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Supreme Court asks Ajit Pawar's NCP not to use Sharad Pawar's photos, videos

Sanjay Kumar Mumbai, Nov 13: The Supreme Court on Wednesday instructed Ajit Pawar's faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) not to use



any photos, videos or images of Sharad Pawar ahead of the Maharashtra assembly election on November 20. The court issued these instructions with compliance to its earlier order asking both sides to maintain their separate identities ahead of the polls.

stand on your own legs, now that you have ideological difference with Sharad Pawar. Once you have disassociated from Sharad Pawar you shouldn't use his name, photo or video," the apex court said, as quoted by Bar & Bench. Posting the matter for November 19, the apex court said that it has full faith in the wisdom of voters who know whom to vote for, but the court did not discount the use of artificial intelligence to destroy a level playing field.

SC declares 'Bulldozer Justice' unconstitutional

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, Nov 13: Amid allegations of selective demolition of unauthorised constructions belonging to members of a particular community in BJP-ruled states as a punitive measure, the Supreme Court on Wednesday declared 'Bulldozer Justice' unconstitutional, saying the Executive cannot demolish residential and commercial properties of persons only on the grounds that they were accused or convicted of a crime.



"It is a settled principle of criminal jurisprudence as recognised in our country that a person is presumed to be innocent till he is held guilty...if demolition of a house is permitted wherein number of persons of a family or a few families reside only on the grounds that one person residing in such a house is either an accused or convicted in the crime, it will amount to inflicting a collective punishment on the entire family or the families residing in such a structure. In our considered view, our constitutional scheme and the criminal jurisprudence would never permit the same," a Bench led by Justice BR Gavai said.

"Depriving such innocent people of their right to life by removing shelter from their heads...would be wholly unconstitutional." "It is not a happy sight to

demolishing a building, when authorities have failed to follow the basic principles of natural justice and have acted without adhering to the principle of due process, reminds one of a lawless state of affairs, where "might was right," it said. Exercising its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution, the Bench - which also included Justice KV Viswanathan - laid down detailed guidelines on demolition of properties. It said no order on demolition could be passed without a 15-day prior show-cause notice and without giving a hearing to the affected persons and actual demolition can be carried out only 15 days after the final order had been passed.

SC parked bulldozer in garage forever: Akhilesh Yadav

Naresh Malhotra Lucknow, Nov 13: He claimed that the manner in which bulldozers were used in Ayodhya was the reason behind the BJP's defeat in the Lok Sabha elections.

The Supreme Court has parked the bulldozer in the garage forever, Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav said on Wednesday in a dig at the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh over the top court's demolition verdict. The Uttar Pradesh government, which has been receiving flak from various quarters over its "bulldozer action", also hailed the Supreme Court's verdict while clarifying that it was not involved in the case. The verdict was part of the case "Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind vs North Delhi Municipal Corporation and others", the state government said while asserting that the apex court's decision would help curb organised crime and instil a fear of legal consequences among criminals.

might is right, the Supreme Court laid down pan-India guidelines and said no property should be demolished without a prior show cause notice and the affected must be given 15 days to respond. The executive cannot assume judicial powers to punish citizens by demolishing their properties without following due process, the apex court said while terming such excesses "high-handed and arbitrary" and ruling that they needed to be dealt with the "heavy hand of the law".



are being held on November 20. At the rally in support of the Samajwadi Party's Sisamau candidate Nasim Solanki, Yadav said, "The Supreme Court has issued a big order. This will stop the bulldozer action." Equating "bulldozer justice" with a lawless state of affairs where

exam cancelled are people of the BJP." details and the registration process was launched on Tuesday by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Minister of Odisha Mohan Charan Majhi. The PBD-2025 is to be held from January 8 to 10 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The Ministry of External Affairs said the launch of the PBD

Jaishankar launches website, NRIs can register now for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

New Delhi, Nov 13: Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and people of Indian origin living abroad and desiring to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), 2025, can now register for the event. A website with all



website marks the commencement of online registration for participation in the convention. The website will also facilitate reservation of accommodation in Odisha. The theme of the PBD convention is "Diaspora's contribution to a Viksit Bharat". It will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A youth edition of PBD will be held in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. President Droupadi Murmu will confer the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards and preside over the valedictory session. While launching the website, EAM Jaishankar said Prime Minister Modi's regular interactions with the diaspora during his official visits abroad and the unwavering support of the latter to India's growth story are a testimony to the strong bonds shared between India and its global community.

The EAM expressed confidence that the Indian diaspora will continue to play an important role in India's march towards a Viksit Bharat. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated to commemorate the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi in India from South Africa on January 9, 1915.

Let's ensure resounding victory together: Rahul to Wayanad voters

ST Correspondent New Delhi, Nov.13: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday urged Wayanad voters to support his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and said she will be more than just a representative for them and be their sister, daughter and advocate.

"I'm reaching out to my family in Wayanad this election, my sister Priyanka Gandhi is ready to be your voice in Parliament," Gandhi said in a post on X. "She will be more than just a representative - she will be your sister, your daughter, and your advocate. I am confident she will help unlock Wayanad's full potential." Rahul Gandhi said. "I urge all of you to come out, vote, and support her. Let's ensure a resounding victory together!" the former Congress president said. Voting in the bypolls for the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat commenced at 7 am on Wednesday. The Wayanad constituency comprises seven assembly segments of Mananthavady (ST), Sulthan Bathery (ST), and Kalpetta in Wayanad district; Thiruvambady in Kozhikode district; and Erand, Nilambur, and Wandoor in Malappuram district. A bypoll was necessitated in the hill constituency after Rahul Gandhi, who won the Wayanad LS seat in the general elections held earlier this year, vacated it after he also won from the Rae Bareilly constituency. There are 16 candidates in the fray for the seat with Congress-led UDF's candidate and Rahul's sister Priyanka Gandhi, who is making her electoral debut, CPI(M)-led LDF's Sathyan Mokeri and BJP-led NDA's Navya Haridas being the top contenders.

BJP offered Rs 50 crore each to 50 Cong MLAs to remove Karnataka govt: Siddaramaiah

Mysuru, Nov 13: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday alleged that the opposition BJP offered Rs 50 crore each to 50 Congress MLAs to remove his government. He said none of the Congress MLAs agreed, due to which the BJP is now resorting to filing false cases against him. "To overthrow the Siddaramaiah government somehow, they (BJP) offered Rs 50 crore to 50 MLAs. Where did they get so much money from? Did former Chief Ministers B S Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai, Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra print the money?" Siddaramaiah asked after inaugurating public works worth Rs 470 crore in the T Narasipura assembly constituency in Mysuru district. "They have made crores of rupees. Using the money, they offered Rs 50 crore to each MLA," the chief minister alleged. "But none of our MLAs agreed for it this time. That's why they have started a campaign to remove this government somehow. That's why they are doing it (filing false cases)," Siddaramaiah said.

EC officials check Eknath Shinde's bag in Palghar amid Uddhav Thackeray checking row

Mumbai, Nov 13: Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde's bags were checked by Election Commission's officials in Palghar on Wednesday. Parbhani, Nov 09 (ANI): Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde addresses a public rally ahead of the state Assembly elections, in Parbhani on Saturday. The action came after Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray questioned the poll panel after his bags had been inspected by the election authorities after he arrived in Latur and Yavatmal districts over the last two days. He asked election officials if the same action will be taken against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde. "I am not angry with [the ECI officials] as they were doing their duty. But at the same time, I have a question: do they check the bags of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah, and Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde, the man with the pink jacket (referring to Ajit Pawar) and that deputy CM Fadnavis?" Thackeray had said at a public meeting in Wani. Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, however, said Uddhav Thackeray was trying to divert the attention by needlessly protesting against the checking of his bags by poll officials and was "seeking votes by whining".

Omar Abdullah stunned to see the progress of new Assembly complex in Jammu

Navdeep Singh Sahni Jammu, Nov.13: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was on Monday taken aback by the poor pace of work when he visited the under-construction Assembly complex after resuming work at the civil secretariat here in Jammu. After attending the brief ceremony in the portico of the civil secretariat building Omar went around the power corridors and interacted with his ministerial colleagues as they resumed working in their offices. Later Omar stepped out of his office chamber and walked on foot to the project site. The security officials hurriedly covered him in different layers of protection as they marched on foot outside the civil secretariat complex. The foundation stone of the multi-floor Assembly complex was laid by Omar himself on July 1, 2011. In the last over 13 years the successive governments failed to

complete the project. Omar toured the complex, where officials from the Public Works Department (PWD) Roads & Buildings



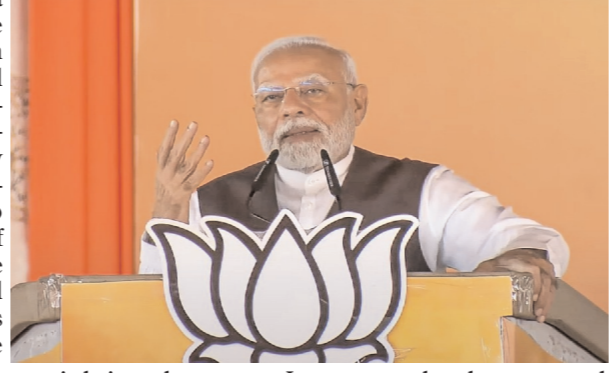
(R&B) Division provided a detailed briefing on the project's various stages, timeline, and next steps. During the inspection visit to the project site, Omar asked pointed queries to the senior officers of the project executing agency to learn more about the reasons behind the delay and the current status of

the progress. As Omar went around the assembly complex along with Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and other cabinet colleagues he was informed by the officers that the new assembly complex may take at least two more years to get ready. Omar when enquired about the reasons behind the delay of the project was informed by the senior officials that the non-availability of the funds was the primary reason. Due to prolonged delay the original cost of the project initially pegged at around 110 crores has already exceeded 200 crores. On ground zero, the construction work was started in August 2011. Initially, the project was estimated to be built at a cost of around 113 crores in a stipulated period. According to the project engineers, who remained in charge from time to time the work on the project was going on smoothly till 2015 but the same hit the roadblock during the BJP-PDP alliance government in office.

BJP won't allow anyone to play with your 'Maati, Roti, Beti': Modi

Tejinder Kaur Babbar Ranchi, Nov 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday accused the JMM-Congress-RJD government in poll-bound Jharkhand of harbouring Bangladeshi infiltrators and said that a conspiracy was being hatched to change the identity of Jharkhandi with reduction in tribal population, especially in Santal Parganas region. Addressing two back-to-back rallies in Santal Parganas division in Sarrah and Godda assembly seats, which are going to polls in the second phase on November 20, Modi also accused the incumbent government of being knee deep in corruption. "You love your identity as a Jharkhandi. What will happen if identity is lost. The statistics show that the tribal population in the state has halved in Santal Parganas. Your 'Jal, Jungle, Jameen' (water, forest, land) is being taken over. We need to save both the tribals as well as Jharkhand," Modi said. "A big conspiracy is on to change the

identity of Jharkhand. And the JMM-Congress government is taking all wrong decisions to harbour the infiltrators. Their documents are being made overnight. Tribal girls are being targeted in the guise of marriage. Your land as well as livelihood



is being taken away... I assure you that the BJP-NDA government will not allow anyone to play with your Maati (land), Roti (livelihood) and Beti (daughter)," he added. The prime minister's statement is in

sync with the BJP's allegation that Bangladeshi infiltration has led to reduction in tribal population and demographic change, especially in Santal Parganas. The saffron party has made it a major poll issue in the ongoing assembly elections. Addressing the rally in Sarrah, where BJP's Sita Soren is taking on Congress minister Irfan Ansari, Modi hit out at the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) for being mum on the "foul language" used by Ansari against Sita Soren. "The Congress has a history of insulting the tribals. A Congress minister used such a foul language against Sita Soren. Why did he dare to do so? Because they know JMM would do nothing. The JMM just for

power don't utter a word for Sita Soren. The Congress has had a history of being against tribals. They tried their best to defeat Droupadi Murmu when we fielded her for President. They still miss no opportunity to disrespect her," Modi said. Accusing the JMM-Congress-RJD government of having looted the state, Modi alleged that several schemes of Centre, including housing and tapped drinking water scheme, could not reach many corners due to corruption of the state government. "Where does all this money go? It was this corruption money that we saw as a heap of notes on TV. We would spare none," added Modi. Reacting to the charges, JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey said the prime minister seems to have forgotten that it was the BJP government led by Raghunath Das that tried to take away the identity of the tribals. "Either the prime minister has not been briefed, or he is deliberately forgetting it. Jal, Jungle, Jameen is the identity of tribals. And CNT (Chota Nagpur Tenancy) Act and SPT (Santal Pargana Tenancy) Act are the best tools to protect them. And it was the double engine government under his watch that tried to amend these Acts to take away tribal land and give it to corporate friends.

## News box

## Madras HC reserves order on actor Kasthuri's anticipatory bail plea

**MADURAI:** The Madurai Bench of the Madras HC on Tuesday reserved orders on the anticipatory bail petition filed by actor S Kasthuri (51) in a case filed by the Madurai Thirunagar police, based on a complaint by Naidu Mahajana Sangam in Madurai, for her remarks against Telugu people in a meeting



in Chennai last month.

In her petition, Kasthuri stated that she made the comment while speaking about the claim of 'Tamilan' status by Brahmin and Telugu-speaking people in the state. The remark was not about the entire Telugu-speaking community and had just referred to a particular group who founded Dravidar Kazhagam and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, she added. Stating that similar FIRs have been registered against her in several districts, the actor alleged that the complainants have misinterpreted her speech and though she had tendered an apology, they lodged complaints at the instigation of a few politicians.

Stating that no riot or provocation had happened so far due to her comment, she requested the court to grant her anticipatory bail. When the case was heard by Justice N Anand Venkatesh, the actor's counsel clarified that the actor did not make any comment about Telugu women in particular.

## Focus on education, healthcare &amp; agriculture: Venkaiah to centre

**VELLORE:** Former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu urged the central government to prioritise education, healthcare and agriculture, stressing that 56% of India's population relies on agriculture while 18% lives below the poverty line. He was speaking at the ruby jubilee celebrations of VIT University, Vellore, on Tuesday. Naidu along with Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan inaugurated the newly-constructed Rajammal Govindasamy Staff Residence and Sarojini Naidu Block (Ladies hostel) at the VIT Anna Auditorium. The former V-P attributed VIT's remarkable growth to the vision and strategic planning of its founder-chancellor Dr G Viswanathan, calling him a guiding force for multiple generations. He urged VIT to consider establishing a campus in Delhi to serve 1 lakh students across its branches in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. Addressing concerns in the education sector, Naidu noted that only 27% of Indians have access to higher education and reiterated the need for free education and healthcare for rural and underserved communities. "The government must address challenges in agriculture while investing in essential services," he emphasised, adding collaborative efforts between government and the private sector are essential, especially in rural education and healthcare.

## British era mining tunnel unearthed in Sandur forests

**BALLARI:** A team of experts involved in tracing early human habitations in the forests of Sandur in Ballari district recently stumbled upon a 200-year-old one-km tunnel of the British era. There are many big and small caves in the forests of Sandur and the team launched its study sometime ago. The team led by Prof Ravi Korishettar,



honorary director of Archeological Pre-History Museum, and noted wildlife experts Samad Kottur and Santosh Martin from Ballari discovered the tunnel. The team is assisted by officials from the forest department. Local forest guards were aware of an opening of a tunnel-like structure, but did not venture into it.

On Sunday, the team managed to cover about 100 metres inside the tunnel. According to the team, as one proceeds, the height of the tunnel decreases and it is close to four feet at some places. There is a large opening at the entrance to the tunnel, which looks like a cave. "Not much information is available locally on the tunnel, which is atop the Devadari Hills. It's possible that the tunnel was made during the British regime to explore iron ore. Experts in the mining field may throw more light on it. It is interesting to see the tunnel at 900 metres above the sea level," a team member said.

## Serving up a spike! Storied volleyball club, St George, is looking to script a comeback

**KOCHI:** It was a nippy November evening in 1955. The venue was the Infant Jesus High School ground in Vazhakulam, a small town near Muvattupuzha in Ernakulam district. A team from Delhi was taking on the local St George club in a showpiece game of volleyball.

The makeshift gallery was packed, despite the fact that tickets were priced at 10 ana and 6 ana, not an insignificant amount back then. It was the golden era of Indian volleyball. Earlier in the year, the national team had won the Asian Championships in Tokyo, which also played host to the country's bronze-winning performance at the 1958 Asian Games. The Delhi squad comprised national-level players such as Sath Prakash, N N Chadha, Mohanlal, and others, while the Vazhakulam club boasted the likes of V J Joseph, T P P Nair and K C S Narayan, who were then part of the Indian Air Force team. In a high-intensity match that saw the teams trading spikes, blocks and digs, St George got the better of their more-fancied opponents, much to the delight of spectators. Established in 1942, St George, one of the oldest volleyball clubs in the state,

if not in the country, is now taking the lead in reviving youngsters' interest in the sport. It has been organising free training facilities and camps every year, except for a three-year hiatus during the pandemic. The club opened a modern indoor stadium in 2022, thanks to funding from the local panchayat and money mobilised by club members, says Thomas Varghese, the club's current president. That same year, the club organised its largest coaching camp, which saw the participation of over 160 children. Thomas attributes the club's early success to players such as John Nedungat, Joseph Scaria, and N M Luka, who helped popularise the game in Vazhakulam. "It must have been the simplicity of the game and the landscape of the village that saw volleyball gain popularity in Vazhakulam. All you needed were two wooden poles, a net, a ball and a little space unlike other major sports. The game suited the hilly terrain of Vazhakulam," says Paul Vadakkera, a former international and current member of the club.



A number of established players including V J Joseph and Beena Varghese learned the ropes of the game in Vazhakulam. "There are very few Indian players who have not been associated with the Vazhakulam club in one way or another. Stalwarts like T P P Nair, Jimmy George, Tom Joseph, T J Varghese, Pappan Varapuzha, Cyril C Velloor have all played at our club at least once in their career," recounts Thomas. Paul's brother and former state and university player Jacob Vadakkera was also associated with the club from childhood. "Club tournaments were festive occasions. Beyond the game,

the venue provided youngsters with an avenue for socialising," he points out. "Volleyball is no longer popular with youngsters.

This had affected the club. We hope recent developments, including the new stadium, will help us revive the spirit of the game in our town," adds Jacob, who is now a volleyball coach with the State Sports Council. Former national captain and Dronacharya award winner T P P Nair has fond recollections of representing the Vazhakulam club -- the 1955 match against the Delhi team. "I was a part of the Air Force team, when my captain V J Joseph invited me to play for his home club. They were hosting a team from Delhi and wanted players who could help the local club put up a good fight. That was my only association with Vazhakulam. We played well and won the match," remembers Nair.

Nair was spotted by Joseph in 1951, during a training session. Impressed by his powerful spiking, Nair was inducted into the IAF team and went on to become one of the greatest players the country has produced.

## 'Vote for Modi' on invite: Karnataka HC stays proceedings against man, printer

**BENGALURU:** A strange case of a man printing his wedding card with the message, "The gift that you would give me in the marriage is a vote for Narendra Modi", and the election flying squad filing a criminal case against him for violating the poll rules during the 2024 parliamentary elections, came up before the Karnataka High Court. Justice M Nagaprasanna passed the interim order of stay after hearing the petition filed by the man, Shivaprasad, and Balakrishna A, printer of the invitation card, from Dakshina Kannada district. The petition by the accused questioned the crime registered by the flying squad at the Uppinangady police station. Issuing



notices to the Uppinangady police and flying squad of the Sullia Assembly constituency, the court said the petitioners are alleged of a strange offence.

