

## Demographic change bigger threat to social harmony than infiltration, warns PM

While addressing the centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in New Delhi today, the Prime Minister said that while "unity in diversity" is the soul of India, divisions fuelled by caste, language, regionalism, and extremist thinking could weaken the nation if not confronted.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned that while infiltration and external forces have long threatened the country's unity, the bigger challenge today comes from demographic changes undermining social equality. While addressing the

centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in New Delhi today, the Prime Minister said that while "unity in diversity" is the soul of India, divisions fuelled by caste, language, regionalism, and extremist thinking could weaken the nation if not confronted.

Social equality means establishing social justice by giving priority to the deprived and promoting national unity. Today, crises are emerging that directly attack our unity, culture, and security. Extremist thinking, regionalism, disputes over caste, language, and divisions instigated by external forces. All these countless challenges lie before us," he said.

He said the soul of India has always been its unity in diversity, warning that "if this principle is broken, the nation's strength will also be weakened." Stressing the need to

constantly uphold and strengthen this value, he noted that social equality today faces a greater challenge from demographic change than even from infiltration.

Calling it an issue tied to internal security



and future peace, he said that this was why he had announced the Demographic Mission from the Red Fort, urging the nation to remain vigilant and confront the challenge with dedication. PM Modi further said that, similar to challenges, the struggles

faced by the nation today are also different. "Economic dependence on other countries is a conspiracy to break our unity. There's a conspiracy to change our demographics," he warned.

Praising the government, the Prime Minister said he was "very satisfied" that these challenges and struggles were being dealt with swiftly. On the occasion, PM Modi released a specially designed commemorative postage stamp and coin highlighting the RSS' contributions to the nation.

"The Rs 100 coin features the National Emblem on one side and, for the first time in independent India, an image of Bharat Mata on the other, seated on a lion with swayamsevaks bowing before her. A special postal stamp was also released today, depicting RSS swayamsevaks proudly participating in the 1963 Republic Day Parade," he added.

Those elected by corpses ruling Kerala: Union Minister Suresh Gopi sparks row

Kerala. (Agency)

Union Minister Suresh Gopi sparked controversy again during a public interaction in Idukki district, alleging that those "elected by corpses" have been governing Kerala for years. He was referring to the controversy in Thrissur, where the Congress and the Left had alleged voter list manipulation. Gopi indirectly claimed that deceased individuals were included as active voters in Kerala's electoral rolls. Gopi also addressed allegations made against him, including claims that he disrupted Thrissur Pooram and manipulated the voter list. He said, "Those who made corpses vote to win are the ones who are ruling Kerala for this long. The corpses who were buried 25 years ago were made to vote. You all have reported it."

Speaking about his victory in Thrissur, Gopi said he did not win from Thiruvananthapuram or Palakkad, where the BJP is influential. "I was able to win from Thrissur, where BJP will not be able to have that kind of influence even in future. I believe it was because God was with me," he said, adding that he was emotional and upset while making the remarks. He also called for a shift in Kerala's political landscape. "At least this time, or even if we don't come to power this time, there should be the rise of a new force in the political and power structure by having a strong presence in the assembly."



## CM Rekha Gupta bows at the feet of young goddesses on Maha Navami

The Sikh Times  
Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, 1 October 2025  
On the auspicious occasion of Shardiya Navratri, on the day of Maha Navami, the Chief Minister of Delhi Rekha Gupta performed the traditional Kanya Puja (worship of young girls) at the Government Girls' Secondary School, Haidarpur, Shalimar Bagh, and received blessings from the little goddesses. Sitting humbly on the ground, the Chief Minister bowed at the girls' feet, removed their footwear, applied a tilak on their foreheads, and tied the sacred mauli thread. Maternal affection was evident as she gazed upon the innocent faces of the little goddesses adorned with red chunris. She warmly interacted with each child, gently touching their foreheads, she said, is the hope, the

and said that the true embodiment of the Mother is reflected in these little goddesses, and that the brightness of the future shines through their smiles. Throughout the ceremony, the atmosphere was filled with devotion, affection, and a spirit of togetherness. With simplicity, humility, and maternal warmth, the Chief Minister performed the worship according to traditional customs and received blessings. She remarked that the worship of girls during Navratri symbolises both reverence for strength and the embrace of compassion. On this occasion, the Chief Minister stated that the Delhi government is fully committed to ensuring a bright future for these girls. Every girl, she said, is the hope, the



inspiration, and the strength of society. In this worship, she venerated the little goddesses while also embodying the spirit of motherhood and affection inherent within every woman. She emphasised that Navratri is not merely a festival of faith and devotion, but also conveys a profound message of respecting women's power and recognising the vital role of daughters in society. The Chief Minister further added that the Navratri of Goddess

Continued news page 2

Durga symbolises strength, and that in Indian culture daughters and girls have always been regarded as embodiments of feminine power. Daughters are the foundation of families and society. Without their empowerment, neither families, nor society, nor the nation can progress.

She underlined that today's festival reminds us of our duty to provide daughters with education, equal opportunities, and a safe environment to enable them to become empowered. She also mentioned that the tradition of Kanya Puja has been practised for generations, and she has always felt that the future of the country and society rests in its daughters.

Continued news page 2

related to monocropping and suggested transitioning to intercropping. "Monocropping leads to multiple problems, including nutrient depletion and limitations in nitrogen fixation. We need to carefully assess the possibility of replacing monocropping with intercropping," Chouhan pointed out. "We are aware of the challenges," Chouhan acknowledged. "We must concentrate on increasing production and mechanization, reducing costs, and improving sugar recovery. Water use is a serious concern. Under the principle of 'per drop, more crop,' we need strategies to reduce water requirements. At the same time, we must also consider



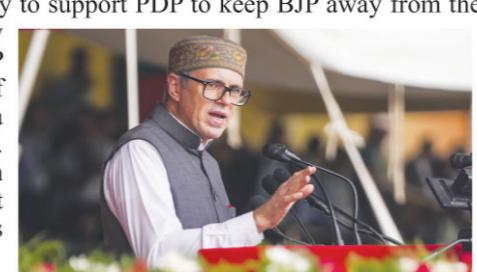
Will resign rather than ally with BJP for statehood restoration: Omar Abdullah

The CM said had the BJP been included in the government, "they would have immediately restored our statehood as a gift".

