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India registers 'strong protest' with Dhaka over remarks by Bangladesh leader

Sanjay Kumar

New Delhi, Dec 20: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday that India lodged a "strong protest" with Dhaka over controversial statements made by a key aide of Bangladesh's interim government, Mahfuz Alam.



bouring country, MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi wants to "remind all concerned to be mindful of their public comments".

"We have registered our strong protest on this issue with the Bangladesh side. We understand that the post being referred to has reportedly been taken down. We would like to remind all concerned to be mindful of their public comments. While India has repeatedly signalled interest in fostering relations with the people and the interim government of Bangladesh, such comments underline the need for responsibility in public articulation."

Maoist menace in Chhattisgarh to end soon: Amit Shah

Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Dec 20: Siliguri: Union home minister Amit Shah said on Friday that while Bihar and Jharkhand have become Naxal-free, the Maoist menace in Chhattisgarh and the Northeast will soon be eliminated.

very important in eastern India. The corridor between the Mahananda and Teesta rivers is a crucial route that connects the Northeast with



the rest of India. The SSB's presence in such a region has provided the entire country with assurance and security." Shah praised the role of the SSB in securing the 2,450 km long Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders.

security along the borders with Nepal and Bhutan, because my SSB jawans are standing guard there." Shah said. The SSB has successfully removed over 1,100 cases of encroachment on no-man's land along the Nepal border, he added.

SP's Sambhal MP fined Rs 1.91 crore, electricity cut off at residence for power theft

ST Correspondent

Lucknow, Dec.20: Electricity Department has imposed a fine of Rs 1.91 crore on Lok Sabha MP from Sambhal Zia Ur Rehman and also disconnected the electricity supply to his residence for alleged power theft at his residence, an official said on Friday.



Sambhal even today. A fine of Rs 1.91 crore has been imposed on the MP by the Electricity department and the power supply to his residence has been disconnected," Sambhal Superintending Engineer Vinod Kumar told.

Delhi HC to hear Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam pleas on Jan 7

New Delhi, Dec.20: The Delhi High Court will on January 7, 2025, hear the bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam and others accused in a UAPA case connected to February 2020 riots.

Kejriwal accuses BJP of calling Purvanchalis as Rohingyas, deleting their votes

Navdeep Singh Sahni

New Delhi, Dec.20: AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Friday accused BJP chief JP Nadda of equating Purvanchalis with Rohingyas and Bangladeshi people, and admitting deletion of their votes in Delhi ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls.

ident JP Nadda openly admitted in Parliament deletion of names of Purvanchalis, Rohingyas and



Bangladeshi. The Purvanchalis are being called Rohingyas. How can those who came from UP and Bihar to Delhi and were settled here for 30-40 years be called as Rohingya or Bangladeshi?" he

asked. Kejriwal said the AAP workers will go door to door across Delhi to tell the Purvanchali people about the BJP's "conspiracy".

Fadnavis announces judicial probes into Parbhani violence, Beed sarpanch murder

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

Mumbai, Dec. 20: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday announced judicial probes into the Parbhani violence and the murder of village head Santosh Deshmukh in Beed district.

ing" anarchy in Beed district would be punished irrespective of their political links. Sharing the details tied to the sarpanch murder, Fadnavis said on December 6, Ashok Ghule, Sudarshan Ghule and Pratik Ghule went to the site of



an energy project site in Beed district and beat up the watchman Amardeep Sonawane and project manager Shivaji Thopte. Deshmukh was informed about the incident as the Ghules are from the

neighbouring village, he said. Fadnavis said that on December 9, Deshmukh's vehicle was intercepted by a black Scorpio and another car at a toll naka. He was pulled out and bundled into the Scorpio, the CM told the House.

the company stop the work. That day, Sudarshan Ghule also came to the office and asked the company official to stop work. Project manager Thopte was subsequently called to Parli, where Karad threatened and asked him to either stop the work or pay Rs 2 crore, Fadnavis said.

Former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala dies

Naresh Malhotra

Gurugram, Dec.20: Indian National Lok Dal president and five-time Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala died here on Friday at the age of 89. Chautala, who was former deputy prime minister Devi Lal's son, suffered a cardiac arrest at his house here and was immediately rushed to a hospital but could not be saved, a party spokesperson told.

said the demise of the INLD supremo is extremely sad. "My humble tribute to him. He served the state and society throughout his life. This is an irreparable loss for the politics of the country and Haryana state," Saini said



on X. Former chief minister and senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda recalled that when Chautala was the chief minister, he was the Leader of Opposition in the Haryana assembly. Chautala served the peo-

ple of the state. There are many good memories with him, he said, adding that he was like his elder brother. Congress leader Randeep Singh Hooda and Kumari Seja also condoled the death of Chautala. Born on January 1, 1935, Om Prakash Chautala was the eldest of the five children of former deputy prime minister Chaudhary Devi Lal. Chautala left studies after primary education. In 2013, when Chautala was lodged in Tihar Jail in connection with the teacher recruitment scam, he passed the class 10 and then class 12 examination at the age of 82.

'We have let the people of India down': Shashi Tharoor

New Delhi, Dec 20: Referring to the showdown between Congress and the BJP over BR Ambedkar, MP Shashi Tharoor stated that the Parliament has failed to fulfil its responsibilities and let the country's peo-

as Parliament was starting. Sadly, most of this time has been wasted in disruption," he told news agency. Ravichandran Ashwin announces retirement! - For more details & latest news, read on here He noted that while constructive work was done in parliamentary committees, constant disruption in parliamentary proceedings had prevented the house from functioning effectively.



ple down. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor speaks to the media at Parliament during the Winter Session "Most of our MPs are disappointed. I think that there are a lot of major issues to be discussed in our country, including unemployment, price rise, Manipur, Sambhal violence broke out just

There was an agreement reached between the government and the opposition in the first week that the opposition could protest outside but inside work would continue. It went on for 2-3 days. But thereafter, we ended up once again with a complete breakdown," the MP said.

Coal bunker at Mettur thermal plant crashes, one dead, five rescued

COIMBATORE. A coal bunker at Mettur Thermal Power Plant in Salem collapsed on Thursday evening, burying a group of workers under more than 500 tonnes of debris and coal. After an hour-long operation, five workers were rescued alive, while one was found dead.

Search operation is under way to locate others who may have been trapped inside. The bunker or storage container had 500 tonnes of coal load, sources said. Though these bunkers can handle a coal load of up to 625 tonnes, their load-handling capacity decreases with time and all these structures are nearly 30 years old, sources said. Superintendent of Police Gautam Goyal told TNIE "Around seven to eight people were caught under the debris. Five of them were rescued alive. One worker P Venkatesh (50) of Mettur was found dead. The search operation is on to rescue others." The coal-fired plant comes under the control of Tangedco. It has four units and each unit produces 210 megawatts (MW) of electricity every day. Coal is crushed in the grinding mill on the ground floor and sent to a 52m high bunker through an 18m feeder. Each unit has five bunkers named from A to E.

On Thursday, around 5 pm, when a group of workers were at the grinding mill, the third bunker (D) collapsed allegedly unable to hold the weight after it was loaded with around 500 tonnes of coal. The collapsing bunker damaged the feeder and fell on the grinding mill where the workers were working. Production was stopped immediately. Police and fire and rescue services teams rushed to the spot. Five workers, M Gowtham (20), A Thiruchendur Murugan (28), C Sreenivasan (44), C Srikanth (24) and P Manoj (27), were rescued and taken to Mettur Government Hospital in ambulances. Manoj was later referred to Government Mohan Kumaramangalam Medical College Hospital in Salem.

Two held for facilitating dumping of Kerala biomedical waste in Nellai

TIRUNELVELI. Two agents, who were allegedly involved in facilitating the dumping of biomedical and other waste from Kerala in Tirunelveli's Kodaganallur, Palavoor and Kondanagaram villages, were arrested by the Suthamalli police on Thursday. The accused were identified as Manohar (51) and Mayandi (42), residents of Suthamalli in Tirunelveli district. Superintendent of Police N Silambarasan confirmed the arrests. "We are tracing the other accused and are planning to bust the entire chain of operations," he said.

Meanwhile, officials and functionaries of various political parties continued to visit the dumping sites in the three villages for the third consecutive day. Leader of Opposition and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami strongly condemned the dumping of Kerala waste in Tamil Nadu. He said Chief Minister MK Stalin is only interested in shaking hands with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and holding photo shoots. "He is a chief minister who is not even brave enough to oppose the dumping of waste from a

neighbouring state in Tamil Nadu," Palaniswami posted on X. NTK leader Seeman also condemned the Kerala government for dumping waste in Tamil Nadu. In a post on X, he stated that this practice continues despite strong opposition from the Madras High Court

strongly condemned the dumping of medical waste from Kerala in the border districts of Tamil Nadu. In his post on X handle, Palaniswami said these waste have been dumped in Kallur, Pazhavur and some other places in Tirunelveli district. "Tamil Nadu is not a dustbin. Since these medical waste will spread communicable diseases, all these should be removed immediately and firm steps should be taken to prevent dumping of medical waste in our state," Palaniswami said.

Minister: TN turned dumpyard during AIADMK rule

Chennai: Minister for Finance and Environment and Climate Change Thangam Thennarasu alleged TN had become a dumpyard for Kerala during the AIADMK regime. He was responding Palaniswami's criticism. The minister said the dumping of waste from Kerala has been greatly avoided through stringent surveillance along the border after the present DMK government came to power in 2021. He added action is being taken on a few unexpected incidents and those committing the crime are being punished as per law. He also blamed Palaniswami for desperately trying to do politics out of any issue.



and the National Green Tribunal. "Kerala is vigilant in protecting its natural resources but dumps its waste in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu farmers send vegetables and other essentials to Kerala. Is it fair for Kerala to send its waste to Tamil Nadu?" he asked.

EPS: Remove waste immediately, TN not a dustbin

Chennai: AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Thursday

Telangana HC hears petition by KTR to quash corruption case

The complaint accuses the petitioner and two government officials of conspiring to cause wrongful loss to the state exchequer and gain for third parties.