The petition stated that Shivaprasad printed the invitation card of his wedding with the postscript that was said to be an offence

under Section 127A (restriction on the printing of pamphlets, posters, etc.) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The petitioner contended that the magistrate permitted the flying squad to file the complaint without following the due procedure and application of mind. The petitioner's counsel argued that the documents appended to the petition demonstrated that the invitation was printed long before the elections were declared and it would not make an offence under Section 127A of the Act. Such Acts are required to be in operation only during the election and not prior, he argued. The court said that there should be an interim stay of all further proceedings in the case till December 12, the next date of hearing.

## Rodents plague govt maternity hospital in Hanamkonda, patients in distress

**HANAMKONDA:** Patients and their attendants at the government maternity hospital are spending sleepless nights due to an increasing rodent menace. Allegedly, rodents have been consuming food stored by patients and their families.

On Tuesday, videos of rodents moving in the daycare ward went viral on social media raising concerns over safety of patients and hygiene. Several new mothers and their attendants expressed agony over this menace, alleging that despite repeated complaints, no measures have been taken by the hospital staff. M Lakshmi, an attendant, said: "Two days ago, my daughter gave birth at the hospital, and now we are spending



sleepless nights as these rodents pose a high risk for the newborn baby and the mother. We have also found rodents on the patients' bed. Despite our complaints, no action has been taken by the hospital staff to curb this problem." Resident Medical Officer (RMO) Dr A Ambareesh told: "There are no rodents inside the patients

ward but they have been observed outside the wards. We are taking measures to control the menace by spraying pesticides and cleaning sewage pipelines once a week." This is not the first rodent-related incident in a hospital. In 2022, a patient P Srinivas (42), reportedly died from rodent bites at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) hospital in Warangal. Srinivas was admitted to the Respiratory Intensive Care Unit (RICU) when he was reportedly bitten by rodents while undergoing treatment. The hospital authorities then shifted him to NIMS, Hyderabad, for better treatment, but he died. Hanamkonda District Collector P Pravinia told that an inquiry will be initiated and necessary measures will be taken at the hospital.

## Four lives struck down on railway track, but none answerable!

**KOCHI:** Four persons lost their lives in a matter of seconds to a rail accident, and nobody is accountable for the tragedy! While it may seem tough to digest, that's exactly the case with the Shoranur railway accident that happened earlier this month.

It was around 3.05pm on November 2 that the four workers -- all hailing from Adimalaipudur in Salem district, Tamil Nadu -- were struck by a speeding Thiruvananthapuram-bound Kerala Express on the Bharathapuzha bridge about 2km away from the Shoranur Junction railway station. They died just two days before the visit of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to the state on November 4, for which the entire railways machinery in the state was put on edge. "Railways are not responsible for the deaths and hence we cannot give them compensation either," a top official from the Palakkad railway division told. "The deceased did not die during duty-time;

they were returning after their work was completed. They were asked to clean the railway yard area and they were not at all supposed to enter the railway bridge. They



should have used the regular route, but they trespassed the railway bridge to reach the road. More importantly, they are not our direct employees..." the reasons not to announce compensation went on. The Palakkad division also issued a statement stating that the deceased reached the spot "without informing the railway officials and without the permission of railway

personnel". Since no railway work was planned on the bridge on that day, no railway protection was available on the bridge, the statement said. "The action for terminating the contract has been initiated and a criminal case also is being lodged against the contractor for failing to ensure the safety of the workers," the Railways statement said further, putting the blame on the deceased and the contractor. But voices from various corners have pointed out that the railway authorities pressured the contractor to finish the work on time, and thus, he brought in more people.

The four deceased were fresh to the work, which offered a paltry wage of Rs 600. Now, citing rules, the Railways say that it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure the safety and security of the contracted workers. They also make it clear that the contractor should give compensation to the relatives of the deceased.

"Even then, we have announced an ex-gratia of 1 lakh each to the relatives of the deceased," said a railway official. At the same time, top retired officers pointed out

## Absence of sperm doesn't automatically mean innocence in rape cases: POCSO court

**HYDERABAD:** Making it clear that absence of sperm does not automatically mean innocence in rape cases, a fast track court for Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) cases here has sentenced an accused to life in prison. The court's observation on Monday came after the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) found no evidence of sexual assault against a 17-year-old survivor. The case pertains to a missing person complaint registered with the LB Nagar police in 2018. Four days later, the police found the girl at Secunderabad Railway station. She told the police that the accused, identified as Kanakala Rajesh, took her to Visakhapatnam under false pretences and assaulted her. The police then altered the case 366-A, 376(2)(n) of IPC, Section 5(1) read with 6 of POCSO Act and Section



3(2)(Va) of SC and ST (POA) Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2015. Following procedure, the police sent the girl for medical examination and the samples collected were sent to FSL. The FSL report said that there was no evidence of sexual intercourse. However, in its orders, the court said that forensic evidence like presence of sperm was just one type of evidence, but absence of sperm does not equate to innocence. "Sperm detection is only relevant if there was ejaculation. However, not all sexual assaults involve ejaculation, and even if ejaculation occurred, there may have been limited or no deposition of sperm into the vagina, especially if the assault was brief or involved different types of sexual activity", the court order said. The defence counsel cited to the court the statement of the survivor that the accused came to her house four times and they had physical relations before they went to Vishakhapatnam and said that this was proof of mutual consent. However, the court pointed out that the victim was a minor on the date of the incident. "According to the principles of law, minors are legally not deemed capable of giving consent to sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse with a minor below the age of consent is often categorised as statutory rape," the court noted. "It is a well-settled principle of law that the evidence of the victim is more than sufficient to establish the case, as she is the sufferer, and there is no need for corroboration," the prosecution said.

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## NEWS BOX

## Two arrested for robbing dhaba owner at gunpoint

**Gurgaon.** Two people have been arrested for allegedly robbing a dhaba owner at gunpoint in Sector 37 area. According to police, the accused have been identified as Ashuman (24), a resident of Patel Nagar and Mohit (21) from Devil Colony. Both accused have criminal records. The incident took place near Hero Honda Chowk during the early hours of Monday when the accused came on bike and pointed gun at the dhaba owner, and forced him to hand over all the cash in the counter. "On Monday, when I was sitting at the dhaba cash counter, two men came on a bike. I identified them as Mohit and Anshuman. I knew that they were criminals. While Mohit went inside dhaba, Anshuman showed a gun tucked into the waistband and asked me to hand over all the cash. He threatened to kill me and forcibly took Rs 5,000 cash from the cash counter," the complainant said. After the robbery, both accused fled on bike. Police, meanwhile, registered a case under sections 3 (5) (common intention) and 309 (4) (robbery) of the BNS and 25 (1-B) (a) of the Arms Act.

## Labourer dies in hit &amp; run, police hunt for car driver

**Gurgaon.** A 55-year-old labourer was mowed down by a car in the Madanpuri area. The incident took place in the early hours of Nov 8 and a preliminary probe revealed that he was hit by a Wagon R car. Police have launched the hunt to nab the accused. According to police, the victim identified as Jai Bhagwan alias Dalu from Ravi Nagar, suffered severe injuries when he met with an accident at gali number 11 in Madanpuri. Alerted by locals, police reached the spot and rushed the victim to the Civil Hospital, where he was declared dead and the body was then shifted to the morgue. ASI Baljit Singh said CCTV footage near the crime scene is being obtained to nab the culprit. "We have analysed the CCTV footage near the crime scene, and the victim was mowed down by a Wagon R car at around 2 am. The footage is grainy, and the registration number of the vehicle was not visible. We are trying to obtain CCTV footage from nearby areas to identify the accused," Singh said. The case is being probed and complaint under sections 106 (causing death due to negligence) and 281 (rash driving on a public way) of the BNS has been registered.

## MCG serves notices to 53 ad fee defaulters, will approach EOW

**Gurgaon:** MCG has served notices to 53 advertisers who defaulted on advertising fee payments resulting in revenue losses for the civic body. The corporation plans to escalate these cases to the Gurgaon police's economic offence wing (EOW) for further investigation.

The civic body has instructed the advertising agencies to clear their pending dues with an additional 15% penalty within two days, otherwise, their permission will be cancelled and the agency will be blacklisted. These advertisers were given permission by MCG to advertise in its area as per the provisions in the Haryana Municipal Corporation Advertisement Bye-laws. These agencies have displayed their advertisements without paying the corporation its fee. "We have issued an ultimatum to the agencies that if the fee is not deposited within two days, the letter of intent (LOI) authorising them to display ads in the MCG area will be cancelled," an MCG official privy to the matter said.

"Moreover, we will also forward the cases of these recovery of dues to the EOW of Gurgaon police. The defaulting agencies will also be blacklisted as per the provision of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Advertisement Bye-laws, 2022," the official said. Meanwhile, in a positive development, the corporation's advertisement department achieved its highest-ever revenue collection of Rs 55.66 crore in the current financial year so far, surpassing the collections from previous years. In the last fiscal year, the corporation generated an income of around Rs 55 crore from advertisements.

## Three arrested for sheltering wife of gangster Kaushal

**Gurgaon.** A day after gangster Kaushal Chaudhry's wife Manisha was arrested in an attempted extortion case, three people who provided shelter to her were arrested.

Those arrested by the Crime Branch sleuths include Manisha's 75-year-old father Suresh. The Manesar Crime Branch team arrested Suresh from Gadoli and her acquaintances, Meenakshi from Sector 10 and Ved Vati from Ambekar Nagar on Tuesday night following the information obtained from Manisha during the interrogation. "The trio provided shelter to Manisha during the past few weeks after she was declared a proclaimed offender by Gurgaon Police," a Crime Branch official said. Manisha, who is currently in police remand, was arrested by the joint team of Haryana Special Task Force and Gurgaon Crime Branch on Monday from Devi Lal Colony in the attempted extortion case registered at Bilaspur police station on Sept 15. Manisha is accused of operating her husband's gang in the Delhi-NCR region and extorting money from businessmen.

## Rioting FIR against lawyers for blocking Hapur road for 2 hours



**Ghaziabad.** The UP Bar Council has recommended the immediate transfer of the district judge over the Oct 29 courtroom ruckus in Ghaziabad. The report, submitted by a five-member inquiry committee to probe the incident, also suggested the cops who baton-charged the lawyers be suspended and cases registered against lawyers withdrawn. The Oct 29 clash began after a group of 50 lawyers interrupted proceedings in district and sessions judge Anil Kumar's court around 11.30 am. Lawyers wanted the judge to stop hearing the case he was attending to and take up theirs, one related to a land dispute, immediately. The lawyers doubled down on their demand when the judge advised them to wait for their turn. The judge subsequently went into his chamber while police tried to escort the lawyers out. Cops

said they resorted to lathi-charge as lawyers tried to enter the judge's chamber. Three advocates were injured in the fracas. Later, a group of lawyers torched a police check post on the court campus. Cops registered two FIRs against lawyers, but no arrests have been made so far. Following protests, UP Bar Council president Kishor Gaur set up a probe panel under former chairmen and members Rohitashv Kumar Agarwal, Madhusudan Tripathi, Arun Kumar Tripathi, Ajay Yadav and Prashant Singh Atal. The panel submitted its report on Nov 9. It was accessed by TOI on Tuesday. The panel made four recommendations. "First, the district judge of Ghaziabad should be transferred as soon as possible. Second, the policemen who entered the court of the district judge and lathi-charged the

unarmed lawyers and women lawyers should be suspended, and disciplinary action should be taken against them. Third, the cases registered by the police against the lawyers in the above incident should be immediately withdrawn by the govt. Fourth, the Hon'ble high court should issue such a system and guideline that no such incident be repeated against the lawyers in future," it states.

Deepak Sharma, president of the Ghaziabad Bar Association, said, "Now that the committee has submitted its report to the council, we are waiting for action to be taken against the district judge. Until the judge is transferred, we will not resume judicial work at the court and will remain on strike," he said. Meanwhile, an FIR for rioting and wrongful restraint was filed after lawyers blocked Hapur Road near the district magistrate's office on Monday and Tuesday, disrupting traffic and delaying emergency services for nearly two hours, from 12 pm to 2 pm.

Over 50 advocates had gathered on the road and burnt the effigy of the district judge. Police reported that the road blockade caused a severe traffic jam, and even obstructed an ambulance, even as Sharma said their demonstration was "peaceful". Two FIRs were registered at the Kavi Nagar police station against unidentified advocates under sections 191 (2) (rioting), 189 (2) (unlawful assembly), 126 (wrongful restraint), 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 324 (4) (whoever commits mischief and thereby causes loss or damage to the amount of Rs20,000 and more), and 126 (wrongful restraint) of the BNS.

## Govt to equip dist hosps to cut child pneumonia deaths

**Gurgaon.** Haryana's district hospitals will be equipped with essential medical devices, including paediatric nebulisers, pulse oximeters, oxygen cylinders, nasal prongs, and suction catheters to combat childhood pneumonia mortality. The state aims to reduce pneumonia-related deaths to less than three per 1,000 live births by 2025, down from the current 5.7. The initiative, launched as part of an awareness campaign running till Feb 28, 2025, aims to curb pneumonia deaths among children under five, said an official.

With pneumococcal pneumonia responsible for 16% of severe cases and 30% of deaths in children under five, hospitals offering comprehensive care will be identified and listed for frontline workers to ensure swift

referrals in emergencies. The lung infection, caused by bacterial, viral, or fungal agents, fills the alveoli (air sacs) with pus, obstructing the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

Haryana's director of health services, Dr Virender Yadav, said that district hospitals would each receive four nebulisers, four Salbutamol MDI inhalers with spacers, pulse oximeters, oxygen cylinders, concentrators, and hoods, as well as nasal prongs and suction catheters. Medicines such as amoxicillin, gentamicin injections, and ampicillin would also be available at these facilities. Personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitisers, and other necessary resources are to be provided as well, he added. As part of the initiative, skill stations will be set up in each

district hospital. "These stations will facilitate district-level training and reorientation," Yadav said, emphasising that district master trainers will lead capacity-building sessions for officials under the Social Awareness and Action to Neutralize Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS) program. The training will cascade down to healthcare staff and frontline workers who will conduct home visits to identify cases early. One of the aspects of the state's pneumonia control program is the focus on community-based interventions led by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and other healthcare workers. Over the next year, these trained personnel will conduct household visits to screen children under five for symptoms of pneumonia. In cases of

cough and breathing difficulty, the frontline workers will assess children and carry amoxicillin to provide treatment on-site if needed. The state has allocated Rs 15.4 crore to support these efforts, which are essential given the high rate of pneumonia among children. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the state recorded 17,688 cases, including 8,230 respiratory infections and 3,565 hospital admissions. Risk factors contributing to childhood pneumonia include low birth weight, malnutrition, non-exclusive breastfeeding, indoor air pollution, and lack of vaccination, especially for measles, Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib vaccine), and pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV).

## Two migrants from Uttar Pradesh shot at by terrorists in Budgam

**Jammu, Nov 01:** Two migrants from Uttar Pradesh were shot at by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam on Friday. Their condition is said to be stable. They were working on Jal Jeewan Project in Budgam. Sufiyan and Usman were injured after being shot at in the Mazhama area of Magam in the central Kashmir district, officials said. Two migrants from Uttar Pradesh were shot at by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam on Friday. The incident is the latest in a series of terror attacks in the Union territory in recent months. Earlier this week, terrorists belonging to Pakistan-sponsored Jaish-e-Mohammed had attacked an ambulance in an Indian Army convoy in J&K's Akhnoor sector. The security forces eliminated three ter-

rorists in counter-terror operations. Enhance your career with IIT Delhi's Design Thinking & Innovation Programme Enroll now! According to a PTI report, the terrorists were planning a major strike, utilising the Akhnoor route traditionally used by operatives of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group. According to intelligence reports, the terrorists entered the Akhnoor region through the Battal area, and a wireless set seized from them confirmed their association with the JeM. On October 24, two Army soldiers and two civilian porters were killed after terrorists attacked a military vehicle in Baramulla. Earlier on October 20, a doctor and six construction workers were killed when terrorists attacked a tunnel construction site on the Srinagar-Leh national highway in Ganderbal district. Addressing the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations in Gujarat's Kevadiva on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that terrorism will not be tolerated and urged the nation to strengthen its unity in the face of ongoing challenges.

"Moreover, we will also forward the cases of these recovery of dues to the EOW of Gurgaon police. The defaulting agencies will also be blacklisted as per the provision of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Advertisement Bye-laws, 2022," the official said. Meanwhile, in a positive development, the corporation's advertisement department achieved its highest-ever revenue collection of Rs 55.66 crore in the current financial year so far, surpassing the collections from previous years. In the last fiscal year, the corporation generated an income of around Rs 55 crore from advertisements.

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**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Nirmal Singh badan S/o Badshah Singh R/o 24, 0, shikhi mohalla, sadhpuri bharatpur, deeg rajasthan -321205 have changed my name from Nirmal Singh badan to Nirmal Singh for all future purposes.

**Name Change**  
I, Divyaansh Sharma S/O Ravinder Sharma R/O House No-101, Pocket F-26, Rohini Sector-7, North West Delhi - 110085 have changed my name to Divyansh Sharma for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, RANJEETA SINGH W/O SHRI RAJENDER PRASAD RESIDENT OF H-287, SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT. GAZIABAD, U.P. NOIDA, U.P.-201301 have changed my name from RANJEETA SINGH to RANJEET KAUR for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, JI-812979L NB SUB K M ELENGOVAN S/o C KANNABIRAN Presently residing at H NO-191, 5th CROSS M V GARDEN, ULISOOR, BANGALORE, KARNATAKA-560008 have changed my name from K M ELENGOVAN to K M ELANGOVAN for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 13/11/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
It is for general information that I, KOMAL DI BHARAT SINGH, R/O A-77 Kamal Vihar, Street No. 3, near Chetan Bihari Mandir, Sant Nagar, Barari, North Delhi, Delhi-110084, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as KOMAL RANI in my SC Certificate No. 055291. The actual name of mine is KOMAL, respectively which may be amended accordingly.

