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SIT to probe Uddhav gov'ts alleged conspiracy of false cases against Fadnavis, Shinde

Mumbai, Jan 31: Amid allegations that false cases were filed against BJP leaders during Uddhav Thackeray's Maha Vikas Aghadi...

(MVA) government, the state government formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Friday to investigate the alleged conspiracy.

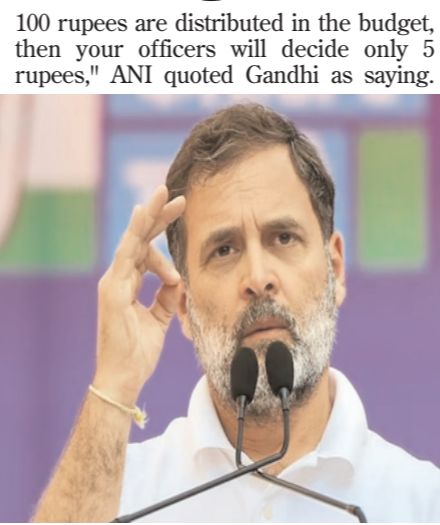
State Reserve Police Force; Navnath Dhavle, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mumbai police, and Adikrao Pol, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mumbai. The panel will probe and submit the report on the same within 30 days, the order said.

Sonia Gandhi referring to President as 'poor thing' demeans high office

New Delhi, Jan. 31: The BJP on Friday latched on to former Congress president Sonia Gandhi's reaction to President Droupadi Murmu's address to both Houses of Parliament, alleging the Congress leader referring to the President as a "poor thing" demeans the high office and reflects her feudal mindset.

Rahul Gandhi questions Nirmala Sitharaman's budget-making process

New Delhi, Jan 31: Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Friday launched a sharp attack on Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman over the preparation of the Union Budget, questioning the alleged lack of representation for the marginalised communities in the decision-making process.



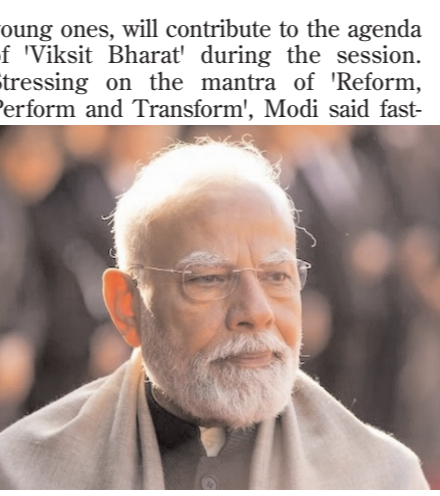
Gandhi's criticism comes a day ahead of the 2025 Union Budget, which will be presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1.

100 rupees are distributed in the budget, then your officers will decide only 5 rupees," ANI quoted Gandhi as saying. accused him too of not including people from minority communities in his team.

No attempt from abroad to stoke trouble before Parliament session: PM Modi

New Delhi, Jan. 31: It is perhaps the first time since 2014 that no attempt has been made from abroad to "stoke a fire" in India before the start of a Parliament session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday.

a fire from any foreign corner," the prime minister said. With his government tabling its first full-fledged budget on Saturday in its third term, Modi said he prayed that Goddess Lakshmi, who is associated with wealth, will bless the poor and middle class.



Modi said his government has been working in mission mode in its third term for an all-round development and asserted that innovation, inclusion and investment have shaped its economic agenda.

They will proudly move forward with a developed India," Modi said. Hence, this effort to fulfill the resolve of a developed India, this immense hard work, is going to be a great gift for our teenagers, our young generation, he said.

Kharge comes to Sonia Gandhi's defence over her 'poor thing' remark on President

New Delhi, Jan 31: Kharge said it was the BJP that insulted the President by not inviting her to the inauguration of the new Parliament building or the Ayodhya Ram Temple. As the row over Sonia Gandhi's 'poor thing' remark about President Droupadi Murmu intensified, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge came to her defence and accused the BJP and media of twisting her statements.



in a post in Hindi on X. "The Indian National Congress and our leaders can never insult Her Excellency the President or any citizen. This is the Congress over its former president Sonia Gandhi's remarks on Murmu's address to a joint sitting of Parliament, saying they were "deeply disrespectful" and underscored the opposition's "continued disregard" for the dignity of the highest constitutional office.

Delhi court to pronounce verdict against ex-Cong MP Sajjan Kumar in 1984 anti-Sikh riots

New Delhi, Jan 31: The court reserved the judgment after hearing the final arguments over the killings of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984. Special judge Kaveri Baweja reserved the verdict after the prosecution completed its arguments. The judge, who reserved verdict in the case, on December 21 allowed the prosecution to argue on certain points on a plea by the state.

alleged killings of two persons in Saraswati Vihar area during the anti-Sikh riots that erupted in the aftermath of former prime minister Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984. The court reserved the judgment after hearing the final arguments over the killings of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh on November 1, 1984. Though Punjabi Bagh police station registered the case initially, a special investigation team later took over the investigation, the report added.

IT panel to recommend umbrella body for TV, print and online media

New Delhi, Jan 31: The Parliamentary panel on communications and information technology will recommend that the Union government form an umbrella media regulatory body, Media Council of India. The Parliamentary panel on communications and information technology led by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lawmaker Nishikant Dubey will recommend that the Union government form an umbrella media regulatory body, Media Council of India, to regulate print, television and online media, functionaries aware of the development said on Friday.



"You work for a paper. Your articles in the paper comes under the purview of the Press Council of India. But when the same article appears online edition of the paper, there is no regulatory mechanism." Currently, two different bodies oversee print and electronic media and there is no central regulator to control online content. The Press Council of India, a body constituted through an act of Parliament, is a statutory quasi-judicial autonomous authority with the objectives of preserving the freedom of the press and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies.

NEWS BOX

Greater Chennai Corporation makes microchipping must for pet dog licence

CHENNAI. To prevent abandonment of pet dogs and the subsequent increase of strays, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has made it compulsory to implant microchips on canines to get pet licence. A resolution was passed during the corporation council meeting at Ripon Building on Thursday. Owners found abandoning their pets will face fines or legal action, the resolution said. This system will also help in tracking the lost pets.

Dr J Kamal Hussain, the GCC Veterinary officer, said, "The microchipping will be done at GCC's six pet clinics and will be further extended to the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University's veterinary hospital, and private veterinary clinics." The microchips will store details such as the pet's name, species, breed, colour, sex, age, vaccination status, and a unique identification number recognised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. The GCC will develop a dedicated online software and a mobile app to be integrated with the corporation's existing online pet licencing portal. In August 2023, GCC introduced an online licencing system, leading to 9,151 registrations so far. However, the current system only tracks pet numbers and vaccination status. In 2024, a survey by the Worldwide Veterinary Service found around 1.8 lakh stray dogs in Chennai. The GCC, under TNAWB's guidance, introduced the microchipping mandate to pin accountability on pet owners. While now, Rs 50 is being charged to obtain a pet licence, the corporation is yet to decide about the charges for microchipping.

Sexual assault allegation surfaces as cops arrest two more for inmate abuse

SAMBALPUR. Shocking allegation of sexual abuse at 'Samartha' rehabilitation centre has come to the fore even as police on Wednesday arrested two more persons for their involvement in torturing the mentally-challenged inmates of the facility.

A woman inmate has accused the secretary of 'Adarsha Shishu Mandir', the NGO managing the centre, Harishchandra Das of sexually assaulting her. Police have already arrested Harishchandra and a female caretaker of the centre Swagatika Pradhan after disturbing videos of inmates being subjected to torture went viral on social media. On Wednesday, Harishchandra's son Subhrajit Das and another caretaker Subham Behera were arrested for allegedly abusing and assaulting the inmates of the facility located at Netaji Nagar here.

Dhanupali IIC Subrat Panigrahi said police arrested Subhrajit and Subham after their involvement in the crime was ascertained. "We are now investigating into the complaint of sexual assault. The medical examination of the victim has already been conducted. A scientific team was also sent to the facility to collect evidence," he said. This apart, sub-collector Pushpanjali Panda visited the centre to investigate the allegations and also interacted with some of the inmates. She has reportedly submitted her probe report to the district collector. Sources said preparations are underway to shift all the 30 inmates of the centre to the integrated infrastructure complex in Bajamunda. Sources said preparations are underway to shift all the 30 inmates.

Two men chase college student, molest her in Bengaluru; accused still at large

BENGALURU. A 24-year-old college student was molested by two unidentified men who tried to get into her cab in the early hours of Monday. The incident took place near Kammanahalli in Banasawadi police station limits and the police are yet to arrest the accused. The police said the incident occurred between 2 am and 3 am on Monday. The woman had booked a cab to Whitefield from Chikkamma Layout in Kammanahalli. As she got into the car and closed the door, two strangers attempted to barge into the rear seat. Shocked by this, she immediately got out of the car and started running towards her house. One of the accused ran after her, caught her by the neck and touched her inappropriately, while the cab driver tried to fight off the other



miscreant. Her screams alerted the residents who rushed to her aid, and the two suspects fled, the police said. Later that evening, the woman filed a complaint, and the police registered a case under Sections 74 (assault or use of criminal force to a woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 75 (sexual harassment) of the BNS.

IIT Bangalore, University of Toronto collaborate on AI-driven solutions to enhance infrastructure

The institutions have proposed a public-private partnership to integrate AI into governance for better management of water resources.

BENGALURU. In a significant push towards AI-driven urban governance, researchers from the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B) and the University of Toronto are collaborating to enhance infrastructure and quality of life in Bengaluru and other urban centres in India.

The institutions have proposed a public-private partnership to integrate AI into governance for better management of water resources, urban mobility, waste disposal, and climate adaptation.

The initiative aims to develop solutions for Bengaluru first, with plans to replicate them across other metros like Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi.

The initiative was highlighted at the 'AI and the City - Understanding Applications in Urban Environments' conference, organised by IIIT-B's Centre for Information Technology and



Public Policy (CITAPP) in collaboration with the University of Toronto's School of Cities and the University of Toronto India Foundation (UTIF). The event showcased AI's role in urban planning, disaster management, cybersecurity, and environmental sustainability. The conference drew participation from experts across 22 institutions spanning 11 countries, including the Geneva Graduate Institute, Georgia Institute of Technology, Royal Holloway University of London, and Singapore Management University.

Sachit Rao, a professor at IIIT-B, demonstrated how AI-based techniques can map and monitor Bengaluru's water bodies, track flooding using satellite data, and assist policymakers in planning flood mitigation strategies. Given Bengaluru's recurrent flooding issues, such AI-driven insights could significantly improve

urban resilience, he said, emphasising the need to replicate this model in other major Indian cities for better infrastructure planning.

Similarly, researchers at CITAPP presented AI applications for monitoring urban heat islands, using predictive modelling and local climate zone analysis. They highlighted how AI can classify land surfaces, analyze temperature patterns, and evaluate the effectiveness of green spaces in cooling urban areas.

Roland Hass, Adjunct Professor at IIIT-B, showcased AI-driven

cybersecurity solutions to protect interconnected smart city systems. He explained how technologies like Large Language Models (LLMs) can detect vulnerabilities, automate software testing, and strengthen urban digital infrastructure against cyber threats. AI-powered threat intelligence was also highlighted as a crucial tool in countering the rising frequency of cyberattacks on city networks. With AI gaining momentum globally, researchers emphasise that while AI solutions take time to develop, cross-disciplinary knowledge exchange is essential to create effective, context-specific urban governance models. Karan Singh, Associate Director at the University of Toronto's School of Cities, emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary collaborations in tackling India's critical urban challenges.

Councillors concerned over Chennai corporation officials skipping panel meetings

Ward 104 councillor T V Shemmozhi (DMK) said no corporation official showed any interest in attending these meetings.



CHENNAI. During the corporation council meeting held on Thursday, councillors, especially standing committee members, raised concern over the absence of corporation officials at every committee meeting in the recent months which are usually held before council session. Ward 104 councillor T V Shemmozhi

(DMK) said no corporation official showed any interest in attending these meetings. He said at least officials from the department concerned should participate since these meetings finalise

the proposals to be tabled at the council. "Although the chief engineer attends some of the meetings, the GCC commissioner often asks him to skip the meetings, prioritising other works," he said, proposing to schedule meetings on Tuesdays if it would ensure the participation of corporation officials. Standing committee (works) chairman N Chitrasu stressed the need for senior officials to attend the meetings. His concerns were echoed by other standing committee chairman. GCC Deputy Mayor M Magesh Kumar said the 15-member standing committee meets regularly to address public concerns, but without officials, the meetings are futile. He said that going forward, subjects will be held back from being tabled at the council.

Registrar asks Kurnool admin to find suitable buildings, land for HC Bench

KURNOOL. The process of setting up High Court Bench in Kurnool was initiated with the formal request from the HC Registrar to the district administration for information on the availability of infrastructure to accommodate the judiciary and related personnel. Kurnool Collector P Ranjith Basha directed the Revenue Divisional Officer, Superintending Engineer of Roads & Buildings, and the Commissioner of Kurnool Municipal Corporation to identify suitable buildings and land to accommodate the court rooms and other needed infrastructure. "The Registrar asked for the information to be submitted by January 30, marking a tight deadline for district authorities. Kurnool district Bar Association general secretary BS Ravikanth Prasad said that this move follows the State's efforts to decentralise judicial services. The HC Bench move met with enthusiasm from local advocates, he added.

Another senior advocate and president of National Lawyers Forum for Social Justice Y Jayaraju said, "We are welcoming this move as yet another step forward in setting up permanent High Court Bench in Rayalaseema region at Kurnool. They view it as a long-awaited opportunity to reduce the travel burden on legal professionals, providing faster case resolutions and greater efficiency in the judicial system." Local officials are hopeful that suitable infrastructure will be found in time to allow the HC Bench to begin functioning as soon as possible, marking a new era in the Rayalaseema region's legal landscape. Speaking to Kurnool District Revenue Officer (In-charge) Venkateswarlu said that they directed the officials concerned to immediately find out of the available accommodation required to set up the HC Bench in Kurnool, and then they will submit a detailed report to the higher officials. They are mainly focused on finding buildings that can accommodate 15 High Court Judges, as well as various rooms for court operations and other essential amenities, he added. They are also tasked with identifying residential accommodation for judges. They are mainly focused on finding buildings.

Kadapa 'Raja-Rani Dolls' seek marketing help

KADAPA. Artisans in Settigunta and Lakshmiripalle, known for their intricate wooden Raja-Rani dolls, are seeking the State government support to preserve their century-old craft, much like the recognition given to Etikoppaka toys as a symbol of Andhra Pradesh's rich cultural heritage. The local artisans are urging the State government to help them market their dolls nationally. For decades, around 100 families

of Settigunta and Lakshmiripalle villages in the Railway Koduru region of the erstwhile Kadapa district have been crafting Raja-Rani wooden dolls and other intricately designed wooden toys that enjoy demand not only in the Telugu States but also in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The Andhra Pradesh MSME Development Corporation recently identified the region as a Raja-Rani Dolls Cluster, a decision welcomed by the artisans. Under the Government of India's Ministry of MSME, cluster development programmes require the State government proposals for approval. Therefore, the State government submitted a Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared by ITCOT National Technical Agency proposing a '6 crore budget for land development, building construction, and machinery.



The feasibility of the project is currently under review by SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India), with field inspections expected in February. The project is likely to take shape by June-July, with 85% funding from the Centre and 15% from the State. Once approved, the initiative gives an impetus to the local toy-making industry through training programmes, necessary infrastructure and machinery to sustain the makers, thereby carrying on the intricate tradition. Located along the Kurnool-Chittoor National Highway, these villages have a 100-year-old legacy of wooden toy-making, with nearly 100 families engaged in the craft.

Men, women, and children alike contribute to this art form, skillfully shaping wood into intricate figures. The Raja-Rani dolls have a substantial market at sacred pilgrimage sites in the

State and also in neighbouring Tamil Nadu and Karnataka where these dolls are gifted during weddings as a long-standing tradition. The craft gained national attention between 1997 and 2002 when government-backed exhibitions across the country showcased these toys. A notable moment came when artisans from the region presented their Shakuntala wooden doll crafted from white pumpkin wood at an exhibition in Hyderabad, where it caught the eye of then-US President Bill Clinton, who purchased it.

In 1993, artisans formed the Sri Lakshmi Venkateswara Artistic Wooden Toy Makers Cooperative Society, led by I Subbarayudu Achari. While earlier generations relied solely on this craft for livelihood, many families have since shifted to other professions due to dwindling support.

Speaking to TNIE, K Subbarayudu Achari emphasised that recognition as Raja-Rani Dolls Cluster would boost training programmes, infrastructure development, and national-level marketing opportunities. He highlighted the unique demand for Settigunta dolls particularly in neighbouring state where similar toys are unavailable reinforcing the need for government backed promotion and expansion.

Accessing government services with Mana Mitra will be as easy as texting a friend: Lokesh

VIJAYAWADA. In a world-first initiative, the Andhra Pradesh government has launched WhatsApp governance, offering 161 citizens' services directly to the public through the platform. At the launch of 'Mana Mitra' at his residence in Undavalli on Thursday, HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh stated that with WhatsApp governance, accessing public services will be as simple as texting a friend or a family member. As part of phase one, 161 citizens' services are now available under Mana Mitra, which has been launched in collaboration with Meta.

