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J&K Assembly Speaker rejects BJP's resignation demand

Sanjay Kumar Jammu, Nov 07: Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday rejected the BJP's demand for his resignation...

Marshals remove BJP MLA after a brawl breaks out over a banner on the restoration of Article 370 displayed by Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) MLA and brother of Lok Sabha MP Engineer Rashid, Khurshid Ahmad Sheikh in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly session, in Srinagar on Thursday...

by the House itself. The Speaker has limited power in these issues as he has to preside, count, and give decisions based on the facts in front of him...

'Bolster multifaceted partnership': India on ties with US under new Trump presidency

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Nov 07: India is looking to bolster its broad and multifaceted partnership with the US, especially in areas such as trade, technology and mobility of professionals...

partnership is a very special and a multifaceted partnership... Prime Minister conveyed to the President-elect that we look forward to working very closely,



as we had done with him earlier as well, to further strengthen the India-US comprehensive global and strategic partnership...

Jaiswal said. Two-way trade in goods and services touched \$190 billion in 2023, making the US India's second-largest trading partner. Noting that India and the US were able to resolve all seven of their pending trade disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO) earlier this year...

'Courtesy call', Kalyan after meeting Shah in Delhi

Naresh Malhotra New Delhi, Nov 07: Jana Sena Party president and Andhra Pradesh deputy chief minister Pawan Kalyan met Union home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday and had a brief discussion about various issues...

assumed charge as the deputy chief minister of the state on June 12. "He briefly explained about the initiative taken by him as a minister



of panchayati raj and rural development, environment and forests," a Jana Sena leader familiar with the development said on condition of anonymity...

the implementation of pre-election promises made by the NDA, apart from the prevailing political situation in the state," the Jana Sena leader added. However, the sudden decision of Kalyan to rush to Delhi to meet Shah raised many eyebrows in the political circles in the state...

'Insult of Babasaheb Ambedkar': Rahul Gandhi reacts to BJP's 'red' Constitution attack

New Delhi, Nov 07: Reacting to Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis' 'red' Constitution remark, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi said on Thursday that the BJP has insulted Dalit



icon and scholar, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the release of Mahavikas Aghadi (MVA) guarantees for the Maharashtra assembly election...

thinking of BJP is an insult to the Constitution maker, Maharashtra's son Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. During the Lok Sabha elections, the people of Maharashtra fought for the Constitution and gave a big victory to Maha Vikas Aghadi. The people of Maharashtra will not tolerate the insult of Babasaheb by the BJP...

Congress anti-Hindu, 'B-Team of Muslim League': Nitesh Rane

ST Correspondent Mumbai, Nov 07: "We saw Congress' manifesto yesterday, it is a copy of the manifesto of BJP and Mahayuti. Rahul Gandhi should have clarified yesterday how many guarantees the Congress gave in Karnataka and other Congress-ruled states have fulfilled...



they violate the High Court's order. What Raj Thackeray ji is saying, and what every Hindu activist says, is that if there is to be religious harmony in Maharashtra, and if one law is to apply to all religions, then the laws that apply to Hindus must also apply to others...

What is being done to restore Delhi Ridge?

New Delhi, Nov 07: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the DDA about the measures undertaken to restore the Delhi Ridge area, where several hundred trees were allegedly felled illegally...

SC says 'compromise' can't be basis for dismissal of sexual harassment case

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, Nov 07: The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that a sexual harassment case cannot be dismissed on the basis of a 'compromise' reached between the accused and the complainant...

Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) to quash a sexual harassment case on the basis of a compromise agreement between the accused and the complainant. The case pertains to the sexual harassment of a 15-year-old girl...

from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Reportedly, a compromise was reached between the girl's family and the accused...



order. Though the Supreme Court initially observed that an unaffected party cannot file a plea in a criminal case, it eventually decided to examine the issue. The apex court ordered for the victim's father and the accused to be made a party to the case.

reached between the girl's family and the accused, wherein the latter said that they registered a complaint due to a misunderstanding and no longer wished for any action to be taken against Gupta. Based on this agreement, the accused moved the Rajasthan High Court for dismissal of the case...

MEA flags threat to Indian diplomats in Canada

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Nov 07: As the ongoing tensions between India and Canada continue to be on the rise amid a diplomatic showdown, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said that threat to Indian diplomats in Ottawa has increased...

Addressing a media briefing in Delhi, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that New Delhi had asked for security for the Indian diplomats for consular camp, however, it was not provided by the Canadian government. "Over the last year or even more, the kind of things that we have seen attacking Indian diplomats, threatening, intimidating, harassing Indian diplomats," he added...

Palestinian militant group Hamas has issued a statement urging US President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration to make "stop the war" in Gaza a priority. The statement comes amid reports that Trump recently advised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to conclude the military conflict before his inauguration on January 20...



Benjamin Netanyahu to conclude the military conflict before his inauguration on January 20, following his electoral victory over Vice President Kamala Harris. "In light of the initial results showing Donald Trump

winning in the U.S. presidential elections," Hamas responded to the election results, and they expect Trump to "listen to the voices that have been raised by the U.S. public for more than a year regarding the [Israeli] aggression on the Gaza Strip." Dig deeper: India's batting lineup wobbling and collapsing to New Zealand at home is good news for Australia ahead of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy...

Bhulaiyaa 3 and Ajay Devgn's Singham Again. As the numbers roll in, Anees Bazmee is revelling in the success of his film. Notably, Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, starring Kartik Aaryan, has trailed slightly behind Rohit Shetty's cop drama. However, Anees remains unfazed and is focusing on the impressive performance of his film...

## News box

## No physical education teachers in over 50 per cent govt schools in Dindigul district

**DINDIGUL:** Of the 170 government higher secondary schools in Dindigul district, 93 lack physical education teachers while 30 schools have no playgrounds, an RTI reply revealed. Dindigul district is divided into 15 education divisions — Atoor, Bathlagundu, Dindigul City, Dindigul Rural, Kuzhiyamparai, Kodaikanal, Natham, Nilakottai, Ottanchatram, Palani Rural, Rediyar Chatram, Shanarpatti, Thomppampatti, Vadamadurai, Vedasandur. Speaking to TNIE, RTI activist K Rathispandian said, "When the Chief Minister's Trophy Games 2024 were held, there was poor response from the schools which lacked physical education teachers and playgrounds. There are many government lands available in the villages near the government schools.

About 1-3 acres of land is enough for sports training. But, the education department and headmasters have not taken any steps to help the students. Many schools do not have a physical education period either. I do not know why the education department does not care about the importance of physical education, as it promotes fitness, overall health and well-being. Lack of physical education during school hours causes potential friction among students and paves the way for low self-esteem." An official from the district education department said, "Many parents and students are upset with the issue. Besides, there is no space available in most of the schools for playgrounds.

These are long pending issues and we have informed our superiors. The vacancies will be filled based on deputations and transfers. We are using the help from the district sports office to conduct various sporting events."

## New parameters to test liquor quality soon

**VIJAYAWADA:** Excise and Prohibition Minister Kollu Ravindra has said the State government will introduce new standards and procedures to ensure the quality of liquor. As many as 13 parameters will be introduced to test the blending, and extra-neutral alcohol and gas chromatography tests will be made available at the regional excise laboratories in Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Chittoor, Kurnool and Kakinada to ensure that all types of liquor is tested as per the guidelines and regulations of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). In an official release on Wednesday, Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra said the existing testing process, which is limited to testing only extra-neutral alcohol (ENA) based on six parameters, will be modernised and more quality parameters will be added.

Until now, regional excise laboratories used to test extra-neutral alcohol based on basic parameters such as ethyl alcohol, acidity, aldehydes, methanol and water content. Till now Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) used to be tested before bottling, and alcohol strength (percentage) was the only parameter. "From now onwards, the government will make comprehensive changes in the system, adopting advanced technology, and will conduct a few more tests to ensure the quality of liquor," he explained. As part of modernisation of the system, 13 parameters have been set for testing ENA, and nine parameters for testing blended liquor such as whisky, brandy, vodka and gin before bottling. "The new quality standards will help prevent chemical reaction," he added.

## Food poisoning case reported at Mancheril Tribal Welfare Girls' School, 12 students hospitalised

**ADILABAD:** While the food poisoning incident at the Wankidi Tribal Welfare Girls' Residential School is yet to fade from memory, a fresh case has now been reported from the Tribal Welfare Girls' Residential School (Ashram school) in Mancheril district. Twelve Class 10 students reportedly experienced vomiting and stomach pain after eating breakfast in the hostel mess on Wednesday. The school staff shifted the affected students to a Mancheril hospital for treatment. Doctors said that all students were in stable condition, according to Mancheril Collector Kumar Deepak.

The district collector visited the hospital, interacted with the students, and discussed their health condition with the doctors. He confirmed that food safety officials collected samples of the food and water served at the school and sent them to a laboratory for analysis. A medical camp was also set up at the school to treat other students exhibiting similar symptoms.

The collector asserted that purified drinking water is supplied through an RO plant at the school. Additionally, samples of pickles brought by students from home have been sent for testing. In the Wankidi Mandal Tribal Welfare Girls' Residential School, the recent food poisoning incident led to the hospitalisation of 78 students, of whom 10 are still receiving treatment at various hospitals, including the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad. Three students remain at NIMS, and four more were transferred there on Wednesday for better care. Three others are being treated in Mancheril.

## Ration shops in Kerala on the brink of closure as govt commissions fail to cover expenses

**KOCHI:** ARD-1, the first fair price shop (FPS) in Changanassery taluk, shut down on March 31, 2023, marking the end of an era. Established when rationing began in Kerala, this FPS in Kurishumoodu was operated by Joseph Kunju's family for decades. Kunju's children urged him to close the shop to curb losses. Now dependent on them for livelihood, Kunju reflects, "Leaving my lifelong career was painful, but dwindling returns and rising operational costs made running the shop unsustainable." Kunju's story echoes the plight of FPS dealers statewide, highlighting the challenges facing this once-essential institution. This isn't an isolated case. Many FPSs, or ration shops as they are known commonly, once vital in feeding thousands, now struggle to sustain themselves. Government commissions fail to cover expenses and delayed payments add to the woes, according to the Kerala State Retail Ration Dealers' Association, the umbrella organisation of FPS dealers. High wages and rent are dealing a heavy blow, says association president G Krishnaprasad. This sentiment is echoed by many dealers struggling to make ends

meet. Unless the commission paid to dealers is significantly increased, many FPS owners may be forced to shut down their shops, he adds. The association estimates that more than 150 shops have downed shutters in the recent past.

N Shijeer, the organising secretary of the association, told TNIE that the current commission structure for FPS was formulated in 2018, when electronic point of sale (E-PoS) machines were introduced, and has remained unchanged since. "The existing structure ensures a monthly commission of Rs 18,000 for selling 45 quintals of foodgrain," Shijeer explains. "This comprises Rs 8,500 in government support and Rs 220 per quintal." Despite repeated requests, the commission structure has not been revised in the last six years, he says. For shops selling above 45 quintals, the additional income works out to Rs 180 per quintal. While there are some shops in Wayanad and Malappuram, which have more than 2,000 ration cards, a majority of the FPSs in the state have 200 to 300 cards on average. Shijeer points out that the



payments are often delayed for months, putting the dealers under severe stress. Food and Civil Supplies Minister G R Anil acknowledges that there are payment delays and issues affecting dealers. He avers the government is working to address these problems. To improve the financial viability of FPS owners, the government is upgrading FPS into K-stores, which will provide better returns, he says. "According to a study conducted by the department, around 2,000 FPSs face difficulties due to income crises, but some shops with over 2,500 cards earn more than Rs 1 lakh in commission. The government recognises

Kerala's high standard of living and aspirations, but notes that increasing commission payments for FPS owners is constrained by the fact that the public distribution system (PDS) is a service," Anil says. To enhance earnings for FPS dealers, the government plans to introduce additional services, such as retailing bottled drinking water, which can generate good commissions, the minister points out.

"A further expansion of services under FPS aims to ensure that dealers receive decent returns," he adds. Policy experts point out that before moving to a targeted PDS system in 1997, Kerala was recognised for having the best PDS in the nation, catering to almost all of its citizens and making a significant impact on nutrition.

A drastic reduction of the above poverty line (APL) subsidy led to these households leaving the PDS, shrinking the customer base of ration shops and leading many of them to closure. Computerisation of the system also dealt a blow to the FPS operators as it reduced the scope for the diversion of grains into the black market.

## Eluru police launch Abhaya App

Initiative aims to provide a platform to women to report crimes anonymously

**VIJAYAWADA:** In a major step towards improving women's safety, the Eluru district police launched a mobile application named 'Abhaya' on Wednesday. The app aims to provide a safe and secure environment for women across the district. Speaking at the launch, District Superintendent of Police (SP) K Pratap Shiva Kishore emphasised that the Abhaya initiative represents a significant commitment by the police to protect women and prevent violence against them. SP Kishore praised the contributions of women in the police force, calling them the 'real heroes' and citing Kiran Bedi, India's first female Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, as a key inspiration for the programme. According to the SP, the app was developed to act as a 'beacon of hope and protection,' especially in emergency situations. "Through this app, women can find critical resources and support when they face threatening situations," he said. "Our aim is to create an environment



where women can feel safe and are assured that the police are there to protect them." The Abhaya app allows women to report crimes or incidents anonymously, offering a layer of confidentiality to encourage more women to come forward. An online form available at <https://formurl.com/to/abhaya> allows women to report incidents directly to the police, ensuring a quick response under the SP's direct supervision. "Often,

women hesitate to report incidents due to fear of backlash or further problems," he explained. "The anonymity feature removes this barrier, enabling more women to come forward without hesitation." For additional support, a dedicated helpline number, 9550351100, has been set up for women in distress. The SP also highlighted the key role of Village Women Protection Secretaries in the initiative.

These officers maintain close connections with local communities, enabling them to gather information quickly and relay it to police authorities. This ground-level support is crucial for proactive crime prevention, SP Kishore noted. To strengthen the initiative, the SP encouraged female officers to take on active roles in police stations. "We want women officers to listen to complainants with respect and respond promptly. We're also creating opportunities for women to serve as writers in police stations, helping them grow professionally," he said.

## Limited resources at Jangaon government hospital affect quality patient care



**JANGAON:** The absence of facilities and staff shortage at the Jangaon District Government Hospital has reportedly affected the ability of doctors and other healthcare staff to provide quality care to patients. In the meantime, private diagnostic centres in the town are capitalising on the gap created by the lack of essential equipment in the government hospital. Recently, with the announcement of a government medical college in the district, the existing government hospital

was converted into a teaching hospital. Sources said that for the past seven years, the CT scan room and other laboratories have been locked. Due to inadequate funding, severe staff shortages and a lack of essential equipment, the hospital is now on the brink of closure, the sources added. Despite these conditions, poor patients from remote villages continue to seek treatment at the Jangaon District Government Hospital. With the CT scanner out of order, doctors are referring patients to

private diagnostic centres. Although it is expected to deliver high-level care as a teaching hospital, the Jangaon government hospital currently provides only basic first aid to accident victims. Patients are advised to go to hospitals in Hyderabad, including OGH and Gandhi, or other private facilities for emergency treatment. This entails a journey of at least 90 kilometres, taking around three hours. Ambulances with ventilator support charge approximately ₹15,000 for a one-way trip. The government hospital treats between 600 and 700 outpatients daily and has inpatient services with 125 beds. However, given the lack of equipment and staff, its ability to provide effective treatment is severely compromised, the sources added. Dr D Gopal Rao, principal of the Government Medical College, Jangaon, and in-charge of the District Government Hospital, told TNIE, "We have already submitted a report to the Telangana State Medical Infrastructure Development Corporation (TGMIDC) for the approval of funds to procure a new CT scanner for the hospital."