HYDERABAD. Justice N.V. Shrivani of the Telangana High Court granted permission to hear a lunch motion petition filed by Kalvakuntla Taraka Rama Rao (KTR), MLA and Working President of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). The petition seeks the quashing of proceedings in Crime No.12/RCO-CIU ACB-2024, registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code. The court scheduled the hearing for after 2:45 PM on Friday. The petitioner, named as Accused No. 1 in the case, is alleged to have been involved in irregularities concerning the conduct of Formula E Races in Hyderabad.



prosecution, the case stems from a complaint by M. Dana Kishore, Principal Secretary of Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD), to the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), alleging procedural violations and financial irregularities.

A tripartite agreement was executed on October 25, 2022, between Formula E Operations Ltd. (a UK-based company), the MA&UD Department of Telangana,

and ACE Nxt Gen Private Limited for conducting Formula E Races from seasons 9 to 12 in Hyderabad. The Telangana government's role was confined to building the race track and providing civic amenities.

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) reportedly incurred ₹12 crore for the inaugural event held on February 11, 2023. However, the subsequent agreement saw HMDA assume the role of promoter and host, with estimated expenditures rising to ₹110 crore for the event and ₹50 crore for ancillary works.

The prosecution alleges that:

1. HMDA transferred payments totaling over ₹54.88 crore to Formula E Operations Ltd. and other entities, without necessary administrative approvals.
2. Foreign remittances were made without regulatory

clearance, resulting in an additional tax burden of ₹8.06 crore.

3. Payments were processed even after the unilateral termination of the tripartite agreement by Formula E Operations Ltd. on October 27, 2023. A new agreement was executed between Formula E Operations and the MA&UD Department during the Model Code of Conduct period, allegedly without the Election Commission's prior approval.

The complaint accuses the petitioner and two government officials of conspiring to cause wrongful loss to the state exchequer and gain for third parties. KTR contends that the allegations are politically motivated and lack merit. The complaint fails to detail any personal pecuniary benefit to the petitioner or substantiate claims of conspiracy with private entities. Moreover, no private party has been named as an accused in the case.

Special court to deal with indiscipline in Syro-Malabar Church over liturgical matters

KOCHI. A special court has been established at Mount St Thomas, the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church, to take action as per ecclesiastical and canonical laws against the indiscipline in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archeparchy over matters of liturgy. The court was established by Major Archbishop Raphael Thattai. According to Canon Law No. 89 for the Eastern Churches, the major archbishop has the right and duty to exercise disciplinary supervision over the clergy. The special court will take disciplinary action in accordance with the law, if orders and warnings are rejected. The uniform method

of Holy Mass came into effect in the Syro-Malabar Church on November 28, 2021. Despite the efforts of the Pope, the Office for the Eastern Churches, the Syro-Malabar synod, the major archbishop, the apostolic administrator, and the pontifical delegate to implement uniform Holy Mass through doctrine and decree, priests have been showing reluctance to comply. "Establishment of the special court became necessary as violations continue to sow division among the faithful and create great disquiet in the public," said Syro-Malabar Church spokesperson Fr Antony Vadakkakkara.

"Such courts should normally function in diocesan centres. However, the apostolic administrator had informed the superiors that it was not possible to open the court at the diocesan office in the current situation. Therefore, at the request of Bishop Bosco Puthur and in accordance with the instructions of the Eastern Office in Rome, the major archbishop has established this special court. The court will have the authority to take action as per the canon law against priests, monks and laity of the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese who commit disciplinary violations," he said.

Snakebite hospitalises two Gurukul students in Jagtial

JAGTIAL. Two Grade-8 students from Peddapur Gurukul residential school in Metpalli mandal were reportedly bitten by snakes within 24 hours. The students were rushed to the government area hospital in Korutla town, where they were administered anti-venom injections. Akhil was bitten on Wednesday night, while another student, Yashwith, was attacked on Thursday morning. Doctors confirmed that both students are safe and out of danger. DMHO K Pramod informed that the victims are under observation and will be discharged on Friday. The incident has sparked fear among the school's students. Concerned parents rushed to the school and staged a protest, demanding the institution be relocated to a safer environment. "Suspending staff is not a



solution. Two students have died earlier, and now two others are undergoing treatment. The district administration must find a permanent solution," said a parent, Srinivas. Another parent, Saritha, stated: "There is no proper medical facility for children in the school. When I heard about the incident, I was panicking over my child's safety." District Collector B Satya

Prasad visited the school on Thursday. He assured parents and students that the government would implement measures to enhance safety. The collector directed authorities to maintain clean and hygienic surroundings, clear bushes regularly, and deploy snake catchers on the premises.

Third such incident

This is the third such incident at Peddapur Gurukul Residential School. On August 9, a Grade 6 student, Anirudh, died after severe stomach pain, while two others, Mokshith and Hemant Yadav, were hospitalised with similar complaints. Earlier, on July 27, a Grade 8 student, Ghana Aditya, died due to suspected epileptic fits. During a subsequent sanitation drive, numerous snakes were discovered on the school premises, raising concerns over safety on the campus.

Two gang-rape 15-year-old girl in Sundargarh district, another makes failed bid

ROURKELA. A 15-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by two youths while a third man in his 50s, taking advantage of her precarious situation, unsuccessfully attempted to assault her sexually in Bisra police limits of Sundargarh district. The incident came to light on Thursday after Uditnagar police arrested the three who were known to each other. The two main accused are in the age group of 25 to 30 years while the third is a 55-year-old fish vendor. The victim, who belongs of Uditnagar police limits of Rourkela, had left home on Tuesday over some

family dispute. While she was waiting at Rourkela railway station the same evening, one of the accused befriended her and on the pretext of offering help, took her to Bisra where the crime was committed, police said. She was kept at the house of the fish vendor who on Thursday afternoon dropped her at Rourkela possibly fearing police action. Rourkela SP Nitesh Wadhvani said the girl had left home on Tuesday but her family lodged a missing person complaint on Wednesday night since she had, on a previous occasion too, taken off without informing the parents.

Uditnagar police began the search from the railway station and collected clues about her whereabouts. However, the fish vendor on Thursday afternoon dropped her at Rourkela. As soon as police got wind of her return, it arrested one culprit from Rourkela and the other two from Bisra while they were preparing to escape, Wadhvani said. As per preliminary investigation, one of the accused who befriended the victim at the railway station took the girl to the house of the fish vendor at Bisra where the second youth joined him.

1.4L suspicious plots registered for paddy sale: Satellite survey

CUTTACK. The satellite survey conducted by Odisha Space Application Centre (ORSAC) has detected 1,44,734 suspicious plots registered by farmers for selling kharif paddy at minimum support price (MSP) in Cuttack district. After detection of such plots, the Cooperation department has initiated steps for their physical verification. "We have received the report of satellite survey conducted by ORSAC a few days back. It has detected 1,44,734 suspicious plots. They, however, cannot be termed as fake unless verified physically to ascertain their genuineness," said deputy registrar of cooperative societies (DRCS), Cuttack, Supriya Swain. As many as 393 surveyors



have been engaged for physical verification of the plots in 1,850 revenue villages under 15 tehsils of Cuttack district. The field visits have already started, said Swain.

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Supreme Court stays Kerala HC's norms on parading of elephants for Temple festivals

KOCHI. The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the guidelines issued by Kerala High Court on parading of elephants at festivals, bringing relief to the devaswoms of Thiruvambady and Paramakkavu, the major participants of Thrissur Pooram. A division bench of the Kerala High Court had imposed strict restrictions on elephant parade, directing that a 3-metre distance be maintained between elephants, and 8 metres between elephants and percussion ensemble at festivals. A Supreme Court bench comprising Justice B V Nagarathna and Justice N K Singh observed that the restrictions imposed by the High Court, contrary to the Kerala Captive Elephants (Management and Maintenance) Rules, 2012, were impractical. The bench noted that the High Court should not have exercised suo motu powers in the case.

Verdict will ensure smooth conduct of festivals: Paramakkavu devaswom secy

The High Court bench of Justice A K Jayashankaran Nambiar and Justice Gopinath P had in the November 13 judgment observed that the use of elephants in festivals was not an essential religious practice. The devaswoms approached the Supreme Court pointing out that the restrictions will bring the conduct of Thrissur Pooram to a grinding halt. "We welcome the order of the Supreme Court which will ensure smooth conduct of the temple festivals. The court has accepted our argument that the restrictions are impractical. We will conduct the elephant parade adhering to the Captive Elephant Rules, 2012," said Paramakkavu Devaswom secretary G Rajesh Poduval. V K Venkitchalam, secretary of Heritage Animal Task Force secretary, said: "The SC has directed to conduct festivals adhering to the Kerala Captive Elephants Rules, 2012. As per the rule, the an elephant cannot be paraded during day and night on the same day.

Accidents on the rise, but MVD lenient on 'fitness' of school buses in Kerala

KOCHI. The recent fatal accidents that shook Kerala have sparked calls for stringent measures to reduce the number of mishaps. However, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) has gone more lenient, allowing educational institution buses (EIB) whose fitness certificates have expired or about to expire soon, to continue plying for another four to five months. So far, the practice was to withdraw the vehicles from service and carry out repair and maintenance works before subjecting them for fitness tests as and when their validity ended, even if it meant the vehicle couldn't be operated for two to three weeks during the academic year. The lone exemption was provided during the pandemic. Now, as per the written directive issued to all deputy transport commissioners, regional and joint regional transport officers, the validity of the fitness certificate of all EIBs, whose fitness expired or is about to expire in the coming months, has been extended till April 2025. "It's directed that fitness tests of such vehicles need to be conducted only in the month of April, May 2025. The same is aimed at avoiding subjecting the vehicles to fitness tests by the institutions multiple times in a single academic year," read the December 18 directive issued from the office of the transport commissioner. The decision was taken after the Kerala Private School



Management submitted a memorandum, saying that schools had reopened after being closed for a long period during Covid in December 2021, and the same led to a situation where many schools are forced to submit school buses multiple times for fitness tests in an academic year as the validity period of some buses ends midway. "The (latest) move will result in EIBs plying without carrying out timely maintenance activities. This increases the risk of mishaps, especially like moving vehicles catching fire. Also, will insurance companies approve claims if such vehicles meet with accidents? Such leniency at a time when accidents are rising will send a wrong message," said a former senior MVD official on the condition of anonymity. For instance, on November 14,

the wheels of a school bus got detached due to loose nuts amid operations at Pattanakkad in Cherthala, he said, adding the same will result in a loss to the state exchequer, with vehicles skipping tests based on the year of registration. Meanwhile, MVD sources said the usual practice was that such vehicles are subjected to fitness tests at the start of the academic season itself without waiting for the expiry of the fitness validity period. "If the fitness validity of a school bus is till August, the management can submit the bus for fitness certificate in April-May itself, ensuring its operation can be availed without interruptions throughout the academic year. This 'reduction' of validity period in fact ensures the vehicle is in top condition. Now, many vehicles would be plying without carrying out the periodic maintenance tests," said a source. In Kerala, over 23,000 vehicles are being operated by schools. Of these, around 9,000 are owned by CBSE schools while the rest belong to aided, unaided schools and colleges. A huge number of vehicles are operated by private parties. The development comes even as the Ernakulam Regional Transport Office (RTO), the first in Kerala to register one million vehicles, lacks a dedicated Vehicle Testing Centre despite the rise in the number of fitness test inspections over the years.