Srinagar.(Agency)

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday asserted that he would resign rather than aligning with BJP for the restoration of state status to Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. "After last year's elections, we had an option to align with BJP (which was experimented in 2015). Had I wanted, I would have included BJP in the government the way late Mufti Sayeed did in 2015 and Mehbooba Mufti did in 2016. Then also, the government could have been formed without BJP as Congress and NC were ready to support PDP to keep BJP away from the government. They aligned with BJP on the pretext of giving Jammu a representation". Abdullah said in his government without BJP's inclusion, "We have given representation to Jammu. We gave representation to Pir Panjal and the Dy CM is from Jammu without the inclusion of BJP". The CM said had the BJP been included in the government, "they would have immediately restored our statehood as a gift". Asserting that he is not ready to align with the saffron party, the CM said, "I am not ready to make any such deal. If including BJP in government is a must for getting statehood back, then I am ready to resign and let anybody else be elected as CM because I am not ready for it". "If I have to wait for restoration of statehood, I will do it but won't align with BJP," Omar said.

Ruling out an agitational path for restoration of statehood, the CM said, "Those who tell me why you don't come out on roads to protest for restoration of statehood should see Ladakh's situation".



## "Cruise Setting Won't Do": Air Marshal On Operationalisation Delays

New Delhi.(Agency)  
Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Awadhesh Kumar Bharti, on Tuesday stressed that India's defence sector is making significant strides towards self-reliance, with the Indian Air Force (IAF) actively pursuing indigenous projects.

Air Marshal Bharti emphasised the importance of indigenous engine production, stating that within the next 10-12 years, India aims to develop its own engine. This ambitious goal requires concerted efforts from both the defence sector and industry stakeholders. "We are exploring indigenous engine production, and

potentially, within 10-12 years, we will have an indigenous engine. That is our goal. If you put your efforts into it and if the industry puts their efforts into it, then it will definitely be achieved," the Air Marshal told reporters on the sidelines of the Aero Tech India in Delhi. The Deputy Chief's comments come as Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is working with American General Electric (GE) to acquire GE-404 engines for the Light Combat (LCA) Aircraft Mk-1. The company has reportedly promised to ramp up its manufacturing with the expectation of delivering a total of 12 engines at the

end of the financial year 2025. Discussing Atmanirbharta (self-reliance), Air Marshal Bharti stressed the importance of self-reliance in the defence sector, citing the need for

indigenisation. He emphasised that while it's challenging to achieve 100% indigenisation at once, starting with achievable milestones can lead to significant progress. In times of crisis, relying on domestic capabilities is crucial, and indigenisation is a prerequisite for true self-reliance. We are looking at self-reliance. While indigenisation is the way forward because we are never able to indigenize 100% in one go, you start with whatever you can, and thereafter, ultimately, we reach 100%. In times of crisis, you can't bank on anybody.



## "False": DK Shivakumar Says Bengaluru Pothole Didn't Cause Student's Death

The BJP has alleged that Dhanushree, a final-year B-Com student, died after she came under the wheels of a tipper truck while trying to avoid a pothole in Bengaluru.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday rejected BJP allegations that the death of a 20-year-old college student in Bengaluru during a road accident was caused by potholes. His remarks came a day after the BJP alleged that Dhanushree, a final-year B-Com student, died after she came under the wheels of a tipper truck while trying to avoid a pothole in North Bengaluru's Avalahalli area.

"It is all false. They are only spreading a hoax. Because of them (the saffron party), all this has been created," Shivakumar told reporters. Following the incident on Monday, the BJP alleged that

60 per cent of Karnataka, including Bengaluru, has turned "into a death trap due to misrule by the Congress government." "It is unfortunate that a student has lost her

life because of a pothole on the roads of Silicon City. The roads of Bengaluru, which were supposed to facilitate smooth traffic, are instead endangering the lives of commuters every day. This exposes the poor performance of D K Shivakumar," the party's official Karnataka handle wrote on X.

The police said the accident occurred around 8:10 am when Dhanushree was riding her two-wheeler from Byappanahalli to her college in KR Puram. A senior police officer said preliminary investigations showed her vehicle was allegedly hit from behind by a tipper truck, causing her death on the spot.



Front continued news  
**Residents seek transparency, control in BPTP Astaire Gardens in Gurgaon**

The more love and opportunities given to daughters, the brighter the future of the nation will be, she said. Expressing her joy at being part of the Kanya Puja programme, the Chief Minister personally interacted with every child. The girls shared their aspirations — some wished to become doctors, some teachers, while others dreamt of joining the police or becoming IPS officers. The Chief Minister said that every girl has her own dreams, and the government stands firmly beside them to help realise those dreams. She also highlighted the Delhi government's Honson Ki Udaan (Flight of Courage) scheme, explaining that it is designed for children who otherwise have no opportunity to showcase their skills or talents. Through this initiative, the government will identify their abilities and provide support to help them move forward.

**News box**

**Infra crumbling in Manesar, says petition in court; MCM, administration & police told to file reply**

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Pothole-ridden roads, overflowing sewage, chronic waterlogging and traffic jams — unhappy over "persistent issues", a resident of Kherki Daula has filed a petition in a city court. The petition demands "transparency and accountability", requesting the court to obtain detailed audit reports of the construction, development and maintenance of roads, sewage and drainage systems over the past five years. The plea filed by Jagroop Singh — while seeking to ensure a smooth and flood-free environment — accuses Municipal Corporation of Manesar (MCM) of "neglecting" its statutory duties, thereby causing.

**Notices to senior officers of Gurgaon civic body for lapses in waste management**

**Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

Gurgaon: MCG on Tuesday issued showcase notices to its joint commissioner-I and senior sanitary inspector of zone-I for lapses in waste management in Khanda village. The civic commissioner flagged negligence in the lifting of garbage from a secondary collection point, where waste had remained unattended for several days, leading to unsanitary conditions.

The notice also pointed out that no challan was issued to the private agency responsible for transporting the garbage, indicating a failure to enforce contractual obligations. "Such complaints highlight dissatisfaction over the poor state of sanitation, and the credibility of the Corporation is adversely affected due to a lack of prompt and effective action at your level," the notice read.

The officers have been given 48 hours to explain why disciplinary action should not be taken for dereliction of duty, with a warning that disciplinary measures may be initiated if their replies are found unsatisfactory.

