

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

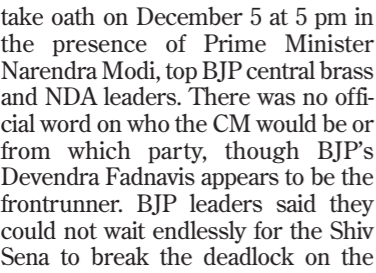
The Sikh Times National Daily

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

Vol. 16 No. 201 RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465 New Delhi, Monday, 2 December 2024 sikhtimesindia@gmail.com 9654077232 12 pages ₹ 3

Maha Govt swearing-in on Dec 5; Sena hints at Shinde's 'big decision'

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, Dec 01: Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Bawankule made the announcement saying the new Chief Minister would...



power-sharing deal offered by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. 'Already, the previously scheduled swearing-in on December 2 has had to be postponed,' an NDA source said. Shinde did not make an appearance even today and continued to be at his native Dara village in Satara district of Maharashtra. Shiv Sena's Sanjay Shirsat said Shinde could take a 'big decision soon'.

'Madam is busy': When Sonia kept Najma Heptulla waiting for an hour

Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Dec 01: After being elected president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1999, Najma Heptulla rang up the then Congress chief Sonia Gandhi from Berlin to convey the news but had to hold the phone line for an hour as a staff told her that 'Madam is busy'.



out that I was calling from Berlin, an international call, he just said, 'Please hold the line.' I waited for one full hour. Sonia never came on the line to speak to me". Heptulla says she was truly disappointed.

moment for me — a moment in time of such importance that it drilled a sense of rejection in my psyche forever." It was, however, a rejection that proved prescient. It prophesied a time of transition, a downward spiral and crisis in the Congress that left its old-time and experienced members, who had given their all to the party, beleaguered and demoralised.

RG Kar ex-principal Sandip Ghosh helped two cartels procure hospital contracts: CBI

ST Correspondent

New Delhi, Dec 01: Former principal of Kolkata's RG Kar College and Hospital Sandip Ghosh allegedly helped two cartels in procuring hospital contracts, the Central Bureau of Investigation has said in its recently filed chargesheet.



Ashish Kumar Pandey, and businessmen Biplab Singha of Maa Tara Traders, Suman Hazra of Hazra Medical and Afsar Ali Khan of Eshan Cafe, in the charge sheet. "This case was registered in compliance with the directions of Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta relating to financial irregularities in RG Kar Medical College & Hospital at Kolkata," the CBI Spokesperson said.

Our fight is for the spirit of our country, says Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi

Wayanad, Dec 01: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday launched a scathing attack against the BJP-led Centre, saying today the fight is against the force that is weakening the rights of the people, and handing them over to a few businessmen friends.

Farmers gear up for 'Dilli Chalo' march

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Chandigarh, Dec 01: Farmer leader from Punjab Sarwan Singh Pandher on Sunday said a group of farmers, led by their leaders, will march towards Delhi on foot on December 6 even as he lashed out at the Centre for not holding any talks with the protesting farmers for resolving their issues.

(group) of farmers will be led by Satnam Singh Pannu, Surinder Singh Chautala, Surjit Singh Phul and Baljinder Singh. The



group that will carry essential items with it will head towards Delhi peacefully, he said. The first group of farmers, during their march to Delhi, will stop at the Jaggi city centre in Ambala, the Mohra grain market, Khanpur Jattan and Pipli in Haryana, he said.

nights on the road. He added that the number of farmers in the first group will be shared later. Lashing out at the BJP-led Centre, Pandher said it has not held any talks with the protesting farmers since February 18. Accusing the Centre of running away, he said, "They have stopped the talks with us."

Parliamentary panel seeks details of properties in 'unauthorised' occupation of state govts

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, Dec 01: The Parliamentary committee scrutinising the Waqf (Amendment) Bill has sought details from various state governments about the veracity and updated details of Waqf properties which, according to the Sachar committee, they had occupied in an unauthorised manner, sources said.

interfere in religious matters, has sought to curb this power while making a slew of other changes in the existing Act. Sources said the Parliamentary panel has decided to get an update on the points made by the Sachar committee on the Waqf properties



that are allegedly in unauthorised occupation of state governments or their official agencies. The Sachar committee was informed by various state Waqf boards during 2005-06 about the alleged unauthorised

occupation. The Parliamentary panel has been collecting information from states through the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs. Sources said the panel headed by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal has noted that there were 316 such properties in Delhi, 60 in Rajasthan and 42 in Karnataka reported to the Sachar committee in 2005-06.

boards over ownership or possession of any property, with the panel noting that the Sachar Committee had stated its list was not exhaustive. The UPA government constituted the Sachar Committee in 2005 to study the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India. It submitted its report in 2006 highlighting the poor status of Muslims on all these indicators as it recommended a host of measures.

Judicial panel members visit Sambhal mosque, inspect violence-hit areas

Naresh Malhotra

Sambhal, Dec 01: Amid tight security, members of a judicial commission on Sunday visited the Shahi Jama Masjid here and other areas that witnessed violence over a court-ordered survey of the Mughal-era mosque. Panel head retired Allahabad High Court judge Devendra Kumar Arora and retired IPS officer Arvind Kumar Jain were the two members of the three-member commission who visited the areas that witnessed violence on November 24.

Moradabad Divisional Commissioner Singh said, "Today the chairperson of the inquiry commission and one other member visited the site. Their primary purpose was to inspect the location. They visited the areas where the disturbance occurred, examined the site and the structure, and spoke to some of the people



present there." The team will visit again and a complete schedule for its visit will be announced, he said. "The situation here is gradually returning to normal and it is being closely monitored. Conditions are stabilising rapidly.

As of now, the district magistrate's orders remain in effect until December 10 and after that, there will be no restrictions on anyone. We are in the process of collecting evidence and have so far identified 400 individuals involved (in the violence)," he said. Singh was referring to an order that prohibits the entry of outsiders, including politicians, social organisations or public representatives, in the violence-hit Sambhal till December 10 without permission from the competent authority in order to maintain law and order.

Adityanath directs officials to adopt sensitive approach to resolve complaints

Lucknow, Dec. 01: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday urged officials to adopt a sensitive approach in addressing public grievances, stressing that no injustice would be tolerated. Addressing



people at a 'Janta Darshan' held at the Gorakhnath Temple, Adityanath reiterated the government's commitment to fairness and transparency in handling public issues, a statement issued here said. "No injustice will be tolerated. Every individual will get justice," he said while directing officials to

ensure prompt and satisfactory resolutions to complaints. Adityanath said that the government stands firm in its resolve to address every grievance, the statement read. He directed officials to adopt a sensitive approach while resolving issues, according to the statement. The chief minister advised mediation for family disputes, suggesting legal action if reconciliation efforts fail, it said. He also ordered strict action against illegal land encroachments by influential individuals. Several people sought financial assistance for medical treatments. Adityanath assured them of full support and directed officials to expedite the process of estimating treatment costs and forwarding the proposals to the government for approval. For cases involving police and revenue matters, he called for impartial and transparent handling, ensuring that justice is ensured to all. Over 300 people attended the Janta Darshan seeking the chief minister's intervention in various issues.

## Play looking to decipher Kerala's Kuruva gang psyche in works

**KOCHI:** Robbers linked allegedly to the Kuruva gang have been keeping some pockets of Kerala and the state police on edge. Accounts of the violent nature of their crimes have left many puzzled. An attempt to address this curiosity is currently in the works in Kolkata, West Bengal, in the form of a play detailing the history, life and works of these gangs, without downplaying the dread these members have spread. Playwright and director Ravi Thykkat said "Oru Kuprasidha Gramam - A Notorious Village" was developed with the help of police officers, who had visited Thiruttu Gramam - the base of the gang - as part of investigations into cases of robbery. "Even now no outsider is allowed into the village," Ravi pointed out, adding, "The art of thievery is ingrained in the blood of everyone born into the community."

He adds, "Thiruttu Gramam, loosely translated into village of thieves, in Tiruchirappalli, has a long history extending to the Chera-Chola period. According to legend, the Kuruva community members even robbed the Chola kings. 'Oru Kuprasidha Gramam' tells the story of the village, its residents, their art of robbery, how they pass on the skills to the next generation, and various cases linked to the village." Hailing from Palakkad, Ravi, who has won accolades as a playwright, focuses on mega theatre productions staged mainly in West Bengal.

**'Oru Kuprasidha Gramam' to debut on February 9**

"Oru Kuprasidha Gramam will feature nearly 40 artists and will be two hours long. The production will debut on February 9 at Behala Sarat Sadan, one of the largest stages in Kolkata.

## Flash flood alerts in Nellore, Chittoor, Kadapa districts

**TIRUPATI.** Heavy rains lashed parts of Nellore, Tirupati, Chittoor and erstwhile Kadapa district on Saturday under the influence of Cyclone Fengal. A flash flood warning has been issued for Nellore, Chittoor, and Kadapa districts. People in low-lying areas also have been put on alert. Authorities have issued a sixth-level danger warning at Adani Krishnapatnam Port, indicating the severity of the situation.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Fengal made landfall as a cyclonic storm on the north Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast between Karaikal and Mahabalipuram, near Puducherry with wind speeds of 70-80 kmph, gusting to 90 kmph, on Saturday evening.

A yellow alert has been issued for Rayalaseema, Coastal Andhra and Yanam as heavy to very heavy rainfall is predicted in these districts over the next 24 hours. As a precautionary measure, two NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) teams have been deployed in Nellore, while one SDRF (State Disaster Response Force) team each has been deployed in Tirupati and Kurnool districts.

**Heavy rains disrupt normal life in Nellore, Tirupati districts**

Normal life was disrupted in urban areas like Tirupati, Nellore, Sullurpeta, Kavali, and Naidupet. Tirupati district administration declared a holiday for all educational institutions from Saturday afternoon, prioritising public safety. Nellore district was also severely affected. Both district

administrations are on high alert to mitigate potential damage and safeguard residents. Rainfall statistics show a significant impact across both districts. Four flights operating from Tirupati Airport to Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, and Bengaluru were cancelled, leaving passengers stranded due to the adverse weather conditions.

While Indukurupeta and Muthukur mandals in Nellore recorded the highest of 8 cm rainfall, Doravaristram in Tirupati logged 6 cm rainfall. Vakadu, Varadaiahpalem, and Chittampur mandals in Tirupati recorded 5 cm. In Nellore, Podalakuru, Dagadathi, and Venkatachalam mandals saw 4 cm of rainfall as of 4 pm on Saturday.

**Real-time assessment of rains crucial, asserts CM**

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu convened a high-level review meeting with officials from the Disaster Management Department and Chief Minister's Office (CMO), District Collectors, and Real-Time Governance (RTG) teams. He emphasised the importance of maintaining vigil at all levels, real-time monitoring, and timely action to address the cyclone's effects. He directed officials to ensure public safety, minimise disruptions, and provide timely updates to farmers about potential crop



damage. He highlighted the role of RTG teams in continuous monitoring and communication to keep the public informed and prepared. He instructed District Collectors to be ready for relief and rehabilitation efforts.

**Control rooms set up**

Tirupati District Collector Dr S Venkateswar issued a statement advising people to avoid travelling unless absolutely necessary. He cautioned the public against crossing flooded roads, emphasising that even a momentary lapse in judgment could lead to danger. The district administration has set up control rooms at both the district and mandal levels to monitor the situation and respond promptly to emergencies.

Control rooms have been set up in all major subdivisions, and officials are on high alert to respond to any emergencies, such as

clearing blocked drains or relocating affected populations in low-lying areas. People can dial 0877-2236007 to seek assistance from the dedicated cyclone control room, or 0877-2236007 to contact Gudur Sub-Collector's Office. In Nellore, District Collector O Anand has advised citizens to stay vigilant, especially in areas surrounding the Somasila reservoir and Penna River. However, with continued rainfall, inflows from Annamaya district into the reservoir may increase, which could lead to the release of water depending on the situation.

Chittoor district, Collector Sumit Kumar announced that 24/7 staff would be available at the control rooms that can be reached by dialling 9491077356 and 08572-242777. All officials have been instructed to closely monitor the situation and assist in the relocation of people from flood-prone areas. The district has been actively coordinating with local authorities to ensure the safety of its residents.

**Gear up to face rain fury: Special CS to Discoms**

In light of the forecast for heavy rains, strong winds, and potential flash floods in Nellore, Tirupati, Chittoor, Prakasam, and Kadapa districts, Special Chief Secretary (Energy) K Vijayanand has directed power utilities to be fully prepared to handle any emergencies.

## Vistaraku tradition empowers tribal women in Andhra's Alluri Sitharama Raju

Over 20 women make eco-friendly leaf plates and cups at Van Dhan Vikas Kendra in Paderu of Alluri Sitharama Raju district

**VISAKHAPATNAM.** Harnessing traditional knowledge and sustainable resources, tribal women in Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district are turning a long-standing practice into a source of livelihood. Producing and selling "Vistaraku," eco-friendly dining plates made from Bauhinia Vahli leaves, locally known as "Addakulu," the women have found a way to be self-employed while discharging environmental responsibility.

This initiative, supported by the Paderu Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) through Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK), has helped in increasing incomes of tribal communities. Launched in February 2024 by the then Collector Sumit Kumar and ITDA Project Officer (PO) V Abishek, the VDVK Vistharaku Centre at Paderu has brought together women from surrounding villages to make these biodegradable plates and cups. "Up to 20 women work flexibly, stitching leaves at home or using machinery at the centre, even on

Sundays. They decide their schedule on their own," said DRDA Project Director V Murali.

Currently, 20 women are actively crafting plates and cups, producing around 2,000 pieces daily in five varieties, including thick-lined buffet plates, regular plates, hand-stitched plates, and cups of two sizes. These women have crafted biodegradable plates for daily use for generations, a skill now adapted for broader markets. "This is something we have always done. Now, it helps us earn a steady income," said B Santhi, adding that the best leaves are collected in May and June, though off-season leaves are usable if handled carefully. She further noted that they procure leaves from tribals at weekly shandies and occasionally collect them themselves or receive them directly from some collectors.

With rising awareness of plastic's adverse environmental impact,



demand for these eco-friendly alternatives is growing. "People are choosing sustainable options. This change gives us hope for better sales and financial stability," said Vijaya Lakshmi, Treasury Officer, and Chinnammalu, Secretary of the VDVK. The use of machinery has improved product quality. "Machines allow us to create refined products that appeal to buyers," said Chinta Madhavi, VDVK staffer.

The project gains momentum as ASR district prepares to ban plastic plates, cups, and bags from December 1.

and Rs 5 lakh for training and seed capital. "Our goal is to show women a path to self-reliance. From collecting leaves to selling the final products, they manage everything. We are here to guide and support them," stated PO Abishek. Blending tradition with opportunity, the initiative empowers communities while fostering sustainability. "Although demand is currently low, we are hopeful of better sales, providing financial support and contributing to environmental conservation," the women observed.

## Grape farmers in TN's Theni face losses as rain disrupts flowering and yield

**THENI:** Continuous rain over the past two months, coupled with weather changes, has caused distress to grape farmers in Theni. With flowers failing to mature and turn into fruit, the price of grapes has dropped from Rs 60 per kg to Rs 15. Theni is a major producer of the Muscat Hamburg variety of grapes, also known as panneer thiratchai, a GI-tagged variety that is extremely popular among farmers because of its quick growth and yield cycle. Unlike many other varieties, the panneer thiratchai is available throughout the year, and the region's soil and water enhance its sweetness. However, the grape variety's yield has taken a drastic hit owing to rain and other climatic factors. Speaking to Periyar Vaigai Irrigation Farmers Association president and Kaamayam Thiratchai Vivasayigal Sangam coordinator Pon Katchi Kannan said over 300 farmers in Cumbum Valley cultivate panneer thiratchai on nearly 5,000 acres. "While it is blooming season currently, few flowers have matured into fruits due to continuous rain.

Flowers fail to pollinate and the crop is largely affected by downy mildew, powdery mildew and grey mould. Although farmers generally harvest around 6 tonnes per acre, the yield has reduced to a tonne per acre. The cost of production remains unchanged and farmers spend Rs 2 lakh per acre," he pointed out. Kannan urged the Tamil Nadu government to provide a minimum support price of Rs 50 per kg to prevent loss and also sought compensation for this year.

Speaking to Odaipatti Grapes Farmers Producers group director S Kalandhi said climate plays a pivotal role in grape cultivation and dry, sunny weather is suitable. "Unprecedented weather and fungal infection cause discolouring and cracks and the fruits begin to rot. The Grapes Research Centre in the district does not provide predictions or warnings to the farmers. Farmers must make note of the climatic changes and act accordingly," he said. Deputy Director of Horticulture Department R Nirmala told, "Farmers have been asked to insure their crop with the Agriculture Insurance Company of India (AIC) to prevent loss due to climate change. Many farmers in Chinnamanur have insured their crops.

## Cyclone Fengal: Water level in Chembarambakkam reservoir surges 10-fold in 10 hours

**CHENNAI:** The water level in Chembarambakkam reservoir, a key drinking water source for Chennai, sharply increased on Saturday due to the impact of rainfall brought by Cyclone Fengal. By 8 pm, the inflow to the reservoir was almost up 10-fold in 10 hours from 479 cusecs to 5,610 cusecs. A senior official from the Water Resources Department (WRD) told TNIE, "There are no plans to open the surplus shutters as the reservoir still has enough storage capacity. As of now, Chembarambakkam holds 2.368 tmcft of water out of its total capacity of 3.645 tmcft."