## Kerala school sports meet: Thiruvananthapuram dominates swimming, tops tally

**The district led with 91 golds, 76 silvers and 79 bronzes. It has scored 853 points.**

**KOCHI:** As the 21st Kerala State School Sports Meet completed the third day, out of 529 events, 348 have been completed. On the third day, Thiruvananthapuram continued to dominate the points table. The district led with 91 golds, 76 silvers and 79 bronzes. It has scored 853 points. Kannur followed in the second position with 49 golds, 37 silvers and 51 bronzes with a total point of 469. Hosts Ernakulam stood 6th with 286 points. The swimming pool seemed to have been taken over by the swimmers from Thiruvananthapuram. The swimmers from the district gave no leeway to others and continued to rake in gold medals besides breaking records. On the 3rd day, after 56 of the 103 swimming events were completed, Thiruvananthapuram swimmers bagged 41 golds and stood far



ahead of other districts with 353 points. Ernakulam came a distant second with 8 golds and 101 points. In aquatics, MVHSS Thundathil continued to dominate the pool and came out as the top achiever with 89 points.

## Athletics begins today

The fourth day of the sports meet will see athletes setting the track of the main venue Ernakulam Maharaja's College Stadium on fire. The athletics competitions will get

under way on Thursday. In all, 2,700 athletes will participate in athletics competitions. Registration for the competitions started on Wednesday. Competitions for teachers will be held on the last day.

The athletics events will begin with the senior boys' 5000m walk. This will be followed by senior girls' 3000m walk and the junior boys' 300m walk. Then sub-junior boys' high jump, 400m run, shot put, 4x100m

relay, sub-junior girls' 400m run, long jump, shot put, 4x100m relay, junior boys' pole vault, hammer throw, long jump, junior girls' shot put, 3000m run, 400m run, high jump, long jump and 4x100m relay events will be held. Senior boys' long jump.

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NEWS BOX

Wildfires spread across Southern California, destroying homes and prompting evacuations

CAMARILLO. California was lashed by powerful winds Wednesday that fed a fast-moving wildfire, which destroyed dozens of homes and forced thousands of residents to flee as forecasters warned of the potential for "extreme and life-threatening" blazes.

Northwest of Los Angeles, the Mountain Fire exploded in size and prompted evacuation orders for more than 10,000 people as it threatened 3,500 structures in suburban communities, ranches and agricultural areas around Camarillo, according to a statement from Gov. Gavin Newsom. The area east of the Pacific coast city of Ventura will receive federal assistance after a request from Newsom was granted, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said Wednesday. The blaze was burning in a region that has seen some of California's most destructive fires over the years. A thick plume of smoke rose hundreds of feet into the sky Wednesday, blanketing whole neighborhoods and limiting visibility for firefighters and evacuees. The fire grew from less than half of a square mile to 16 square miles (62 square kilometers) in little more than five hours. Ventura County Fire Captain Trevor Johnson described crews racing with their engines to homes threatened by the flames to save lives. "This is as intense as it gets. The hair on the back of the firefighters' neck I'm sure was standing up," he said during a news conference Wednesday afternoon. At one spot, flames licked the burning remains of a home. Its roof was reduced to only a few charred shingles. Two people suffered apparent smoke inhalation and were taken to hospitals, fire officials said. No firefighters reported significant injuries. The erratic winds and limited visibility grounded fixed-wing aircraft, and gusts topped 61 mph (98 kph), said weather service meteorologist Bryan Lewis. Water-dropping helicopters were still flying.

First responders pleaded with residents to evacuate. Deputies made contact with 14,000 people to urge them to leave as embers spread up to 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) away and sparked new flames.

"This fire is moving dangerously fast," Ventura County Fire Chief Dustin Gardner said. Aerial footage from local television networks showed dozens of homes in flames across several neighborhoods as embers were whipped from home to home. Other footage captured horses trotting alongside evacuating vehicles.

Not The Outcome We Had Hoped For: Obama Congratulates Trump On Election Victory

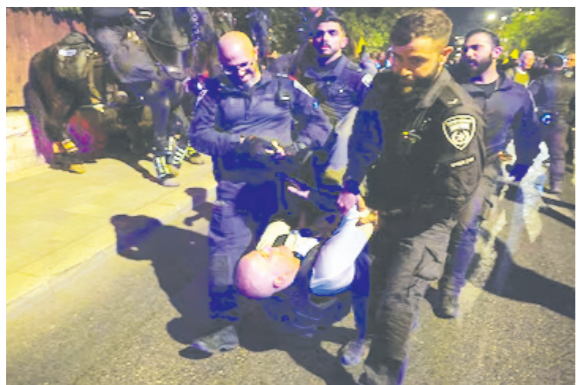
World. Former president Barack Obama on Wednesday congratulated Donald Trump on his election victory, noting the importance of a peaceful transfer of power. Obama's comments stand in stark contrast with Trump's unprecedented refusal four years ago to concede defeat to Joe Biden, culminating with the violent attack by his supporters on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

This is obviously not the outcome we had hoped for," Obama said in a statement. "But living in a democracy is about recognizing that our point of view won't always win out, and being willing to accept the peaceful



transfer of power. "The ex-president also voiced pride over the efforts of Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate Tim Walz, who were soundly beaten in the election. Obama called them "two extraordinary public servants who ran a remarkable campaign."

Man Attempts Ramming Attack In East Jerusalem, Shot Dead By Israeli Police



World. A suspect was shot and killed after he attempted a ramming attack in Anata, East Jerusalem, early Thursday, Israeli authorities said. According to police, the driver accelerated towards officers and ignored orders to stop. Fearing for their safety, Border Police fired at the vehicle, neutralising the suspect. There were no reports of any injuries from the incident, the Jerusalem Post reported. More than a year into a war that has ricocheted across the Middle East, Israeli troops are still battling Hamas in the most heavily destroyed and isolated part of the Gaza Strip. In northern Gaza, Hamas militants carry out hit-and-run attacks from bombed-out buildings.

Since its Oct. 7 attack on Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, Hamas has taken heavy losses. The recent killing of its top leader, Yahya Sinwar, was viewed as a possible turning point, yet the two sides do not appear any closer to a cease-fire, and Hamas, which still holds scores of hostages, remains the dominant power in Gaza. The conflict has drawn in militants from Lebanon to Yemen, and their key sponsor, Iran, has inched closer to all-out war with Israel. But in northern Gaza, the war seems stuck in a loop of devastating Israeli offensives, followed by Hamas fighters regrouping. More than 43,300 Palestinians have been killed in more than a year of war in Gaza,

Canada orders TikTok's Canadian business to be dissolved but won't block app

TORONTO. Canada announced Wednesday it won't block access to the popular video-sharing app TikTok but is ordering the dissolution of its Canadian business after a national security review of the Chinese company behind it.

Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne said it is meant to address risks related to ByteDance Ltd.'s establishment of TikTok Technology Canada Inc. "The government is not blocking Canadians' access to the TikTok application or their ability to create content. The decision to use a social media application or platform is a personal choice," Champagne said.

Champagne said it is important for Canadians to adopt good cybersecurity practices, including protecting their personal information. He said the dissolution order was made in accordance with the Investment Canada Act, which allows for the review of foreign investments that may harm Canada's national security. He said the decision was based on information and evidence collected over the course of the review

and on the advice of Canada's security and intelligence community and other government partners.

A TikTok spokesperson said in a statement that the shutdown of its Canadian offices will mean the loss of hundreds of local jobs. "We will challenge this order in court," the spokesperson said. "The TikTok platform will remain available for creators to find an audience, explore new interests and for businesses to thrive." TikTok is wildly popular with young people, but its Chinese ownership has raised fears that Beijing could use it to collect data on Western users or push pro-China narratives and misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020. TikTok faces intensifying scrutiny from Europe and America over security and data privacy. It comes as China and the West are locked in a wider tug of war over technology ranging from spy balloons to computer chips. Canada previously banned TikTok from all



government-issued mobile devices. TikTok has two offices in Canada, one in Toronto and one in Vancouver.

Michael Geist, Canada research chair in Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa, said in a blog post that "banning the company rather than the app may actually make matters worse since the risks associated with the app will remain but the ability to hold the company accountable will be weakened." Canada's move comes a day after the election in the United States of Donald Trump. In June, Trump joined TikTok, a

platform he once tried to ban while in the White House. It has about 170 million users in the U.S. Trump tried to ban TikTok through an executive order that said "the spread in the United States of mobile applications developed and owned" by Chinese companies was a national security threat. The courts blocked the action after TikTok sued.

Both the U.S. FBI and the Federal Communications Commission have warned that ByteDance could share user data such as browsing history, location and biometric identifiers with China's government. TikTok said it has never done that and would not, if asked. Trump said earlier this year that he still believes TikTok posed a national security risk, but was opposed to banning it. U.S. President Joe Biden signed legislation in April that would force ByteDance to sell the app to a U.S. company within a year or face a national ban. It's not clear whether that law will survive a legal challenge filed by TikTok or that ByteDance would agree to sell.

Under extraordinary circumstances Harris stepped up, led historic campaign: Biden



WASHINGTON. President Joe Biden on Wednesday applauded Vice President Kamala Harris for leading a historic campaign under extraordinary circumstances. "What America saw today was the Kamala Harris I know and deeply admire. She's been a tremendous partner and public servant full of integrity, courage, and character," Biden said in a

statement. "Under extraordinary circumstances, she stepped up and led a historic campaign that embodied what's possible when guided by a strong moral compass and a clear vision for a nation that is more free, more just, and full of more opportunities for all Americans," he said. "As I've said before, selecting Kamala was the very first decision I

"Her story represents the best of America's story. And as she made clear today, I have no doubt that she'll continue writing that story," Biden said.

made when I became the nominee for president in 2020. It was the best decision I made. Her story represents the best of America's story. And as she made clear today, I have no doubt that she'll continue writing that story," he said. "She will continue the fight with purpose, determination, and joy. She will continue to be a champion for all Americans. Above all, she will continue to be a leader our children will look up to for generations to come as she puts her stamp on America's future," Biden said.

Hurricane Rafael strikes Cuba, knocks out power grid and triggers widespread damage

HAVANA. Cuba was left reeling Thursday after a fierce Category 3 hurricane tore across the island, knocking out the country's power grid. The full extent of the damage remained unclear through the early hours of the day, but forecasters warned that Hurricane Rafael could bring "life-threatening" storm surges, winds, and flash floods to Cuba after battering parts of the Cayman Islands and Jamaica. On Wednesday evening, massive waves lashed Havana's shores, while sharp winds and rain whipped through the historic cityscape, leaving trees scattered on flooded roads. Much of the city was dark and deserted.

As it moved across Cuba, the storm weakened to a Category 2 hurricane, churning into the Gulf of Mexico near northern Mexico and southern Texas, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. However, many Cubans were left picking up the pieces



from the night before, with a strange sense of déjà vu after a turbulent few weeks in the Caribbean nation. In October, the island had already been struck by a one-two punch. First, Cuba was rocked by island-wide blackouts that lasted for days, a consequence of the country's ongoing energy crisis. Shortly afterward, another powerful hurricane hit the eastern part of the island, killing at least six people. The storm deepened discontent already simmering in Cuba, where an ongoing economic crisis has prompted many to

migrate. While the U.S. State Department issued a travel warning for Cuba in light of the storm, the Cuban government also raised an alarm, urging citizens to hunker down. Classes and public transport were suspended in parts of the island, and authorities cancelled flights in and out of Havana and Varadero. Thousands of people in the western part of the island were evacuated as a precautionary measure, and many more, like Silvia Pérez, a 72-year-old retiree living in a coastal area of Havana, scrambled to prepare.

"This is a night I don't want to sleep through, with the battering wind and the falling trees," Pérez said. "I'm scared for my friends and family." The storm's fury followed its earlier impact on the Cayman Islands and Jamaica, where it also caused flooding and landslides.

Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz fires finance minister, collapsing coalition government

Lindner responded to his dismissal by accusing Scholz of failing "to recognize the need for a new economic awakening in our country. He has played down the economic concerns of the citizens."

BERLIN. Germany's centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced Wednesday he was firing Finance Minister Christian Lindner, signaling the collapse of the ruling three-party coalition that relied on Lindner's pro-business party. Scholz announced the move at a news conference following weeks of disputes among the coalition partners over ways to boost the country's ailing economy. He said he would seek a vote of confidence in January that he said might lead to early elections that he felt would be due next September. "I otherwise would have to take this step to prevent

damage to our country. We need an effective government that has the strength to make the necessary decisions for our country," Scholz said. Lindner, from the pro-business Free Democrats, had rejected tax increases or changes to Germany's strict self-imposed limits on running up debt. Scholz's Social Democrats and the environmental Greens, who are also part of the coalition, wanted to see massive state investment and rejected the Free Democrats' proposals to cut welfare programs. Lindner responded to his dismissal by accusing Scholz of failing "to recognize the need for a new economic awakening in our country. He has played down the economic concerns of the citizens." He said the chancellor's proposals to reenergize the economy were "dull, unambitious and make no contribution to overcoming the fundamental weakness of our country's growth." Scholz said about Lindner that "he has broken my trust too often. He even unilaterally canceled the agreement on the budget. After we had already agreed on it in long negotiations. There is no basis of trust for further cooperation. Serious government work is not possible like this." He accused Lindner of publicly



calling for a fundamentally different economic policy, including what Scholz said would be tax cuts worth billions for a few top earners while at the same time cutting pensions for all pensioners. "That is not decent," Scholz said. Scholz said he would seek the vote of confidence in Germany's Bundestag, or parliament, on Jan. 15, which would "allow the members of the Bundestag to decide whether to clear the way for early elections."

The election could then "take place by the end of March at the latest, in compliance with the deadlines set out in constitution," he said. The regular election is scheduled for September 2025. Germany's economy is expected to shrink in 2024 for the second year in a row, or at best stagnate, battered by external shocks and home-grown problems including red tape and a shortage of skilled labor.

Scholz's center-left Social Democrats, Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck's environmentalist, left-leaning Greens and Lindner's pro-business Free Democrats — a party that in recent decades has mostly allied with conservatives — set out in 2021 to form an ambitious, progressive coalition straddling ideological divisions that would modernize Germany. The government can point to achievements: preventing an energy crunch after Russia cut off its gas supplies to Germany, initiating the modernization of the military and a series of social reforms. But the impression it has left with many Germans is of deepening dysfunction. Ahead of the vote of confidence in January, Scholz said he would reach out to opposition leader Friedrich Merz of the center-right Christian Democrats to confer on possible ways of strengthening the economy and defense. "I will now very quickly seek talks with the leader of the opposition," Scholz said. He said he wants to offer Merz the possibility of working together on issues "that are crucial for our country, on quickly strengthening our economy and our defense."