Residents have long complained of poor waste management in Khanda, and the latest incident has heightened concerns about oversight and accountability within the civic body. The MCG has been under public scrutiny in recent months over garbage collection inefficiencies across the city. "The situation has worsened in the last month. Waste was not being lifted for the last 15 days. I raised the issue with MCG officials, but no action was taken. It was only after I approached the MCG commissioner on Monday that lifting resumed today (Tuesday)," said Avneesh Raghav, councillor of ward number 9.

**Bikers crowd underpasses in rain, traffic comes to a crawl**

**Noida. (Agency)**

Rainfall on Tuesday left roads waterlogged and created traffic snarls in several areas across the city. Rain also left the Ramlila grounds in Sector 62 and Noida Stadium, Sector 21A inundated.

A clogged drain led to severe waterlogging at the loop connecting the Noida Expressway with Rajnigandha Chowk, slowing down traffic in the area. Commuters said that vehicles struggled to cross the stretch during the rainfall in the afternoon. Gaurav Kumar, a commuter, said that even a short spell of rain throws traffic out of gear at this location. "The Noida Authority needs to fix the drainage before the situation worsens," he said. Later, workers from Noida Authority reached the spot and cleared the choked drain, after which water gradually receded. Showers also forced two-wheeler riders to seek shelter under flyovers, leading to traffic congestion for brief periods. At Film City and Mahamaya flyovers, bikers parked beneath the structures, slowing down the flow of vehicles. There was also temporary waterlogging near the bird feeding point outside the Dalit Prema Sthal. However, it cleared after some time. At the Ramlila grounds, seats, mats, and swings were all drenched. More than 50 helpers from the Sanatan Dharm Ramlila at Noida Stadium were engaged to clear out the water with roller dryers. According to the spokesperson of Sanatan Dharma Ramlila, helpers will check all swings in the mela ground and will allow operations to restart only after they checks have been conducted to avoid risk of electrocution or any other accidents, said the spokesperson of Sanatan Dharma Ramlila at Noida Stadium. Similar arrangements have been made at the Shri Ram Mitra Mandal Ramlila ground in Sector 62's C block. Meanwhile, no waterlogging was reported from Durga pandals in the city as the majority had waterproofing or were organised in concrete buildings, including community centres. DCP (traffic) Pravin Ranjan Singh said that additional personnel were deployed at critical points to manage movement. "There was no traffic jam on key stretches like DND Flyway, Noida Expressway, and Kalindi Kunj," he added. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature on Tuesday was recorded at 34.2 degrees Celsius while minimum temperature was 28.7 degrees Celsius.

# I-T lens on property deals worth Rs 28k crore in Haryana's Manesar

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A survey by the I-T department has uncovered serious lapses in the documentation of property transaction records at Manesar tehsil, raising concerns about potential large-scale tax evasion. Over the past five years, the tehsil office registered property deals worth an estimated Rs 28,000 crore. But in a glaring breach, the Permanent Account Number (PAN) of buyers and sellers, which is a must for transactions above Rs 30 lakh, was missing from records. The survey conducted by a 10-member team over 24 hours found that the registration software used at the tehsil failed to capture PAN details, despite existing norms requiring tehsil offices to share names, PAN, and Aadhaar numbers with the income tax department for all high-value property deals. The problem isn't confined to Manesar. The survey revealed that the protocol was not being followed in 93 tehsils across 22 districts. An I-T official explained that while PAN cards were collected during the



registration process, they were not being entered into the system, reportedly because of software glitches. The omission of PAN details raised red flags about the transparency and legality of these transactions.

Officials said without PAN data, authorities cannot track the flow of money and identify possible tax

evasion. "Even if 1% of people evade taxes, the amount would be huge," an I-T official said, spotlighting the scale of potential revenue loss. Previous surveys at Wazirabad and Kadipur tehsils had revealed similar irregularities, suggesting a broader pattern of negligence or systemic failure in the registration process. Officials said the I-T

department had alerted revenue officials and urged them to update the software and ensure compliance with documentation rules. District revenue officer Vijay Yadav confirmed that the survey at Manesar tehsil focused on registries completed over the past five years. "Irregularities were found in feeding buyer and seller identity cards and PAN details into the software. This will be rectified," he said.

The I-T department is now working to trace the PAN of those involved in these property transactions and will cross-check whether the corresponding income is reflected in their tax returns. The outcome of this exercise could have far-reaching implications, not only for those involved but also for the credibility of the property registration system in the region. According to officials, the survey was part of the state govt's efforts to curb corruption and irregularities in property registrations. In recent years, the system has been made paperless to enhance transparency.

## Business, illegal construction: Homes in Gurgaon's Sushant Lok 2 & 3 on radar

**Noida . (Agency)**

Gurgaon: The district town planner (enforcement) will launch a major sealing drive this week in Sushant Lok-2 and Sushant Lok-3 to curb unauthorised commercial activities and illegal construction. More than 60 houses have been issued restoration orders, with owners failing to comply within the 10-day deadline. The sealing action is expected to be carried out in a phased manner. Notices were served earlier to 24 houses operating businesses such as salons, guest houses and coaching centres, and 36 houses with structural violations in stilt and setback areas. The sealing drive in Sushant Lok-2 and 3 is part of DTCP's larger strategy to address the encroachment at licensed colonies that have seen a surge in commercial misuse over the years, said officials, adding, "Many homeowners have converted their premises into profit-generating establishments such as clinics, coaching centres, salons, and guest houses — leading to traffic congestion, parking shortages, and complaints from neighbouring residents." These modifications, officials said, not only compromise the structural integrity of the buildings but also obstruct emergency access and fire safety clearances. Following spot inspections in June, the department found widespread misuse of residential plots. DTPE Amit Madholia said sealing and OC cancellation will follow for those violating residential land use norms. While a few owners voluntarily removed illegal additions from stilt areas, a large number continued to operate commercial establishments, prompting the department to move ahead with strict action. "The enforcement drive is being conducted under the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act and relevant building bylaws. Plot owners were instructed to restore their properties to their original residential form.