IIMB director, dean, six faculty members found guilty of minority rights violation

BENGALURU. The director, dean, and six other faculty members of the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) have been accused of violating the constitutional rights of minority students and staff, with serious allegations of caste-based discrimination and harassment. These charges stem from a report, submitted to the principal secretary of the Social Welfare Department of Karnataka on November 26, by the Directorate of Civil Rights Enforcement (DCRE), which confirms that caste atrocities were committed by IIMB's leadership, including director Dr Rishikesh T Krishnan and dean Dr Dinesh Kumar. On December 9, the department instructed City Police Commissioner to register an FIR against the accused. However, action is yet to be taken. The probe was triggered by a complaint from Gopal Das, associate professor of Marketing, who joined IIMB in 2018. It is said that although Das belongs to the Dalit community, he never sought reservation benefits and applied for the post based on his qualifications and merit alone. Recognised as one of the top 2% professors worldwide by Stanford University for five consecutive years, Das has been vocal about addressing caste-based discrimination within the institution. As per the DCRE's report, the issue is beyond Das and it accuses Krishnan and Kumar of publicising Das' caste identity through mass emails, which contributed to creating a discriminatory and hostile work environment. The DCRE also noted that IIMB failed to establish a grievance redressal mechanism for SCs/STs members, as mandated by law. The issue came to light after Das' promotion was put on hold due to harassment complaints made by doctoral students. IIMB initiated an inquiry into the matter, which included a committee member from the SC category. The inquiry confirmed that the students' complaints were valid.

Annual bird census will be a single-day affair on January 18 in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR. The Wildlife Wing of the Forest, Environment and Climate Change department has decided to conduct the annual bird census across the state on a single day on January 18, 2025. The survey this year will also include satellite tagging of certain migratory bird species, flamingos in particular. PCCF (wildlife) and chief wildlife warden Prem Kumar Jha informed TNIE that the annual bird census used to be a two day affair but will be held on a single day this time. "Technically, it is more precise as birds keep migrating from one place to another and a census for two days may result in double counting in some places leading to errors in the enumeration exercise," Jha said. Accordingly, he said, the census will be carried out on January 18 covering Chilika, Bhitarkanika, Hirakud and other wetlands. Preparations for the exercise will begin from December 16. The PCCF



(wildlife) said students will also be given exposure about the census a day prior to the counting exercise. He said this year's exercise will also include satellite tagging of migratory bird species, especially flamingo, to know more about the migration pattern and distance covered by the species to reach Odisha during winter. "Scientists of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) will be involved in the research project. The WII will also supply us satellite tagging rings to monitor and understand the flight path of the birds," Jha said. He said the Wildlife Wing has also scaled up protection measures for the congregation of migratory birds in Chilika and other places. "A total 21 anti-poaching camps have been set up around Chilika lagoon and each camp is being manned by at least two to three persons," he said. In the last census held in January 2024, Chilika lake had recorded a congregation of 11.37 lakh birds.

Risky disposal of biomedical waste by Adilabad sanitation workers

ADILABAD. Irregularities in the collection and disposal of biomedical waste — needles, syringes, saline bottles, pipes, parts of human bodies and foetuses — have been observed in the erstwhile Adilabad district. Sources pointed out that such waste is often improperly dumped and collected by municipal sanitary workers, posing risks to their health, apart from being harmful to the environment and the health of people living in the vicinity. Biomedical waste from government and private hospitals is supposed to be systematically collected and incinerated at temperatures ranging from 800°C to 1,200°C. Government hospitals in Nirmal, Mancherial, Bhainsa, Utnoor, Bellampally, Khanapur and Asifabad, along with the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Adilabad and other private hospitals, are expected to adhere to these protocols. The sources said the Nizamabad Pollution Control Board granted a contract to a single contractor nearly 40 years ago to collect biomedical waste from hospitals in the district and transport it

to Nizamabad for incineration. This process involves distances of up to 238 km from Asifabad and 158 km from Adilabad to Nizamabad. The increasing number of hospitals has raised the volume of biomedical waste. However, municipal staff, lacking proper awareness and training, often collect and dump the waste improperly, leading to environmental pollution and the spread of diseases, the sources said, adding that contractors have also been accused by locals of exploiting the system by irregularly claiming bills and failing to ensure proper transportation and disposal. **Demand for new PCB offices** Given the increase in hospitals and medical facilities, there is a pressing need to expand biomedical waste management units and establish PCB offices in the newly formed districts. Despite holding key positions, former environment ministers, A Indrakaran Reddy and Jogu Ramanna, were unable to establish such offices in the district. Entrepreneurs interested in setting up new biomedical waste units

have alleged a lack of cooperation from authorities, who continue to favour existing contractors instead of encouraging new initiatives that could create employment opportunities, said sources. They suggest that to address these challenges, the government must establish new biomedical waste management units in each district to reduce transportation distances and ensure timely disposal. It must also increase monitoring by the PCB to ensure adherence to waste disposal protocols, promote entrepreneurship, improve infrastructure, conduct awareness and training programmes for municipal workers to ensure proper waste handling. Municipal Sanitary Inspector D Narendra told that municipal workers do not handle biomedical waste, as it is transported to Nizamabad in a dedicated vehicle. Meanwhile, Environmental Engineer G Laxman Prasad noted that the CPCB allocated the responsibility of biomedical waste management to a Nizamabad-based contractor, covering a 150 km radius.

Bees invade school function, leave 30 students injured in Kendrapara

KENDRAPARA. The annual function of a government high school in Derabishi block here was scrapped midway after a swarm of bees invaded the venue and attacked students on Thursday. At least 30 students suffered multiple stings in the incident which took place during the annual function of Ramachandra Nodal high school at Fakirabad village. An injured student Sarat Das (13) said the function was underway at the school playground when honeybees from a nearby tree laid siege to the venue and started stinging those present there. Some students and teachers ran for their lives, hid in the school classrooms and closed the doors. However, the bees followed them and continued their attack. A teacher of the school said all the injured students were rushed to Derabishi community health centre for medical care. The annual function was cancelled temporarily after the incident. A local said the beehive fell from a tree near the school playground all of a sudden triggering the attack. The unsuspecting students were caught off-guard. "We suspect someone disturbed the bees by throwing stones at the hive," he added. Derabishi IIC Kishor Tarei said the condition of all the injured students is stable. Later in the day, block education officer Srikant Behera reached the school to take stock of the situation.



CM makes urgent decisions, Cabinet nod comes after: Somesh Kumar to Kaleshwaram panel

HYDERABAD. Justice PC Ghose, who heads the Commission of Inquiry into the Kaleshwaram project, expressed displeasure with former Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar for his delay in appearing before the panel on Thursday. After questioning IAS officer and then CMO secretary Smita Sabharwal, Justice Ghose waited for some time for Somesh Kumar's arrival. When the former CS did not show up, Ghose announced he would take a break and that Somesh Kumar would have to wait until the evening. However, as Ghose was leaving the room, Somesh Kumar entered. The panel chairman remarked, "You are too late." Somesh Kumar responded that he was available, but Justice Ghose took a break and returned later to question him. During the proceedings, Justice Ghose commented the blue sapphire worn by Somesh Kumar, asking whether it would protect



him. Somesh Kumar, in turn, asked if Justice Ghose was an astrologer. In a lighter vein, Ghose replied that he was not an astrologer but a "foreteller" who could predict the future by studying someone's forehead. Ghose also made sarcastic remarks towards Somesh Kumar, saying, "You were the Chief Secretary and head of all the departments. You cannot say that you were just a secretary to the Cabinet." The panel chairman asked whether Somesh Kumar had ever issued a dissent note regarding the three

barrages of the Kaleshwaram project. Somesh replied in the negative. Referring to records, Justice Ghose suggested that the construction of the three barrages had been approved without the Cabinet's consent. Somesh Kumar and Smita Sabharwal explained that due to the urgency of the work, any file approved by the Chief Minister would subsequently be placed before the Cabinet for ratification. When asked, Sabharwal clarified that files placed before the Cabinet would not have come to the CMO if they had been approved at the ministerial level. She added that her role was limited to general coordination with line departments and did not involve any technical or advisory responsibilities. She further stated that no deviations or concerns had been flagged by either the Finance Department or the Chief Secretary's office regarding the Kaleshwaram files.

Narasan lake encroached and sold as housing plots, allege Harur residents of Tamil Nadu

DHARMAPURI. Residents of Ambedkar Nagar in Harur staged a road roko urging the district administration to take steps to remove encroachments from Narasan lake located in the area. The lake bunds have been destroyed and are being sold as housing plots. On Thursday, about a hundred residents from Ambedkar Nagar, located along Harur—Tiruvannamalai road, gathered on the road with their livestock, children, and vehicles and staged a road roko, condemning the encroachments on Narasan lake. Speaking to , K Sundar, a villager, said, "Narasan lake is a 17-acre waterbody, crucial for groundwater recharge, feeding livestock, and farming. Over the years, the lake's water spread area has been dwindling, and merely 7 acres of the lake remain presently. If left unattended, the lake would soon cease to exist." Another resident R Suresh said, "The lake has been converted into housing plots. The bunds of the lake were destroyed and land is being sold. We urge the administration to look into this issue seriously and help recover our lake," he said. Officials in the revenue department in Harur said, "Tahsildar Radhakrishnan, DSP Karikal Pari Sankar and Harur DRO, Chinnusami held talks with the protestors and assured a detailed inquiry into the matter. They promised that if any violation is identified following this, severe action will be taken."