Lokesh further explained that 360 more services will be added in the second phase. The services will cover six key categories: electricity bill payments, revenue services, municipal services, grievance redressal, and booking for temple darshan/seva and bus tickets. Lokesh observed, "This first-of-its-

kind chatbot symbolises our vision for a digitally inclusive Andhra Pradesh, where citizens can book bus tickets, plan temple visits, and obtain certificates — all on WhatsApp." "This initiative, in partnership with Meta, makes accessing government services as simple as chatting with a friend or family member. People will no longer need to run from pillar to post to access certificates and other government services," he said. Explaining the scale of the project, he noted, "Connecting 36 departments to WhatsApp governance is a complex task. In phase one, we are making 161 civil services available on the platform. In phase two, we plan to add 360 more. WhatsApp governance will serve as a bridge between the government and the people, ensuring real-time delivery of certificates and Lokesh stressed that there would be no room for fake certificates in the

system. "Every certificate provided will feature a special QR code for authenticity verification. We are also planning to integrate blockchain technology soon. In the second phase, we will incorporate AI bots and voice functionalities," he added.

Acknowledging that there would be further refinements, the Minister assured that any shortcomings would be addressed.

"We are collecting real-time data from all departments and codifying it. A data lake will be created to provide seamless services. Our team has worked tirelessly over the past three months, testing for the last 15 days. While we understand improvements are needed, we are committed to making this an ideal product within six months.

"Reflecting on his Yuva Galam Padayatra, where the idea for WhatsApp governance originated, Lokesh shared,

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Man gets life imprisonment for murder of brother-in-law

Gurgaon. A court has awarded life imprisonment to a man accused of killing his brother-in-law in 2022.

Police stated that accused Naveen Kumar visited his sister Sarita's family, in Basai Enclave on 26th June, 2022. He was on talking terms with his brother-in-law Harvinder, however, was unhappy due to a dispute between the couple, who were married for 14 years and had 2 children. A fight broke out between the couple in the middle of the night and Naveen shot Harvinder in the head. A case was registered under section 302 of IPC and sections of the Arms Act at Sector 10A police station by Naresh Kumar, who stated that Harvinder was his uncle. Another relative Rupesh stated that they received a phone call around 1:00 AM from Sarita, who told them about Harvinder's firearm injuries. He added that upon reaching the spot, he found Harvinder lying on the bed. A pistol was found on the floor, which was taken into possession by the police.

Victim's wife, Sarita, however, changed her statement two times. Initially she said that she woke up to a gunshot noise and saw Naveen holding a pistol and fleeing from the spot. She later changed her statement in the court, saying some unknown person came and murdered her husband. Manjit Kaushik, counsel for the accused, argued there is no eyewitness of the occurrence and Naveen can't be held guilty in the absence of any reliable evidence. Additional session judge Sunil Kumar Dewan, in his order on Jan 29, observed that as per the material available on record, the convict killed Harvinder due to the family dispute going on between the deceased and his wife, who happens to be the sister of the convict.

The court refused to show any leniency in the case, however, refused to give capital punishment, stating chances of "reformation". The case does not fall in the category of "rarest of the rare case".



YEIDA approves map for Film City Phase 1

Noida. Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) approved on Thursday the layout prepared by a consortium led by film producer Boney Kapoor for the construction of the first phase of the Film City spanning 230 acres in Sector 21. The project's foundation is likely to be laid in Feb and is expected to be ready in eight years. On June 27 last year, UP govt awarded Kapoor's Bayview Projects LLP, in partnership with real estate company Bhutan Infra, the contract for developing the first phase of the project. The consortium had submitted a draft plan on Dec 24 last year, which was subsequently vetted by the development authority's planning department and a dedicated committee.

YEIDA CEO Arun Vir Singh said the approved map will be valid for a maximum of five years. "The master plan divides the 230 acres into designated zones for film production facilities, commercial establishments, and green spaces. Around 155 acres have been allocated for the core film industry that will have film production studios, sound stages, post-production units and related infrastructure. This area is divided into four campuses," he said. A commercial hub — retail spaces, office buildings and entertainment complexes — will come up on 75 acres in the first phase too. The master plan also integrates 23 acres of green zone with industrial and commercial usage. The first phase is estimated to come up at an estimated Rs 1,510 crore. According to officials, the concessionaire will have to secure approvals for its parking and landscaping plans, ensure phased construction of filming facilities and film institute, and obtain GRIHA 4-Star and IGBC Gold certification—awarded to buildings that meet certain sustainability and environmental performance standards—for the buildings. Each plot or building within the project will also have to align with the Authority's building regulations. The concessionaire will also have to develop an electrical substation, a sewage treatment plant (STP), water tanks, an energy centre and other allied services. The project also mandates a 12-metre-wide setback line to ensure proper spacing between buildings.

Register your lifts by March 25 or face fine, 200 buildings told

Noida. Over 200 residential societies, malls, hotels and commercial complexes are yet to register elevators under the Uttar Pradesh Lifts and Escalators Act. With the March 25 deadline not far away, the district administration recently sent them reminders to complete the procedure or pay a penalty. The Lift Act was passed by the state legislature in Feb 2024 to regulate the installation, maintenance and safe operation of lifts and escalators across the state, especially Noida, a bustling hub of high-rise buildings where elevators are a crucial part of daily life. On Oct 29 last year, the Noida administration issued a directive that made it mandatory for building owners and RWAs to register lifts on their society's premises within six months from Sept 25.

Four months since, only two residential societies—Exotica Fresco and Purvanchal Royal Park, both in Sector 137—have registered their 68 lifts. This is a fraction of the estimated 80,000 lifts in Noida and Greater Noida. "We have been sending reminders since Jan 15, and the process is ongoing as more such reminders will be sent. Establishments are being informed that penalties will be imposed if lifts are not registered by the March 25 deadline," ADM (finance) Atul Kumar said. AOs, however, told TOI that the registration process was tardy. Surojit Dasgupta, Exotica Fresco apartment owners' association president, said the registration process on the UP Directorate of

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

KUMBH MELA SPECIAL TRAIN

In continuation to already announced Special Trains for Maha Kumbh Mela-2025, Northern Railway has decided to run following Special Train as per details given below:-

Train No. 04494/04493 Anand Vihar T.-Patna Jn.-Anand Vihar T. Kumbh Mela Special Train		02 TRIPS	
Train No. 04494	STATIONS	Train No. 04493	
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	
---	23:55	14:00	---
	ANAND VIHAR T.		
00:43	00:45	13:15	13:17
	GHAZIABAD		
02:00	02:02	10:43	10:45
	ALIGARH JN.		
03:05	03:10	08:50	08:55
	TUNDLA JN.		
06:40	06:45	05:15	05:20
	GOVINDPUR		
10:30	10:35	02:10	02:15
	PRAYAGRAJ JN.		
14:40	14:50	23:25	23:35
	PT. DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA JN.		
16:05	16:07	22:08	22:10
	BUXAR		
17:00	17:02	21:08	21:10
	ARAJN.		
17:30	17:32	20:40	20:42
	DANAPUR		
18:15	---	---	20:00
	PATNA JN.		

Days of Run : 04494 Ex Anand Vihar on 06.02.2025 (Thursday) and 04493 Ex Patna Jn. on 07.02.2025 (Friday).
Accommodation: 1st AC, 2 Tier AC & 3 Tier AC

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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Format C-1 (For candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV) Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018, of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union Of India & Anr.)

Name and address of the candidate: Mohd Ishraq Khan
Name of the Political Party: INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
Name of election: DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTION, 2025
Name of the Constituency: AC-67 Babarpur Vidhan Sabha, A-31/150, Main Road No. 66, Maujpur, Seelampur, PO: Seelampur, Dist: North East Delhi, Delhi-110053

I, Mohd Ishraq Khan, a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information.

The following details about my criminal antecedents:

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	63-Judicial Magistrate First Class	FIR No. 670/19 PS New Usmanpur CIS No. 1761/20	Charge	DMC ACT 466A, Indian Penal Code: 34, 188, 448

B. Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

Sl. No.	Name of Court & dates(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum punishment imposed
1.	NA	NA	NA

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of Constituency.

Mohd Ishraq Khan
Candidate, Indian National Congress
A-31/150, Main Road No. 66, Maujpur, Seelampur, PO: Seelampur, Dist: North East Delhi, Delhi-110053

FORMAT C-1 Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgement dated 25th September 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)
Name and Address of the Candidate: Shiv Kumar (Kaka) S/o Ramdhani residing at H.NO. 495-E, Netaji Subhash Marg, East Badli, Delhi 110032.
Name of Political Party: Sarvodaya Prabhart Party
Name of Election: General Election to Legislative Assembly in NCT of Delhi 2025
Name of Constituency: AC-47, Babarpur Assembly

I, Shiv Kumar (Kaka), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents.

S.No.	Name of Court	Case No. and Date	Status of Case (s)	Section(s) of the Act concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Not Applicable	FIR No. 177/1990 U/S 279/337 IPC PS BHAIANPURA	Not Applicable	Sections 278 and 337 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) deal with driving, causing hurt, and endangering the safety of others.
2	Not Applicable	RR No. - 378/2020 U/S 188 IPC PS WELCOME	Not Applicable	Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) deals with disobedience to orders given by public servants. It is often used during times of crisis, such as pandemics, civil strife, and natural disasters.
3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

(B) Details about cases of conviction in criminal offences.

S.No.	Name of Court & Date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment imposed
1	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
2	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
3	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

KUMBH MELA WEEKLY SPECIAL TRAIN

In continuation to already announced Special Trains for Maha Kumbh Mela-2025, Railways have decided to run following weekly Special Train as per details given below:-

Train No. 02421/02422 Subedarganj-Delhi Jn.-Subedarganj Superfast Kumbh Mela Weekly Special Train		08 TRIPS	
Train No. 02421	STATIONS	Train No. 02422	
ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	ARR. DEP.	
---	21:35	19:40	---
	SUBEDARGANJ		
22:45	22:47	17:18	17:20
	FATEHPUR		
00:15	00:20	16:00	16:05
	GOVINDPUR		
02:00	02:02	13:50	13:52
	ETAWAH JN.		
03:33	03:35	12:43	12:45
	TUNDLA JN.		
04:45	04:47	11:35	11:37
	ALIGARH JN.		
08:55	---	---	09:30
	DELHI JN.		

Days of Run : 02421 Ex Subedarganj on every Sunday from 09.02.2025 to 02.03.2025 and 02422 Ex Delhi Jn. on every Monday from 10.02.2025 to 03.03.2025
Accommodation: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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NAME CHANGE

I, PRAGYA UIKEY Wife of No. 15799823Y Rank-NK(GNR) Name-SUKHPAL DHURVE Presently residing at VILL-TITARI, PO-BADGAON, SUB-DIST-CHHINDWARA, DIST-CHHINDWARA, MADHYA PRADESH-200110, have changed my name from PRAGYA UIKEY to PRAGYA DHURVE for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, hitherto known as KIRPA SHANKAR SINGH son of Late Shri RAM DULARE SINGH, residing at House No. G-2/290, Gali No.18, Sangam Vihar, PO: Pustha Bhawan, District: South Delhi, Delhi-110062, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KAMALA SHANKER SINGH.

I, RAJ KUMARI DEVI Mother of No. 16130112X Rank-SE/PA Name-ABHISHEK NANDAN Residing at VILL-BADOKHAR, PO-BARAFHUR, GAUR, BASTI, UTTAR PRADESH-272163, have changed my name from RAJ KUMARI DEVI to RAJ KUMARI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, Vibhor Satish Sharma S/O Satish Sharma R/O Flat NO - 1601, Sector-C, Pocket-1, Vasant Kunj, South Delhi-110070 have changed my name to Vibhor Sharma for all future purposes.

I, Radhakishan Kachave S/o Marotrao Kachave R/o F-43, Delhi Police Colony, Modli, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053 declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Kachave Radha Kishan Marotrao and Marathoo Aital Rao in my Service Book. The actual name of mine and my father is Radhakishan Kachave and Marotrao Kachave.

I, Ankur Garg S/o Satyapal R/O E-56/1, Gali No-12, Jagjeet Nagar, Carri Mendlu, Seelampur, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Satpal Garg in my 10th, 12th and Graduation Educational Documents. The actual name of my father is Satyapal.

I, KM Been Singh Chauhan W/O Radha Mohan RZ-89C, Gali No. 5a/5b/v/c, kamal park, District south west delhi, New Delhi-110046 declare my name to Beena Chauhan for all future purposes.

I, Sachin Kumar Yadav which is to be cancelled by Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited. Branch: Preet Vihar, Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

I, Sachin Kumar Yadav which is to be cancelled by Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited. Branch: Preet Vihar, Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

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NAME CHANGE

I, ARAVIND KUMAR SHARMA S/O Mr. RAM BAHADUR SHARMA R/O RZF-2223, GALI NO-2, NEAR RATAN CYCLE, PALAM COLONY, RAJ NAGAR PART-2, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110077 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as ARVIND KUMAR SHARMA in my minor son namely PRASHANT SHARMA aged 17 year in his 10th class educational documents. The actual name of mine is ARAVIND KUMAR SHARMA which may be amended accordingly.

I, No. 14841052H Rank-HAV/MT Name-VAKIL SINGH S/O LALLAN SINGH Presently residing at VILL-ABHAIPUR, PO-PAKARI, TEH-DIST-BALLIA, UTTAR PRADESH-277124, have changed my mother's name from ANANTI KUMAR DEBI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, No. 14839122X Rank-HAV/MT Name-MULE BABURAO ARJUN Presently residing at VILL-LIMBA GANESH, PO-CHOUSALA, TEH-DIST-BEED, MAHARASHTRA-431126, have changed my mother's name from CHANGUNABAI to MULE CHANGUNABAI ARJUN for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, No. 14839122X Rank-HAV/MT Name-MULE BABURAO ARJUN Presently residing at VILL-LIMBA GANESH, PO-CHOUSALA, TEH-DIST-BEED, MAHARASHTRA-431126, have changed my mother's name from ARJUN to MULE ARJUN SHRIPATI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, 22053767P Rank-SEP/NA Name-RANJIT KUMAR R/O VILL & POST-JALPURA, THANA HASPURA, AURANGABAD, BIHAR-824120 declare that my father name from AJAY SHARMA to AJAY KUMAR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 30.01.2025 before Sub Divisional Magistrate Delhi.

I, SAILABALA MUDULI Wife of No. 6396848L Rank-HAV/DRESSER Name-JANARDANA ROUT Presently residing at VILL-JAIPUR, PO-RAMBAG, TEH-DIST-JAIPUR, ODISHA-755014, have changed my name from SAILABALA MUDULI to SAILABALA ROUT for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, SAILABALA MUDULI Wife of No. 6396848L Rank-HAV/DRESSER Name-JANARDANA ROUT Presently residing at VILL-JAIPUR, PO-RAMBAG, TEH-DIST-JAIPUR, ODISHA-755014, have changed my name from SAILABALA MUDULI to SAILABALA ROUT for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

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I, SAILABALA MUDULI Wife of No. 6396848L Rank-HAV/DRESSER Name-JANARDANA ROUT Presently residing at VILL-JAIPUR, PO-RAMBAG, TEH-DIST-JAIPUR, ODISHA-755014, have changed my name from SAILABALA MUDULI to SAILABALA ROUT for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, SUKANYA SHARMA W/O VIKRANT KUMAR SHARMA R/O 307, VIDYA ENCLAVE GH-11, SECTOR-56, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001 HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR SONS NAME FROM ADDI SHARMA TO ADDI NARAYAN SHARMA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

I, KUSUM DEVI W/O MRIDUL MITTAL R/O AGARWAL MANDI, TATIRI, BAGHPAT, UTTAR PRADESH-250601, have changed my name from KUSUM DEVI to KUSUM RANI MITTAL for all future purposes.

Mrs. Shashi Ahuja Owner of the Residential House No 332, Block -A, Sector -XU-2, Greater Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. Mrs. Shashi Ahuja have lost Original Allotment Letter dated 07/03/2024 issued by GNIDA in favour of Mrs. Shashi Ahuja, for which complaint lodged to the police. That any person(s) (Appropriate authority etc. if finds the misplaced Allotment letter aforesaid said person may come forward and inform the undersigned within 15 days from the date of Publication.

RAHUL KUMAR GUPTA (ADVOCATE)
43B, Third Floor, Patparganj Village, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-11 M-NO- 7252922875,

I, No. 14839122X Rank-HAV/MT Name-MULE BABURAO ARJUN Presently residing at VILL-LIMBA GANESH, PO-CHOUSALA, TEH-DIST-BEED, MAHARASHTRA-431126, have changed my mother's name from ARJUN to MULE ARJUN SHRIPATI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 31/01/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

I, 22053767P Rank-SEP/NA Name-RANJIT KUMAR R/O VILL & POST-JALPURA, THANA HASPURA, AURANGABAD, BIHAR-824120 declare that my father name from AJAY SHARMA to AJAY KUMAR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 30.01.2025 before Sub Divisional Magistrate Delhi.

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I, SAILABALA MUDULI Wife of No. 6396848L Rank-HAV/DRESSER Name-JANARDANA ROUT Presently residing at VILL-JAIPUR, PO-RAMBAG, TEH-DIST-JAIPUR, ODISHA-7

NEWS BOX

Israel says it struck 'multiple' Hezbollah targets in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley

JERUSALEM. Israel's military said Friday it struck "multiple" Hezbollah targets in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, two months into a fragile ceasefire with the Lebanese group after major hostilities last year.

"The targets that were struck include a Hezbollah terrorist site containing underground infrastructure, used to develop and manufacture weaponry and additional terrorist infrastructure sites on the Syrian-Lebanese border used by Hezbollah to smuggle weaponry into Lebanon," the military said in a statement. It said the overnight strikes were aimed at targets that "posed a threat" to Israel and Israeli troops. On Thursday, the military said it intercepted a Hezbollah "surveillance" drone approaching Israeli territory, which it said "represents a breach of the ceasefire understandings between Israel and Lebanon." "The (army) continues to remain committed to the ceasefire understandings between Israel and Lebanon, and will not permit any terrorist activity of this kind," it said.

The Israeli army missed a January 26 deadline to complete its withdrawal from Lebanon. It now has until February 18. Israel had made clear it had no intention of meeting the deadline, charging that the Lebanese army had not fulfilled its side of the bargain. Under the terms of the ceasefire, the Lebanese army is to deploy in the south as Hezbollah pulls its forces back north of the Litani River, some 30 kilometres (20 miles) from the border.

The Iran-backed militant group is also required to dismantle any remaining military infrastructure it has in the south.

Find another sucker: Trump warns BRICS nations, says '100 per cent tariff if they move away from US dollar'

World US President Donald Trump fired another stern warning to the BRICS bloc, which includes India, threatening to impose 100% tariffs if the group attempts to replace the US dollar with an alternative currency. In a post on his social media platform, Truth Social, Trump wrote on Friday: "The idea that the BRICS countries are trying to move away from the dollar, while we stand by and watch, is OVER."

He said, "We are going to require a commitment from these seemingly hostile countries that they will neither create a new BRICS currency nor back any other currency to replace the mighty US dollar. If they do, they will face 100% tariffs and should expect to say goodbye to selling into the wonderful US economy." Trump added, "They can go find another sucker nation. There is no chance that BRICS will



replace the US dollar in international trade— or anywhere else. Any country that tries should say hello to tariffs and goodbye to America!"

Trump has repeatedly voiced his opposition to de-dollarisation, cautioning that BRICS nations should uphold the US dollar's dominance in global trade to avoid potential economic repercussions.

The BRICS bloc, which comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, as well as Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, has been discussing alternatives to the US dollar for international trade. In particular Russia and China, have been seeking an alternative to the US Dollar or creating their own BRICS currency.

US Senators push to reverse auto-renewal of work permits back to 180 days

WASHINGTON. Two influential Republican Senators have introduced a resolution to reverse a Biden-era rule that increased the period for renewing work permits from 180 to 540 days. The automatic extension of the Employment Authorisation Document (EAD) from 180 days to 540 days was of great help to the spouses of H-1B visa holders, a significant number of whom were from India. The rule finalised by the Department of Homeland Security on January 13 applies broadly to immigrants, refugees, green card holders, spouses of H-1B visa holders and more. Introduced on Thursday jointly by Senators John Kennedy and Rick Scott, the resolution seeks disapproval under Congressional Review Act (CRA) procedures for the Biden administration's rule that automatically extended the renewal period for an immigrant EAD to almost a year-and-a-half before officials could review those permits.

The Biden administration's dangerous rule automatically extended work permits for immigrants to 540 days, giving immigrants more time to avoid reporting to US officials hampers the Trump administration's efforts to enforce our immigration laws and keep Americans safe, said Kennedy. In a statement, Scott alleged that the Biden-Harris administration worked for four years straight to dismantle America's immigration system and open the southern border, allowing millions of illegal aliens to come across the border unvetted and unchecked. Then, in a last-minute move, former President Biden passed a ridiculous rule that allows illegal aliens to keep jobs in the United States for over a year without authorisation. That's insane, and it undermines President Trump's mandate and efforts to secure the border and put Americans' interests first," Scott said.

How did so many Thai farmers end up held hostage by Hamas

Thais remain the largest group of foreign agricultural laborers in Israel today, earning considerably more than they can at home.

BANGKOK. Five Thai nationals held hostage by Hamas since its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel were released Thursday. They were among 31 Thais taken by the militant group, of whom 23 have already been released. Another two have been confirmed dead, and the status of one remaining person is not clear. According to Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 46 Thais have been killed during the conflict, including the two who died in Hamas captivity. They were among tens of thousands of Thai workers in Israel. Here's a look at what they were doing there.

Why are there so many Thais in Israel?

Israel once relied heavily on Palestinian workers, but it started bringing in large numbers of migrant workers after the 1987-93 Palestinian revolt known as the first Intifada. Most came from Thailand, and Thais remain the largest group of foreign agricultural laborers in Israel today, earning considerably more than they can at home. Thailand and Israel implemented a bilateral agreement a decade ago to ease the way for workers in the agriculture sector. Israel has come under criticism for the conditions under which the Thai farm laborers work. In a 2015 report, Human Rights Watch said they often were housed in makeshift and inadequate accommodations and "were paid salaries significantly below the legal minimum wage, forced to work long hours in excess of the legal maximum, subjected



to unsafe working conditions and denied their right to change employers." A watchdog group found more recently that most were still paid below the legal minimum wage. How many Thais work in Israel? There were about 30,000 Thai workers, primarily working on farms, in Israel prior to the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. In the wake of the attack, some 7,000 returned

home, primarily on government evacuation flights, but higher wages have continued to attract new arrivals. Thai ambassador to Israel Pannabha Chandramy said Thursday that there are now more than 38,000 Thai workers in the country.

What happened after they left?

Faced with a labor shortage in the wake of the exodus after the Hamas attack, Israel's Agriculture Ministry announced incentives to try and attract foreign workers back to evacuated areas. Among other things, it offered to extend work visas and to pay bonuses of about \$500 a month. Thailand's Labor Ministry granted 3,966 Thai workers permission to work in Israel in 2024, keeping Israel in the top four destinations for Thais working abroad last year.

Thai migrant workers generally come from poorer regions of the country, especially the northeast, and even before the bonuses the jobs in Israel paid many times what they could make at home.

No happiness': Misery for Myanmar exiles four years on from coup

SAMUT SAKHON. Four years after Myanmar's military seized power in a coup, the country is in the grip of a bloody civil war that has driven many of the country's young across the border to Thailand. There they scrape by doing hard jobs for little pay — often living in fear of being arrested and sent back to Myanmar. AFP met three of them in Mahachai, a district of Samut Sakhon in Bangkok's western suburbs known as "Little Myanmar" for its population of migrant workers.

They told of their experiences and hopes and fears for the future — speaking under pseudonyms for their own safety and that of their families back in Myanmar.

Ma Phyu: 'I lost all my dreams' "After the coup, I lost all my dreams," Ma Phyu told AFP. Before the military seized power, the 28-year-old was teaching young children while studying at university in Yangon with the aim of qualifying as a teacher.

After the February 1, 2021 coup, which ousted the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi, the generals launched a bloody campaign of violent

repression against dissent. Resistance has been fierce, led in large part by young people who grew up during Myanmar's 10-year dalliance with democracy.

Like thousands of others, Ma Phyu chose to flee Myanmar rather than live under



the junta, and now cannot return for fear of retribution from the authorities. Thailand is home to the world's largest Myanmar diaspora — 2.3 million registered workers, plus another 1.8 million unofficial migrants, according to the UN migration agency IOM. Lacking Thai language skills, Myanmar migrants in Thailand are forced into difficult and dirty jobs including construction, food and farm

After initial ecstasy of freedom, released Israeli hostages face long road to recovery

TEL AVIV. When Ilana Gritzewsky returned to Israel after being held captive in Gaza for 55 days in November 2023, she had so much adrenaline coursing through her body she couldn't sleep for two days.

"You don't understand that it's really over," Gritzewsky recalled. "You don't know who you are or even what your name is." A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is underway and hostages are being released in stages. But after the initial jubilation of being freed, the released captives — who have been held for more than 15 months — are likely to endure a trying reentry, based on the testimony of those who were held hostage themselves. Gritzewsky, 31, who is originally from Mexico, was kidnapped with her boyfriend from Kibbutz Nir Oz on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas militants burst across the border, killing around 1,200 people, and kidnapping around 250 people, in an attack that sparked the war in Gaza.

Gritzewsky was released after 55 days during the only previous ceasefire deal



a year ago. More than a year later, Gritzewsky still has lingering health issues. She hasn't gained back all of the weight that she lost, she's prediabetic, and has lingering pain issues from the kidnapping, when her pelvis and jaw were broken and her leg was burned from the motorcycle exhaust. She suffered hearing loss in one ear.

"I'm still not able to really take care of

myself," she said. "I don't think my brain has really grasped everything I've gone through." She acknowledges she has neglected her own recovery as she advocates tirelessly for her boyfriend's release. Fifteen hostages have been released from Gaza, in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, as the current ceasefire for the that has devastated Gaza moves into its second full week. More than 47,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and wide swaths of the territory have been destroyed. Hamas is expected to release small groups weekly throughout the ceasefire's initial six-week phase. There are approximately 80 hostages left in Gaza, almost half of whom Israel believes to be dead. The joy of a warm embrace, and a new reality sets in. When Gritzewsky was freed, she was able to do what she had dreamed of during her captivity: hug her mother and see her family.



recovered as of Thursday evening, according to US media reports. Trump politicizes crash Trump, who took office 10 days ago, turned a press conference on the disaster into a platform for his crusade against diversity, equity and inclusion or DEI — a series of often decades-old measures meant to combat racism and sexism across the United States. Accusing his Democratic predecessors Joe Biden and Barack Obama of having kept good employees out of the aviation industry in pursuit of DEI, he claimed: "They actually came out with a directive: 'too white.' And we want the people that are competent." The passenger plane was carrying 64 people and the Black Hawk had three aboard. The collision — the first major crash in the United States since 2009 when 49 people were killed near Buffalo, New York — occurred as American Eagle Flight 5342 from Wichita, Kansas came in to land. Reagan National is a major airport located a short distance from downtown Washington, the White House and the Pentagon.

Five years after Britain left the EU, full impact is still emerging

LONDON. Five years ago Friday, two crowds of people gathered near Britain's Parliament — some with Union Jacks and cheers, others European Union flags and tears. On Jan. 31, 2020 at 11 p.m. London time — midnight at EU headquarters in Brussels — the U.K. officially left the bloc after almost five decades of membership that had brought free movement and free trade between Britain and 27 other European countries. For Brexit supporters, the U.K. was now a sovereign nation in charge of its own destiny. For opponents, it was an isolated and diminished country.

It was, inarguably, a divided nation that had taken a leap into the dark. Five years on, people and businesses are still wrestling with the economic, social and cultural aftershocks. "The impact has been really quite profound," said political scientist Anand Menon, who heads the think-tank U.K. in a Changing Europe. "It's changed our economy." And our politics has been changed quite fundamentally as well," he added. "We've seen a new division around Brexit becoming part of electoral politics."

A decision that split the nation. An island nation with a robust sense of its historical importance, Britain had long been an

uneasy member of the EU when it held a referendum in June 2016 on whether to remain or leave. Decades of deindustrialization, followed by years of public spending cuts and high immigration, made fertile ground for the argument that Brexit would let the U.K. "take back control" of its borders, laws and economy. Yet the result — 52% to 48% in favor of leaving — came as a shock to many. Neither the Conservative government, which campaigned to stay in the EU, nor pro-Brexit campaigners had planned for the messy details of the split.

The referendum was followed by years of wrangling over divorce terms between a wounded EU and a fractious U.K. that caused gridlock in Parliament and ultimately defeated Prime Minister Theresa May. She resigned in 2019 and was replaced by Boris Johnson, who vowed to "get Brexit done."

It wasn't so simple. **A blow to the British economy**

The U.K. left without agreement on its future economic relationship with the EU, which accounted for half the country's trade. The political departure was followed by 11



months of testy negotiations on divorce terms, culminating in agreement on Christmas Eve in 2020. The bare-bones trade deal saw the U.K. leave the bloc's single market and customs union. It meant goods could move without tariffs or quotas, but brought new red tape, costs and delays for trading businesses. "It has cost us money. We are definitely slower and it's more expensive. But we've survived," said Lars Andersen, whose London-based company, My Nametags, ships brightly colored labels for kids' clothes and school supplies to more than 150 countries. To keep trading with the EU, Andersen has had to set up a base in Ireland, through which all orders destined for EU countries must pass

before being sent on. He says the hassle has been worth it, but some other small businesses he knows have stopped trading with the EU or moved manufacturing out of the U.K. Julianne Ponan, founder and CEO of allergen-free food producer Creative Nature, had a growing export business to EU countries that was devastated by Brexit. Since then she has successfully turned to markets in the Middle East and Australia, something she says has been a positive outcome of leaving the EU. Having mastered the new red tape, she is now gradually building up business with Europe again. "But we've lost four years of growth there," she said. "And that's the sad part. We would be a lot further ahead in our journey if Brexit hadn't happened." The government's Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts that U.K. exports and imports will both be around 15% lower in the long run than if the U.K. had remained in the EU, and economic productivity 4% less than it otherwise would have been. Brexit supporters argue that short-term pain will be offset by Britain's new freedom to strike trade deals around the world. Since Brexit, the U.K.

NEWS BOX

Four get 20-year jail term for 2022 gang rape

VELLORE: The Fast-Track Mahila Court in Vellore on Thursday convicted four men for gang-raping a doctor in 2022 and sentenced them to 20 years in prison. Judge S Mageswari Banu Rekha also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on each of them. Having already served three years in Vellore Central Prison during the trial, the court directed them to serve the remaining 17 years. Meanwhile, a juvenile in the case is facing trial at a Juvenile Justice Board and the verdict is expected next week.

According to police sources, the convicted were identified as R Parthiban (22), V Manikandan (22), R Barath (20), and E Santhosh Kumar (24) – all residents of Sathuvachari, Vellore. The incident took place on March 17, 2022, when the 28-year-old doctor and her male friend were returning after watching a movie. They had taken a shared auto-rickshaw with four other passengers and the driver. The vehicle was diverted to an isolated area and the five gang-raped the woman. They also robbed them of Rs 40,000 in cash and two sovereigns of gold jewellery. Based on an online complaint from the woman, the police registered a case. A special investigation team led by DSP R Ravichandran and ASP D V Kiran Shruthi had arrested the culprits and submitted a 496-page chargesheet. Public prosecutors K Vigneshwari and M Sandhiya examined 39 witnesses.

Hesaraghatta grassland reserve gets Karnataka cabinet stamp

BENGALURU. In what could be termed a victory for conservationists, the public and state forest department, the Siddaramaiah cabinet on Thursday decided to declare 5,678 acres and 32 guntas of land (2298.18 hectares) in Yelahanka taluk of Bengaluru City district as 'Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve' (GHC) under Section 36(a) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The government fulfilled a decade-old demand that was being stalled because of political controversy. The area was the last standing 'savannah' ecosystem of Bengaluru. In October 2024, the State Board for Wildlife headed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, had approved the proposal which has now got the cabinet nod. Meanwhile, the cabinet deferred the proposal to declare 5959.32 hectares, including 6km of Honnavar sea coast and forest area in Uttara Kannada district as 'Apsarakonda-Mugali Marine Wildlife Sanctuary'. Revision of annual licence renewal charges of Karnataka Water Transport Board is expected to generate an additional revenue of Rs 3.50-4 crore per annum. The state's minor ports include Karwar, Honnavar, Malpe, Belekeri, Manki, Padubidri, Keni, Bhatkal, Old Mangalore, Tadadi, Kundapur, Pavinakurve and Hangaratta. Withdrawal of Karnataka Urban and Rural Planning (Amendment) Bill, 2024, regarding Premium FAR. The Governor has returned the bill, seeking some clarifications. Since it involves legal aspects, it is appropriate to consult the relevant stakeholders. The ordinance for utilisation and regulation of Bengaluru Palace Grounds land was gazetted on January 29, 2025.

Campaign has desired effect: Leprosy cases decline in state

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. For the second time since the launch of 'Aswamedham', a statewide initiative to identify and treat leprosy patients, the number of annual new cases has remained below 500. The state has witnessed a 38% decline in new cases in 2024-25, to date, compared with 2018-19. In 2018-19, there were 783 new cases, but this number has now dropped to 486. The prevalence rate of leprosy has also declined, down from 0.15 per 10,000 in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to 0.11 in 2024-25. This progress is particularly encouraging given improved case detection since the launch of the Aswamedham campaign in 2018. However, the initiative faced setbacks during the Covid pandemic before being revived in 2022-23, leading to the detection of 559 cases that year. While cases among children have also decreased – from 33 in 2022-23 and 30 in 2023-24 to 19 in 2024-25 – health experts caution that these figures may not tell the full story. They warn that undetected and unreported cases, especially among adults, could still be prevalent.

Dr Purushothaman Kuzhikkathukandiyil, professor of paediatrics at MES Medical College, Malappuram, emphasised that stigma remains a significant barrier to accurate reporting. "Despite awareness campaigns, the stigma associated with leprosy may lead to under-reporting. In contrast, diseases like tuberculosis, which are notifiable, have a more robust reporting mechanism," he said. To tackle these challenges, the health department launched the sixth edition of the Aswamedham campaign on Thursday, focusing on home visits to identify hidden cases and provide timely treatment. Health Minister Veena George expressed confidence in the state's progress, stating, "Kerala is on the verge of eliminating leprosy and has the lowest number of leprosy patients in the country."

Kadamattom St George Church: A blend of history, art, and architecture with unique murals and heritage

KOCHI. It is the smell of burning candles and incense floating with the gentle breeze that greets you as you slowly climb the stone steps of the hillock leading to the historic Kadamattom St George Orthodox Church along NH 85 near Kolenchery. At the summit, what strikes you is the nadakasala or portico reminiscent of Hindu temples and it harmoniously sits next to the Baroque facade of the church. Having a unique place in the annals of history, this church houses the mortal remains of the legendary Kadamattathu Kathanar who was believed to possess supernatural powers. Besides its association with the wizard priest, this church is known for its magnificent centuries-old murals and a Persian stone cross with Pahlavi inscriptions. Step inside the church and one's eyes immediately rest on the beautiful barrel-vault above the sanctuary, which sports small panels exquisitely painted with floral designs. Hidden behind the main altar is a visual treasure – a rare painting of St George slaying a dragon. Flanking the sanctuary are two side altars. The one on the left has a wooden reredos with a panel depicting the Virgin Mary and behind it hides a painting showing St Thomas touching the Risen Jesus. Behind the reredos on the right altar is a mural of the Resurrection. The paintings, which had faded over the centuries, were painstakingly redone by mural conservationist V M Jijulal and his six-member team as part of the renovation of the church. "We used imported Italian pigment to restore the paintings, including the one depicting the



Baptism of Christ on the right wall," says Jijulal, adding that it took five months to retouch all the frescoes. He says they also painted two new murals of the Virgin and Mar Abo, the saintly bishop who established this church in the 9th century, above the side altars. "We also recreated the painting of St George on the wall above the main entrance as the original mural is not visible to believers because it is behind the main altar," Jijulal smiles. Kadamattom Church joins the ranks of historic Christian places of worship which boast remnants of the Kerala architectural style from the pre-colonial era.

According to Kochi-based Conservation Architect Rakhi Mariam Johnson, this church blends European and traditional Kerala architecture. "Like many old Kerala churches, here you can find a Vernacular Kerala church with a European facade in Renaissance,

Mannerist and Baroque styles brought by Portuguese missionaries," she says. One can safely say that based on historical records, the original Kadamattom Church, probably built of wood in the Kerala style, was rebuilt using stone and mortar during the Portuguese colonial period.

According to Fr Sunny Varghese, the vicar, the roof, ceiling and interior of the church were restored as part of the three-year renovation project spearheaded by Swiss architect Karl Damschen. "It was done without affecting the antiquity of the structure and almost 3,000 cubic metres of wood were needed to restore the roof and ceiling," he says. All throughout the day, one can spot a steady stream of pilgrims, many of them non-Christians, to Kadamattom Church. They all come to the tomb of Kadamattathu Poulose Kathanar in front of the altar on the left, seeking solace from their various afflictions.

People believe that he is a powerful intercessor who can work miracles. Though there aren't any historical records about this priest who used his magical powers to fight the powers of darkness, there are legends aplenty. It is said that he was born in this village in the 9th century to a poor couple. "Like many old Kerala churches, here you can find a Vernacular Kerala church with a European facade in Renaissance, Mannerist and Baroque styles brought by Portuguese missionaries," she says.

Idukki's Muthuvan tribe keeps wild honey collection sweet, civil

IDUKKI. The expertise of members of the Muthuvan tribe is second to none when it comes to collecting wild honey from dangerous, rocky slopes and wild trees. However, since the five tribal settlements in the Vattavada panchayat of Idukki have several honey collecting men who extract it from the large tree holes where the bees build hives, they strictly follow a specific system to ensure proper distribution of the produce, which is also a source of their livelihood. Each collector is allotted a specific number of tree holes from which he can collect the wild honey. In the collector's absence, only a member of his family or someone he assigned can collect the honey from the spot allotted to him. The system helps with the community existence and cooperation, and the Muthuvan tribal community in Vattavada follows it without any hesitation and complaints. Says Ramaraj, the Vattavada panchayat member and a resident of the Kudalar tribal settlement, "The Shola forests that surround the settlements have wild honey in abundance, and the tribes have been collecting the produce for generations for self-consumption and sale." He said the bees build hives in the holes of large wild trees. "Since the bees build hives only in tree holes with narrow entrance, the large holes are purposefully made narrow by placing a stone," Ramaraj told. He said each settlement in Vattavada has around 20 to 30 collectors. "Another man should not harvest honey from the tree hole where a collector has placed a stone. In his absence, anyone he has assigned or his family members can harvest the honey from the tree hole," Ramaraj said.

Though wild trees dot the expanse of the Shola forests, every honey collector knows the spots assigned to him and others. However, anyone is free to harvest from newly-formed beehives. C Rajendran, a tribal community member said, Muthuvan tribals give more importance to community values and cooperation. "Our forefathers followed the system (of allotting spots and collecting honey), and now, we also follow in their footsteps," he said.

Karnataka Cabinet approves Greater Bengaluru Integrated Satellite Town project for Ramanagara

BENGALURU. In what could be termed a shot in the arm for Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who also holds Bengaluru Development and Town Planning portfolio, the state cabinet on Thursday approved 'Greater Bengaluru Integrated Satellite Town' project comprising a cluster of 10 villages in Ramanagara district. Shivakumar got cabinet's approval for renaming Ramanagara district as Bengaluru South in July last, and the state is awaiting the Union government's nod for the same. Shivakumar is also keen on establishing Bengaluru's second international airport between Harohalli and Bidadi. He had advised people of his Kanakapura Assembly constituency recently to not sell their land as its value would appreciate in view of these development activities. Briefing reporters, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil



admitted that with the implementation of the satellite town project, land prices would skyrocket in Ramanagara taluk. To reduce congestion in Bengaluru, the government proposed to develop Devanahalli, Nelamangala, Hosakote, Doddaballapura, Magadi and Bidadi as satellite towns with all infrastructure. As part of it, the cabinet approved

the 'Greater Bengaluru Integrated Satellite Town' project in Ramanagara taluk. Bhyramangala and Bannigere in Bidadi hobli, Hosur, KG Gollarapalya, Kanchuganahalli, Aralalusandra, Kempaiahnapalya, Kanchuganahalli Kaavala, Mandalahalli and Vaderahalli villages in Harohalli hobli will be part of the satellite town. The Greater Bengaluru Development Authority will implement it. It was proposed to take up five integrated satellite towns in Bidadi, Sathanur, Ramanagara, Solur and Nandagudi to reduce congestion in Bengaluru. The government will formulate schemes to develop sustainable cities with solar energy and thereby create employment opportunities. On November 18, 2023, it constituted the Greater Bengaluru Bidadi Smart City Planning Authority as the Greater Bengaluru Development Authority.

CCTV cameras across Tamil Nadu to be geo-tagged

CHENNAI. Tamil Nadu police will no longer need to send search parties to evaluate the availability of CCTV cameras near a scene of crime, as cops will soon be able to get all the information about CCTV cameras with just a click of the mouse, and save them precious time while pursuing cases. The state police is half-way into preparing a comprehensive online database of all government-owned, sponsored, and private CCTV cameras across the state, and it will be accessible on a common platform.

Every camera will be geo-tagged and this will help cops view the availability of CCTV cameras in a particular location, the same way how users can get information from Google maps about restaurants, ATMs or toilets in the vicinity of a particular location.

Every police station will be able to access the data of CCTVs available in their jurisdiction by logging into the specialised government web portal. As on January 30, data of around 1.8 lakh CCTVs across Tamil Nadu has been collected on the portal, which is hosted on a department server that is accessible only to the police. The exercise was started in Madurai city in December and will soon be completed. The system does not provide any live feed or stored video footage from any of the cameras, a senior official said. It will provide information on the type of camera like Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and Pan Tilt Zoom (PTZ), its working status, the storage space available and the contact details of the location where it has been installed. As all cameras are geo-tagged, it will help field officers understand which CCTV cameras can be used as evidence based on distance and direction from the scene of crime. The web portal also has two important features for a postmortem analysis of the system's efficacy – firstly, it allows cops to identify sensitive locations where CCTV cameras are required, but not available, for future procurement.

Man hit by car on MG Road dies; driver on the run

GURUGRAM. A 34-year-old man was killed while crossing MG Road on Thursday evening after being allegedly hit by an unidentified speeding car, police said on Saturday. Police identified the victim as Nazmul Haq, originally from South Dinajpur, West Bengal, residing in a rented accommodation at Nathupur in DLF Phase-III. He worked as a painter in Gurugram. Officers said Haq was returning home from Chakkarpur, Sector 28, just when he met with the accident in front of Metro pillar number 73 around 8.30pm. The driver, after hitting the pedestrian, allegedly accelerated his car and fled from the spot. However, nobody could note down the vehicle's registration number, said investigators citing eyewitnesses. Commuters alerted the police control room and rushed the injured Haq to a private hospital in DLF Phase-III, they added. "Doctors declared him dead on arrival. The hospital administration further alerted the police following which a team reached there for investigation," said Sandeep Kumar, public relations officer, Gurugram police, said. "There were no major injury marks on the body. But doctors said Haq might have sustained severe internal head injury from the impact as he was bleeding from nose and ears," he said, adding that there was no CCTV camera at the spot.

Investigators said that they were scanning CCTV camera footage of Sikanderpur, Iffco Chowk and other locations near the spot to zero-in on the car that had hit him.

Firm to pull out of housekeeping services, 4k families in a fix

NOIDA. Nearly 4,000 families at Jaypee Greens Kosmos are in a fix as the maintenance agency, a subsidiary of the builder Jaiprakash Associates Limited, will cease its operations from Wednesday and halt manpower and financial support for housekeeping and security services. In a letter dated Nov 22, Jaiprakash Associates Limited-Facility Management Group (JAL-FMG), which has managed the society's maintenance since 2015, and Suraksha Realty Ltd asked the society's apartment owners' association (AOA) to take over the housekeeping and other services. The AOA, however, expressed its inability to manage these services as the company did not transfer the bank accounts or the balance amount collected as charges paid so far by the residents towards such services. Residents also pointed out that several towers and electricity infrastructure in the project were still incomplete, and the developer also has an outstanding water bill towards Noida Authority. If the maintenance agency pulls out, water and electricity supply are also likely to be affected. Ten of the 46 towers at the Kosmos project, part of the Jaypee Greens Wish Town in Sector 134, are still under construction. In May 2024, Suraksha officially assumed control of Jaypee Infratech Limited (JIL) through insolvency proceedings to complete the unfinished flats. Earlier this month, TOI reported that Suraksha had failed to mobilise the promised Rs 3,000 crore required for construction, deploy workers, or even establish escrow accounts as stipulated in the resolution plan. According to the approved resolution plan, passed by NCLAT in May this year, Suraksha was supposed to resume construction of flats within 90 days. "In 2015, Jaypee Infratech Ltd appointed its subsidiary, JAL-FMG, for the maintenance-related services of the society. Since then, residents have been depositing all the maintenance charges to the company's account, which is about Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per month. Initially, while buying the flats, all the residents deposited about 1.5 lakh to the company in the name of a maintenance deposit, which is approximately Rs 80 crore. JAL-FMG has not transferred this amount to the AOA but wants it to take over all the services," Brijesh Singh, a resident of the society, said. The society's AOA was set up in 2022, but since then has not received any maintenance charges from the residents.

NANI RESORTS & FLORICULTURE PVT. LTD.
 Corp. Off.: ROF Group, Building No. 80, First Floor, Sector-44, Gurgaon-122003, Ph. 0124-4399399

Notice is hereby given to the Public at large that the following booking of residential apartments in the Affordable Housing Project "ROF ALANTE" being developed by M/s NANI RESORTS & FLORICULTURE PVT. LTD. situated at Sector 108, Gurugram, Haryana vide License No. 43 of 2019 dated: 05.03.2019.

That the below mentioned Units are falling under list of defaulters due to Non-Payment of dues as per the provisions of Affordable Housing Policy, 2013 and are hereby served a final notice to clear their dues within 15 Days of this Publication. If the balance payments against the said units are not received within next 15 days, then the allotment of the below mentioned Units shall stand cancelled as per the provisions of Affordable Housing Policy, 2013.

Application No.	Carpet Area + Balcony (Sq. Ft.)	Apartment No.
10111, 2301, 2479, 1330, 3113, 10007, 5268, 4870, 544, 2002, 1599, 10125, 617, 608, 3639	1BHK TYPE- 1 (332.779+79.362)	F-1007,F-110, F-1109, F-1204, F-1402, F-1509, F-204, F-309, F-402, F-403, F-604, F-702, F-707, F-907, F-910
1325,5288, 4860, 3584, 1329, 1524, 3579, 846, 5055	1BHK TYPE- 2 (333.091+102.15)	F-1006,F-1105,F-1112, F-1205,F-1206,F-1512, F-206,F-505,F-811
764,1207,2492,1016,23 47,1044,3070,3131,387 1,1343,1354,4786,2159, 3059A,1880,2297,765,9 77,1378,844,920,2094,3 625,3717	2BHK+ST TYPE-B (645.549+104.787)	B-1204,B-1407,B-1503, B-308,B-508,C-1004, C-1104,C-1208,C-1404, C-504,C-607,D-1104, D-1208,D-1407,D-1504, D-1508,D-904,E-1103, E-1404,E-1407,E-407, E-508,E-707,E-803
104,136	2BHK+ST TYPE-D (645.549+120.287)	A-103, D-103
2009,1103,1237,668,51 2,1315,4785,4784,1503, 1374,1701,1261	3BHK TYPE- A (645.743+121.536)	A-202,C-1001,C-102, C-202,C-401,C-602, C-801,D-102,D-1402, D-1502,E-402,E-601
1680,513,1832,2111,23 73,2354,1348,3536,207 0,1804,2114,3872,1673, 2535,1821,3005,3868,3 327,3897,10009,3429,3 010,3215,1070,2382,15 48,2004	3BHK TYPE- C (645.786+91.063)	A-1406,A-305,A-405, A-406,A-605,A-606, A-905,B-1401,B-1406, B-1506,B-205,B-605, B-905,C-1006,C-106, C-206,C-305,C-505, C-605,C-805,D-406, D-805,D-806,E-1405, E-1505,E-306,E-805

Therefore, all the person/allottee (s) are hereby called upon to clear all their dues within 15 days to avoid cancellation of the said Units as per the terms of the Haryana Affordable Housing Policy 2013.

In the absence of payment within the stipulated period above, it shall be presumed and/or deemed that the allottee (s) or concern has no such claims/objections by virtue of this notice and, if any, the same have been waived or abandoned without any reference to such claims/objections made thereafter and necessary action will be taken as per the applicable Policy and Law.

For NANI RESORTS & FLORICULTURE PVT. LTD.
 Place: Gurugram (Haryana) Director

Kumbh stampede leaves painful lessons

The unfortunate incident of stampede at Prayagraj Maha Kumbh is a cause of concern for the whole nation. As per initial reports, more than a hundred million devotees had gathered in the Sangam area to take 'amrit snan' on the occasion of 'mauni amavasya'. The thread of faith and belief of the masses is so strong that everybody wants to take a holy dip at the nose point on this historic moment which has arrived after 144 years.

It is being reported that the mishap happened around 1 o'clock in the early morning hours, when some pilgrims tried to cross the barricades demarcating the path for the akharas to go for the traditional 'shahi snan'. It is a matter of satisfaction that normalcy was restored immediately and the rituals at the Sangam are going on.

Stampede during religious congregations has become almost a matter of routine in India. People take it in their stride as an act of God and the administrators also forget it after some initial jolts. In January 2015, in a stampede at a temple in Andhra Pradesh, six devotees died in an attempt to get the free-visit passes; 121 people lost their lives at Hathras in Uttar Pradesh in their quest to get a closer glimpse of their religious guru; 115 pilgrims were killed and 100 others injured in a stampede at Ratangarh temple in Madhya Pradesh during Navaratri celebrations in November 2023.

The Kumbh Mela in Uttar Pradesh witnessed a stampede in February 2013, in which 36 devotees lost their lives; while jostling to get free food and clothing at a temple in Uttar Pradesh, 63 people died due to mismanagement; in September 2008, 250 pilgrims were trampled to death at Chamundagar temple in Rajasthan during the Navaratri festival; 145 devotees died after a rumour of a landslide triggered a stampede at the Naina Devi temple in Himachal Pradesh in August 2008; 265 people died at the Mandardevi temple in Wai town, Maharashtra, because of slippery steps in January 2005. The list of such mishaps is endless. The recurrence of such human tragedies at regular intervals indicates that the system does not learn enough lessons to prevent them from happening in future.

Though it is not advisable to do a hasty post-mortem of such a human tragedy, there are some facts in the public domain which need to be discussed for preventing similar mishaps. Such discussions become imperative in view of the fact that preparations for the Maha Kumbh started years before the event. Meticulous planning was done under the supervision of the Chief Minister of the state. Pre-event assessment of the crowd as well as daily monitoring of the arrivals of the devotees during the Maha Kumbh is of utmost importance. The entry of the pilgrims in the Sangam area should have been regulated keeping in view the actual space available to accommodate them.

There should have been a mechanism in place, in coordination with police agencies of all states, to estimate the number of devotees likely to arrive at the Maha Kumbh on a daily basis. Restrictions, which were imposed on the movement of trains and buses carrying people to Prayagraj after the tragedy, should have been clamped much before the crowd swelled to full capacity. It seems many devotees did not leave the area after taking a holy dip at the nose point and were occupying the space for days together, resulting in congestion. This would have been prevented by launching awareness campaigns and circulating advisories in advance, asking people to limit their stay at the Sangam area and vacate the space for the others.

There should have been deployment of force to ensure that the circulating and bathing areas were free from unnecessary squatting. It is advisable to plan holding areas at all entry points to contain the crowds temporarily and release them in groups as per the space available on the bathing ghats. Waterways should have been planned for a quick exit of the pilgrims from the Sangam area. The entry and exit routes should have been separate to avoid traffic jam. It would have been better if area-specific days for bathing were fixed and notified to people for the sake of their safety and security. ss

Kudos to cops for cracking Saif case

Politicians have struck a jarring note by making all sorts of inferences and insinuations

It was in 1975 (or perhaps the first half of 1976) that I first set eyes on Saif Ali Khan. He was fast asleep on the upper berth of a coupe on a Mumbai-Ahmedabad train. The berth was booked in the name of his father, the Nawab of Pataudi, Mansoor Ali Khan, a former captain of India's cricket team. The Nawab and I had dinner on the lower berth, which was booked in my name. Ten years later, he came to my Chandigarh bungalow to interview me. He recalled our train journey and I inquired about his son.

A few years ago, I met Saif and his wife, Kareena, at the Mahalaxmi Race Course. It was the day of the Indian Derby. Saif and I were guests of our mutual friend, Farouq Rattoney, whose horses had won the race in two successive years previously. I took advantage of the occasion to recount to him that train journey. Earlier this month, I found his name and pictures splashed across newspapers and news channels for his brush with an intruder in his 11th-floor residence in Mumbai's tony suburb of Bandra, where many Bollywood actors live. Saif was stabbed when he confronted the intruder. He had to go to a private, well-known hospital close to his home for medical treatment, including a surgery in close proximity to the spine. It was a delicate operation expertly performed by the hospital's competent doctors. Saif recovered in five days and was discharged. An unnecessary controversy was kicked up in the electronic and print media on unrelated issues like why his wife did not accompany him to the hospital and why he chose an autorickshaw over an Uber or an Ola. (Answer: It was easily available outside his residence). The worst was yet to come. In the days following the assault, critics of the Maharashtra Government went to town proclaiming a total collapse of law and order. They denigrated my city of Mumbai as the most dangerous place to live in and its police force as the pits as far as security of life and property was concerned. Arnab Goswami, the doyen of sensation-seeking newshounds, found fault with every move the police made to nab the culprit. Obviously, he was still smarting from the fact that the Mumbai Police had dared to arrest him and put him behind bars for a few days for trying to build up viewership through sensationalism. Politicians went even further, making all sorts of inferences and insinuations, going to the extent of asserting that Saif was not stabbed or injured at all, but was merely playing to the 'gallery'! BJP leader Nitesh Rane, recently inducted into the Mahayuti government, tried to

introduce a communal angle into the episode. Nitesh is a known Muslim-baiter and poor Saif is consequently condemned in the minister's eyes. I am sure that the minister is aware that Saif's mother is Sharmila Tagore and his wife Kareena Kapoor. How much of Islam Saif himself has imbibed or follows is uncertain. As far as my knowledge goes, religion has never been a contentious issue in Bollywood. The criticism of the police is even more disturbing. Doubts have been expressed about the identity of the man arrested, to the extent of asserting that he does not resemble the person shown entering and exiting



through the staircase in the CCTV footage. Obviously, the doubts have been created by elements who want to disparage the government at any cost, particularly on an occasion when a golden opportunity to berate it in the public eye presents itself, like it does when a prominent person is attacked. Level-headed and fair-minded citizens will pat the back of the city police's crime busters for the systematic and patient efforts they made to nab the culprit despite the tremendous pressure they faced from the onset of the investigation. It is not easy to get rid of public and political pressures to trace culprits quickly on such occasions. I have experienced such pressures myself all through my working years and hence can relate and sympathise with the officers and men entrusted with the job. Earlier this month, I found his name and pictures splashed across newspapers and news channels for his brush with an intruder in his 11th-floor residence in Mumbai's tony suburb of Bandra, where many Bollywood actors live. Saif was stabbed when he confronted the intruder. He had to go to a private, well-known hospital close to his home for medical treatment, including a surgery in close proximity to the spine. It was a delicate operation expertly

performed by the hospital's competent doctors. Saif recovered in five days and was discharged. An unnecessary controversy was kicked up in the electronic and print media on unrelated issues like why his wife did not accompany him to the hospital and why he chose an autorickshaw over an Uber or an Ola. (Answer: It was easily available outside his residence). The worst was yet to come. In the days following the assault, critics of the Maharashtra Government went to town proclaiming a total collapse of law and order. They denigrated my city of Mumbai as the most dangerous place to live in and its police force as the pits as far as security of life and property was concerned. Arnab Goswami, the doyen of sensation-seeking newshounds, found fault with every move the police made to nab the culprit. Obviously, he was still smarting from the fact that the Mumbai Police had dared to arrest him and put him behind bars for a few days for trying to build up viewership through sensationalism. Politicians went even further, making all sorts of inferences and insinuations, going to the extent of asserting that Saif was not stabbed or injured at all, but was merely playing to the 'gallery'! BJP leader Nitesh Rane, recently inducted into the Mahayuti government, tried to introduce a communal angle into the episode. Nitesh is a known Muslim-baiter and poor Saif is consequently condemned in the minister's eyes. I am sure that the minister is aware that Saif's mother is Sharmila Tagore and his wife Kareena Kapoor. How much of Islam Saif himself has imbibed or follows is uncertain. As far as my knowledge goes, religion has never been a contentious issue in Bollywood. The criticism of the police is even more disturbing. Doubts have been expressed about the identity of the man arrested, to the extent of asserting that he does not resemble the person shown entering and exiting through the staircase in the CCTV footage. Obviously, the doubts have been created by elements who want to disparage the government at any cost, particularly on an occasion when a golden opportunity to berate it in the public eye presents itself, like it does when a prominent person is attacked. Level-headed and fair-minded citizens will pat the back of the city police's crime busters for the systematic and patient efforts they made to nab the culprit despite the tremendous pressure they faced from the onset of the investigation.

Maha Kumbh tragedy

Safety of devotees must be prioritised

A great tragedy has cast a shadow on the Maha Kumbh festival, the most magnificent spectacle India presents to the world every 12 years. Better crowd management could have prevented the stampede that took place in the Sangam area as crores of pilgrims jostled to take a holy dip on the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya in the wee hours of Wednesday. Ensuring a safe pilgrimage was an enormous challenge from the outset, and it is apparent that some lapses led to the pre-dawn melee. Anticipating a huge congregation, the mela authorities had issued an advisory on Tuesday, urging devotees to follow safety guidelines. However, the organisers and security personnel were caught off guard when some pilgrims climbed over the barricades at Akhara Marg. The Uttar Pradesh Government has tried to downplay the incident, probably with the intention of averting panic and avoiding negative publicity, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered condolences to the



devotees who lost their family members. A thorough probe is a must to find out how the situation spun out of control and who all were guilty of dereliction of duty.

Creating a veil of secrecy will only fuel rumours and misinformation. The administration did appeal to devotees to bathe at the first ghat they reached so as to prevent overcrowding, while emphasising that all ghats at Sangam were equally sacred. However, this appeal should have been backed by proactive steps to make pilgrims move ahead in a disciplined way. The Sangam stampede should prompt the mela organisers to review security arrangements and do course correction. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that the government's first priority is to ensure the safety of devotees. This should be the way forward during the remaining four weeks of the Maha Kumbh. The spectre of death should not be allowed to mar a festival that proudly showcases India's spiritual grandeur.

The letters, loves and literature of Amrita Sher-Gil

Amrita had a choice of lovers and she exercised it daringly, at times, even defiantly.

Amrita Sher-Gil (1913-1941) was very fond of literature, poetry in particular. This fondness figured midway between her passion for painting and interest in music. During her early childhood in war-torn Hungary, drawing interested her a lot. She was able to draw figures on her own. But reading needed help. With help from her parents, she took to reading short pieces, lyrical poems in particular. Hungarian was her mother tongue and appealed to her.

She read not only to pass time but also to enjoy and refine her feelings. The poems of Endre Ady charmed her a lot. He was a symbolist who sought to award new meanings to social and political concerns. They were in tune with the risks that had begun to lurk over human life with the advent of industrial changes. She might not have grasped the full import of such poems then. Her interest grew into profound concern when, as a young lass, she started to live in Paris, the centre of modernism in Europe. It was only a matter of time before French became her primary mode of communication and literary expression. Charles Baudelaire shone over the literary and artistic world at the time. He wrote poems in the modern mode, setting a trend in Europe. Under his influence, love poetry turned its back on nostalgia, swooning in union and the bliss of solitude. Their place was taken up by cynicism, loneliness, nihilism and abandon. Evidences of all these factors were to be seen and encountered in every nook and corner of Paris.

Amrita did swim with the tide, but she also set her aim high. While Picasso and Braque painted Europe, she resolved to paint India in a modern way. India was then ruled by the British. It was pertinent for her to be adept in the use of the English language and also to have sufficient knowledge of its literature. Her

letters, which escaped burning at the hands of her parents, bear witness to the fact that her writing skills in English grew very fast. Her earlier letters to her admirers and lovers show that she was labouring a lot. Words and phrases were jumbled together. Her later letters show how cogent she had become in their usage. Surely, towards the end of her short and tragic life, English blossomed as her literary language with as much felicity as French had figured earlier.

Regarding Punjabi and Urdu, she could converse in these languages, probably not so fluently. What about her study of English literature? As compared to her grasp of French literature, it was less in extent and depth. She relished DH Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Like Lawrence, she believed that sensuality was the root of the creative process in a language and more so in music and painting. In its absence, the creative urge met with a false and facile end.

Virginia Woolf gave her the insight to paint from more than one perspective. The first creative work to celebrate her art is a play in Punjabi written by Sant Singh Sekhon. Named Kalakar (artist), its protagonist is a male artist who feels that Amrita Sher-Gil is destined to raise the art scene in Punjab to the level it is enjoyed elsewhere, particularly in Europe. Her great concerns — seeing versus looking, sex versus sexuality, nakedness versus nudity — figure a lot in it. Then, a Pakistani poet of great promise penned a poem, Jamurd, on her celebrated painting, The Three Sisters. He invokes



the memory of Amrita to take birth again and turn the enraptured silence of the three sisters into an eloquent experience. Slender and short, but charming, Amrita fascinated Salman Rushdie, who introduced the spell of magical realism in the Indo-English fiction. In The Moor's Last Sigh, he both inflates her being and deflates her becoming. Its heroine, born and brought up in Europe, turns into a painter of diverse talent. She is married and her husband is a mismatch. Though she bears several

children, her charm stays intact. Even Jawaharlal Nehru gets close to Amrita Sher-Gil. He would often voice his affection for her.

Rushdie's definition of Amrita as a "line of beauty" glows as a rainbow in the play, Tumhari Amrita, starring Shabana Azmi and Farooq Shaikh. It was the Urdu translation of an American play, Love Letters, penned by AR Gurney in 1889. It had nothing to do with Amrita's life, except that she was also very fond of writing and receiving letters. Her letters hinged on the recognition of the other along with of her own self. No wonder, she was full of remorse when her parents consigned most of her letters, including several from Nehru, to the flames. Tumhari Amrita deals with the illusion and disillusion caused by letter-writing, with the lovers getting close just for a short while. With Amrita, it was otherwise. Amrita had a choice of lovers and she exercised it daringly, at times, even defiantly. She had the creative urge to realise her potential through sexual union. There was none who charmed her for long. Most persons with whom she cohabited failed to understand how sex, turning into a play of senses, invigorated her art of painting. Rather than getting intrigued, which regrettably enough they did, it was essential for them to grasp this factor. This was the core of her being-cum-becoming and it is yet to be grasped in full. The leitmotif, lost in the past, should be elaborated, recognised and applauded.



England's Great landscapes

England is home to some of the most beautiful and inspiring landscapes in the world. Here are few of them:

Lake District

Everyone has their favourite Lake District panorama, but from the summit of Haystacks you have god-like views over the valleys of Buttermere and Ennerdale and the glittering waters of Crummock Water. On a clear day, you can even glimpse the Irish Sea.

North Cornwall

The rocky coast of North Cornwall contains some of England's most magnificent, surf-washed beaches. Watergate Bay, near Newquay, has two miles of golden sand, pounded by Atlantic rollers and backed by cliffs and caves. Peregrine falcons, gulls and fulmars wheel overhead and you can spot strawberry anemones and crabs among the rock pools.

Cotswolds

The lovely market town of Chipping Campden is quintessential Cotswolds, all golden stone, mullioned windows and gracious houses. The High Street, with its 17th century covered market house, is particularly lovely—summed up in the words of the English historian G.M. Trevelyan as, "the most beautiful village street now left on the island".

North Norfolk

There is a haunting quality to the creeks and salt marshes of North Norfolk, set under vast dome-like skies. Explore them safely by walking from Burnham Overy Staithe along a causeway to a vast dune-backed beach, or by taking a boat trip from Morston to see the resident seal colony at **Blakeney Point**.

Exmoor National Park Exmoor National



Park, which extends across north Devon and west Somerset, contains wonderfully varied landscapes of wild heather moorland, heath and deep wooded combs of ancient oaks.

From windswept Dunkery Beacon, the highest point, you can see swathes of south west England laid out below you—moors, rolling fields and the glittering sea beyond. Look out for Exmoor ponies and red deer,

and on a clear night, the stars shine like diamonds.

London

"Earth hath not anything to show more fair," wrote William Wordsworth of the view from Westminster Bridge. Over 200 years later, it is still one of the great scenes of London, both by day and night, though the view from neighbouring Waterloo Bridge is perhaps even more impressive. On one side are the Houses

of Parliament, Big Ben and the London Eye, on the other, the towers, domes and skyscrapers of the city. It's a reminder that London is one of the most exciting cities in the world.

Northumberland

Although the coast of Northumberland provides countless magnificent views, the interior is just as impressive. There is something special about standing on Hadrian's Wall, at the top of Housesteads Fort, knowing that nearly 2,000 years ago Roman soldiers walked this very turf. Through summer and winter, they'd have stared out across this same landscape to the Tyne Valley and Scottish borders, perhaps longing for the olive groves and cypress trees of home.

Settle Carlisle railway

The Settle Carlisle railway offers some of the best countryside views of any train journey in England. Get off at Dent Station and you can see the Yorkshire Dales national park spread out below you. Wild moorland drops to a zigzag valley dotted with the occasional cottage. Cloud shadows race across the hilltops and the cry of sheep drifts on the wind.

New Forest

The New Forest is a mix of heath and moor, bogs and ancient pasture, but walk or cycle among the dappled glades, arching tunnels of beech trees and stands of redwoods and ancient trees to see it at its most beautiful. Especially in spring, when leaves are soft, vibrant green, ponies and foals graze in clearings and bluebells and rhododendrons bloom in Roydon Woods.

Peak District



Kinder Scout and the high moorland of the Dark Peak are the images that come to mind when you think of the Peak District. But as viewers of BBC's The Village will have seen, it's the region's green roller-coaster hills studded with sheep and the steep valleys dropping to splashing rivers and streams that are every bit as beautiful.

'Soul warming' is the expression that comes to mind when talking about the beaches of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and it's definitely the result of something more than the tropical sun. It's the crystal clear sea with a tinge of aqua blue, schools of iridescent fish that dart in sudden movements across the corals, and the soft bone white sand where one can lay the whole day. Even though there has been an influx of tourists over the last few years, you can still manage an isolated spot amongst the many beaches of the archipelago. Your island hopping itinerary could plug in some of these beaches.

Corbyn's Cove Beach, Port Blair

Corbyn's cove doesn't really qualify as a lazy enticing beach amidst the many that you will find in the Andamans, but it does offer a welcome relief from Port Blair's city life. If you have a day's stop in Port Blair, this could be a small induction into the sandy stretches that await you on your trip.

Radhanagar Beach, Havelock Island

The Radhanagar beach has won many accolades in the travel world—an evening of sunset watching here and you will understand why. A sprawling, flat, soft bed of sand, it can accommodate hundreds of people during high season. There are a few pavilions to sit at, with the buzz of beach sellers and a small market leading up to it. But to avoid the entire bustle, walk towards the far end on the right.

Elephant Beach

One of the most coveted and isolated sandy spots, Elephant beach is a pit stop for snorkellers. You'll need to take a boat to get here, but once you arrive, expect pristine water and untouched white sand. There is a bit of infrastructure here too, so carry food and water if you are planning on spending the day. Boats are available from Havelock Island.

Long Island Beach

An unspoiled magical island in the Andamans, Long Island beach is strictly for the intrepid. A couple of restaurants and a paltry local population make this island less touristy, which is good news if you're looking for some isolated spots to yourself. Long island is 82 km from Port Blair, and a boat service to and fro runs only four times a week.

Ross and Smith Island Beach

A boat ride of 25 minutes off Diglipur gets you to the serene twin islands called Ross and Smith. The beaches here promise uncluttered vistas and soft waves sweep up along the shore. The islands are actually separated by a narrow stretch of sand, technically making it a single beach.

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For an unhurried experience, visit Lalaji Bay beach in Long Island. If nothing else, you are bound to see dolphins leaping up out of the sea. The beach lies six km from the main jetty, and can be reached by a short

hike or small dinghies.

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Wandoor is one of the closest beaches with tourist access, since it lies in Port Blair. Expect a splash of colour during high season, with tourists dotting the pale sand. Boats to Jolly Buoy Island leave from here.

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The Aamkunji beach in Rangat is known as a popular turtle nesting ground. So if you are a keen environmental enthusiast, this is the place you should be heading. A long boat ride

through the islands (or with multiple crossings if you take the ferry) is the only way to get here from Port Blair.

Mayabunder

Avis and Karmatung beaches in Mayabunder are situated in the north part of Middle Andaman. Relatively quiet, you will not find the buzz of Havelock here—which is a blessing if you want to avoid the tourist clutter.

Casurina Beach, Diglipur

Diglipur is the main base camp for those who want to hike up to Saddle Peak in the Andaman Islands. An added advantage of this long trip from Port Blair (300 km by road), is that you can relax by the Casurina beach here. It can be hours before you will bump into anyone.

Beach hopping in the Andamans



"Think He Passed Exams By Cheating": Congress Leader Jabs Arvind Kejriwal

Sandeep Dikshit said that being an engineer, Arvind Kejriwal is saying such "absurd" things that a student of class 5 or 6 would not say.

New Delhi. Taking a swipe at Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday, Congress candidate from the New Delhi assembly constituency Sandeep Dikshit said that being an engineer, he is saying such absurd things that a student of class 5 or 6 would not say.

As the battle for the February 5 assembly polls in Delhi intensified, the Congress leader alleged Arvind Kejriwal of lying. "He (Arvind Kejriwal) said that I have done so much work; I have just said that whatever you say, say it with a record. Today, at 3 pm, it will be clear that either Congress or AAP is speaking the truth... Both BJP and AAP are distributing cash to get votes; I want to ask them if they are in politics or the market?" the Congress leader said. "Sometimes, I fail to understand



what Arvind Kejriwal studied at IIT. Being an engineer, he is saying such absurd things that a student of class 5 or 6 would not say. What had he done? I think he passed his exams by cheating... I'll suggest he should go through his engineering books—he will come to know how much he lies," added Mr

Dikshit. Meanwhile, Arvind Kejriwal visited the Election Commission today and claimed that if AAP had not protested, one crore Delhi residents would have been deprived of water. He alleged bias, stating that instead of acting against Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini, the ECI is targeting him. He further said, "Whatever punishment is given to me, I will accept it. We have not taken time from the Election Commission; if we meet them, then it is fine; otherwise, we will come to the gate and give our answer and water bottle to the three commissioners."

"If we had not protested and raised a hue and cry, one crore people of Delhi would have stopped getting water... ECI has sent me a notice asking why no action is taken. I saved Delhi from a water crisis and I am being threatened with punishment... Instead of

filing an FIR and taking action against Nayab Saini, the Election Commission is after me... Neighbouring states of election states can influence elections by stopping water... Money, sarees, shoes and jackets are being openly distributed in Delhi, but the Election Commission is silent. ECI does not show the courage to take action against BJP today," he said. Sandeep Dikshit is up against AAP's Arvind Kejriwal and BJP's Parvash Verma in the New Delhi constituency for the upcoming February 5 polls.

Delhi will go for polls in a single phase on February 5, while the counting of votes will take place on February 8. The Congress, which was in power for 15 consecutive years in Delhi, has suffered setbacks in the past few assembly elections. In contrast, the AAP dominated the 2020 assembly elections by winning 62 out of 70 seats, while the BJP got only eight seats.

Capital cry: Delhi mange vikas aur virasat

NEW DELHI. A lively discussion unfolds at a tea stall close to the Hanuman temple near Connaught Place around noon, drawing the attention of those within their hearing range. Unmindful of the gathering, mononymous Nirbhay and his friend Pramod Malhotra—both civil service aspirants—get on with debating the Delhi election animatedly. "Delhi na mange daru-jharu, Delhi mange vikas aur virasat, dear samjha karo," observes Pramod. That elicits chuckles from the now-attentive crowd.



Pat comes Nirbhay's counter, a smile creasing his face: "No, no! Modi ji ne Swachhata Abhiyan chalaya tha jharu hath me lekar. Delhi chahe more and more jharu." The chuckles turn into guffaws. So, who's winning? They are suddenly contrite. "Delhi will prefer commitment, not corruption!" The New Delhi constituency has over 1,00,382 voters, including 45,713 women. Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal won thrice from here. So did one of his predecessors, the late Sheila Dixit of Congress.

The BJP made it only once when Kirti Azad returned victorious over three decades ago. Kejriwal faces a stiff challenge from Praveesh Singh Verma, son of former CM Sahib Singh Verma, and Sandeep Dikshit, son of Sheila Dikshit. It's a no-holds-barred contest. The catch is that many middle-class voters remain undecided. Raghuvir Nirala, who runs an eatery on Mandir Road, sums up the mood: "The voters of our category, who constitute nearly 10.12% of voters, are still in a dilemma. We cannot overlook Kejriwal as he has left an impression on the voters, but the BJP's Verma has made the race tough."

EC refutes AAP claim on raid at Mann residence

NEW DELHI. In yet another confrontation between the AAP and the Election Commission, ruling party leaders, including Atishi, on Thursday claimed that poll panel officials and the Delhi Police raided Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's residence in Kapurthala House. However, the New Delhi District Election Office clarified that actions were taken in response to cVIGIL Complaint ID 1282744 regarding alleged cash distribution at Kapurthala House, which falls under the jurisdiction of the New Delhi Assembly constituency.

The AAP leaders called the raid the BJP's "yet another politically motivated move". They slammed the party for misusing agencies to target opposition leaders while ignoring blatant violations of the Model Code of Conduct by BJP leaders.

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal questioned the "selective targeting" of opposition leaders, highlighting that BJP leaders were distributing cash, blankets, sarees, shoes, jackets, shawls, and even gold chains ahead of the elections. "The Chief Minister of Punjab resides in Delhi at Kapurthala House, which is his official residence. It seems that a raid is being conducted on the Chief Minister of Punjab," Kejriwal told reporters at a press meet.

Mann reacted to the development on 'X' and wrote, "Today, a team from the Election Commission, along with the Delhi Police, arrived at my residence, Kapurthala House, in Delhi to conduct a raid. In Delhi, BJP members are openly distributing money, yet neither the Delhi Police nor the Election Commission seems to notice anything. No action is being taken against this." He alleged that the Delhi Police and the EC were working under the BJP's influence to malign the image of Punjab and its people.

PM condoles deaths in Washington plane crash: We stand in solidarity with US

New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said he was "deeply saddened" over the loss of lives in a midair collision between an American Airlines plane and a US Army helicopter in Washington DC. He said India stood in solidarity with the people of the US. All 67 people - 64 aboard the American Airlines plane - that collided with a Black Hawk helicopter, carrying three US Army personnel, were feared dead in what could be the worst US aviation disaster in almost a quarter-century. "Deeply saddened by the loss of lives in the tragic collision in Washington DC. Our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. We stand in solidarity with the people of the United States," PM Modi tweeted and tagged US President Donald Trump in the post.

The midair collision occurred when the American Airlines flight (Flight 5342) coming from Wichita, Kansas, was approaching the runway of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. The flight collided with the chopper engaged in a training exercise and both the aircraft plunged into the Potomac River bordering the airport. Emergency personnel found the body of the plane upside down in three sections in the river and the wreckage of the helicopter. The crash occurred in some of the most tightly controlled and monitored airspace in the world, just around five kilometres south of the White House and the Capitol. Officials were yet to ascertain the reason behind the collision. Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) were investigating the circumstances that led to the tragedy.

India Tops Global List In Passenger Loads On Domestic Flights: Report

New Delhi. India's domestic flights have recorded a passenger load factor of 86.4 per cent in 2024, to forge ahead of the US and China which figure at the second and third spot respectively, according to the latest report of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). India's fast-growing aviation sector has carried 16.3 crore passengers on domestic flights during 2024, according to figures compiled by the country's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

India achieved a passenger load factor of 86.4 per cent, the highest among all domestic markets, the IATA report states. The corresponding figure for the US was 84.1 per cent and China (83.2 per cent). Brazil with a passenger load factor of 81.9 per cent was placed at the 4th rank followed closely by Australia (81.8 per cent) and Japan (78 per cent). Globally both domestic and international full-year demand reached record highs for passenger numbers and load factors.

The international full-year traffic in 2024 increased 13.6 per cent compared to 2023, and capacity rose 12.8 per cent. The total full-year traffic in 2024 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) rose 10.4 per cent compared to 2023.

This was 3.8 per cent above pre-pandemic (2019) levels. Total capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), was up 8.7 per cent in 2024. The overall load factor reached 83.5 per cent, a record for full-year traffic, according to the IATA report.

It also points out that December 2024 was a strong finish to the year with overall demand rising 8.6 per cent year-on-year, and capacity grew by 5.6 per cent. International demand rose by 10.6 per cent and domestic demand by 5.5 per cent. The December load factor reached 84 per cent, which is a record for the month. "2024 made it absolutely clear that people want to travel. With 10.4 per cent demand growth, travel reached record numbers domestically and internationally. Airlines met that strong demand with record efficiency.

"On average, 83.5 per cent of all seats on offer were filled - a new record high, partially attributable to the supply chain constraints that limited capacity growth." Aviation growth reverberates across societies and economies at all levels through jobs, market development, trade, innovation, exploration, and much more," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

"Looking to 2025, there is every indication that demand for travel will continue to grow, albeit at a moderated pace of 8.0 per cent that is more aligned with historical averages." The desire to partake in the freedom that flying makes possible brings some challenges into sharp focus," he observed.

Delhi HC sets aside Rs 2.5 crore bail condition for Rau's CEO

NEW DELHI. The Delhi High Court on Thursday set aside the Rs 2.5 crore financial condition imposed on Abhishek Gupta, CEO of Rau's IAS Study Circle, while granting him interim bail. The case pertains to the tragic deaths of three UPSC aspirants in the basement of the coaching institute in Old Rajinder Nagar in July 2024. Justice Vikas Mahajan ruled in favour of Gupta, directing the trial court to reconsider his bail plea purely on its merits. The hearing on his interim bail is scheduled for Friday before the Rouse Avenue court.

Earlier, the trial court had granted Gupta interim bail on September 23, 2024, but imposed a condition requiring him to



deposit Rs 5 crore. These co-owners of the basement were granted regular bail by the Delhi High Court on January 21.

Senior counsel Jayant Sood, appearing for Gupta, argued that since the Supreme Court had stayed such financial conditions and four co-accused had already secured regular bail, his client should not be subjected to a harsher standard. The trial court had earlier extended interim bail for the accused while awaiting further consideration on January 31. On December 7, 2024, Gupta's counsel had informed the trial court that the financial condition was under challenge in the High Court.

Rakesh Sharma Wore Space Patch With India Flag In 1981. Now, Comes Another

New Delhi. Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla will become the second Indian to travel to space, four decades after Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma's historic feat in 1984. Mr Shukla, a serving officer in the Indian Air Force (IAF), will pilot the Axiom 4 (Ax-4), a private space mission that will launch aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft this year from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

But the Sharma-Shukla parallel does not end there. Group Captain Shukla's selection for Ax-4 comes through the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which identified him as a key astronaut for India's upcoming Gaganyaan mission. ISRO has collaborated with NASA and Axiom Space for this mission. As part of Ax-4, Mr Shukla will serve as the mission's pilot alongside three other astronauts: Peggy Whitson, a former NASA astronaut and mission



commander, Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland, and Tibor Kapu from Hungary. Ahead of the mission, Axiom released the 'space patch' which will feature on the astronauts' space suits. The Ax-4 patch has four ascending lines, each representing a flag of the countries

reached the ISS but will also be a landmark event for Poland and Hungary, whose astronauts will be making their first visits to the space station.

"I am really excited to go into microgravity and experience space flight on my own. The tempo for the mission has been building up each month. I think we are at a stage wherein all the pieces are kind of coming together. I'm extremely excited to see how this unfolds in the coming months and for the actual space flight as well." Group Captain Shukla told Axiom Space has been steadily expanding its private astronaut missions to the ISS since its first mission, Axiom Mission 1 (Ax-1), in April 2022. That mission saw a four-member private crew spend 17 days aboard the orbiting laboratory.

Ax-2 followed in May 2023, led by Peggy Whitson, the same commander for Ax-4. That mission lasted eight days in orbit.

"Poor Thing": Row Over Sonia Gandhi's Remarks On President's Speech

President Murmu addressed a joint sitting of the Parliament this morning to mark the beginning of the Budget Session.

New Delhi. The Budget Session began with a fresh controversy this morning after Congress MP Sonia Gandhi called President Droupadi Murmu a "poor thing" while commenting on her address to the Parliament. The phrase followed Mrs Gandhi's concern that the 66-year-old looked exhausted after her long customary speech, with the BJP snubbing it as a "derogatory comment". President Murmu addressed a joint sitting of the Parliament this morning to mark the beginning of the Budget Session. After her customary speech, Mrs Gandhi - a senior politician who once served as Congress chief - was asked reporters asked her for her comment outside the Parliament. "The President was getting very tired by the end. She could hardly speak, poor thing," Mrs Gandhi replied, flanked by her children Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, both MPs. "Boring? No comments? Repeating



the same thing again and again?" Rahul Gandhi could be heard helping his mother with her comments. The BJP attacked the Gandhis over the "derogatory" remark on Ms Murmu and said the Congress's feudal mindset can't digest the fact that an Adivasi lady had become the President of the country. "It was a derogatory comment. Leaders like Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi should not pass such

comments, especially on the President. Droupadi Murmu belongs to an Adivasi family and now she is the number one citizen of our country and that is not accepted by the Congress's zamindari mindset. That's why they are opposing her speech," said BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar. The Congress is yet to comment on the BJP's charges. The BJP has accused the Congress of being feudal

several times in the past, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi even recalling an image of Indira Gandhi from her Gujarat visit, which showed her holding a hanky near her nose due to foul smells. He hinted at her being an elitist while calling it the "fragrance of humanity". President Murmu, during her address earlier in the day, said the government has worked towards lifting the economy out of "policy paralysis" despite challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic and global conflicts. She also said that the third term of the Modi government is seeing work being done at thrice the pace of previous regimes. The President praised the government's efforts in the aviation and railway sectors and said it is working towards modernisation in the agriculture sector and aims to make it self-reliant. She also shared concerns over digital fraud and cybercrime that pose challenges to national security.

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Casurina Beach, Diglipur

Diglipur is the main base camp for those who want to hike up to Saddle Peak in the Andaman Islands. An added advantage of this long trip from Port Blair (300 km by road), is that you can relax by the Casurina beach here. It can be hours before you will bump into anyone.



for snorkellers. You'll need to take a boat to get here, but once you arrive, expect pristine water and untouched white sand. There is a bit of infrastructure here too, so carry food and water if you are planning on spending the day. Boats are available from Havelock Island.

Long Island Beach

An unspoiled magical island in the Andamans, Long Island beach is strictly for the intrepid. A couple of restaurants and a paltry local population make this island less touristy, which is good news if you're looking for some isolated spots to yourself. Long island is 82 km from Port Blair, and a boat service to



England's Great Landscapes



Exmoor National Park Exmoor National Park, which extends across north Devon and west Somerset, contains wonderfully varied landscapes of wild heather moorland, heath and deep wooded combs of ancient oaks. From windswept Dunkery Beacon, the highest point, you can see swathes of south west England laid out below you—moors, rolling fields and the glittering sea beyond. Look out for Exmoor ponies and red deer, and on a clear night, the stars shine like diamonds.

London

"Earth hath not anything to show more fair," wrote William Wordsworth of the view from Westminster Bridge. Over 200 years later, it is still one of the great scenes of London, both by day and night, though the view from neighbouring Waterloo Bridge is perhaps even more impressive. On one side are the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and the London Eye, on the other, the towers, domes and skyscrapers of the city. It's a reminder that London is one of the most exciting cities in the world.

Northumberland

Although the coast of Northumberland provides countless magnificent views, the interior is just as impressive. There is something special about standing on Hadrian's Wall, at the top of Housesteads Fort, knowing that nearly 2,000 years ago Roman soldiers walked this very turf. Through summer and winter, they'd have stared out across this same landscape to the Tyne Valley and Scottish borders, perhaps longing for the olive groves and cypress trees of home.

Settle Carlisle railway

The Settle Carlisle railway offers some of the best countryside views of any train journey in England. Get off at Dent Station and you can see the Yorkshire Dales national park spread out below you. Wild moorland drops to a zigzag valley dotted with the occasional cottage. Cloud

shadows race across the hilltops and the cry of sheep drifts on the wind.

New Forest

The New Forest is a mix of heath and moor, bogs and ancient pasture, but walk or cycle among the dappled glades, arching tunnels of beech trees and stands of redwoods and ancient trees to see it at its most beautiful. Especially in spring, when leaves are soft, vibrant green, ponies and foals graze in clearings and bluebells and rhododendrons bloom in Roydon Woods.

Peak District

Kinder Scout and the high moorland of the Dark Peak are the images that come to mind when you think of the Peak District. But as viewers of BBC's The Village will have seen, it's the region's green roller-coaster hills studded with sheep and the steep valleys dropping to splashing rivers and streams that are every bit as beautiful.



England is home to some of the most beautiful and inspiring landscapes in the world. Here are few of them:

Lake District

Everyone has their favourite Lake District panorama, but from the summit of Haystacks you have god-like views over the valleys of Buttermere and Ennerdale and the glittering waters of Crummock Water. On a clear day, you can even glimpse the Irish Sea.

North Cornwall

The rocky coast of North Cornwall contains some of England's most magnificent, surf-washed beaches. Watergate Bay, near Newquay, has two miles of golden sand, pounded by Atlantic rollers and backed by cliffs and caves. Peregrine falcons, gulls and fulmars wheel overhead and you can spot

strawberry anemones and crabs among the rock pools.

Cotswolds

The lovely market town of Chipping Campden is quintessential Cotswolds, all golden stone, mullioned windows and gracious houses. The High Street, with its 17th century covered market house, is particularly lovely—summed up in the words of the English historian G.M. Trevelyan as, "the most beautiful village street now left on the island".

North Norfolk

There is a haunting quality to the creeks and salt marshes of North Norfolk, set under vast dome-like skies. Explore them safely by walking from Burnham Overy Staithe along a causeway to a vast dune-backed beach, or by taking a boat trip from Morston to see the resident seal colony at

Blakeney Point.

India will build world-class AI model: IT minister

NEW DELHI. India will develop a world-class foundational AI model that will compete with the best global models, including ChatGPT and Deepseek R1, said Minister of electronics and information technology Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday. He minister further speaking to the press also highlighted that the government's AI compute facility would be "the most affordable" in the world. The minister further stated that at least six major developers and start-ups are expected to build foundational models within the next 8-10 months, with an optimistic estimate of just 4-6 months. "Making modern technology accessible to everyone, that is the economic thinking of our PM... Ours is the most affordable compute facility, at this point of time," Vaishnaw said.

The minister outlined the next steps in India's AI blueprint, which includes the deployment of 18,693 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) by empanelled bidders, including companies such as Jio Platforms, CMS Computers, Tata Communications, E2E Networks, Yotta Data Services, and others. Additionally, the government plans to establish an AI safety institution, with 8 projects already approved under this initiative.

The government is also seeking proposals to develop India's own foundational AI models tailored to the country's context, languages, and culture.

These models will use datasets that are "for our country, by our country, and for our citizens," with an emphasis on removing biases. As part of the IndiaAI Mission, the government had earlier approved an outlay of Rs 10,372 crore to strengthen India's AI ecosystem, with a key focus on enabling 10,000 GPUs for AI compute infrastructure. When asked about potential impacts of the US' GPU and AI chip export restrictions on India's AI mission, Vaishnaw reassured that India is regarded as a trusted partner globally.

"India respects intellectual property rights and technological considerations. That's why we have signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on several important technologies," the minister stated.

Survey may address tough economic questions

The much-awaited Budget session of the parliament kicks in with the tabling of the Economic Survey report in Parliament on Friday. The economic survey report, an annual document prepared under the guidance of the CEA, is a precursor to the Budget. It gives a glimpse of the economic health of the country in the ongoing financial year, and lays down a path for policymakers for the next year. Even though the finance ministry and its bureaucrats maintain that the preparation of the Economic Survey report is an independent process and has no bearing on the budget presented a day later, the survey does prepare for things to come in the budget. With the economy going through tough times - GDP growth slowing down, consumption and private investments failing to take off and employment generation facing unprecedented challenges amid the rise of AI and automation - the Economic Survey is expected to find answers to some of those questions. "This annual publication (of Eco survey) is a definitive source for understanding the Indian economy, its challenges and likely solutions through the lenses of actual practitioners," says Debopam Chaudhary, chief economist, Piramal Enterprises. He expects the survey to lay out a plan to create fiscal space for funding new capex; underline low or negative economic impact from freebies and make a case for one nation one election. Lekha Chakrabarti, an economist and a professor at National Institute of Public Policy and Finance (NIPPF), says the Economic Survey will focus on "economic growth with equity" towards a Viksit Bharat 2047. She says the country does not have a comprehensive document yet on the analytical framework and the road map towards Viksit Bharat 2047, and she hopes this Economic Survey will present that comprehensive framework and the significant components of our 'graduation dreams' towards a developed country by 2047.

Sensex jumps 800 points: 5 reasons why stock market is rising ahead of Budget

NEW DELHI. The stock market surged in the afternoon session on Friday, a day before Budget 2025, with the Sensex and Nifty gaining almost 1%. While the S&P BSE Sensex surged nearly 800 points to reach a day's high of 77,537.12, Nifty gained almost 300 points, both extending their gains for the 4th consecutive day. The S&P BSE Sensex was up 766.21 points to 77,526.02, while the NSE Nifty50 climbed 275.10 points to 23,524.60 as of 1:30 pm. Below are the reasons behind the market rally on Dalal Street ahead of the Union Budget 2025 presentation:

Investor Optimism on Growth Measures

Investors are hopeful that the government will announce policies to support economic growth. Expectations of tax relief, higher spending on infrastructure, and incentives for key industries have boosted market sentiment. A strong push towards manufacturing and job creation could further improve the economic outlook. Strong Performance of IT, Auto, and Consumer Stocks

Shares of IT, auto, and consumer durable companies have been among the biggest gainers. Trivish, COO of Tradejini, said, "Investor optimism is driving market sentiment, fueled by expectations of policy measures that could support economic growth. Historically, Budget Day has been volatile, but data shows that Nifty has closed positively after the Budget in 12 out of the last 18 years since 2010. While initial reactions may be mixed, markets often recover if key measures align with expectations."

Apple expanding manufacturing in India to meet domestic demand, global export needs: Tim Cook

The company has been diversifying its manufacturing from China to India, largely due to the ongoing trade tensions between the U.S. and China.

NEW DELHI. Apple CEO Tim Cook on Friday said that the company is expanding its manufacturing in India to meet both domestic demand and global export needs. During a call with investors discussing the company's quarterly results, Cook also expressed his enthusiasm for the Indian market. In 2024, Apple surpassed the Rs 1 trillion

mark for iPhone exports from India, achieving record outbound shipments of USD 12.8 billion (Rs 1.08 trillion), reflecting a 42% year-on-year increase. "Yeah, if you look at the manufacturing we do there, we do manufacturing both for the domestic market, and we export. And so, in -- our business needs a certain economies of scale for it to make sense to manufacture in-country. And so, that really means that we're going to be both a use for the domestic market and an export market," said Cook. The company has been diversifying its manufacturing from China to India, largely due to the ongoing trade tensions between the U.S. and China. Apple now aims to source around 25% of its total manufacturing from India. Cook also revealed that India set a new record for the December quarter and that the company is planning to open four more stores in the country. While Apple currently holds a

modest share in India, it aims to grow its presence in the market.



"We have great results in a number of emerging markets. And as you know, from past calls, I'm particularly keen on India. India set a December quarter record during the quarter. And we're opening more stores there," said Cook. Additionally, Cook stated that the iPhone

was the top-selling model in India during the quarter. India, which is the second-largest smartphone market in the world and the third-largest for PCs and tablets, presents a significant opportunity for Apple, given its modest current share in these markets.

"And we have very modest share in these markets, and so I think there's lots of upside there," he added. Apple reported a remarkable USD 124.3 billion in revenue for the year-end holiday quarter, although sales growth fell short of market expectations as the iPhone faces intense competition, particularly in China. However, the company's shares surged more than 3% in after-hours trading on Thursday after it forecast higher-than-expected sales for the upcoming quarter.

Budget Session: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tables Economic Survey 2024-25

NEW DELHI. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday tabled the Economic Survey for 2024-25, offering a glimpse into the state of the Indian economy, a day ahead of the Union Budget presentation.

The survey, an annual document prepared by the Ministry of Finance under the guidance of the Chief Economic Advisor, provides a snapshot of the country's economic health for the current financial year and outlines a path for policymakers in the year ahead. With the economy facing challenges—slowing GDP growth,



weak consumption and private investment, and difficulties in employment generation amid the rise of AI and automation—the Economic Survey is expected to address some of

these pressing issues. While the finance ministry and its officials maintain that the Economic Survey is prepared independently and does not influence the Budget, it offers insights into potential developments to come.

Last year, the Economic Survey had forecasted a lower growth rate of 6.5-7%, below the 7.2% projected by the RBI. The theme of the survey was economic resilience and had set the tone for the policies were proposed in the 2024 Union Budget.

SP Group to seal \$3 billion refinancing deal with global funds to repay debt



MUMBAI. The Shapoorji Pallonji Group, which owns 18.6% in over \$30.5 billion worth Tata Sons, is close to sewing up a funding deal with a group of overseas alternative asset managers to refinance its outstanding debt that runs in excess of \$3.2 billion. The group has been trying to raise funds to refinance its mounting debt for quite some time, and was close to line up Rs 20,000 crore of funding late last year from state-run Power Finance Corporation (PFC) but the lender backed out at the final stage. Before that its attempts to raise money didn't

materialise, forcing it to buy time from creditors after paying interest. A large portion of the debt was maturing last May. As per a source in the know of the ongoing discussions, the Shapur Mistry-led group is in advanced stage of talks with four alternative asset managers -- Davidson Kempner and Cerberus Capital, along with its existing investors Farallon Capital Ares Management, who are willing to partially rollover their debt maturing later this year. Sterling Investments, the main holding company of the group, holds a little over 9% in Tata Sons,

while other group entities own the remaining stake in the country's largest conglomerate, valued at over \$165 billion, which means the SP group's stake is worth over \$30.5 billion. "The SP group and these alternative asset managers are likely to sign an agreement within the next 40-45 days," the source told TNIE.

The SP group didn't respond to calls seeking confirmation. The group has been looking for fundraising since early 2024 but without much success. Most of its existing debt was maturing in May 2024. Since then it got an extension from creditors by paying interest. Most of the group's debt is linked to the group's promoter entity, Sterling Investments, which had secured \$2.6 billion in 2021 from alternative investment manager Ares Management and the hedge fund Farallon Capital with a tenor of 3.5 years. "The group is looking to refinance its debt with fresh funding from Davidson Kempner and Cerberus Capital and partial financing from existing creditors Farallon and Ares who are willing to roll over a portion of their debt maturing by May," the source explained.



meet demand and their expansion plan in Karnataka and Maharashtra is on track. While Toyota is confident about its growth prospects in India, Asazuma said that the current concern for them is the rupee depreciation. He added that if they experience a rise in input cost, they will have to pass it to end consumers. "While we are producing in India, there are some cars which we bring from Japan. This is where we are facing the impact," stated Asazuma as the rupee experienced a consistent depreciation in recent months. Asazuma also informed that TKM would be coming up with a new mobility service company for their used car division. Toyota, at present, has three outlets for used cars which they expect to double this year. Toyota Kirloskar Motor Executive Vice President & Country Head Vikram Gulati said that the company has a multi-pathway corridor ranging from battery electric to hydrogen, plug-in hybrid and flex fuels to tackle the problem of carbon emission.

Sebi bans finfluencers from using live stock prices, tightens crackdown on illegal advisories

MUMBAI. The markets regulator Sebi, which has been after the so-called financial influencers or finfluencers who are tricking the gullible public into investing in stocks they get paid to recommend, for long, has delivered a major blow to them by restricting their use of live-market data/prices in their what they call educational content. The key prohibitive measures include not allowing them to use real-time stock price data and using the names of the scripts they are talking up/down directly or indirectly by using code names. The regulator has warned of strict penalties including cancellation of their licence for rule violations. This move is expected to end the illegal advisory businesses that many finfluencers operate without Sebi registration. Sebi first restricted associations between registered and unregistered entities in an October 2024 circular, and the latest circular further tightens the rules. Under the new rules, which the Securities and Exchange Board announced in a circular last night, finfluencers can only use stock prices with a three-month lag, effectively preventing

them from offering real-time trading tips disguised as education. They are also banned from using the name of the stock directly or indirectly through employing a code. "A person engaged solely in education shall mean that such person is not engaged in any of the two prohibited activities. Such person should not be using the market price data of the preceding three months to speak/talk/display the name of any security including using any code name of the security in his/her talk/speech, video, ticker, screen share etc indicating the future price, advice or recommendation related to security/securities," says the circular, adding these "regulations have come into force with effect from August 29, 2024." The following are the key points in the latest circular: Finfluencers/self-styled stock market educators cannot use live stock prices - they can use only data with a three-month lag; registered market entities cannot associate with finfluencers in any way that involves monetary or non-monetary compensation; investor education is allowed, but educators must not give

investment advice or make performance claims without Sebi's approval; finfluencers cannot use stock names, codes, or price data from the past three months in any form that could imply



investment advice; and any entities found violating these rules risk penalties/suspension/cancellation of their Sebi licence. "It is the responsibility of the persons regulated by Sebi to ensure that any person associated with them or their agent, directly or indirectly, does not engage in any of the above-mentioned two prohibited activities, directly or indirectly," the circular warned. The mushrooming of so-called finfluencers on a slew of social media platforms has

blurred the lines between real financial education and investment advice on the sly, leaving the gullible public at risk as it has become too complicated to distinguish credible sources from misleading ones. However, with the latest move, which bans access to live data, many of these financial crooks are likely to find it difficult to retain subscribers and students. Sebi norms will be violated if any entity regulated by Sebi is indirectly associated with an entity engaging in the above-mentioned prohibited activities, the circular said, adding the restrictions will apply to advertisements, branding and promotional materials sourced through third-party marketing agencies as well. "Persons regulated by the Sebi and their agents have been advised through the October 22, 2024 circular to terminate their existing contracts, if any, with persons engaged in any of the above-mentioned two prohibited activities, directly or indirectly, within three months from the date of issuance of that circular," Sebi said.

NEWS BOX

SL vs AUS: Mitchell Starc goes past Dale Steyn, joins exclusive 700-Test club

New Delhi Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc surpassed South Africa pacer Dale Steyn in the list of most international wickets. Starc, with the wicket of Dimuth Karunaratne on Thursday, January 30, in the 1st Test match of the series against Sri Lanka, entered the 700-club.

Starc became only the fourth bowler in Australia's history to take 700 wickets in international cricket (ODIs + Tests + T20Is). The pacer joined Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath, and Brett Lee in the list. Only a handful of fast bowlers in the entire world have been able to achieve this incredible feat. England's James Anderson and Stuart Broad, Pakistan's Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, South Africa's Shaun Pollock, New Zealand's Tim Southee, Sri Lanka's Chaminda Vaas, and West Indies' Courtney Walsh are the only non-Australians in the list of pacers to have achieved this feat.

Starc has been in sensational form in recent times. In the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy, the pacer picked up 18 wickets from 5 Tests, helping captain Pat Cummins bag a sensational 4-1 win over India in the series. Starc has spoken about his love for Test cricket before. Back in 2022, he had spoken about extending his red-ball career in international cricket.



"It's certainly impossible at the moment to play every game as a three-format player," Starc was quoted as saying by Cricket Australia back in 2022. "Having (the IPL period) to rest might help me keep bowling at decent speeds for a period of time," he had added.

However, after making that statement, Starc did play in the Indian Premier League 2024 to prepare for the T20 World Cup 2024, and signed up for the auction in 2025 as well, where he was picked up by Delhi Capitals.

The pacer has won the T20 World Cup 2021, ODI World Cup 2023, and the World Test Championship 2023. Starc has also helped Australia qualify for the WTC Final 2025 by beating their toughest opponents—the Indian team. The fast bowler has two ICC tournaments lined up for him in the next six months. He will play in the Champions Trophy and then in the World Test Championship Final.

Pedri extends contract with FC Barcelona till 2030

New Delhi Barcelona midfielder Pedri extended his contract till 2030 with the Spanish club on Thursday, January 30. The 22-year-old player, who is currently one of the mainstays for both his club and country, put his signature on the new contract midway through the season.

Pedri is the second big-name player who extended his contract with Barcelona in recent days. Earlier on January 24, Uruguayan centre-back Ronald Araujo put an end to ongoing transfer speculation by signing a six-year contract extension with La Liga giants. The Canary Islander made his long-awaited arrival at Barcelona nearly five years ago, following a season on loan at Las Palmas after signing for the club in 2019. He returned to Barça in the summer of 2020, and from day one, it was clear he was a special talent. At just 17 years old, he secured a spot in midfield and has since become a key fixture in the team at 22. While Pedri is still young, his present form is nothing short of exceptional. This season, he's not only maintained his high level of play but also gained regular playing time, thanks to a long



injury-free period. This has helped establish him as one of the world's best midfielders. The Canary Islander has become a central figure in a team known for its fast, intense style of play, often taking risks, knowing he'll deliver when the ball is at his feet. Ensuring his future at the club has been a top priority—for both the team and Pedri himself. Growing up in the Canary Islands, he was a huge fan of Barça's style, and now he's living his dream. And it's a dream that looks set to continue for at least another five years. z had troubles with his injuries. The midfielder was injured during Spain's quarter-final against Germany in Euro 2024. In that game, German midfielder Toni Kroos lunged into Pedri, knocking out the player with his knee. Pedri, having been struck on his shin, fell down and was not able to continue past the 8-minute mark.

Premier League: FA charge Arsenal over Myles Lewis-Skelly red card reaction

Arsenal were charged for failing to manage their players, who surrounded referee Michale Oliver after Myles Lewis-Skelly was controversially sent off in a 1-0 win against Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday.



New Delhi The Football Association (FA) have charged Arsenal with failing to control their players after they reacted angrily to Myles Lewis-Skelly's erroneously displayed red card against Wolves in the Premier League on Saturday. According to the FA, Arsenal players "surrounded" referee Michael Oliver and acted "in an improper

manner." Arsenal have until February 3 to respond. Lewis-Skelly was sent off for what Oliver and the VAR deemed major foul play after a poorly timed tackle on Wolves' defender Matt Doherty. The charge comes just days after the FA overturned Lewis-Skelly's three-match sentence after an appeal from Arsenal. This is the third time this season that a player has won an appeal against a red card in the Premier League, despite VAR being used as a safety net. The

Football Association (FA) have charged Arsenal with failing to control their players after they reacted angrily to Myles Lewis-Skelly's erroneously displayed red card against Wolves in the Premier League on Saturday. According to the FA, Arsenal players "surrounded" referee Michael Oliver and acted "in an improper manner." Arsenal have until February 3 to respond. Lewis-Skelly was sent off for what Oliver and the VAR deemed major foul play after a poorly

timed tackle on Wolves' defender Matt Doherty. The charge comes just days after the FA overturned Lewis-Skelly's three-match sentence after an appeal from Arsenal. This is the third time this season that a player has won an appeal against a red card in the Premier League, despite VAR being used as a safety net. "We're always putting a lot of emphasis on evolving, on where football is going in the next five, 10 years, on the rules, and all that sort of thing. But one of the most important things we can do to evolve is create an environment that's much better at a social level, one that's healthier, that's nicer, in which we reward things that are not only winning, that when people make mistakes they have the chance to make amends." "We shouldn't be here with this hatred, these things we see, because they affect everyone and in the end, they take away the joy of this sport, the reason for it - which is to enjoy ourselves, have good moments. We are all talking about it, but no one seems to be moving strongly enough and bringing people with them to get that out of the game, because it's just unacceptable."

Arsenal won the game 1-0, putting them six points behind Premier League leaders Liverpool.

Ed Sheeran catches up with England Cricket Team on opening night of his India tour

New Delhi British singer Ed Sheeran caught up with the England Cricket Team on the opening night of his India tour in Pune on Thursday, January 30. Sheeran is in the country for his 'Mathematics' tour which kicked-started in Pune as he mesmerised his Indian fans with a soulful performance. The 'Shape of You' singer also invited the England Cricket Team to his show, who were in the city for the fourth T20I of the ongoing five-match series against India. Ed Sheeran held a special meet-up backstage with the entire England squad and the backroom staff. He was also presented with England captain Jos Buttler's jersey signed by the entire squad. In return, the pop star gave a jersey of the football club Ipswich Town to the England skipper. England cricket shared glimpses of their meet-up on their X handle, calling it a 'perfect' evening for their players and staff. A 'Perfect' evening! Thank you to @edsheeran for inviting our squad and backroom staff to the opening night of his India tour in Pune. After catching up backstage, Ed and @josbuttler swapped

shirts - with Jos now the proud owner of a signed @IpswichTown top," wrote England Cricket on their X account.



India lead the 5-match series by 2-1. Meanwhile, India are leading the five-match T20I series by 2-1, ahead of the fourth T20I scheduled to be played on Friday, January 31 at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Pune. The Men in Blue won the first two matches of the rubber in Kolkata and Chennai. However, England made a remarkable comeback by winning the third

game held in Rajkot. The Three Lions batted first and posted a score of 171/9 in 20 overs, led by a half century from Ben Duckett (51 off 28). India wrist spinner Varun Chakravarthy (5/24) picked up his second five wicket haul as England batters continued to struggle against his variations. In reply, India's chase never got going as they kept on losing wickets at regular intervals and could only reach 145/9 in their 20 overs. As a result, England won the game by 26 runs and managed to register their first

Virat Kohli's doppelganger attends his Ranji Trophy return against Railways in Delhi

Star India batter Virat Kohli's doppelganger was spotted attending his comeback game in the Ranji Trophy 2024-25 amongst his several fans at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi. Kohli marked his comeback to India's premier domestic first class competition after over 12 years as he featured in Delhi's seventh round match of the tournament against Railways. As the India star returned to play in his hometown, a massive crowd gathered outside the stadium to get a chance to watch the local boy play. People from all age groups thronged to the venue with school children, working professionals and local shop owners all in attendance to cheer for Kohli. Among Kohli's several fans, one particular guy caught everyone's attention for his uncanny



resemblance to the batting stalwart. The fan was seen sporting a full-fledged beard like the former India captain and was also wearing similar shades as Kohli. His presence outside the venue sparked a strong reaction from other fans who came rushing in to click photographs with Kohli's look-alike.

Kohli gets a rousing reception on Day 1

Earlier on Day 1 of the match, Kohli received a warm welcome at his home ground as fans began queuing up outside the stadium as early as 4 am to watch their favourite star. As the starting time of the match approached, fans began growing in numbers with chants of 'Kohli-Kohli' being heard all around the venue. The massive influx of the crowd also created a ruckus at the entry gate as constant pushing by the fans in a bid to enter the stadium, led to a stampede-like situation where a few people also got injured. However, the situation was brought under control by the security personnel quickly. As the fans filled the stands of the stadium, they began chanting for Kohli at the top of their voices, who also played around with the crowd with his fun gestures. A fan even breached the security and rushed to the pitch to touch Kohli's feet before being taken away by the ground security. Meanwhile, after not being able to watch Kohli bat on Day 1 after Delhi captain Ayush Badoni won the toss and opted to bowl first.

IND vs ENG 4th T20I Predicted XI: Will Rinku Singh, Arshdeep Singh return in Pune

New Delhi Team India will look to seal the series before the final game in Mumbai on February 2, when they take on a resurgent England in the fourth T20 International on Friday. After victories in Kolkata and Chennai, Suryakumar Yadav's side stumbled in the third T20I in Rajkot, handing England a chance to claw back at 2-1.

The series was expected to be a high-scoring contest, yet bowlers have stolen the spotlight with contrasting performances. With another crucial game in Pune, India are likely to make key changes to their playing XI. India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate confirmed that Rinku Singh, who missed the second and third matches due to back spasms, is fit and available for selection. His return could mean Dhruv Jurel sits out, and India might also consider an additional seam-bowling all-rounder like Shivam Dube or



Ramandeep Singh in place of Washington Sundar. "Rinku is fit. He played the first game, hurt himself and missed the next two. But I would imagine Rinku comes back in as soon as he's proper fit. He batted the other night and I think he'll be ready to go tomorrow," Ten Doeschate said during the pre-match press conference.

After resting Arshdeep Singh in the third T20I, India are likely to bring him back for the Pune clash. Arshdeep, who won the ICC Men's T20I Player of the Year, has a knack for striking early in the powerplay, making him a valuable asset in India's bid to clinch the series. England did not train on the eve of the match, but they could make a few alterations. Jamie Smith, who walked off in the third T20I with a calf issue, might be replaced by Jacob Bethell. The visitors could also consider rotating their pace attack, giving either Mark Wood or Jofra Archer a rest in favour of Saqib Mahmood. IND vs ENG Predicted XI India: Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Rinku Singh, Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy.

Arshdeep's return, batting-order in focus as India aim series win in Pune

England remained alive in the 5-match T20I series against India by winning the 3rd game by 26 runs in Rajkot. As the action moves to Pune, the focus remains on India's batting line-up.

New Delhi The team selection will be in focus as India tries to seal the T20I series against England in their upcoming match at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune. Set to be played on January 30, Friday, the 4th T20I gives Suryakumar Yadav's India another chance to take an unassailable lead in the series.

India had the same chance in the previous T20I match at Rajkot, but failed to seize it after the team's batting order put up a disastrous display. Hardik Pandya, Washington Sundar,

Sanju Samson, and even Suryakumar Yadav failed to deliver as India failed to chase a modest total of 172 runs at the Niranjan Shah Stadium. In the Rajkot game, India's batting failed on multiple levels. Sanju Samson's struggles against pace continued as he fell to Jofra Archer for the third time in the series. Suryakumar Yadav's trend of low scores continued as he got out for just 14 runs. Hardik Pandya simply could not get going, as he stuttered through his innings of 35 balls in the middle overs of the game. The most fatal blow perhaps came with the promotion of Washington Sundar. The all-rounder faced 15 balls at a strike rate of 40, which stifled specialist batter Dhruv Jurel, who was slotted at No. 8 in the lineup. Jurel simply did not have enough time to build his innings. India will look to shake off all those issues and return to winning ways in the 4th T20I of the 5-match series. Pune presents India with an opportunity to seal the series and might see the team changing their combination slightly to find better balance. England, on the other hand, would



be happy with the show they put up in Rajkot. The team will hope for the likes of Harry Brook to do better against spin. England's batters have struggled to read Varun Chakravarthy for the majority of the series, and if they are to challenge India in the subcontinent, they need to find a way to tackle him.

Team News: India vs England, 4th T20I Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate revealed on Thursday, January 30, that Rinku Singh is fit and available for selection. If Rinku comes into the side, the only possible change India can make is to leave out Dhruv Jurel

from the 4th game. Jurel has not impressed so far, and it would make sense for Rinku to replace the right-hander. For England, questions remain about young Jamie Smith's fitness after he sustained a calf strain in Rajkot. Given there was no press conference from England's side on Thursday, it is unclear if the likes of Jacob Bethell and Smith are fit or not. England do not have a very strong middle-order, and if Bethell and Smith are not fit, they will be in a bit of a bind.

Pune Pitch and Conditions

Pune is expected to be a very good batting track. But that could have been said about Rajkot as well. The matches in this series so far have seen slightly two-paced pitches, and one might expect that trend to continue in the 4th T20I as well. The weather in Pune is expected to be on the cooler side.

Predicted Playing XI

If everyone is fit, it would be ideal for England not to change their line-up.

Kriti Sanon

Looks Stunning In Chic Casuals As She Gets Papped At Aanand L Rai's Office



Kriti Sanon has recently announced her next film *Tere Ishk Mein* with Dhanush. The romantic drama will be directed by Aanand L Rai and today the actress was spotted at his office. She looked stunning in casuals as the video of her went viral on social media. In the video, shared by Instant Bollywood, we can see Kriti coming out of the car and greeting paps. She opted for a long denim skirt paired with a black tee. She looked gorgeous in minimal makeup. Kriti greets paps with a smile and also waves at them. Fans dropped heart and fire emojis in the comment section. On Tuesday, the makers of the film released a teaser of *Tere Ishk Mein* showcasing Kriti in an enigmatic avatar, perfectly embodying the depth, intensity, and complexities of her character. The hauntingly beautiful score promises an unforgettable musical odyssey. Soon after Kriti was confirmed as the female lead, several fans reacted to the teaser and expressed excitement to watch their favourite actress on screen with Dhanush. "The roles Kriti is talking up recently are simply awesome, I'll be there for this film FDFS," one of the fans wrote. "Her chemistry with Dhanush looks interesting, waiting for this movie," added another. Produced by Aanand L Rai, Himanshu Sharma, produced by Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar, this film promises to take audiences on a rollercoaster of emotions, with a monumental soundtrack by the legendary A.R. Rahman and poetic lyrics by Irshad Kamil. Previously, Rai revealed that *Tere Ishk Mein* shares thematic roots with his 2013 masterpiece, *Raanjhanaa*. "It is from the world of *Raanjhanaa*, but... it's an expansion rather than an extension. It enhances the emotional depth with a new narrative," he explained. The film, written by Himanshu Sharma and Neeraj Yadav, promises to retain the passionate love and intensity that defined *Raanjhanaa* while exploring a fresh storyline. Rai has described the project as a deeply personal exploration of love and tragedy, reflecting his own evolution as a filmmaker. *Tere Ishk Mein*, which faced delays due to Dhanush's prior commitments, is set to begin production in October 2024, with a theatrical release targeted for 2025.



Akshay Gets 'Best Gift' From Priyadarshan As Filmmaker Offers Hera Pheri 3 To Him, Suniel Shetty, Paresh Rawal



The *Hera Pheri* franchise, which kicked off in 2000, has cemented its place as one of India's most beloved comedy series. With unforgettable characters, hilarious dialogues, and timeless humor, the films continue to hold a special place in fans' hearts. Starring Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, and Paresh Rawal, the first two installments became cult classics, and now, excitement is brewing over *Hera Pheri 3*. The latest buzz? Filmmaker Priyadarshan, who directed the first *Hera Pheri*, recently fueled speculation about his return to the franchise. The revelation came in a lighthearted exchange on social media, following Akshay Kumar's birthday wishes to the director. On Priyadarshan's birthday, Akshay Kumar took to social media to share a candid moment from the sets of their upcoming film. With his signature humor, he wrote about celebrating amidst 'real ghosts and unpaid extras,' while also expressing gratitude for the director's mentorship. Priyadarshan's response, however, stole the spotlight. Playfully acknowledging Akshay's message, he teased, "In return, I would like to give you a gift - I'm willing to do *Hera Pheri 3*. Are you ready @akshaykumar, @SunielVShetty, and @SirPareshRawal?"

Akshay's excitement was palpable as he replied, "Sir!!! Your birthday, but I got the best gift of my life. Chalo karte hain phir thodi hera pheri!" In a recent interview with Pinkvilla, Akshay reaffirmed his enthusiasm for the third installment. He shared that, much like the fans, he is eagerly awaiting the film's return and hinted that production could commence this year if all goes as planned. Reflecting on the franchise's legacy, he admitted that when they first made *Hera Pheri*, they never anticipated its enduring impact.

"Even after watching it, we found it funny, but we had no idea characters like Babu Bhaiya, Raju, and Shyam would become such legends." Beyond *Hera Pheri*, Priyadarshan and Akshay Kumar have created several cult favorites, including *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* (2007), *Bhagwan Bhag* (2006), and *Khatta Meetha* (2010).

Karan Veer Mehra, Chum Darang Pout In New Photos With Shilpa Shirodkar From Their House Party



Karan Veer Mehra and Chum Darang recently had a blast when they reunited with their *Bigg Boss 18* friends Shilpa Shirodkar and Digvijay Singh Rathee. While several pictures and videos from their bash are already going viral on social media, Shilpa has now shared new photos from their intimate celebration. On Thursday, Shilpa Shirodkar took to her Instagram handle and shared a series of pictures in which she was seen posing with Chum, Karan Veer and Digvijay. In one of the clicks, Digvijay was seen taking a selfie as Chum and Karan made a pout. Another photo featured the *Bigg Boss* stars posing for the camera, flaunting their smiles.



In the caption of her post, Shilpa joked, "Jahan chaar yaar mil jayein toh kya hua hoga. Therefore, Digvijay rushed to the comments section and replied, 'Aish hoti hai!'"

Earlier today, Karan Veer Mehra also took to his Instagram handle and shared a picture with Shilpa, Chum and Digvijay from their house party. In the caption of his post, he penned down a note on friendship and love and wrote, "Kisi k haat ki taqdeer hai dost, Humre pass jo tasveer hai dost, Nazar aaye toh ussay dur rehna, Mohobat ek udta teer hai dost." *Bigg Boss 18* concluded on January 19. While Karan Veer Mehra emerged as the show's winner, Chum was also one of the finalists. Other finalists on the show were Vivian Dsena, Rajat Dalal, Avinash Mishra and Eisha Singh.

After the *Bigg Boss 18* finale, *News18 Showsha* exclusively asked Chum if she had a romantic bond with Karan Veer Mehra. "This friendship will go on. Hum logo ne sirf ghar ke andar ke liye friendship nahi banaya hai, definitely. The friendship will continue outside the house also," she said.



Ameesha Patel

On Box Office Records: 'Every Film Can't Be A Blockbuster'

Ameesha Patel made her Bollywood debut opposite Hrithik Roshan in *Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai*.

Ameesha Patel, who made her debut with *Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai*, has shared her two cents on the superstar debate. The actress said that Ranbir Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan, and Kartik Aaryan are the "last of superstars". Speaking to *India Today*, Ameesha said, "After Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan, Ranbir, Hrithik, and Kartik are definitely carrying the legacy forward, that's it. I feel that's where it might end. They're the ones truly delivering, and it's scary to think about what will happen to Bollywood after them." Ameesha Patel went on to add, "When a Shah Rukh Khan, Sunny Deol, Ajay Devgn, Salman Khan, Ranbir, or Hrithik release a film, there's this expectation that it has to match up to their previous blockbusters. But realistically, it's impossible for every film to be a colossal hit. Success like that is rare. Every film can not be a blockbuster."

Talking about the current generation of actors, Ameesha Patel said, "I think Kartik is fabulous. Ayushmann Khurrana has done some outstanding work, and Rajkumar Rao has broken the mould to become almost like a mainstream hero. Shraddha Kapoor is



also doing some great work."

She added, "Ayushmann has taken bold steps—whether it be playing a bald man or dressing as a woman—and made them work. Similarly, Kartik has proven his ability to deliver hits consistently. Hats off to both of them for taking risks and making them count."

Ameesha Patel made a powerful comeback with *Gadar 2* opposite Sunny Deol. The film broke records and set new standards at the box office.