## 70% surplus rain this season, Haryana logs wettest September in 3 years

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Gurgaon: Haryana has closed this monsoon season with its highest rainfall in three years. It has recorded a 70% surplus over the long-term average, according to IMD data. At 129.2 mm against a normal of 77.2 mm, 2025 stands out not just for the statewide numbers but also for the intensity of Sept showers that tipped the balance. In 2023, rainfall stood at 43mm (-44%) while in 2024, it was 105.7mm (37%). Officials at the meteorological centre noted that the late-season bursts were unusual. An IMD scientist said, "Most of the surplus came in the last fortnight of Sept, when several districts recorded back-to-back spells of moderate to heavy rain."

Meteorologists said the surplus will reflect in groundwater and reservoir levels, offering some relief ahead of the rabi season. Yet they cautioned that Haryana's rainfall pattern remains erratic. "Three deficit years followed by one surplus year does not indicate stability. The overall variability is increasing," an IMD scientist added. Prior to the last three

years, Haryana experienced relatively normal rainfall. However, the state saw repeated deficits over the past 25 years. Data from 2000 to 2025 shows multiple shortfalls: 2001 saw just 12.8 mm (88% below normal), 2004 received 21.6 mm (76% deficit) and 2020 recorded 24.8 mm (69% below average). Some years had above-average rainfall: 2010 logged 183.9 mm (108% above normal), 2005 had 163.8 mm (85% surplus) and 2021 recorded 187.5 mm (135% above normal). In this context, 2025's Sept surge of 129.2 mm, 70% above the long-term average, marks the highest rainfall in the state for the month in recent decades. District-wise, Panchkula recorded the highest rainfall (118% above normal) while Gurgaon too received above normal rainfall (42%). The excess rainfall had mixed effects. South Haryana, including Gurgaon, Faridabad, and Nuh, recorded heavy showers, causing urban waterlogging and traffic snarls. Farmers welcomed the boost to groundwater and fodder crops but reported damage to standing paddy in

low-lying fields. District-wise, rainfall in 2025 showed wide variation: Ambala received 219.4 mm (55% above normal), Bhiwani 108.6 mm (128% surplus), Fatchabad 140.5 mm (184% above), Hisar 138.6 mm (153% surplus) and Kurukshetra 210 mm (176% above normal). Panchkula recorded the highest rainfall in the state at 332.1 mm, while Sirsa saw an exceptional 119.2 mm, 253% above its usual level. Some districts, however, recorded below-normal rainfall: Faridabad logged 90.3 mm (-21%) and Karnal 96.2 mm (-1%). Gurgaon received 115.7 mm. Meanwhile, Ayanagar in south-west Delhi recorded 71.2mm, while precipitation at Palam measured 21.8mm, Ridge 29.8mm, Rajghat 40.5mm, Pusa 36mm and Mayur Vihar, 35mm. So has the rainy season really ended? Why then has such substantial precipitation been recorded at the various weather stations? While experts explained that that post-monsoon rains were common, current weather conditions are such that the city may in fact see patchy rains until Oct 7. It may

## YEIDA cracks down on illegal sale of plots around Noida international airport

**Noida . (Agency)**

Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has initiated a crackdown on illegal colonisers promoting fraudulent projects near Noida International Airport. The authority received multiple complaints about unapproved "township projects" being marketed aggressively, promising homes near the upcoming airport without legal sanction, especially to buyers from Delhi-NCR. The authority now plans to take action against social media handles that promote these illegal colonies. The authority has assured strict action and coordination with the local administration to curb these activities.

TOI's report on Sept 15 ("Khosla ka Ghosla, by invite: With car pickups & fake maps, land sharks net 'airport investors'")

detailed how sales agents arranged cars for prospective buyers, took them to manicured "show plots" with boundary walls and planted hedges, and then sold them the dream of owning a property "just half an hour from the airport". Homebuyers, especially from Delhi-NCR, were lured with fake "airport townships", offering free cab rides, glossy maps, and token-booking starting at Rs 11,000 schemes to lure them into buying plots that had no legal sanction. Buyers were promised plots for Rs 15,000-18,000 per square yard with easy payment plans. Salesmen made specific promises: a boundary wall would be built after one payment, and the legal paperwork (registry and mutation) would be done after another. In reality, this was a scam, and the land shown was either govt-notified under

YEIDA's Master Plan or agricultural land where no residential construction is allowed. Officials say the activities grew over the past three years, fuelled by the announcement of projects such as the airport, Film City, Logistics Park, and Heritage City. Many unsuspecting buyers fell for the bait of cheaper rates compared to Noida and Greater Noida. YEIDA CEO RK Singh urged people not to fall into this vicious trap. "We will build watertight cases against illegal colonisers. Any project not allotted or approved by YEIDA in the notified area is illegal. FIRs will be lodged against identified developers. We are also considering writing to the state govt to form a special investigation team (SIT) to crack down on the mafia operating from Jhewar to Agra," he said.

## Ramlila's diminishing grandeur: Bigger budgets, smaller crowds in digital age

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Gurgaon: Ramlila has always been an integral part of Dussehra celebrations. For many families, the nippy autumn evenings of Navaratri were often incomplete without watching the familiar yet magical tale of Ram and Ravana unfold on stage.

More than theatre, it was a community gathering that blended faith, entertainment, and tradition. However, in recent years, Ramlila is witnessing thinning crowds despite bigger budgets and more elaborate stage setups.

Organisers admit that while funds and infrastructure have grown, audiences — especially the younger generation — are losing interest in slow-paced, multi-day performances. Young audiences, hooked on 30-second reels and short-form videos, find little appeal in sitting through hours of

mythological enactment. In 1990s, a grand Ramlila could be staged for around Rs 5 lakh. Today, committees spend Rs 20-22 lakh on elaborate sets, modern sound systems, LED screens and stage lighting. In recent years, the organisers have introduced several innovations to keep the centuries-old performance relevant. Traditional painted curtains have been replaced with giant LED backdrops that allow for dynamic visuals and quick scene changes, while professional stage lighting and modern sound systems with mics ensure better clarity. Costumes have become more elaborate, with glittering fabrics and sharp makeup designed to hold attention both on stage and in livestreams. Yet the audience numbers continue to slide.

"One cannot compete with the instant gratification of reels. Today's youth can spend three hours scrolling, but they don't feel the connection we used to during our childhood," says Raj Saini Bisarwal, media spokesperson of the 60-year-old Shri Durga Ramlila Committee. "The money is there, the sets are there, but the patience is gone. Earlier, schools often declared short breaks so students could be part of the festivities. Today's generation is more into T20 than a test match." Yet, some people have kept the tradition alive against all odds.