WASHINGTON. Opinion polls underestimated the level of Donald Trump's support for the third US presidential election in a row, predicting a neck-and-neck race with Kamala Harris when in the end the Republican edged the vice president across battleground states. Trump's win involved surging support in a number of demographics and regions, but experts said pollsters failed to accurately predict races in states where the results differed significantly from the last election in 2020. "They did fine in battlegrounds, but... they failed to provide the essential information that Trump was surging across the board," said Michael Bailey, a professor of political science at Georgetown University. More than 90 percent of US counties voted in higher numbers for the Republican billionaire than they did in 2020, according to The New York Times. Overall, the polls had predicted razor thin margins in races in the seven battleground states that decide close US elections. As of Wednesday, Trump was projected to win five of those states by between one and three percentage points. The former president was well on his way to sweeping all seven states, according to those projections.

"Trump may have been mildly underestimated but I think the polls ended up doing pretty well, collectively -- this was not a huge miss," said Kyle Kondik, a political analyst at the University of Virginia. "The polls suggested Trump had a decent chance to win, and he won." Small margins The pollsters' performance was under the microscope this year, after two big misses in succession: they had failed to anticipate Trump's victory in 2016, and had overestimated the margin by which President Joe Biden won against him in 2020. "Trump was underestimated by about two points this time around" in key states, said Pedro Azevedo, Head of US polling at AtlasIntel. In Pennsylvania, the latest polling average from RealClearPolitics put the Republican in the lead by 0.4 percentage points. As of Wednesday, he was ahead by two points.

In North Carolina, polls predicted a 1.2-point margin for Trump, and he won by three points over Harris. In Wisconsin, the vice president was given a 0.4-point lead, but the projected results showed Trump leading the count by 0.9 points. Unable to adjust The main problem has not changed since Trump's arrival on the US political scene about a decade ago: a fringe of his electorate refuses to take part in opinion polls, and firms have failed to be able to accurately gauge their impact. In the most recent polls conducted by The New York Times with Siena College, "white Democrats were 16 percent likelier to respond than white Republicans," NYT data analyst and polling guru Nate Cohn wrote two days before the election.

News box

Madras HC allows vet's plea to check on ailing monkey at Vandalur Anna zoo

CHENNAI: Madras High Court allowed a veterinarian to visit an ailing monkey currently lodged at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur near Chennai on Wednesday for checking its health conditions.

He stated that a forest department staff member brought the premature baby monkey to the camp as it was fighting for survival due to multiple injuries inflicted by strays.

He sought the court to order interim custody, arguing the monkey still requires continued treatment, as the authorities concerned had not taken any positive action even after submitting a representation in this regard.

One more held in Mumbai girl's rape, abduction case

PUDUCHERRY: One more person from Chennai has been arrested in the abduction and rape case of a minor girl who came to Puducherry from Mumbai along with her parents.

The police have already arrested an auto driver, Khwaja Moinuddin, and three others - Dinabandhu, Ramesh and Pankaj from Chennai. All the four from Chennai are in their 30s and are employees of a construction company in Chennai.

Earlier when the girl left home on October 30, the auto driver, under the pretext of taking her around Puducherry, gave her alcohol and took her to his home in Kottakuppam. She was allegedly raped several times before being abandoned on the East Coast Road.

'Safeguarding Srivari temple is top priority'

TIRUMALA: Newly-appointed chairman of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) BR Naidu said the top priority of the Board will be to safeguard the sanctity of Srivari temple -- the world-renowned Hindu pilgrim centre -- and provide hassle-free darshan to the multitude of devotees.



(EO) J Syamala Rao at the temple's sacred Bangaru Vakili (Golden Entrance). Following the ceremony, Naidu, accompanied by his family, had a special darshan of the presiding deity.

The TTD chairman thanked Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for selecting him for the coveted post, fulfilling his dream. "Since childhood, I used to trek the footpath to offer prayers to Sri Venkateswara Swamy every year.

Kerala faces rising snake bite threat, demand grows for viper anti-venom

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: In the backdrop of deaths resulting from pit viper bites in Kasaragod and Idukki districts, demands are rising to develop anti-snake venom for a variety of vipers found in the state.



categorised according to the location.

Over the past few years, Kerala has been seeing a spurt in the number of deaths due to HNPV bites. On October 24, Manjeshwar resident Ashok, 43, died at a private hospital in Mangaluru following an HNPV bite.

venom is effective only for the big four in India. So, administering anti-snake venom for pit viper bites is useful but at times it can also cause anaphylaxis (a life-threatening allergic reaction).

Speaker highlights Constitution at CPC

VIJAYAWADA: Addressing the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Sydney, Australia, Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu has said transparency is the foundation of the Indian Constitution.

Another key point discussed at the CPC was the limited time legislators have to deliberate on crucial proposals due to their active involvement in addressing local issues.

He proposed a minimum of 70 Assembly working days a year to address this gap. He concluded by emphasising that the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly is moving towards a paperless system through ICT adoption.

Apollo doctors successfully reattach severed limb in Telangana

HYDERABAD: Apollo Hospitals performed the first successful complex microvascular replantation surgery, a first-of-its-kind major proximal limb reattachment in the state, which could bring new hope to patients with severe limb injuries.

Guru Prasad, Plastic Surgeon, Dr Vivek Reddy, Orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Sharanya, Anaesthetist, Dr Raj Kumar and Critical Care Specialist, carried out the intricate eight-hour surgery performed by two teams.



While one team meticulously prepared the amputated hand, the other worked on the patient's arm to enable reattachment, making the surgery successful.

Dr G N Bandari said, "This surgery is a milestone in microvascular reimplantation,

limited to 4 to 6 hours for replanting the upper portions of the hand, while for the lower part of the limb, be it wrist, or fingers, the golden hour can be up to 6 to 8 hours.

demonstrating what is possible beyond the traditional golden hour of replantation. We hope to inspire greater awareness of how immediate care and transport of amputated parts can be critical for successful reimplantation.

Rourkela police on alert ahead of Jharkhand Assembly elections

ROURKELA: In the run-up to the Jharkhand Assembly polls in two phases, Rourkela police and their counterpart from West Singhbhum, are on alert to thwart any attempt by Maoists to disrupt the elections.

The move comes in the wake of Bihar-Jharkhand Special Area Committee of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) outfit asking Jharkhand voters to boycott the election through posters and banners.

Of late, there has been an uptick in Maoist violence in the vast Sarada forest in West Singhbhum district which shares 75 km of porous border with Sundargarh district in Odisha which stretches from Bisra to

Koida. Rourkela SP Nitesh Wadhvani said personnel of Rourkela police in coordination with their West Singhbhum counterparts are regularly carrying out anti-Naxal operations along the Odisha-Jharkhand border to allow little room for Maoists to cause disruptive activities in the neighbouring state using Odisha soil.

He said all vulnerable entry and exit points are under constant surveillance. Five static posts have been set up at strategic locations within Bisra, Koida, K Balang and Chandiposh police limits. The focus is on keeping the left wing extremists (LWEs) on the run and also prevent flow of banned materials and criminals to the poll-bound state.

Wadhvani said Jharkhand-bound trains and buses are being intensively scrutinised and around half a dozen of cases under NDPS Act have been registered and several

criminal elements have either been arrested for pending cases or put under surveillance. Police sources informed amid increase in surveillance, road checking, patrolling and crackdowns at vulnerable areas, the criminal elements are finding it hard to operate with ease.

However, the Maoist violence has not yet spilled over to Sundargarh. The increased police activities would continue till the first phase of election on November 13 when five Assembly segments under West Singhbhum and two Assembly constituencies under Simdega go to polls. Meanwhile, Sundargarh police too have sealed inter-state border points with Simdega district.

Limited resources at Jangaon government hospital affect quality patient care

HYDERABAD: A bench of the Telangana High Court on Wednesday continued hearing the appeals filed by the Assembly Secretary challenging the orders of a single judge regarding the petitions seeking disqualification of several MLAs who defected from the BRS to the Congress.

Plea to book Revanth for 'abusing' leaders rejected

Justice B Vijaysen Reddy of the Telangana High Court on Wednesday dismissed a writ petition filed by BRS leader Errolla Srinivas seeking a direction to the Banjara Hills police station to register a case against Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for allegedly using offensive language against pink party leaders during a public meeting in March 2024.

According to the petition, the chief minister also used crude and offensive language, including a threat to "pull out the intestines" of prominent BRS leaders like former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao. The petitioner argued that such statements from a sitting chief minister were inflammatory and could incite violence and lead to law-and-order problems in the state.

Med admissions: HC notices to state govt, Kaloji varsity

A bench of the Telangana High Court, comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J Sreenivas, on Wednesday issued notices to the state of Telangana and the Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS) in a writ petition filed by Dr S Satyanarayana, challenging the validity of Rule VIII(I) and (ii) of the Telangana Medical Colleges (Admission into Postgraduate Medical Courses) Rules, 2021, because these rules are arbitrary and discriminatory.

Midnight police raid sparks political uproar in Palakkad

PALAKKAD: Kerala's highly charged political scene reached a boiling point on Wednesday after an early morning police raid at a Palakkad hotel where Congress leaders were staying for a bypoll campaign.

The Palakkad Town South Police conducted another raid at the hotel on Wednesday afternoon, re-inspecting rooms and gathering information from KPM Regency's CEO. CPM and BJP leaders filed complaints calling for investigations into alleged black money transactions and demanding comprehensive inspection and seizure of CCTV footage.

Mamkootathil was present during the raid. The CPM accused Congress workers of deliberately enacting a melee to facilitate his escape. Congress leaders disputed this, stating the candidate had left to meet with religious leaders.



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events, the CPM released CCTV footage from the hotel, showing Congress worker Fenny Ninan, the first accused in the fake ID scam in connection with the Youth Congress Organisational election in which Mamkootathil is also under the police scanner, with a trolley bag alongside senior leaders. The UDF candidate is also seen in the footage.

During the march, a minor clash erupted between the protesters and the police. In his address inaugurating the protest, KPCC president K Sudhakaran condemned the raid as a staged "midnight drama" and accused minister M B Rajesh and his brother-in-law of conspiracy.

## Should heads roll Ball is in BCCI court

THE whitewash by New Zealand in a Test series in India has triggered Indian cricket's greatest crisis. This calls for a befitting response. Let us first put the result of the just-concluded India-New Zealand Test in context. The Kiwis, now nicknamed Black Caps, were, for decades, minnows among Test-playing sides. When they first visited India in the winter of 1955-56, the hosts won 2-0, marking India's first-ever series victory — 23 years after their Test debut. India's maiden series win abroad was also against New Zealand in the form of Tiger Pataudi's team triumphing 3-1 in 1967-68. The Black Caps didn't win a series against India until 1981, which was largely because of a singular fast bowling feat at the Basin Reserve in Wellington by Richard Hadlee. New Zealand did indeed beat India in the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) final in 2021. But the trend of the former never winning a series in India persisted, until the outcome on Sunday. The impregnable bastion that India had become at home, with the might of Australia, England and South Africa tumbling repeatedly had crumbled like sandcastle! That, too, at the hands of a squad without their two best players — batsman Kane Williamson and left-arm fast bowler Trent Boult. Given the fact that Sri Lanka had thrashed New Zealand on subcontinental soil just prior to the Black Caps taking on India, there was not unjustified expectation that the home side would produce a brown-wash, thereby rendering the upcoming five Tests in Australia inconsequential in terms of India qualifying for a third consecutive WTC final.

Horror of horrors! Indian batsmen could not cope with the tourists' spin trio. Earlier generations of Indian wielders of the willow could play slow bowling with their eyes closed — even on rank turners. So, what is it that has happened since India humbled England 4-1 eight months ago?

In the delirium that the BCCI has existed in lately, obsessed with phenomena like the Twenty20 Indian Premier League, certain fundamentals have been forgotten. That it's not the BCCI's bank balance but India's display on the field which matters most. That while lifting the Twenty20 World Cup this year wasn't insignificant, wearing the WTC crown is the ultimate prize in a game conceived as an even contest between bat and ball. The BCCI boasts that its net worth is greater than the combined wealth of the rest of the cricket boards. But it is the Aussies with far less funds who hold the WTC and World Cup trophies.

The BCCI constitution empowers its president considerably. On major matters, he is looked upon as being the face of the organisation, its spokesman. Yet, the present president, Roger Binny, a former international cricketer, the bowler of the tournament in India's dizzying 1983 World Cup, has been missing in action.

Whether he has been a mover and shaker behind the scene, one doesn't know. But it astonished many that he was present at the T20 WC final at Barbados in June; but absent at the post-match presentation ceremony. The BCCI secretary, and not Binny, represents the BCCI on the International Cricket Council board — unprecedented in the catalogue of Indian cricket. Was there a backroom deal between the genial and gentlemanly Binny and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which seemingly remote-controls the BCCI? Binny and the BCCI secretary cannot be absolved of being party to a policy failure. Binny is guilty of apparently abdicating a proactive role as president. His secretary has underlined that enthusiasm is not a substitute for expertise. Jay Shah, son of the Union Home Minister, with no cricketing background, calling the shots manifested in the shape of Gautam Gambhir, a BJP Lok Sabha MP, being appointed as India's head coach with a degree of haste. From the heights of Rahul Dravid, a globally recognised authority on batsmanship, the critical responsibility was transferred to a man with a limited track record in Tests.

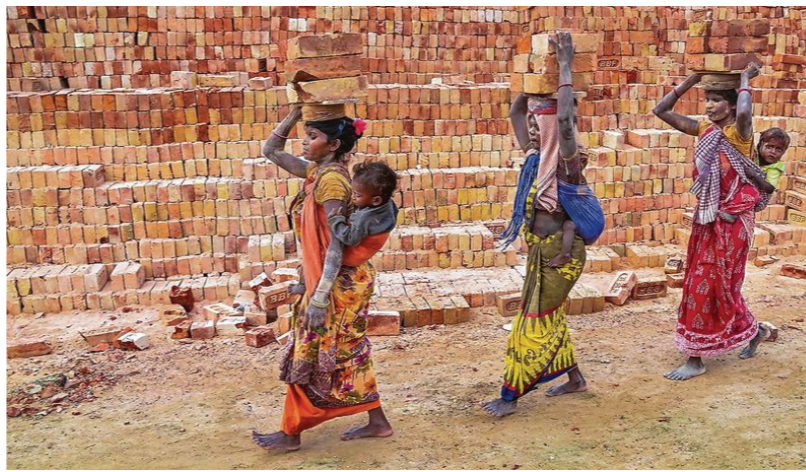
## Women's woes on the labour front

ILO study shows caregiving activities keeping 53 per cent of them out of the workforce in India

THE perennial mystery of the abysmally low number of women in India's labour force seems to have been solved to some extent. The reason for this has been partially attributed in the past to a heavier domestic burden, but now there is more certainty on the issue. The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) latest global study on the impact of care responsibilities on women's labour participation shows that gender roles are completely skewed in favour of men. It finds that 53 per cent of the women in this country remain outside the labour force for this reason. The solution to the problem, it rightly suggests, is more investment in the care economy. This is not to say that there are no care facilities for children here, at least as far as the youngest age group is concerned. The anganwadi scheme is probably the world's largest network of centres to provide nutritional and medical support for children up to the age of six years. The programme was expanded a few years ago to convert it into an anganwadi-cum-crèche scheme. But there seems to be a lack of urgency about ensuring that the plan to make crèches widely available for working women becomes a reality in urban and rural areas. The Niti Aayog has reportedly highlighted flaws in this scheme, which seems to be progressing slowly. The fact is that programmes involving infrastructure and industrial development are carried out with much greater zeal by government agencies rather than schemes to promote women and child development. The issue of child care and crèches is evidently not considered critical enough to be given high priority. And the attitude has remained the same during the rule of successive governments, be it the UPA or the NDA.