He further clarified, "The reservoir has a storage capacity of 24 feet, and the current



water level stands at 19.31 feet as of 4 pm. According to guidelines, we can safely store water up to 21 feet, so the current level is within the safe zone. We are monitoring the situation continuously." Future decisions will

depend on rainfall in the catchment areas and further inflows into the reservoir, the official added. On Saturday evening, Kancheepuram district monitoring officer KS Kandasamy and collector Kalaiselvi Mohan inspected the reservoir. Speaking to reporters, Kandasamy said the situation was safe as the water level has reached only two-third of the reservoir's capacity. He added that even if the rainfall, and consequently the inflow, continued consistently for another 24 hours with the same intensity, there won't be any problem.

Another WRD official also shared updates about other reservoirs, stating, "The storage at Redhills stands at 2,461 million cubic feet (mcf) out of 3,300 mcf, with an inflow of

3,500 cusecs on Saturday evening. We can store about 1,100 mcf more here. If the inflow reaches 10,000 cusecs, surplus gates may need to be opened. Other reservoirs, including Poondi and Cholavaram, are also safe.

"The official compared the current storage to last year, saying, "As of 6 pm on Saturday, the total water storage of Chennai reservoirs stands at 6.626 tmcft out of 13.222 tmcft. In contrast, it was 10.718 tmcft over the same period last year."

While the delayed monsoon and reduced rainfall have resulted in poor water level in reservoirs this year, officials assured that the available water, along with Krishna water, would be enough to meet the city's summer needs.

**On Saturday evening, Kancheepuram district monitoring officer KS Kandasamy and collector Kalaiselvi Mohan inspected the reservoir.**

## Kerala: Internal conflicts spell trouble in CPM

**In a highly publicised event in Thiruvananthapuram, CPM's Kayamkulam area committee member and district panchayat member Bipin C Babu joined the BJP on Saturday.**

**PALAKKAD/ALAPPUZHA:** CPM is facing unprecedented dissension within its ranks amid its regional meetings, with disputes often coming out into the open. In Palakkad district, a dissident group has set up a 'parallel office' at Kozhijampara, while an area committee member in Kayamkulam, Alappuzha, has joined the BJP. Furthermore, the CPM Karunagappally area committee was dissolved on Saturday following disruptions in local conferences and protests by the rebel faction members, who carried 'Save CPM' placards at the meetings. In Kozhijampara, the parallel office - named EMS memorial - was inaugurated on S Muhammed Farooq, chairman of the Development Standing Committee of the Kozhijampara gram panchayat, on Saturday. According to dissenting party members, this office will function as a public service centre to address the needs of the local community. The conflict in the Kozhijampara local committee was triggered following the appointment of Arun Prasad, who defected from the Congress, as

the local secretary.

The dissident group accused the Palakkad district leadership, especially district secretary E N Suresh Babu, of acting unilaterally. When the district leadership organised a meeting, the dissenting faction also held a parallel meeting in an auditorium in Kozhijampara. The faction members stated that they will not leave the CPM, but will continue organisational activities independently. Meanwhile, in a highly publicised event in Thiruvananthapuram, CPM's Kayamkulam area committee member and district panchayat member Bipin C Babu joined the BJP on Saturday. CPM lost its credentials, more people will leave party: Bipin While welcoming Bipin into the party, BJP state president K Surendran said more dissidents from the CPM will join the party soon. "Senior leaders, including G Sudhakaran, have resentment in the CPM and more leaders from Alappuzha will join the party soon," he said. After joining the BJP, Bipin launched a scathing attack on the CPM,



claiming that the party had lost its secular credentials and was controlled by communal forces.

"The state of senior leader G Sudhakaran is also pathetic. Hundreds of party members resigned from the party and after the organisational election, more people will leave the party. I will resign from the district panchayat member post in coming days," Bipin said. Bipin had expressed his discontent earlier, protesting the CPM's decision not to invite senior leader G Sudhakaran to area conferences. Bipin had stated that

Sudhakaran was being deliberately ignored by the party leadership.

**THE SIKH TIMES**

Edited, Printed, Published  
Owned by Simmi Babbar  
N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar  
Delhi-110009  
Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing  
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City  
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)  
Corporate Office:  
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,  
Press Area, ITO, New Delhi  
Editor-in-Chief  
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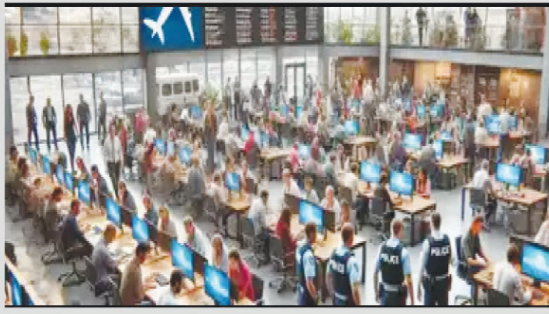
RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

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News box

Travel dreams turned nightmare: Gang in Noida sector 63 takes many for a ride with holiday packages



NOIDA. A fake travel company operating out of Sector 63 was busted on Saturday and 32 people, including 12 women, were arrested for cheating customers with lucrative holiday packages.

"Once the payments for the bookings were made through cash or bank transfers, no services would be provided. Refund requests would also be ignored," said DCP (central Noida) Shakti Mohan Awasthi.

Those arrested, aged 19 to 37, include senior officials and team leaders accused of orchestrating the operation, police said.

1 dead, 2 injured after section of under-construction tunnel part of Delhi-Mumbai Expressway collapses in Kota

NEW DELHI. One worker lost his life and two others sustained injuries when a section of an under-construction tunnel on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway collapsed in Rajasthan's Kota district, police reported on Sunday.

Superintendent of Police (Kota Rural), Sujit Shankar, stated that the incident occurred on Saturday night in the Modak area of Ramganj Mandi.

"Shamsher Singh (33) was pronounced dead at the hospital," Shankar said, adding that the injured workers are currently receiving medical treatment.

Following the incident, police teams and officials from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) arrived at the site to assess the situation.

Week after murder, another Delhi cop stabbed by criminal

NEW DELHI. In another brazen attack on a man in uniform, a Delhi Police head constable was stabbed by a criminal in northeast Delhi's New Usmanpur on Saturday.



the man on his right knee." The injured criminal was taken to Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital for treatment. A semi-automatic pistol and a cartridge were recovered from Adil's possession.

Maharashtra polls: Poll body to hear Congress' electoral malpractice allegations on Tuesday

NEW DELHI. Reiterating its commitment to a transparent process during the Maharashtra Assembly elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday assured the Congress party of a review of all legitimate concerns.

In a letter to the Congress, the ECI stated that it had followed a transparent process involving candidates and their agents at every stage of the voting process.

In an interim response to Congress's complaints, the ECI reaffirmed the transparency of its processes, emphasizing the involvement of candidates or their agents at every stage.

also reiterated that electoral roll updates are carried out with the involvement of political parties.

Regarding Congress's concerns about voter turnout data, the ECI asserted that there was no discrepancy. It clarified that polling station-wise data is available and verifiable by all candidates.

"The gap between the 5 PM polling data and the final voter turnout is due to procedural priorities, as presiding officers perform multiple statutory duties near the close of polling before updating voter turnout data.



criticizing the Commission. The issue was also discussed at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, where the party announced plans to launch a "national movement."

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal, addressing the media, alleged that "electoral malpractices" influenced the Haryana Assembly election results.

"The CWC acknowledged that the party's performance in Haryana was contrary to all expectations. The INC should have

formed the government in the state by a convincing margin, but it did not. Electoral malpractices influencing the results have been overlooked," he claimed.

Maharashtra Congress chief Ana Patole also wrote to the ECI, questioning how voter turnout increased by 7.83 percentage points after the official polling time had ended.

"subsequent addition of over 10,000 voters in each constituency from the final voter lists," as well as an "inexplicable increase in voting percentages from 5 PM to the final voter percentage declared by the ECI at 11:30 PM on polling day."

In the Maharashtra Assembly elections, the Maha Vikas Aghaikam comprising Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), and NCP (Sharad Pawar) lost to the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance. Congress secured 16 seats, Shiv Sena (UBT) won 20 seats, and NCP (SP) managed 10 seats.

The Indian government should immediately file a case of Hindu genocide against the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in the International Court: Charanjiv Malhotra

New Delhi. Leading social worker, Corona warrior and Gau Mata protector Charanjiv Malhotra said that incidents of cruel atrocities against Hindus and minorities are continuously happening in Bangladesh.



Prime Minister Mohammad Yunus should resign from his post taking responsibility for the continuous inhuman incidents in Bangladesh. He said that a case should be registered against acting Prime Minister Mohammad Yunus for this inhuman atrocity and legal action should be taken against him in the International Court.

Intervene in it. Mr Malhotra said that better job opportunities, but there are many more questions. DCP trans-Hindon Nimish Patel told TOI that

shut all their mouths. A mother's eyes can't be deceived. He is my son," she had said.

NGT slams MoEF for 'stalling action' over asbestos sheets in educational institutions

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has strongly criticised the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) for obstructing its proceedings by failing to provide a decisive response regarding the health risks posed to students by asbestos sheets in educational institutions.

Aryan murder: Cow vigilantes were on 'patrol' for smugglers, 1 had a toy gun

Gurgaon: It was coincidence that led to the 16-minute chase, which ended with the killing of 20-year-old student Aryan Mishra in the early hours of Aug 24. That night, Anil Kaushik, a member of the Faridabad Cow Protection Task Force, and four of his associates were on one of their regular "patrols" to search for cattle smugglers, according to the charge sheet filed in the case earlier this week.

turned their car, I fired a round into the air. We chased the Duster via Patel Chowk, Badkhal, and Ankhbeer towards Palwal. They were driving at a very high speed, and I kept firing at them to stop their vehicle. At Bhagola, their car stopped. I got out of our vehicle and fired a shot at the person sitting in the front seat next to the driver with the intention to kill him," Anil said in his statement quoted in the charge sheet.

case. The document also cited the statements of 41 witnesses, including Aryan's co-passengers in the Duster and investigators who probed the case. After their arrest, the accused lied to

police that they disposed of Anil's firearm in Bawana canal at Narela, Delhi.

statements to police, the group left their house from NIT-5 area of Faridabad around 1.30am to look for a hotel for Shanky. Wanted in an assault case registered in the city on Aug 15, the Gulatis wanted to shield Shanky from getting arrested. They couldn't find a hotel room available at that time in the night, so it was decided that Shanky would take shelter at their neighbour Kirti Sharma's house in Sector 21D.

"While we were on our way to Kirti aunty's house, a white Swift without a number plate started chasing us. Someone started firing from that vehicle, and fearing that they were police, we started speeding towards Badkhal," Shanky told police. Anil told investigators his group suspected cows were being smuggled in the Duster, so they followed. The chase, which began from Sector 21D, ended 29km away on the Delhi-Agra highway in Palwal at 3.08am. "As they

turned their car, I fired a round into the air. We chased the Duster via Patel Chowk, Badkhal, and Ankhbeer towards Palwal. They were driving at a very high speed, and I kept firing at them to stop their vehicle. At Bhagola, their car stopped. I got out of our vehicle and fired a shot at the person sitting in the front seat next to the driver with the intention to kill him," Anil said in his statement quoted in the charge sheet.

ing for help. And the accused fled after noticing that my mother and Kirti aunty were in the car," Shanky said in his statement. Faridabad police, in their charge sheet submitted to a local court on Nov 26, named the five cow vigilantes as accused - Anil Kaushik, Adesh Kumar, Varun, Saurav Sharma and Krishan - in the murder

case. The document also cited the statements of 41 witnesses, including Aryan's co-passengers in the Duster and investigators who probed the case. After their arrest, the accused lied to

police that they disposed of Anil's firearm in Bawana canal at Narela, Delhi.

statements to police, the group left their house from NIT-5 area of Faridabad around 1.30am to look for a hotel for Shanky. Wanted in an assault case registered in the city on Aug 15, the Gulatis wanted to shield Shanky from getting arrested. They couldn't find a hotel room available at that time in the night, so it was decided that Shanky would take shelter at their neighbour Kirti Sharma's house in Sector 21D.

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NAME CHANGE: I, VINIT KUMAR S/O ARJUN LAL R/O L-47, Near Dwarika Main Metro Station, 60 Feet Road, Dwarika Sector-16A, South West Delhi, Delhi-110078, declare that name of mine, my father and my mother have been wrongly written as GOLU KUMAR, ARJUN and TEEJA in my CBSE 10th and 12th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my father and my mother are VINIT KUMAR, ARJUN LAL and TJJA DEVI respectively.

NAME CHANGE: I, AVNEET KAUR DHINGRA D/O HARVINDER SINGH residence of HOUSE NO- 217 GOPAL PARK CHANDER NAGAR KRISHNA NAGAR EAST DELHI-110051, have changed my name to AVNEET KAUR for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, R. Krishnamoorthy S/O C Ramaswamy permanent resident of door no.76/3 vill-melkottai post Marudupallai Tehsil-bargur distt Krishnagiri Tamil Nadu 645108 do hereby affirm and declare that my son's name as per my office record is RK Kalayarasan as well as my daughter's name is RK Monika and my son's name in aadhar card is Kalayarasan K and my daughter's name in aadhar card is Monika K. I want to declare that both RK Kalayarasan and Kalayarasan K is the same person and RK Monika and Monika K is the same person for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, MANISHA W/O BHUPINDER SINGH, residing at 105-K, Type-2, Sector - 4, Raja Baza DIZ Area, New Delhi, G.P.O., Delhi - 110001 have changed the name of my minor Daughter NANDITA aged 15 Years and she shall hereafter be known as NANDITA SINGH.

NAME CHANGE: It is for general information that I, PRAMOD SHAH MAHAJAN S/O VINDA SHAH, R/O 351, New Panyanka Camp, Madanpur Khadar, South Delhi, Delhi - 110028, declare that name of mine and my wife have been wrongly written as and PRAMOD MAHAJAN and SEEMA DEVI MAHAJAN in my minor son namely NEERAJ SHAH, aged 16 years in his 10th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine and my wife are PRAMOD SHAH MAHAJAN and SEEMA DEVI respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE: I, UMAKANT GAUTAM biological son SANJAY KUMAR R/O H.No. - 148, Block No- 25, Trikoti Pur, Dist: East Delhi-110091 declare that I have adopted by SOBH NATH S/O FULLU RAM and INDRAMATI W/O SOBH NATH R/O H.No. - 148, Block No. - 25, Trikoti Pur, Dist: East Delhi- 110091, Date 2-03-2015 vide sub Registrar Deed No. 1005. Therefore name of my father and mother may be known as SOBH NATH and INDRAMATI for all Future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, SURESH CHAUDHARY S/O MEHAR SINGH RESIDING AT HOUSE NO. G-1 A DHAWAN DEEP BUILDING 6 JANTAR MANTAR ROAD OPP. KERALA HOUSE NEW DELHI 110001 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM SURESH CHAUDHARY TO ROBIN CHAUDHARY FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE: I, HUSHBOO PANDEY W/O LAV PANDEY R/O PLOT NO. 58, 2ND FLOOR, BLK.A, ASHOK VIHAR PH-1, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110052 have changed my name to KHUSHBOO PANDEY for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE: I, ANKITA JAIN W/O Manish Kumar Maloo R/O Flat No.140118 Tower-16, Mahagan Mywoods Society Tower-16 near Mahagan Mart Sector-16C, Greater Noida Po Noida Dist.Gautam Budha Nagar Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my minor son name ESHANSH MALOO Aged 3 years to ESHANSH MALOO JAIN

NAME CHANGE: I, Naveen Sejwal s/o Dilbagh Sejwal R/O House No 44 Chirag Delhi, New Delhi-110017 have changed my name to Naveen Choudhary for all purposes

NAME CHANGE: I, hitherto known as MANOJ KUMAR alias MANOJ KUMAR TANWAR S/O JAI SINGH R/O 34-A, HARIJAN BASTI, PALAM EXTN, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110045 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MANOJ KUMAR TANWAR.

NAME CHANGE: I, hitherto known as ROHIT alias RAHUL SHARMA S/O Late YOGINDER SHARMA residing at Duriyal, Kachera Versabad, Duriyal Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh - 203207 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAHUL SHARMA.

NAME CHANGE: I, AASHWANI KUMAR S/O SATRAJ SINGH residing at House No. 49, VTC, Tilang Pur Kollia, PO : Tilangpur,Kollia, West Delhi, Delhi-110043 have changed the name of my minor Son AARYAVEER aged 13 years and he shall hereafter be known as AARYAVEER SEHRAWAT.

NAME CHANGE: I, JAHIR AHAMAD S/O BASHIR AHAMAD residence of HOUSE NO- 145, KRHYA NIM, BHOGAON, MAINPURI, UTTAR PRADESH-205262 have changed my name to JAHIR AHMAD for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE: I, BRYAN ANTHONY PANDEY S/O MARTIN THOMAS residence of HOUSE NO. B-27-28, KHASRA NO. 86, FREEDOM FIGHTER ENCLAVE, NEB SARAI, DELHI-110068 have changed my name to BRYAN ANTHONY THOMAS for all future purpose.