Banwari Lal Saini, a veteran performer in Jacobpura, has been playing the role of Ravan for over four decades. "I have seen crowds come and go, but I cannot imagine Dussehra without stepping into Ravan's shoes," he says. This year, he takes on a particularly challenging role: Jogi Ravan, the disguise Ravan assumes



while kidnapping Sita. "It's small, but it's important. The change in his facade tells the story without words."

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# Signature View Apartments: From dream homes to unsafe ruins

## The Sikh Times

New Delhi: While streets in Mukherjee Nagar wear a dreary look, gloom has set upon Signature View Apartments as the families have started vacating their flats after the apartment was declared unsafe. Built in 2007 by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on 2.16 acres of land in Mukherjee Nagar, Signature View consists of 12 towers and 336 flats for high-income group and middle-income group buyers. Residents who invested their life savings were initially drawn by modern amenities and the prestige of a DDA project. Cracks began to appear within a few years. While minor repairs were carried out by the DDA in 2015, rust was discovered in the steel reinforcements. The plaster fell off from the walls and water seepage became harrowing for the residents. Reports from the National Council for Building Materials and other agencies pointed to poor construction practices, but interventions remained superficial. While talking to The Tribune, Amarendra Rakesh, president of the Residents Welfare Association, said: "The roofs and plaster began falling inside homes by 2018 to 2019". "Studies, including one from Ram Research Institute, confirmed that poor cement-water ratios and untreated water caused structural damage. Yet, DDA failed to act," he said. In

### 5-yr-old girl dies after iron rod falls on her at construction site

New Delhi: A five-year-old girl died after an iron rod fell on her head from an under-construction building in East Delhi's Jagatpuri Extension, the police said on Monday. The building owner, Nathu Singh (68), a resident of Jagatpuri Extension, along with three labourers employed at the construction site, had been arrested in connection with the case, they said. The incident took place around 11 am on Sunday when the girl was walking through the area while returning from a Durga temple, and an iron rod fell on her, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said. "She sustained severe injuries on her head and right eye after the iron rod, part of a terrace platform intended to hold a water tank, dislodged from a four-story building under construction. She was rushed to GTB Hospital, where she succumbed to her injuries during treatment," he added. On the statement of the child's father, the police registered a case under sections 290 (Negligent conduct with respect to pulling down, repairing or constructing buildings, etc) and 125(a) (endangering human life or personal safety of others) of the BNS. After the girl's death, who is the only child of her parents, Section 106 (causing death by negligence) of the BNS has now been added to the case. A senior police officer said a preliminary inquiry revealed that the platform on which the water tank was to be kept had been improperly secured, leading to the fatal accident.

### Man crushed to death by minitruck

Gurugram: A supervisor of the Punhana Market Committee was crushed to death by a speeding minitruck near Chandanki village of Nuh district. The driver hit the deceased's motorcycle, dragging him for 50 m. The entire incident was captured on a CCTV camera. According to the complaint filed by Jaber, a resident of Nuh, his brother Shamim (45) had been working as a supervisor at the market committee for about 12 years. "Shamim had gone to Lahabas village on Monday around 4 pm for official work on his motorcycle. When he was returning to the Punhana office, he was hit by a speeding minitruck near Chandanki," Jaber said. An FIR was registered against an unknown driver. The accused's whereabouts are being ascertained.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

THIS IS FOR THE GENERAL INFORMATION OF ALL CONCERNED THAT MY CLIENT RASHMI WADHWA C/O ... RIO H NO. 624, 1ST FLOOR SEC. 47 GURUGRAM, HARYANA-122008, HAS DISOWNED THEIR SON NAMLY ANANT AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW NAMITA KHANDELWAL FROM HER MOVEABLE AND IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY AND ALSO SEVERED ALL RELATIONS WITH THEM DUE TO THEIR ANTI-FAMILY ACTIVITIES. MY CLIENT RASHMI WADHWA SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR ANY ACT, DEED OR THING DONE BY THEM, ANYBODY DEALING WITH THEM SHALL BE DOING SO AT HIS/HER OWN RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY.

(HARSH VARDHAN SINGH)  
ADVOCATE  
CH. No.: 326, Lawyer's Block Saket District Court, New Delhi-17  
Enr. No. D/2943/17  
Mob: 9810436651

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to all that my clients Smt. Arti Chandyke, W/o Sh. Tajinder Chandyke and Sh. Tajinder Chandyke S/o Late Sh. Rajinder Pal Chandyke both R/o 5/12, 3rd floor, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018, have severed all their relationship/connection with their son Sh. Pravali Chandyke and his wife Smt. Ashay Chandyke. And my clients have disowned and disinherited both of them from their entire moveable and immoveable property due to the above mentioned Smt. Ashay Chandyke's unruly behavior towards my clients and my clients' constant threats to implicate my clients into false criminal cases. Whosoever deals with Pravali & Ashay in any manner shall do so at his/her own risk, cost and consequences as my clients will not be responsible for the same in any manner whatsoever.

### KHAGESH SETH, ADVOCATE

123 Lawyer's Block Saket Courts, New Delhi-110017  
Enr. No. D/2943/17  
Mob: 9810436651

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mrs. Kavita S/o Mr. Sushil Kumar is the owner of Freehold Residential Plot no. 176 area measuring 150 Sq. Yds. Out of Khasra no. 185 situated at Village Jalapur Raghunathpur Maru Mohala Gokuldhama pargana Jalalabad Tehsil Modinagar Dist. Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh, by virtue of Sale deed dated 18.09.2021 as Doc no. 13294 in Book No. 1 Vol no. 13352 on page 345-360 S/o Sh. Modinagar in the Chain Documents below mentioned Document not available i.e. original Sale Deed dated 17.02.2010 executed by Mr. Vijay Pal Singh in favor of Mr. Madan Mohan Singh. Mr. Pal Singh as Doc no. 1807 in Book no. 1 Vol no. 3582 on page no. 129-160 S/o Sh. Modinagar. & Original Gift Deed dated 02.01.2021 executed by Mr. Madan Mohan Singh & Mrs. Kalyana Singh in favor of Mr. Aasha as Doc no. 79 in Book no. 1 Vol no. 12760 on page no. 131-170 S/o Sh. Modinagar. now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property, and same has been finance by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd. Branch: Peeragarhi 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.