Such apathy is only to be expected in a country where a patriarchal culture pervades all segments of society, cutting across castes and religions. The issue of toilets is a similar one, with those involved in policymaking apparently impervious to the discomfort faced by women in areas where public toilets are not readily available. The Swachh Bharat campaign, with defined targets for making towns and cities open defecation-free (ODF), has made a significant difference, but there is still vast room for improvement. For instance, poor quality toilets remain the bane of railway travel for women and are a direct consequence of the lack of priority for this critical sanitation matter. Recently, Road Transport

and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari highlighted the ramshackle condition of toilets at highway fuel stations. The ILO report flags the gender imbalance in India; it notes that compared to 53 per cent of the women involved in unpaid caregiving, only 1.1 per cent of the men stay outside the labour force due to such responsibilities. India is in the same boat as countries like Iran, Egypt, Jordan and Mali, which also have over 50 per cent of the women outside the labour force for the same reasons. In sharp contrast, countries like Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia and Sweden have only 10 per cent of the women away from



regular employment due to this factor.

A parallel report released recently relating to schoolgoing children shows that the trend of women being saddled with heavy domestic work begins at a young age and ends up affecting their education. This UNICEF study shows that young girls are spending far greater time on unpaid domestic activities than boys of the same age. As compared to 32.9 per cent of the girls, only 9.1 per cent of the boys are engaged in such work. The study, based on the 2019 Time Use Survey of the Programme Implementation Ministry, says this is impacting the learning process for girls and preventing them from doing homework or taking part in sports.

Another disturbing finding is that at least 20 per cent of the children in the age group of 6-17 years are engaged in unpaid domestic work. It must be recognised that some domestic work is done by all children as they learn to do chores to prepare them for adult life. But this should not be such that it

affects their educational process in any way. The study also finds that the impact is confined largely to girls. It seems to presage the ILO report with regard to women being kept out of the workforce due to caregiving activities.

The solution, according to the UNICEF study, is to raise investment in services that reduce domestic household work burdens, such as easier access to water and power, especially in rural areas. Affordable child care services, social protection programmes and schemes to promote gender equality are among the other recommendations.

These are positive ideas to set right the glaring gender imbalance impacting girls who are not able to focus sufficiently on their education. But these are also issues that should have been recognised long ago by political leaders and bureaucrats alike while formulating policies to bring more women into the workforce. In this context, it must be noted that female labour force participation is reported to have risen from 23 to 37 per cent from 2017-18 to 2022-23, with the rise largely due to an increase in agriculture-related activities in rural areas. There can be no comfort in the fact that the ILO data shows

that northern Africa and Arab nations have an even higher percentage of women outside the workforce due to caregiving responsibilities. Significantly, eastern Europe has the lowest rate (11 per cent), which can be directly attributed to the substantial state support given for child care services.

Both these reports need to be studied with care so that remedial measures can be taken as soon as possible. The first step must be to strengthen and expand the existing anganwadi-cum-crèche scheme. Secondly, urban areas should have specialised child care facilities, which need not be subsidised entirely. While the pattern of European child care cannot be replicated here, the best practices can certainly be adapted to the Indian context. The outcome of such widespread child care schemes will be to unleash the potential of women at the workplace and this, in turn, can help India reach the goal of becoming a developed economy sooner rather than later.

## Boost to madrasas

Trudeau govt letting anti-India elements run riot

THE Supreme Court's decision to uphold the constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education Act, 2004, has sent out a strong message that the rights of minorities will be safeguarded at any cost. The Muslim community in UP, a BJP-ruled state which has become synonymous with bulldozer justice, has every reason to hail the verdict. The madrasas in the state had been under threat after the Allahabad High Court scrapped the 20-year-old law earlier this year, stating that these schools violated the constitutional tenet of secularism. The apex court has set aside the HC verdict, thus ensuring that lakhs of students will not be shifted to conventional institutions.

Madrasas have been on the 'hit list' of the saffron party in recent years not only in UP but also in states such as Assam and Madhya Pradesh. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has



also been in the thick of things; last month, it wrote to the chief secretaries of all states and union territories, recommending that madrasa boards be closed down, state

funding to the institutions be stopped and the children studying there be enrolled in 'formal' schools. The NCPCR's unconvincing contention is that the education imparted to children in madrasas is not 'comprehensive' or 'proper'; the commission has gone to the extent of accusing these schools of not complying with provisions of the Right to Education Act.

It is hoped that the SC ruling will help in curbing the brazen vilification of madrasas. These institutions are being targeted on the pretext that they are breeding grounds for religious fanatics and terrorists. Weeding out the black sheep is no doubt important, but attempts to dismantle the entire madrasa system reek of intolerance and hatred. Such nefarious moves are undermining the secular credentials of India, aptly described by the Supreme Court as a melting pot of cultures, civilisations and religions.

## Punjab byelections a litmus test for Mann government

All political parties must share the responsibility for this situation. Certificates of progress by successive govts attest the hypocrisy of our politics.

IN a never-ending 'festival of democracy', another round of elections has been announced, including the four byelections to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. Clearly, much is at stake in these elections for the Bhagwant Mann government. An electoral reverse in the bypolls after its disappointing performance in Haryana could demoralise the ruling party's cadres and raise doubts about its future.

The government's immediate challenge, therefore, is to demonstrate its political dominance in the state by winning the byelections in a stiff challenge from the Congress and the BJP. Midway into its present tenure, its real test will be at the end of the government's present term when its performance will be judged on the touchstone of whether its policies and performance have earned it the willing allegiance of the people. For the present, the land of the Gurus and the five rivers, known as the granary of India and the sword arm of the nation, finds its people in distress. The hopelessness of the marginalised masses, crushed by penury and the resultant loss of dignity, rampant drug addiction, a crumbling public infrastructure and widening social divides heightened by unconscionable economic disparities, have scarred the soul of Punjab. An understaffed constabulary tasked to address the stirrings of radicalism, political violence, gangsterism, a perpetual face-off between the government and the dominant farming community and the large-scale migration of unemployed youth to foreign lands in search of an elusive future, foretells the story of a state in decline. The continuing slide in several development indices presents a harsh but irrefutable reality.

A look at the Niti Aayog's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) rankings for Punjab for 2023-24 speaks for itself. For instance, on SDG-8 related to decent work and The state's debt burden on account of the fiscal profligacy of successive governments is more than Rs 3.51 lakh crore, as of March 2024 (India Policy Forum, 2024, Economic Development of Punjab, India Prospects and Policies). According to the Niti Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty



Index for 2023, 4.75 per cent of Punjab's population lives in abject poverty. All political parties must share the responsibility for this situation. Self-serving certificates of progress and development by successive governments attest the hypocrisy of our politics. The renewal of the state demands a cooperative endeavour premised upon a broad democratic consensus on the way forward.

For this, a necessary first condition is the eschewing of politics of vendetta against political rivals. To rescue Punjab from the vicious cycle of economic stagnation and secure the state's future, the incumbent government, with an unprecedented legislative majority, must own responsibility for sound policy decisions. It could start with the fine-tuning of its agricultural policy, including crop diversification and rationalisation of water consumption given the precarious water situation in the state, both in terms of its quality and future availability. A report by the Global Commission on the Economics of

Water, released in October 2024, has drawn attention to the link between unsustainable subsidies and the imprudent water use for agriculture in India. The diminishing availability of potable water in several districts of Punjab and frightening forecasts in this regard present an existential crisis. The state's education and health sectors need a transformational revisiting for reasons recorded in several official documents. Also, it is time to acknowledge that no government can rest its claim to popular support solely on the basis of unsustainable freebies and state largesse, simply because no leader or political party can command an economic impossibility. The irrefutable logic of the law of diminishing returns compels a qualitative change in the practice of our politics. Political parties cannot remain captive to the pull of power regardless of the ends to which it is applied nor can competitive politics regress to a point where public discourse is constantly debased by reckless personal accusations without a meaningful

conversation about our grave common challenges.

The Bhagwant Mann government has the time and opportunity still to deliver upon its promises and vindicate its much asserted claim of being a government with a difference. In its endeavours to pull the state out of the morass in which it finds itself, it is entitled to necessary support from the Central Government in a spirit of cooperative federalism.

But it is equally important that it trusts the electorate with the truth of the situation and engage constructively with the Opposition for the difficult but necessary steps to address the situation, notwithstanding ideological contestation and pursuit of political ambitions.

For its part, the electorate must insist on an enlightened political engagement in the ensuing elections and ensure that each election is a time for introspection and furtherance of progressive democratic politics centred around the fundamental questions that confront the state.

And, all parties, including the Congress, which is in a revanchist mode in the state, and a resurgent BJP, will do well to remember the unmistakable message of the elections in the neighbouring states that the collective wisdom of the people shaped by the memories of their lived experiences manifests itself eventually and owes no apology to the predictions of political pundits.

The ultimate test of elections in the deepening of democracy is whether they yield leaders and policies that command the peoples' trust and give expression to the muffled sighs of the oppressed yearning for a life of dignity. The byelections in Punjab will test our ability to take electoral democracy beyond the momentary impulses and transient passions, towards the realisation of its higher purposes. Let us, therefore, bind our politics by the fetters of duty owed to the people. Economic growth, Punjab, which was once among the nation's top three states on most development parameters, is now ranked at number 18. On gender equality (SDG-5), it is ranked at number 19 and is at number eight for good health and wellbeing (SDG-3).

Recently, I drove down to Pushkar from Delhi and stayed there for 2 days and unlike other destinations that I cover, there wasn't a lot of sightseeing that I did.



# Pushkar

## Religion, mythology and psychedelia

Pushkar has 3 or 4 places of interest, but the beauty is that one can spend a lot of time just seeing these places only. Doing a solo trip always makes you connect with your inner self and a place like Pushkar was the perfect choice of destination! Why? Here's a destination that's of significant religious importance for Indians, has the most fascinating mythology attached with it and the town itself looks like a psychedelic cross between Banaras and Tel Aviv. Let me take you through my Pushkar trip then!

**Climate**

Any place in Rajasthan is best visited during the winters and Pushkar is no exception. While summers can be scorching hot, between end

November to February, the afternoon sun will more or less blind you than burn you out!

**History**

One of the oldest cities of India, Pushkar city is associated with Lord Brahma (The Creator Of The Universe) and a fascinating mythological story. As the legend goes, Brahma was in search of a place for his Mahayagna and he found the city of Pushkar suitable. But in the city of Pushkar there was a demon, Vajranash

who was killing people for fun. Thus the Lord intoned a mantra on a lotus flower that instantly killed the demon. During this process a part of the Lotus flower fell in Pushkar and gave birth to the Pushkar lake. After the killing of vajranash, Brahma performed a yagna to protect the place from demons. The consort of Brahma, Saraswati, was also needed to offer Ahuti for the yagna but since she was not there that time so Gayatri, a Gurjar girl, was married to Brahma and performed the yagna. This act made first wife of Brahma, Saraswati very angry and she cursed Brahma saying that he would be worshiped in Pushkar only. From that day on people say that the only Brahma Temple in the World exists in Pushkar!

**Food**

Pushkar is strictly vegetarian so meat lovers beware! While some of the restaurants do serve egg, any form of meat is a strict nono. However the quality of food is really good weather you are having Dal Chawal or a woodfire Pizza. Due to the huge influx of Israeli tourist, many restaurants serve more Continental food than Indian food. Some restaurants have the menu written in both English and Hebrew, which reminds me of certain beaches of South Goa where its Russian!

**Shopping**

While on the Walk from the Entry of the ghats to



the Brahma Temple, there are lots of handicraft shops selling beautiful ethnic footwear, bags, bed sheets. If you are a good negotiator, you can get some genuinely good stuff! One tip though: First talk around with a few shopkeepers and get a feel of the rates and then buy, because many of the shops want to make a quick buck by quoting high prices. I found the right shop to buy footwear for my wife and the shop owner was an elderly woman who proudly said that they are

Marwaris and they have been making footwear for over 100 years.

**Places of interest**

**The 52 Ghats:** The most important thing to do in Pushkar is to spend substantial amount of time at the Ghats. An early morning session and an evening sessions are about perfect. There are about 52 ghats around the Pushkar Lake. Jagannath Ghat, Nagar Ghat, Chir Ghat and many more. The otherwise serene ghats have though one nuisance - the Pandas (The

men who perform religious ceremonies). The problem is that most of these are people looking to earn an easy buck with the pilgrims. They will conduct a small puja and then ask for a fee. Now how do you avoid these Pandas and enjoy the beauty of the lake. One trick is that befriend one of them in the begging only and tell him that you will see thr ghats and offer a Puja at the end. In this way, any other Panda that comes to you can be told that you are already booked. I applied this and was left quite at peace most of the time.

Walk around the Pushkar town: Walking around Pushkar town is a must do because it's seldom that you can see such amalgamated mix of people and food and signboards.

Pushkar is a great place to unwind and procrastinate for a couple of days or if you are in the introspective mood, a couple of weeks. The place has a natural rugged beauty with an enchanting lake, nice simple Rajasthani people, Spicy but tasty food and loads of similar people around you in search of inner peace. As an Indian ad says, Push Karo, Khush raho (Push the Button and Be Happy), I guess an entry into Pushkar makes you happy mentally and spiritually!

**Seasonal attractions**

The Pushkar Fair or the Pushkar Mela, is an annual five day camel Fair and is actually the world's largest camel fair.

Estonia had never featured on my 'must-see countries' list. Why then, would I go to this far-flung, erstwhile Soviet state? Well, my aunt had a conference in Tallinn and she asked me if I would like to free-load. So I said yes. Shamelessly. Never mind the fact that I wasn't expecting much from the city. I mean, how different could it be from the cliché of a struggling Soviet offshoot, fraught by the shadows of its past? But a free ride is a free ride. And so, in Tallinn, I promptly landed.

could see vibrant, red-tiled spires soaring in stark contrast to the rest of the city's modern landscape. I was told later that I had been staring at the city's Old Town.

**The old town**

The next morning, while my aunt toiled away at the conference, I set out on foot to explore Tallinn's fairytale like Old Town,

one of the most well preserved gothic towns in the world. As I passed between a pair of imposing, ivy-covered towers at the beginning of Viru Street — the main archway into Old Town, I got the distinct impression that I had dived from the 21st century straight into the heart of a bygone era. I ambled through winding cobbled streets towards the Town Hall, which was flanked by a large market square and many charming open-air cafes. I shuffled within earshot of a tourist guide and overheard him tell his group that the site had witnessed a memorable execution centuries ago. "A priest was beheaded here for killing a waitress in the late 1600s," the guide bellowed. "What was his crime?" he was asked. "She brought him a really bad omelette," he said solemnly. I decided that I liked this guide, with his penchant for drama. So I discreetly hot-footed after him,

# Tallinn

## up a good score

*Be it fairytale-like charm, surrender to Tallinn's magic and lose track of time.*

as he shepherded his group through the heady cocktail of spire-crowned architecture and twisting alleys to the Russian Orthodox Alexander Nevski Cathedral. "The classic onion-domed 19th-century Church has become the city's tourist symbol," the guide rumbled. "But nationalist Estonians are not happy because they regard it as a symbol of Soviet oppression."

The group fervently nodded. So did I. Minutes later, he turned around and huffed towards a church with a soaring spire. I trailed him as he chattered to his group that the 13th-century Olaf's church was the tallest building in the world till a couple of centuries ago. Over the centuries, unfortunately, its poor spire had been repeatedly ambushed by lightning, thereby reducing its original height. I panted all the way up to the top of the spire on the heels of the heaving group. The view was magnificent, but with vertigo lurking around the corner, I quickly wobbled down and waited for the drama king and his subjects.

Our next stop was the ex-KGB Estonian headquarters outside the Old Town. I suddenly felt as if I were at large in a Robert

Ludlum novel, as I shadowed the guide round the spooky building like a shifty spy. "This," he boomed dramatically, "is where the KGB tortured suspected rebels." He then theatrically wagged a finger towards the basement windows. "They are covered up with concrete to suppress the sound of screams," he said, his eyes goggling. I shuddered. So did the rest of the group. Minutes later, the guide, the group and the budding stalker stood outside the gigantic Hotel Viru. "This was a notorious den of Cold War intrigue," I heard him say. "Every room was tapped and monitored by the KGB."

**The singing revolution**

Later that evening, I visited the Song Festival Grounds with my sight-seeing averse aunt. While she grumpily stood shivering in a corner, I hung on to the words of a local who mentioned that the grounds had been host to over 30,000 music artistes from all over the world and that it was here that the Singing Revolution or the patriotic, night-singing demonstrations took place in the late 1980's, fuelling Estonia's liberation from Russia.

The next day, I went back to Tallinn's roots, the Old Town Square and sat in a cafe, sipping wine and soaking in the sun, which had, for a few brief minutes



managed to burst through the clouds. The waiter brought me the menu, with a pamphlet stuck in between its pages. Culture Calls, the pamphlet screamed. Below was a list of more than 250 cultural events, dotting Tallinn's epochmaking annual calendar. The city, clearly had a new reason to celebrate, as Europe's Cultural Capital for the year. I realised two things then - that first impressions aren't necessarily lasting and that it wasn't just me enjoying a moment in the sun; it was all of Tallinn.

**Highlights**

**Museum of Occupations:** Brings alive life under Soviet and Nazi regimes.

**Kadriorg Palace:** The majestic summer palace of the Tsar. A portion of it is closed to the public and is occupied by the Office of the President.

**Open Air Museum:** An open complex of Estonian rural architecture from the Tsarist era.

**Getting around:** Tallinn is a well connected city - you can avail of its trams, trolleybuses or taxis



# Congress MP's 'lipstick' joke about wife during her poll campaign slammed by BJP

**Slamming the Punjab Congress Chief and Ludhiana Lok Sabha MP Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, the BJP sought an apology from him and also said that Warring's comments showed his "petty mindset".**

New Delhi: The BJP has slammed Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring's "my wife goes out all dressed up with a bindi and lipstick" comment, calling it sexist and anti-women. The BJP also demanded an apology from the Ludhiana MP. On Wednesday, November 6, while campaigning for his wife Amrita Warring for the upcoming Gidderbaha bypoll, Raja Warring sparked a controversy by saying, "She goes out at 6 am wearing lipstick and a bindi and returns at 11 pm. She is of no use to me. She has gone out of my hands, find someone else for me." After the polls, she will also attend weddings and funerals. Please ensure a win in the bypolls, so that she starts respecting me, knowing that she won the election because of her husband," the Lok Sabha MP said. Amrita is the Congress



candidate for the Gidderbaha Assembly constituency, which fell vacant after Amrinder Singh Raja Warring vacated the seat earlier this year following his Lok Sabha polls victory in Ludhiana. Union Minister and BJP leader Ravneet Singh Bittu attacked Amarinder Singh Warring, accusing him of disrespecting women and reflecting his "petty mindset".

"I was surprised to hear him (Amrinder) ... What is he trying to tell the women? He is saying that his wife (Amrita Warring) wears a 'surkhi-bindi' and leaves home at 6 am and comes back at 11 pm. What does this mean?... You have used improper words to give a wrong message... You should apologise to all women. They are agitated with the message you want to give, that women who go out to work are of no other work... This shows your petty mindset... You have made a condemnable statement..." Bittu said. Amrita is making her poll debut in the Gidderbaha bypolls, taking on BJP's Manpreet Singh Badal and Aam Aadmi Party's Hardeep Singh Dimpy Dhillon. Bypolls will be held in four assembly seats in Punjab on November 20. Votes will be counted on November 23. The bypolls were necessitated after MLAs representing these assemblies were elected to the Lok Sabha.

## Waqf row: Parliament panel chief visits Karnataka amid BJP's land jihad charge

**Waqf Bill parliamentary panel chief Jagdambika Pal is in Karnataka on a solo "fact-finding" mission to address concerns from local farmers alleging their land was improperly claimed as Waqf property.**

New Delhi: The Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Jagdambika Pal, met with farmer delegations in Karnataka on Thursday following claims that some lands in the state were marked as Waqf properties without the owners' consent. The BJP has labelled these actions as 'land jihad'. Pal said he's in the southern state "for a fact-finding visit". BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, who petitioned Pal to address the farmers' grievances, had announced the visit on social media. The visit includes stops in Hubballi, Vijayapura, and Belagavi to meet with affected farmers and other



stakeholders. nataka...they handed over one memorandum saying that a piece of land which was belonging to them, Waqf Board is claiming it is theirs," Pal told news agency ANI. He added that some farmers claimed to have held these lands for "more than 50-70 years."

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar dismissed the BJP's 'land jihad' charge against the Congress government and protests over it as "political drama" and claimed, "BJP themselves started this in 2019. But my government is committed, we will not change any record... They are trying to put the blame on us." Shivakumar argued that the parliamentary committee lacks authority to interfere in state land issues, stating, "JPC doesn't have any powers to enter; they might have come for their political purposes."

Pal's trip has also been met with pushback from some opposition lawmakers on the panel, who alleged that it was conducted unilaterally, without committee consultation. "This is just an example where the chairperson has decided to take this trip alone, which has not been mandated by the committee while the official trip will come later," an opposition MP told India Today TV on condition of anonymity. Meanwhile, BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje tweeted her support, saying, "This 'land terrorism' must end! I request the Chairman to listen to our farmers and Swamijis and find a permanent solution." The entire parliamentary committee is scheduled to visit multiple cities, including Lucknow and Hyderabad, from November 9 to November 14 to meet with stakeholders and prepare a report on the contentious issue.

## Air India lacks competent managers: P Chidambaram slams airline over flight delay

New Delhi: Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Tuesday claimed that passengers on a Delhi-Chennai Air India flight were asked to wait at the aircraft door for 15 minutes after being cleared for boarding. The flight, which was scheduled to depart at 8:45 pm, was delayed by another half an hour, Chidambaram said. The former Finance Minister said he is a frequent Air India traveller and criticised the national carrier for lacking "competent managers at different levels" to deal with emergency-related issues. "All passengers on flight AI 540 Delhi to Chennai are standing on the aero bridge for the last 15 minutes. We were cleared for boarding at the gate but were told to wait at the aircraft door. Passengers are just boarding 10 minutes after departure time. No one knows when the flight will depart," he tweeted.

"I am a frequent traveller by Air India. I regret that there has been practically no improvement since the management changed hands from the government to the private sector. I can list a number of aspects of flying that can be improved by competent management. I think Air India lacks competent managers at different levels," he said. Later, in an update, Chidambaram said the flight would leave at 9:15 pm instead of the scheduled time at 8:45 pm. "AI 540 Delhi to Chennai, scheduled to depart at 20:45 hours, is pushing back at 21:25 hours and will take off shortly," he said.

## Chief Justice scraps summer breaks in Supreme Court days before his retirement

**According to the amended rules, which came into force immediately, the partial working days will begin from May 26, 2025 and full working days will resume from July 14, 2025.**

New Delhi: With just days left for his retirement, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has scrapped summer breaks in the Supreme Court. He said now there would only be "partial court working days". The court calendar for 2025 designates summer holidays as 'partial working days'. According to the amended rules, which came into force immediately, the partial working days will begin from May 26, 2025 and full working days will resume from July 14, 2025.



The Supreme Court will sit for these two terms annually -- the first commences with the partial working days which would end on the day immediately preceding the winter break.

The second term will commence from the end of the winter holiday. Meanwhile, the duration of the partial working days will be decided by the Chief Justice, who will also appoint one or more judges to hear cases during this period.

The judges will take up all admission matters, after notice matters, regular matters or matters of urgent nature. Chief Justice Chandrachud, who assumed office on November 9, 2022, will demit office on November 10. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who is currently the senior-most judge in the top court, will be the next Chief Justice of India and assume the position on November 11.

## Cabinet nod to easy education loan scheme for families with Rs 8 lakh income

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet has approved the PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme, aimed at providing financial support to meritorious students pursuing higher education in both public and private institutions. Announced on Wednesday, the scheme is designed to offer collateral-free, guarantor-free education loans to students who secure admission to one of the top 860 Quality Higher Education Institutions (QHEIs) in India. This includes both government and private institutions, making it accessible to a wide range of students.

The PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme is expected to benefit around 22 lakh students. It allows them to take loans that will cover the full cost of tuition fees and other related expenses for their courses. For loans up to Rs 7.5 lakh, students will receive a 75% credit guarantee, making it easier for banks and financial institutions to approve and disburse loans. This provision is aimed at reducing the financial risk for lenders



and encouraging them to support more students. In addition to these benefits, the scheme provides interest subvention for students whose annual family income is up to Rs 8 lakh, and who are not receiving any other government scholarship or interest-subvention benefits. These students will receive a 3% interest subsidy on loans up to Rs 10 lakh during the moratorium period, which refers to the time between the loan disbursement and the beginning of repayment. The government plans to extend this

interest subvention to 1 lakh students each year, with a particular emphasis on students from government institutions who are enrolled in technical or professional courses. The scheme has a financial outlay of Rs 3,600 crore for the period between 2024-25 and 2030-31, with the expectation that 7 lakh fresh students will benefit from the interest subvention during this time. This initiative aims to make higher education more accessible by reducing the financial burden on students and their families. The PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme will apply to a wide range of top-ranked institutions, as determined by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). This includes institutions that rank within the top 100 in overall, category-specific, and domain-specific lists, as well as state-run universities ranked between 101 and 200. Additionally, all Central government-run institutions are eligible under the scheme.

## Centre doubles fines for stubble burning as Delhi, other areas battle pollution

**Under the new rules, which take effect immediately, farmers with less than two acres of land will face a fine of Rs 5,000. Those with between two and five acres will be fined Rs 10,000.**

NEW DELHI: The Centre has increased penalties for farmers involved in burning crop stubble, with fines now set to rise as high as Rs 30,000, as part of efforts to tackle worsening air quality in Delhi and neighbouring regions. Under the new rules, which take effect immediately, farmers with less than two acres of land will face a fine of Rs 5,000. Those with between two and five acres will be fined Rs 10,000, while farmers with more than five acres of land will be penalised Rs 30,000 for engaging in stubble burning. The amendment is part of the government's push to reduce air pollution under the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) Act of 2021.

The new rules may be called the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (Imposition, Collection, and Utilisation of



Environmental Compensation for Stubble Burning) Amendment Rules, 2024, an official notice stated.

As part of the new measures, complaints related to pollution will be handled by the pollution control boards and the CAQM, with clear guidelines for conducting enquiries and addressing grievances. The increase in fines follows sharp criticism from the Supreme Court, which had

previously described earlier penalties as ineffective in curbing the practice.

The court noted that previous fines were "toothless" largely due to delays in appointing adjudicating officers and setting up a proper regulatory framework for enforcement. The top court had also recently criticised the Delhi government over the blanket ban on firecrackers. The court observed that the ban was "hardly implemented" and directed the Delhi top cop to file an affidavit stating the measures that were taken to enforce the ban in the national capital. The government's move is aimed at addressing the severe air pollution that annually plagues Delhi and its surrounding areas. On Thursday, the air quality was recorded in the 'severe' category in many areas. Anand Vihar, Bawana, Mundka and Wazirpur recorded air quality in the 'severe' category, while other areas were in the 'very poor' category.

## Unlike Delhi, these cities are breathing clean air. Here's a list of 12 places

New Delhi: As Delhi's air quality continues to worsen post-Diwali, several cities across India stand out for their cleaner air. Northeastern cities like Gangtok in Sikkim and Aizawl in Mizoram are among the least polluted, boasting excellent air quality that supports respiratory health. In the south, Mangalore in Karnataka also ranks high for its clean air. Since Diwali, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) has consistently remained above 300, reaching around 350 recently. This places it in the 'very poor' category, posing serious health risks for residents. Just recently, the Supreme Court tore into the Delhi government over the blanket ban imposed on the bursting of firecrackers. The top court observed that the ban was "hardly implemented" and pulled up the Delhi top cop over the measures taken by the police to enforce the ban in the national capital. The Supreme Court directed the AAP government and Delhi Police Commissioner to file affidavits stating steps taken to implement the ban



this year as well as proposed steps to ensure compliance with the ban next year within one week.

**NORTHEASTERN CITIES OFFER BREATHABLE AIR**  
According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data from November 6, Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, recorded an AQI of just 29, making it the nation's most breathable city. Unlike Delhi,

where the air is saturated with smoke and particulate matter, Gangtok's primary pollutant is ozone, which contrasts sharply with the toxic air found in many northern cities. Close behind Gangtok is Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, which reported an AQI of just 34 on Wednesday. Although its primary pollutant is PM10, the pollution levels remain far below those in Delhi and

other northern cities.

**SOUTHERN CITIES ALSO EXCEL IN AIR QUALITY**

Southern India has also made notable strides in air quality. Among the cleanest is Mangalore in Karnataka, with an AQI of 32 on November 6. Unlike cities plagued by particulate matter, Mangalore's main pollutant is carbon monoxide, reflecting its cleaner air profile. In contrast, Bengaluru, Karnataka's capital, recorded a 'moderate' AQI of 110, facing challenges due to PM10 and PM2.5, largely from vehicle emissions. However, several southern cities, including Udipi (AQI 45), Tirunelveli (35), Thrissur (46), Tuticorin (46), Kolar (40), Kollam (48), Kalaburagi (41), and Chamarajanagar (40), have achieved 'good' air quality status. While meteorological and geographical factors certainly influence pollution levels, a significant factor distinguishing polluted and non-polluted cities is the management of local pollution sources.



# The top 5 sacred spaces in the World

These places offer more than just photo opportunities. Many of them have been significant for people throughout history as places of pilgrimage and worship. Even if the faith isn't your own many of them resonate with an atmosphere of reverence and solemnity that will touch the least religious soul. You will often leave feeling connected, if not to the whole of nature, at least to the chain of human history.

Machu Picchu, Petra, Angkor Wat, the Parthenon and the Pyramids appear in this list, proving that it's not just the meditative perspective of remote mountain tops that pilgrims seek out in order to connect with their spiritual side. These wondrous monuments are attractions from a purely historic and architectural viewpoint as well, and many people don't realise until they arrive how much of the atmosphere survives beyond the visitors and their cameras.

You may have already planned to visit one of these sacred places on your holiday - even to modern folk many of them have a certain regenerative and restorative power. Could it be the perspective they give on human history, or is it just seeing such a revered spot in person and feeling the atmosphere that gives you something to think about and share with friends and family when you return?

Many of the places on this list are worth building a holiday around so trawl through and plan yourself a mini pilgrimage and recharge your spiritual batteries.

## Stonehenge



More than nine hundred stone rings exist in the British Isles and twice that number may originally have been built. These megalithic structures are more accurately called rings rather than circles because they often display non-circular elliptical shapes; Stonehenge, however, is circular. It is difficult to precisely date the stone rings because of the scarcity of datable remains associated with them, but it is known that they were constructed during the Neolithic period, which in southern England lasted from approximately 4000 to 2000 BC.

Before the development of archaeological dating methods, 17th century antiquarians assumed that Stonehenge and other megalithic structures were constructed by the Druids. The Druids, however, had nothing to do with the construction or use of the stone rings. The Celtic society, in which the Druid priesthood functioned, came into existence in Britain only after 300 BC; more than 1500 years after the last stone rings were constructed. Historians in the 19th century often attributed the stone rings to Egyptian travelers who were thought to have infused Europe with Bronze Age culture. With the development of Carbon-14 dating techniques, the infusion-diffusion concepts of European Neolithic history were abandoned and the megalithic structures were shown to predate Egyptian culture.

Mid-20th century archaeology generally assumed stone rings were used for ritual activities and recent research has deepened our understandings. Beginning in the 1950's, Oxford University engineer Professor Alexander Thom and astronomer Gerald Hawkins pioneered the study of the astronomies of ancient civilizations, or archaeoastronomy. Conducting precise surveys at hundreds of stone rings, archaeoastronomers discovered significant celestial alignments indicating that the stone rings were used as astronomical observatories. These

studies also revealed the extraordinary mathematical sophistication and engineering abilities with which the stone rings were built.

Stonehenge, the most well known stone ring, is a composite structure built during three periods from 3100 to 1100 BC. Constructed with massive stones weighing as much as twenty-five tons and transported from quarry locations hundreds of miles away, Stonehenge was a structure with multiple purposes. It was a monument of nearly imperishable nature located at a specific site of terrestrial energetic power and celestial significance. It was an astronomical observation device used to predict, in advance of their occurrence, particular

periods in the annual cycle when the earth energies were most highly influenced by the sun, moon and stars. It was a temple, built by and for the people, in which festivals of renewal were held at those energetic periods determined by astronomical observations. It was a structure built with certain types of stones, positioned according to sacred geometry, which functioned as a sort of battery for gathering, concentrating and emanating the earth energies of the site. It was also an eclipse predictor of astonishing accuracy.

## Bagan Temples

There are two enormous ancient temple complexes in Southeast Asia: Bagan in Burma and Angkor in Cambodia. Both sites are remarkable for their expanse of sacred geography and the number and size of their individual temples. For many visitors Bagan is the more extraordinary because of its wonderful views.

Scattered across a vast dusty plain may be seen scores of exotic Buddhist temples. The kingdoms of Bagan date to the early 2nd century AD, yet the region entered its golden age during the reign of King Anawrahta in 1057 AD. From this time, until it was overrun by Kublai Khan's forces in 1287 AD, more than 13,000 temples, pagodas and other religious structures were built. Today, seven centuries later, approximately 2,200 temples remain standing. The river Irrawaddy has washed away nearly one-third of the original city area, thieves have torn apart many temples in search of treasures, while earthquakes and the ravages of time have reduced hundreds of other temples to piles of crumbling stones.

Two of the loveliest temples are the Mahabodhi and

extraordinary mathematical sophistication and engineering abilities with which the stone rings were built.

Stonehenge, the most well known stone ring, is a composite structure built during three periods from 3100 to 1100 BC. Constructed with massive stones weighing as much as twenty-five tons and transported from quarry locations hundreds of miles away, Stonehenge was a structure with multiple purposes. It was a monument of nearly imperishable nature located at a specific site of terrestrial energetic power and celestial significance. It was an astronomical observation device used to predict, in advance of their occurrence, particular



Gawdawpalin. The Mahabodhi, a smaller replica of the famous Bodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, India (where the Buddha attained enlightenment), was built during the 13th century reign of King Nantaungmya and is covered with niches containing seated Buddha figures. The 60 meter tall Gawdawpalin temple, built in the 12th century by King Narapatisithu, was badly damaged in a 1975 earthquake but has since been reconstructed. Many of the temples of Bagan are still functioning and large numbers of pilgrims visit the ancient holy place.

## Baalbek

In the hills of Lebanon stands the temple complex of Baalbek, one of the most enigmatic holy places of ancient times. According to orthodox archaeological theory, the story of Baalbek goes back approximately 5000 years. Excavations around the Roman Temple of Jupiter have uncovered remains dating to the Early Bronze Age (2900-2300 BC). During the 1st millennium BC, the Phoenicians chose the site of Baalbek for a temple to their Sun-god Baal and legends tell that Baalbek was the birthplace of Baal. Next came the Seleucid and Roman Empires and it is to the Romans (64 BC - 312 AD) that archaeologists attribute the many and massive temple foundations of Baalbek.

The Roman city at Baalbek, called Heliopolis or the City of the Sun and dedicated to the sun god Jupiter, does contain the largest stone structures ever built in the Roman Empire. The Romans, however, did not have the engineering or construction skills necessary for the carving and placement of the enormous blocks of stone which underlie their own constructions. The courtyard of the Jupiter temple, completed around 60 AD, is situated upon a platform, called the Grand Terrace, which consists of a pre-Roman outer wall formed of immense, finely crafted and precisely positioned blocks. These blocks of stone, ranging in weight from 450 tons to 1200 tons, are the largest pieces

of stonework ever crafted in the world. Why these stones, as large as 69 feet long by 14 feet wide, are such an enigma to contemporary scientists is that their method of quarrying, transportation and placement is beyond the technological ability of any known ancient or modern builders. These great blocks of stone show extensive evidence of wind and sand erosion that is absent from the Roman temples, indicating their construction dates from a far earlier age. Finally, the stones of Baalbek show stylistic similarities to other cyclopean stone walls at verifiably pre-Roman sites such as the Acropolis foundation in Athens, the foundations of Mycenae, and the megalithic constructions of Ollyantayambo in Peru and Tiahuanaco in Bolivia.

## Canterbury Cathedral

Mother church of the Anglican communion and the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, this wonderful cathedral has featured heavily in English history—most notoriously in 1170 when Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in the cathedral, since when the cathedral has attracted thousands of pilgrims. It also featured in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. The Cathedral was founded in 597 AD by St Augustine—sent to convert the heathens of Britain by Pope Gregory the Great.

Augustine's original building under the nave was extensively rebuilt and enlarged by the Saxons, and the cathedral was

rebuilt completely by the Normans in 1070 following a major fire. A staircase and parts of the North Wall—in the area of the North West transept, also called the Martyrdom—remain from that building. The church was substantially rebuilt at the end of the 14th century in the high English gothic style.

## The Parthenon

The supreme expression of ancient Greek architectural genius, the Parthenon has enchanted painters and poets for two thousand years. Neolithic remains indicate a continuous sacred use of the hill from at least 2800 BC. Built upon the foundations of an earlier Mycenaean temple, the first known Hellenistic structures, dating from the 6th century BC, were temples dedicated to the goddess Athena. In 480 BC Persians destroyed these temples and in 447 BC the Athenian leader Pericles erected the presently standing temple of Athena. Made of white marble, the temple had 46 columns, was roofed with tiles, and enshrined a 40 foot tall golden statue of Athena. The Parthenon has suffered considerable damage over the centuries. In 296 BC the gold from the statue was removed; in the 5th century AD the temple was converted into a Christian church; in 1460 it housed a Turkish mosque; in 1687 gunpowder stored by the Turks inside the temple exploded and destroyed the central area; and in 1803 much of the remaining sculpture was sold by the Turks, who controlled Greece at the time, to the Englishman Lord Elgin, who then removed the sculptures and sold them to the British Museum.

The name Parthenon refers to Athena Parthenos, the daughter of Zeus. Patroness of Athens, she represents spiritual development, intellect and understanding, and is the symbol of the human aspiration for wisdom. The character of Athena represented these qualities yet it was the sacred geographical location, the astronomical orientation and the sacred geometry of the temple which actually generated the qualities for which Athena was known. In the Greek religious tradition particular geographical locations were known to have and express specific energetic characteristics. Therefore, while Greek sacred architecture praises the qualities of certain deities, it was understood that the deities themselves were metaphors for unique natural powers which already existed before the temples were constructed. Certain holy places around Greece, being expressive of specific powers, were also understood to be in spatial relationship with one another, as shown by the study of sacred geography. The temples developed at these sites incorporated sophisticated mathematical and astronomical knowledge which further enhanced the powers inherent at these places.



### Gold, silver price : Precious metals witness dip on MCX

New Delhi. Both gold and silver prices recorded a dip on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Thursday, November 7, 2024. Gold futures, maturing on December 5, 2024, stood at Rs 76,340 per 10 grams on the MCX, after recording a dip of Rs 315 or 0.41 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 76,655. Similarly, silver futures, maturing on December 5, 2024, witnessed a dip of Rs 620 or 0.68 per cent and were retailing at Rs 90,200 per kg on the MCX against the previous close of Rs 90,820. The gold and silver prices in India depend on several factors, including the value of the rupee against the dollar. Global demand also plays a key role in determining the trends observed in the rate of precious metals.

#### GOLD, SILVER PRICES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET

Gold prices touched a more than three-week low on Thursday, as the dollar strengthened after Donald Trump's win in the U.S. presidential election, while focus was also on the Federal Reserve's interest rate decision later in the day, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold fell 0.1 per cent to \$2,656.34 per ounce by 03:27 GMT, while, U.S. gold fell 0.5 per cent to \$2,663.60.

### Macrotech Developers Acquires Bain Capital's Stake in 3 Entities for Rs 307 Crore

New Delhi. Realty firm Macrotech Developers has acquired Bain Capital's stake in three industrial and logistics park entities for Rs 307 crore as part of a strategy to enhance rental income. Macrotech Developers is one of the leading real estate firms in the country. It sells properties under Lodha brand.

In a regulatory filing on Thursday, the company informed that it has "executed Securities Purchase Agreements (SPAs) with India Opportunities Fund SSA Scheme 1 and DSS Opportunities Investment 1 (Bain Capital) for acquisition of their interest in the digital infrastructure platform entities (Bellissimo Digital Infrastructure Development Management Pvt Ltd, Palava Induslogic 4 Pvt Ltd and Bellissimo In City FC Mumbai 1 Pvt Ltd), in entirety at a consideration of Rs 307 crore". Bain Capital had a 30 per cent stake in Bellissimo Digital Infrastructure Development Management Pvt Ltd and a 33.33 per cent stake each in the other two entities.

This is in line with the company's objective of gradually growing its annuity income. This is in pursuance of our planned strategy for calibrated growth in our annuity income through digital infrastructure viz. industrial and logistics under the LILP (Lodha Industrial and Logistics Park) brand," the company said. In September, the company acquired the interest of Ivanhoe Warehousing India Inc (Ivanhoe) in the digital infrastructure platform entities.

Macrotech Developers has a significant presence in the housing segment. Now, it is developing offices, malls and logistics parks to grow its rental income.

### COP29: What are the main issues at the UN climate summit in Baku

New Delhi. This month's U.N. climate summit - COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan - has been dubbed the "climate finance COP" for its central goal: to agree on how much money should go each year to helping developing countries cope with climate-related costs.

That discussion could be tough following Tuesday's re-election of former U.S. President Donald Trump, a climate denier whose campaign vowed to remove the top historic greenhouse gas emitter and leading oil and gas producer from the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement to fight climate change for a second time.

COP29 delegates will also be looking to advance other deals made at previous summits. That refers to the new annual climate financing target, which is meant to kick in when the current \$100 billion pledge expires at the end of this year.

Wealthy nations have only sometimes met that annual goal since 2020, leading to growing mistrust among the world's climate-vulnerable nations. As COP29 aims to set a much higher target for the years ahead, wealthy nations insist the money cannot come entirely from their budgets. Instead, they are discussing a far more complex effort that would involve reforming the global multilateral lending complex in ways that de-escalate climate-linked financial risks and encourage more private capital. It is unclear how much of the total annual target would be offered by rich nations. Also unresolved is whether fast-developing nations like China or the Middle East Gulf oil states should also contribute, a position championed by the United States and European Union.

By reforming the global banking system, countries hope to drive up the annual climate finance sum. U.N. agencies estimate that trillions of dollars are needed yearly, but officials with the COP29 host Azerbaijan said that a number in the "hundreds of billions" has a more realistic chance of being approved by consensus. **FOSSIL FUEL TRANSITION**

Last year's COP28 summit in Dubai ended with countries agreeing for the first time to "transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems."

Since then, however, both fossil fuel use and export sales have continued to rise globally, while new areas have been approved for oil and gas production in countries like Azerbaijan, the United States, Namibia, and Guyana. With countries and companies unclear in their resolve to quit coal, oil and gas, negotiators said COP29 was unlikely to deliver timelines or stronger language on fossil fuels, though some countries might push for a halt in new coal plant permitting.

Countries will also be discussing progress in their pledge to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency, as a way of easing demand for fossil fuels. **RULES FOR CARBON MARKET.**

# Sensex drops 900 points as Trump euphoria fades, focus shifts to Fed rate decision

**Stock market today: Sensex and Nifty fell sharply during Thursday's intraday trading session as investors turned cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's rate decision.**

New Delhi. Benchmark stock market indices tumbled sharply on Thursday, as the initial euphoria following Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election fizzled out. The benchmark BSE Sensex dropped over 900 points in early trade.

At 10:41 am, the Sensex was down 858.03 points to 79,520.10, while the Nifty50 tumbled 281.10 to trade at 24,202.95. This U-turn came after the indices surged by over 1% on Wednesday, marking their biggest single-day gain in more than six

weeks, driven by optimism over Trump's election win, which was seen as positive for domestic equities.

However, Thursday's losses were fuelled by investors turning their focus to the US Federal Reserve's upcoming rate decision, which is expected to provide more clarity on the future trajectory of US interest rates. Key stocks on the Sensex took a hit with financial giants like HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, and ICICI Bank among the top contributors to the losses. Sector-wise, Nifty Metal was down 1.3%, dragged by Hindalco, Adani Enterprises, and Vedanta. Other sectors, including Nifty Bank, Auto, Financial Services, Pharma, and Consumer Durables, also opened lower, reflecting broader market weakness.