Officials allay farmers' fears on bypass road project in Coimbatore

COIMBATORE. A consultative meeting was held by Highways and Revenue Department officials with farmers, regarding the implementation of the Western Bypass project. Officials assured them to review the plan after farmers from Madukkarai and Perur taluks alleged that water channels and existing rural roads would be disconnected after works on the bypass commenced. The meeting was chaired by Gnanu Moorthi, divisional engineer (Western Bypass) and S Ramkumar, revenue divisional officer (Coimbatore

South). Farmers affiliated with the 'Coordination Committee for Victims under Western Bypass' had submitted a complaint with the district collector on December 16. They pointed out that the Western bypass project from Mylkal on Madukkarai Road to Narasimhanaickenpalayam on Mettupalayam Road for a distance of 32.5 km implemented by the state highways department, cuts through existing rural roads and water channels. The road from Theethipalayam village to Ayyaswamy

temple, a 3-km stretch constructed by NABARD bank and a village link road between Om Shakti Temple and Kuppapur road, a 1.5-km stretch, at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore, are being destroyed under the project. They urged officials to construct a flyover on the road from Theethipalayam to the Kallukadai section and from Chellappanpudur to Kuppapur. They also demanded a small bridge across Pallavari near Theethipalayam Chips Company and a water channel near the Om Shakti temple. On hearing the matter, Gnanu

Moorthi assured that the highways and revenue officials will make a field visit to examine flaws pointed out by farmers. He added that the official team will change the method of implementation if necessary. Meanwhile, a coordination committee led by Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam S Palanisamy met V Senthil Balaji, minister in charge for Coimbatore, on Thursday. They urged him to increase fund allotment for the project to construct more bridges and extend service roads.



Why the making of Constitution matters

THE deliberations in the two-day debate on 75 years of the Constitution in Parliament saw the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) highlighting their own commitment to the constitutional vision, but equally keen on pointing to lapses committed by the rival side.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi singled out the Congress for a no-holds-barred attack. He blamed the Nehru-Gandhi family for the subversion of the Constitution. He cited, for example, the Congress party's hand in suppressing the constitutional rights through the imposition of the Emergency and the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in the first amendment to the Constitution. Rahul Gandhi framed his intervention in terms of a conflict between the competing ideologies of civic nationalism and Hindutva, distinguishing the upholders of the Constitution from the supporters of Manusmriti — a text whose tenets challenge the basic premises of India's foundational doctrine.

The BJP relentlessly criticised the Congress as the principal offender when it comes to transgressions of the Constitution. However, the BJP overlooked that in some instances, it has surpassed the Congress in these transgressions. The debate was noteworthy in another respect, with doubts being raised about the Congress' preeminent role in Constitution-making. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, while initiating the debate in the Lok Sabha, said attempts had been made to project the Constitution as a contribution of a particular party in the last few years. "Today, I want to make it clear that our Constitution is not the gift of a single party. It might be interesting to ask why this unhistorical reconstruction is being made. It's certainly not the 'gift of one party'. But, having been largely absent from the freedom struggle and the Constituent Assembly, we can, perhaps, sympathise with the impulse of the BJP to downsize the Congress' role and insert its own ideas in the proceedings from which it was basically absent. But this is not just about downplaying the Congress' role in drafting the Constitution. It demonstrates more stark attempts to further mainstream the BJP's discursive and political agenda of rewriting the national script to reinterpret events in consonance with the needs of contemporary Hindu nationalist politics. The BJP is unmistakably leveraging its power at the Centre for a calculated reconstruction of modern history. There is no shortage of historical analyses of the origins of the Constitution and, yet, repeated attempts are being made to misrepresent and misinterpret its history. One has to see the Constitution as the product of a collective deliberation that stretched over three years — more than 7,500 amendments were tabled and 2,500 moved and a document of almost 400 articles emerged, one of the longest of its kind. Its drafters were chosen by indirect elections. But it was Indians who drafted it. No colonial theory and practice was involved in shaping the Constitution. Our own versions of democracy, secularism and federalism driven by principles of equality, justice and fraternity underlined it. This vision of a new India of "equal citizens" was articulated in the Karachi Congress Resolution of 1931. It went on to become the core of the Congress campaign in the 1937 elections and later, formed the core of the Constitution. Contrary to the Defence Minister's claim that the Congress was not the only party which drafted the Constitution, the fact is that the vast majority of the Constituent Assembly's members were elected on a Congress ticket, leading to charges that the Assembly was entirely dominated by the Congress. Granville Austin, in his monumental study of The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation, notes that the "Constituent Assembly was a one-party body in an essentially one-party country...." Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar was appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee and he, undoubtedly, played an important role in drafting the Constitution. But the Drafting Committee was not entirely a free agency. The draft of the Constitution was discussed as per the views and recommendations of various subject committees and the draft itself was discussed.

Look beyond simultaneous polls

A democracy needs much more than the efficient conduct of elections

THE relationship between the electorate and the elected representatives is that of demand and supply. In a democracy, the latter work towards fulfilling the former's aspirations. The ruling party tries to keep its poll promises, sometimes working to fulfil its own vision of what it thinks is good for the people and the country. One Nation, One Election (ONOE) may be a part of the BJP's election manifesto, but surely it wasn't demanded by any section of society, even though some people felt that India suffered from "too much democracy". That the ruling party was convinced about the merits of ONOE was evident from the repeated assertions of its leadership and the way in which the terms of the Ram Nath Kovind committee were drafted. Its recommendations were a foregone conclusion, but the speed with which the government acted on it has surprised many. Having been elected with a truncated mandate, few expected the NDA government to vigorously pursue this matter, especially since its implementation is far away.

The 'farsightedness' of the government in wanting to legislate on something to be implemented a decade from now is intriguing. Similar alacrity was exhibited in passing the Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, labelled "a post-dated cheque") before the 2024 General Election. The difference is complete unanimity in passing the women's Bill but a total divergence in opinion about the desirability of the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill that pertains to ONOE.

The government won't mind referring the Bill to a joint parliamentary committee as this would satisfy the Opposition and reflect its own open-mindedness. The passage of the Bill in a hurry might not be the objective; bringing it on the table and opening up the possibility of a consensus would serve the purpose as everyone would feel they are deliberating a 'grand' electoral reform. But is it so?

Simultaneous polls were held for 15 years after 1951 without an express provision to this effect in the Constitution. The chain was broken due to the vicissitudes and dynamics of power politics. The right to vote in favour or against a government is an essential ingredient of a democracy. While the Bill doesn't take away the right of withdrawing support to a ruling party, it offers the voters the right to elect a government for a curtailed period in order to complete the "unexpired term" of the government that is voted out. Thus, an outgoing elected regime would pave the way for an incoming elected substitute for a limited period.

The voter will be electing the playing eleven once

every five years to fulfil the fetish of simultaneous elections and elect 'extras' or a 'nightwatchman' to replace an injured main player (government). The current system applicable to electing members of Parliament or legislative assemblies in a bye-election will now apply to the entire House in the event of mid-term polls. Parliamentarians may consider whether this twisting of the people's right would diminish the character of our democracy. What would be achieved by creating this duality? Is simultaneity such a sacred objective or a fundamental principle that issues affecting democratic choice should be thus subordinated to



managerial efficiency? The wisdom of the lawmakers is on trial. After all, the framers of the Constitution didn't provide for simultaneous elections and left it to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to act within the constitutional framework to deal with the exigencies of any situation. Nobody can dispute the benefits of a short, swift, single predictable exercise, especially when it involves a billion people. While holding elections is a routine democratic exercise, it is not like the UPSC conducting civil services exams once a year as per a fixed schedule. Administrative efficiency is desirable and there are ways in which the conduct of elections could be less time-consuming and involving less manpower. The excessive dependence on paramilitary forces, cited as a bottleneck forcing the ECI to conduct prolonged multi-phased elections, is due to the volatile nature of our politics and the vitriolic campaigning. The extant laws do empower the ECI to hold elections six months prior to the expiry of the term of any House, giving it a certain flexibility in scheduling and bunching elections for efficient management. However, recent examples show that the ECI has opted to stagger elections that could have been

easily combined. Clearly, expediency is more persuasive than a hidebound adherence to the principle of simultaneity.

Whether this so-called reform passes muster in Parliament or not, it is time the government and political parties took up more substantive electoral reforms pertaining to the issues of cash, crime, caste, community, the integrity of the electoral process, disqualification of candidates and capping the poll expenditure that have been suggested by the ECI and are languishing for long. Simultaneous elections are intended to reduce government expenditure in conducting elections, but what about controlling the use of black money in polls, and finding transparent ways for political funding? The Bill doesn't target these through the so-called reforms.

Let it be known that the Model Code of Conduct prohibits only a certain category of public expenditure with a view to denying the ruling party an unfair advantage by spending public resources. One wonders why ruling parties should wait till before the elections for taking major policy decisions and dub them as "disruptors of governance".

Further, elections in any state concern the voters and political leaders of that state, neither affecting the voters of other states nor the Central Government unless the party leadership is obsessed with campaigning everywhere, not letting the local leadership manage state-level campaigns. Would simultaneous elections further diminish the focus on elected local bodies and turn them into nondescript representatives of their central leadership rather than effective representatives of local voters?

The efficient conduct of elections is definitely a source of satisfaction, but a democracy needs much more. As parliamentarians spend their precious time making the conduct of elections more efficient in the distant future, they would do well to devote time to the issues affecting the people here and now. The hazardous air quality in the Capital, especially outside Parliament, the depletion of groundwater, the pollution of our rivers, the pathetic conditions of our educational institutions and public health facilities, and the environmental degradation facing the country are more immediate and pressing issues of governance and deserve their attention as much as the matter of simultaneous polls.

The citizens of India may not be exhausted by exercising their voting right frequently, but they might be exhausted waiting for their aspirations of a decent living to be fulfilled.