**NAME CHANGE**  
It is for general information that I, LAL MOHAN THAKUR S/O SIPAHI THAKUR, R/O H.No. G2/39A, First PHASE-1, CHATTAR PUR, SOUTH MOHAN Garden, West Delhi, Delhi-110059, declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as NEETU in my minor SON ADITYA THAKUR aged 12 year in his school record and Birth Certificate Registration No. 5172961. The actual name of my wife is NEETU DEVI which may be amended accordingly.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform the general public that Onkashwar Infrastructure Private Limited, a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013, with Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U45400DL2008PTC177867 and registered office at A-66, Anand Vihar, Trans Yamuna, East Delhi, Delhi, India, 110082, has undergone a change in ownership and management. The company's directorship has officially transitioned as follows:  
Current Directors:  
1. Sita Sharma  
2. Abhinnet Singh  
3. Rajendra Kumar Singh.  
Outgoing Directors:  
1. Abhinnet Singh  
2. Rajendra Kumar Singh  
The outgoing directors have officially relinquished their roles and responsibilities in the company and will no longer be associated with its management or operations.  
New (Incoming) Directors:  
1. Deepak Malik  
2. Noopur Malik  
The new directors will assume full control and responsibility for the company's operations, assets, and business activities going forward.  
Please be informed that the previous management, including the outgoing directors, shall be responsible for all acts, liabilities, claims, affair etc. including but not limited to companies operations, asset and business activities that arose till the completion of this transaction/ change of ownership, the new management will assume all responsibilities after the same.  
Any stakeholders, clients, vendors, or members of the public who have any claims or issues related to this transaction are requested to contact the undersigned advocate. For further information or inquiries, please contact the company's registered office.  
Yatinder Bainsla Advocate  
OFF-97, SECTOR 5, PUSHP VIHAR SAKET, NEW DELHI-110017

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
My client Budh Ram and Lata Devi W/o Mugh Ram R/o C-113, Gali NO.4, Tanki Road Cosmos School Harsh Vihar, Badapur, New Delhi-110044 has disowned his son Pradeep Kumar Verma and his wife Neetu from all his movable and immovable property and severe all his relation with them if anybody deals with them in future my client and his other family members will not be responsible for any kind of act, deeds, transaction of any nature done by them.  
MUKUL KUMAR & MITHUN SHARMA  
Advocate  
Ch. No.371 Lawyer's Chamber, Block, Saket Court Complex, New Delhi

**NAME CHANGE**  
I hitherto known as Suresh Kumar Baira W/O Chiranjeet Lal Baira, R/O A-2735, J Colony, Mastanpur Khadar, Sarita Vihar, South Delhi, Delhi - 110076 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Suresh Kumar.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, JYOTI RANI W/O KULDEEP SINGH R/O H.NO-603 MUNDHA MALLA, KHERI KALAN, FARIDABAD-121002 HAVE CHANGE MY NAME TO JYOTI FOR ALL PURPOSE.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SAROJ Wife of M. 16019847Y RFN HAWA SINGH Presently residing at VILL-DHANI KHARJWALA, PO-BABAI, TEH-KHETRI, JHUNJHUNU, RAJASTHAN-335801 have changed my name from SAROJ to SAROJ DEVI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 13/11/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as SIDDHANT PANDEY S/O SHYU NARAYAN PANDEY R/O H-NO-409, BLOCK-25, TRILOK PURI, CHILLA SARODHA KHADAR, EAST DELHI, DELHI-110091, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SID-DHANT PANDEY

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of RASHTRAWADI AAM JAN PARTY. The office of the party is located at Village and Post Chaure Bazar Tehsil Bakapur District Ayodhya-224209. This Party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951. Names/address of the office bearers of the Party are as follows:  
President/Chairman-  
Dr. Manoj Kumar Yadav  
General Secretary/Secretary-Arvind Kumar Singh  
Treasurer-  
Suresh Kumar Yadav  
If anyone has any objection to the registration of RASHTRAWADI AAM JAN PARTY they may send their Objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given by Mr. Pritam Singh Tanwar that The Sale Deed dated 28.03.2006 executed by Mr. Shiv Narayan in favour of Mrs. Rajwanti Tanwar Registered as Doc No. 11431 for Plot No. 23 admeasuring 175 sq. yds. out of kharsa no. 32/8/1 - 8/7, 12/6, 19/1/1, 19/1/4, 13/3 & 13/8 situated in village Ucha Gaun (Yadav Colony) Balahgarh Faridabad, has been lost/Misplaced, Mr. Pritam Singh Tanwar will be taking financial assistance from Aditya Birra Finance Ltd., Public is being warned not to deal with the said document. Any person dealing with the said document would do so at their own risk & responsibility. Owner shall not be liable in any manner whatsoever for any loss incurred by such person. If anybody found these documents or notice any misuse of the above mentioned document, Concern person is required to communicate in writing to the undersigned at below address.  
Khalitan & Khalitan  
A-38 Kailash Colony, New Delhi-110048  
Contact #011-4974545

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, DEEPAK S/O SUBHASH R/O H NO-78, PRAJAPATI MOHALLA, BHARTHAL, VILLAGE, BARTHAL, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110077, have changed the name of my minor daughter PRAGATI KUMARI aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as PRAGATI.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, JC-722759A Rank-SUB (Retd) Name-LAL SINGH YADAV R/O VILL-MUNDAHERA, DIST-JHAJJAR, HARYANA-124140 have changed my wife's name from MAYA DEVI to MAYA YADAV for all future purposes, in my service record my wife's date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1958 instead of her correct date of birth as 02/07/1954 vide affidavit dated 08/07/2024 before Notary Public Jhajjar, Haryana.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The general public is hereby informed that Mrs. Radha Kashyap intends to purchase Flat No. GF-4, Ground Floor, with an area of 45 square meters, built on Residential Freehold Plot Nos. L-3 and L-3A, out of Kharsa No. 1475, Gali No. 10, located at Ganpati Apartment, Balaji Enclave, Village Raipur, Pargana Dasna, Tehsil & District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, 201002, from Mrs. Chavvi Construction through its Proprietor Mr. Manoj Jain. The initial recorded Khata (land ownership) was in the name of Mr. Jal Ram Sharma, who has since passed away, leaving behind the following legal heirs: Mr. Surendra Sharma, Mr. Vinod Sharma, Mr. Sunil Sharma, Mr. Arni Sharma, Mr. Anil Sharma, Mr. Sushil Sharma, and Mr. Pranshu Sharma. Mr. Sushil Sharma and Mr. Arni Sharma subsequently sold the property to Ms. Chavvi Construction, through Proprietor Mr. Manoj Jain, by a Sale Deed dated 12.03.2018. Please note that the chain of documents, including the Death and Survival Certificate for the late Mr. Jal Ram Sharma, are not available. The Property is to be financed by Hinduja Housing Finance Ltd., Branch Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi. Any person(s) found in possession of aforesaid property and any objection, then kindly contact the undersigned along with original property document, within 07 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid sale deed shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.  
[ASHWANI KUMAR] Advocate  
Chamber No. 122,  
Tehsil Compound, Ghaziabad, U.P.

NEWS BOX

### An attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels sees explosions near ship in Red Sea

DUBAI. An attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels saw multiple explosions strike near a commercial vessel travelling through the Red Sea on Tuesday, though no damage was immediately reported by the ship, Western authorities said.

The Houthis later claimed they targeted American warships there. The attack comes as the rebels continue their months-long assault targeting shipping through a waterway that typically sees \$1 trillion in goods pass through it a year over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and Israel's ground offensive in Lebanon. The Houthis have insisted that the attacks will continue as long as the wars go on, and the assaults already have halved shipping through the region. Meanwhile, a UN panel of experts now alleges that the Houthis may be shaking down some shippers for about \$180 million a month for safe passage through the area.

A vessel in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, about 130 kilometres southwest of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida, reported the attack, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said. No one was wounded on board in the blasts, and the ship was continuing on its journey, the UKMTO added. Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed in a prerecorded statement Tuesday night that the rebels attacked two American destroyers in the Red Sea with ballistic missiles and drones. It wasn't immediately clear if the UKMTO report was directly linked to the Houthi claim, but similar incidents of rebel fire coming near other ships have happened before. The Houthis have targeted more than 90 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October 2023. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign, which also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have included Western military vessels as well. The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US, or the UK to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran. The Houthis have shot down multiple American MQ-9 Reaper drones as well. The last Houthi maritime attack came Oct. 28 and targeted the Liberian-flagged bulk tanker Motaro. Before that, an Oct. 10 attack targeted the Liberian-flagged chemical tanker Olympic Spirit.

### US won't limit weapon sales after aid groups say Israel missed deadline to boost Gaza humanitarian aid

WASHINGTON. The Biden administration says Israel has made good but limited progress in increasing the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and it will not limit arms transfers to Israel as it had threatened to a month ago if the situation had not improved.

However, international aid organisations say Israel has failed to meet US demands to allow greater humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip, where conditions are worse than at any point in the 13-month-old war. State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said Tuesday that the progress to date must be supplemented and sustained but that "we at this time have not made an assessment that the Israelis are in violation of US law." The law requires recipients to adhere to international humanitarian law and not impede the provision of such aid. The department's decision comes a day after Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's top national security adviser, Ron Dermer, in Washington to go over the steps that Israel has taken since Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned in October of possible repercussions if the aid situation had not improved in 30 days.

Blinken "further reiterated the importance that Israel take every possible step to minimise civilian harm," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement. The Biden administration last month set a deadline expiring Tuesday for Israel to "surge" more food and other emergency aid into the Palestinian territory. It warned that failure to comply could trigger US laws requiring it to scale back military support as Israel wages offensives against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

### Western policy towards children destructive: Russia bans 'liberal propaganda' of childless lifestyle

World. Russian lawmakers have approved final legislation prohibiting the promotion of childlessness, as part of Moscow's efforts to counter what it perceives as Western liberal influences. With declining birth rates and an ageing population, Russia aims to address demographic challenges, which have been further impacted by its military campaign in Ukraine. The State Duma unanimously endorsed the bill, which restricts content across various media platforms that encourages the rejection of parenthood. The legislation targets specific content promoting deliberate childlessness. Whilst personal choices remain protected, the law focuses on the promotion of childless lifestyles, though the practical distinction remains unclear. Penalties include fines of up to 400,000 rubles for individuals and 5 million rubles for organisations, with provisions for deporting foreign offenders. Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin emphasised the law's significance, stating, "Without children, there will be no country. This ideology will lead to people stopping giving birth to children." He highlighted its role in safeguarding youth and promoting traditional family values. The upper house will review the legislation on November 20, before President Vladimir Putin's anticipated approval.

## British writer Samantha Harvey's space-station novel 'Orbital' wins the Booker Prize for fiction

LONDON. British writer Samantha Harvey won the Booker Prize for fiction on Tuesday with "Orbital," a short, wonder-filled novel set aboard the International Space Station that ponders the beauty and fragility of Earth. Harvey was awarded the 50,000-pound (\$64,000) prize for what she has called a "space pastoral" about six orbiting astronauts, which she began writing during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The confined characters loop through 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets over the course of a day, trapped in one another's company and transfixed by the globe's ever-changing vistas. "To look at the Earth from space is like a child looking into a mirror and realizing for the first time that the person in the mirror is herself," said Harvey, who researched her novel by reading books by astronauts and watching the space station's live camera. "What we do to the Earth we do to ourselves."

She said the novel "is not exactly about climate change, but implied in the view of the Earth is the fact of human-made climate change." She dedicated the prize to everyone who speaks "for and not against

the Earth, for and not against the dignity of other humans, other life." "All the people who speak for and call for and work for peace — this is for you," she said. Writer and artist Edmund de Waal, who chaired the five-member judging panel, called "Orbital" a "miraculous novel" that "makes our world strange and new for us."

Gaby Wood, chief executive of the Booker Prize Foundation, noted that "in a year of geopolitical crisis, likely to be the warmest year in recorded history," the winning book was "hopeful, timely and timeless." Harvey, who has written four previous novels and a memoir about insomnia, is the first British writer since 2020 to win the Booker. The prize is open to English-language writers of any nationality and has a reputation for transforming writers' careers. Previous winners include Ian McEwan, Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie and Hilary Mantel. De Waal praised the "crystalline" writing and "capaciousness" of Harvey's succinct novel — at 136 pages in its U.K. paperback edition, one of the shortest-ever Booker winners. "This is a book that repays



slow reading," he said. He said the judges spent a full day picking their winner and came to a unanimous conclusion. Harvey beat five other finalists from Canada, the United States, Australia and the Netherlands, chosen from among 156 novels submitted by publishers. American writer Percival Everett had been the bookies' favorite to win with "James," which reimagines Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" from the point of view of its main Black character, the enslaved man Jim. The other finalists were American writer Rachel Kushner's spy story "Creation Lake"; Canadian Anne

Michaels' poetic novel "Held"; Charlotte Wood's Australian saga "Stone Yard Devotional"; and "The Safekeep" by Yael van der Woude, the first Dutch author to be shortlisted for the Booker. Harvey is the first female Booker winner since 2019, though one of five women on this year's shortlist, the largest number in the prize's 55-year history. De Waal said issues such as the gender or nationality of the authors were "background noise" that did not influence the judges. "There was absolutely no question of box ticking or of agendas or of anything else. It was simply about the novel," he said before the awards ceremony at Old Billingsgate, a grand former Victorian fish market in central London. Founded in 1969, the Booker Prize is open to novels originally written in English published in the U.K. or Ireland. Last year's winner was Irish writer Paul Lynch for post-democratic dystopia "Prophet Song." Lynch handed Harvey her Booker trophy at the ceremony, warning her that her life was about to change dramatically because of the Booker publicity boost.

### Trump says Musk, Ramaswamy will form outside group to advise White House on government efficiency

Donald Trump in a statement said that the move would shock government systems.

WASHINGTON. President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday said Elon Musk and former GOP presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy will lead a new "Department of Government Efficiency" — which is not, despite the name, a government agency.

The acronym "DOGE" is a nod to Musk's favorite cryptocurrency, dogecoin. Trump said in a statement that Musk and Ramaswamy will work from outside the government to offer the White House "advice and guidance" and will partner with the Office of Management and Budget to "drive large scale structural reform, and create an entrepreneurial approach to Government never seen before." He added that the move would shock government systems. It's not clear how the organization will operate. It could come under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, which dictates how external groups that advise the

government must operate and be accountable to the public. Federal employees are generally required to disclose their assets and entanglements



to ward off any potential conflicts of interest, and to divest significant holdings relating to their work. Because Musk and Ramaswamy would not be formal federal workers, they would not face those requirements or ethical limitations. Musk posted on X: "Department of Government Efficiency. The merch will be (fire emojis)." Later he added: "Threat to BUREAUCRACY!!!" Musk has been a constant presence at Mar-a-Lago since Trump won the presidential

election. The president-elect has often said he would give Musk a formal role overseeing a group akin to a blue-ribbon commission that would recommend ways to slash spending and make the federal government more efficient. Musk at one point suggested he could find more than \$2 trillion in savings — nearly a third of total annual government spending.

Trump had made clear that Musk would likely not hold any kind of full-time position, given his other commitments.

"I don't think I can get him full-time because he's a little bit busy sending rockets up and all the things he does," Trump said at a rally in Michigan in September. "He said the waste in this country is crazy. And we're going to get Elon Musk to be our cost cutter."

Ramaswamy suspended his campaign in January and threw his support behind Trump. Trump said in his statement the two will "pave the way for my Administration to dismantle Government Bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure Federal Agencies."

### US president-elect Trump ramps up transition moves with key appointments to his administration

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump has moved quickly to staff up his incoming administration, naming loyalists to several key posts within days of his election victory and signalling his desire to have some seated without a Senate confirmation process. The staffing picks are the subject of intense speculation and scrutiny, with Trump vowing that his second administration will oversee a radical shake-up of the federal government.

Trump will not be inaugurated until January and had previously made one cabinet-level appointment, naming his campaign manager Susie Wiles as his White House chief of staff, a position that does not require Senate confirmation. Curbing illegal immigration served as one of Trump's central campaign promises, as he pledged to launch the largest deportation operation of undocumented migrants in US history, beginning on day one. Here are the people Trump has picked for key positions so far

Pete Hegseth, secretary of defense  
Hegseth, 44, is a co-host of Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends Weekend" and has been a contributor with the network since 2014, where he developed a friendship with Trump, who made regular appearances on the show. Hegseth lacks senior military or national security experience. If confirmed by the Senate, he would inherit the top job during a series of global crises — ranging from Russia's war in Ukraine and the ongoing attacks in the Middle East by Iranian proxies to the push for a cease-fire between Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah and escalating worries about the growing alliance between Russia and North Korea.

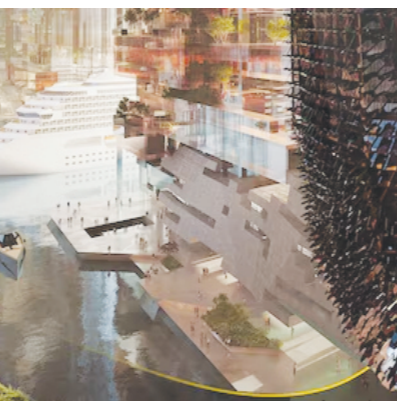
Hegseth is also the author of "The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free," published earlier this year. Kristi Noem, secretary of homeland security. Trump picked a well-known conservative who faced sharp criticism for telling a story in her memoir about shooting a rambunctious dog to lead an agency crucial to the president-elect's hardline immigration agenda. Noem used her two terms leading a tiny state to vault to a prominent position in Republican politics. South Dakota is usually a political afterthought. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, Noem did not order restrictions that other states had issued and instead declared her state "open for business." Trump held a fireworks rally at Mount Rushmore in July 2020 in one of the first large gatherings of the pandemic. She takes over a department with a sprawling mission. In addition to key immigration agencies, the Department of Homeland Security oversees natural disaster response, the U.S. Secret Service, and Transportation Security Administration agents who work at airports. William McGinley, White House counsel  
Trump says William McGinley, a lawyer who has served in Trump's White House and in a key political role this year, will be his White House counsel.

## Saudi Arabia Replaces CEO Of Futuristic Mega-City NEOM Amid Mounting Scepticism

World. Saudi Arabia announced Tuesday that it was replacing the chief executive of its futuristic mega-city NEOM as scepticism mounts over the Gulf kingdom's most ambitious development projects. "Following the departure of Nadhmi al-Nasr," who had served as the project's chief executive since 2018, "Aiman al-Mudaifer has been appointed as interim CEO", NEOM said in a statement. The company said that Mudaifer brought with him a "deep and strategic understanding of NEOM" after serving as head of a property arm of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund since 2018.

There has been mounting scepticism over signature projects such as NEOM, a planned futuristic megacity in northwestern Saudi Arabia meant to feature a ski resort and twin skyscrapers 170 kilometres (105 miles) long. Authorities have reportedly scaled back

2030 size and population targets for NEOM, though officials have not confirmed any revisions.



Unveiling The Line in 2022, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the country's de facto leader, said its population would exceed one million by 2030 before climbing to nine million by 2045. However, Bloomberg reported

There has been mounting scepticism over signature projects such as NEOM, a planned futuristic megacity in Saudi Arabia.

earlier this year that under revised projections just 300,000 people would be living in The Line by decade's end, and only 2.4 kilometres of the project would be completed by then. Work on NEOM is progressing alongside other major development projects launched as part of Vision 2030, Prince Mohammed's bid to position the world's biggest crude exporter for an eventual post-oil future. Last year the Gulf kingdom emerged as the only bidder to host the 2034 football World Cup, meaning it now has a decade to build the necessary stadiums and boost its lodging and transport capacity.

## Indians dream of life in US, but why are Americans fleeing the country

World. An Indian man enters America with dreams. He burns the midnight oil and expects success and wealth. It is said that the US, the land of the free and the home of the brave, never disappoints the meritorious. This is the American dream that many Indians chase, even risking their lives by taking the illegal 'dunki route' to enter the US. But Americans are leaving the US, amid political division and economic hardship. The chatter of leaving the US has grown since Donald Trump won the presidential election, widening the cracks. This has also led to a rise in nomad visas after US election results were announced and Trump swept it. People are allowed to work remotely from a foreign country for an extended period of time on these visas. Google searches by Americans for how to move to Europe, Canada, and Mexico increased manifold after Trump's victory. That's also because a section of Americans who see themselves as liberal, do not feel they can live on in the US under Trump's regime. They see Trump, who has

vowed to crack down on immigration and has an anti-abortion stance, as a divisive figure. Though there is no concrete data, several reports, including in The New York Times and USA Today, and online discussions reveal this trend. A similar trend was also seen in 2016 when Trump defeated Hillary Clinton to become the President. The trend has a name -- AmerExit.