### [NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA]

Advocate

F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziabad

Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 09958871432

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Ali Raza S/o Mr. Abdul Nabi & Mr. Sakur Raza S/o Mr. Abdul Nabi are the owner of Freehold Residential Plot area measuring 154 Sq. Yds. out of Khasra No. 1067 & 1068, situated at Shyam Enclave Hadihat Village, Pasonda Pargana Loni Tehsil & District Ghaziabad U.P., by virtue of Sale Deed dated 01.09.2025 which is duly regd., as Doc. No. 10707, in Book No. I, Vol. No. 22937 on pages 141-170, dated 01.09.2025 SRO-Sadar II Ghaziabad, till date and has lost/misplace his (1) Original Sale Deed dated 31.01.2014 Vide Doc no. 876, Vol. no. 9983 Page no. 85-142 SGR-ZGB-III, first Page & last particular registration page, now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property, and same has been finance by DCB Bank Ltd. Branch: Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh. 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.

### [NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA]

Advocate

F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziabad

Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 09958871432

November 2022, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi's structural audit officially declared the buildings unsafe, cit-

October 12, 2025 as the final deadline with no stay on demolition. The court directed the DDA to pay rent retrospectively at Rs

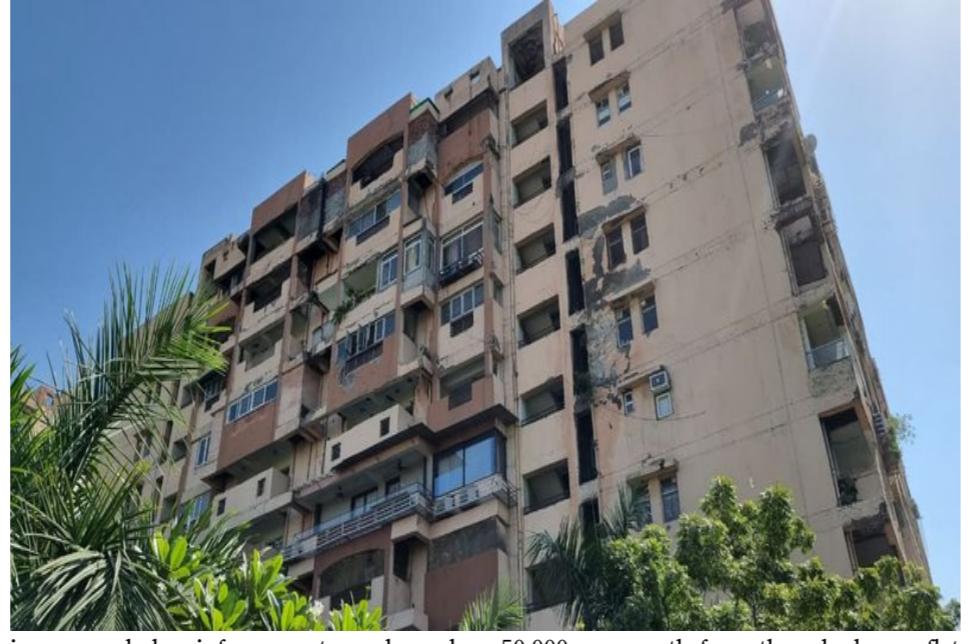
ilar flats ranges from Rs 80,000 to Rs 90,000.

I will have to pay the difference from my own pocket," said Ashok Yatin, relocating to DLF Motinagar. Some families vacated the apartment after receiving the DDA support. "We lived in danger till August," said Satish Chaudhary, a resident since 2012.

"Once we got two installments of August and September we finally moved out," he said. Legal proceedings have also begun. In May 2025, the CBI filed cases against 32 officials and others, including DDA engineers and contractors, for negligence and endangering lives. According to the FIR, "It is alleged, as per the aforesaid letter of complaint, that the accused public servants of the DDA in conspiracy with the directors of the companies, as per the list enclosed, bypassed the quality control as highlighted in the contract and the CPWD manual and compromised the quality and structural safety requirement during the construction.

Due to sub-standard construction and inferior quality of materials, the building was declared unsafe for living within less than a decade of its erection, thereby causing loss of Rs 45 crore (approx) to the DDA and wrongful gain to themselves."

"Therefore, a regular case has been registered against the aforesaid persons under Sections 120-B and 420 of the IPC and Sections 13(2) r/w 13(1) (d) of the PC Act, 1988, and entrusted to Yasir Ararat, Deputy SP, CBI, New Delhi, for investigation," the FIR added. Meanwhile, the DDA has invited demolition bids and promised reconstruction, though timelines remain uncertain. Residents recount years of warning signs. "Rust in steel bars was visible as early as 2015," Rakesh stated. Gaurav Pandey, secretary of the Residents' Welfare Association, pointed out that multiple reports cautioned the DDA, but poor implementation worsened the damage. "By 2018 to 2019, ceilings and plaster were falling inside homes. The IIT-Delhi report of November 2022 clearly declared Signature View structurally unsafe. Safety must come first, and by October 12, most families will vacate," he said. For hundreds of families, the upheaval is not just structural but deeply personal. Children are compelled to change schools, elderly residents are leaving familiar surroundings and long-standing communities are being uprooted. Once hailed as a model DDA project, Signature View now stands condemned less than 15 years after possession. While demolition may clear unsafe towers, rebuilding trust will take far longer. The story of Signature View is a stark reminder of how negligence, poor oversight and delayed action can turn dream homes into ruins, leaving residents caught between unsafe walls and uncertain futures. Multiple calls to officials of the DDA did not elicit any response.



ing corroded reinforcements and weakened columns, beams and slabs. Shriram Institute of Industrial Research also concluded its report with similar findings. Following this, the Delhi High Court on September 17 ordered evacuation, setting

50,000 per month for a three-bedroom flat with a 10 per cent annual increase. Several residents argue this is below market rates. "I retired from government service and invested my lifetime savings here. The DDA pays us Rs 50,000, but the rent of sim-