Only two stocks on the Nifty50 were trading in positive territory. Apollo Hospitals share price surged nearly 7% hitting its all-time high after reporting a



63% YoY jump in net profit for Q2FY25, driven by strong performance in its hospital business. Tata Steel was also up nearly 2% after the company reported a profit in the quarter ending September 2024, reversing a loss from the same period last year. The shift in sentiment from Trump's victory to concerns over monetary policy has left analysts divided. **VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment**

Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, cautioned that the 'Trump trade,' which had lifted US markets sharply, is unlikely to have the same positive impact on Indian markets. "Indian market valuations are high, and with concerns over earnings slowdown, investors should stick to quality and value stocks in this uncertain period," he advised.

Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd highlighted the fact that foreign institutional investors continue to offload their investments from Indian markets, noting that they having pulled out Rs 1.14 lakh crore from Indian stocks in October.

Thursday's market retreat highlights the shifting investor sentiment post-Trump's win, with markets reassessing the long-term impact of the US election results. As attention now turns to the US Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates, the stock market is expected to remain volatile today.

## US elections: Why renewable energy stocks tumbled after Donald Trump's win

New Delhi. Donald Trump's pledge to halt renewable energy projects on his first day in office has sent shockwaves through the industry, causing renewable energy stocks to fall sharply. Trump promised to end offshore wind farms, stating, "We are going to make sure that that ends on day one." As a result, shares of major players like Orsted, the world's largest offshore wind developer, plunged by as much as 14%, while wind turbine makers Vestas and Nordex saw declines of 11% and 7.5%, respectively. This is not Trump's first confrontation with renewable energy. During his previous campaign, he argued that solar panels require vast spaces, such as entire deserts, to generate energy. However, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association, utility-scale solar projects today typically occupy less than 600,000 acres—far less than Trump suggested. If Trump follows through on his pledge, the renewable energy sector could face severe challenges. He may



seek to eliminate or scale back tax credits for renewable projects, which could hinder the industry's growth. Additionally, Trump could dismantle environmental regulations set by the Biden administration, potentially easing the regulatory burden on fossil fuel companies. A Trump presidency could shift energy policy, favouring fossil fuels over renewable sources. Trump has also vowed to end the electric vehicle mandate, which would impact the EV industry and its

infrastructure. His stance on electric vehicles has shifted dramatically after initially calling them a "hoax," he recently softened his position, partly due to support from Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Trump now claims to be "for electric cars," though his support is qualified, seeing them as suitable for a "small slice" of the population. While Trump's ability to make these changes would depend on congressional backing and potential pushback from businesses and activists, his proposed energy policies have already sparked uncertainty, causing concern among renewable energy investors. Renewable energy stocks, particularly in the solar sector, have taken a hit, with fears that a second Trump presidency could threaten the Inflation Reduction Act, which is an essential piece of legislation that has driven growth in clean energy by providing tax incentives for solar power

## Ola Electric share price gains after 2 straight sessions. Here's why

New Delhi. Ola Electric Mobility shares saw a slight rebound on Thursday, rising by 1.41% to Rs 75.45, after two consecutive sessions of losses. The stock briefly surpassed its IPO price of Rs 76, but it remains volatile, with concerns over ongoing consumer complaints. Despite today's gain, the stock is down more than 52% from its all-time high of Rs 157.53.

The uptick in the stock price is attributed to Ola Electric's recent inclusion in the MSCI Small Cap Index, which could boost its trading volume and liquidity. Additionally, the company is set to report its Q2FY25 results tomorrow, which may also be influencing investor sentiment. A couple of days ago, Ola Electric shares plummeted over 8%, falling below their IPO price for the first



time since the lock-in period ended, hitting a record low of Rs 73.70.

While Ola Electric has gained market share, profitability and breakeven remain key focus areas. The company has also been facing service-related issues, leading to increased scrutiny from the Centre. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued a showcause notice to the company, further complicating its outlook.

A few days ago, Kranthi Bathini, Director of Equity Strategy at WealthMills Securities told Business Today that the stock is likely to remain weak in the medium term, though investors with a higher risk tolerance might consider holding the stock. "For those looking to enter, it may be worth waiting for lower levels, but only with a long-term view," he added. From a technical standpoint, analysts indicate the stock remains weak, with some suggesting it could fall toward Rs 70. Ravi Singh, Senior Vice-President at Religare Broking, described the stock as being in a "no-trade" zone, while AR Ramachandran, a SEBI-registered research analyst, believes it is oversold and could find support at Rs 59.4, advising buying only if the stock closes above Rs 80.3 for a potential target of Rs 100.

Ola Electric, founded in 2017, is an electric vehicle manufacturer that produces vehicles and components such as battery packs and motors at its Ola Futurefactory.

## Tessolve buys German chip design firm



BENGALURU. Hero Electronix's Tessolve to acquire Germany-headquartered semiconductor chip design firm Dream Chip Technologies for up to Rs 400 crore. Founded in Bengaluru, this acquisition will strengthen Tessolve's leadership in the industry by adding advanced capabilities in system on chip (SoC) designs for the artificial intelligence (AI), automotive, data center, and industrial markets. The acquisition will expand Tessolve's European

operations by adding four delivery locations across Germany and Netherlands, including a specialised ADAS & imaging center-of-excellence lab. "This acquisition solidifies our position as a top tier semiconductor engineering firm globally," said Srinji Chinamilli, Co-founder & CEO of Tessolve. "Dream Chip's capabilities strengthen our ability to take on leading edge ASIC design projects and greatly enhance our European footprint," he added.

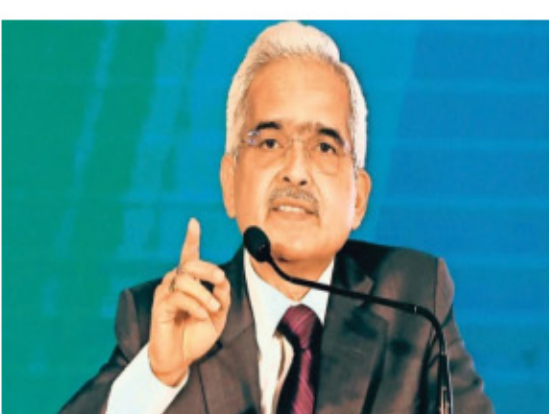
**Dream Chip Technologies, headquartered in Germany is recognised as one of the leading semiconductor design service companies in the region.**

Dream Chip Technologies, headquartered in Germany is recognised as one of the leading semiconductor design service companies in the region. The acquisition is a 100% cash transaction. "By combining our design capabilities and IP with Tessolve's established semiconductor services and embedded solutions, we can offer our customers a solution from chip architecture to post-silicon test and supply chain management for their most complex designs," said Jens Benndorf, CEO of Dream Chip Technologies.

# October CPI number is going to be very high than September: RBI Governor Das

New Delhi. Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday said the consumer price-based index (CPI) which accelerated to 5.5 per cent in September, is likely to escalate further in October. The Governor stated that the change in monetary policy stance in the October policy to 'neutral' from 'withdrawal of accommodation' should not be interpreted as a cut in the repo rate in the next policy, dampening hopes of the much-awaited reduction in the key policy rate. He was responding to a question that there has been some disconnect between the RBI's change in stance in the October 2024 policy and his subsequent statements in various speeches that there are "significant upside risks to inflation". "I had said in my monetary policy statement (on October 9, 2024) very clearly that in September and October, the inflation prints are expected to be higher. September came at 5.5 per cent. I reiterate today that the October CPI number is again going to be very high, perhaps higher than the September (CPI) number," he said at the BFSI Insight Summit, organised by the Business Standard newspaper. Retail inflation

surged to a nine-month high of 5.49 per cent in September from 3.65 per cent in August, mainly due to a rise in food prices especially of fruits and vegetables, data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed. The October CPI print will be released by the NSSO next week. The repo rate, which has been steady for 20 consecutive months, currently stands at 6.5 per cent. While a majority of economists have pencilled in a repo rate cut in the December 2024 monetary policy meeting, a section of analysts expects a reduction in the February 2025 policy meeting. To a query on the change in monetary policy stance in October policy and his statements indicating inflation remains a significant risk, Das said the RBI's communication has been very consistent that a change in the stance gives the banking regulator optionality and flexibility to decide the future course of action. We have to be very cautious in our future course of action. A change in stance doesn't mean that the next step (by the RBI) is a rate cut in the very next meeting. It's not so," Das stated.



On the economy, Das said that the 70-80 high-speed indicators, which the RBI monitors, show that only IIP numbers and FMCG sales in the urban sector have considerably moderated. However, the GST, e-way bills, toll collections, air passenger traffic, performances of steel and cement industries and the automobile sector in October have done well. "So overall, if you see the incoming data present a mixed picture, where the positives outweigh the negatives," Das said. On the impact of US presidential

results on India, the Governor said that irrespective of the global developments and the outcome of the US elections, and the kind of spillovers it will have on the rest of the world, the Indian economy and the financial sector is currently well placed, and very resilient to deal with any kind of spillovers. When asked about the recent ban on 4 NBFCs from sanctioning and disbursing loans for violation of various rules, including charging excessive pricing of loans, Das said there are 9,400 NBFCs, and action has been taken on only 4 entities. The four NBFCs included Asirvad Micro Finance Ltd promoted by Manappuram Finance, Arohan Financial Services Ltd, Mitsubishi-backed DMI Finance and Navi Finserv, founded by former Flipkart founder Sachin Bansal. Das said the action was preceded by months of direct bilateral engagement with the individual NBFCs. Our action is not punitive, but corrective," he said, adding that once the regulatory compliances are being met, the RBI withdraws the restrictions.

NEWS BOX

**Robin Uthappa unhappy with CSK for allowing Rachin Ravindra to practice in Chennai**

New Delhi. Former India cricketer Robin Uthappa has criticized the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Chennai Super Kings (CSK) for allowing Rachin Ravindra to practice in their academy in Chennai ahead of Test series against India. Notably, Ravindra went to CSK academy ahead of their one-off Test against Afghanistan in Greater Noida and trained there to get acclimatized to the Indian conditions. The move worked wonders for the 24-year-old as he played a magnificent innings of 134 (157) in the first Test in Bengaluru and followed it up with an unbeaten 39\* in the second innings to help New Zealand chase down 107 to win the Test. Courtesy of his match-winning performances, Ravindra was adjudged Player of the Match for helping New Zealand win their first Test in India after 36 years. While receiving his award, Ravindra revealed how his preparations in Chennai helped him with his batting. Recently, Uthappa criticized CSK's move for allowing to practice in their academy saying that a line has to be drawn as the country always comes ahead of the franchise. "Rachin Ravindra came here and practiced at the CSK Academy. CSK is a beautiful franchise that will always look



after its franchise players but a line has to be drawn where the interest of the country comes ahead of your franchise players, especially when he is a foreign player and comes and plays against our country," Uthappa said on his YouTube channel. When it comes to the country, there should be a line somewhere: Uthappa

Further ahead, Uthappa, who's played for CSK himself in the 2021 and 2022 seasons, said that the franchise always go out of their ways for their players but should draw the line somewhere. "I am not surprised that CSK always go over and above for their players but somewhere in that kindness, maybe I am not saying the right thing, I absolutely love CSK, but when it comes to the country, there should be a line somewhere where we do not cross that line," he added. The 2007 T20 World Cup winner also hailed Ravindra for his splendid hundred in Bengaluru calling it one of the best knocks by an overseas player in India. "On the basis of that preparation, Rachin Ravindra batted brilliantly. One of the best knocks by an overseas player.

**AUS-A vs IND-A: Dhruv Jurel shines despite India getting all-out for 161**

New Delhi. On a day when the rest of the batters failed, Dhruv Jurel stepped up to score a valiant 80 off 186 balls to help India-A get to 161 runs in the first innings of the 2nd unofficial Test against Australia-A on November 7, Thursday in Melbourne. Jurel would hit 6 boundaries and 2 sixes in his knock that saved the blushes of the Indian side, who was once again rocked by a top order failure. Jurel, along with KL Rahul, was added to the India-A squad as the BCCI wanted both men to get some game time under their belt ahead of the Perth Test in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The 23-year-old was part of India's squad in the Bangladesh and New Zealand Test series but couldn't get to play a game. Jurel did play a stellar role earlier in the year for India against England and scored a similar knock in the Ranchi



Test, where he had saved the Indian team. A similar act was needed on Thursday as Michael Neser would rip through the Indian top order. Abhimanyu Easwaran and Sai Sudharsan were back in the hut in the first over as Neser delivered the early blows. Rahul, who was being used as an opener during the tour game, also failed as he was dismissed for just 4 runs by Scott Boland. Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad also didn't last long as India was reduced to 11 for 4 under 3 overs. Jurel would join Devdutt Padikkal in the middle and the duo steadied the ship for the Indian side. Neser would come back to dismiss Padikkal just ahead of lunch. Jurel was batting at 24 runs off 91 balls at a point in his innings as India took the break at 64 for 5.

Jurel and Nitish Kumar Reddy would add 39 runs before Beau Webster dismissed the all-rounder and Tanush Kotian in quick succession to leave India reeling at 103 for 7. Jurel would start to attack from this point as he slowly started to lose partners at the other end. The wicketkeeper did find some support from Prasidh Krishna and the duo added 36 runs before Jurel's stay was ended by McSweeney.

**UEFA Champions League: Barcelona thrash Red Star 5-2, Arsenal and PSG beaten**

**Barcelona continued their impressive form with a 5-2 victory over Red Star Belgrade in the UEFA Champions League. Meanwhile, Arsenal and PSG faced defeats at the hands of Inter Milan and Atletico Madrid, respectively.**



New Delhi. Barcelona continued their recent form on November 6, Wednesday as they thrashed Red Star Belgrade in the UEFA Champions League. Arsenal and PSG would suffer losses on the day as Inter Milan and Atletico Madrid were able to edge past them respectively. Robert Lewandowski netted a goal in each half, propelling his team to a commanding 5-2 victory over Red Star Belgrade. Inigo Martinez kicked off the scoring with a close-range header from Raphinha's free-kick in the 13th minute. Red Star responded 14 minutes later, with Silas beating Barca's high defensive line to finish off a quick counterattack. Just before halftime, Lewandowski slotted home a rebound from Raphinha's shot in the 43rd

minute, then extended Barcelona's lead in the 53rd with a smooth finish on a Jules Koukonde cross. Koukonde also assisted Raphinha's goal for Barca's fourth, and in the 76th minute, set up Fermin Lopez for the fifth, before Milson pulled one back for Red Star in the 84th. The win moves Barcelona to sixth in the Champions League standings with nine points, while Red Star, without a

point, sits 35th. Inter Milan edged out Arsenal 1-0 in a tightly contested match, with Hakan Calhanoglu's perfect penalty record intact as he converted from the spot just before halftime. Arsenal's Mikel Merino was penalised for a contentious handball, giving Calhanoglu his 19th successful penalty out of 19 since joining Inter. Arsenal fought hard in the second half, with Yann

Sommer denying Kai Havertz and another chance going just wide. Inter's resilient defense secured their 10 points from four games, while Arsenal, on seven, are still outside the top eight for automatic knockout qualification.

PSG receives knockout blow in stoppage time

Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League struggles deepened with a last-second 2-1 defeat at home to Atletico Madrid. Warren Zaire-Emery scored first for PSG, but Nahuel Molina quickly equalized, and Angel Correa struck in the third minute of added time to clinch victory for Atletico. PSG, with four points from four games, are in the elimination zone in 25th place, while Atletico climbed to safety with six points. PSG now face Bayern Munich and RB Salzburg, while Atletico meet Sparta Prague and Slovan Bratislava.

Other results on Wednesday saw Aston Villa's unbeaten run come to an end against Club Brugge after a bizarre handball from Tyrone Mings gave the Belgian side a penalty, which they converted. Bayern Munich would edge past Benfica to return to winning ways while RB Salzburg, Atlanta, Brest, Monaco and Shakhtar also secured wins.

**Thomas Draca becomes first player from Italy to register for IPL 2025 auction**

**Italian cricketer Thomas Draca has become the first player from Italy to register himself for the upcoming IPL 2025 mega auction.**



New Delhi. Italy's Thomas Draca has become the first player from his nation to register for the upcoming IPL 2025 (Indian Premier League 2025) mega auction. Notably, the bidding event for the grandest T20 league is set to be held on November 24 and 25 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. For the event, a total of 1,574 players have registered their names out of which 1,165 are Indian and 409 overseas. Among the 409 overseas players, Thomas Jack Draca is the only player to register from Italy as India Today accessed details of player registrations. The right-arm seamer recently played for the Brampton

Wolves in the Global T20 Canada 2024 and impressed everyone with his performances. Draca was the joint second-highest wicket-taker of the tournament with 11 wickets to his name from six innings at an average of 10.63 and an economy of 6.88. His best performance of the season came against Surrey as he scalped 3/18 in four overs to help his team defend 198 and win the match by 59 runs. He further registered figures of 3/10 and 3/30 against Mississauga and Surrey respectively which helped his team finish on the second spot on the points table.

this year in June against Luxembourg and registered bowling figures of 2/15 in four overs in his team's 77-run win. Draca has played four T20Is so far and has scalped eight wickets at an average of 8.50 and an economy of 4.25 with best figures of 3/9 vs Isle of Man. For the IPL auction, Draca has registered himself under the all-rounders' category at a base price of INR 30 Lakh. It remains to be seen whether Draca gets his name shortlisted by the franchises for the mega auction and if any team shows interest in bidding for the Italian cricketer.

**Allah Ghazanfar's spin wizardry makes Bangladesh lose 8 wickets for 23 runs**

New Delhi. Afghanistan off-spinner Allah Ghazanfar triggered a dramatic collapse for Bangladesh in the first ODI of the three-match series on Wednesday, November 6 at Sharjah Cricket Stadium, Sharjah. The 18-year-old picked 6/26 and ran through the Bangladesh batting order to help his team win the match by 92 runs. The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side was cruising at one stage as they were 120/2 after chasing a modest target of 235 runs. However, 18-year-old Ghazanfar spoiled Bangladesh's hope with his spin wizardry leaving batters dumbfounded by his subtle variations. The 18-year-old started with the new ball alongside seamer Fazalhaq Farooqi and got the first wicket in his very second over by cleaning up Tanzid Hasan (3 off 5). He finished his first spell with figures of 1/21 in 4 overs and later returned in the 31st over with his captain desperate to turn things around as Bangladesh needed 105 runs from 20 overs having 7 wickets in hand. He started



the proceedings by dismissing Mehidy Hasan Miraz (28 off 51) caught at fine leg and further got Mushfiqur Rahim stumped in his very next over.

Bangladesh lose last seven wickets in 27 balls. The off spinner further got Rishad Hossain lbw in the same over and shattered the stumps of Taskin Ahmed to scalp three wickets in a single over. At the other end, Rashid Khan (2/28, 8 overs) breached the defence of Towhid Hridoy and Mahmudullah while Ghazanfar cleaned up Shoriful Islam to bundle out Bangladesh for just 143.

Bangladesh lost their last seven wickets for 11 runs and within 27 balls and hence were completely outfoxed by Afghanistan's spinners. As a result, Afghanistan won the match by a huge margin of 92 runs and took a 1-0 lead in the series. Ghazanfar was deservedly adjudged Player of the Match for his marvellous spell of 6/26 in 6.3 overs.

Earlier in the day, Mohammad Nabi (84 off 79) and captain Hashmatullah Shahidi top scored for Afghanistan to help them get to 235 in 49.4 overs. Taskin Ahmed (4/53) and Mustafizur Rahman (4/58) picked four wickets each for Bangladesh.

**Neeraj Chopra sends emotional message to retiring coach Klaus Bartonietz**

New Delhi. In a heartfelt farewell, javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra announced his separation from long-time coach Klaus Bartonietz, who is retiring and returning to Germany. Their partnership has been marked by remarkable achievements, including Neeraj's historic gold at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, another Olympic medal, two Asian Games golds, and a World Championship title.



It was reported in October by PTI that Bartonietz had expressed his interest in ending the successful partnership with Neeraj and head back home. The 75-year-old had cited his age and family commitments to part ways with the Indian javelin star. Neeraj would take to X and hailed Bartonietz as more than a mentor to him. The javelin star said that thanked the German coach for standing by him during his injuries and lows in his career so far. Neeraj would say that he would miss them as a team and ended his message with wishing Bartonietz happy retirement. The 26-year-old also added a heartwarming video showing the journey of both men as a team

on his X account as well. "I write this without knowing where to begin. Coach, you are more than just a mentor to me. Everything you taught has helped me grow both as an athlete and person. You have gone out of your way to make sure I was mentally and physically prepared for every competition. You stood by me through injury."

"You were there through the highs, and you were there even more through the lows. You were one of the quietest in the stands, but your words to me rang the loudest in my ears

**In a heartfelt message and video, Neeraj Chopra announced that he would be separating from his longtime coach Klaus Bartonietz, who will be heading back to Germany and retire. Bartonietz oversaw Neeraj's meteoric rise in javelin throw.**

when I threw. I will miss the pranks and the laughs we shared, but more than anything, I will miss US as a team. Thank you for being a part of my journey. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of yours." The 75-year-old Bartonietz first joined the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) in 2019 as a biomechanical expert. He became Chopra's coach after a fallout between the athlete and his former mentor, Uwe Hohn, and the AFL. Bartonietz's final event with Chopra was the Diamond League final in Brussels earlier this year, where Chopra placed second.

**Australia's Raygun retires from breaking after Olympics 2024 performance backlash**

**Rachael Gunn, also known as B-girl Raygun, has announced her retirement from competitive breaking following a viral backlash over her Paris Olympics performance. The scrutiny and criticism have led her to reconsider her future in the sport.**

about her path to Olympic qualification and sparking renewed criticism of breaking's place in the Olympics. Originally, Gunn had planned to continue competing but ultimately found the experience "upsetting" enough to reconsider. Speaking to a local radio station, Gunn said that she didn't have any control over how people saw her and the level of scrutiny that's going to be there has made her rethink about continuing breaking. "I just didn't have any control over how people saw me or who I was," she told local radio station 2DayFM on Wednesday, as quoted by BBC.



New Delhi. Australian breaker Rachael Gunn, known as B-girl Raygun, has announced her retirement from competition, citing the overwhelming viral response to her Paris Olympics performance. Gunn, a 37-year-old university lecturer, made headlines after she failed to score in all three competition rounds in August, performing an unconventional routine with moves like the sprinkler and kangaroo hop. Her unorthodox style brought her both global attention and widespread ridicule, even fuelling conspiracy theories

"I was going to keep competing, for sure, but that seems really difficult for me to do now. "I think the level of scrutiny that's going to be there, and people will be filming it, and it will go online." Gunn, who has said the criticism drained her enjoyment of the sport, reiterated on Wednesday that the controversy left her disillusioned. The 37-year-old said that people shouldn't be made to feel bad about the way they dance. Gunn said that she does continue to dance but it's

confined to her living room with her partner. "Dancing is so much fun, and it makes you feel good. I don't think people should feel crap about the way that they dance." "I still dance, and I still break. But, you know, that's like in my living room with my

partner!" The backlash surrounding Gunn's performance has also reignited debate over breaking's Olympic suitability. Breaking, which debuted in Paris, won't feature in the 2028 Los Angeles Games, and many question whether the free-form nature of the genre aligns with organised competition.



# Seema Sajdeh

**On Telling Son Nirvaan About New Boyfriend Vikram Ahuja: 'What I Do Will Have An Effect...'**



Seema Sajdeh and Sohail Khan are finally divorced, as was shown in the third season of *Fabulous Lives Vs Bollywood Wives*. Seema is now dating Vikram, her ex-fiance whom she previously left for Sohail Khan. Seema and Vikram's rekindled romance was revealed in the final episode of the show. In a recent chat, Seema opened up about breaking the news of her new romance to her children.

Speaking to *Bollywood Bubble*, Seema expressed, "My most comfortable conversations about my life are with my son because I know I am going to get the God's honest truth from him. He knows that I hold him in the highest regard and that his opinion matters to me and what he feels matters to me. Both my children are my priority. I won't do anything in my life which isn't okay with my kids. At the end of the day, whatever I do will have a ripple effect on their lives and it is my responsibility as a mother to them. It is cathartic for me to have these conversations with Nirvaan. It helps me see things clearly."

Seema recalled how she told Nirvaan about Vikram and said, "The conversation was very organic. Yohan, being younger, looks up to Nirvaan as his elder brother. Nirvaan can also explain things to me from Yohan's point of view, and vice versa. I had Nirvaan when I was so young that, in a way, he became my best friend. We don't hide anything from each other." On her show, Seema revealed that she had reunited with Vikram and said, "He knows me like no one else. If anybody knows us in town, they all know the story of Seema and Vikram. Vikram is the one that I was engaged to before I met Sohail, and here we are. Life comes full circle." "It feels amazing. I really didn't see this coming. And I can't wait to tell this bunch of girls that I absolutely love. I mean, oh my God! Are they going to fall off their chairs? And yet again, I am entertainment, entertainment," she added.

**Deepika Padukone Reveals How Her Baby Girl Dua Keeps Her From Doing Daily Chores: 'True Story'**



Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh embraced parenthood in September this year. They welcomed their baby girl on 8th September. On the occasion of Diwali, they revealed that they have named the little one 'Dua Padukone Singh', while giving a tiny glimpse of the baby's feet. The couple's fans eagerly wait for any update, and the actress has been keeping them hooked by re-sharing adorable reels that she can relate with, as a new mom. Today, Deepika shared an adorable reel, that mentioned how newborn babies keep their mom away from doing daily chores. On Wednesday, Deepika Padukone took to her Instagram story to re-share a reel. It hilariously showed newborn babies' strategy to ensure their mom is engaged all the time. The video shows a very sleepy baby trying to stay awake by keeping one eye open. The text on the video reads, "Trying to keep myself awake here, because if I sleep... My mom will take a shower, eat, clean the house and no more snuggles." Looks like baby Dua is also keeping Deepika Padukone engaged with her cute antics! Sharing the video, the actress wrote, "True Story."

Meanwhile, a few days ago, Deepika re-shared a reel that depicted all the cute things that babies do! The video showed how cutely babies use their whole hand to hold a finger, how they sleep with their mouth wide open, the way babies stretch when trying to wake up, and many other things. The text on the reel read, "Things about a newborn that make my heart burst." On the special occasion of Diwali, Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone shared a tiny glimpse of their baby girl Dua. She was seen dressed in a red ethnic outfit. Along with the little glimpse, the couple revealed the baby's name, and what it signifies. "Dua Padukone Singh" ('Dua': meaning a Prayer. Because She is the Answer to our Prayers. Our hearts are filled with Love & Gratitude. Deepika & Ranveer," read the joint statement.

**Prabhas To Start Shooting For Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit By December End: Report**



*Spirit*, the Sandeep Reddy Vanga directorial featuring South Superstar Prabhas, has been creating buzz ever since its announcement in 2021. Backed by T-series, the film will portray the Baahubali in the role of a cop. After facing multiple delays, a recent report claimed that the film's shooting will commence next month. However, the official release date is yet to be finalised. As per a report by 123Telugu, producer Bhushan Kumar revealed that they are planning to begin filming by the end of December. During the promotions of the recently released horror-comedy film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, Bhushan said, "We are doing *Spirit* with Prabhas. The other cast is yet to be finalized. We will commence the casting process soon. We are planning to start the film from December end," as quoted by the publication.

*Spirit* will mark Prabhas' first collaboration with the Kabir Singh director. Talking about the film, a source earlier told Pinkvilla, "Vanga has written a 'Pakka Commercial Entertainer' that will appeal to a diverse range of audiences. It's a cop-themed action film with a lot of entertainment, including emotions that will resonate with moviegoers all around the country." Earlier during an interview with *Galatta Plus*, Sandeep Reddy Vanga revealed that *Spirit* will made on a whopping budget of Rs 300 crore.

Moreover, Vanga was confident that the film would mint around Rs 150 crore on the first day itself. He said, "With Prabhas and my combination, as well as satellite and digital rights, we can cover our costs straight up. If everything goes as planned with the teaser, trailer, and song pre-release, as well as everything else we do to capture the audience's interest, the opening day will be Rs 150 crore. It is a trading calculation."

After completing *Spirit* with Prabhas, director Vanga will begin working on his highly anticipated *Animal Park*, which is a sequel to Ranbir Kapoor's 2023 action thriller film *Animal*. Talking about the sequel, Bhushan told *Bollywood Hungama*, "We will have a six-month gap after *Spirit* wraps, and then we will start *Animal Park*."

"Meanwhile, talking about Prabhas, the actor is currently busy shooting *Salaar Part 2* with director Prashanth Neel. Apart from that, he also has *The Raja Saab*, director Hanu Raghavapudi's next and *Kalki 2* lined up."

# Uorfi Javed

**Criticises Sana Khan's Remarks On Women's Clothing: 'Bringing Others Down'**

Social media sensation Uorfi Javed has called out former actress Sana Khan for her recent comments about women's dressing sense. Talking on Rubina Dilaik's podcast, Sana expressed confusion about why husbands "allow" their wives to wear revealing clothes, stating that such outfits have no self-respect. Claiming that "Every man wants his wife to dress modestly," Sana went on to ask if men are comfortable with other people calling their wives "hot" over the way they dress. In addition to Rubina coming under fire on social media for not objecting to the comments as a host, users have also criticised Sana, with Uorfi being the most recent addition.



Uorfi Javed, who is famous for her bold dress sense, did not mince her words as she slammed Sana. Taking to her Instagram Stories, she expressed her disagreement, stating that such thoughts downplay other women. Uorfi stated, "Bringing other women down, considering yourself superior because of your new 'clothing choices'. Your choices don't make you superior to the ones who make

different choices."

Uorfi also stated that women are free to wear whatever they want, and they should not be judged on the kind of clothes they wear. She added, "Lady, if you can wear whatever you want and don't want to be judged, other women can demand that too." In a recent podcast episode with Rubina Dilaik, the former actress Sana Khan talked about her experiences with fashion and modesty. She shared her experience of gradually transitioning from Salwar Kameez to more revealing clothes like backless dresses. Sana then went on to voice her opinions on working on modest dressing while in marriage, stating that many of the men that she has come across appreciate it when their wives dress more modestly. Sana expressed her bewilderment at the attitude of men who do not mind when their wives dress rather provocatively. She wondered if these men like it when other people find their wives "hot" by the way they dress. "