#### WHY AMERICANS ARE LEAVING US

"I would say at least 50% of our friends are considering moving, with politics at least a factor for most," Justin Knepper, a 48-year old, who moved from California to Portugal in the last election, told USA Today about the current scenario. Even many expats are looking to move to a country "that aligns with their values, ranging from universal health care to fleeing the polarised political landscape of the United States", reports USA Today. A Trump presidency has brought a sense of gloom and despair to many who think they will be hit directly by his policies. "I would



challenge you to find somebody who's as depressed and dark and scared as I am," Deirdre Roney told USA Today months before the US elections. Deirdre and her husband obtained dual citizenship of the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda and left. Dee Segler left the US just a day before the US Presidential election, but she had planned it for a long time. It was not the immediate elections that made her leave suddenly, it was the overall political climate in the U.S. lay-off, no promotions and difficulty making ends meet added to the

reasons to say goodbye to the US. For her, it was her disillusionment with corporate America.

#### PEOPLE TAKE TO SOCIAL MEDIA TO DISCUSS AMEREXIT

People are also taking to social media to share that they intend to leave the US. There is a Reddit handle called r/AmerExit. This handle saw a flood of posts after Trump won the recent US elections. People came up with job opportunity suggestions in Canada and Finland. They also discussed countries with better rights for transgenders and homosexuals. The exit plans are also being discussed on X. "I fear for my life. My husband and I have voted in every election for the last 30 years. But this is the last straw! We have decided to pack our bags and leave! We love America, but we can't live in a country run by a racist dictator like Donald Trump. Goodbye, America," wrote an X user. Cindy Sheahan also moved to Sicily this October due to the "increasingly polarised and divisive climate in the US".

News box

**Caste clash in Ariyalur school: 18 students arrested, released same day**

**ARIYALUR:** A total of 18 students of the government higher secondary school at Vikramangalam in the district were arrested over an alleged clash on campus on Monday. The students, who were all aged between 16 and 17, and from two separate communities, were produced before the local juvenile justice board and let go the same evening. Existing animosity between the students from the SC and MBC communities intensified on November 9 when a 16-year-old SC student of Class 11 was sleeping on a writing bench in class. Seeing this, his classmate from the MBC community banged on the bench. This led to an altercation in which other students joined. The teachers, however, pacified them. On Monday, the students, with support of other classmates from their respective community as well as those in Class 12, again exchanged blows. Vikramangalam police, who were called in, along with the teachers ended the assault. That evening, parents of the SC students, however, resorted to a road blockade in Vikramangalam demanding action against those from the dominant community whom they blamed for the incident. Police registered a case and arrested 10 SC students and 8 MBC students. They were produced before the local juvenile justice board and let go with a warning, police said.

**12 Adilabad villages head to vote in Maharashtra polls**

**ADILABAD:** Villagers of the 12.5 disputed villages, located on the border between the erstwhile Adilabad district in Telangana and Jivithi taluka in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra state, continue to enjoy the privilege to cast votes in both the states. Currently, they are focused on the Maharashtra Assembly elections, scheduled for November 20. While residents of the erstwhile Adilabad district are engaged in the caste survey, residents of these 12 disrupted villages are all set to cast their votes on November 20. These villages fall under Rajura Assembly constituency in Chandrapur district, Maharashtra state, which is a general seat. Votes from these villagers are crucial as the margin of victory often ranges from 2,000 to 2,500 votes. In villages like Parandholi, Athapur, Mukadhamguda and Bollarpatar there are around 3,350 voters. Besides casting votes, these residents also benefit from various schemes provided by both states, as the boundary dispute is still with the Supreme Court, while paying taxes to both. Despite these advantages, the villages lag behind in development. They also vote in the Adilabad Lok Sabha constituency of Telangana and Chandrapur Lok Sabha constituency of Maharashtra. The villagers elect two gram panchayat sarpanches and two MPs and MLAs. For the Maharashtra Assembly elections, BJP candidate Deorao Vithoba Bhongle and Congress candidate Subash Ramchander Rao Dhote are actively campaigning in the region.

**BRS top brass' silence on MLC polls baffles leaders in Telangana**

**HYDERABAD:** The BRS appears to be not all that keen on contesting the ensuing graduates and teachers MLC elections likely to be held in March next year. The party leaders wonder why the top brass is not showing interest. Party sources said they can understand if the party does not want to contest teachers' constituencies. They however said they are unable to fathom the minds of the top leadership when it comes to contesting the graduates constituency. They said the party has a good voter base in the four districts — Adilabad, Karimnagar, Medak and Nizamabad. No preparatory meeting held so far. Senior leaders of the party said that the leadership, till now, has not called any preparatory meeting even for the graduates' constituency. A majority of the leaders are of the view that the party should contest the Graduate MLC elections. They are sure that they will get a positive result as an anti-incumbency wave is building up against the ruling party. They recall how BRS candidate A Rakesh Reddy had secured a very good number of votes in the election to the council from Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam graduate constituency. Opportunity to get back into reckoning As the election opens an opportunity for the party to get back into reckoning, the leaders are trying to persuade the leadership to field a candidate as it would shore up the party's strength in North Telangana. The leaders said that there were 14 MLAs and a good number of former MLAs in the four districts which form the graduates' constituency and the party could make full use of their services and win the election. The leaders including former mayor of Karimnagar Corporation Sardar Ravinder Singh, former chairman of corporations Chirumalla Rakesh, Devi Prasad and party leader Rajaram Yadav are serious aspirants for the party nomination. The party, however, is yet to warm up to the elections.

**Nedumbassery organ trafficking case: NIA identifies three recipients**

**KOCHI:** The NIA probing the Nedumbassery organ trafficking case has identified some of the recipients who travelled to Iran for kidney transplantation. NIA has turned these identified recipients and donors as witnesses in the case after the probe revealed that the accused told them that organ donation and transplantation were legal in Iran, and promised them substantial amounts of money for donating organs. Operations of the racket came to light after the arrest of a youth at Kochi airport in May this year. On May 18, officials of the Bureau of Immigration at the airport intercepted Sabith Korukulath, a resident of Valappad in Thrissur, on suspicion that he was involved in organ trade. An investigation revealed that Sabith worked for a gang under Ernakulam native Madhu Jayakumar. Madhu is still held up in Iran. Madhu's friend Sajith Shyam, of Kalamassery, and Vijayawada native Bellamkonda Ram Prasad were later arrested by the police. The NIA took over the probe on July 1, and filed a chargesheet against four accused persons. During the probe, NIA identified some of



the donors and recipients who were approached by the racket. As per the chargesheet filed by NIA, the racket identified gullible youth with financial constraints from Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana and other states. Members of the racket would obtain the youths' consent by promising money. The donors were trafficked to Iran where their organs were harvested after collecting huge amounts of money from recipients from New Delhi, Jammu and Ghaziabad, among others, the probe revealed. The recipients were charged up to ₹50 lakh by the accused. NIA found that recipients belonged to higher strata of society and

travelled to Iran to undergo organ transplantation. In September, the Kerala High Court granted bail to Sajith Shyam, the second accused. Following this, Bellamkonda approached the NIA Court in Kochi with a bail plea claiming that charges against him were similar to that of Sajith. When the court considered the bail petition, NIA produced certain documents, including WhatsApp chats of the accused with others, revealing that he was actively involved in organ trafficking. The NIA also retrieved several pieces of digital evidence from the mobile phone of Sajith. These included medical records, lab tests done by donors, their flight tickets to Iran as well as details about kidney transplant packages at hospitals in Iran. Considering the evidence, the court had dismissed Bellamkonda's bail petition, stating: "Perusal of the data collected by the investigating agency, produced in a closed envelope, would clearly indicate that the petitioner is actively involved in organ trafficking and hence it prima facie appears that he is part of a huge racket involved in organ trafficking."

**Victoria Hospital, the first in the South to adopt Virtopsy**

**BENGALURU:** Victoria Hospital here will soon adopt Virtopsy, also known as virtual autopsy, to examine bodies without cutting them open. Virtual autopsy uses scanning technology, especially a CT scanner, to scan the body. The images are then processed to a 3D visual representation of organs. Victoria will become the first government hospital in South India to adopt this technology. Currently, AIIMS in New Delhi and NEIGRIHMS in Meghalaya perform virtual autopsies. St John's Medical College Hospital in the city is the only private hospital to have this facility in South India. A top official from Victoria Hospital said that the process of adopting this technology is nearing completion and the Department of Medical Education is keen on introducing virtual autopsy. Over 3,000 postmortems are conducted in Victoria Hospital every year. Virtual autopsy helps in examining the bodies faster. In the initial phase, virtual autopsy will be used in road accident and accidental fall cases as they typically have bone fractures. "Also, in most road accident cases, people will be under treatment before succumbing to injuries. In such cases, generally there won't be any foul play, which needs a detailed examination to find out the reasons for the death," the official said. However, murder, suicide and dowry death cases require conventional autopsy methods. "As technology has improved and there is accuracy in virtual autopsy, we can adopt it even to examine murder and suicide cases," the official said. A source said in the past, there was opposition to body incisions as some religious beliefs do not support them. However, doctors have to perform autopsies as per law. This technology can make the process less traumatic for families of the dead. Additionally, virtual autopsy can help in research and doctors are in favour of it, he added.

**Government school in Pudukkottai gets a facelift as villagers lend a hand**

**PUDUKKOTTAI:** A government village school once lacking in adequate facilities has undergone such a transformation with the concerted help of residents that it has been adjudged one of the best in the state and will be presented an award. The precincts of the Puliayachi Kudiyiruppu Panchayat Union Primary School at Vadakadu was once covered with shrubs. It now boasts of modern buildings and infrastructure designed to enhance educational experience after the villagers alongside the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the school management committee (SMC) chipped in mostly for the revamp.



Setting a benchmark, the school has become the first government primary school in Pudukkottai to have its own auditorium. Other improvements include tiled classrooms, CCTV cameras, WiFi network,

inverters and smart classrooms. An RO drinking water plant that can fill two 1,500-litre tanks is another feature. The improvements were entirely funded by savings from the school's annual day celebrations, along with contributions from the local community, PTA members and also funds under the 'Namaku Naame' scheme. Minister Siva V Meyyanathan also contributed from his MLA funds, which helped in laying paver blocks and building the compound walls, sources said. K Suresh, a journalist and a PTA member of the school, stated this transformation would not have been possible without the dedication and labour of the villagers. "We visited the government model school at Pachaloor in Aranthangi,

which is the inspiration for all this new infrastructure here," he said. School headmistress K Valarmathi said, "The development costing around Rs 25 lakh was made possible in just six months with the contribution of villagers, MLA and others. Our school has actively increased student enrolment through door-to-door outreach and promotional materials like pamphlets and banners. The enrolment has gone up from just 17 students in 2019-20 to 30 students now." Pudukkottai Chief Educational Officer (CEO) K Shanmugam informed that the government middle school at Kunnakurumbi in Aranthangi block also secured the best school award in the district under the middle school category.

**Plaintiffs allowed to accompany cops during arrest, Kerala HC seeks explanation from TN police**

**KOCHI:** The Kerala High Court on Tuesday sought an explanation from Tamil Nadu police on how it allowed complainants in a case to accompany police officers during an arrest. The court questioned the police procedures following a petition filed by N Prakash of Ernakulam, who is seeking to register an FIR against some individuals who allegedly trespassed into his home and unlawfully arrested him. The court has named the station house officer (SHO) of Puliangudi station in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, as a party to the proceedings. In his petition, Prakash stated that on July 28, the SHO from Tenkasi,



dressed in uniform, along with two persons in civilian clothes, entered his house claiming that there was an FIR lodged against the complainant at the Puliangudi station and a warrant for his arrest. Prakash said they assaulted him and forcibly placed him in a car. His arrest was

officially recorded, and he was remanded to judicial custody at the Central Jail in Palayamkottai for about a month. He was later released on bail and subsequently filed a complaint with the Kerala police regarding the illegal arrest and trespass. However, he stated, no action has been taken by the police. Meanwhile, the government pleader pointed out that an FIR was indeed registered by the Maradu police based on Prakash's complaint over his alleged kidnap by a person in a police uniform and two others in civil dress. However, the investigation revealed that the petitioner was arrested by the Puliangudi police in a case registered on charges of criminal breach of trust and cheating.

**SWTD plans new floating dock to attract more visitors**

**KOCHI:** Commuters taking the State Water Transport Department (SWTD) ferry boats to Fort Kochi have to walk a good 10 minutes to reach the beachside of the famed tourist spot after alighting at the customs boat jetty. This despite the Kochi Water Metro terminal being much nearer to the core area. Now, the SWTD is set to establish a new floating dock near the Ro-Ro ferry jetty at the main Fort Kochi area to spare commuters the nearly one-kilometre-long walk. The initiative, as part of a healthy competition with the Water Metro, is aimed at luring more commuters, especially tourists, to SWTD boats. The new facility will be built using the CSML (Cochin Smart Mission Ltd) funds at the underutilised Kamaladavu boat jetty of the Kochi corporation. "We're setting up a floating boat jetty at Kamaladavu jetty, which is rarely used these days. Talks with the corporation have been finalised. The jetty will facilitate our ferry as well as tourist boats to reach the main area of Fort Kochi," said SWTD



director Shaji P Nair. At present, a major share of tourists are availing the Water Metro in the High Court-Fort Kochi section to sail to the tourist destination, while SWTD caters more to daily commuters. The two agencies have also seen a steady rise in patronage in recent months. While SWTD's average monthly ridership is around 2.25 lakh, daily average ridership in Water Metro is around 6,000. It touches the 10,000-mark on weekends. "We're sprucing up our infrastructure in the West Kochi region. Renovation of the Mattancherry boat jetty is over while that of the Customs jetty is on," said the official.

The SWTD could not operate boat services to Mattancherry, another popular tourist destination, for the past six years after large amounts of silt got deposited in the backwater channel. Though the department took up the issue with the irrigation department, the latter allegedly failed to take any concrete action. "The matter has now been taken up at the ministerial level," a source in the SWTD said, adding that the department intends to resume the services at the earliest. The latest push comes even as the Water Metro is set to start services in the High Court-Mattancherry section by December end. Kochi is the first Indian city to have a Water Metro, with the launch of the first vessel, Muziris, in December 2021. The Cochin Shipyard Ltd is manufacturing 23 boats for Water Metro and has already handed over 15 electric-hybrid vessels of 100-passenger capacity. SWTD too has gone on modernising drive as two more 100-passenger capacity modern boats are expected to join its fleet soon.

**Big turnout expected on big day in Channapatna**

**BENGALURU:** Channapatna is poised for a monumental day as it braces for an unprecedented flood of voters surging into polling booths on Wednesday. The air is electric, with every household seemingly locked into this fiercely contested race, fuelling predictions of a historic turnout. With stakes extremely high, parties have unleashed an unparalleled mobilisation campaign, reaching every corner and rallying even the smallest clusters of voters. In 2023, Channapatna with around 2.3 lakh voters saw around 80 per cent voting, with 1,97,796 ballots cast. Then JDS candidate HD Kumaraswamy won the election, polling around 96,000 votes, while BJP's CP Yogeshwara trailed closely with 80,000, leaving Congress far behind with just 15,000 votes. This election, officials and party workers from both sides of the divide anticipate a massive voter turnout of well over two lakh. Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, Manoj Meena, said,



"Ramanagara district consistently sees high voter turnout, with figures above 80% in assembly and parliamentary elections." Workers from JDS, BJP and Congress have fully been activated on the ground to bring in voters. Sources in the JDS-BJP camp said, "We're ready for Wednesday's high turnout, with our booth-level workers fully engaged." ongress volunteers and teams associated with the party candidate Yogeshwara have swept across the constituency, reminding voters to come to the polling booth. Adding to the spectacle, many voters whose names appear on the voter list, but are residing in Bengaluru, Mysuru and other cities, have returned to Channapatna for the big day. The constituency's voter demographics could play a defining role, with Vokkaligas constituting the largest voting bloc of approximately 1,05,000, followed by 38,000 Dalit voters, 28,000 Muslims, 12,000 Kurubas, 6,000 Scheduled Tribes, and the remaining are Thigalas, Ursus, Lingayats and other smaller communities. Sources suggested that Vokkaligas, in particular, are expected to turn up in big numbers, setting the stage for what could be Channapatna's most dynamic election yet. As dawn breaks, all eyes will be on Channapatna as every vote cast would alter its political landscape.

## When going got tough, CJI Chandrachud faltered

A legacy is determined by what we leave behind, what we were when we arrived, what we did well, where we failed and where we stand on the ultimate measuring scale by which judges are weighed. It's on the day of retirement that judges are judged, having spent many years of their life judging us.

Where do the chips fall for Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud, the 50th Chief Justice of India (CJI)? He came in on a high crest of expectation, given his intellectual calibre, near-stellar record of judgments and carrying the legacy of family. Preceding him was a line-up of mostly disappointing CJIs; this gave him the benefit of comparison but also added to the expectations. It was as if he had to rectify a decade of slippage.

He delivered across a range of issues concerning individual and human rights. He recognised the right to live free from the effects of climate change as a fundamental right. He also delivered judgments on the rights of persons with disabilities, reproductive rights and the right to abortion, as well as striking down provisions of Prison Manuals of several states which assigned jobs to prisoners on the basis of caste. He overruled the broadcast ban on MediaOne and rejected a vague notion of "national security concerns" as a ground to violate freedom of speech and freedom of the press. He limited the state's power to take over private property, and on his last day as a judge of the court, denounced bulldozer justice and awarded a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to a victim of state high-handedness. The liberal and progressive side of Chandrachud came through shining. The technological reform side was also on display as he pushed through paperless courts, digitisation and administrative efficiencies. The Indian court system is not just about judging, it's also about managing a huge bureaucracy. It's a system used to the old ways, and reform does not come easily, but a seasoned judge like Chandrachud knew where the levers and drivers for change were. So far so good.

It's when things got tougher that he started to falter. Judicial appointments to the Supreme Court and high courts is an ongoing battleground between the government and the judiciary. The National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2015, was struck down, but in its wake came a to-and-fro participatory process between the executive and the judiciary. Wilful delay can stymie matters, as also ill-founded rejections. Here only a strong Chief Justice can get the desired results, and this means strength coupled with the ability to stare down the government. It's the notable names that matter — S Muralidhar, Saurabh Kirpal, John Sathyan — and on this count, the report card of the ex-CJI does not read well. Also, in cases concerning the government as contrasted to those concerning individuals, the record is bleak. The decision to uphold the abrogation of Article 370 while leaving the question of the revocation of J&K's statehood effectively unanswered is a glaring example. So, too, are decisions where he refused to recognise the right to marry for same-sex couples. His decision to send the Gyanvapi mosque case back to the trial court paved the way for allowing an "archaeological survey" of the mosque, even as he made damning oral remarks in the hearings, stating that The Places of Worship Act did not prohibit suits seeking to "ascertain the religious character" of sites — a decision that seemed to go against the spirit of impassioned passages in the Ayodhya verdict heralding the importance of the Act and its necessity to prevent disputes over religious structures.