## Nigerian national held in Delhi for duping over 100 women through app

New Delhi: A 29-year-old Nigerian national was arrested from west Delhi's Tilak Nagar for allegedly duping more than 100 women from across India by posing as a UK-based Korean businessman on a language exchange app, police said on Monday. Stephane, alias K Cee Dominic, was picked up from his rented accommodation, they said. Explaining his modus operandi, police said Dominic used an app, which helps users practise languages by chatting with native speakers around the world, to target single women and gain their trust. He would then claim

to be stranded at immigration with large-value cheques or documents pending clearance. His associates would impersonate officials over phone calls to demand money, which victims would transfer digitally, the police said. Dominic would allegedly introduce himself as Duck Young, a Korean jewellery businessman settled in the UK, and would lure women with false promises of personal relationships and business partnerships, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said. The matter came to light after a

woman, Anjali, filed a complaint on September 24, alleging that she had been conned out of Rs 48,500. According to the police, she met "Duck Young" through the app, who later claimed he was detained at the Mumbai airport for travelling without a medical facility card. The complainant then received calls from two Indian numbers, where the callers impersonated immigration officials and demanded money for his clearance. "After transferring money via UPI, she was asked to pay an additional Rs 2 lakh. When she refused, the accused cut off all commun-

ication," the DCP said. A case in the matter was registered at Cyber Police Station, Shahdara, and a team was formed to track down the fraudster. Investigators analysed call records, bank details and social media accounts before tracing Dominic to the west Delhi area. A mobile phone containing the fake on September 24, alleging that she had been conned out of Rs 48,500. According to the police, she met "Duck Young" through the app, who later claimed he was detained at the Mumbai airport for travelling without a medical facility card. The complainant then received calls from two Indian numbers, where the callers impersonated immigration officials and demanded money for his clearance. "After transferring money via UPI, she was asked to pay an additional Rs 2 lakh. When she refused, the accused cut off all commun-

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I, Kumar Charkarwary S/o Sarsij Ranjan R/o D280 Plot No. Mahavir Enclave Part 1 Delhi-110045 have changed my name to Kumar Charkarwary for all future purpose.

### NAME CHANGE

I, Sirsij Ranjan Prasad Singh S/o Brajesh Kishor Singh R/o Ladat, Depura Madhubani Bihar-847223 have changed my name to Sarsij Ranjan for all future purpose.

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## NEWS BOX

## At least 91 students remain buried in rubble two days after school collapse in Indonesia

**SIDOARJO. (Agency)**

At least 91 students remain trapped in concrete rubble almost two days after an Islamic school building collapsed on them, authorities said after reviewing attendance records and reports from anxious families of those missing.

More than 300 rescue workers desperately worked to free survivors Wednesday morning, after the structure fell on top of hundreds of people, mostly teen boys, who had been performing afternoon prayers Monday in a prayer hall at a century-old al Khoziny Islamic boarding school in East Java province that was undergoing an unauthorized expansion. At least three students have been confirmed dead and 100 others were injured, many with head injuries and broken bones. The National Disaster Management Agency revised the number of people presumed buried in the rubble to 91 late Tuesday from the previous 38.

The agency said at least six children are alive under the rubble, but the search was made difficult by the slabs of concrete and other unstable, heavy parts of the building. Heavy equipment was available but not being used due to concerns that it could cause further collapse. Rescuers have been running oxygen, water and food from narrow gaps to those still trapped under the debris to keep them alive, some of them pinned in place. The students were mostly boys in grades seven to 12, between ages 12 and 18. Female students were praying in another part of the building and managed to escape, survivors said. The prayer hall had been two stories but two more were being added without a permit, according to authorities. Police said the old building's foundation was apparently unable to support two floors of concrete and collapsed during the pouring process.

## Apple Sued For Firing Jewish Employee After Denying Sabbath Time Off

**World. (Agency)**

The US agency that enforces workplace anti-discrimination laws sued Apple on Tuesday, claiming the manager of a retail store made antisemitic comments and denied a Jewish employee's requests for time off before firing him.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission says the manager of the Reston, Virginia, Apple store told the worker, Tyler Steele, that he smelled like body odor, forced him to work on the Jewish Sabbath and warned him not to discuss the October 2023 Hamas attack on Israel with coworkers.

The lawsuit in Alexandria, Virginia, federal court accuses Apple of religious discrimination and retaliation in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC is seeking unspecified back pay and other damages for Steele, including punitive damages for "malicious and reckless conduct."

Apple did not respond to a request for comment.

The EEOC routinely sues employers for discrimination based on sex, race, disability, pregnancy and other protected traits. Under Acting Chair Andrea Lucas, a conservative Christian who was appointed to the post by Republican President Donald Trump, the commission has placed new scrutiny on religious discrimination. In a statement in August, Lucas claimed that during Democratic President Joe Biden's administration "religious protections too often took a backseat to woke policies." According to Tuesday's lawsuit, Steele started working at the Reston Apple store in 2007 as an "Apple Genius" providing advice and technical support to customers, and converted to Judaism in 2023. A new manager hired that year denied Steele's requests not to work on Fridays and Saturdays, the EEOC said. The Jewish Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday.

## Over 90 Students Trapped In Rubble After Indonesian School Collapse

**world. (Agency)**

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## Blair has decades of experience in the Middle East. For some that's his great strength — and for others his huge weakness.

**LIVERPOOL. (Agency)**

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has returned to the forefront of Middle East peace efforts after a U.S. peace plan on ending the Israel-Hamas war cast him in a leading role in overseeing the post-war administration and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip's familiar territory for Blair, who spent eight years working to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians as the international community's envoy to the Middle East. His decision to step down in 2015 was seen as a reflection of the dire state of Mideast peace efforts that devolved further under the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The

U.S. proposal — which President Donald Trump and Netanyahu said they agreed on after talks at the White House on Monday — would put Gaza's territory and its more than 2 million people effectively under international control, deploying an international security force and installing a "Board of Peace" headed by Trump and Blair to oversee the administration and reconstruction. Hamas said Tuesday it would study the plan, both within the group and with other Palestinian factions before responding.