CHANGE OF RELIGION: I, AASMIN D/O ABDUL RAHIM R/O WZ-43, CHHOTIJA MOHALLA, PALAM VILLAGE, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110045 do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I have embraced HINDU Religion and renounced ISLAM Religion w. e. f. 28.02.2024.

NAME CHANGE: I, IZHAR KHAN S/O JAHIR AHMAD residence of HOUSE NO. 13-A, 3RD FLOOR, R H S GALI NO- 3 BLOCK-A, KANTI NAGAR EXTN, KRISHNA NAGAR, DELHI-110051 have changed my name to IZHAR KHAN for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE: I, DEEPAK S/O Shri SUBEDAR R/O 17/ 476 DDA Flats, Madan Gir ND. I, Declaration to all My son's Original name is JIWANT But wrong Name as Cast certificate as Jiwant Ratan Jiwant and Jiwant Ratan is one and the same person

NAME CHANGE: I, DEEPAK S/O Shri SUBEDAR R/O 17/ 476 DDA Flats, Madan Gir ND. I, Declaration to all My son's Original name is TANMAY ARUN But wrong Name as Cast certificate as TANMAY ARUN TANMAY ARUN and TANMAY RATAN is one and the same person

NAME CHANGE: I, Aakash Kumar Biswas S/O Arorindo Kumar Biswas R/O - Room number 67 NHQ doctor hostel NRS medical College and hospital sealda kolikola - 700014 have changed my name to Aakash Biswas for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, hitherto known as AASMIN D/O ABDUL RAHIM R/O WZ-43, CHHOTIJA MOHALLA, PALAM VILLAGE, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110045 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AASTHA GUPTA.

NAME CHANGE: It is for general information that I, UMAKANT GAUTAM biological son SANJAY KUMAR R/O H.No. - 148, Block No- 25, Trikoti Pur, Dist: East Delhi-110091 declare that I have adopted by SOBH NATH S/O FULLU RAM and INDRAMATI W/O SOBH NATH R/O H.No. - 148, Block No. - 25, Trikoti Pur, Dist: East Delhi- 110091, Date 2-03-2015 vide sub Registrar Deed No. 1005. Therefore name of my father and mother may be known as SOBH NATH and INDRAMATI for all Future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, HUSHBOO PANDEY W/O LAV PANDEY R/O PLOT NO. 58, 2ND FLOOR, BLK.A, ASHOK VIHAR PH-1, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110052 have changed my name to KHUSHBOO PANDEY for all future purpose.

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NAME CHANGE: I, AASHWANI KUMAR

NEWS BOX

"Turn To Love, Not Fear": Kate Middleton's Christmas Letter After Cancer Battle

London. Kate, Britain's Princess of Wales, says love is the greatest gift people can give each other in a message to guests who will attend her annual Christmas carol service next week at London's Westminster Abbey.

The December 6 carol concert, the fourth she has hosted, marks Kate's most prominent return to royal engagements since she underwent a course of preventative chemotherapy for cancer.

In a letter to the 1,600 invited guests, Kate, 42, the wife of heir to the throne Prince William, returned to themes of love and the need for empathy about which she has spoken in previous very personal statements and video updates on her health. Christmas, her letter said, was not only a time for celebration, but also for reflection and relief from the pressures of daily life.

She said the Christmas story reflected "our own vulnerabilities", and how much people needed each other despite their differences. "Above all else it encourages us to turn to love, not fear," she wrote. "It is this love which is the greatest gift we can receive. Not just at Christmas, but every day of our lives," she said. William, who earlier this month said the year had been "brutal" for the royal family with Kate's treatment coming in the wake of his father King Charles' own cancer diagnosis, will give a reading at the service. Six-time Olympic track cycling champion Chris Hoy, who revealed he had terminal cancer himself in October, will light a candle. The "Together At Christmas" service will be broadcast on Britain's ITV on Christmas Eve.

Hindu Spiritual Leader's Arrest Being 'Misconstrued': Bangladesh To UN Forum

United Nations. The arrest of a Hindu leader in Dhaka has been "misconstrued" and he was arrested on specific charges, Bangladesh has told a UN forum on minority issues, claiming that there has been no systematic attack on minorities in the country. Hindu priest Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former member of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), was arrested from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Monday. He was denied bail and sent to jail by the Chattogram's Sixth Metropolitan Magistrate court in a sedition case on Tuesday. With utter dismay, we note that the arrest of Chinmoy Das has been misconstrued by some speakers, although he was actually arrested on specific charges. The matter is being dealt with by our court of law," Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Offices and other international organisations in Geneva Tareq Md Ariful Islam said. Islam made the statement during the 17th session of the Forum on Minorities Issues that took place in Geneva on November 28-29. After Das, the leader of the Hindu group Sammilita Sanatani Jote, was sent to prison, it triggered protests by Hindus in various locations, including the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chattogram. India has noted the developments with deep concern even as a diplomatic row has erupted between the two South Asian neighbours.

During the session, some Bangladeshi NGOs and individuals spoke about the situation in the country. A representative of the International Forum for Secular Bangladesh (IFSB) said that the situation right now in the country is "very alarming" and a "very burning issue." Referring to Das' arrest, the representative said that ISKCON is a very popular and peaceful organisation but the former ISKCON leader has been arrested with "nothing accused against him. He was arrested three days before in Dhaka and now Bangladesh every day .... the police, army ... every day, they are torturing the minority."

Islam said that Bangladesh reaffirms that every Bangladeshi, regardless of religious identity, has the right to practice their respective religion or express views freely. "Ensuring safety and security of every citizen, including from the minority community, remains the cornerstone of the interim government of Bangladesh," Islam said.

Taiwan President Gets 'Red Carpet' Welcome In US, China Reacts

Honolulu, United States. Taiwan President Lai Ching-te was feted with a red carpet, garlands of flowers and "alohas" as he kicked off his two-day stopover in Hawaii on Saturday, part of a Pacific tour that has sparked fiery rhetoric from Beijing.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has responded to Lai's first overseas trip as president with threats to "resolutely crush" any attempt for independence. Looking relaxed in a Hawaiian shirt, Lai flitted around the US island state, visiting a Pacific island history museum, an emergency management centre and the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbour. Earlier, he was given the "red carpet treatment" on the tarmac of Honolulu's international airport, according to his office, which said it was the first time a Taiwanese president had been given such a welcome.

He was met by Ingrid Larson, managing director in Washington of the American Institute in Taiwan, Hawaii Governor Josh Green, and others. At every turn, Lai was presented with garlands of brightly coloured flowers or leaves known as leis, greetings of "aloha", and other Hawaiian gifts. In the evening, Lai is expected to deliver his first public speech of the week-long trip at a dinner attended by US government officials and Taiwanese people living abroad. Beijing opposes any international recognition of Taiwan and its claim to be a sovereign state and especially bristles at official contact between the island and the United States. Like most countries, Washington does not recognize Taiwan diplomatically but is its most important backer and biggest supplier of arms. In a statement, China's foreign ministry said it "strongly condemns" the United States for Lai's stopover and that it had "lodged serious protests with the US".

Thanks for dinner: Trudeau's all-smiles pic with Trump amid tariff hike threat

World. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Saturday (local time) was all smiles as he enjoyed dinner with US President-elect Donald Trump at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida following talks amid the Republican leader's warning to impose 25 per cent tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imports after he takes office in January.

Trudeau made an unannounced visit to Florida on Friday evening and became the first G7 leader to meet with Trump before he begins his second term on January 20 amid fears of the US President-elect threatening tariffs on Canada and Mexico if they did not curb the flow of drugs and illegal immigration across the US's borders.

"Thanks for dinner last night, President Trump. I look forward to the work we can do together, again," Trudeau posted on X, with a picture of him and Trump beaming at dinner at the Mar-a-Lago residence. Trump described his meeting with Trudeau as "very productive" and said both of them

discussed a wide range of topics, including drug smuggling and the "massive trade deficit the US has with Canada". In a post on Truth Social, Trump said he made it very clear that the US would no longer sit idly by as its people became victims to what he called the "scourge of the drug epidemic". "I just had a very productive meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, where we discussed many important topics that will require both countries to work together to address, like the fentanyl and drug crisis that has decimated so many lives as a result of illegal immigration, fair trade deals that do not jeopardise American Workers, and the massive trade deficit the US has with Canada," he said.

"I made it very clear that the United States will no longer sit idly by as our citizens become victims to the scourge of this drug epidemic, caused mainly by the drug cartels, and fentanyl pouring in from China.



Too much death and hardship! Prime Minister Trudeau has made a commitment to work with us to end this terrible devastation to US families. We also spoke about many other important topics, like energy, trade, and the Arctic. All are vital issues that I will be addressing on my first days back in office, and before," he said. On Friday, Trudeau said in a press conference in Canada that he was taking Trump's tariff threat seriously. "Donald Trump, when he

makes statements like that, he plans on carrying them out," he said.

Trump's pledge has raised fears of a trade war with Canada and Mexico. The Republican leader is keen on using tariffs as a tool to pressurise both countries to stem the flow of illegal drugs into the US, particularly, deadly opioid fentanyl, and also migrants crossing illegally into the US. While Trump has argued that tariffs on imports would help to protect US manufacturers and boost domestic job growth, several economists have warned that the move would increase costs for US consumers.

Outgoing President Joe Biden slammed Trump's tariff proposal, saying it was "counterproductive" and it could threaten to "screw up" the US's relations with Canada and Mexico.

Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum warned this week that Trump's tariff plan would have dire consequences for both countries and suggested possible retaliation.

"Start With A Problem...": Tech Billionaire Ankur Jain, 34, Shares His Easy Secret To Success

World. Tech entrepreneur Ankur Jain, 34, has an estimated net worth of \$1.2 billion, according to Forbes. A former executive at the dating app Tinder, where he still holds a 36% stake, Jain launched his latest venture, Bilt Rewards, in 2002. The service allows users to earn rewards by paying rent or purchasing homes, as reported by the New York Post. Bilt is now valued at \$3.25 billion. Mr Jain, the highly successful son of former Microsoft executive Naveen Jain - who briefly became a billionaire during the rise of his company InfoSpace before the dot-com crash - recently shared advice for aspiring entrepreneurs in an interview with the Daily Mail. "Start with a problem, not a perceived opportunity," Mr Jain told the UK newspaper. "Those are two very different things. I think one of the most dangerous things that



happened to entrepreneurship was that business school graduates started going into entrepreneurship," he explained. The focus on statistics, models, and creating new opportunities has led young entrepreneurs to prioritize unnecessary goods and services - often at the expense of consumers rather than addressing genuine needs, according to a former Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree. "They've neglected to ask what real problems they can solve for people,"

he said. Mr Jain highlighted Bilt as an example of addressing a tangible issue and making it work effectively. "It's your biggest expense, and now it's your most rewarding," he said, referencing housing costs.

According to Bilt's data, the average American renter spends roughly 30% of their income on housing each year. Jain previously shared with the New York Post that his inspiration to create Bilt - and to focus on solving real-world problems - stemmed from hearing a \$100 million pitch from a venture capitalist a few years ago. The idea? Selling virtual luxury goods on the blockchain. "I'm thinking to myself: 'You have the biggest housing crisis, a health care and mental health crisis here in the city... And here you are sitting, talking to me about like, digital Prada bags on the blockchain,'" he said.

Hamas Releases Footage Of Crying Israeli Hostage, His Mother Reacts

World. Palestinian group Hamas released a video on Saturday featuring an American-Israeli hostage, Edan Alexander. Held in Gaza since the devastating October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, Alexander directly addresses US President-elect Donald Trump in English and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Hebrew, pleading for intervention and urging Israelis to pressure their government for the release of hostages. The video, released by Hamas's military wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, has not been independently verified for authenticity or date. Yael Alexander, Edan's mother, spoke at a rally in Tel Aviv the same evening.



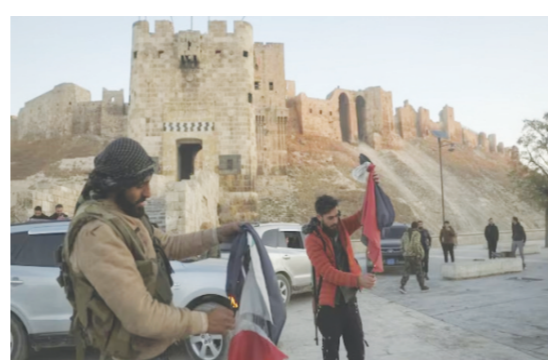
"This video has upset me, but beyond the hope it gives us, it shows how bad the situation is for Edan and the other hostages and how much they are crying out and hoping to be saved now," she declared. She revealed that she had spoken directly with

Netanyahu, urging him to honour his commitment to secure the hostages' release. "You must keep your promise and free them. This state is strong enough to end the war and bring them all back, including my Edan," she said. Netanyahu's office later confirmed the conversation, reiterating that Israel remains resolute in its determination to bring back all hostages. Describing the video as "cruel psychological warfare," the Prime Minister said that such tactics would not deter Israel from its mission. The Hostage Families Forum, an advocacy group

for those captured, also weighed in, stating that the only viable solution for the return of hostages lies in a negotiated agreement. "One year after the first and only deal, it's clear to everyone: returning the hostages is only possible through a deal," the group's statement read. The October 7 attack, which saw 1,207 deaths - mostly civilians - resulted in the kidnapping of 251 hostages. Around 97 hostages remain in Gaza, including 34 whose deaths have been confirmed but whose bodies have not been returned. A brief truce in November 2023 led to the release of 80 Israeli hostages in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners, alongside the release of 25 predominantly Thai captives. However, efforts since then to broker further exchanges or a ceasefire have largely faltered. Israel's military response has claimed the lives of 44,382 people in Gaza, according to figures from the Hamas-run health ministry.

Syrian rebels enter Aleppo, President Bashar al-Assad vows to defeat them

Thousands of Syrian insurgents took over most of Aleppo on Saturday, establishing positions in the country's largest city and controlling its airport before expanding their shock offensive to a nearby province. They faced little to no resistance from government troops, according to fighters and activists. A war monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the insurgents led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham seized control of Aleppo International airport, the first international airport to be controlled by insurgents. The fighters claimed they seized the airport and posted pictures of it. Thousands of fighters also moved on, facing almost no opposition from government forces, to seize towns and villages in northern Hama, a province where they had a presence before being expelled by government troops in 2016. They claimed on Saturday evening to have entered the city of Hama.



A HUGE EMBARRASSMENT FOR ASSAD

The swift and surprise offensive is a huge embarrassment for Syria's President Bashar Assad and raises questions about his armed forces' preparedness. The insurgent offensive launched from their stronghold in the country's northwest appeared to have been planned for years. It also comes at a time when Assad's allies were preoccupied with their own conflicts. In his first public

comments since the start of the offensive, released by the state news agency Saturday evening, Assad said Syria will continue to "defend its stability and territorial integrity against terrorists and their supporters." He added that Syria is able to defeat them no matter how much their attacks intensify.

Turkey, a main backer of Syrian opposition groups, said its diplomatic efforts had failed to stop government attacks on opposition-held areas in recent weeks, which were in violation of a de-escalation agreement sponsored by Russia, Iran and Ankara. Turkish security officials said a limited offensive by the rebels was planned to stop government attacks and allow civilians to return, but the offensive expanded as Syrian government forces began to retreat from their positions. The insurgents, led by the Salafi jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and including Turkey-backed fighters, launched their shock offensive on Wednesday. They first staged a two-

pronged attack in Aleppo and the Idlib countryside, entering Aleppo two days later and securing a strategic town that lies on the highway that links Syria's largest city to the capital and the coast. By Saturday evening, they seized at least four towns in the central Hama province and claimed to have entered the provincial capital. The insurgents staged an attempt to reclaim areas they controlled in Hama in 2017 but failed.

PREPARING A COUNTERATTACK

Syria's armed forces said in a statement Saturday that to absorb the large attack on Aleppo and save lives, it redeployed troops and equipment and was preparing a counterattack. The statement acknowledged that insurgents entered large parts of the city but said they have not established bases or checkpoints. Later on Saturday, the armed forces sought to dispel what it said were lies in reference to reports about its forces retreating or defecting, saying the general command was carrying out its duties in "combatting terrorist organisations."

French Museum Invites Public To Visit Art Exhibition Naked, Here's Why

World. The Marseille Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (Mucem) is currently exhibiting a comprehensive collection of artworks exploring the theme of naturism. In a novel approach to audience engagement, the museum invites visitors to view the exhibition naked, facilitating a more intimate and visceral experience of the artworks. The collection, comprising 600 pieces from both public and private collections, offers a rich exploration of the history and cultural significance of naturism. France is the world's leading tourist destination for naturists: its temperate climate and the presence of three seas have facilitated the establishment of communities, which - with the exception of Switzerland - have few real equivalents elsewhere in Europe, where naturism is practised more freely, outside established communities," the museum told the New York Times.

"Today, there is a new craze for nudity in nature, a craze that goes hand in hand with the quest for healthy, vegetarian diets and the use of natural therapies, meditation and yoga in the open air. These lifestyles, along with the rejection of the diktats that weigh down our bodies, are all keys to understanding the issues at stake in the naturism of yesterday and today." Since opening in July, the museum's exhibition has attracted nearly 100,000 visitors, with around 600 attending five special viewings in the nude.

Some participants were seasoned naturists, distinguishable by their tan-line-free and often weathered appearances. Others, however, had little to no experience being nude in public, apart from the occasional skinny dip. For these individuals, nudity was typically limited to locker rooms or intimate settings. Attending the exhibit in the nude offered a unique opportunity to engage with art and their own bodies in a new way - promoting a sense of acceptance or, perhaps, neutrality.