He also effectively suspended the operation of the Ritu Chhabria judgment, which had held that an individual's right to default bail could not be defeated by the investigation agency filing an incomplete chargesheet without completing the investigation. Curiously, Justice Chandrachud passed an order that no court should rely on the said judgment in deciding default bail applications, in response to a mention made by the Solicitor General with respect to another case filed by the Enforcement Directorate. This, despite being a vocal champion of personal liberty. True, electoral bonds were struck down, but the follow-up of disgorging monies from beneficiary political parties didn't happen.

## Ukraine's youth not willing to fight a war that's not their own

The Ukrainian army today faces a serious desertion crisis as 30,000-plus soldiers have already fled from their posts.

WILL the ongoing land wars of Europe and West Asia end with the advent of US President-elect Donald Trump? The fiery and fatal events have already shaken all, connected or unconnected. It is an intra-ethnic and intra-race (civil) war between Europe Slavs; it is an intra-religious war between Russian Orthodox/Eastern Church with a Jew as the head of one state that now is the hallmark of implacable Moscow-Kyiv hate war.

The Israel-Hamas bloodshed, on other hand, is also inherently a religious war between Jews and Islam-following Hezbollah (Lebanon), Houthis (Yemen) and Iran. What makes things more ominous is that even after the regime change in the US, the crusade-jihad congenital revenge to "kill-to-finish-all" will intensify, as was felt in US pre-poll political campaign. Both wars brought profit and prosperity to the US arms industry, which the US President-designate can't ignore. Also, the situation is so charged that no warring leader has either the time or the intention to talk peace and stop caravans of dead or dying bodies and displaced persons in search of food, shelter and medication. No leader is bothered about rotten, melting corpses on streets. Everyone wants the war to continue and intensify. From state or government heads to gun makers, traders, diplomats, the war is lucrative for everyone, and an opportunity to hog limelight as nationalist, patriot and hero of his/her land. Fortunately, however, in the midst of these lunatics who are ceaselessly giving the call for revenge-war, race-war, religious-war and endless war to all stakeholders (though for different reasons), there have suddenly developed two strong "anti-war" sentiments from most unexpected quarters. Despite Ukrainian President Zelenskyy determined to continue fighting the war, young Ukrainians are fiercely opposing conscription and refusing to go to the warfront to get killed.

Consequently, the Ukrainian army today faces a serious desertion crisis as 30,000-plus soldiers have already fled from their posts. Desertion reached such alarming proportion that on August 20, 2024, Ukrainian parliament was forced to "de-criminalise the first attempt to flee army as long as those caught agree to return to duty". The initial euphoria of February 2022 of joining the forces to protect their motherland has evaporated, owing to astronomical

number of body bags, which has created an incurable psychic disorder among large number of surviving combatants. Evidently, Ukraine is in a spot. Denuded of 25 per cent of its population, which has migrated, or is maimed, slaughtered, and forcibly scattered, conscription has not gone down well with eligible army recruits. Youngsters are protesting hard to avoid joining the armed forces, which has become a

the state.

Thus, whereas the state says "fall in line to fight for state against foe in front", "believers" will have none of it because they are subjects of church first, state later. Being in service of church does not allow them to follow the state's diktat to fight in the battleground. Let state make its own arrangements to get men on ground to deal with its foes.

Though considered unpatriotic by any standard of modern definition of a 'citizen's duty', yet these are signs of modern world's anti-war sentiments. Any nation, especially in the west, has to take into account that memories of mass destruction and brutal mayhem of 65 million people in World War-II are still too fresh to be forgotten. The leaders may become or remain warmongers for their own power games and corporations may be influenced by astronomical profits earned by their weapons of mass destruction, but the thought of dying for "wars without cause" cannot be ignored any more. Gone are days of demagogues and rambles of Armageddon in the name of nationalism, patriotism and martyrdom for dealing with enemy. Israel is on a multi-front war;

Russia-Ukraine conflict has already imperilled the EU's economy which is based on technology, industry and agro-industrial export. The youth there is still well looked after by various state welfare measures. Therefore, in the present era of globalisation, which prosperous youth of west would like to die as chained animals? History shows that usually the "medically unfit" rich are invariably incapable of any physical fight. Rich love to take up lucrative contracts to produce combat weapons to make profit, but are never known to have joined forces to fight and die for their nations. The wealthy west and belligerents today face such a defining moment in the two ongoing wars. However, there are indications of winds of change. Wars are started by both, agent provocateurs and lunatics. Only people with mass action can put brakes on fanatics making dollars over dead bodies as was done by Americans themselves to stop the Vietnam War. It is time to end war and restore normal lives in the much-touted globalised world.



## Manipur's misery

Central, state govts letting people down

MANIPUR has been unravelling for the past year and a half, and there is little reason to hope that things will improve anytime soon. There has been a fresh escalation of violence, with farmers working in paddy fields being targeted by snipers on hilltops. The killing of two women — one was gunned down and the other burnt alive — shows the sheer brazenness of militants. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic clashes between Meiteis and Kukis since May last year. The 'double-engine' government has miserably failed to restore peace and public order. Nevertheless, Chief Minister N Biren Singh continues to be in the saddle, with the BJP high command stubbornly persisting with him. Biren's troubles are mounting, with a Kuki organisation demanding a court-monitored SIT probe into his alleged role in inciting ethnic violence. The outfit has approached the Supreme Court on the basis of some leaked audio clips. With the court asserting that it does not



appreciate any attempt to "brush things under the carpet", the CM's position has become even more untenable. The onus is on the petitioner to prove the authenticity of these

potentially damning clips.

The Centre's attempts to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table have been fruitless. There is a huge disconnect between the Union Government and the local people, whose concerns and aspirations remain unaddressed. Two of its contentious decisions — fencing the India-Myanmar border and scrapping the Free Movement Regime — have been staunchly opposed by several tribal organisations in Manipur. They have cited a threat to the social, cultural and economic ties between tribal communities living on both sides of the border, but the Centre seems to be in no mood to do a rethink. This intransigence has further alienated residents of the strife-torn state. Leaving Manipur to fend for itself can be perilous for the security of the entire North-East, which has been battling insurgency for decades.

## Biodiversity loss reflects global failure

The perennial challenge is the world's inability to mobilise massive resources to tackle climate change

THE tsunami of news about the just-concluded US presidential elections has deflected international attention from the ever-worsening global ecological crisis and the diminishing multilateral efforts to tackle its various dimensions before it's too late. The 16th Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held from October 21 to November 1 at Cali, Colombia. It was a prelude to the 29th COP of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change being convened at Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to 22. Biodiversity and climate change are intimately interlinked domains, with strong feedback loops. The relentless destruction of forests, in particular rainforests, across the world, progressively shrinks one of the most important carbon sinks for absorbing atmospheric greenhouse gases and reducing global warming. The loss of habitat for wild animal and plant species in the denuded forests reduces biodiversity and brings the surviving species in close contact with human and domesticated mammal populations, exposing the latter to unfamiliar and highly infectious strains of viruses. This is what happened during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The world's oceans are the other major carbon sink, absorbing greenhouse gases in the same manner as forests do and moderating atmospheric temperatures. But the sea has become the world's rubbish dump. All manner of hazardous and toxic waste is thrown into the sea. The dumping of non-degradable plastics into oceans has created vast floating islands of plastic waste in several oceanic zones. The chemistry of seawater is changing, as are its thermal parameters. Marine life is being adversely impacted, and the oceans are estimated to be absorbing 30 per cent less carbon emissions than during the last millennium. From these two instances, one can clearly discern

how biodiversity loss is accentuating global warming. They need to be dealt with in tandem. A single global convention on ecology, explicitly recognising the integral link between biodiversity and climate change, has become an urgent necessity.

COP16 was the first to be held after the landmark COP15, which led to the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in 2022. Among its major targets were the setting up of protected terrestrial, inland water and marine zones to reach over 30 per cent of such zones globally by 2030. The GBF also aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. It was agreed that developed countries would channel \$20 billion to developing nations by 2025 to enable them to meet their biodiversity targets. This figure would go up to \$30 billion by 2030. The Colombian hosts declared the setting up of the Cali Fund under the COP to handle biodiversity finance, but so far only \$396 million have been pledged. The GBF contains a landmark decision on the equitable sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources and digital sequence information, and of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. It is well known that multinational companies from the Global North have been looting genetic resources of developing tropical countries to make pharmaceutical products, agribusiness items and other goods from the sale of which huge profits are made. The source countries of such genetic resources get no share of these profits. Western countries want such genetic material to be "open source", claiming that this promotes



innovation and lower prices of products, which are in the nature of global public goods. But the same argument is rejected when it comes to industrial products and technology, where intellectual property rights are considered sacrosanct. At COP15, the principle of benefit-sharing from the use of genetic resources was conceded, but the mechanism for implementing it was left to be worked out by COP16. However, the decision adopted practically eviscerates the sharing principle. The reported text says: "... entities which on their balance sheet dates

exceed at least two out of three of these thresholds (total assets: \$20 million; sales: \$50m; profits: \$5m), averaged over three years, should contribute to the global fund 1 per cent of their profits or 0.1 per cent of their revenue as an indicative rate." The contribution is not mandatory, only exhortatory. The rates are only 'indicative'. Nithin Ramachandran of the Geneva-based Third World Network commented: "The decision is giving bio-pirates a chance to make a one-time donation to the Cali Fund and get away with it." The developed countries insisted that in view of the decision on sharing of benefits from genetic resources, there should not be domestic laws regulating this domain. This would have meant the legitimised looting of genetic resources for the payment of paltry sums into the proposed global fund. This was strongly

resisted by India and other developing countries and eventually dropped.

COP15 had directed that the states party to the CBD would submit National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans at COP16. These would indicate how countries proposed to deliver on various goals and targets set out in the GBF adopted at COP15 and what progress they had already achieved against its parameters. In fact, only 44 of the 196 countries that are party to the CBD had made their submissions by the end of the conference, including India.

# M

## The best kept secrets of Manipur



In and around Imphal, borders keep shifting like quicksand. Hills and plains, Meitei and Naga, Burma and India — everyone has his own story of Manipur. This was a trip into India's last Great Unknown.

They called him El Diablo — The Devil — and he came with quite a bit of head. We stared at each other across the table, silently. Me, tired and very thirsty after a long day on the road. He, bubbling and frothing with sinister energy. I made the first move. In one blurry second, I reached out, picked him up and took a long swig. Hell, El Diablo was very good, no questions asked. I first saw a can of El Diablo — a 12% strong lager — as the sun set over Ningthoukhong, a sleepy town about 35 km out of Imphal, the Manipur capital. The day had been stretched out. My photographer and I had started early from Kolkata and had only reached Imphal late in the afternoon, after a two-and-a-half hour flight that stopped at Agartala and offered no tea or coffee. The air hostesses had saccharine smiles, but I missed my caffeine shot. There had been some redress though: just as the plane dipped into the Imphal valley, we spotted the world-famous Loktak Lake with its floating circles of vegetation. From above, it looked a bit like the Signs poster, but I didn't feel like Mel Gibson. Anyway, Imphal was where we'd be for the next three days to attend the Bhagyachandra National Festival of Classical Dance. I'd done my homework well. The evenings would be kept for Manipuri, Odissi, Bharatanatyam and more at the historic Kangla Fort. During the day, I wanted to drive to the Burma border at Moreh, taste iromba, the white-hot dried fish delicacy, and check out the all-women Ima Market in the heart of Imphal. It would all fit in neatly. But I should have known better. The northeast is India's last Great Unknown and I had travelled here enough to know that the region had this wonderful habit of running your plans — even five-year ones — through the shredder for

at the counter lowered his voice and asked, "Beer chahiye?" Had I heard him right? Beer? This part of Manipur was supposed to be dry by the rulebook, but I blinked and nodded. And out came El Diablo, for 200 bucks. It seems salvation didn't come so cheap, even sitting next to the temple walls. As I sipped on the beer and felt the mellow glow, I realized that it was a priceless moment — I, an Indian, was drinking an Indonesian beer with a Spanish name that had been smuggled in from Burma. It's then that I started falling in love with Manipur.

### More about Moreh

For years I had heard about Moreh, the border town about 110 km south of Imphal. The tales depicted it as some sort of frontier El Dorado, where you got everything from shoes to clothes and gadgets at great prices. Its gates also opened into mysterious north Burma. A journalist friend in Kolkata had told me how he had crossed the Moreh border and had met a Burmese army officer who had taken him all the way to Mandalay — without a passport, visa or any other official papers! I wanted my own Moreh stories to tell. "So can we go to Moreh?" "No no!" Vigorous headshake. "But it's only a few hours by car. We'll be back by the evening." "No no no!" More vigorous headshake. "We'd love to see the Burma border!" "No no no no!" Even more vigorous headshake. Well, that's my Moreh story — I never went there! I had not taken into account the fact that since we were guests of the Manipur government, there would be checks and balances on our movement in the border state. The same government employee who was our gracious host and guide in Imphal would turn into an establishment watchdog at the hint of an indiscreet request. But Burma was all around us in Manipur. The state shared almost half of its border with the country. Imphal had a Moreh market, which sold all the cross-border deliverables at a good price.

standing like sentinels all around. These hills also served as boundaries of the mind. The mostly Hindu Meitei from the plains seemed to avoid the hill tribes — Nagas, Kukis and others — and it also worked the other way round. I knew that the exquisite Longpi pottery from the hilly Ukhrul district, the home of Tangkhul Nagas, was a prized buy. Naturally, I thought I would get the best of it in Imphal. But no luck there. Hardly anyone knew of it and after much searching, I found a few specimens in the boutique handicrafts store of the city's biggest hotel. And even there, the salesperson was clueless about the amazing craft. Long live Dakshinapan! Then there are other borders, shifting like quicksand and going far back in time. Manipur stood at the frontier of the Empire for decades and fought valiantly against the British in 1891 under the leadership of the general, Bir Tikendrajit, who was later arrested and executed. He is revered in Manipur as a great martyr, no less than Kshudiram or Bhagat Singh. "But how many people know of him outside the state?" asked theatreperson Ratan Thiyam during a chat with me on the sidelines of the festival. I didn't have any answers. The countryside around Imphal also saw some of the fiercest fighting in the Second World War and there are monuments to that all around. In the heart of town is the war cemetery, where the British troops are laid to rest. It's a tranquil place, filled with birdsong and a breeze that tugs at the falling leaves. The plaques are so old, yet so young... 27, 22, 29, 31 — most of them fell in the prime of youth. Across the ancient battle lines, the Japanese war memorial is located at the base of a small mound ominously called Red Hill, a few kilometres out of Imphal. The monument is stark, almost rigorous in its eastern sense of symmetry and simplicity — open concrete walls in a stone-paved courtyard. That's how far the imperial forces had come before they were beaten back in 1944.

### Sangai-ed in Loktak

The best part about riding a motorbike in Imphal is that you can do without a helmet — no one's ever watching you — but you can never do without a mask. Almost every biker worth his room wears it. It's like they're all in some never-

have been torn down, the asphalt has got stripped off. The dust, which fills your nose and feels like grit on your tongue, mixes with the exhaust fumes to form a fine, brown aerosol that just hangs in there. Some parts of Imphal would do rush-hour Shyambazar proud.

But then, if the town gets some bad press, the countryside more than makes up for it. Leaving Imphal behind, our journey to Loktak Lake was like driving straight into a picture postcard. The smog thinned out and then vanished, the sky turned azure and all around us were paddy fields ripe with a golden harvest. Farmhands worked with scythes, slicing the crop, piling it up in mounds under a benign sun. In the distance, smoke rose from haystacks. Love songs started playing in my head. If I were Keats, I thought, I'd plonk myself by the roadside and write To Autumn. My photographer went into a controlled frenzy with his camera, punctuating the job at hand with oohs and aahs. I understood. Poor fellow had lived all his life on congested Amherst Street.

After the above, the lake itself was a bit of an anti-climax. Websites variously described it as a natural wonder, the only floating lake in the world. This was due to the phumdis, the buoyant circles of vegetation unique to this lake. While they had looked enchanting from the flight, at ground level they were too big to be spotted. So we did the touristy thing and went on a boat ride. It's there that I heard that hydropower projects had changed the lake's character substantially. The dam had altered water levels and the phumdi were dwindling. The sangai deer — an endangered species that is also the state animal of Manipur — was facing severe habitat loss in the Keibul Lamjao National Park, which is part of Loktak's wetland ecosystem. There are just a few hundred of them left in the wild. But this is India, the land of miracle men. Maybe the Manipuri sangai will survive, just like the Bengal tiger. There are no problems of survival though at Imphal's biggest feminist rhapsody, the Ima Market. Spread over four cavernous blocks —

visited it on a bustling Monday morning when trade was just picking up. The women — almost all of them dressed in the traditional wraparound phanek and sporting the mandatory tilak — were a happy, thriving community. I spotted two of them playing ludo on the side even as they aggressively courted customers. One of the older Imas was blissfully asleep while the younger ones watched over her pile of shawls. The threads of kinship ran deep and everyone knew everyone else here. Even the competition had a touch of banter and love that warmed your heart.

### Supping with the devil

I like to think of it as the devil chilli, but it has many names, like The Ghost Who Walks — bhoot jolokia, Naga mirch, raja mirch. In Manipur, they call it u-morok. Seasoned northeast travellers all know this hottie and share whispered tales of their first encounter, which is inevitably unforgettable. I had first had it at a roadside eatery in downtown Shillong. It had been ground into a red paste and I mistook it for tomato sauce and put a big dollop in my mouth. I somehow survived to tell the tale. For perspective, please note that there's been a proposal to use the bhoot jolokia in hand grenades. The chilli is available across the northeast, but hardly anywhere is it as celebrated as in Manipur. They pile up mountains of u-morok and sell it by the bucket in the markets — fresh green, red and dried. They put it in curries, flavour their fish and chop it finely to have on the side with fritters. You can't visit Manipur and give u-morok the miss — and I didn't. The raw stuff was a first and I tried it with egg pakodas at the dance festival. I remember it was cold that evening and I was sneezing. Then, as the chilli flavour exploded like a bomb in my mouth, everything turned hyper-real. My sinuses cleared. I heard every note the musicians were playing and my head buzzed with energy. It felt like an epiphany without the hallelujahs. But my best u-morok experience was altogether more visceral and it took place at a Chak Hotel. These are the traditional fish-and-rice eateries that dot the markets of Imphal. If you want to taste authentic Meitei food, this is where you go. Our driver took us to one in Paona Bazar, which was small and unpretentious but served food in squeaky clean plates and bowls. We ordered the all-course thali. So there was rice, two types of dal, various bhajis (one of them was spring onion stalks stir-fried with shrimp and galangal — surely a Burmese influence), a piece of fried fish, various other fish curries and surprisingly, a large chunk of boiled squash.

I tried it all, but the piece de resistance was the iromba. A thick mish-mash of boiled veggies, ngari — the dried local fish — and loads of u-morok, you'd need Bear Grylls's taste buds to have this signature dish cooked without a drop of oil. It was very healthy and well, very smelly. One small spoonful, and I could feel the fish-chilli combination travelling all the way down my throat. Let's just say it was unforgettable. But that goes for all of Manipur. A few weeks have passed since I returned, but the state and its people are like a jewel in my mind's treasure hoard. I made friends, shared stories and got to know India a bit more. When I flew there, my guardian angel went along with me. I came back with two devils — a box full of u-morok and an empty can of El Diablo. I'm still sorting out if that qualifies as good karma. But the u-morok has got pickled at home and El Diablo sits at my desk. They keep calling me back to Manipur.

### Planning the trip:

#### Why go?

Because Manipur is like a picture postcard, with blue hills and a golden Imphal valley dotted with rice fields. Because this is place for cross-border adventures. You can drive up to Moreh, the Burma border, and if you're lucky, maybe even take a walk in the neighbouring country! Because you can visit the world's only floating sanctuary — the Keibul Lamjao National Park — and hope to see one of the rarest deer in India, the Sangai. And if you can't spot the animal, you can still take a boat ride on the Loktak Lake and check out the phumdi, the floating vegetation circles that are a natural wonder.

Because where else can you shop at a huge market run entirely by women? Don't miss the Ima Market in Imphal.

Because you love horses and must visit the polo ground in Imphal. The game was supposedly invented here!

Because you love tribal art and must pick up the exquisite Longpi pottery from Ukhrul.

#### When is a good time?

Manipur is open to tourists round the year. But for a rain-free, hassle-free trip, book your tickets between November and April.

#### How to reach?

Remember, Manipur has no rail connectivity. There are flights from Kolkata. You can also take a train to Silchar or Dimapur and drive on to Imphal.

#### Where to stay and what to eat?

There are hotels of all standards — from budget to super deluxe — in Imphal. Try eating at a Chak Hotel — the local fish-and-rice eatery — in Imphal. Don't miss the iromba, the signature dried fish Meitei delicacy. It will set fire to your taste buds, but is worth a try.

kicks. That's precisely what it felt like when we landed in Imphal on that early November afternoon. All I wanted was a hot shower, but the team that had come to pick us up was in a tizzy. We were late, it emerged, and we'd have to rush off to the Ningthoukhong Gopinath Temple, where the chief minister would inaugurate the festival. And as we all know in Bengal, CMs can't be kept waiting. So we drove with gale force and reached the temple — an enormous complex that was giving off waves of devotional energy like a room heater. Men dressed in crisp white were clanging cymbals, dancers were whirling, people were chanting. And then there were the kids. All of them rouged up and fitted out like Gopinath — identical little Krishnas churned out by an assembly line. It was all slightly trippy. I decided that I needed a break and strolled out. Just next to the temple gates was a stall selling tea and fritters. Salvation, finally, I thought. Then, just as I was taking my first bite of the gobhi pakoda, the young chap

There was Burma Travels, Burma Stores. Our neighbour ran deep in the consciousness here. Strolling around the bustling Paona Bazar, I walked into Burma Traders, a 'suitings and shirtings' establishment, where the Marwari owner recounted how his family had settled in pre-Independence Burma and had traded across the northeast. They still had shops in Guwahati and Imphal. The Rangoon branch had been sold years back.

Travelling in and around Imphal, I realized that borders — both within and outside — were a living, evolving reality here. The capital was at the centre of a sun-drenched valley with blue-green hills



ending gangster flick. In reality though, it's the pollution. I hate to say it, but Imphal is among the dustiest, smokiest towns I've seen in the northeast. The place seems to be a work in progress — roads are being widened, buildings

veggies, fish, fruits and perishables on one side and garments and decorative items on the other — all the stalls are run by women, or Ima (mother). You could say the market is Manipur's indigenous answer to multi-brand retail. I

# Executive can't become judge: Supreme Court warning on bulldozer action

## L-G clears home guards' appointment

Says medical test should be conducted immediately to fast-track the recruitment process

**►The top court emphasised that the executive cannot assume the role of adjudication, stating that the arbitrary demolition of a citizen's home on mere accusations violates constitutional law and the principle of separation of powers.**

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court took a firm stand on the bulldozer action Wednesday, saying that the executive cannot override the judiciary and emphasising that "the legal process should not prejudice the guilt of an accused." The

top court was hearing the petitions seeking to put brakes on the "bulldozer" action against the accused person as a corrective measure. During the hearing, the court emphasised that the executive cannot assume the role of adjudication, stating that the arbitrary demolition of a citizen's home on mere accusations violates constitutional law and the principle of separation of powers. No one can be held guilty without a fair trial," the Court said, reinforcing the protections available to all, including those accused or even convicted. The Court warned that the executive's overreach in such cases disrupts foundational legal principles. The Court highlighted that officials must be held accountable when they act beyond their authority. Such arbitrary actions,



especially in the absence of a judicial order, undermine the rule of law. "Officials cannot act in such an arbitrary manner," the Court noted, adding that safeguards within criminal law exist to protect even those accused or convicted of crimes from abuses of power. In cases where the rights of the accused are infringed upon due to arbitrary actions or negligence, the Court

suggested that compensation could be an avenue for addressing such cases. "If only one person is accused of a crime, how can authorities be allowed to remove shelter from the heads of the entire family or a few families?," the court asked. "Officials cannot be spared if acting in abuse of power," the Court said, reinforcing that accountability measures must apply to prevent misuse of authority. The ruling was announced by a bench of justices B R Gavai and K V Vishwanathan. On October 1, the court reserved its order after hearing the case. The court also extended its interim order, instructing authorities to stop demolition drives until further notice. The order excluded unauthorised structures, including religious buildings on roads and footpaths. The court emphasised that "public safety" is essential, and no religious structure — whether a temple, dargah, or gurdwara — should block.

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi LG VK Saxena has directed for the immediate appointment of as many as 2,346 home guards, who have qualified for their physical and written test, Raj Niwas officials said on Tuesday. The L-G has also directed the officials to set up a medical camp within one week for the medical tests of the qualified candidates and subsequently hand over their appointment letters at the earliest, they said. A total of 32,551 applicants later qualified for the physical measurement and efficiency test. However, vacancies totalling 7,939 were stuck up due to two pending court cases. The remaining 2,346



applicants who qualified the test will not have to unduly wait for the court order to be pronounced, in view of the LG's direction, they said.

Some of the applicants had earlier filed cases in the High Court on various issues. The court ordered maintaining status quo pending its decision in the matter. However, 2,346 candidates were not affected by the cases yet their appointment too was stuck up due to the cases, they said. The LG also directed the director general of home guards to ensure that the remaining 7,939 vacancies are also filled at the earliest after taking cognisance of the decisions of the High Court, they added. In January, the Directorate General of Home Guards announced 10,285 vacancies. However, the age criteria for tenure of service has now been reduced from 60 to 45 years. This led to a protest by over 8,000 home guards raising concerns about job security. They demanded that the recruitment be cancelled and the previous criteria be reinstated. The Home Guard is a voluntary force that assists the police. Their tenure spans for three years, with a yearly extension of up to five years. The last recruitment was held in 2019. It was not conducted later owing to Covid-19-induced disruptions.

**Protest over new rules**  
In January, the Directorate General of Home Guards announced 10,285 vacancies. However, the age criteria for tenure of service has now been reduced from 60 to 45 years. This led to a protest by over 8,000 home guards raising concerns about job security. They demanded that the recruitment be cancelled and the previous criteria be reinstated.

## Telecom Ministry to soon introduce steps to reduce call drops

**NEW DELHI:** The Union Telecommunications Ministry is working to solve the issue of call drops on war-footing, following several complaints. A call drop occurs when the call is unexpectedly disconnected, and it has become one of the most frequent complaints by mobile phone users. Several factors contribute to this issue, including network congestion, inadequate infrastructure, poor signal strength, and interferences caused by environmental conditions. The Ministry has said that the monitoring of the quality of service will be done on a monthly basis from April 2025, in comparison with the three-month monitoring service. Notably, the call quality check was done at tower level earlier and from now on, it will be done at the smartphone level. While earlier, local service area (LSA) was done to check the quality, the ministry will now conduct cell level monitoring. The government is trying



to approach the issue of call drop through a more micro-microlevel approach. The ministry is planning to set up 27,000 towers and connect 26,000 villages across the country to enhance connectivity.

### SAVING CITIZENS FROM ONLINE FRAUD

The government is now looking to impose financial disincentives on telecom companies that do not meet the guidelines. Graded financial disincentives of upto Rs 3 lakh per parameter will be imposed for non-compliance, for consecutive non-compliance with defined standards

across 30 parameters. The Ministry has also taken note of the frauds and scams that are happening across the country. There is an alarming rise in the number of frauds that are committed online and now to tackle it, the government has set up a Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU) for real-time information sharing on telecom misuse. So far, 750 organisations are helping the ministry, including police, banks, and regulatory bodies. **Blocking Spoofed Calls:** A system to block incoming international spoofed calls with Indian phone numbers was launched on October 24. The system blocked around 13.5 million calls daily (89.8 per cent of such calls), according to an official release. **Sanchar Saathi:** Sanchar Saathi, is a citizen-centric platform which enables people to report suspicious calls and messages. So far, over 2.5 crore mobile connections have been disconnected with the help of the platform. Apart from this, over 2.29 lakh phones have been blocked for involvement in cybercrime and financial fraud.

## Central armed forces to soon get first all-women battalion with over 1,000 personnel

**NEW DELHI:** In a first, the Home Ministry has approved a decision to establish an all-women battalion of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), comprising over 1,000 personnel. The ministry issued a sanction on Monday approving an exclusive women's unit called "reserve battalion" in the CISF, with a total strength of 1,025 personnel, led by a senior commandant-rank officer, news agency PTI reported. Currently, female personnel constitute around 7 per cent of the force, whose total strength is around 1.80 lakh. The CISF has started preparations for the early recruitment and training for the new battalion. It has also begun searching for a new headquarters for the all-women battalion. Sources from the CISF said that the training is being specially designed to create an elite battalion, which will be capable of performing multifarious roles, including commandos in VIP security and also managing security of airports, Delhi Metro, among others. Notably, the CISF has 12 reserve battalions as of now, which have a mix of both men and women personnel. The force has a huge interface with women commuters and visitors at facilities like the 68 civil airports it guards, the Delhi Metro and historical monuments like the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort. It already has female personnel deployed at these duty locations. The proposal for creation of all-women battalions in the Force was initiated following the direction of Home Minister Amit Shah during the 53rd Raising Day of the force in March 2023.

## India successfully tests long range land attack missile off Odisha's coast

**NEW DELHI:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the maiden flight-test of the Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) from Integrated Test Range (ITR) off Odisha's Chandipur on Tuesday. The missile was launched from a mobile articulated launcher. During the test, all sub-systems performed as per expectations and met the primary mission objectives. The missile was monitored by several range sensors like Radar and Electro Optical Tracking System deployed by ITR at different locations to ensure complete coverage of the flight path. The missile followed the desired path using way point navigation and demonstrated its capability to perform various manoeuvres while flying at various altitudes and speeds. The missile is equipped with advanced



avionics and software to ensure better and reliable performance. The Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile is developed by Bengaluru-based Aeronautical Development Establishment along with contributions from other DRDO laboratories and other industries. Hyderabad-based Bharat Dynamics Limited and Bengaluru-based Bharat Electronics Limited are the two Development-Cum-Production-Partners for the missile and are engaged in its development and integration. The test was witnessed by senior scientists from various DRDO laboratories along with representatives from all three military services. The Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile is a Defence Acquisition Council-approved, Acceptance of Necessity-sanctioned, Mission Mode Project and can be launched from the ground using a mobile articulated launcher and also from frontline ships using a universal vertical launch module system.

## Dacoity: Woman shot at, held captive with son

**The woman, who was shot on her thigh during the dacoity, works at a private company in Gurugram and was working from home on the day of the incident.**

**NEW DELHI:** In a sensational case of dacoity, eight masked men entered a house in West Delhi's Moti Nagar, held a 31-year-old woman and her 2-year-old kid at gunpoint to steal valuables and even shot her in the thigh when she refused to cooperate. DCP (west) Vichitra Veer said that the daring dacoity was reported on October 28 at Moti Nagar police station following which the police initiated a full-scale investigation and caught four of the eight accused, including one who had previously worked as cook there. The woman, who was shot on her thigh during the dacoity, works at a private company in Gurugram and was working from home on the day of the incident. "I was working on a laptop and my son was playing nearby. Our domestic help was preparing snacks and the main entrance door of the house was open due to the festive season," the woman stated in her complaint. At around 7.15 pm, half-a-dozen masked men, some of them carrying pistols, barged in house and gestured to the woman to keep quiet. They snatched her mobile phone and dragged her to another room where an



almirah was kept. "They asked me about the keys but I told them that it was with my mother-in-law. They then grabbed my son and I pleaded with them to give him back," an excerpt from the FIR read. Irked over the woman refusal, the miscreants threw the two-year-old onto the servant's lap and fired a shot towards the woman which brushed her thigh, injuring her minorly. "Suddenly one among them came running towards us and said they had found what they needed. Seeing them busy, I instantly grabbed my son and rushed towards the bathroom along

with the servant. We bolted the door from inside to save ourselves," the complaint read. When the criminals left, the woman dialed her husband who in turn made a PCR call and alerted the police who then formed multiple team to crack the sensational case. "We focussed on the back route technique to trace the accused people in which we kept analysing the CCTV footage to ascertain the route used by the accused to arrive at the location," SHO (Moti Nagar) Varun Dalal told this newspaper. During the analysis, the cops came across footage at a nearby petrol pump where the accused had first arrived to fuel up their motorcycles. "The registration number of one of the motorcycles was caught on CCTV through which we obtained ownership details and then continued tracking the accused," Dalal said. One of the robbers, Shyam Babu, a resident of Village Budhai Purwa, Gonda, UP was identified and arrested. On interrogation, he revealed the names of other people and later three more people Pankaj Kumar, Rakesh, and Rajender were also arrested.

## 'Gurugram's flawed waste system fuels pollution crisis'

**NEW DELHI:** As air quality in Gurugram remains poor, residents say that much pollution results from rampant open waste burning in public areas. Open fires from burning garbage have been observed across the city, with one blaze in Sector 10 last month requiring 20 minutes to be extinguished after fire officials stepped in due to a lack of response from the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG). Residents report that, despite complaints to the pollution control board, waste burning continues unchecked in areas such as DLF-2, IFFCO Chowk, Udyog Vihar, and Sector 31, often due to actions by local shopkeepers and sanitation workers. The state's Urban Local Bodies (ULB) department has called out local agencies for insufficient action against municipal solid waste (MSW) burning, describing it as a compliance failure and a violation of the state's comprehensive air quality management system (CAQMS). In response, the ULB mandated that civic bodies file reports on enforcement efforts by Friday. Since mid-October, MCG has



issued penalties amounting to Rs 35,000 for seven waste-burning violations, under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). The MCG has also warned senior officials of accountability measures if they fail to act, and it has encouraged residents to report such incidents directly. At the root of the problem is the city's solid waste management, which emphasises removing waste from public areas more than reducing and segregating waste at the source. According to experts, the focus has remained on the transportation of waste rather than its disposal. Even the authorities give contract for the waste lifting and transportation and agencies which receive the tender get paid

according to the weight of the waste lifted. Another reason behind the burning is to illegally dispose of the factory or hazardous waste that gets rejected at the landfill sites. Several waste lifting agencies take money from these factories to lift their waste, which is at times hazardous, and dump at the area, where regular waste is already piled up. At times, this waste is dumped in an empty area. It is then mixed with the regular waste and burned to escape the eye of authorities, ignoring the fact that the hazardous waste burned can lead to health issues for the people residing near the area. In an interview with Ruchika Sethi of Citizens for Clean Air, who advocates for more sustainable waste management practices in Gurugram, Prabhat Shukla discusses the most pressing issue and possible solutions. **Excerpts.**  
**What is the current waste management system in Gurugram?**  
Primarily, the focus has been on engaging the sanitation workers and pick-up trucks and transporting the waste from one spot to the other. For this, the contracts were awarded. In 2017, the MCG awarded

contracts to waste-to-energy companies that are based on burn technology. The entire waste contract model was based on a tipping fee model. The MCG pays for the door-to-door collection and transportation of waste from smaller agencies that take it to secondary dumping points called 'Khattas' or informal Garbage Vulnerable Points. From here, waste is loaded onto bigger trucks by JCBs and taken to the Bhanwari Landfill site. These agencies are paid by how much they offload in weight. **What exactly is the issue with this system?**  
There is an inherent flaw with this system. Waste management rules say that waste needs to be processed. If you leave waste as it is, it will rot and stench. But if agencies are getting paid for dumping waste at one point, there is absolutely no incentive for them to segregate waste as they don't get any money from it. **Where is waste frequent burned?**  
There are multiple areas. First is at the small scrap dealers who burn plastic. The second is horticulture waste fires from trimming of tree branches and hedges collected by tractors into large heaps. Thirdly, waste is burned at a large scale at the Khattas.



# Famous Beaches in New Zealand

Being an island country, New Zealand is literally surrounded by long shorelines. Here you will find all kinds of beaches for swimming and surfing. New Zealand is literally surrounded by beautiful beaches. It has more than 9,000 miles of coast plus hundreds of pristine seashores. You can find all kinds of shoreline here—from jagged rocky shores to hidden black and white sands. With major cities located near the water, there are plenty of famous beaches in New Zealand to choose from. Whether you are looking for adventure or relaxation, you will surely find a stretch of coast to explore and enjoy.

So, if you love beaches and the lifestyle that comes with staying on a beach, then you will surely enjoy your visit to New Zealand during ICC Cricket World Cup 2015. Here you will find long sandy beaches, turquoise lagoon, ideal surfing spot and natural seaside hot springs. New Zealand offers a beach for every temperament.

If want to soak up the sun in New Zealand, here are the best stretches of coast found in the country.

## Wauai Beachin

This beach is near the city of Gisborne and surrounded by reserves and protected lands. The beach is huge and offers plenty of recreational activities from idyllic picnic spots, walking and jogging tracks to swimming and sunbathing.

## Kaiteriteri Beach in Nelson

This beach has golden sand and receives the highest rate of sunshine hours in the country. Although not expansive, it is perfectly formed and has all the prerequisites for an idyllic seaside experience. The place has a busy vacation atmosphere with pack campgrounds and vacation homes. Do not forget to bring your camera as penguins, seals and dolphins are common seen here.

## Piha Beach in West Auckland

This is the country's most famous surfing beach. It is found on the west coast and a half-hour drive from Auckland. Rugged cliffs frame the sea and the lush bush of the Waitakere Ranges provides opportunity for exploration, walks and picnics. This beach is definitely not for swimming and sunbathing but best for surfing.

## Hot Water Beach

This gorgeous beach is located in Coromandel Peninsula. If you arrive 2 hours before or after low tide, you can experience a natural spa without paying a cent. Tourists came here with shovels to dig holes at the tide line then wait for the natural hot water to seep up through the sand. You can enjoy sea water that is full of healthy minerals such as calcium, magnesium and potassium. But beware of the notoriously strong rip tides near the outcrop.

## Karikari Peninsula's Beach

This beach was made famous by the 1993 film, The Piano. It is vast and still-empty paradise with black sand and craggy cliffs with a 100-foot Karekare Falls tucked just inside the forest. It is famous for its annual beach race day every month of April with local ponies and horses race in order to raise money for a cause.



Located an hour north of Montreal in the Laurentian Mountains, Mont Tremblant attracts tourists from around the world. There is just enough adventure mixed in with the decadence of luxury hotels, fine wine and great food. Being a part of the Intrawest family, Mont Tremblant has all of the elements of Whistler in BC, Steamboat in Colorado and Panorama in Alberta. Intrawest has done an amazing job of transforming the base of each mountain into a world class village. Packed with wine bars and bistros as well as a satisfying mix of Asian, French and International cuisines, there is something here to satisfy any craving. It has coffee shops, pubs, cafeterias and places for fondues and raclettes. Mont Tremblant, Canada Re-named Whistler Mountain in 1965 (after the cry of the ubiquitous western hoary marmot, or Whistle Pig) the pleasantly car-free village centre was purpose-built, quite attractively, on the site of an old garbage tip, a favourite haunt of bears. It is now an attractive but sprawling village, dominated in the Upper Village by the imposing neo-gothic structure of the splendid Fairmont Chateau Whistler

## Mont Tremblant Canada

hotel, and some truly terrific skiing on Whistler and Blackcomb mountains which have the largest vertical drop in North America: both are about a mile high. Vancouver, the gateway city, is one of the most beautiful in the world. Then comes the two hour "Sea-to-Sky Highway" (99 North) drive, the early stages along the magnificent Strait of Georgia coastline, with misty views of Vancouver Island.



One of Whistler's few snags is its low elevation. At 675 metres (2,214 feet), close to the maritime influence of the Pacific seaboard, it tends to attract more than its fair share of rain. Although this nearly always results in fresh snowfalls higher up the mountain, the prospect of going out in the rain to start a day's skiing puts a



# Edinburgh in Pictures



The Edinburgh Castle is a proud symbol of the Scottish nation. Watching over the capital like an overprotective father, the castle is not only the country's most instantly-recognisable sights, but also its most significant. Built in the 12th century, this beautiful

## National Portrait Gallery

Scotland's National Portrait Gallery is a strikingly-red Gothic revival building containing some of the country's most renowned works of art. The enormous entrance hall houses a mural depicting some of the most important Scots throughout

## Calton Hill

The capital's most significant pile of earth, Calton Hill has played a pivotal role in the history of Edinburgh. The hill has served various functions—from being used as a place of execution, to hosting a vigil for Scottish devolution—and it continues to

## Edinburgh Castle

## Edinburgh Playhouse

The city's best known theatre venue—it is said that the theatre is haunted by the grey-suited ghost of Albert, an old stagehand who died in a freak accident here many decades ago—originally opened as a super-cinema in 1929, but is now the UK's largest

## Holyrood Park

This beautiful Royal Park within spitting distance of the capital offers visitors a real taste of the Scottish Highlands. Sprawling across 650 acres of high hills, wide glens, steep cliffs, craggy ridges and deep lochs, it makes for a perfect excursion from the

## Palace of Holyroodhouse

On a sunny summer's day in Edinburgh, there is nothing nicer than taking a leisurely stroll through the fragrant gardens at Holyrood Palace. Founded in 1128, the sublimely beautiful Holyrood Palace was once home to generations of Scottish Kings and

## Shopping

From Princes Street in the heart of the New Town—the city's foremost shopping strip littered with high street giants like H&M and Topshop—to streets with a strong local flavour; Edinburgh has a good collection of atmospheric places to shop at.

## Fish and chips

Whether it's the classic cod, chips and mushy peas or a battered sausage with gravy, you can't leave Edinburgh without sampling the famous chippies. You'll find eat-in and takeaway shops right across the city, but the best of the lot is The Tailend Fish Bar in Leith. The first of the posh chippies, it offers all the traditional dishes—cod and haddock, pies, chicken and sausages—but also has soups, salmon, prawns and more. If you can't make it to The Tailend, other great Edinburgh chippies include the award-winning L'Abla D'Oro which is also one of the city's must-eat spots.

## Heart of Midlothian

As you're walking the Royal Mile, you should keep an eye out for the famous Heart of Midlothian. A beautifully decorative love-heart-shaped mosaic, built into the cobblestones beside St Giles Cathedral, it marks the original location of the now-demolished

## Jenners

Jenners is more than just a shopper's paradise; unlike most British department stores, it also offers hair and beauty treatments, chiropody, manicures and more. An Edinburgh retail institution, this enormous department store has been a fixture on Princes

## Cafes in Edinburgh

Spend an hour or two at one of the ambient, street-side cafes in the city. Amidst the multitude, Peter's Yard is said to have the best coffee, crispbread and cakes in Edinburgh. Add to that a lively atmosphere, a great location, friendly service and a sincere

## St Giles' Cathedral

The religious centre of Scottish life for close to a millennium, St Giles' Cathedral is a pivotal part of the Edinburgh landscape. Also known as The Mother Church of Presbyterianism, the building is instantly recognizable by its architecture and famed crown

## National Museum of Scotland

If you fancy a fascinating stroll through the country's long, rich history, then a trip to the Museum of Scotland should definitely feature on your itinerary. Scotland is famous for its creative influence—having invented the telephone, the bicycle, the steam

## Royal Yacht Britannia

Once the official Royal Yacht of Queen Elizabeth II, the Britannia has since reinvented itself as Britain's finest exhibition ship. Permanently moored in Leith, the imposing vessel maintains its original design and function, so members of the public can

## The Vaults

The Edinburgh Vaults are where history and the paranormal collide. Built in the late 18th century underneath the South Bridge, these vaults were forgotten about for over 150 years, but were opened to the public after excavations in the

## The Water of Leith

This 12-mile stretch of walkway winds serenely through the Scottish capital from Balerno right to the port of Leith with plenty to amuse along the way. Keep your eyes open too for the knee-deep statues throughout the shallows and dotted on the banks. These

## Bars and nightlife

There's no dearth of places in the city where you can have a tippie. From warm and friendly neighbourhood pubs, to more elegant bars, Edinburgh has plenty of venues which are great for some fun in the afterhours. The Bong Club is one of the most

**'Starlink will receive service licence if it meets govt's conditions'**

**NEW DELHI.** Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia stated on Tuesday that Elon Musk's Starlink will receive a service licence provided it meets the government's conditions and addresses security concerns. While speaking to media, Scindia also mentioned that the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) will determine the pricing of the satellite spectrum.

"You have to also look at it from a security perspective... making sure that security concerns are addressed. When they do that, we will be more than happy to do so. There is a specific format, and you need to check all the boxes. When you check all the boxes, you will get the licence. They are in the process of doing that," said Scindia.

Currently, the government has issued licences to Bharti Group-backed OneWeb and the Jio-SES joint venture, Jio Satellite Communications, to provide satellite communications services in India. Elon Musk-led Starlink and Amazon's Project Kuiper have applied but are yet to be approved by the government.

Meanwhile, Indian telecom players Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea Limited are facing off over satellite spectrum. Indian telcos favour auctioning, whereas, foreign players like Starlink and Amazon's Project Kuiper advocate for administrative allocation, aligning with global practices.

According to sources, TRAI is likely to finalize its recommendations on proposed rules related to spectrum allocation for satellite communications by December 15. The government will then evaluate TRAI's recommendations and decide on allocating spectrum to satellite communication companies, paving the way for satellite-based broadband services in the country. The minister also mentioned that BSNL to rollout one lakh 4G mobile towers by May-June next year.

**'Identify sites to set up nuclear power projects'**



**NEW DELHI.** Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday stated that he had urged states to identify potential sites for setting up nuclear power projects. Speaking to the media after a meeting with state power ministers, he also mentioned that 18 sites have been identified across the country for the establishment of nuclear power capacity.

"Nuclear power capacity is expected to grow from 8 Gw to 20 Gw by 2032. States located far from coal sources should consider setting up nuclear power plants at sites where coal-based thermal power plants have completed their life," said the minister.

He also urged states to expedite the implementation of smart metering projects, noting that this would help reduce operational and financial losses. He further recommended offering a 5% rebate to prepaid consumers. "We have urged the states to proceed in a phased manner, starting with high-load customers and gradually moving to low-load ones," he said. The conference of Power Ministers of States/UTs was held on November 12, and the minister highlighted that today, the peak demand, which has reached as high as 250 GW, is being effectively met through collective efforts. However, in view of the growing demand, additional efforts are required to increase capacity.

**NTPC Green to announce IPO price range; seeks \$12 billion valuation**

**MUMBAI.** NTPC Green Energy is set to begin the last leg of the largest sectoral initial share with a Rs 11,000-crore issue on Wednesday, announcing the price range, reportedly seeking a valuation of \$12 billion. The clean energy subsidiary of state-run NTPC is seeking a valuation of about \$12 billion in what could be the biggest initial public offerings in the renewable energy industry, people familiar with the matter said. Issue will open on November 18, and the company said it will announce the price range on Wednesday.

The NTPC Green issue follows the successful listing of Waaree Energies, which raised \$514 million last month and was subscribed more than 70 times with the company getting investors from the likes of Goldman Sachs, Blackrock and Morgan Stanley apart from retail and wealthy investors. Investor interest has been surging in the renewable energy sector, given the huge government focus.



Renewables has added more than 100 gigawatts in the last decade, outpacing earlier expectations and the target to have 500 gw or 50% of the energy needed being sourced from the green resources by 2030.

ACME Solar Holdings, is also planning a \$344 million (Rs 2,900 crore) issue and has received strong demand from both retail and qualified institutional investors. The issue from the NTPC arm will take the IPO issuances to a life-time record of well over Rs 1.2 lakh crore that was achieved in 2021. In 2021, the companies collectively raised Rs 1.19 lakh crore and excluding the NTPC's Rs 11,000 crore and ACME's Rs 2,900 crore will take the numbers much higher.

**FinMin says state-run banks' H1 earnings jump 25.6% to Rs 85,520 crore**

**The statement added that the aggregate business of the 12 state-run banks stood at Rs 236.04 lakh crore, which grew by 11%.**

**MUMBAI.** The finance ministry has said the banks run by it have reported strong set of numbers with net income surging by 25.6% to Rs 85,520 crore in the first half of the fiscal along with rapid improvements in asset quality. Almost 45% of this is contributed by SBI alone with Rs 35,366 crore in net income in the reporting period.

While operating profit jumped to Rs 1,50,023 crore, 14.4% more growth the same period in the previous fiscal, from which they earned Rs 85,520 crore in net income, which is as much as 25.6% more than what they have logged in the corresponding period last fiscal, the finance ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

The statement added that the aggregate business of the 12 state-run banks stood at Rs 236.04 lakh crore, which grew by 11%. Of this global credit and deposit portfolio grew 12.9% and 9.5% on-year to Rs 102.29 lakh crore and Rs 133.75 lakh crore respectively.

The statement added that finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier in the day met with the heads of the state-run banks to take stock of the



challenges banks are facing. The statement also noted that public sector lenders have shown significant progress

21.6% more than what it had earned from the previous year.

in adopting new age technologies like AI/cloud/blockchain apart from upgrading existing digital infra, putting in place necessary systems/controls to tackle cyber security risks and taking multiple steps to provide best-in-class customer services. It can be noted that like last fiscal, most of this fiscal's first half earnings of Rs 85,000 crore have been logged in by the State Bank only. The industry leader has logged a cool 28% growth in net income in the second quarter at Rs 18,331 crore, and Rs 17,035 crore in the first quarter. Last fiscal, the bank had earned Rs 61,077 crore, which was

**Vistara-AI to operate 5.6k weekly flights**

**The new full-service carrier will operate over 5,600 weekly flights and connect more than 90 domestic and international destinations with a fleet of 208 aircraft.**

**NEW DELHI.** Air India Group has completed the operational integration and legal merger between Air India and Vistara, creating a full-service carrier.

The new full-service carrier will operate over 5,600 weekly flights and connect more than 90 domestic and international destinations with a fleet of 208 aircraft. The airline will now be flying over 120,000 passengers every day and offers an extended worldwide connectivity to over 800 destinations through more than 75 code share and interline partners, Air India said in a press statement on Tuesday.

Preparation for the full-service merger commenced more than two years ago, and has seen the induction of more than 6,000 staff from Vistara into a new organisation structure, harmonisation of operating procedures across the four



airlines, and alignment of over 140 IT systems. More than 4,000 vendor contracts have been consolidated, 270,000 customer bookings migrated and 4.5 million Club Vistara frequent flyer accounts inducted to Air India's recently-redesigned frequent flyer program, Maharaja Club. Consequent to the merger of Vistara and Air India, Singapore Airlines, which held a 49% share in Vistara, becomes a 25.1%

shareholder in the resultant Air India group. The merger of Air India and Vistara follows the merger of the Group's low-cost airlines Air India Express and AIX Connect (formerly Air Asia India) on 1 October 2024. The unified Air India Group now operates over 8,300 weekly flights on 312 routes, connecting more than 100 domestic and international destinations with a fleet of 300 aircraft.

In a press statement, the company said that the consolidation of the four Tata-owned airlines into one Group operating one full-service and one low-cost airline is part of the ongoing, five-year transformation program, Vihaan.AI, which is focused on establishing Air India Group as a world-class global aviation company with an Indian heart.

**Hyundai Q2 profit declines 16% to Rs 1,375 crore**

**NEW DELHI.** Automaker Hyundai Motor India on Tuesday posted a 16% y-o-y fall in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,375 crore for the quarter ended September 2024.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 1,628 crore in the same period last year. Announcing its first quarterly results after listing on stock exchanges, the automaker reported a 8% decline in revenue from operations to Rs 17,260 crore for the second quarter compared to Rs 18,660 crore in the year-ago period.

Hyundai Motor India said it has sold a total of 1,91,939 units of passenger vehicles during the second quarter. This includes 1,49,639 units in the domestic market, with a strong contribution from the SUV segment, it added. The export volume stood at 42,300 units, HMIL said.

The company had sold a total of 2,09,777 units in the year ago period. HMIL

Managing Director Unsoo Kim said in a press conference that the company had challenges on volumes in the second quarter due to the domestic and geopolitical factors impacting its margins.



The Indian auto industry is cyclical in nature, and has its ups and downs, after the phenomenal growth in the last two-three years due to the pent up demand post-COVID, the current demand moderation is very natural, he added.

The automaker fared well in regions like Africa and Latin America, but the Middle East continued to face headwinds due to the Red Sea crisis, Kim said. "We will be closely monitoring the situation, and will also plan to mitigate the risk by focusing on other regions," he added. HMIL COO Tarun Garg said that prevailing high interest rates and lack of pent-up demand in the market were some of the factors affecting the domestic market.

Shares trading lower HMIL made its market debut on October 22 at the opening price of Rs 1,931 per share on BSE. Its shares closed lower by 0.98% at Rs 1,804.45 on the BSE following its financial results. The shares of the company are still trading lower than its IPO price of Rs 1,960 per share. The company sold a total of 1,91,939 units of PVs during the second quarter.

**'You and I...': Zomato welcomes Swiggy on Dalal Street after stock market listing**

**Swiggy market listing: Zomato's social media post, featuring a banner announcing Swiggy's listing, showcased a friendly nod between the two food tech giants.**

**New Delhi.** Food delivery giant Zomato welcomed Swiggy stock market debut on Tuesday with a warm social media post.

"You and I... In this beautiful world," said Zomato's post on X. The post was accompanied by an image of Swiggy and Zomato delivery persons standing in front of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) building. The post, featuring a banner announcing Swiggy's listing, showcased a friendly nod between the two food tech giants.

Swiggy is now officially listed on the BSE and NSE after its IPO. Shares opened at Rs 420 on the NSE, marking a 7.69% premium over the IPO price of Rs 390. This is better than what the GMP had indicated. The IPO price band was set between Rs 371 and Rs 390 per share, and the offering raised Rs 11,327



crore, driven by high interest from institutional investors. Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) led the demand with a 6.02 times subscription, while the retail category saw a moderate subscription of 1.14 times.

Swiggy's IPO was oversubscribed by 3.59 times, but non-institutional investors showed lower interest, with subscriptions at 0.41 times. The listing brought significant returns for major backers like Prosus NV.

Meanwhile, markets remained under pressure, with the BSE Sensex down by over 170 points to 78,495, and the Nifty50 slipping 61 points to 23,822 in early trade. Swiggy's market entry marks the 50th mainboard IPO on the NSE this year, further highlighting investor interest in India's thriving tech and startup landscape. Meanwhile, Zomato shares were up nearly 1% on the stock exchanges early trade.

**Karnataka is a hub for Web3 start-ups: Report**

**As per the report, out of the 422 companies covered in the Compendium, nearly 70%, or 290, are headquartered in India.**



**BENGALURU.** With 97 Web3 startups, Karnataka leads in emerging technology, and stands out as a hub for Web3, which has transformed users' interaction with the internet. It is followed by Maharashtra with 47 companies headquartered in the state. Karnataka alone holds 33% share in Web3.

The Bharat Web3 Association on Tuesday released a report, 'India's Web3 Revolution: A Compendium of Web3 Firms Led by Indian Innovators,' says while Web1 and Web2 were dominated by Western companies, Web3 presents an opportunity for the country to take a leading role in the new phase of the internet.

Unlike Web1, where users were only able to read data shared by certain companies or Web2, where users could post and create content over the Web, but on platforms mainly owned by big, centralised entities, Web3 aims to create a more open and democratic web, where data and assets are controlled by individuals rather than centralised corporations. As per the report, out of the 422 companies covered in the Compendium, nearly 70%, or 290, are headquartered in India. Within the country, in terms of cities, Bengaluru continues to hold its title as the Tech Capital of India, hosting 96 companies. Mumbai is the second preferred city for Web3 startups, home to 37 companies. As per the report, the country houses more than 400 companies specialising in blockchain development, Non-Fungible Token (NFTs), the metaverse, gaming and Decentralised Finance (DeFi).

**Nykaa reports 66% jump in net profit to Rs 12.97 crore**

**NEW DELHI.** E-commerce firm FSN E-Commerce Ventures has reported about 66% increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 12.97 crore in the second quarter ended on September 30, 2024, according to the company filing.

The company, which owns Nykaa brand, had posted a net profit of Rs 7.8 crore in the same period a year ago. The consolidated revenue from operations of Nykaa grew by 24.4% to Rs 1,874.84 crore during the reported quarter from Rs 1,507.02 crore in the September 2023 quarter.

The beauty vertical of Nykaa recorded a 29% year-on-year (YoY) gross merchandise value (GMV) growth, reaching Rs 2783.3 crore during the reported quarter. "This was fuelled by new customer acquisition growth of 31% YoY, bringing Nykaa's cumulative beauty customer base to 30 million and One Nykaa cumulative base to 37 million. This contributed to a 22% YoY rise in annual unique transacting customers and a 24% YoY increase in total orders," the company said in a statement. Nykaa Fashion witnessed a healthy revenue growth of 22% YoY and its GMV grew 10% YoY, the company said.



NEWS BOX

**Mike Tyson shows aggression, Jake Paul wears bizarre head gear for open workouts**

New Delhi. Mike Tyson rolled back the years and adopted an aggressive approach, while Jake Paul decided to troll the boxing legend with a bizarre chicken head gear during the open workouts on November 12, Tuesday. Tyson and Paul will be locking horns inside the boxing ring on Saturday, November 16 at the AT&T Stadium in Dallas, Texas. The bout is all set to be streamed live by Netflix and the Indian fans can watch it at 6:30 AM IST.

Ahead of the fight, both men would have their open workouts in a ring inside the Toyota Music Factory, Texas. Iron Mike was seen during the session constantly on the front foot and frequently making his pad man back up into the ropes. Tyson was also seen



throwing some different combinations to the ones that were called, but the fans were happy to see the boxing legend being back in the ring. You can see some of Tyson's training below. On the other hand, Paul appeared wearing a rooster hat on his head and showed off his new physique ahead of the fight. Many speculate that the hat was worn by the 27-year-old in a bid to taunt and take a jibe at Tyson before the fight. You can see the video below: What Tyson and Paul said after open workouts. Tyson would comment on his fight camp and said he has learnt that he is tougher than he believed before. Also Read: Magnus Carlsen meets 3-year-old prodigy Anish Sarkar. "That I'm tougher than I believed I was, because when I agreed to this fight and started training, I thought: 'what the f\*\*\* am I thinking of?' But now I've finished the process, the fight is the party," said Tyson as quoted by the Independent. Paul appeared to very confident and claimed that it will be a short night for Iron Mike and he will knockout the legend. "It's gonna be a short night for Mike." "It's not about how long you've been doing something, it's about how good you do it. On Friday, people are gonna see me outbox the person who's been doing it their whole life. Friday, my dreams come true and my career starts [...] I will knock out Mike Tyson," said Paul.

**Australia's coach Daniel Vettori likely to miss Perth Test to attend IPL auction**

New Delhi. Former Australia cricketers Ricky Ponting, Justin Langer and are likely to miss their commentary duties for the first Test of the upcoming five-match Test series between India and Australia due to IPL 2025 auction. Notably, the IPL (Indian Premier League) 2025 auction is all set to be held on November 24 and 25 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia while the first Test between India and Australia is set to begin from November 22.

With the two dates clashing, Ponting, who's the head coach of Punjab Kings (PBKS) and Langer, who's the head coach of Lucknow Super Giants (LSG), are likely to be with their respective IPL teams to formulate their strategies in the mega auction. Apart from them, Australia's assistant coach Daniel Vettori, who's the head coach of Sunrisers Hyderabad, is also likely to fly to Jeddah for



the bidding event of the T20 extravaganza. According to Australian newspaper 'The Age', "Channel Seven could be without Ricky Ponting and Justin Langer for parts of the Perth Test due to a clash of commitments, and Australia may lose a vital backroom coach for the start of the blockbuster Border-Gavaskar series in a potential stand-off with Indian cricket." "Back in 2023, Ponting, who was previously coaching Delhi Capitals (DC) left after day three of the Perth Test to attend the auction. On the other hand, Langer stayed till the end of the game while Vettori completed his duties with Australia before flying for the auction which was held two days after the Perth Test finished.

**1574 players have registered for IPL auction** The Age further reported that no decision had been made on whether Vettori would stay with the team through the entire Test or leave early for the auction. Vettori was appointed Australia's assistant coach in May 2022 along with Andre Borovec. Meanwhile, 1,574 players have registered for the IPL mega auction out of which 409 are from overseas. Each team can build a squad of 25 players each and hence 204 slots are still left

**Recapping BGT: When India faced shoddy umpiring and shambolic game spirit in Sydney**

**The Sydney Test played between India and Australia in 2008 is remembered as the most controversial Test match played between two countries as the game witnessed poor umpiring and several other heated moments between the two teams.**

New Delhi. India and Australia have often treated fans with several memorable encounters on the cricket pitch in their rich history of playing against each other. However, not a single game has been able to match the intensity of the infamous Sydney Test from 2008. Several controversies, shoddy umpiring, allegations of racial abuse and a display of questionable spirit of the game by the hosts Australia marred the game. It all began on January 2, 2008 as Australia came into the game on the back of a strong 337-run win in the first Test in Melbourne. After Australia captain Ricky Ponting won the toss and opted to bat first, India made early inroads in the Australian batting line up as RP Singh dismissed both openers to leave Australia on 27/2. The Australian skipper Ricky Ponting walked in at number 3 and got an early life in his

innings as he was caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper MS Dhoni. However, umpire Steve Bucknor didn't raise his finger which allowed Ponting to stitch a 92-run partnership with Michael Hussey until he was finally dismissed on 55. Following his dismissal, India managed to get three more wickets quickly leaving Australia reeling at 134/6.

**Andrew Symonds survives three dismissals**

Then came the second controversial moment of the Day 1 as Shant Sharma managed to find a thick edge of Symonds' bat which was taken by Dhoni behind the stumps. However, umpire Bucknor was once again unmoved and the Australia batter continued his country's culture of not walking despite edging the ball. At the time of the appeal, Australia were 193/6 and Symonds was further given two more lives on the same day with umpire Bucknor not taking Dhoni's stumping appeal seriously and refusing to send it upstairs to the third umpire.

The replays showed that the Australia batter was short of his crease on both occasions. The casual umpiring cost India massively as Symonds went on to score 162\* taking



Australia to a massive score of 463. In reply, India posted a massive 532 on the board with centuries from Sachin Tendulkar (154) and VVS Laxman (109).

**The Harbhajan-Symonds face-off**

There was more drama in the Indian innings as Harbhajan Singh had a go at Symonds who misconstrued a Hindi expletive to 'monkey' and alleged that the India cricketer had racially abused him. The umpires Mark Benson and Bucknor also came into the act and the situation was dealt after the match. However, there was more drama to follow in the second innings as trailing by 69 runs, Australia scored a massive 401/7 in the second innings and set India a target of 333 in the fourth innings. During Australia's second

innings, Michael Clarke came under scrutiny for not walking despite edging the ball to slips against Anil Kumble and the Indian fielders had to plead with the umpire to make him raise his finger. The fourth innings of the match witnessed the most intense moments of the game as India were once again on the wrong side of controversial calls. Michael Clarke and Ricky Ponting claim grounded catches

Rahul Dravid was given caught out despite having a good gap between bat and ball against Andrew Symonds. A few overs later came the most controversial call of the match as Sourav Ganguly was given caught out at second slip against Brett Lee. The India batter waited for a few seconds to confirm with the umpires whether the catch was cleanly taken and umpire Mark Benson raised his finger after taking captain Ricky Ponting's word. The Australia skipper raised his finger to gesture that Clarke had taken the ball cleanly. However, the replays showed that the Australian fielder had grounded the ball leaving Ganguly and former India cricketer Sunil Gavaskar fuming in the commentary box.

**WI vs ENG: Andre Russell ruled out of remaining 3 T20Is, Alzarri Joseph returns**

New Delhi. All-rounder Andre Russell has been ruled out of the remainder of the T20I series against England, while Alzarri Joseph made a return to the team as West Indies revealed their squad for the next 3 matches. Russell had suffered a left ankle sprain during the 1st T20I against England and had missed the 2nd match of the series. Russell had posted an update on his injury in the past few days and now will be out of the squad for the next 3 matches. In place of the all-rounder, West Indies have roped in Shamar Springer into the side. Springer had made his debut during the tour of Sri Lanka recently. The second change sees Alzarri come into the side after serving his 2-match suspension. The pacer had an on-field altercation with the ODI captain Shai Hope during the 3rd and final match of the 50-over series recently and had walked off the ground. His actions were punished with a ban and now he has completed it. Alzarri comes in place of Shamar Joseph. "As the



series moves to Saint Lucia, experienced all-rounder Andre Russell has been ruled out due to a left ankle sprain sustained during the opening T20I at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Saturday. In his place, all-rounder Shamar Springer, fresh off two T20I games against Sri Lanka, will join the squad."

"Alzarri Joseph, having completed his two-match suspension, will rejoin the squad in Saint Lucia for the crucial final leg of the series, replacing Shamar Joseph," read the statement from Cricket West Indies.

**West Indies will be without the services of all-rounder Andre Russell for the remainder of the England T20Is as the squad announced on November 12, Tuesday. Alzarri Joseph makes his return to the side after serving his 2-match ban.**

England currently lead the series 2-0 after brilliant performances with the bat in the first 2 games.

**West Indies T20I Squad for last 3 matches:**

Rovman Powell (Captain), Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Terrance Hinds, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Evin Lewis, Gudakesh Motie, Nicholas Pooran, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd, Shamar Springer.

**Gambhir is prickly character, never took dig at Kohli: Ponting**

**Ponting had said that Kohli's poor form would be a concern and any other international player would have struggle to keep his spot in the Test side with just two hundreds in five years.**

MELBOURNE. Responding to Gautam Gambhir's jibe at him, former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting on Wednesday said the India head coach was a "prickly character" and insisted that his comments on Virat Kohli should not be construed as a dig on the star batter, who himself would be worried about his prolonged lean patch. Ponting, in an interview to ICC, had said that Kohli's poor form would be a concern and

any other international player would have struggle to keep his spot in the Test side with just two hundreds in five years. He though had also spoken highly of Kohli's ability to bounce back. Gambhir, when



asked about Ponting's comments, said the Australian legend needn't be concerned about Indian cricket. "I was surprised to read the reaction but knowing the coach, Gautam Gambhir...he's quite a prickly character, so I'm not surprised it was him who said

something back," Ponting told 7News when asked about Gambhir's comments. "If he comes my way, yeah. I don't expect him to. We have got quite a bit of history, against each other. I have actually coached him at Delhi Capitals and he is quite a prickly character," Ponting said in jest when the anchor asked if he would shake hands with Gambhir if they cross path. One of the greatest batters of his time, Ponting then explained what he meant and felt that things were taken out of context. "In no way was it a dig at him (Kohli). I actually followed it up by saying he's played well in Australia and he'll be keen to bounce back over here...If you ask Virat, I'm sure he would be a little bit concerned that he hasn't been able to make the same amount of hundreds as he has in previous years," he said. Follow The New Indian Express channel on WhatsApp



tomorrow. "Ferrero also said Rublev is a player who moves a lot and that is hindering Alcaraz at the moment and costing him a bit. "Rublev is a player who moves a lot, you have to be very good on your legs and, right now, that's what's costing him a little more, recovering between points."

After his title win in Beijing in October, the 21-year-old Spaniard's form has been inconsistent, particularly since his Wimbledon triumph earlier in the year. His recent setbacks include an unexpected second-round loss at the U.S. Open and a round of 16 defeat to Ugo Humbert at the Paris Masters. Following his match against Rublev, Alcaraz is set to face world number two Alexander Zverev in his final round-robin match at the prestigious eight-man tournament. Last year, Alcaraz reached the semi-finals before being defeated by Novak Djokovic, who eventually went on to win the title.

**SA v IND, 3rd T20I Preview: India look to bounce back in Centurion batting paradises**

**South Africa vs India, 3rd T20I preview: As the series moves to the Highveldt, India will look to rely more on pace and seal an unbeatable lead. After their batting flopped in Gqberha, India stars will be keen on putting on a better show in Centurion on Wednesday.**

New Delhi. With all squared at 1-1, India and South Africa will head to the SuperSport Park in Centurion to resume their rivalry in the second of the T20I series. Despite losing the second T20I after a big win in the series opener, India will be a confident bunch as

they look to bounce back and secure an unbeatable lead.

India will have to quickly adjust to the change in conditions as the series moves to the Highveldt. The SuperSport Park is known for offering good bounce and pace. In the recent past, it has been a graveyard for bowlers. Since 2023, the average run rate at this venue has been 9.50 in T20 cricket. Last year, South Africa completed the highest-successful chase in T20I cricket, gunning down 259 in 18.5 overs against a touring West Indies team. It will be a big test for the young bowling attack from both sides. India have enjoyed success with the ball, but they need to be prepared to take a beating and look for wickets. India have found success with their spin-bowling unit. Varun Chakravarty and Ravi Bishnoi have taken 12 wickets between them with the former dominating the bowling charts with 8 wickets at an economy rate of 8.25. While



India will look to stick to their strengths, the bounce and carry that is on offer in Centurion might prompt them to make changes to their pace-bowling department.

On the other hand, India will certainly look to better their batting performance after having been bundled out for 124 in the second T20I. Runs from lower-order have been missing for the tourists and that's an area that they would have worked on in the two-day

break. South Africa, on the other hand, were helped by Gerald Coetzee's lower-order hitting and Tristan Stubbs' solidity in the second T20I. The hosts will be hoping for some more runs from their famed middle-order. Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller, who are good players of spin, will be looking to overcome the Varun threat and return to peak form. All-rounder Marco Jansen, speaking on the eve of the 3rd T20I, said he is confident of their batters finding a way to counter the spin threat. "Playing spin here is a lot different to playing in PE or Durban. Here there is bounce, and they will try and hit a fuller length because of the bounce. So, how we go about that is different to each individual," Jansen said.

**PITCH AND CONDITIONS: CENTURION**

The weather is expected to be clear for the 3rd T20I on Wednesday. The pitch will offer bounce and pace, but the batters will enjoy the ball coming onto the bat.

# Nikki Tamboli

Spotted With Boyfriend Arbaz Patel At Mumbai Airport



Bigg Boss Marathi 5 left a lasting impression on viewers nationwide. But what primarily made the news was the romantic connection between co-contestants Nikki Tamboli and Arbaz Patel. Even after the show ended, the two decided to continue their relationship and are now often spotted together on dinner dates and casual outings. On Tuesday, Nikki and Arbaz were snapped at Mumbai airport, captured by paparazzi in a delightful video.

The clip showed Nikki Tamboli and Arbaz Patel dressed in casual attires. The actress wore a beige co-ords set. Ditching heavy accessories, she complimented her figure-skimming fit with comfy shoes and a brown Louis Vuitton bag. The Bigg Boss Marathi 5 finalist left her hair loose in a side-parting. On the other hand, Arbaz donned a grey sweatshirt and black pants. Before heading inside the airport, the duo posed for the paparazzi.

In an interview with Instant Bollywood, Nikki Tamboli talked about her relationship with Arbaz Patel. While the actress confessed to being "more than friends", she added that she is still unsure about their relationship status. When asked if their relationship is official now, Nikki said, "I won't deny that we are more than friends; we are. But abhi bhi hum ek dusre ko samajh rahe hai, ek dusre ki life ko dekh rahe hai ke bahar kiski zindagi kaisi hai, kaise sab kuch karna hai (we are still getting to know each other and seeing what our lives are like outside and how everything should be managed)."

"It is not official, but I won't deny or accept a few things. For example, yes, I like him, pyaar hai toh hai (if there is love, there is). Ab wo kaisa hai, dosti wala hai, I do not know. I am still understanding him because he is a very nice guy (what kind of love it is, whether it's more like friendship, I don't know yet)," she added. Hosted by actor Riteish Deshmukh, Bigg Boss Marathi 5 premiered on Colors Marathi and JioCinema. Nikki Tamboli secured third position in the show, whereas Suraj Chavan emerged as the winner.



Kartik Aaryan Cheers As Paparazzo Dance To Jana Samjho Na From Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 For Him



Kartik Aaryan is currently basking in the success of Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3. The actor is currently promoting his movie across various cities in India. The actor was spotted at the Mumbai airport while he was flying to Patna, and he interacted with the paparazzi. One of the notable moments was when a paparazzo came forward and danced to the steps of the Jana Samjho Na song from the horror comedy in front of the actor. In a video shared by a paparazzo, Kartik Aaryan interacted with the paparazzi as he made his way inside the airport. As he talked to the paparazzi, one of the cameramen came forward to show him his moves to the Jana Samjho Na song. The paparazzo placed his cameras on the floor and danced for the actor. Aaryan looked at his moves and smiled and cheered for his efforts.

As the movie continued to perform well in theatres, Aaryan took to his social media to thank his fans. The movie became his first film to earn Rs 200 crores at the box office. Taking to his Instagram, he wrote, "Rooh Baba Tomar Forever!! It's 11/11 and dreams do come true, First double century of my career... Your love has brought me this far Thank you for this Bday Gift in advance #Gratitude #BhoolBhulaiyaa3."

The Anees Bazmee directorial was released in cinemas on Diwali, November 1. The movie clashed with Rohit Shetty's Singham Again which starred Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Arjun Kapoor, Akshay Kumar, and Tiger Shroff in key roles. Despite the clash, the movie performed well at the box office and has entered the Rs 200 club. Apart from Aaryan, the movie also stars Triptii Dimri, Rajpal Yadav, Madhuri Dixit, and Vidya Balan in pivotal roles.

Lauren Gottlieb Flaunts Ample Cleavage From Bold Photo Shoot: 'Too Much? I'm Just Getting Started'



Dancer-actor Lauren Gottlieb has set social media platform on fire with her sensual new photos. On Tuesday, she got on Instagram and shared a series of bold photos from a recent photo shoot. In the photos, Lauren was seen flaunting ample cleavage in a plunging neckline dress. The ABCD 2 star was seen wearing a blue dress and striking numerous poses for the camera. Lauren shared the photos with a cheeky caption. "Too much? Please. I'm just getting started! ???," she wrote. The photos raised the temperature and how! Several fans took to the comments section and showered



her with compliments. "Have mercy on me," a fan wrote. "Too much??? Never !!! Keep going!!!" another added. "Most beautiful girl in the world," a comment read.

Lauren Gottlieb no longer works in Bollywood. She moved back to Los Angeles. Last year, she revealed she was battling with depression on Maniesh Paul's podcast. Lauren chose to stay away from the limelight at the peak of her career and when asked why, she said, "I was growing in fame, but the more I was spiraling. I knew it was the biggest risk to let it all go, but I had so much faith in myself that I knew if I work on myself and feel mentally healthy again, I'll come back."

She also made the headlines after she revealed she was engaged. She got engaged to her boyfriend Tobias Jones in August 2023. She hasn't announced the wedding date yet. Apart from ABCD, Lauren has also starred in Ambarasariya, and Welcome 2 Karachi to name a few.

## Ranjani Raghavan's

BMTC Photoshoot Lets Fans Relive Bus Memories



Actress Ranjani Raghavan, known for her roles in Kannada serials and admired for her simple beauty, is active on social media, frequently sharing photos and videos. Recently, she was spotted boarding a BMTC bus. Dressed in a red outfit, Ranjani looked effortlessly beautiful, and fans were thrilled with her look. She struck various poses on the BMTC bus, and her photos have received an outpouring of likes and comments.

She captioned her post with, "The girl who boarded the 276 bus. What's your area bus number?" prompting fans to share their local bus numbers. Some even commented that they found out which area Ranjani lives in, while others humorously noted the bus looked empty. Though the Kannadathi serial on Colors Kannada has ended, fans haven't forgotten its characters. Ranjani, who played the role of Bhumi, continues to stay in touch with her fans through social media. Ranjani Raghavan became popular as a Kannada teacher

from Hasirupete and won people's hearts as Kannadathi. After bidding farewell to the serial Putta Gowri, she even wrote a story and script for another serial. She initially gained popularity through Putta Gowri and furthered her fame with Kannadathi. Now, Ranjani is busy in the Kannada film industry and on television.

Ranjani has recently engaged in acting in films, web series, and writing, including a book titled Kathe Dabbi. She has acted in movies like Rajahamsa, Takkar and Night Curfew and has also appeared in Swapna Mantapa by Baraguru. She made her Tollywood debut with the movie Satyam, also set to release in Kannada. Ranjani introduced her 'life partner', Sagar Bharadwaj, by sharing a mirror selfie with the caption, "Sagar Bharadwaj and Ranjani Raghavan," adding tags like "My Guy," "Life Partner," and "Best Friend Forever." It appears that the actress will be getting married soon.