### Legacy of the war in Iraq

Blair has decades of experience in the Middle East. For some that's his great strength — and for others his huge weakness. As prime minister between 1997 and 2007, he took the United Kingdom into the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 despite strong public opposition. The subsequent conflict killed 179 British troops, some 4,500 American personnel and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. A public inquiry concluded in 2016 that Blair took the country to war based on flawed intelligence

and "before the peaceful options for disarmament had been exhausted." But it did not say that the war was illegal, which



could have opened the way for Blair to be prosecuted for war crimes. Blair has defended his decision to go to war, saying he did it in good faith, believing that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

### Mideast diplomatic role

After leaving office in 2007, Blair was appointed Middle East envoy by the

"Quartet" of the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations — a post that began with great promise but which struggled to deliver dramatic changes in its quest to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Blair's experience in British politics and name recognition offered hope that he had the charisma and connections that might bring progress. But his work became mired in skirmishes over issues such as the movement of Palestinian goods and people in the West Bank, and dealing with the difficulties of a Gaza Strip ruled by the militant Hamas group and blockaded by Israel and Egypt. Well, he was a colossal failure in the many years that he was the special envoy of the Quartet," said Nomi Bar-Yaacov, a Mideast expert at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. "They didn't achieve much." Blair quit in 2015 with little to show in the way of progress toward a Palestinian state. That was long before the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel ignited the latest war and further poisoned hopes for peace and stability.

## Court disqualifies Trump-appointed US attorney in Nevada from overseeing multiple criminal cases

**LAS VEGAS. (Agency)**

A federal judge disqualified Nevada acting U.S. Attorney Sigal Chatta from several cases after concluding Tuesday that the Trump appointee has stayed in the temporary job longer than allowed by law. U.S. District Judge David G. Campbell disqualified Chatta from supervising the criminal prosecutions, siding with defense lawyers who argued that her authority expired in July. Campbell ordered government attorneys on the cases to tell the court within seven days that Chatta is not directing their work. He did not dismiss the indictments, however.

A phone call seeking comment was not answered Tuesday night by Chatta's office, and the Department of Justice did not immediately respond to an emailed request. It was the second setback in recent weeks for the Trump administration's effort to extend handpicked acting U.S.

Attorneys beyond the 120-day limit set by federal law. A judge reached the same conclusion as Campbell in August in ruling acting U.S. attorney in New Jersey, Alina Habba, was in the

job illegally. Under federal law, if a permanent U.S. attorney is not nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate within 120 days, judges of the federal district court can appoint an interim until the



vacancy is filled, Campbell wrote in his ruling. Campbell took aim at the Trump administration's strategy of using a string of temporary appointments to allow Trump's candidates to bypass the usual requirement that U.S. attorneys be confirmed by the Senate — something that generally requires a degree of bipartisan support.

He pointed to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, which Congress passed specifically to regulate the

temporary filling of executive branch vacancies that require presidential appointment and Senate confirmation.

"The procedure used by the government to appoint Ms. Chatta was never intended by Congress," Campbell wrote. Chatta, a conservative lawyer, drew opposition from Nevada's Democratic Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen. Both vowed to block her if the administration sought to make her appointment permanent, calling her an election denier who has advocated for political violence and supported illegal actions by Trump.

Chatta previously represented Nevada churches that challenged the state's COVID-19 restrictions, arguing they violated First Amendment rights by treating churches differently than casinos or other secular businesses. She ran for state attorney general in 2022 but lost to Aaron Ford, a Democrat. Chatta also represented one of six Nevada Republican Party members accused of submitting certificates to Congress falsely declaring Donald Trump the winner of the 2020 presidential election in the state.

## Strong earthquake kills 31 people in a central Philippine region hit by deadly storm just days ago

**MANILA. (Agency)**

An offshore earthquake of magnitude 6.9 collapsed walls of houses and buildings late Tuesday in a central Philippine province, killing at least 31 people, injuring many others and sending residents scrambling out of homes into darkness as the intense shaking cut off power, officials said.

The epicenter of the earthquake, which was set off by movement in a local fault at a depth of 5 kilometers (3 miles), was about 19 kilometers (12 miles) northeast of Bogo, a coastal city of about 90,000 people in Cebu province where at least 14 residents died, disaster-mitigation officer Rex Ygot told The Associated Press by telephone. The death toll in Bogo was expected to rise. Workers were trying to transport a backhoe to hasten search and rescue efforts in a cluster of shanties in a mountain village hit by a

landslide and boulders, he said. "It's hard to move in the area because there are hazards," Glenn Ursal, another



disaster-mitigation officer told the AP, adding some survivors were brought to a hospital. At least 12 people died when they were hit by falling ceilings and walls of their houses, some while sleeping, in Medellin town near Bogo, Gemma Villamor, who heads the town's disaster-mitigation office, told the AP. In San Remigio town, also near Bogo, five people, consisting of three

coast guard personnel, a firefighter and a child, were killed separately by collapsing walls while trying to flee to safety from a basketball game that was disrupted by the quake, the town's vice mayor, Alfie Reyes, told the DZMM radio network. Reyes appealed for food and water, saying San Remigio's water system was damaged by the earthquake. Aside from houses in Bogo, the quake damaged a fire station and concrete and asphalt roads, firefighter Rey Cañete said. "We were in our barracks to retire for the day when the ground started to shake and we rushed out but stumbled to the ground because of the intense shaking," Cañete told The AP, adding that he and three other firemen sustained cuts and bruises. A concrete wall in their fire station collapsed, Cañete said. He and fellow firefighters provided first aid to at least three residents.

## Yemen's Houthi rebels claim missile attack on Dutch-flagged ship in Gulf of Aden

**The Houthis separately threatened to "employ all means and instruments available" to target several American oil firms.**

**DUBAI. (Agency)**

Yemen's Houthi rebels early Wednesday claimed the attack that left a Dutch-flagged cargo ship ablaze and adrift in the Gulf of Aden, underlining the range of their weaponry and their campaign targeting shipping over the Israel-Hamas war. The attack Monday on the Minervagracht was the most serious assault in months by the Iranian-backed Houthis in the Gulf of Aden, which is some distance from the Red Sea where they have sunk four vessels since November 2023.

The attack also comes as Israel engages in a new ground offensive targeting Gaza City as efforts to reach a ceasefire again hang in the balance. Meanwhile, the Mideast also

remains on edge after the United Nations reimposed sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program. The Houthis separately threatened to "employ all means and instruments available" to target several American oil firms. The Houthis fired a cruise missile that targeted and struck the Minervagracht, Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said. Saree accused the ship's owners, Amsterdam-based Spliethoff, of violating "the entry ban to the ports of occupied Palestine." