Tuseed remains one of the recent DUSU leaders to have contested a major election. Tuseed is now serving as national secretary of the Congress's youth wing. The DUSU election threw up a split verdict this year with two seats each on the central panel going to the NSUI and the ABVP. The NSUI clinched the coveted post of president as well as joint secretary, ending its seven-year dry spell at the helm of the students' union.



**A new study has found that kids from high socioeconomic background are more likely to rely on parental help as adults.**

# Kids from wealthy families more dependent on Parents

Author Anna Manzoni of the North Carolina State University said that she wanted to know how young adults become independent of their parents, adding that she ended up focusing on what he called 'partial independence,' when people don't live with their parents but still get financial support from them.

In the study, Manzoni looked at data on 6,471 people between 18 and 32 who participated in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health and found that 41.4 percent of the participants who were between the ages of 25 and 32 when the study conducted its most recent interviews in 2008 still relied on financial support from parents.

Manzoni said that those who attended four-year colleges and those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were much more likely to be partially independent in their early 20s.

However, people who attended college were more likely to become financially independent as they reached their late 20s and early 30s.

She said that this was especially true for people who paid their own way through college, adding people whose parents supported them financially throughout college were also more likely to move back in with their parents at some point.



## Dad's diet key to wellbeing of

# Offspring

**The kind of food your father relished may have a direct impact on your health and overall wellbeing, according to new research.**

A dad's diet before they conceive could be genetically passed onto the children, with a subsequent impact on those children's mental health, the team from Melbourne-based RMIT University reported.

While mothers' diet and impact on children has been widely



researched, this is believed to be the first time the behavioural and hormonal effects of the male diet on offspring has been studied.

During the study, lead researcher and professor Antonio Paolini allowed male rats to eat abundant amounts of food and compared them to those with access to 25 percent fewer calories in their diet.

"Even though the fathers had no contact with their offspring and the mother's behaviour remained relatively unchanged, the offspring of the food-limited rats were lighter, ate less and showed less evidence of anxiety," he noted.

The differences appeared to be 'epigenetic', meaning the younger rats' genes functioned differently as a result of their fathers' experience.

"The results suggest that the diet of one generation may affect the next," Paolini pointed out.

Reduced calories may sharpen survival instincts, making animals less anxious and more adventurous in the way they explore their environment.

The environmental factors could also have an effect on sperm production in men in the days leading up to conception, posing an additional risk to the health of their children.

"This makes it important for both mothers and fathers to consider their environment and things such as diet, alcohol consumption and smoking, before conceiving," the authors noted.



Even if your five-year-old kid does not know what money can buy for him or her, the moment he or she gets to know the value of it, chances are the knowledge may make him or her less philanthropic in nature, says an interesting research.

In other words, the act of handling money makes young children work harder and give less.

This effect was observed in children who lacked the concrete knowledge of money's purpose and persisted despite the denomination of the money.

"Money is a double-edged sword. It produces good outcomes in terms of concentration and effort but bad outcomes when it comes to helping, taking, and donating," said professor Kathleen Vohs from the University of Minnesota and co-author of the study.

For this, the researchers conducted five experiments and one study involving 550 children (ages three-six) in Poland and the US.

In one experiment, the children were asked to either sort

## Learning value of money may make kids less kind



money or buttons before completing a challenging puzzle.

After sorting money or buttons, the pre-schoolers were asked to help the experimenter prepare a task for another child.

The children who had sorted money were less helpful in terms of gathering crayons for the experimenter than those who had first handled buttons.

An additional study tested whether candy might elicit a similar response to money.

After sorting money, buttons or candy, the children were informed that they could take up to six Disney stickers. All of the children who sorted money took at least three stickers, whereas only 78 percent of children who sorted candies and 76 percent who sorted buttons took as many.

The children were then told they could give some of their stickers to other children who did not participate. Kids who sorted money prior to receiving their stickers donated half as many stickers compared to kids who sorted buttons or candy.

"Our findings with children as young as three years old suggest potentially significant implications for achievement, generosity, and interpersonal harmony," added Lan Chaplin, associate professor of marketing at the University of Illinois.

According to Vohs, the results with children mirror patterns from European, Asian and North American adult samples.



## Sensex, Nifty extend gains but earnings concerns loom; Infosys gains 2%

**New Delhi.** Benchmark stock market indices opened higher on Tuesday, continuing its positive momentum built over the past few trading sessions, further helped by gains in IT sector stocks. The S&P BSE Sensex was up 238.80 points to 80,348.65, while the NSE Nifty50 added 79.70 points to 24,301.80 as of 9:30 AM.

Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services said that the two-day rally in the market is unlikely to sustain beyond a point since earnings concerns are major headwinds. "The impact of short covering and the positive sentimental effect of the Maharashtra election results will be temporary. Too much should not be read into the FIIs turning big buyers yesterday since that was due to MSCI rebalancing with higher weightage to HDFC Bank. Leading banks will remain resilient due to consistent buying and reasonable valuations," he added. "In the coming days, attention will be focused on what President Trump will do. Trump's selection of Scott Bessent as the Treasury Secretary is a positive from the market perspective since he is regarded as a fiscal conservative. This can help bring down the bond yields in the US, thereby favouring EMs. But as of now, the dollar index above 107 is a headwind. A sustained rally in the market can happen only when indicators of earnings revival emerge. This is sometime away," he said.