Naked museum events aren't entirely new. Similar gatherings have taken place in cities like Paris, Vienna, Montreal, Barcelona, Milan, and even Dorchester in England. However, Mucem may be the first major museum to dedicate an entire exhibition to the history, culture, and symbolism of naturism - a movement akin to nudism but rooted in principles of self-respect, respect for others, and harmony with the natural world.

I always say that nudity is a tool - a very effective tool - to get people to achieve body acceptance," said Stephane Deschenes, the president of the International Naturist Federation. "But it's not the objective."

The exhibit, Naturist Paradises, chronicles the evolution of naturism in Europe over the past century. It begins with its origins as a groundbreaking social health movement and explores its modern alignment with the body positivity movement. The exhibition features an array of artefacts, including vintage magazine covers, black-and-white photographs, archival videos, paintings, and informative text displays.

## IMD predicts heavy rainfall in Kerala till December 4, issues yellow alert

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy rainfall in Kerala under the influence of Cyclone Fengal, which triggered a landfall in Tamil Nadu on Saturday. As per the forecast, the state will receive heavy rainfall till December 4. The IMD issued a yellow alert in Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad, and Malappuram districts for



Sunday. The rain is expected to intensify on Monday and Tuesday. Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Wayanad districts are on orange alert on Monday and Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Kottayam, Kannur and Kasargod districts on yellow alert. An orange alert has been issued in Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasargod districts for Tuesday and a yellow alert for Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur and Palakkad districts. Thunderstorms with lightning have also been predicted for the state and fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea on the mentioned dates.

# Migratory Harriers skip Thamirabarani basin as infrastructural growth ruins habitat

**ATREE's senior scientist Dr T Ganesh told that the arrival of Harriers have declined all over India may be due to the loss of their habitats.**

**THOOTHUKUDI.** The arrival of migratory Harriers, the raptor birds, to Thamirabarani river basin has witnessed a gradual decline due to the destruction of their habitats in the grasslands of the river basin. According to researchers associated with the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), the development of housing plots in the grasslands, industries, windmills and increasing stone quarries have adversely affected the birds' habitat in the basin. Harriers, which are ground roosting birds hailing from Eurasian countries, visit the grasslands of Vagaikulam, Peroorani, Vallanadu and Vanchi Maniyachi in Thoothukudi, Koonthankulam,

Vijayanarayanan and Paruthipadu in Nanguneri, and Samugarangapuram in Radhapuram region during the migratory season (September and March). Though there are 16 different Harrier species, only three species — Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*), pallid harrier (*Circus macrourus*) and Eurasian marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) — visit the southern parts of Tamil Nadu. According to ATREE researchers, these raptors prey on grasshoppers, birds, and rodents; whereas jungle cats, small Indian foxes and dogs are their major predators. The typical character of the Harriers is to wait nearly 100m away from the roosting site to check for any disturbance before they roost, said M Mathivanan, coordinator, ATREE.

Speaking to, ATREE research associate A Saravanan said that the developing housing plots on grasslands, industries, windmills and the increasing stone quarries have adversely affected the birds' habitat. "We could not find large roosts of Harriers at the Paruthipadu grassland after eucalyptus trees were cultivated in the landscape," he said. Moreover, an annual census conducted by the ATREE researchers recorded only 91 Harriers during a survey in 2022-23. "Previous census results have also shown a declining trend in the sighting of Harriers with 398 in 2015-16, 276 in 2016-17, 387 in 2017-18, 198 in 2018-19, 212 in 2019-20,



217 in 2020-21 and 201 in 2021-22," Saravanan added. It may be noted that over 70 and 91 stone quarries are active in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli, respectively. The State of India's Birds Report (2023) had also noted that grassland birds are declining rapidly in India, said M Mathivanan, coordinator, ATREE. "Our researchers had tagged transmitters on 15 Harriers in India, including six from Tamil Nadu, to learn more about its routes. The bird tagged at Tharuvai in Tirunelveli a few years ago had returned to the same place again this year, and frequents Tharuvai and Panayankulam surroundings," Mathivanan added.

Moreover, an annual census conducted by the ATREE researchers recorded only 91 Harriers during a survey in 2022-23. "Previous census results have also shown a declining trend in the sighting of Harriers with 398 in 2015-16, 276 in 2016-17, 387 in

2017-18, 198 in 2018-19, 212 in 2019-20, 217 in 2020-21 and 201 in 2021-22," Saravanan added. It may be noted that over 70 and 91 stone quarries are active in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli, respectively.

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ATREE's senior scientist Dr T Ganesh told TNIE that the arrival of Harriers have declined all over India may be due to the loss of their habitats. "Their habitats on the grasslands have been encroached by the green energy projects such as solar farms that spread across hundreds of acres, wind mill turbines, and expansion of residential colonies into grasslands. If they find their habitat encroached by any other projects they would skip visiting the next season," he pointed out. Though female Pied Harriers (*Circus melanoleucos*) are rare visitors to the Thamirabarani basin, they were recently sighted at Vallanadu grasslands, said Sakthi Manickam, a bird watcher.

## Homemaker leads the way in turning waste into masterpieces

**A homemaker from Yanamalakuduru in Vijayawada, Sujatha is celebrated for her unique artistic creations that reflect her love for her country.**

**VIJAYAWADA.** For 55-year-old Nadakuduru Sujatha, art began as a hobby to keep her mind engaged and free from idleness. Over time, her work gained significant recognition, transforming her passion into a pursuit that has brought her both national acclaim and international recognition. A homemaker from Yanamalakuduru in Vijayawada, Sujatha is celebrated for her unique artistic creations that reflect her love for her country. She specialises in transforming small, discarded objects, such as eggshells, into stunning masterpieces.

Sujatha is particularly known for painting national anthems, patriotic songs, and national symbols on tiny canvases. Her remarkable achievements include multiple awards and breaking international records, proving that creativity knows no limits. Her inspiring journey — from homemaker to accomplished artist — has encouraged many women to follow their passions and accomplish extraordinary things.

Speaking to , Sujatha shared, "I've been passionate about art since childhood. I dislike being idle, so I dedicate my free time to honing my craft. To date, I've created over 200 designs." Born to Ankaraju and Dhana Lakshmi from Paladugu village, Sujatha also

loves essay writing and enjoys collecting rare items like coins and stamps. She often gifts her artwork for special occasions, adding a personal touch to her creations.

In November 2023, Sujatha made her mark in the Indian Book of Records for using the most seeds to create an image of the Indian map. Earlier, in August 2023, she earned a place in the Telugu Book of Records for her micro-art, including painting on lizard eggs. Grateful for the support of her husband, Adishesha Varna, her parents, and her three children, Sujatha says, "Winning awards has made me more responsible, and the appreciation I receive on social media motivates me to keep pushing the boundaries of my craft." Among her notable works is art on toothpicks, for which she was recognised for writing 'Vande Mataram' and 'Jana Gana Mana' on them. In 2012, she made waves in the Telugu Book of Records for painting India's map on lizard eggs, almonds, and cashew nuts. On Independence Day 2014, she carved the Tricolour on a watermelon. This year, for Gandhi Jayanti, Sujatha created a detailed map of India along with a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, demonstrating her deep respect for the nation's history and leaders.

## Heavy rain disrupts Chennai's public transport system as trains, buses delayed or diverted

**CHENNAI:** With torrential rain lashing Chennai, the public transport system including suburban services and MTC bus service were completely disrupted on Saturday. The MTC services were either cancelled or diverted throughout the day due to waterlogging on the bus routes, forcing commuters to spend large sums on cabs and auto rickshaws.

The MRTS services were completely suspended between Chennai Beach and Velachery due to strong winds, and the Chennai-Jolarpettai daily express trains were cancelled in both directions. As the state government on Friday had warned against public gathering and transportation for non-emergency purposes, in view of the cyclone landfall, bus stops and stations witnessed limited crowd on Saturday. According to the Chennai Railway Division, the suburban trains were not



cancelled, but were irregular and delayed by 30-40 minutes in every section. The time gap between two trains was also increased due to safety concerns. In several places on the Chennai-Avadi section, local trains were operated at a speed of 10-30 km/h due to inundated tracks, causing significant delays. As a result, hundreds of commuters were stranded at the stations for a few hours on the Chennai Beach-Chengalpattu, Chennai-Arakkonam and Chennai-

Gummidipundi routes. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Transport Corporation diverted buses away from waterlogged subways, and buses from Avadi, Ambattur, and other areas were short-terminated at CMBT. Bus services on flooded roads throughout the city were also suspended. The Chennai Central-bound express trains from Mangaluru, Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Mumbai and other places were short terminated at Tiruvallur, Avadi and other stations.

Further, a few other trains also got diverted to Chennai beach, while several express trains from the northern parts of the country were diverted via Perambur skipping the stoppage at Chennai Central. Similarly, bus services were diverted on Jawaharlal Nehru Road, EVR Periyar Road, Rajiv Gandhi Salai, LB Road, MTH Road, and several other locations.

## Probe launched into poor quality of food at Acharya Nagarjuna University in Andhra

**GUNTUR:** Taking serious note of the poor-quality food served to students at Acharya Nagarjuna University, the Education Department has initiated an investigation into the matter. The issue surfaced on Friday night when a large group of students staged a dharna at the Vice-Chancellor's office on the university premises.



The students alleged that frogs and insects were found in the rice and sambar served during lunch in the girls' hostel mess earlier that day. They raised slogans demanding better food quality in the girls' hostel. Addressing the media, a female student revealed that insects had been found in the food for the past three days. "We complained to university officials and even submitted written complaints, but

no action was taken," she asserted. Another student stated that many girls had stopped eating in the hostel mess and attended classes on empty stomachs, as their grievances were ignored by the officials and hostel staff. According to local sources, when the girls tried to leave the hostel to protest, the staff locked the gates to prevent them from going outside. However, the students eventually gathered in large

numbers, forced the gates open, and staged a protest on Friday night. University Rector Acharya Simbachalam and police officers rushed to the scene to pacify the protesters. The Rector assured the students that immediate action would be taken to improve food quality by Saturday. He inspected the preparation of breakfast on Saturday morning. Guntur RDO K Srinivasa Rao visited the university and inspected the hostel mess, kitchen, and water plant.

He expressed dissatisfaction with the poor sanitation conditions. Food safety officials collected food samples for testing to verify the students' claims. They have been directed to take strict action against the mess warden and contractor if the allegations are proven true.

## No more use of IV Ringer's lactate in government hospitals across Karnataka

**BENGALURU:** In the wake of the deaths of five postpartum women at the District Hospital and Ballari Medical College and Research Centre (BMRC), the state health department has suspended the use of IV Ringer's lactate in all government hospitals across the state as a precautionary measure. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao announced on Saturday. Rao explained that Ringer's lactate glucose has been in use in hospitals for a long time. This year, 192 batches of the IV solution were supplied by the Drug Supply Corporation to hospitals. However, following concerns raised about two specific batches during its use, all 192 batches were stopped as a precautionary measure. "Previously, after the manufacturer obtained a court order, the solution was tested at the Central Drug Laboratory. Based on this, a technical expert committee in Karnataka allowed the use of these specific batches in hospitals," Rao said, highlighting the



background. The focus now remains on the IV solution used at Ballari District Hospital, where doubts persist. The batches supplied there have been sent for anaerobic testing, to determine whether the solution contributed to the deaths of the postpartum women. The minister said the test results are expected within a week, and a final decision on the use of the solution will be made based on these findings. "Until

we receive clarity, the use of IV Ringer's lactate has been completely stopped across the state as a precautionary measure," he said, adding that hospitals have been instructed not to use the solution, though certain batches were found to meet quality standards.

**Upalokayukta takes up suo motu case**

Following news reports of the deaths of four postpartum women at the District Hospital and BMRC in Ballari this month, allegedly due to inadequate care and medication, Karnataka Upalokayukta Justice B Veerappa has taken suo motu action. The Upalokayukta directed the Ballari Superintendent of Police to inspect the hospitals and submit a report, which was filed on Friday. Based on findings, a suo motu case was registered against doctors of both institutions, with notices seeking their explanation. The Ballari DC, Ballari ZPCEO, and health commissioner have been instructed to provide a detailed report within a month.

## Minister intervenes as Kerala Kalamandalam retrenches 130 temporary employees

**The university has a sanctioned strength of 150, including teachers, and needs Rs 90 lakh per month for salary distribution. But the government was providing only Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh per month for the past two years.**

**KOCHI.** Battered down by financial crisis, the Kerala Kalamandalam, the Deemed to be University of Art and Culture under Kerala government, issued an order to discontinue the service of around 130 temporary employees, including teachers, hostel wardens, drivers and cooks. The order issued by Kalamandalam registrar on Saturday said the service of temporary employees will remain suspended from December 1, 2024 until further orders. Responding to the news, Cultural Affairs Minister Saji Cherian told TNIE that he has given instruction to the varsity registrar to withdraw the order immediately. "The government

will look into the grievances of the university and try to solve the issue. Retrenchment of employees is not the policy of the government, and we will address the issues faced by the university," he said. Though Registrar P Rajesh Kumar and Vice Chancellor B Ananthkrishnan were unavailable for comments, a senior officer said the university was forced to retrench the temporary employees as the institution was not receiving adequate non-plan funds for distribution of salary. The university has a sanctioned strength of 150, including teachers, and needs Rs 90 lakh per month for salary distribution.



But the government was providing only Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh per month for the past two years. "Last year the distribution of salary was delayed by 75 days after which the

administration made arrangements to provide the salary in the same month itself. A liaison officer was appointed to take up the financial issues with the government. Now the salary is being distributed by the end of the month. Employees who have taken loans are struggling to pay the installments on time," said a teaching staffer. "The non-plan fund of Kalamandalam is Rs 7.75 crore and the sanctioned staff strength is 150. But the staff strength was fixed in 1981 when Kalamandalam was conducting only diploma courses. If the temporary employees are retrenched, the

functioning of the school will be affected as there are only three permanent teachers," said V S Arunkumar, a temporary worker.

The functioning of the students' hostel and mess will be affected as all the employees are temporary workers. There are 11 security staffers and 19 sweepers apart from drivers and office staff," he added. "The government provided Rs 27 crore to Kerala University this month. Malayalam University with a staff strength of 40 has a non-plan fund of Rs 5.5 crore and they are getting Rs 80 lakh per month," said Anilkumar, another staffer who received retrenchment order.

## The peril of allowing disputed mosque surveys

THE dispute over the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal is the most recent instance in a spate of petitions in courts, seeking directions to survey existing mosques to determine temple remains. This is part of a concerted attempt to intensify disputes over mosques in Varanasi, Mathura and, now, the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, which enjoys the official status of a 'protected monument' and has been earlier declared a 'monument of national importance.' Over the past few years, these disputes have been escalated with the active encouragement of politically affiliated rightwing groups, aimed at weaponising faith and puffing up interreligious conflicts. After the Supreme Court delivered the verdict in favour of the Hindu parties in the Ayodhya case, it was widely believed that conflicts over disputed sites would cease and communal mobilisation would, henceforth, abate. Contrary to this, the Ayodhya judgment opened up the pathway for petitions demanding access to mosques on grounds that there was a temple beneath it. There is an expectation that given the prevailing political climate, the courts will respond favourably. The template is clear — a court-mandated archaeological survey and a judiciary which privileges the faith of the majority in interreligious disputes. It was to prevent such attempts to change the character of the places of worship in the name of correcting perceived historical wrongs that Parliament enacted the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. This law essentially lays down that the religious character of all places of worship would remain the same as it was on August 15, 1947, barring the Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya, and that no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section. This, however, couldn't stop proceedings in the Gyanvapi case from taking a swift turn after five Hindu devotees moved a Varanasi civil court, seeking permission to offer daily prayers at the Gyanvapi mosque, which they claimed housed several Hindu deities.

This was followed by an order of a district court directing the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to determine if a mosque was superimposed on a pre-existing temple. The Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, which manages the affairs of Gyanvapi, had argued in the apex court that the survey of the mosque premises would defeat the spirit of the 1991 Act. But this was set aside. The Supreme Court allowed the right-wing groups to proceed with the litigation. The survey was subsequently carried out by the ASI.

Claims to the Gyanvapi mosque are a re-enactment of the events in Ayodhya. As in the case of Ayodhya, this dispute is not about law, nor history, but about politics and pushing the far-right project of Hindu supremacy, with courts coming up with ingenious legal justifications to circumvent the Act. The former Chief Justice of India (CJI), DY Chandrachud, set the ball rolling by his observation that changing the 'religious character' of a place of worship may be prohibited under the Act, but 'finding the nature of the religious place' was not. This opened the way for resurrecting dozens of historical disputes as there was nothing barring courts from trying to ascertain the 'religious character' of a particular place of worship. In line with this approach, the Supreme Court refused to stay the Allahabad High Court's order allowing a survey to be conducted at the Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura to examine whether it was built on a temple. Not only can this train of events be used to alter the character of the place of worship, but it also allows the right-wing to take up issues around disputed sites of worship nationally and dredge up religious sentiments locally to keep the communal pot boiling. The mosque management committees in Varanasi and Mathura cases challenged the survey exercises based on the Places of Worship (Special Provisions).