Terror alert in Punjab

Police force can't afford to let its guard down

TERROR groups working in tandem with gangsters, mostly based abroad, are keeping Punjab Police personnel on their toes. These are dangerous portents for a state that remained in the throes of militancy for a decade and is yet to fully recover from that prolonged nightmare. The targeting of police stations or posts in Majha, which is vulnerable to cross-border smuggling of guns, explosives and drugs, is a brazen attempt to dent the morale of law enforcement agencies and fuel tensions in the state. According to the police top brass, this is the handiwork of pro-Khalistan groups backed by the usual suspect — Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence. Handlers based in Germany and other Western countries are also in the thick of things, going by the recent arrest of three members of the Khalistan Zindabad Force terror module and the busting of an inter-



state gun racket. Two decades after rooting out militancy from the state, the Punjab Police had been jolted out of complacency in July 2015 when terrorists from Pakistan

stormed Dinanagar police station in Gurdaspur district. Barely five months later, the Pathankot airbase was attacked. The two incidents taught the police a harsh lesson — there is no room for laxity when anti-India elements are hell-bent on creating trouble. The latest surge in terror activities is another wake-up call — it should spur the state's cops to be more vigilant and work in closer coordination with Central organisations such as the Border Security Force and the National Investigation Agency.

The recent attempt on the life of former Deputy CM Sukhbir Singh Badal outside the Golden Temple is a stark reminder that violent extremism is not yet dead and buried in Punjab. The embers of radicalism are still glowing, with efforts afoot to resurrect the bogie of Khalistan. The onus is on the police to enforce the rule of law and reassure the people about their safety and security.

Buddha Nullah a toxic story of industrialisation

For restoring Buddha Nullah, strict regulations to enforce industrial compliance with environmental standards, robust monitoring of industrial discharge and heavy penalties for non-compliance are crucial.

Buddha nullah, once a pristine tributary of the Sutlej river, has endured a slow and painful decline for over 50 years. Flowing through Ludhiana, Punjab's industrial heartland, it is now an infamous toxic drain. It carries untreated industrial waste, urban sewage and agricultural runoff. The drain symbolises the environmental costs of industrialisation and urban expansion, coupled with human negligence.

Yet, despite the grim reality, a glimmer of hope persists. Restoration efforts, though challenging, offer the promise of renewal and resilience, provided they are supported by bureaucratic efficiency, political will and community participation. In its prime, Buddha Nullah was a lifeline for the region. Its clear waters nourished aquatic ecosystems, supported agriculture and contributed to the livelihoods of local farmers and businesses. However, it began declining as Ludhiana saw rapid industrialisation. Factories proliferated along the waterway, discharging untreated effluents. Domestic sewage, agricultural runoff and unchecked growth of dairies along its banks compounded the pollution. The effluents overwhelmed the nullah's natural ability to purify itself. Over time, it could no longer support the communities that once thrived along its banks.

Buddha Nullah's deterioration to a toxic drain has impacted the quality of life of the locals. Children contend with harmful fumes, exacerbating respiratory issues. Adults face chronic illnesses like skin diseases and gastrointestinal disorders directly linked to the polluted water. Fishing communities have abandoned their trade as aquatic life has vanished. The toxic water has not only deprived these communities of their livelihoods but also poses a broader public health crisis. Statistics paint a troubling picture. The health authorities have reported that respiratory diseases are 40 per cent more prevalent in areas near the nullah as compared to the unaffected regions. A 2022 study by Punjab

Agricultural University revealed alarmingly high levels of heavy metals like lead and chromium in the water, far exceeding the safe limits. These pollutants have seeped into the groundwater, further compromising public health. The polluted waters also contaminate the Sutlej river and Harike reservoir downstream. Being the vital sources of water for both Punjab and Rajasthan, the issue has strained inter-state water relations. Efforts to restore the nullah have been sporadic and riddled with challenges. Early attempts in the 1980s focused on awareness and monitoring industrial waste, but they lacked enforcement mechanisms. In the 1990s, industries were mandated to install effluent treatment plants (ETPs), but compliance was inconsistent, with many ETPs remaining dysfunctional. Bioremediation was also attempted, but success remained elusive.

Recent initiatives, such as the Buddha Nullah Rejuvenation Project and installation of sewage treatment plants (STPs) during 2018-2022, have been undermined by funding delays, poor enforcement and resistance to the removal of encroachments. The lack of coordination between government bodies and civil society organisations has further hindered progress, leaving the pollution and its impacts largely uncontained. The judicial interventions sought by environmentalists have been limited to ad hoc measures for a persistent problem. Deeper thought and innovative solutions for a durable impact are needed. Achieving meaningful progress requires a combination of policy reforms, technological innovation and active community engagement. The following strategies can help improve the situation. Stricter regulations are essential to enforce industrial compliance with environmental standards. Robust monitoring of industrial discharge and heavy penalties for non-compliance are crucial. A dedicated task force should oversee the implementation of these

regulations, holding the polluting industries accountable.

Relocating the most harmful industries to designated zones, supported by incentives, could mitigate environmental risks. Such incentives should be comparable with those offered to the new industries and those which move to safer places may also be allowed to



make commercial capital out of their present premises. Comprehensive policy reforms must prioritise the tributary's health with clear goals and timelines while ensuring that livelihoods are protected.

Expanding and updating treatment infrastructure is critical. Increasing the number of STPs and common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) will reduce the influx of untreated waste into the nullah. Real-time monitoring can ensure industrial effluents are treated before discharge. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping can identify pollution hotspots, allowing targeted interventions. Community

engagement is also vital for successful restoration efforts. Educating residents about waste segregation and proper disposal methods can reduce domestic garbage dumping into the nullah. Cleanliness campaigns involving local participation can remove pollutants and foster a collective sense of responsibility. Grassroots initiatives can transform public attitudes and promote environmentally responsible behaviour. It will

be in the interest of the industry to actively associate itself in such endeavours. A clean environment in Ludhiana may attract more industrial consumers. International examples offer valuable lessons. The Thames river in the UK, once known as "The Great Stink", was revitalised through sustained political will, heavy investment and implementation of strict environmental laws. The Rhine in Europe underwent a transformation due to coordinated global efforts. Similarly, the Ganga Action Plan has demonstrated the effectiveness of community involvement and public-private partnership. These examples demonstrate that with a committed, multifaceted approach, Buddha Nullah can also be restored. Restoring it is not merely an environmental endeavour; it is a chance to create a legacy of resilience and collective action. A revitalised tributary can once again sustain vibrant aquatic ecosystems and provide clean water for the local communities.

The future of Buddha Nullah, thus, lies in the hands of the government, industries and local communities. Together, they can restore it to its former glory. Even the most polluted waterways can be revived with determination and collaboration. Punjab and Punjabis can do it for sure.

17 ways to do up Your Living Room

Interior expert Raseel Gujral lists simple fun ways to do up your living room.

Personality

I want to walk into a space that makes me sigh! The living room should be designed in such a way that it speaks to you with volume and personality.

Unusual pairing

The rush of being surprised by unexpected beauty. For example a beautiful antique in an otherwise contemporary living room setting is something unexpected.

Art talks

Nothing can replace the timeless appeal of original art. Exquisite pieces of art can hold an entire space together. Touch of unapologetic glamour Glamour needs no justification. Every living room should have a hint of glamour — need not be loud, just a



touch of Venetian glass can change the look of a room!

Colour

Colour is oxygen — it makes you breathe. Each colour makes you feel different — it lights up your life!

Transform the mundane The layering of materials can transform the simple to the sublime. An intricately worked on carpet in an empty space can transform the otherwise mundane area to something interesting. A simple sofa with exotic cushions can change the look of your living room.

Sense of origin Never lose it. When you fill your room with furniture it should not shout but should have gentl flavours.

Conversation pieces Key pieces should anchor a space, not let it float away. You may have a small room and fill it with a hundred small pieces. Visually it's unappealing and your pieces do not get noticed either. Have one large painting or one large sculpture in the room instead.

Let your experiences and travels talk There is no substitute to personal style. Your living room should reflect it in the things that you pick on your travels! Find your own inspiration Fashion, art, life — everything is a stimulus. One is inspired by books, clothes, fashion shows etc. This inspiration should be brought in to your rooms.

Dare to differ

There is nothing more boring than the black dress syndrome. Do not follow the herd. Do up your house differently.

Paint a wall in a deep mahogany! Minimalism

Today to be minimal means leaching every bit of personality. Minimalism is in! Do not do anything over the top. Your room should be simple and sophisticated. Minimalist interiors don't necessarily mean everything is stripped down. It means everything serves a specific function.

Lift your spirits Details. Ones that make you fall in love over and over. Fill your room with little things that give you joy. It can be a simple photo frame, a beautiful



vase, anything that lifts your spirit!

Surprise yourself

The compulsion to constantly surprise yourself. The furniture you place in the living room should have a story, so every time you walk in, it should surprise you.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever Buying objects of beauty — is beginning a love affair, every time. The joy of finding something new and bringing it home — like picking up a lamp in an antique market.

Change is good

The drama of everyday life. Keep changing the look of your home. Paint a sculpture an electric red this will add drama!

Lighting The play of light and shadow — in pattern and history. Place your pieces in such a way that the light and shadow will form designs in your room.

Take care of your marble flooring

Here are ways to retain the regal air of your marble decora



Using marble for home interiors presents a marvelous panoramic view to home. If you have spent a good amount of money on installing marble as flooring or for decorative structures at home, you need to take special care to maintain the beauty of this stone. There are some precautions you need to take when working with marble:

-Liquid or food containing acid when spilled on marble floors could cause it to etch, or leave a dull mark on its surfaces. The dull mark or stain may either be as large as a coin size or could spread over several tiles. So, if you manage to drop any fruit juices,

carbonated beverages, wine and even tea on the marble surface, gently rub the marble with the a clean cloth dipped in a solution of hydrogen peroxide mixed with a few drops of ammonia until it retains its shine.-Another terrible source of etch marks and stains are cleaning detergents which contain acid. Never use vinegar or any other acidic products to clean marble floors. Marble is delicate and should only be cleaned with PH natural, gentle cleaners. It is advisable not to use locally available cheap quality cleaner which may result permanent loss of shining.-Marble floor tiles are porous and can easily be discolored by spills from food, sitting pots, metal furniture legs, oil, ink, water damage, etc. Cooking oils or any other type of greasy products can stain marble like floor. Hence, you should clean it up immediately with some soap and water.-Regular cleaning of a marble surface and dusting of marble furniture helps to retain its natural shine for a long time. The best way is to use a terry cloth to wipe up any dirt. Instead of using hot water, it is advisable to wet the marble top with lukewarm water. You don't require scrubbing marble surface unless there are some hard materials present on it. After cleaning the surface with cleaners, you could apply smooth polishing for making the marble glittering and shining.