## Amazon Japan raided over alleged anti-monopoly violation

**TOKYO.** Amazon Japan's offices were raided by authorities Tuesday over an alleged anti-monopoly law violation, a source said, with the e-commerce giant accused of abusing its industry dominance to drive down prices. The Japan Fair Trade Commission conducted an on-site inspection of Amazon's Japanese subsidiary in Tokyo, reportedly its third probe into the company over domineering behaviour. This time, the focus was on what is known as the "buy box" -- a coveted spot on the Amazon.co.jp website that allows products to be featured prominently.

Competition for the spot is intense, with sellers offering the same product treating it like a "matter of life and death", the source, who declined to be identified, told AFP. "We've been told that whether they can secure the 'buy box' makes a huge difference in terms of sales," he said. Sellers have been pressured to lower prices to give Amazon a competitive edge over rival e-commerce sites, or forfeit their right to the buy box, the source said. The US company is also accused of using the buy box to make sellers use in-house logistics services for everything from packing to order processing and shipping. Such tactics can constitute "abuse of a dominant position" and "transactions with binding conditions", both banned by Japan's anti-monopoly law, the source said.

Amazon Japan told AFP that it will "fully cooperate with the Fair Trade Commission's investigation".

Globally, Amazon last year reported net profit of more than \$30 billion on revenue of \$575 billion, powered by its online retail operation and its cloud computing division. Amazon's businesses include retail, advertising, and streamed movies and music -- a model that also has the 30-year-old company facing a US government lawsuit, accused of expanding an illegal monopoly and otherwise harming competition.

## FDI inflows surge 38% to \$14.3 bn in first half of current financial year

**NEW DELHI.** The net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows in the current financial year rose from \$10.4 billion in the first half of FY24 to \$14.3 billion in the same period of FY25, a year-on-year increase of 37.6%, as per a finance ministry report.

Significant contributions came from sectors such as manufacturing, financial services, electricity and energy, and communication services, which collectively made up nearly two-thirds of the gross FDI inflows. Singapore, Mauritius, the Netherlands, the UAE, and the US were sources for about three-fourths of the flows. "Though cumulative net FDI inflows in H1 of FY25 were greater than those in the



same period of the previous year, there was an outflow of net FDI in September 2024 due to a significant increase in repatriation and disinvestment, which exceeded the gross FDI inflows during that month," the report said.

Meanwhile, the report cited heightened geopolitical tensions and recent developments in China for the withdrawal of significant funds from Indian equities. After seeing net inflows for five consecutive months, foreign portfolio investors became net sellers in October, it stated. During FY25, rupee was recognised as one of the most stable currencies, remaining within a narrow range of 84.3 to 84 per dollar from April to October 2024, it said. This stability was reflected in its low coefficient of variance, recorded at 0.28%, it added. The labour market is showing signs of growth as evidenced by high-frequency indicators such as net payroll additions under the Employee Provident Fund Organisation, the employment sub-index of the Purchasing Managers' Index, and the Naukri JobSpeak index, all highlighting a rise in formal employment and hiring, according to the report. "Results from the Annual Survey of Industries 2022-23 show robust growth in the manufacturing sector, with over 22 lakh jobs added compared to 2018-19, underscoring the sector's strong post-pandemic recovery," it stated.

# Byju's under scrutiny again: Government launches new investigation into finances

**The probe aims to determine if the company misrepresented its financial statements or if funds were improperly diverted.**

**New Delhi.** The government has launched a fresh investigation into the financial and accounting practices of Byju's, the troubled edtech giant. The new investigation comes after a previous review by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs highlighted lapses in corporate governance at the company, according to sources familiar with the matter, reported Bloomberg.

### NEW INVESTIGATION DETAILS

The Registrar of Companies' regional

office in Hyderabad has been asked to examine Byju's financial records. The probe aims to determine if the company misrepresented its financial statements or if funds were improperly diverted. Sources mentioned in the report confirmed that irregularities in Byju's accounts triggered the investigation. Specific details about the shortcomings have not been disclosed. The registrar has a year to complete its review and submit findings. The latest probe follows an earlier yearlong inspection by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. While that review found corporate governance issues at Byju's, no conclusive evidence of financial wrongdoing was uncovered.

### BYJU'S LEGAL AND FINANCIAL STRUGGLES

Once India's most valuable startup, with a



valuation of \$22 billion, Byju's is now grappling with financial turmoil and legal challenges. The company is entangled in insolvency proceedings both in India and the United States. In October, the Supreme Court of India overturned a bankruptcy tribunal's ruling that had allowed Byju's to settle its debts with a key creditor. This decision has returned the company to the insolvency process, with control of its operations handed over

to an insolvency resolution professional. The rapid decline of Byju's has hit its investors hard. Prominent backers, including Prosus NV, have written off their investments. Byju Raveendran, the company's founder, recently acknowledged the firm's downfall, stating that its valuation has dropped to zero.

There have been no comments from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the

insolvency resolution professional overseeing Byju's. The company itself has not issued any public statements regarding the new investigation.

Byju's was once celebrated as a success story in India's booming edtech sector. However, the company has faced mounting challenges, from debt repayment issues to allegations of mismanagement.