## Why women vote matters, not mandir-masjid

HE landslide nature of the victory of the BJP-led NDA in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls captured so much attention that pundits virtually forgot a historical milestone. For the first time ever since the Lok Sabha elections were held in...

THE landslide nature of the victory of the BJP-led NDA in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls captured so much attention that pundits virtually forgot a historical milestone. For the first time ever since the Lok Sabha elections were held in 1952, the female voter turnout surpassed the male turnout. So focused was everyone on the 'Balakot' effect that not much attention was paid to tens of millions of women who thanked the then ruling party for toilets, gas cylinders, pucca houses, electricity connections, Jan Dhan accounts and Mudra loans by voting in droves for the BJP. How do you think the BJP vote share jumped from about 31 per cent in 2014 to almost 38 per cent in 2019? Interestingly, the gap between male and female voter turnout dropped from 4.5 per cent in 2009 to 1.5 per cent in 2014. And the BJP became the first party in 30 years to win a Lok Sabha majority. Even more interesting: the female voter turnout dropped significantly in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as compared to 2019. And the BJP lost its majority. The message is stark: even misogynist politicians can no longer afford to underestimate the power of the female voter to make a decisive difference in elections. Mandal and mandir are considered to be turning points in the Indian electoral history, having irreversibly changed politics and elections in India. The growing role and power of the female voter, too, can be described as a historical turning point in Indian politics. Gradually, yet irreversibly, the female voter is no longer willing to follow the dictates of a panchayat or a patriarch on whom and which party to vote for. She may not be as noisily aggressive as the female voter in the United States, but is still quietly enjoying her own agency.

For decades, savvy marketing professionals have realised that it is the woman who can make her family choose your brand. Savvy politicians, too, are now realising and recognising this reality. Caste, ethnic and religious identity do matter even today. But the female voter is demolishing these silos. A CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies) survey of the Maharashtra Assembly elections found that close to a quarter of Muslim women have voted for the Mahayuti. Another CVoter post-poll survey of Jharkhand has revealed that a large proportion of the upper-caste women

have voted for the "tribal" party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM). It is not just the Lok Sabha elections whose outcomes now depend on what women think and how they decide to vote. They, perhaps, play an even bigger role in determining the outcome of the Assembly elections in the states. And they do snub and reject the BJP if they are convinced that there is a better alternative. When the Assembly elections were held in Haryana in October, Congress candidate and champion wrestler Vinesh Phogat became a symbol of the resurgence of the Congress in the state. The outcome seemed a foregone conclusion, with almost everyone expecting a Congress sweep.

Unfortunately for the Congress, the 'silent' female



voter had other ideas. She seemed to have prioritised her satisfaction with the incumbent on important issues than get swayed by the Jat machismo. In the end, the BJP won 48 seats while the Congress had to be content with just 37 in a House of 90.

But the real impact and power of the female voter reverberated when the Assembly elections were held in Jharkhand and Maharashtra. In both states, analysts talked about strong anti-incumbency and anger at food inflation that eroded household budgets. Other analysts argued that the ruling incumbents in both states had played a trump card by implementing direct cash transfer schemes for women. It was the Ladki Bahin scheme in Maharashtra and the Maiya Samman Yojana in Jharkhand. In the end, these female welfare and

empowerment-oriented cash transfer schemes played a decisive role. What many analysts forget is that 'bribing' voters has been a factor in Indian elections since long. These were mostly confined to cash and liquor to males who would then 'decide' which way the family voted. Bypassing males and directly helping females is a relatively new phenomenon and is clearly paying rich dividends.

There is another factor that is being missed by most analysts while arguing about the growing power of the female vote. Almost all of it seems confined to just the impact of direct cash transfers. It is almost as if the female voter is concerned only with the cash in her bank account when she decides whom to vote for. That she is not concerned about other issues that would engage a male voter. At best, such an analysis is deeply patriarchal. Women have agency. They think independently. And while they do prioritise money in the bank (who doesn't), they also think about other issues. Once again, Jharkhand and Maharashtra provided telling examples. CVoter surveys in Jharkhand had been repeatedly showing that the arrest of Chief Minister Hemant Soren by the ED had backfired politically. Many local voters considered it to be an assault on their identity and pride. This added a multiplier effect to the Maiya Samman Yojana and the JMM-led alliance romped home.

Add to this the Kalpana Soren factor. Kalpana went out of her way to campaign for her husband Hemant Soren when he was in jail. A simple housewife, when asked to fill the vacuum of leadership in her party not only rose to that occasion but also became the most potent and lethal campaigner in the moment of crisis. Yes, India remains a patriarchal society. The representation of women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies is still abysmal. But while they are still to get elected in large numbers, they now decide who gets elected. Ten years back, they became one of the deciding factors of the election mandates. After the current round of elections, they have arrived as the dictating factor of the mandate. Now just wait for the 33 per cent reservation to become reality, and the politics of India will be forced to go beyond the realms of Mandal and kamandal. It is not a question of 'if' anymore but just a question of 'when' that will happen. Well, that 'when' actually happened yesterday.

## Charisma vs crisis

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's landslide victory in Wayanad, with a margin of over 4.1 lakh votes, marks a significant moment in her political career and for the Congress party. Her win, alongside her mother Sonia Gandhi and brother Rahul Gandhi holding...

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's landslide victory in Wayanad, with a margin of over 4.1 lakh votes, marks a significant moment in her political career and for the Congress party. Her win, alongside her mother Sonia Gandhi and brother Rahul Gandhi holding positions in Parliament, consolidates the Gandhi family's influence in politics. It underscores the party's reliance on dynastic leadership. Priyanka's charismatic presence and oratory skills are seen as valuable assets for the Congress, especially as her brother continues to face criticism over his leadership. Her ability to emotionally engage with voters, particularly women, during her campaign helped secure a decisive win. Many within the party hope her rise can inject fresh energy and broaden the Congress appeal.

However, her elevation comes at a critical time. The



Congress has been facing significant electoral setbacks, having been thrashed in Maharashtra and losing ground in

Haryana. These defeats highlight the party's diminishing relevance and raise questions about its ability to compete against the BJP's organisational strength and narrative control.

The key question is: Can Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's ascent breathe new life into a struggling Congress? While her victory in Wayanad demonstrates localised success, translating this into a national momentum will require strategic reforms, alliances and a clear vision for the future. It remains to be seen whether she emerges as a transformative leader or simply a continuation of the Congress' dynastic politics. As she steps into the national spotlight, Priyanka faces the daunting challenge of revitalising her party as also proving that the Congress can offer a viable alternative in the political landscape.

## Priyanka consolidates Gandhi fief

A gentleman whom I have never met wrote a letter to me last week. He is 74 and holds a post-graduate degree in arts from Punjab. He begins his epistle by stating, "Your role in Punjab as the police chief..."

THE glacial silence in the Congress party following its decimation in the Maharashtra Assembly polls last week tells you why Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his BJP continue to wield power across the country. In one word, it's because the Congress enables them to do so. Photos by The Tribune photographer Mukesh Aggarwal of a Congress Working Committee meeting in the capital on Friday unerringly captures this unwitting state of play in the grand old party. One photo shows the elderly president Mallikarjun Kharge, wrapped in his trademark muffler, obsequiously showing his younger colleague Rahul Gandhi, also in his trademark white T-shirt, a sheet of paper — instead of it being the other way round. Over the last six days, the airwaves have been full of tugs and pressures within Maharashtra's Mahayuti alliance on who is going to be the next chief minister, Devendra Fadnis or Eknath Shinde. In contrast, the Congress seems to have rolled over and gone back to sleep. Some talk about Uddhav Thackeray exiting from the MVA alliance is roiling the state, but much of the sound and fury between the alliance constituents had actually come before the poll results had come in — when they argued about who would be the chief minister of Maharashtra. Certainly, it's a remarkable state of affairs. The Congress and Rahul Gandhi regularly accuse the BJP of promoting Modi to demigod status — a fact the PM himself acknowledged in an interview to News18 in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election in Varanasi, when he said he "was convinced God had sent (me), as this energy cannot be from my biological body" — but the fact remains

that although it continues to lose one election after another, and Jharkhand is the exception rather than the rule, the Congress has simply refused to look inwards. The astonishing fact remains that the Congress' refusal to squarely point the finger at Rahul Gandhi's leadership allows Modi and the BJP to consolidate themselves in state after state. When the BJP lost its majority in Parliament this summer, it closely examined what happened, including why the RSS hadn't helped out. In the Haryana and Maharashtra polls that followed, it ensured it learnt from its mistakes — so it micro-managed every Assembly seat in Haryana to pull the rug from under the feet of an overconfident Congress and romped home in Maharashtra with the help of schemes like Ladki Bahin that guaranteed to put money directly into the bank accounts of women. In sharp contrast, the Congress has blamed the EVMs and put down its failure to "large-scale fraud". Instead of acknowledging failure, like all good leaders, Rahul led the charge in celebrating the win of his very charismatic sister from Wayanad — all very sweet, especially as the young lady showed up in Parliament in a traditional Kerala kasavu sari to take her oath as an MP in impeccably spoken Hindi. But look at it, really. There are now three Gandhis in the house — mother Sonia in the Rajya Sabha, children Rahul and Priyanka in the Lok Sabha, he from the heart of Uttar Pradesh in Raebareilly, she from the stunning southern hill district of Wayanad. Make no mistake, the family fief has gotten even stronger. The control of the Gandhis over the Congress has become even tighter. The anti-dynasty argument has been long



closed in Indian politics — every political party today, not just the Congress, is littered with the sons and daughters of their mothers and fathers supposedly fighting the good fight. We know the argument by now. That the people of India are so smart that they won't accept you, however entitled you are, if you don't work hard enough for them. The problem with the Congress is no longer dynasty. It is the fact that the Gandhis continue to insist on a 'mukhauta,' a man with a mask, a puppet, really, while the Family pulls the strings from behind. With her elevation to the Lok Sabha, Priyanka has joined the ranks of the puppeteers. As her mother, a remarkable woman who held the family together in the awful aftermath of her husband's assassination in

that tragic summer of 1991 and went on to give the Congress 10 years under the remarkable chairmanship of Manmohan Singh, fades from public life, her daughter has stepped up to the plate. It's irrelevant who the baton has been passed to, whether Sonia's son or daughter. Just the incredibly magnetic presence of the newest Gandhi in the House is enough warning that the Gandhis are no pushovers. That's why Priyanka matters. She may charge up the party and shake up politics. When she speaks in Parliament, she is sure to electrify the free-floating ions. She is unlikely, though, to rock the boat, because it is her brother who is steering it. This means that the Rahul-led Congress would rather undermine the vote, both in Maharashtra and Haryana. Or that the brother-sister duo are okay with cracks in the INDIA bloc — as the Trinamool Congress pleads that Parliament be allowed to function this winter session — rather than climb down from Rahul's Adani-fuelled bugbear. All this would be fine if the Congress had won a few states — after all, everyone loves a winner. But when it continues to lose and lose, the question why the Gandhis are so special and cannot be challenged — like the G23 once thought it could, to its detriment — has still not been properly answered. Certainly, no one will be more pleased with this development than Modi. He knows that when he taunts the Congress for its lack of inner-party democracy, he strikes a chord in millions of Indians. He knows and the country knows that the days of 'India is Indira' are long over, and if the Gandhis refuse to take responsibility, the grand old party will slowly wither and the mothballs take over.

Is work tiring you out too much? Do you find yourself dozing off at your desk too often? Laziness is not always the cause of such inattention. A growing research has shown that it might be your eight-hour working day that is the culprit after all. Recent studies have shown that an eight-hour workday is a terrible idea as it has nothing to do with your productivity or efficiency.

**Who brought the eight-hour workday?**

It came after a campaign by social reformer Robert Owen in 1810. At that time, factories used to work for 24 hours, and workers would often find themselves labouring for 10-15 hours. Owen came up with a slogan: 'Eight Hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest'. After almost a 100 years, in 1926, the Ford Motor company became one of the first in America to implement an eight hour work day.

Now, many academicians believe that the eight-hour workday is an outdated idea and their claim has been supported by many studies.

An experiment was conducted in Sweden with nurses at a care home in Gothenburg. Initial reports said that nurses were happier and were more productive during a six-hour shift. However, when the timings were stretched to eight hours, they were relatively more tired, as reported by BBC.

It's not just the timings but also the continual work regime, without taking a break. Writing for the Huffington Post, Tony Schwartz quoted sleep researcher Nathaniel Kleitman, who discovered something called 'basic rest-activity cycle'. It suggests that our bodies work on a 90-minute period at night, shifting between deep and light sleep. According to Kleitman, this holds true



during the day as well as we move from high alertness to low in 90-minute periods, called the 'ultradian rhythm'. The research implied that taking breaks between work is

# Why an eight-hour Workday is not a good idea



essential to productivity. While some have called for a four-day work week, others think a four-hour workday is sufficient. Though the debate rages on, one thing is clear - an eight-hour workday is not the answer!

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**Harassing employees may cut your well-being: Study**

**Communicating with workers may help supervisors by releasing negative emotions through sharing, receiving social support and gaining relational energy from their co-workers.**

Are you a boss who bullies and belittles juniors? Beware, your well-being may be at risk, new research suggests. The researchers have found that supervisors who were abusive felt a sense of recovery because their boorish behaviour helped replenish their mental energy and resources. "The moral of the story is that although abuse may be helpful and even mentally restorative for supervisors in the short-term, over the long haul it will come back to haunt them," said Russell Johnson, associate professor at Michigan State University (MSU).

According to the study published in the Academy of Management Journal, employees may not immediately confront their bosses following abusive behaviour over time they may react in negative ways such as engaging in counterproductive and aggressive behaviours and even quitting the job.

Researchers conducted multiple field and experiments on abusive bosses in the US and China,

verifying the results were not culture-specific. They collected daily survey data over a four-week period and studied workers and supervisors in a variety of industries including manufacturing, service and education. The benefits of abusive supervision appeared to be short-lived, lasting a week or less. After that abusive supervisors started to experience decreased trust, support and productivity from employees — and these are critical resources for the bosses' recovery and engagement. To prevent abusive behaviour, the researchers suggest supervisors take well-timed breaks, reduce their workloads and communicate more with their employees. Communicating with workers may help supervisors by releasing negative emotions through sharing, receiving social support and gaining relational energy from their co-workers, the researchers added.

A whopping 87 per cent of Indian working women are seeking advancement in their careers, finds a survey challenging the commonly held view that women are not as ambitious as men.

However, only 60 per cent of women agreed that their company promoting diversity, while just 29 per cent reported having benefited from the programme, revealed the survey led by global management consulting firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG) titled "From Intention to Impact: Bridging the Diversity Gap in the Workplace".

Conversely, 73 per cent of men believed that the workplace management is committed to gender diversity, suggesting that men were more optimistic about the company's commitment toward gender diversity than women.

"It is important to engage male employees to promote gender diversity. A strong correlation exists between men's support for gender diversity and its subsequent progress. Unless men are champions of and equal stakeholders in this agenda, it will always remain a special interest women's support programme," Priyanka Aggarwal, Partner and Director, at BCG, said in a statement on Monday.

"When men act as change agents, the programme becomes free from any

# Indian working Women as ambitious as men: Survey

prejudices and policies are viewed as fair and neutral. Men can be involved as mentors for women or as core members of the design and implementation team of the programme," Aggarwal said. Keeping in mind these disparities, the survey suggested that companies must spend their time and effort on time-tested and effective initiatives like anti-discrimination policies and regulatory requirements, providing parental leave and child

care and offering flexible working models. The survey is based approximately on 1,500 employees across 25 large Indian companies seeking their perspectives on five categories of interventions-recruitment, retention, advancement, leadership, and culture to examine the diversity gaps in the workplace.

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# Delhi HC to CBI: Appoint officer in coaching centre deaths

**The directive came in response to a petition filed by Dalvin Suresh, the father of one of the deceased students, who had raised concerns over the fairness of the ongoing investigation.**

**NEW DELHI.** The Delhi high court has directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to appoint a senior officer to regularly monitor the investigation into the UPSC aspirants' death case at RAU's IAS Study Circle in Old Rajinder Nagar area. The directive

came in response to a petition filed by Dalvin Suresh, the father of one of the deceased students Nevin Dalvin, who had raised concerns over the fairness of the ongoing investigation. Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma, in his order dated November 27, emphasised the need for balanced oversight. "In order to balance the rights, director CBI is requested to appoint a senior officer to have regular monitoring of the investigation being conducted by the CBI. This court hopes and trusts that the CBI will maintain the faith of the petitioner," stated the court. The court also acknowledged the petitioner's apprehensions about the investigation's integrity but refrained from issuing further directives. The petitioner had earlier approached the high court after his plea for replacing the investigation officer (IO) was dismissed by the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM), Rouse Avenue Courts.

The HC also remarked on the ACJM's observation that magistrates cannot monitor investigations under Section 156(3) of the Criminal Procedure Code. Justice Sharma clarified that while



magistrates cannot compel the CBI to register an FIR, they possess the authority to oversee investigations once initiated by the CBI. "This Court considers that this observation of the learned MM [Metropolitan Magistrate] may not be in accordance with the law. Once the CBI has registered the case and is conducting an investigation, the concerned Court will have all the power to monitor the investigation in line with established legal principles," the court noted. Advocate Abhijit Anand, representing Dalvin Suresh, argued that the investigation lacked thoroughness, citing critical gaps

such as the failure to seize the building site plan and CCTV footage. He also alleged non-compliance with earlier high court directions. "An impartial and comprehensive investigation is a fundamental right of the petitioner," the counsel said, urging the court to consider appointing an independent officer of at least Inspector General rank. The CBI refuted allegations of bias, maintaining that the investigation was conducted in a fair and lawful manner under close supervision. It informed the court that two status reports had already been submitted to a division bench in sealed cover. Highlighting its internal monitoring mechanisms, the CBI assured the court that the investigation was being closely overseen by senior officials and monitored by the Secretary of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), following prior judicial directives. While dismissing the petition, Justice Sharma said, "This Court is conscious of the genuine concerns of the petitioner but trusts that the CBI will uphold its commitment to justice."

## 'Everything changed the day I lost my son': For 3 women whose loved ones died cleaning sewers in Delhi, justice out of reach

**New Delhi:** Rajkumari, Ram Kali and Salesh Devi have each lost a loved one—a husband, a son—on the job. The job? Cleaning Delhi's sewers. For one of them, promises of compensation have gone unfulfilled. For all three, justice remains elusive. They are not alone. The lives lost are among the 94 sewer deaths over the past 15 years in Delhi, but in 75 of those deaths, for which records are available, only one case has led to conviction in court, according to an investigation of RTI records by The Indian Express. The Indian Express tracked down and met the three women to know how their lives changed overnight and where their case stands—it found a swell of despair and helplessness.

**Background:** Moved from UP's Sisamau village to Delhi in search of better work opportunities; belongs to the SC community. Case: Died cleaning a sewer in Rohini Sector 18 in 2011. Case status: Accused (a junior engineer) acquitted. Compensation: Rs 10 lakh received from the government. "This system where people like us are expected to take up these jobs, it's unfair. But what can we do? We don't have the education to get better jobs or money to study further," Rampal's wife Rajkumari (50s), who lives in Delhi's Haiderpur village, said.

According to records, Rampal, who worked as a safai karmchari at a housing society, earning Rs 8,000 a month, died cleaning a sewer in front of the complex in Rohini's Sector 18 in 2011. In October 2018, the Rohini Metropolitan Magistrate Court acquitted the accused, a junior engineer (JE), citing a lack of evidence. It noted that the sewer had not been maintained by the Delhi Development Authority (under whom the area falls) and there were no witnesses to confirm Rampal was instructed to clean it under the JE's supervision. Rajkumari said she was unaware of the court's decision until now. "I was angry (about the way Rampal died) at first, but we just want to move on now," she said.

After Rampal's death, Rajkumari, who earned around Rs 5,000 working as a house cleaner, was left to raise their four children—Ravi, Rinki, Shivam, and Aditya—alone. Rinki completed a degree in Arts and works at a bank. The sons were forced to leave school after Class X to support the family, she said. Shivam works as a cleaner in a nearby society. Aditya is now a driver.

**'Everything changed that day'**  
**Manoj (19)** Background: Family moved from UP's Jhijhana to Delhi in 2008; father stayed back in village, working as a farm labourer. Belong to the SC community. Case: Died cleaning a sewer in Rohini's Sector 3 in 2012

Case status: Trial pending. Compensation: Family says they received only Rs 2 lakh of the Rs 10 lakh compensation amount. "I moved to Delhi so I could give a good life to my children... Everything changed the day I lost my son... since my son passed away, my health has been poor," Manoj's mother Ram Kali (60), who lives in a JJ cluster in Rohini, said.

# Jagan Reddy's party slams Pawan Kalyan over Kakinada port remarks: Theatrical

**New Delhi.** The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has taken a strong stance against Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, criticising his remarks during his visit to the Kakinada Port. Former ministers Ambati Rambabu and Kurasala Kannababu addressed the media in separate press conferences, alleging that Pawan Kalyan's statements revealed cracks within the coalition government. The Jana Sena leader had complained about a lack of cooperation from officials at the port, a claim YSRCP leaders termed as "theatrical" and indicative of his inability to manage administrative affairs.



accused the Deputy Chief Minister of being either ignorant of the facts or lacking understanding of governmental operations.

The Kakinada Port, a critical anchor port for rice exports, has been under scrutiny for the smuggling of Public Distribution System (PDS) rice. Officials recently seized a consignment of PDS rice, prompting Pawan Kalyan's dramatic visit and remarks. Rambabu and Kannababu

former ministers stated. The YSRCP leaders alleged that coalition members have been openly clashing over revenue-sharing issues. They pointed to disputes over liquor, sand, and other revenue streams, claiming these conflicts reflect deeper fissures within the government.

Ambati Rambabu highlighted a recent altercation between two Rayalaseema leaders over a fly-ash issue, necessitating the Chief Minister's intervention. They also accused coalition parties of focusing on personal gains during their tenure, with "MLA taxes" and other alleged exploitative practices burdening genuine stakeholders like exporters.

Kanna Babu also criticised the government's handling of power tariffs, contrasting the YSRCP's lower power purchase rate under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy with the higher rates under the previous Chandrababu Naidu regime.

## After failing exam, man roams around wearing fake Army uniform in Gujarat

**New Delhi.** In a recent incident in Porbandar, a young man posing as an army officer was detained by the police after locals raised suspicions. The man was seen walking around Porbandar Chowpatty dressed in a uniform resembling that of the Indian Army. He did not interact with anyone, which caught the attention of local police officers. The police, who were passing through the area, decided to investigate further. Upon questioning the young man, he initially claimed to be a



member of the Indian Army but could not produce his ID card when asked.

He then stated that he had forgotten it at home. His evasive answers raised further doubts, leading to his detention and questioning at the police station. During the investigation, the man, identified as Sanjay Dodiya, a 10th-grade pass, confessed that although he had appeared for the army exam, he did not succeed. Driven by a strong desire to join the army, he began wearing a fake uniform, complete with a nameplate, and roamed around pretending to be an army officer. The police confirmed that he had not attempted to deceive anyone or use his fake identity for malicious purposes. Dodiya was arrested on charges of impersonating a public officer. However, as no fraudulent activities were reported, he was released on bail.

## Bihar egg seller's son overcomes odds, becomes judge despite financial struggles

**NEW DELHI.** Adarsh Kumar, the son of an egg seller, has become a civil judge after passing the 32nd Judicial Services Exam of the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC). He is from Shivganj, Aurangabad.

His father, Vijay Saw, sold eggs on a cart in the Shivganj market to support his family. Despite financial struggles, Vijay ensured that his children's education was not affected. His wife, Sunayana, also took loans from a self-help group to help fund their children's studies,



keeping the financial difficulties hidden from them. Adarsh, unaware of these sacrifices, focused on his studies. After completing a five-year BA LLB degree from Chanakya National Law University in Patna, Adarsh successfully cleared the BPSC Judicial Services Exam.

He credited his success to his parents, saying, "I owe everything to my mother and father. Their hard work inspired me to work with the same dedication." While speaking to, Adarsh Kumar's mother said she had high hopes of her son, and she's extremely proud of how he has worked despite their financial struggles.

## Delhi Weather: November Warmest In 5 years, Temperature Dip Likely Next Week

**The average minimum temperature for November has been 14.9 degrees Celsius.**

**New Delhi.** Continuing the trend of warmer-than-usual months, November this year emerged as the warmest in the last five years, with the highest day and night temperatures.

This is the most delayed dip below 10 degrees Celsius since 2019, when this happened on December 1, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) data. The average minimum temperature for November has been 14.9 degrees Celsius, nearly 2 degrees Celsius above the long-period average (LPA) of 13 degrees Celsius. Similarly, the average maximum temperature stood at 29.5 degrees Celsius, 1.1 notch above the LPA, marking this as the warmest November since 2019. The sharp decline in minimum temperature began on November 25, when it stood at 14 degrees Celsius and dropped steadily due to strengthened cold northwesterly winds and clear nighttime skies. The temperature fell to



11.9 degrees Celsius on November 26, 10.4 degrees Celsius on November 27 and 10.1 degrees Celsius on November 28, before dipping below the 10-degree Celsius mark on Friday for the first time this season. Speaking over the weather conditions, IMD officials said while the current cold spell is typical for late November, the season has been characterised by overall warmer-than-usual conditions due to a lack of significant rain

and snowfall. A temporary rise in nighttime temperatures by 1-2 degrees Celsius is expected over the weekend due to a western disturbance influencing northwest India, with another dip likely early next week as snowfall occurs in the northern hills. Meanwhile, October too had been warmer than usual, as the city recorded its warmest October this year since 1951, with both days and nights recording nearly 2 degrees Celsius higher than normal on average. The average monthly maximum and minimum temperatures in October were 35.1 degrees Celsius and 21.2 degrees Celsius respectively, the highest since they were 36.2 degrees Celsius and 22.3 degrees Celsius respectively in 1951, according to the data. Additionally, on Friday mercury dipped below the 10-degree Celsius mark for the first time this winter season, with Safdarjung, which is representative of Delhi's weather, recording.

# Reinstating bus marshals: Contentious issue that has spilled into AAP's 2025 Delhi poll campaign

**To prevent incidents of misbehaviour towards women in DTC buses, the bus marshal scheme was introduced in 2015.**

issue between the AAP government and the Opposition BJP, triggering protests and heated exchanges in the past year. More recently, it has led to disruptions during former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's campaign rallies, making it a focal point during the Delhi polls slated for early next year. At a rally in Burari on Friday, Kejriwal's speech was interrupted by Mukesh Pal Singh, a bus marshal, as he raised slogans and pleaded for his reinstatement. After inviting him to the stage, Kejriwal said, "This brother is a bus marshal. I and my party are the ones fighting for you; no one else will. In Gujarat, even police officers are on temporary contracts. The BJP never makes anything permanent."



On Saturday, a man named Ashok Jha, who police said was a bus marshal from Khanpur depot, attempted to "attack" Kejriwal while he was greeting the crowd during a padyatra at Malviya Nagar in Greater Kailash. Sachin Bharwal, a representative from the Bus Marshal Pratinidhi Mandal, said: "In the fight to take credit for the redeployment of bus marshals, our futures are at stake. Both parties are deliberately creating hurdles for each other, and an issue that could have been easily solved is being delayed. Even

among bus marshals, many people have started taking sides of parties, which will only weaken our movement."

To prevent incidents of misbehaviour towards women in DTC buses, the bus marshal scheme was introduced in 2015. Initially, 3,356 civil defence volunteers (CDVs) were deployed as marshals, and following a 2019 recommendation by a task force on women's safety, the vacancies were increased to over 13,000, with over 10,000 appointed in subsequent years. However, in November 2023, the services of these 10,000 bus marshals were abruptly terminated after the Revenue and Finance departments said that their deployment as bus marshals did not align with the Civil Defence Act, 1968. Since then, the dismissals have fueled a blame game between the AAP-led Delhi government and the Centre-appointed L-G V K Saxena.



# How to deal with Workplace Break-ups

A break-up is never pleasant, especially if the person in question happens to be a colleague. Mithila Mehta tells you how to recover from a failed office romance. When an office romance fails, it is bound to create a rather messy situation. It is unlike a regular breakup simply because it is imperative to maintain a cordial relationship with the individual. You will run into each other every day, all the time. You may have to work together and speak to each other as though nothing is wrong. It is extremely hard, but must be done. The most important thing is to ensure that a failed office relationship does not affect your productivity and performance. Let work be your priority, give it everything you have. Further, break-up histrionics will showcase you in a bad light at the workplace,

affecting your credibility and professional image. For the sake of your career, putting on a brave face is very important. Quitting and moving to a new workplace may seem like a good idea, particularly if it is a painful breakup. Consider the option with a cool head, and avoid taking a hasty decision. Don't jeopardise your career over something as trivial as a failed romance.

### Talk things out

No matter how badly things end, remember that neither of you would want the break-up to impact your professional lives. In that sense, you are both on the same side. Discuss the implications of ending the relationship in professional terms. Depending on what note you are parting on, try and establish some

eral ground rules to make things easier for both of you. "I was dating a colleague for



almost two years, when things took a terrible turn due to family differences. We had to break up. We mutually decided to keep workplace interactions formal and dignified, and to keep

our office friends out of the mess. Openly discussing these issues and jointly coming to a consensus ensured that the break-up was quiet and smooth," reveals Meera P, FMCG brand manager.

### Be professional

Try to keep your personal and professional selves separate. Don't let the breakup interfere with professional interactions, especially when working in a team. Give your ex the same respect you would give any other colleague. "Two colleagues in my team, who recently broke up, would unnecessarily bash each other's ideas during brainstorming sessions. Such behaviour is downright immature and should be avoided at all costs," advises Richa Dias, account planner at an advertising agency. Maintain a dignified, composed front at the workplace.

Breaking down or mud-slinging is a strict no-no. It doesn't matter whether you are unbelievably upset, angry, jilted or heartbroken. Unleash your acting skills - simply smile through it all. A common trap is looking for a rebound relationship at the workplace. Steer clear, as this will only complicate matters further.

### Maintain a distance

Give each other considerable time and space to recover from the break-up. While it may not be entirely possible to avoid workplace interactions, keep to the basics. Physical distance will dissipate the awkwardness faster. "Every time I saw my ex boyfriend in office, I would feel an overwhelming sense of sadness. I decided to keep out of his way as much as possible—keeping away from his cubicle, avoiding him in the pantry, keeping separate lunch hours. Out of sight really is out of mind," shares Meera. Delete each other from office communicators if necessary.

### Don't involve others

It is unfair and unprofessional to drag other colleagues into the break-up mess. Let the issues lie between the both of you. "Never stoop down to spreading rumours or nasty stories about your ex to other colleagues. It will simply create a vicious cycle. In fact, try not to speak about the break-up at all. No one needs to know what went wrong, how it happened, or any other such private details," advises Dhaval Mehta, communication manager at a financial institution. Even if other colleagues ask you about the break-up, divulge as little as possible, especially if you don't want your personal life becoming the coffee machine gossip of the day.

An office break-up is sure to be a challenging time — but with a fair amount of tact, discretion and courage, it can be handled successfully. Give yourself some time, and things will fall into place.

# Fostering a creative culture in the Workplace

Take a walk around a workspace in a large organization, and the chances are, you will encounter employees gathered around foosball tables, furiously typing away while sitting on beanbags or strategizing business growth over a cup of coffee. These are outward signs of what companies are trying to do - make creativity a part of the organization's culture and generate new

products, ideas or solutions by creating a relaxed atmosphere at the workplace. The workforce today has evolved over the last decade or so to be more open to creativity. With a large number of millennials joining the employee population, the needs of the employees are drastically different from those of the previous generations. And this has caused a cultural shift within organizations. The new culture is headed towards fostering

creativity to bring out the best in employees. Rigid systems and processes, hierarchies, inflexible policies and linear modes of thinking are slowly being phased out to welcome flat organizations, space for innovation, and a focus on collaboration through creative thinking.

Richard Lobo, SVP, Head HR, Infosys Limited says, "It's easy to examine these outward signs and mistake them for a creative culture. There is nothing a creative workspace can do if the underlying structure does not allow free collaboration across teams. Allowing a creative culture to grow involves both a strong foundation of creative values as well as a workspace free of constraints to open the mind." So, how are companies dealing with this? He explains, "At Infosys, we have begun the journey towards greater employee engagement and innovation by fostering creative thinking in the spaces of technology and beyond. In 2014, we launched the first crowdsourcing idea campaign at Infosys called Murmuration. A CEO-driven initiative, employees were encouraged to provide their ideas about our business strategy, and through an inclusive employee-voting mechanism, 10 ideas were shortlisted for consideration from the original pool of 2,650 ideas."

Tech giants such as Facebook and Google are already famous for their hack-a-thons -- overnight events where employees are asked to ditch their regular work and concentrate on trying out something else within the

company. According to Lobo, "These events encourage out-of-the-box thinking and inculcate the culture of rapid problem-solving using technology." Similarly, Infosys has its own global Hackathon, which is currently in its second season, to channel creative thinking among employees. Here, people are able to get hands-on experience with open source and proprietary software tools and technologies. It also provides a platform for employees to identify and engage with talented designers and developers. ??To ensure that employees have a



Landmark Group strongly believes in a culture of innovation and over the years has benefitted greatly from employee sourced solutions. He says, "Keeping the creative juices flowing is important for us and we continuously organize activities that encourage out-of-box thinking. Play in a Day or Theatre Methodology has been a very successful program for us, where various concepts. Be it business or soft skills, they are explained to employees through theater." He also talks about conducting an interesting engagement activity called Islemix, in which store teams are provided with various Olympic-like tasks and adds, "These activities are not only fun, but also increase employee morale, camaraderie and understanding between team members."

R Mahalakshmi, Director Human Resources, Mondelez India Foods Private Ltd stresses on having a 'thought diverse team' that work on the principle of 'crowdsourcing' to solve key business issues. She talks about putting the power in the hands of employees to create a powerful workplace that welcomes multiple perspectives and enables innovation at work. In a similar way, Yes Bank encourages Owner-Partner-Manager concept, where it empowers employees as owners and partners, who take full responsibility and accountability for self-development and achievement of larger organizational goals.

Deodutta Kurane, Group President, Human Capital Management, Yes Bank also emphasizes the need for organizing various social, cultural and sports events that shape employee experience around recreational programmes, fostering meaningful engagement. He affirms, "DICE (Design Thinking, Innovation and Creativity led Entrepreneurship) is the fundamental building block which defines Yes Bank's DNA and forms its ethos." Creativity has always been a quest, but never a priority. Having the support system to encourage creativity is equally important. The urgency of the situation demands that a leader should engage the entire workforce, at the right time, in creative work. The idea that each employee has something creative to contribute is not a new one, but making it work has required imagination. Freeing up the power of the individual to create is the first step on the creative culture journey.



holistic professional experience, it is necessary to encourage creativity in leisure spaces as well. With Google being the front runner, companies are now encouraging healthy environment through creatively designed workspaces, world-class sports facilities, recreational rooms, gyms, and even sleep pods for power naps.

The workplace? ha?ve ?become all the more dynamic and fast-paced. Invariably because of long shift hours, the office becomes a second home and the colleagues, an extended family. Sabbas Joseph, Director of one of the leading event management companies, Wizcraft shares, "For keeping the dynamism alive, we always host interesting activities that can help the Wizzes (team members) to get to know each other and more importantly, relieve stress. From quizzes to pop up shops, celebrating festivals together to dedicating an entire room with books and a music system for just 'chilling'; I think it's extremely important for companies, especially those that require loads of creativity, to provide an outlet for people to engage and bond with each other as they serve as the best stress antidotes." Companies have realized the importance of innovation and how encouraging creative activities can boost team morale.

Venkatramana B, President, Group HR, Landmark Group India asserts that

## Claim rejections have come down to 25% till November: EPFO

**NEW DELHI.** The Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has reduced the rejection of claims to 25% till November 2024, the organisation informed the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) in its meeting on Saturday in New Delhi. As of 26 November 2024, the combined rejection and return ratio was 21.59%. This includes 13.77% inadmissible claims, and returns (deficiency in claims) stood at 7.82%. The final withdrawal claims reflect 11.92% rejections and 13.44% return cases," the EPFO recently said in a post on social media platform X. In 2022-23, the combined rejection and return ratio was 34%, while in the year before, the claim rejections had touched 35%. Claims are rejected when the claimant is not eligible for the type of advance or withdrawal. Claims are returned if there is any deficiency. Returned claims can be resubmitted after corrections. The Board appreciated the fact that rejection ratio (excluding returns) has come down to 14% in November 2024. During the 2023-24, EPFO settled 4.45 crore claims for an amount of Rs 1.82 lakh crore. In the current financial year, 3.83 crore claims have already been settled for more than Rs 1.57 lakh crore, the CBT was informed. In FY25, 1.15 crore claims have been settled in auto mode, whereby requests for withdrawals for education, marriage and medical purposes are settled automatically.

The limit for auto claims settlement facility has also been extended to Rs 1 lakh from Rs 50,000, which has also been extended to advances for housing, marriage and education.

## FPIs' selling spree continues in Nov at Rs 21,612 crore

Foreign investors pulled out Rs 21,612 crore (USD 2.56 billion) from the Indian equity market in November, mainly due to the rising US bond yields, strengthening dollar and expectation of a slowdown in the domestic economy. While the sell-off continues, the quantum of net outflow significantly reduced compared to October, when FPIs recorded a massive withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore (USD 11.2 billion). With the latest pull out, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have experienced total net outflow of Rs 15,019 crore in 2024 so far. Looking ahead, the flow of foreign investments into Indian equity markets will hinge on several key factors. These include the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate environment, and the evolving geopolitical landscape, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Additionally, the third-quarter earnings performance of Indian companies and the country's progress on the economic growth front will play a crucial role in shaping investor sentiment and influencing foreign inflows, he added. According to the data, FPIs recorded a net outflow of Rs 21,612 crore in November. This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore in October, which was the worst monthly outflow. However, in September, foreign investors made a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore. Market analysts attributed the latest outflow to the rising US bond yields, strengthening dollar and expectation of a slowdown in the domestic economy. Overall, November experienced net outflow but FPIs staged a notable reversal at the beginning of the week ended November 29, due to decisive victory of the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance in the Maharashtra Assembly elections. The resulting political stability appears to have strengthened investor confidence, Srivastava said.

Another factor that contributed to his buying activity is the rebalancing of MSCI's key indices, which added few select Indian stocks in its index. Further, a glimmer of hope for ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon may have also positively influenced market sentiment, particularly from a geopolitical standpoint, he added. A perplexing feature of the recent FPI activity is their highly erratic nature. For instance, during November 23-25, FPIs were buyers, however, in the next two days they again turned massive sellers having sold equity worth Rs 16,139 crore, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

## Real estate developers' luxury push continues even as launches below Rs 2.5 crore slow down

**NEW DELHI.** After growing at a robust 52 per cent annually since the Covid-19 pandemic, residential launches across India's top real estate markets fell by 2 per cent in the first three quarters of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. This marks the sector's first slowdown since the post-2020 boom, with just one ticket size bucking the trend—luxury units priced above Rs 2.5 crore.

The growing premiumisation of India's residential real estate sector amidst easing demand is also evident in sales, which fell by 3 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) between April and September 2024, while the average ticket size of units sold grew by 23 per cent, an analysis of data from Anarock showed. In the Delhi-NCR market, where demand for luxury housing is especially pronounced, sales fell by 0.6 per cent while the average price of units sold surged by 56 per cent. The first signs of a slowdown in residential real estate mirror recent concerns around waning urban demand across sectors, from automobiles to consumer goods. Major developers have announced plans to transition away from affordable housing as they no longer see a business opportunity in the segment. Even in the upper-end Rs 1.5-2.5 crore segment, launches fell by 15 per cent y-o-y in the first three quarters of 2024, as against doubling each year between 2020 and 2023.

### Strong demand for luxury housing

Launches of residential units priced above Rs 2.5 crore across the top seven cities—including the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, and Chennai—surged at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 116 per cent between 2020 and 2023.

# Catching fast: Quick commerce is here to stay

**BENGALURU.** A few years ago, when the concept of quick commerce, a business model where goods are delivered within 10 minutes to 1 hour, started gaining traction, venture capitalists and even a few start-up founders raised questions on the model and wondered whether it is scalable, and do customers really require 10 minutes delivery. But in 2024, all major e-commerce companies are betting big on quick commerce as customers' preferences have changed over years. Not just groceries, major q-commerce players such as Blinkit and Zepto have extended their services in many categories and have introduced new features. From LEGO sets to sports, gym equipment, yoga needs and travel bags, Zomato-backed Blinkit delivers everything in 10 minutes. Now, Amazon India mulls foraying into the quick commerce space early next year with Tez. Swiggy shares got listed on the exchanges on November 13 at around Rs 420. Swiggy said in its draft offer documents filed with SEBI that the assortment of non-grocery items available on Instamart has been growing. The category contribution to the assortment has increased from 18.20% in

FY22 to 25.28% in June quarter of this year. This shows non-grocery items' growth and popularity among users.

Also, for FMCG companies, q-commerce emerges as a fastest growing channel. Nestle India recently said that q-commerce is 50% of its e-commerce business and that it is the fastest channel of growth. Tata Consumer saw its festive sales increase through q-commerce.

According to a Nielsen IQ Shopper Trends 2024 Report, 31% of Indian shoppers now rely on quick commerce for their main grocery needs, while 39% use it for top-up purchases. Among the popular categories, 42% of shoppers use quick commerce for Ready-to-Eat meals, and 45% for Salty Snacks. "Like any other sector, FMCG companies are also experiencing significant benefits from the rise of q-commerce, focusing heavily on ultra-fast deliveries. This shift is being driven by changing consumer expectations and the need for speed in delivery, leading to substantial growth in e-commerce sales," says Somdutta Singh, angel investor, Founder and CEO of Assiduous. Singh adds that quick commerce enables FMCG brands to

penetrate urban micro-markets. For instance, by utilizing local warehouses or dark stores, companies can ensure faster deliveries and better serve densely populated areas. "This strategy not only improves service speed but also allows brands to access new customer bases that value quick service. The immediacy of q-commerce encourages impulse purchases, as consumers are more likely to buy items on a whim when they know they can receive them almost instantly," she says. "This can significantly boost average order values, particularly in categories like snacks and personal care products. Also, quick commerce allows FMCG companies to reduce reliance on traditional retail channels, streamlining their supply chains and potentially increasing profit margins by eliminating intermediaries," Singh explains.

### Expansion of dark stores

A strong network of dark stores (which is a retail distribution centre for online orders) is essential for quick commerce players, especially to increase its market share. Quick commerce companies are raising money to invest in dark stores. In just six months, Zepto announced three

fundraising rounds and in the latest round, it raised \$350 million. Quick commerce logistics enabler Blitz recently raised Rs 40 crore in Series A funding led by IvyCap Ventures to enhance its 60-minute delivery infrastructure and expand its dark store network across the country's top 20 cities. Yash Sharma, Co-founder of Blitz told TNIE that Blitz is committed to empowering marketplaces and brands with 60-minute delivery capabilities, setting the stage for 10x growth in FY25. "Quick commerce in India is currently a \$3 billion market, representing just 5% of the total e-commerce space. Having grown 3x in the past two years, it is projected to become a \$30 billion industry within five years," he said.

Talking about various challenges, he said many brands lack the infrastructure to enable quick commerce on their platforms, resulting in lost sales. Nearly 30% of customers abandon carts due to slow delivery timelines, highlighting a critical gap. Vikram Gupta, Founder and Managing Partner, IvyCap Ventures, pointed out that they are seeing opportunities in this space as the market is expected to grow significantly.

## Capex slowdown helps govt cut deficit by 6.6 per cent in Apr-Oct

**NEW DELHI.** Trading sentiment in the equity market this week will be guided by global trends, foreign fund movement, macroeconomic data announcements and RBI's interest rate decision, analysts said. The monthly auto sales data announcement will also be tracked by investors this week. Markets Brace for GDP Reaction: Looking ahead, markets are likely to react to the disappointing GDP growth of 5.4 pc on Monday. The upcoming RBI policy will be crucial, with both the interest rate decision and commentary being key focus areas.

Global Geopolitical and Macroeconomic Concerns: On the global front, geopolitical tensions, particularly the Russia-Ukraine situation, remains a concern. Important macroeconomic data such as manufacturing PMI from India, the US, and China, along with US jobs data and Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech, will also influence market sentiment," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. India's Economic Growth Slows but Remains Robust India's



economic growth slowed to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors as well as weak consumption, but the country continued to remain the fastest-growing large economy, data showed on Friday. Equity Market Ends Volatile Week on Positive Note: The Indian equity market ended the last week on a positive note after experiencing significant volatility. Key Domestic and Global Data to Influence Markets: "The outlook for the market will be

guided by the major domestic and global economic data such as India's manufacturing PMI, services PMI, interest rate decision, US S&P global composite PMI, manufacturing PMI, services PMI, non-farm payrolls and initial jobless claims," Palka Arora Chopra, Director, Master Capital Services Ltd, said.

### Weekly Performance of Key Indices

Last week, BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 685.68 points or 0.86 per cent and NSE Nifty climbed 223.85 points or 0.93 per cent.

### Focus Areas for the Upcoming Week

"Participants will first react to the GDP data released post-market on Friday. The primary focus will be on the RBI monetary policy review. Additionally, high-frequency indicators such as auto sales, along with manufacturing and services PMI data, are expected to provide further market direction. Foreign inflows will also remain in focus as a major driver of sentiment," Ajit Mishra—SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

## EPFO Board approves reinvestment norms for ETF redemption, amnesty scheme for employers

**NEW DELHI.** A redemption policy for investments in exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and reinvestment of 50 per cent of those redemption proceeds into ETFs, along with an amnesty scheme for employers to voluntarily disclose and rectify past non-compliance without penalties was approved by the Central Board of Trustees of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) in its 236th meeting Saturday. The Board also discussed the pilot of the Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS), which is likely to be launched on December 31. The EPFO, which has 7.37 crore contributing subscribers and a total of 32.56 crore members, plans to increase the ETF redemption period to 7 years from 4 years over the next six years to improve yields. While 50 per cent of the redemption proceeds will

get reinvested in equity through ETFs such as Bharat 22 and CPSE ETFs, the remaining 50 per cent would be invested in other asset classes as per the existing pattern such as government securities and corporate bonds. The changes in investment norms is being done with an aim to earn better returns through investment in equity. The investment committee of the EPFO had earlier noted that "there is a need to balance the short-term returns on investments under EPF Scheme with the future growth prospects in equity". As per the notified pattern of investment by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the EPFO can invest up to 15 per cent of its incremental flows in equity. EPFO started with an investment of 5 per cent in equity through ETFs on Sensex or Nifty in August 2015. Subsequently from 2017

the investment in ETFs was increased to 15 per cent of the fresh accretion.

The 44-member CBT, headed by Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and having both employees' and employers' representatives, also gave nod for the EPFO Amnesty Scheme 2024. The scheme is being brought as the Labour and Employment Ministry moves ahead with the implementation plan for the Budget announcement of Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme. The initiative is designed to encourage employers to voluntarily disclose and rectify past non-compliance or under-compliance without facing penalties or legal repercussions. A simple online declaration from employers will be sufficient to avail the scheme benefits," the Ministry said in a statement.

# COP29 in Baku: Oil and money stain climate talks

**NEW DELHI.** It is indeed ironical the UN Climate Conference, also known as the Conference of Parties (COP), chooses to hold their jamborees in capitals that are the hub of fossil fuel interests. The World, desperately fighting Climate Change and global warming, held its 200-nation gathering in December 2023 in Dubai; and now COP29 has just concluded in Baku, Azerbaijan—the oldest oil exploration town existing since 1840!

The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, opened COP29 on 11 November, embarrassingly referring to the country's oil wealth as "the gift of God" to his people. What could he say? Oil represents 90% of Azerbaijan's exports.

It was billed as a 'finance conference'. The focus of the summit this year was to get the developed world to agree to a new target of funding pegged at \$1.3 trillion a year. It was to help the poorer nations to move away from fossil fuels and to repair the climate change havoc wrought on communities around the world.

There's been a history of skirmishing between the rich and poor nations on who will pay for the environmental damage.

With much back-and-forth, a deal was finally reached in 2009 at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen when the rich nations agreed to raise \$100 billion by 2020. Expectedly, the developed world reneged from its commitments, and it was only in 2022 that the target was met when funding touched \$106 billion. Much of this was disguised low-interest loans, something the poor nations had not bargained for.

### Poor compromise

The Baku conference seemed doomed from the start. The demand for \$1.3 trillion a year by the Global South was met with derision by the rich nations. At one point, representatives for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) walked out of the summit, after dismissing an offer of \$250bn from richer countries. It seemed the climate catastrophe was not registering. Tuvalu, a small south Pacific island nation, was facing submergence with rising tides, but who cares?

In this melee of spats and protests, by 24 November, when the conference was supposed to close, there was no agreement. The differences were so sharp



that Mukhtar Babayev, the Azerbaijan environment minister, also president of the Conference, had two speeches in hand when he walked up for his closing remarks. But the rich nations, with a push from China and India, finally delivered. The gavel came down with the adoption of the rich nations' proposal to raise \$300 billion a year by 2035. It was a bitter compromise for the poor nations. Most environmental groups said it would have been better not to have any deal at all; but a deal is always better than no deal, as it let's one build on it.

### India and China

India led the developing countries at COP29, and continued to reiterate the demand for raising funding to \$1.3 trillion

a year. When the gavel came down on \$300 billion, India's delegate Chandni Raina, in a fierce speech called the deal "paltry" and "nothing more than an optical illusion", and unable to "address the enormity of the challenge we all face."

However, as the world's third biggest emitter and fifth biggest economy, India has been caught in a cleft between advocating renewable energy and continuing a legacy of electricity generation that relies heavily on coal power plants. India generates 80% of its electricity from coal-fired plants, and it is rising. In January 2024, coal-fired electricity generation in India reached a record high of 115 terawatt hours (Twh), a 10% increase from the same month in 2023. This was reflected in India's ambivalence at COP29—fierce public opposition to the final deal, but not pressing too many objections in the intervening days at the conference. India was keen for a deal as climate finance could bolster its transition to a cleaner economy. In the process, though it slammed the "paltry" \$300 billion, it did not veto the deal; and.

NEWS BOX

**2nd Test: Shadman hits fifty, West Indies drop 3 catches on rain-truncated day 1**

New Delhi. Kumar Roach gave the West Indies a strong start on the rain-affected opening day of the Kingston Test, dismissing two Bangladesh batters early. However, sloppy fielding cost the hosts crucial breakthroughs, as three dropped catches allowed Bangladesh to recover and end the day at 69 for 2. Shadman Islam, who reached an unbeaten 50, and Shahadat Hossain, not out on 12, capitalised on the missed opportunities to stabilise the innings after an initial collapse.

The match began five hours late due to a damp outfield, forcing a 3 p.m. local time start under sunny skies. Bangladesh, sent in to bat by captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz, found themselves in early trouble as Kumar Roach struck twice within the first seven overs. Roach, who continued his dominance over Bangladesh, dismissed Mahmudul Hasan Joy for two with a sharp edge caught by wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva and then induced another edge from Mominul Haque, who departed for a duck — his fourth in the West Indies. These early blows left Bangladesh reeling at 10 for 2. However, Shadman Islam (50 not out) and Shahadat Hossain (12 not out) dug in to steady the



innings. Shadman was the beneficiary of two dropped chances, first by Alick Athanaze at slip on 15 and later by Kraigg Brathwaite at short cover on 35. Shahadat also enjoyed a reprieve on 8, thanks to a comical double-drop in the slip cordon involving Athanaze and Kavem Hodge. The slow, rain-affected outfield further hampered scoring, with several boundaries thwarted just short of the ropes. Shadman, however, managed to bring up his fifty off 100 balls, laced with three fours and a six, while Shahadat played cautiously, adding just one boundary in his 63-ball stay.

For the West Indies, Roach (2-19) was the standout performer, reaching the milestone of 50 wickets against Bangladesh. However, the home side's lacklustre fielding undid much of the pressure created by their bowlers. Rain remains a looming threat for the rest of the match, with forecasts predicting interruptions on each of the remaining days. Bangladesh will hope their overnight pair can build on the modest foundation, while the West Indies will need to regroup and capitalize on any further opportunities that come their way.

**Gautam Gambhir's stint as India coach shouldn't be judged too soon: Ajay Jadeja**

New Delhi. Former Indian batter Ajay Jadeja has urged critics to exercise patience with Gautam Gambhir, the newly appointed head coach of the Indian cricket team, amidst the backlash following India's 0-3 home Test series loss to New Zealand. Speaking at the FICCI Turf event on Saturday, Jadeja emphasised that Gambhir's performance as coach cannot be fairly evaluated within a short timeframe.

Gambhir, celebrated for his heroics in India's 2011 World Cup triumph, assumed the head coach role in July, succeeding Rahul Dravid. While the team began on a promising note with a T20I series win over Sri Lanka and a Test series victory against Bangladesh, the subsequent ODI whitewash against New Zealand raised questions about Gambhir's leadership.

Jadeja, however, believes it is premature to critique Gambhir. "I think you are being unfair to him... If you will start judging



people on the basis of their coaching role or whatever way it is being looked at, it is too short a time for people to be judged," Jadeja remarked. The former middle-order batter, who amassed over 5000 ODI runs, further elaborated, "There are phases in cricket. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. Gambhir has always been a straightforward individual, and what you see now is what was expected of him. It's not time to judge him; it's time to enjoy his approach." India's morale received a significant boost with a dominant 295-run victory over Australia in the first Test of the Border-Gavaskar series in Perth, following the New Zealand debacle. Jadeja highlighted that this win showcases the team's resilience and stressed that Gambhir's leadership should be evaluated over a more extended period.

Jadeja also opened on the return of regular Test captain Rohit Sharma for the second Test in Adelaide, beginning December 6. "Rohit coming back will surely boost India's confidence.

**AUS vs IND: Why Australia will miss Josh Hazlewood badly in Adelaide Test**

**Border-Gavaskar Trophy: Fast bowler Josh Hazlewood played a crucial role for Australia in the Day-Night Tests, but would not be a part of their setup against India at the Adelaide Oval. Will Australia miss Hazlewood in the Adelaide Test?**

New Delhi. Australia finds themselves under immense pressure following their crushing 295-run defeat to India in the series-opening Perth Test. With their confidence shaken, the Pat Cummins-led side must regroup and deliver a remarkable turnaround as they prepare for the day-night Test at the Adelaide Oval, starting December 6. Adding to their woes, the team suffered a significant setback with the injury of Josh Hazlewood, a key figure in their bowling attack, leaving them further

exposed ahead of the crucial pink-ball encounter. Hazlewood sustained a "low-grade left side injury" and would not be able to attain full fitness before the Adelaide Test. The hosts roped in Sean Abbott and Brendan Doggett, who are both yet to make their Test debuts. Statistically, Hazlewood has been a gun bowler for the Aussies, especially in Day-Night Tests. He is one of the major reasons why Australia have won 11 out of 12 Day-Night Tests until now.



does have Scott Boland, a proven customer in Tests, but can he make the same impact as Hazlewood?

Hazlewood was also the standout Australian bowler in the Perth Test, where he picked up five wickets, including a four-wicket haul. In fact, it was his spell of 13-5-29-4 that helped the Aussies bowl India out for 150 in the first innings. Now, with Hazlewood

unavailable for the Adelaide Test, the pressure is on Starc and Cummins, neither of whom looked at their best in the opening game. Most wickets for Australia in Day-Night Tests

Australia under the pump Before the start of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Australia were placed on top of the table in the WTC 2023-25. Cummins and Co. were strong contenders to make their way through to the final to be held next year. But after losing in Perth, they lost their top spot in the table. Adding insult to injury, the Aussies dropped out of the two, invariably putting them in deeper trouble as far as playing in the summit clash is concerned. Australia slipped to third after South Africa defeated Sri Lanka by 233 runs at the Kingsmead in Durban. The Adelaide Test provides no room for complacency for Australia. If they go 0-2 down, they could eventually miss out on a spot in the final of the WTC, let alone winning the series against India.

**Rohit Sharma's hilarious exchange with fans goes viral before Pink Ball Test**

**Border-Gavaskar Trophy: India captain Rohit Sharma was hounded by fans in Canberra for his autograph and selfies. The incident brought out a hilarious reaction from the India captain.**

**-Rohit Sharma was hounded for autographs in Canberra**  
**-The incident brought out a classic reaction from Rohit**  
**-India are playing their warm-up game vs PM XI**

Canberra. India captain Rohit Sharma was hounded by fans during training in Canberra during the team's practice session ahead of the warm-up game against Australian Prime Minister's XI. As Rohit was going for practice some eager fans surrounded him and asked him for photos and autographs. The incident elicited a hilarious response from



Rohit Sharma who asked a fan to wait for his turn as he was attending to a previous request. Rohit was asked by the said fan for a selfie while he was autographing a cricket ball, and the constant haggling had Rohit

slightly irritated. The captain responded to the fan, asking him to wait for his turn. "Ek time par ek hi kaam ho sakta hai. (Only one task can be done at a time)," Rohit Sharma said.

**Ligue 1: Coach Luis Enrique urges PSG to stay resilient after frustrating draw**

**-Paris St Germain manager Luis Enrique lamented his team's failure to convert chances in Saturday's Ligue 1 draw with Nantes, despite dominating possession, and stressed the need for persistence.**

New Delhi. Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) head coach Luis Enrique was frustrated after his team's 1-1 draw with relegation-threatened Nantes in Ligue 1 on Saturday. Despite a record-setting 84.1% possession, the Parisians failed to secure a victory at the Parc des Princes, further fuelling concerns about their inability to capitalise on their dominance. PSG looked poised for an easy win when Achraf Hakimi struck in the

second minute, converting a low cross from Nuno Mendes. However, Nantes found an equaliser seven minutes before halftime when Matthis Abline broke free from William Pacho and scored past

providing the assist for Hakimi's opener. However, the team's inability to create clear-cut chances underscored their lack of efficiency.



Gianluigi Donnarumma. The second half saw PSG control possession but struggle to break down Nantes' compact defence. Lee Kang-in hit the post, while Gonçalo Ramos—making his first start in over three months—played the full match,

Reflecting on the draw, Enrique emphasised the importance of resilience: "Efficiency is the key to football. It's incredibly tough to create as many chances as we did. But it's clear that if you don't score, it becomes frustrating and draining. In the end, the solution is persistence and continued trust in our players."

The result comes after PSG's narrow midweek loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League, leaving them teetering on the brink of a European exit. Despite the setbacks, PSG remains undefeated in Ligue 1 this season and sits seven points clear at the top of the table, though second-placed AS Monaco has the chance to close the gap on Sunday against Marseille.



When I started here I told them there would be no excuses. "It's normal that some players, when they come back from injury, are not at the highest level. But if we play as a team we should be able to beat any team, but if some players are disconnected it doesn't go well." Barcelona do not play at home again until mid-December, with their next three games away at Mallorca and Real Betis in LaLiga followed by Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League. "We have to accept the slump, now another month starts. The team has the quality," Flick said. "Today it was not possible. In front of goal we were not able to score." Barca's Raphinha scored the equaliser in the second half while he also hit the crossbar and saw a free kick tipped over the bar, and the winger said they had to find a way to turn things around to get back to winning ways. "We were bad in the game. We have to look at what we are doing wrong to try to improve and win the games," he said. "We have dropped the level of what we were doing and this is making games more difficult for us.

**India will never get someone as good as Ravindra Jadeja or R Ashwin: Pujara**

**-India do not have a replacement for Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, said Cheteshwar Pujara. Pujara called the duo legends of the game and said that they have contributed a lot to the Indian team.**

India do not have replacements for Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, said Cheteshwar Pujara leading to the Adelaide Test match against Australia. Speaking on ESPNcricinfo, Pujara called the duo legends of the game and said that they

have contributed a lot to Indian cricket. Ashwin and Jadeja did not play the opening Test match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Optus Stadium in Perth in a pitch that was conducive to fast bowling. Washington Sundar played as India's lone spinner in the Test match as India look to transition from this veteran duo. While they are still the preferred pair for all home Tests, India have started experimenting with other combinations overseas.

Pujara however believes that there is no chance that India can have the quality of Ashwin and Jadeja in their line-up in the near future.

"You can't have the quality of Ashwin and Jadeja. I have seen a lot of spinners in the Indian domestic circuit, but I wouldn't say that we do have actual replacements for them. Yes, we do have some young talented bowlers whom we need to groom, but those are the legends of the game. I don't think we will ever get someone as good as Ashwin or



Jadeja. We might have some replacements, but I still feel those guys have contributed a lot to Indian cricket," Cheteshwar Pujara said on ESPNcricinfo. "After the WTC final, we will be travelling to England. That will be an important series. We are going to play five Test matches over there. Do you see Ashwin and Jadeja fit into that role? Do you want one of them to be part of the playing XI? But, if

Washington Sundar is going to play in the XI, then you might as well have someone else be part of the squad," Pujara went on to add.

After missing out on the Perth Test, Ashwin and Jadeja are unlikely to get game time in the Adelaide Test match as well. However, that has not worried India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar, who said that India are lucky to have senior players who think about the team before their personal goals.

"It is only tough when you have seniors who do not understand it. When you have seniors like Jaddu and Ashwin, who understand what the team is trying to do, I think it becomes very easy. The team follows what Gauri bhai believes in. We were very happy with how Ashwin and Jaddu were helping the younger guys do well here. I just felt that the culture of the team was focused on team India to win," Abhishek Nayar said in Canberra on Friday, November 29.

# Ananya Panday

## Shares How Moving To Her Own Space Changed Her Life

Ananya Panday stepped into a new chapter of her life last year by purchasing her own apartment in Mumbai. On the occasion of Dhanteras, the actress even held a grihapravesh (house-warming) puja, giving fans a glimpse into her new purchase on Instagram. Living independently has allowed the actress to take charge of her life in a meaningful way. In a recent conversation with her father, Chunky Panday, Ananya shared how this decision brought a wave of positivity into her life. She also candidly revealed that while her parents' concerns came from a place of love, they sometimes added to her struggles. Talking to her dad Chunky Panday on his YouTube channel We Are Yuvaa, Ananya Panday said, "When I used to stay with y'all, I feel like when I used to get sad, you used to feed into my sadness." What added to the gravity of Ananya's sadness was her mom Bhavana Pandey's incessant questions like "What happened? Are you okay?" Recalling the time when she shifted to her new home, the actress noted, "I was acting also a little bit while crying at home."

Ananya Panday wanted to get her own personal space after making a name for herself in Bollywood. During the same conversation, she mentioned that ever since shifting to her new place, her emotional balance has improved, allowing her to discover what inner peace and true happiness look like. The actress also mentioned that she enjoys spending time with herself, and nothing impacts her the way it used to before. Earlier in 2023, Ananya Panday shared a few pictures and videos from the housewarming ceremony on Instagram. Captioning the post, she wrote, "My OWN home !! need all ur love and good vibes !!! to new beginnings .. happy Dhanteras ." On the professional front, Ananya Panday will next be seen in Chand Mera Dil, which will star her with Lakshya, popular for his role in Kill. Apart from the same, the star kid has also begun working on the second season of the popular series Call Me Bae. That's not all. She also has another project lined up in her kitty. In the film, she will share screen space with Akshay Kumar and R Madhavan. On the other hand, her father, Chunky Panday, is gearing up for Housefull 5.



## Janhvi And Khushi Kapoor Spread Holiday Cheer While Decorating Their Christmas Tree In Pajamas



Bollywood sisters Janhvi and Khushi Kapoor are the epitome of sibling goals, always inspiring with their unbreakable bond and support for each other. The duo recently gave fans a glimpse of their festive cheer when Orly shared an adorable snapshot of them decorating their Christmas tree together in cozy pajamas. The heartwarming moment not only showcases their holiday spirit but also sets the bar for sibling plans this season! Taking to Instagram Stories on November 30, Orly shared a delightful collage of Janhvi and Khushi putting up Christmas decorations. The tree, adorned with elegant green and white ornaments, radiates festive vibes.

Janhvi, casually dressed in a simple t-shirt and black-and-white checkered pants, is caught mid-decoration, while Khushi assists in her comfy pajamas, adding a cozy touch to the frame. Orly, ever the playful presence, sneaks into the picture with his signature 'shy fingers' pose, capturing the fun and joy of the moment. Together, the sisters and their friend radiate holiday vibes, reminding us all to embrace the festive season with family and loved ones. In an earlier interview with Lifestyle Asia India, Khushi Kapoor opened up about her special bond with Janhvi. She revealed that Janhvi is her go-to person for advice and has always been a pillar of support. Whether it's life's bigger challenges or smaller dilemmas, Janhvi takes on the role of a guiding figure—sometimes even feeling like a parental presence. Khushi also shared how being Janhvi's sister has its perks, particularly when it comes to sharing wardrobes! From pep talks to shoes, their relationship is a blend of love, wisdom, and fun.

The Archies actress, who recently made her fashion runway debut, also spoke about Janhvi's advice before the event. Speaking to ANI, Khushi revealed how her sister encouraged her to stay calm, be in the moment, and immerse herself in the music. Janhvi's words gave her the confidence to shine on the runway, further proving that their bond goes beyond just sibling camaraderie—it's a deep-rooted friendship. As Janhvi and Khushi usher in the festive season with warmth and togetherness, they remind us to cherish the special relationships in our lives, making their sibling bond one to aspire to this Christmas.

## Aamir Khan's Daughter Ira Khan On How Her Parents' Divorce Changed Their Lives 'I Was 4 When We Moved Out...'



Ira Khan, daughter of Aamir Khan and Reena Dutta, has been open about her mental health struggles. Aamir and Reena divorced in 2002 when Ira was five. In an interview with Pinkvilla, Ira talked about how her parents reacted to her struggles and how she dealt with their divorce. She said that both her parents were concerned when she shared her struggles. "I don't think I told him (father, Aamir) that I was putting it on Instagram. When I told both my parents, they were worried. You don't figure it out all at the same time. It's not like I said one sentence and it was over. There was concern because I was studying in the Netherlands, wanting to drop out, so there were a lot of decisions to be made. My dad has put this faith or belief in us that mental health issues are not shameful," she said during a chat with Pinkvilla. Ira mentioned that while her parents, Aamir Khan and Reena Dutta, never openly blamed themselves for her struggles, she felt they might have. She recalled that when she started medication, both her parents were very worried, focused on their own fears. Ira said, "I started my medication when I came home in 2018. During that time, I could tell that both of them were extremely worried because they were going on their own fears and tangents. And I was like, 'I am the child, I need help right now, we can deal with your fears later'. They never said that or openly blamed themselves, but I am sure they felt those things. Even though they know that it's not in their control, it's a culmination of many things. I hope they don't blame themselves." When asked about how her parents' divorce affected her, Ira said it changed their lives. She said, "My parents' divorce wasn't one day, it was something that changed all our lives since that day. Many good and not good things happened since that day, many things happened that we maybe even didn't know happened." Ira added, "We moved out of the house after the divorce. I was 4 when we moved out but we lived very close by, just like 50 metres away. My dad's job involves a lot of travelling, it's a little hard to say if shifting houses affected the dynamic. I am sure it did. But, it was fine! My grandma also lived in the same building, so we were always around there."

# Sherlyn Chopra

## Reveals Her Struggle With Lupus And The Impact On Motherhood

Actress Sherlyn Chopra has recently unveiled the illness she is struggling with. She claimed that she could never be a mother because of the illness she has been battling since 2021. She shared that she has an autoimmune disorder called Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), which resulted in her kidney failure in 2021.

In an interview with Bollywood Bubble, Sherlyn shared that her doctor told her to keep this health disorder under control and she needs medication for the rest of her life. Following this, she added, "I take it three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening. They also advised that I should never contemplate getting pregnant because it could be life-threatening for both the baby and the mother". Despite this, the actress shared her strong desire to be a mother. Though she cannot be a mother naturally, she is looking for other options and hopes to have at least three or four children. She further added that she wants her child's name to start with the letter A, as she is very fond of names starting with A. Additionally, Sherlyn added, "I think I was born to be a mother because whenever I think about children, I feel an indescribable happiness. Even before they arrive, I'm so happy. Just imagine how much joy I'll feel after they're here".

The actress further decides to balance motherhood with her career. She stated that she would continue her work and take care of her child together. She said, "I will continue working, but I'll carry them along with me. Initially, I'd hire a nanny who could take care of my kids in my presence". She made headlines in 2012 by becoming the first Indian woman to pose for Playboy magazine. This move garnered both controversy and admiration. She began her career in Bollywood in the early 2000s and appeared in several films like Time Pass (2005), Dosti: Friends Forever (2005) and Raqeeb (2007). She also participated in several reality shows, including Bigg Boss Season 3 in 2009.