If you have always been stumped about detangling your necklaces and having all your earrings and bangles in one place, this is for you. Instead of stowing costume jewellery in wooden boxes, why not display them in an attractive manner that will also add to the decor of your home. Follow these DIY tips.

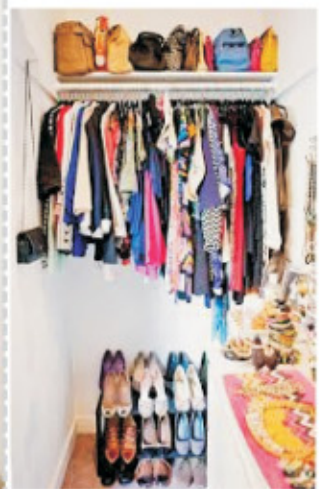
Chocolate and dry fruit boxes:

holi has just gone by and you are probably finishing festive leftovers like chocolates, dry fruits and sweets. Wipe the used boxes clean and store your junk jewellery in them. Chocolate boxes are ideal for storing rings as well as earrings. The small three to four-inch compartments make them easier to fit your rings in separate rows.

5 DIY ideas to organise your accessories



access. This tip also prevents them from getting tangled. Prepare a cardboard mannequin bust and keep it on your dressing table to drape your necklaces. This will make it



easier for you to choose which piece to wear while getting ready, as you will actually be able to see how it would look around the neck. Keep all your scarves in one place by tying them around the rim of a hanger.

Badminton rackets:

That old racket lying neglected in your storeroom since you passed out of college can be put to good use. Nail it to one of the walls in your room. The net can be a great hanger for your danglers and hoops.

Hangers:

Remember those diamond-shaped cloth hangers that had four nails on its corners? Use these for your necklaces, statement pieces and chains for easy

Empty wine bottles:

Wondering if you should dispose wine bottles or use them as fairy light holders? A functional use for empty wine bottles is as bangle holders. Stack several bangles at a time. Unused bowls: Place empty bowls on the dressing table or wardrobe drawer and arrange all your bracelets and anklets in them.

Opposition boycotts Speaker's tea meet as tumultuous Parliament session ends

Amid an uproar over the Ambedkar issue, both Houses adopted a motion to send One Nation One Election bills to a joint parliamentary committee for further scrutiny.

New Delhi. The tumultuous winter session of Parliament saw no exception on the last day as an uproar by the opposition over the alleged insult to Dalit icon BR Ambedkar by Home Minister Amit Shah saw both the Houses being adjourned. As a mark of protest, the INDIA bloc skipped the Lok Sabha Speaker's customary tea party. Opposition leaders said there was no point in joining such a tea party when FIRs were being filed against their MPs, and they were not getting a chance to speak in the House.



Speaker adjourned the House sine die. The Rajya Sabha also witnessed similar protests from the opposition, even as chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said that such "persistent disruptions" were steadily eroding public trust in democratic institutions. Dhankhar said the winter session's productivity was just 40.03%, with the Upper House functioning for just 43 hours and 27 minutes. "As Parliamentarians we are drawing severe criticism from the people of India and rightfully so... It is time to choose between meaningful debate and destructive

disruptions," he said before adjourning the House.

BJP, OPPOSITION HOLD PROTESTS Before the session began, opposition MPs, including Congress's Priyanka Gandhi, held a protest march to Parliament from Vijay Chowk demanding Amit Shah's apology and resignation for allegedly "insulting" BR Ambedkar.

The BJP also held a counter-protest and party MP Aparajita Sarangi gifted Priyanka Gandhi a bag with '1984' written on it, referencing the year of the anti-Sikh riots. The Opposition and the BJP have been at loggerheads this week over Shah's remarks on Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha during a debate on the Constitution. Matters came to a head on Thursday as MPs from both sides came face to face in the Parliament complex, resulting in injuries to two BJP MPs.

The BJP alleged that its MP Pratap Sarangi was pushed by Congress's Rahul Gandhi. An FIR has been registered against Rahul Gandhi after the BJP filed a complaint accusing him of "physical assault and incitement".

Delhi diversity: Signages to have info in four languages

Additionally, bureaucrats working with the Delhi government will also be required to display their names in the four languages on boards outside their offices.



NEW DELHI. To promote linguistic inclusivity, the city will soon feature Hindi, English, Punjabi, and Urdu on road signages, directional boards, and the names of the public places, in compliance with a recent directive from the Department of Arts Culture and Language.

This order applies to metro stations, hospitals, public parks, and roads managed by the PWD. The department oversees 1,250 km of roads in the city and updates to signages will begin immediately.

Additionally, bureaucrats working with the Delhi government will also be required to display their names in the four languages on boards outside their offices.

In a written communication, the department directed all departments, civic bodies and autonomous authorities to ensure compliance with the Act following instructions from L-G VK Saxena. The communication specifies that the sequence of languages on boards and signages should be Hindi, English, Punjabi and Urdu, with uniform font size for all. Currently, most signboards and nameplates display information in Hindi and English. According to the department, the initiative aligns with The Delhi Official Languages Act, 2000 which designates Hindi as the primary official language and Punjabi and Urdu as secondary official languages.

According to the department, the initiative aligns with The Delhi Official Languages Act, 2000 which designates Hindi as the primary official language and Punjabi and Urdu as secondary official languages. As per the 2023 Delhi Statistical Handbook, Punjabi is spoken by 8.77 lakh people and Urdu by 8.67 lakh.

Order issued Dept of Arts has directed all authorities concerned to ensure that the sequence of languages on signage should be Hindi, English, Punjabi and Urdu, with uniform font sizes for all.

One Nation One Election bill referred to joint parliamentary panel

New Delhi. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday sent two bills that lay down the mechanism to hold simultaneous elections to a joint parliamentary committee that consisted of 39 MPs from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The Constitution (129th Amendment) bill and the Union Territories Amendment bill were introduced in the Lok Sabha after a fiery debate on December 17, with the Opposition terming the move "dictatorial" and Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal asserting that the legislation would not tamper with the powers enjoyed by states. According to a statement by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the joint parliamentary committee, consisting of 27 Lok Sabha and 12 Rajya Sabha MPs, will scrutinise the bill and send its recommendation to the Lok Sabha Speaker.

The bills have been vehemently opposed by the Opposition MPs, who called the idea of simultaneous polls, terming it a violation of the "basic structure of the Constitution". Congress member Manish Tewari opposed the introduction of the bills, and termed the move an assault on the basic structure doctrine that stipulates certain features of the Constitution are beyond the amending power of Parliament.

"One of the essential features is federalism and the structure of our democracy. The bills assault the basic structure of the Constitution and exceed the legislative competence of this House," Tewari, a former Union minister, said. Samajwadi Party member Dharmendra Yadav said the measure to introduce "one nation, one election" by the BJP was an attempt to bring dictatorship in the country.

Meanwhile, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader and Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi said that the bill will "finish off" the regional parties.

"This Bill is aimed at maximising political gain and convenience. This Bill will finish off regional parties," Owaisi said.

Total ban on crackers in Delhi, top court told



NEW DELHI. The Delhi government, on Thursday, apprised the Supreme Court that it has imposed a complete ban on manufacturing, storing, selling, and bursting all kinds of firecrackers in the national capital throughout the year with immediate effect.

"By December 19, 2024 order, it (Delhi government) has decided to completely ban firecrackers," the Delhi government told the two-judge bench of the apex court, led by Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih.

However, the Haryana government told the apex court that it has kept green crackers out of the ban. Rajasthan government, which is also affected by the air pollution, said it, too, has banned firecrackers completely in areas falling in the National Capital Region (NCR), while the Uttar Pradesh government said they have decided against banning the firecrackers completely.

After hearing these, the bench said that ban will only become effective only when all states forming part of NCR take the same decision on ban of firecrackers.

"For the time being, we direct Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to impose similar ban which is imposed by Delhi," the top court ordered. The Court was hearing the petition filed by noted environmentalist, M C Mehta, seeking appropriate directions and orders relating to air pollution in national capital and NCR.

The Court, on December 12, ordered Delhi government and other NCR states (Haryana, UP, and Rajasthan) to take a final call on prohibiting the use of firecrackers throughout the year.

Dalits, students' outfits stage demonstrations after Shah's speech on Ambedkar

The protests erupted following Shah's controversial remarks in Parliament.



NEW DELHI. Several organisations working on issues related to social justice and students' outfits held protests on Thursday accusing Home Minister Amit Shah of insulting B R Ambedkar. Some Dalit organisations

said bigger protests were being planned across the country.

The protests erupted following Shah's controversial remarks in Parliament. The NSUI president, Varun Choudhary, said, "Amit Shah has not only insulted Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar but also disrespected our nation. We demand a public apology from him. If he fails to do so, he must resign immediately."

Echoing this sentiment, the AISA organised a protest at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), where students burned effigies of Shah. A senior AISA leader said, "Amit Shah's statement is not a casual remark; it is a deliberate insult to Ambedkar's legacy of equality and social justice. We demand a public apology."

SFI state committee member Sohan said, "Shah's remarks shows his deeply rooted hatred towards Ambedkar."

AAP steps up heat over Shah's remarks against Ambedkar

Two Indian Coast Guard patrol vessels arrived in the Maldives for a four-day visit focused on enhancing maritime collaboration, environmental protection, and regional security aligning with India's SAGAR framework.

NEW DELHI. The Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday demanded an apology and resignation from Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his remarks on B R Ambedkar in Parliament.

With Delhi Assembly elections approaching, party sources revealed that AAP is positioning this issue to consolidate its Dalit voter base and retain dominance in the 12 reserved seats of the national capital. Dalit voters constitute nearly 17-18% of Delhi's electorate and play a decisive role in about 30 constituencies. While AAP traditionally dominates Dalit support in Assembly polls, the BJP has garnered significant backing from the community during Lok Sabha elections.

The reserved constituencies include Bawana, Sultan Pur Majra, Mangolpuri, Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar, Madipur, Deoli, Ambedkar



Nagar, Trilokpuri, Kondli, Seemapuri, and Gokalpuri. Additionally, constituencies like Bijwasan, Narela, Nangloi, and Shahdara also see strong Dalit voter influence. AAP swept all 12 reserved seats in the 2015 and 2020 Assembly elections.

However, in the 2014, 2019, and 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP outperformed AAP and Congress in these segments. Despite the

AAP-Congress alliance in the 2024 general elections, BJP secured victory in 8 of the 12 reserved constituencies. Facing anti-incumbency, AAP has reportedly changed candidates on several seats to address voter dissatisfaction.

AAP sources suggest that the party will intensify its focus on Dalit constituencies and leverage Shah's remarks as a key campaign issue. "AAP is making Shah's statement a central issue to regain Dalit voter trust. It aims to highlight the BJP's alleged disrespect toward Babasaheb Ambedkar," said a senior party source. Addressing the controversy, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal criticised the BJP and accused it of betraying Ambedkar's legacy. Speaking after offering prayers at Valmiki Mandir, he said, "Those who revere Babasaheb must reject the BJP."

After Priyanka Gandhi, BJP MP makes a statement with '1984' bag

BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi gifted Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi a bag referencing the 1984 anti-Sikh riots after her earlier statement in Parliament with bags featuring Palestinian motifs, sparking political controversy.

New Delhi. Days after Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi made a political statement in Parliament by carrying bags featuring motifs of Palestine and Bangladesh, BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi on Friday gifted Gandhi a bag with '1984', written on it, referencing the year of the anti-Sikh riots. Following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, widespread riots broke out against Sikhs in 1984, during which over 2730 people from the community were killed, according to Union Home Ministry data. The Nanavati Commission, appointed to investigate the riots, concluded that Congress leaders including top figures Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar HCL Bhagat, were responsible for the riots. On December 16, Priyanka Gandhi turned up in Parliament with a bag



emblazoned with "Palestine" on it, along with other Palestinian symbols, including a watermelon, a long-recognised motif of resistance in the region, as well as a pattern of keffiyeh, a Palestinian stole.

Congress leaders called it a "gesture of compassion, commitment to justice and humanity", as Israel's ongoing bombardment killed thousands and displaced many in Palestine

However, it was slammed by the BJP, accusing the Congress MP of remaining silent over the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh.

"She did not speak a word on atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh but wants to make a fashion statement with the Palestine bag," BJP MP and Anurag Thakur said. Other BJP leaders, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also criticised her. The next day, on December 17, she arrived in Parliament carrying a bag that read, "We stand with the Hindus and Christians of Bangladesh".

Just a week ago, the Congress MP was also seen carrying a bag with a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani on one side and the slogan "Modi Adani Bhai Bhai" printed on the other.



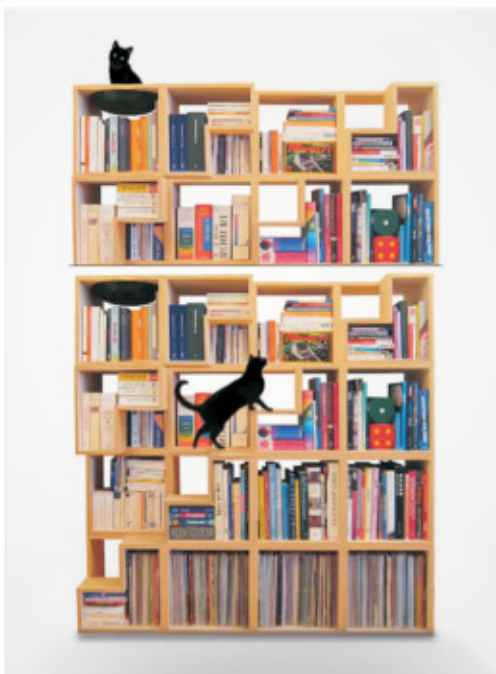
Spice up your interiors with unique Bookshelves



• **Even overloaded bookshelves can be marvels of designs, simply by the titles they adorn and the way they are set!**
 • **Some like to store them alphabetically, others by colours; there are bookshelves that have books lined according to sizes, some according to favourite reads or authors.**

- Use book shelves to frame windows, view + storage + colour!
- Use bookshelves in dual way storage as light boxes that can provide additional ambient lighting to a space.
- Transform your den/library/study area with bookshelves by creating a floating shelf illusion of space.
- Photo-frame book-shelving can be a great highlight to a living space.
- Invent a round side-table with bottom bookshelf and wheels so you can move it! Move it anywhere!!
- Colour-code the books to add colour splash and punch!

Here we have put together some of the unique bookshelf designs we came across -



loved reading will most likely be placed at eye level, grouped together as per its genre or theme.

Books are easy to buy and easier to sell or pass on, but the ones that find space in your bookshelf are the ones that have touched you deeply. Interestingly, ardent book lovers can get a sense of people's personality and influences just by looking at their bookshelves; it's like a passage into their mind. Even overloaded bookshelves can be marvels of designs, simply by the titles they adorn and the way they are set! Some like to store them alphabetically, others by colours; there are bookshelves that have books lined according to sizes, some according to favourite reads or authors. Not only can those around you but even you can know how you feel for your collection of books by the way you place them in your bookshelf. The ones that you

If your bookshelf says so much about you, it's time you gave it one serious look. Ask yourself if it is telling stories you want to be told or is it too casual for your taste. Kanika Bawa, an interior architect for 18 years and an art installation artist whose is listed in the Limca Book of Records says, "Bookshelves can be great organisers of space and can even resolve space crunch issues." Here are some unique ways you can use bookshelves -
 - Knock off an entire internal brick wall and replace with a bookshelf wall, add 6-inch of wall and voila. Another 6-inch extra and you achieve a 1 foot book-storage unit usable from both sides.

10 Ways to add a personal touch to the ceremonies

Wedding is all about traditions. But, you can give it a twist by adding elements that are you. And yes, your partner.

Customise invitation
 Ditch the traditional wedding cards for something more innovative and personal. From writing your love story with timeline on either side of the card to opting for personalised stamps, the options are many.
Ink your trousseau
 Bhavna Nevie, who tied says, "I went all the way to Kanchipuram to get my silk directly from the weavers. I asked them to engrain mine and my fiancée's initials in the pallu of my muburat sari and the breast of his kurta." Create a customised runner to the mandap

penned by you and your partner. Rakshita Iyer, a homemaker, says, "After the panditji recited the mantras, my husband and I exchanged vows that were on how we will continue to love each other despite all our flaws."

Screen AV presentation on reception
 A great way to break the formal setting is to screen an AV -include pictures and video montages of the two of you and your family and friends. You can even get audio and video bytes from family and friends who couldn't make it to the wedding.

Have a photo booth
 Setting a photo booth at the venue, replete with funky props, can add a touch of quirk to

Forget the flowers and use a runner instead, to lead the way to the altar. It could be on any theme -common interests, backdrop of a destination that's close to the two of you. You can do the same to the mandap's background as well.

Make family pictures part of prop

Your extended family has taken efforts to come down and be part of your big day. Make them feel special by handing out notes, expressing happiness and highlighting their uniqueness. Personalise their photos on the table.

Opt for a video slam book
 Instead of getting a book and making your guests pen their thoughts about you and your spouse, make them record a video message for you.

Make a grand entry
 "I entered the wedding venue in my beau's bike," says newly-married Regina Mathews, a software professional. "My husband is a bike modifier and I thought riding a superbike to the venue; the way people cheered still makes me feel exhilarated."

Write your own vows
 Even if yours is a traditional ceremony, set aside a few minutes to recite vows that were



your wedding. From colourful pots to masks and even lanterns, set the mood for some fun.

Make a wedding time capsule
 Get the guests to contribute hand-written notes, collect a few instant snapshots, throw in wedding card and even the RSVPs and seal the wedding capsule.

Dirty spots at home you never notice



Clean your home not just for aesthetic reasons, but also for the health of your family, and take special care to remove dirt from neglected areas like kitchen cabinets, ledges or even around exhaust fans, says an expert.

Here are some tips from Samrat Goyal, co-founder, Broomberg.in, a new company offering high-tech cleaning service:

Above kitchen cabinets and ledges:

Try going higher than eye level and look at the top of the kitchen cabinet or on top of any ledges. Dust and cooking oil fumes sure do make a 'sticky' combination and you will find plenty of those there.

Around and on switchboards:

A surface is not just dirty if it looks dirty. You need to be more regular at cleaning up switchboards simply because people touch switches regularly making them ideal places where germs are deposited and picked up.

Around exhaust fan:

Your kitchen and/or bathroom exhaust fan blades are cleaned once in a while, but what about the area around the exhaust window? We bet you would find a thin layer of grime (dust and cooking oil fumes) that is sprayed outwards by the blades.

Above Geyser:

Your storage type water heater is such a useful thing. But what about the top? Take a look and you will find layers and layers of dust that have been accumulating

unchecked for years.

Above tubelights/ light fixtures:

Just because lights are bright does not mean that they are immune to dust. Tube lights and high up light fixtures are perfect dust catchers that are mostly ignored during a clean up.

Behind paintings:

Paintings are supposed to make your living space look pretty. But then they hide a lot of wall and are also places where dust accumulates unnoticed. Make sure you remove paintings and wipe out the dust on a regular basis.

Behind sofas:

There is something very wrong with sofas when it comes to cleanliness. Positioning them next to walls creates a small gap inaccessible to brooms and mops. It is pretty hard for the regular home owner to shift the sofa and clean this gap.

Above air-conditioner voltage regulators:

You clean the top of your window or split air-conditioner but what about the voltage regulator that is mounted nearby?

High windows:

You never clean those high ventilator windows.

Under the sink:

Your shiny well scrubbed sink is keeping a dirty secret. Check out its under side and all will be revealed.

Whether you have a modern house or a traditional one, living rooms are the most common part of it for the simple reason that man is a social animal by nature, therefore he needs a place which he can call as a place of gathering - where he can socialize with people and spend quality time with his family.

"The living room of your home serves two purposes - for socializing and for private time with your family. Since one room serves a dual purpose, it is important to keep its vaastu in the correct manner," says Dr Madhu Kotiya, body, mind and soul doctor. She gives vaastu shastra tips for positive energy.

- Your living room should always be in the East or in the North direction. However if you have a south-facing house, then your living room can be in South East corner. North direction although is the more beneficial direction for a living room.

- If you are the type who does not like night parties and get-togethers, then have a living room in the North-West direction. Since presiding element of North-West part of a home is "air", the guests start to feel restless after sometime and tend to leave earlier.

- If you want to have a small pooja or a prayer room, then North-East remains the ideal location as god presides in this direction.

- If you love your guests and want them to stay with you for a longer period of time, then you

Vaastu tips for positivity in the Living room

should have your living room located in the South West direction. However, this place is best suited for master bedroom.

- The floor of the living area should slope towards North or East. Same remains for the ceiling.

- Having the door of the living room in East or North brings wealth, health and overall progress. South, North-East or South-East entrance indicates success but then it takes lot of hard work to

achieve. West entrance is good for scholars and researchers. North-West entrance supports development in all areas of life. South entrance for living area is inauspicious.

- Always keep internal furniture, articles and heavy things in West or South side. If there is no such option then use a base of 1-3 inches height to keep furniture in North or North-East.

- The head of the family should sit facing East

or North in the living area so that he remains in command and guests are not able to dominate him.

- Put the TV in South-East corner, otherwise it will break down often. The family will waste a lot of precious time watching TV only if it is kept in North-West corner.

- Keep telephone in East, South-East or North, and not in South-West or North-West.

- Place air cooler and air conditioner in West, North-West or East and never in South-East.



Triptii Dimri

Shares Picture From Her 'Last Workday Of The Year'

2024 is undoubtedly the star year for Triptii Dimri. Following her impressive appearances in *Bad Newz*, *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video*, and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, Dimri will shine with a slew of upcoming exciting projects under her belt. She will be next seen alongside Siddhant Chaturvedi in the highly anticipated *Dhadak 2*. This movie is a sequel to the 2018 original, which starred Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter in lead roles. In line with this, the Qala actress has been tirelessly filming until a few hours ago, when she joyfully announced that today marks her final working day on the set year. Taking to her Instagram stories, Triptii Dimri shared a collage of two mirror selfies, reportedly from her makeup room. She was seen posing for candid clicks with her makeup artist, Nikita Kapoor, hair stylist, Hrishikesh Naskar, and two other members of her team, Aanchal Talreja and Utkantha Lokhande. Looking effortlessly stunning, the actress showcased her beautiful no-makeup look with her hair pulled back in a stylish ponytail, all while wearing a chic black outfit. Above the picture, she sweetly shared, "Last workday of the year...see y'all in 2025!"

In her recent Instagram stories, the actress flashed a cheerful thumbs-up. Further, when we looked closely at the blurred background, we caught a glimpse of some ropes, hinting at the intense stunts she'd been working hard to master. A month back, a picture featuring Triptii and Siddhant went viral on social media. This was a subtle confirmation that the two actors had started shooting for the highly anticipated film in Mumbai. The picture circulating on social media was from Somaiya Vidyavihar University. In the snap, Triptii wore a casual outfit, while Siddhant sported a dishevelled look.

Dimri will also reportedly star in another upcoming yet-untitled film. This will also star Shahid Kapoor, Nana Patekar, and Randeep Hooda in key roles. The action thriller will be directed by Vishal Bhardwaj and has been sealed for a theatrical release on December 5, 2025. Sajid Nadiadwala, on behalf of Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, took to his X handle and shared that the filming will begin on January 6, 2025. "#SajidNadiadwala presents a @VishalBhardwaj film! A spectacular cinematic journey begins on 6th Jan 2025 Film releasing on 5th December 2025 @shahidkapoor @triptii_dimri23 @nanagpatekar @RandeepHooda @WardaNadiadwala," the tweet on Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment's X handle read.

Malaika Arora's

Cryptic Post Talks About Self-Worth: 'Invest Your Energy In Those...'

Ever since Arjun Kapoor confirmed his breakup with Malaika Arora, all eyes have been on her. While the *Singham Again* actor revealed his single status at a Diwali party, Malaika has maintained her silence on the matter and has not spoken about it in public. However, her cryptic social media posts since her breakup have often garnered the attention of her fans and followers. On Thursday, December 19, Malaika shared another such cryptic post on her Instagram Stories. The picture featured a red heart made with fingerprints and discussed the importance of realising one's worth, self-respect and setting boundaries. It read: "Invest your energy in those who truly value your time and presence."

Malaika Arora and Arjun Kapoor started dating in 2018 soon after the *Chaiyya Chaiyya* star parted ways with her ex-husband, Arbaaz Khan. Nearly six years later, they decided to call it quits. In other news, the 49-year-old actress is gearing up for Christmas already. She shared a video on her Instagram account, showcasing her preparation for the festive season. The actress was dressed in a classic white mini bodycon dress. She paired

the full-sleeved dress with golden heels and a cute red bow to add a pop of colour. In the caption of the post, Malaika wrote, "Santa hasn't even started packing, and I'm already in full Christmas mode. Bring on the hot cocoa, holiday movies, and all the sparkle!" Malaika recently took a train trip to an undisclosed location. While she shared the first part of her journey



back in November, she released the second part of her train journey just days ago. In the video, she recreated *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge's* iconic train scene but with the roles reversed. As the reel began, Malaika was seen standing at the gate of the coach dressed in a white comfy co-ord set, helping her co-passengers run to catch her hand to get on the train. On the work front, Malaika is currently judging the first season of the dance reality show *India's Best Dancer vs Super Dancer: Champions ka Tashan* alongside Remo D'Souza and Geeta Kapur.

Rana Daggubati's Birthday Wish For Wife Miheeka Bajaj Is Love



Rana Daggubati's wife Miheeka Bajaj is celebrating her birthday today, and the actor made sure to make the day memorable with a special wish. Rana shared a throwback photo from their wedding celebration on Instagram. In the photo, suggestively from their haldi celebrations, Miheeka is dressed in yellow attire whereas the actor chose an all-white look. The couple can be happily posing for the photo while embracing each other. Rana wrote, "Happiest to you", followed by heart emoticons.

Rana Daggubati also shared a recent selfie with Miheeka where the duo were all smiles for the camera. The actor was dressed in a white sweatshirt while the birthday girl was seen in a bright red dress. Miheeka's birthday comes days after the actor turned 40. Sharing her birthday wishes, Miheeka dropped a series of candid pictures of Rana. "The man with the ever-changing looks and personalities that go hand in hand. There isn't a moment of dullness with you around. The constants in life have been entertainment and an unending supply of love. May you shine bright and don a lot of looks and personalities in the coming years. This year as you turn 40 my only wish is for you to remain forever 14! It never ceases to amaze me how you've managed to maintain the vigour, excitement, thoughts and passion of a kid who's just starting off on their journey. May you always be excited, inquisitive, passionate and ambitious," Miheeka wrote in a long caption accompanying the post.

On the work front, Rana Daggubati is currently busy with his chat show, *The Rana Daggubati Show* on Prime Video. Last month, the show premiered at the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI). The launch featured the first episode, starring Nani, Teja Sajja, and Priyanka Arulmohan. The eight-part Telugu Original chat show will feature Dulquer Salmaan, Naga Chaitanya Akkineni, S.S. Rajamouli, Ram Gopal Varma, Rishab Shetty, Siddhu Jonnalagadda, Sreeleela, and others as gets.

Nana Patekar Recalls Visiting Irrfan Khan's Madh Home: 'He Loved Jasmine Plants'



Nana Patekar, widely acclaimed for his versatile acting, recently shared touching memories of the late Irrfan Khan, celebrating the actor's profound impact. He revealed Irrfan's love for night-blooming jasmine plants and how the actor had expressed a desire to have them. Nana also reminisced about an early conversation with Sutapa, Irrfan's wife, where he assured her of Irrfan's bright future in the film industry. Reflecting on a visit to Irrfan's home in Madh, Nana shared how deeply connected he feels to Irrfan's memory. In a heartfelt conversation with Vishal Bhardwaj for Zee Studios, Nana Patekar described Irrfan as a remarkable individual and shared how Sutapa, who worked as a screenwriter for *Khamoshi*, encouraged him to recommend Irrfan for roles. Nana, however, was confident in Irrfan's talent and future, telling Sutapa, "He will suggest our name in the future. He is a very big actor, don't worry."

Nana also recalled Irrfan's humility despite his success. He shared a poignant memory of visiting Irrfan's house in Madh, where Irrfan spoke about his love for night-blooming jasmine plants. The actor had asked Nana to plant one for him, a request that left a lasting impression on Nana, deepening his connection to Irrfan's legacy.

In another conversation with Anil Kapoor, Nana revealed his initial hesitation to watch the film *Animal*, starring Ranbir Kapoor. However, upon being persuaded by friends, he praised Anil's restrained and balanced performance, contrasting it with the more exaggerated portrayals of other cast members. This admiration showcased the respect between the two actors, further exciting fans about their dynamic after their iconic roles in the *Welcome* series. Currently, Nana Patekar is preparing for the release of his upcoming movie, *Vanvaas*.

Directed by Gadar filmmaker Anil Sharma, the movie also stars Utkarsh Sharma and Simrat Kaur. With its focus on family, honor, and self-acceptance, *Vanvaas* offers an emotional narrative that redefines the concept of familial bonds. Ahead of its release, the makers of *Vanvaas* have arranged a special screening for Aamir Khan in Mumbai. A source revealed, "Nana and Aamir Khan share a great bond, the team of *Vanvaas* has already arranged a special screening for the actor in Bombay. Aamir will be watching the film on 20th December." The trailer, released earlier this month, teases a story of resilience and belonging, adding to the anticipation for its release under the Anil Sharma Productions banner.