## Essar Group co-founder Shashi Ruia dies at 81

**NEW DELHI.** Shashikant Ruia, the co-founder of Essar Group and a prominent figure in India's business landscape, died on Tuesday at the age of 81. "It is with profound grief that we inform of the passing of Shri Shashikant Ruia, Patriarch of the Ruia and Essar Family. He was 81. With an unwavering commitment to community upliftment and philanthropy, he touched millions of lives, leaving an enduring impact. His humility, warmth, and ability to connect with everyone he met, made him a truly exceptional leader," Essar Group said in a statement. The Ruia family also described Shashi Ruia's legacy as a guiding light for future generations, vowing to uphold the values and vision he championed throughout his life.

### A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Shashi Ruia co-founded Essar Group in 1969 alongside his brother Ravi Ruia. Their first major project was a Rs 2.5 crore contract from Madras Port Trust to construct an outer breakwater at the port. This marked the beginning of a remarkable journey that transformed Essar Group into a global conglomerate. Initially focused on construction and engineering, Essar



Group took on significant infrastructure projects, including bridges, dams, and power plants. By the 1980s, the group had diversified into the energy sector, acquiring oil and gas assets. The 1990s saw the group expanding further into steel and telecommunications. Essar developed steel plants and an oil refinery and became a major player in India's telecom sector by establishing a partnership with Hutchison to create the country's second-largest telecom operator. Over time, Essar sold its telecom business and divested its oil refinery to a consortium led by Russia's Rosneft. In a significant development, the group had to let go of its steel plants to ArcelorMittal following insolvency proceedings initiated to recover

outstanding loans.

### EARLY LIFE AND BUSINESS JOURNEY

Shashi Ruia began his career by joining the family business at a young age. Opting not to study abroad, he instead immersed himself in the workings of the company. By the age of 17, he was entrusted with significant responsibilities within the organisation.

Ruia's hands-on approach helped him gain deep insights into various industries and sectors. His commitment to growing Essar Group laid the foundation for its evolution into a global enterprise.

### LEADERSHIP ROLES AND INDUSTRY IMPACT

Shashi Ruia played an active role in several key industry bodies. He was part of the managing committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and served as Chairman of the Indo-US Joint Business Council. He also led the Indian National Shipowners Association (INSA) and was a member of the Prime Minister's Indo-US CEO Forum and the India-Japan Business Council.

## RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das admitted to Chennai hospital, condition stable

**MUMBAI.** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been admitted to a corporate hospital in Chennai on Tuesday after experiencing acidity-related issues. According to the RBI's official statement, the governor's condition is stable, and he is expected to be discharged today. "Governor Das experienced acidity and was admitted in Apollo Hospital, Chennai for observation. He is now doing fine and will be discharged in the next two to three hours," the RBI spokesman said in a



media statement. "There is no cause for concern as the governor is doing fine now," the spokesman added. The 67-year-old is tipped to get a third term as the governor as the government has not

**According to an RBI spokesperson, Das had been briefly hospitalised due to acidity-related issues and will be discharged soon.**

invited applications for a replacement yet. His six-year term ends on December 12, making him already the second longest serving governor in the last six decades.

## Adani Group deals at risk: How countries have reacted after bribery charges

**NEW DELHI.** The Adani Group is under scrutiny after US authorities accused Gautam Adani and seven associates of paying \$265 million (Rs 2,029 crore) in bribes to Indian government officials. The allegations, made public last week, have led to several countries revisiting or cancelling deals with the group.

While the Adani Group has denied the charges, calling them 'baseless' and announced plans to pursue legal remedies, the fallout from global deals has been swift and widespread.

### KENYA

Kenya moved quickly to cancel two projects with the Adani Group. President William Ruto said on Thursday that a procurement process that would have handed control of the country's main airport to the Adani Group was terminated, reported news agency Reuters. "I have directed agencies within the ministry of transport and within the ministry of energy and petroleum to immediately cancel the ongoing procurement," Ruto said in his state of the nation address, attributing the decision to "new information provided by investigative agencies and partner nations". Additionally, a 30-year, \$736-million public-private partnership deal with the energy ministry for constructing

power transmission lines was scrapped. Both cancellations were directly linked to the bribery allegations against the Adani Group. Adani Energy Solutions said on Saturday that Kenya's cancellation of a \$736 million transmission line project did not require it to make any regulatory disclosure under Indian stock exchange rules as it was within its ordinary course of business.

### FRANCE

French energy giant TotalEnergies, which holds a 20% stake in Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), paused any new financial contributions to Adani-related ventures. "Until such time when the accusations against the Adani Group individuals and their consequences have been clarified, TotalEnergies will not make any new financial contribution as part of its investments in the Adani group of companies," the company said. Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), however, dismissed claims that TotalEnergies' decision would impact its growth plans, and said there were no ongoing financial commitments under



discussion with the French company.

### SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), which had pledged \$553 million for an Adani-backed port terminal project in Colombo, is conducting further due diligence following the recent allegations. An official from the DFC confirmed that no funds had been disbursed yet and the loan agreement had not reached the financial close stage, reported Bloomberg. Sri Lanka is reviewing planned wind power projects involving the Adani Group as per media reports. The

government is assessing the financial feasibility and environmental impact of the proposals, with a cabinet discussion expected in the coming weeks.

### BANGLADESH

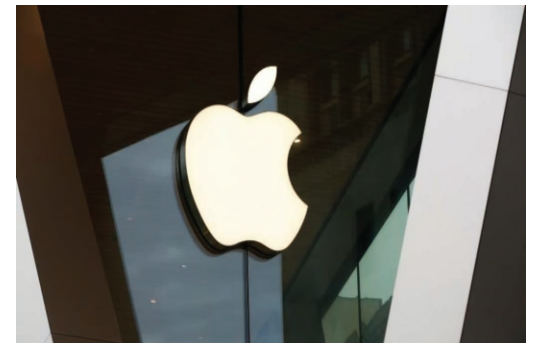
Bangladesh's interim government has set up a review committee to investigate energy agreements signed under the previous regime, including a deal involving Adani Power's Godda coal-fired plant, reported news agency Reuters. The committee has recommended engaging a legal and investigative agency to scrutinise these agreements, citing concerns about their terms and long-term viability.

### TROUBLE IN INDIA

In India, Andhra Pradesh is revisiting its power supply contract with the Adani Group. Officials are reviewing documents to determine whether the state can cancel its agreements with the conglomerate, reported Reuters.

### ADANI GROUP'S GLOBAL PROJECTS

The Adani Group's international portfolio is extensive and includes projects across Asia, Africa, and Australia.



other countries. "Currently, Apple still has not invested in production facilities or factories in Indonesia," he said in a statement released late Monday. He said the ministry urged Apple to immediately set up a production facility or factory in Indonesia "based on the fairness principles" so the company does not have to file an investment scheme proposal every three years. Despite the sales ban, the Indonesian government still allows iPhone 16 to be carried into Indonesia if they are not being traded commercially. The government estimates about 9,000 units of the new model have entered the country that way. Indonesia also banned the sale of Google Pixel phones for failing to meet the 40 percent parts requirement. About 22,000 Google Pixel phones entered the country this year despite the ban.

## Indonesia rejects Apple's \$100 million investment offer

**JAKARTA.** Indonesia has rejected an Apple \$100 million investment proposal aimed at lifting a ban on iPhone 16 sales, saying it lacks the "fairness" required by the government. Indonesia last month prohibited the marketing and sale of the iPhone 16 model over Apple's failure to meet local investment regulations requiring that 40 percent of phones be made from local parts as the country seeks to boost investments from giant tech companies. Following the ban, Apple offered to increase its investments in Indonesia by \$100 million to allow the new phone to be sold domestically. But Industry Minister Agus Gumilang Kartasasmita said Apple had not met the government's requirements, especially when compared with the tech giant's investments in

other countries. "Currently, Apple still has not invested in production facilities or factories in Indonesia," he said in a statement released late Monday. He said the ministry urged Apple to immediately set up a production facility or factory in Indonesia "based on the fairness principles" so the company does not have to file an investment scheme proposal every three years. Despite the sales ban, the Indonesian government still allows iPhone 16 to be carried into Indonesia if they are not being traded commercially. The government estimates about 9,000 units of the new model have entered the country that way. Indonesia also banned the sale of Google Pixel phones for failing to meet the 40 percent parts requirement. About 22,000 Google Pixel phones entered the country this year despite the ban.

### ADANI GROUP'S GLOBAL PROJECTS

The Adani Group's international portfolio is extensive and includes projects across Asia, Africa, and Australia.



## 'Sachin sir called Mumbai': Meme-fest after MI buy Arjun Tendulkar late in IPL auction

**New Delhi.** Arjun Tendulkar was sold to the Mumbai Indians in the IPL 2025 mega auction. The son of India's legendary cricketer, Arjun set his base price at Rs 30 lakh and went unsold in the 1st round. However, Mumbai lifted the paddle for the left-arm pacer to get him in the unsold list in their already strengthened team. A certain section of the fans said that it has become quite predictable now. Some fans said that Sachin, who is mentor of Mumbai Indians must have had an influence in the bid. Arjun was selected in the franchise for the 4th straight year. His journey with Mumbai Indians began in 2021 when the franchise acquired him for the base price of Rs 20 lakh. However, he was ruled out of the tournament due to an injury, which led MI to name Simranjeet as his replacement. Mumbai continued to show faith in Sachin Tendulkar's son by drafting him in the team in the IPL 2022 auction for Rs 30 lakh.

### Arjun's IPL journey

His much anticipated debut came in 2023 against Kolkata Knight Riders. Arjun made headlines in the IPL by claiming his maiden wicket against Sunrisers Hyderabad, dismissing Bhuvneshwar Kumar. His crucial performance played a key role in MI's 14-run win. Finishing the 2023 season with three wickets, Arjun earned the franchise's trust and was retained for the 2024 season.

## Marnus Labuschagne can turn it around: Australia coach backs batter to hit form

**NEW DELHI.** Australian coach Andrew McDonald has offered a strong vote of confidence in Marnus Labuschagne, despite the struggling batter's alarming slump in form in a crushing 295-run defeat to India in the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Perth. While McDonald didn't guarantee the same XI would feature in the second Test in Adelaide, the decline in Labuschagne's performances remains a primary concern. Labuschagne, once a cornerstone of Australia's batting lineup, has been in a significant rut, scoring just 123 runs in his last 10 Test innings at a poor average of 13.66. His latest performances in Perth were particularly troubling, with the Queenslander dismissed for just 2 and 3 in the two innings as India dominated the Australian top order.

Despite the struggles, McDonald is resolute in his belief that Labuschagne can rediscover his best form. "When he's at his best, he's shown great intent at the crease," McDonald said. "It's an ongoing discussion, and that ebbs and flows within players' careers. At the moment, he's in one of those patches, but we're really confident that at his best, he's the player that we need." Labuschagne's woes are not limited to his numbers; his technique and footwork have been under the microscope. The batter's troubles at the crease were evident in Perth, where his fragile form saw him fall victim to Indian captain Jasprit Bumrah for a second time in the match. Despite the harsh critiques, McDonald remains confident that Labuschagne will be given every opportunity to turn his fortunes around. "The mindset and technical aspects are always a combination of factors," McDonald explained. "We're confident that he can turn that around." The coach also addressed the prospect of changes to the squad, particularly if Labuschagne's slump continues. While McDonald acknowledged the impressive depth in domestic cricket, with players like Brendan Doggett making a mark in the Australia A series, he maintained that the squad is built on the confidence that Labuschagne can regain his best form.

## Fearless' Yashasvi Jaiswal will inherit mantle of Kohli, Tendulkar: Greg Chappell

**NEW DELHI.** Former India coach Greg Chappell says Yashasvi Jaiswal appears to be in a good position to carry on the wonderful heritage of batting excellence created by Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli. The Australian batting legend lauded Jaiswal's fearless approach and technical brilliance, which were on full display during his scintillating 161-run knock against Australia in Perth, contributing to India's commanding 295-run victory. "The young opener is fearless and appears poised to inherit the mantle of Indian batting excellence, following the likes of Virat Kohli and Sachin Tendulkar," Chappell wrote for the Sydney Morning Herald. Chappell credited India's robust cricketing infrastructure and strategic planning for nurturing talents like Jaiswal. Highlighting Jaiswal's inspiring journey from a 10-year-old dreamer in Mumbai to a mainstay in India's batting lineup, Chappell said, "Jaiswal's journey encapsulates why India's planning and infrastructure give them a clear edge in world cricket." The contrast between India and Australia's approach to youth cricket development was a key focus of Chappell's column. He emphasized that India's extensive domestic structure and emphasis on long-form cricket at junior levels have cultivated a pipeline of highly skilled players. "A comparison with Australia's Nathan McSweeney is illuminating," Chappell observed. "At 22, Jaiswal has already played 14 Tests, 30 first-class matches, 32 List A games, and 53 IPL matches. In contrast, McSweeney, 25, has just debuted in Tests, with fewer domestic appearances across formats." Chappell praised the role of Rahul Dravid, who has been instrumental in shaping India's junior cricket programs. Under Dravid's leadership, India's focus on red-ball cricket at the grassroots level has paid dividends. "India's system prioritises long-form cricket at the youth level. This ensures players are well-versed in the nuances of the game. When India's U-19 team plays other countries, it often feels like men playing against boys in terms of game awareness," Chappell noted. Chappell, a stalwart of Australian cricket, also warned Cricket Australia about the potential long-term consequences of their current development pathways. He criticised the limited competitive opportunities available to young Australian cricketers, which he believes stunts their growth.

# Hope one day we can reunite: Parth Jindal's emotional goodbye to Rishabh Pant

**Delhi Capitals co-owner Parth Jindal bid an emotional farewell to Rishabh Pant after the batter left for LSG. Jindal hoped that DC and Rishabh would reunite again in future.**

**New Delhi.** Delhi Capitals' co-owner Parth Jindal bid an emotional goodbye to Rishabh Pant after the player was bought by Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL auction. Pant, who had spent 9 years at the Delhi Capitals, was bought by LSG for a record-shattering sum of Rs 27 crore. On Tuesday, 26 November, Parth Jindal

took to Twitter to post a heartfelt message for Rishabh Pant. Jindal called Pant his brother and said that he has always treated him as family. The co-owner then wished Pant the best for his future endeavours and hoped to be reunited with him once again in the near future. "To Rishabh Pant, you are and will always remain my younger brother - from the bottom of my heart I love you and I have tried everything to make sure you are happy and have treated you like my family. I am very sad to see you go and I am very emotional about it. You will always be in DC and I hope one day we can reunite. Thank you for everything Rishabh and remember that we will always love you - go well champ, the world is at your feet. Best wishes from all of us at Delhi Capitals - other than when you play DC I will be cheering and hoping for the best for you!" Parth Jindal wrote on Twitter.



Pant was in high demand in the mega-auction with SunRisers Hyderabad, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, LSG and DC vying for the signature of the player. While RCB dropped out for Pant at Rs 11 crore, LSG and SRH went through a bidding war till Rs 20.50 crore, after which SRH dropped out. Delhi swooped in at the last minute, to exercise their Right To Match, which was eventually beaten by LSG's record bid of Rs 27 crore.

### IPL Auction 2025: Day 2 Highlights

The former Delhi Capitals captain also took to Twitter and bid goodbye to the franchise a day after he was sold in the IPL auction. "Goodbyes are never easy. The journey with Delhi Capitals has been nothing short of amazing. From the thrills on the field to the moments off it, I've grown in ways I never imagined. I came here as a teenager and we grew together over the last nine years," Rishabh Pant wrote on Instagram.

"What made this journey all worthwhile is you, the fans. You've embraced me, cheered for me and stood by me in one of the toughest phases of my life. As I move on, I carry your love and support in my heart. I'll look forward to entertain you whenever I take the field. Thank you for being my family and making this journey so special," he further added.

## Seven all out! Ivory Coast record lowest ever men's T20 international score

**New Delhi.** Nigeria routed Ivory Coast by a staggering 264 runs in a T20 World Cup Sub-Regional Africa Qualifier Group C match on Sunday. The Ivory Coast's total of just seven runs shattered the record for the lowest-ever score in men's T20 international cricket, surpassing the previous mark of 10 runs, jointly held by Mongolia and the Isle of Man. Playing at Lagos' Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, Nigeria's Selim Salau lit up the stage with a blistering knock of 112 off just 53 balls, studded with 13 fours and two sixes. Supported by half-centuries from Sulaimon Runsewe (50 off 29 balls) and Isaac Okpe (an unbeaten 65 off 23 balls), Nigeria posted an imposing 271 for 4 - the highest score of the tournament so far. In response, Ivory Coast's batting unravelled spectacularly. Opener Ouattara Mohamed was the only batter to manage a meaningful contribution,



scoring four runs. The rest of the lineup folded in just 7.3 overs, with six batters falling for ducks. Left-arm spinner Isaac Danladi and pacer Prosper Useni claimed three wickets apiece, with Peter Aho and Sylvester Okpe chipping in to complete the rout. This historic capitulation marked the first single-digit total in men's T20Is. The 264-run defeat is now the third-largest margin in

the format, trailing Zimbabwe's 290-run win over Gambia in October and Nepal's 273-run triumph over Mongolia at the 2023 Asian Games.

Ivory Coast's latest struggles followed a similarly lopsided loss to Sierra Leone, where they were bowled out for 21. The back-to-back defeats have left them anchored to the bottom of the six-team standings. Nigeria, on the other hand, remain unbeaten and sit atop the table, buoyed by their strong performances. For Nigeria, the win further underscores their growing stature in African cricket. For Ivory Coast, this record-breaking defeat will demand serious introspection as they seek to recover from a nightmare start to their

## AUS vs IND: Australia to retain 13-member squad for Adelaide Test despite Perth loss

**AUS vs IND: Australia coach and selector confirmed that the hosts would not make any changes to their squad for the Adelaide Test against India despite the 295-run defeat at the Optus Stadium in Perth.**

**New Delhi.** Australia retained their 13-member squad for their second Test against India, confirmed selector and coach Andrew McDonald. On Monday, the Aussies lost the Perth Test by 295 runs to go 0-1 down in the five-match series against India. It was also the first time Australia lost at the Optus Stadium after winning four matches on the trot since 2018. McDonald, however, showed faith in their squad to make a turnaround in the Pink-Ball Test, starting December 6 at the Adelaide Oval. "The same people in that changeroom are the same people that will be in Adelaide. It is always a consideration, wherever you go in the world in terms of the personnel you pick for conditions," Johnson said, as quoted by ICC. The ones who were a part of the Australian squad, but



did not play the Perth Test, were wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis and fast bowler Scott Boland. McDonald also backed the out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne to find his feet after failing in the opening Test. In the first innings, Marnus scored 2 off 52 balls before Mohammed Siraj ended his painful vigil. In the second innings, Jasprit Bumrah trapped him plumb in front. "That's an ongoing discussion and that ebbs and flows in players' careers, so at the moment he's in one of those patches and no doubt he'll be getting critiqued externally. But internally we're really confident that, at his best, he's the player that we need," McDonald added. In the Perth Test, Australia would have fancied their chances after bowling India out for 150 in the first innings. But India made a comeback through Jasprit Bumrah's five-wicket haul, after which Yashasvi Jaiswal and Virat Kohli scored hundreds.

## RR can provide a good environment for Suryavanshi to grow: Rahul Dravid

**NEW DELHI.** Rajasthan Royals head coach Rahul Dravid believes the franchise can offer 13-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi the ideal environment to develop his talent during his upcoming stint in the Indian Premier League (IPL). The eighth-grade student from Samastipur, Bihar, made history by securing a Rs 1.10 crore contract with the Royals, becoming the youngest cricketer ever to earn an IPL deal. "I think he's (Suryavanshi) got some really good skills, so we thought it might be a good environment for him to grow in. Vaibhav just came to our trials and we were really happy with what he saw," said Dravid in an IPL video.

Suryavanshi's meteoric rise has already made waves in Indian cricket. The eighth-standard student from Samastipur, Bihar, recently became the youngest batter to score an international century, smashing a 62-ball 104 in a Youth Test for India U-19 against Australia U-19 in Chennai. He also debuted in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy last Saturday, scoring 13 off six balls for Bihar. Despite these

achievements, Suryavanshi is still finding his footing in first-class cricket. Having debuted at just 12 years and 284 days in the Ranji Trophy last season, he averaged 10 across five matches, with a top score of 41. However, his stellar performance in the Vinoo Mankad Trophy, where he



scored nearly 400 runs in five matches, has cemented his reputation as a rising star on the junior circuit. While the acquisition of Suryavanshi has captured headlines, Dravid shed light on the team's broader strategy during the auction. "A big target for us in this auction really was bowlers," he revealed. Rajasthan Royals

strengthened their pace department with additions like Jofra Archer, Akash Madhwal, Tushar Deshpande, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Ashok Sharma, and Kwen Maphaka. For spin options, they secured Kumar Kartikeya Singh and Maheesh Theekshana, alongside all-rounders Wanindu Hasaranga and Yuvhvir Charak. "We came into this auction having retained a lot of our core Indian batsmen. We wanted a strong bowling attack, and I think we achieved that," Dravid explained. "With players like Jofra and the unique skills he brings, backed by left-arm options like Farooqi and Maphaka, we've got the versatility we were looking for." Dravid also highlighted the challenges and excitement of navigating the auction dynamics. "There are nine other teams, all well-prepared and planned. You have to think on your feet and have plans A, B, C, and D. It was challenging but incredibly rewarding." With a mix of promising young talent like Suryavanshi and seasoned bowlers, the Royals appear ready to make a mark in the upcoming IPL season.

# From Brett Lee to Spencer Johnson: KKR's love for explosive Australian pacers in IPL

**KKR bought Spencer Johnson for INR 2.80 crore in the auction**  
**Johnson recently took a 5-wicket haul against Pakistan**  
**KKR roped in Johnson after releasing Mitchell Starc**

**NEW DELHI.** After letting go off Mitchell Starc, who terrorised the Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Qualifier 1 and Final of the last season of the Indian Premier League (IPL), Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) lacked a genuine pacer in their ranks. From Shoib Akhtar, Umar Gul, Shane Bond, Trent Boult to Charl Langeveldt, a number of marquee fast bowlers have donned the KKR jersey over the years since the inception of the tournament back in 2008. But the Knights have always had an



inclination towards quality Australian fast bowlers. Who could forget the lethal delivery, the opening ball of IPL 2013 that Unmukt Chand had no clue about? Interestingly, Lee, who made a move from Punjab Kings, was the first out-and-out fast bowler that played for the Knights. Lee played only three games that season, but it marked the beginning of KKR's love-affair with Australian speedsters. After Lee, the Knights had as many as six Aussie pacers in their team, including Pat Cummins, John Hastings, Nathan Courter-Nile, Mitchell Johnson,

Starc and now Spencer Johnson. In the auction that took place in Jeddah on November 24 and 25, the Knight Riders engaged in a mini-bidding-war for Spencer with the Kings before bagging the seamer for INR 2.80 crore from a base price of INR 2 crore. As far as the upcoming IPL is concerned, the Knights will be looking to make use of Johnson, who has come up the ranks. Now let's have a look at Johnson's short career. Impressive Spencer Johnson Johnson has had a short career for Australia, having played only eight T20Is since his

debut last year against South Africa at the Kingsmead in Durban. But it was only recently that Johnson made a mark. The left-armed holds the record for the best figures by an Australian pacer in Men's T20Is. Johnson broke James Faulkner's record set back in 2016 against Pakistan during the T20 World Cup. His figures of 4-0-26-5 rattled the Pakistani batting lineup at the Sydney Cricket Ground. It wasn't a surprise that Johnson won the Player of the Match award after the Aussies won by 13 runs. Earlier this year, Johnson bagged the POTM award in the final as the Brisbane Heat won the Big Bash League (BBL) after beating multiple champions Sydney Sixers at the SCG. He finished with figures of 4-0-26-4, helping the Heat bowl the Sixers out for 112 in 17.3 overs while defending 166. Johnson also bagged the limelight after bowling 19 dot balls out of 20 on debut in the Hundred Men's competition. Playing for Oval Invincibles against Manchester Originals, Johnson had figures of 20-19-1-3. Given his past records in tournaments around the world, KKR will be keen to unleash the fast bowler. Being a left-arm pacer, Johnson can also be their 'X' factor in the championship.





# Mahira Sharma

Dating Mohammed Siraj? Actress' Latest Photos Leave Fans Wondering



Mahira Sharma often shares gorgeous photos of herself on social media, leaving everyone impressed. Recently too, the Bigg Boss 13 star took to her Instagram handle and shared a series of pictures in which she was seen posing in a stunning backless traditional outfit. While netizens were impressed with Mahira's sartorial choice, something else caught everyone's attention. Soon after Mahira shared the pictures online, several social media users noticed that cricketer Mohammed Siraj also liked her post. It has left everyone wondering if something is cooking between the two. It should also be noted Mahira and Siraj have never been spotted together. Therefore, the like from the cricketer has left fans even more intrigued about a possible connection between them.

Mahira Sharma was previously dating Paras Chhabra. The two met for the first time in Bigg Boss 13 house and fell in love with each other. However, they parted ways in 2023 when Mahira even unfollowed Paras on Instagram. Later, Paras also confirmed their breakup and told ETimes, "Yes, we have not been talking to each other after a fight over petty issues for more than a week. But aisi fights toh hamari hamesha hoti rahi hain, even when we were inside the Bigg Boss house. I never thought that it will lead to a breakup."

Asked about Mahira unfollowing him on Instagram, Paras added, "I am equally puzzled and shocked by the news. I don't know why Mahira unfollowed me or deleted our pictures from her social media account. I shifted to Mumbai on April 1 and Mahira shifted on March 15. Since then I have been pretty busy and unpacking my stuff and arranging things here. My mom too has come here to stay with me while Mahira is staying with her mom." Meanwhile, on the work front, Mahira Sharma was recently seen in a music video titled 'Without You'.

## Yuvika Chaudhary

And Prince Narula's Marriage In Trouble? Video Sparks Rumours

Prince Narula and Yuvika Chaudhary welcomed their baby girl in October 2024, but is there trouble in paradise? A viral video has sparked speculation about tension in their marriage. In the video, Prince revealed that he was kept in the dark about the delivery date. While in Pune he was shocked to learn about the birth of their daughter and rushed to the hospital in confusion. He admitted that even his parents were upset, questioning how he was unaware of such a significant event. Adding fuel to the fire, Prince further shared that Yuvika and her mother decided to stay at her mother's house for 45 days after the baby's birth, a decision he reluctantly agreed to, keeping her comfort in mind. This has sparked rumours about the couple's relationship. According to a report in Zee News, amid the rumours of trouble in their marriage, fans noticed that Yuvika did not post anything for Prince Narula on his birthday, which fell on November 24.



While Prince shared many photos with their daughter, Ekleen, and showered her with love using the hashtag #prileen, there was no mention of Yuvika in his post. Additionally, Yuvika did not share anything for Prince's birthday, sparking further speculation about a possible rift in their relationship.

But the couple is yet to address the rumours, leaving fans to wonder about the truth. Prince and Yuvika got married in 2018 after meeting on the sets of Bigg Boss 9. After six years of marriage, the couple welcomed their daughter in October 2024, though they've kept her face private so far. Fans are eagerly awaiting a glimpse of the little one.



### Glimpses From Prabhas And Hanu Raghavapudi's Period Film Fauji Leaked



Pan-India star Prabhas and Hanu Raghavapudi's upcoming period film is currently making waves. The actor's collaboration with the filmmaker was launched in a grand manner, and since then several reports about the film's genre and the budget have leaked. Now, a cascade of pictures of the set, the vintage cars, and the buses have spread across the internet. It is rumoured that the shooting is being done in Hyderabad's Alipore jail, where Subhash Chandra Bose was imprisoned in the 1930s. It is worth noting that the Alipore Jail trial of 1908-1909 marked a turning point in India's independence movement, inspiring young revolutionaries. Tentatively titled Fauji, the film is said to be a grand period war-based romantic drama set against the backdrop of World War 2. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Prabhas is all set to essay the role of a soldier in this period actioner and Iman Vellani is rumoured to be roped in as the female lead.

The music for the film will be composed by Vishal Chandrashekhar, while Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao took the editing duty, and the cinematography is handled by Sudeep Chatterjee to offer audiences a never-before-seen narrative of love. According to reports, the film is set to be a grand cinematic venture with a whopping budget of Rs 400 crore.

Earlier, the makers shared a poster announcing the upcoming film on their social media handle. "When wars were a battle for supremacy, ONE WARRIOR redefined what they were FOUGHT for #PrabhasHanu, a HISTORICAL FICTION set in the 1940s. Shoot begins soon," read the Instagram post.

Coming to Prabhas' work front, the actor has an exciting lineup of films in the pipeline, including The Raja Saab, Kalki 2898 AD sequel, and Salaar 2. Written and directed by Maruthi, the shooting for The Raja Saab is expected to wrap up by the end of this year. The film is bankrolled by TG Vishwa Prasad under the banner of People's Media Factory. Starring Nidhi Agerwal, Anupam Kher, Murali Sharma, Malavika Mohanan, Sanjay Dutt, Jisshu Sengupta, and Yogi Babu, among others, The Raja Saab will hit the theatres in Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi.

### Zaheer Iqbal Gushes Over Wife Sonakshi Sinha, Calls Her 'Hottest'



Zaheer Iqbal and Sonakshi Sinha are avid travel enthusiasts. The couple is currently in Italy to celebrate their five-month anniversary. In his latest Instagram post, Zaheer heaped praises on his wife Sonakshi. The actor shared a picture of Sonakshi dressed in an oversized white hoodie. The Dabangg star was seen sitting next to a heater as she posed for the image captured by Zaheer. Comparing his wife to the heater, Zaheer circled it and tagged it as hot. Then, he drew an arrow over Sonakshi's head and called her "hottest". Take a look:

A day ago, Sonakshi Sinha shared a funny video of them strolling on the streets of Florence. Dressed in her winter best, the actress came up with a funny caption as the couple were seen engaging in a fun banter. Sharing the video, Sonakshi wrote, "Ek toh thandi... aur phir yeh aadmi. Silly postcard from Florence... enjoy!" Take a look: During her appearance on Kareena Kapoor's chat show What Women Want, Sonakshi Sinha revealed that she confessed her feelings to Zaheer within just a week of meeting him. Describing it as "love at first sight", the actress said, "Maine Zaheer ko ek hafte mein hi bol diya tha ki I love you. I was very excited. There was some recognition, koi click hota hai na jab aap jaante ho ki ye aapka hi insaan hai and this is your person. That sort of happened with me, and it never happened with me before. I always used to take my time, but with him, it was instant."

Sonakshi admitted she was the first to fall in love, while Zaheer took his time. She added, "Ladko ko thoda time bhi lagta hai. He is one of those boys jo apna time lagaate hai. Wo bhi ek stage pe tha jahan par usko pata tha agar main padunga ismein toh ye permanent hi hoga. Isliye he took his time." Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal dated for over seven years before getting married on June 23 this year in a private ceremony at Sonakshi's Mumbai residence. Their registered marriage was followed by a star-studded reception attended by Bollywood icons like Salman Khan, Huma Qureshi, Rekha, and Kajol.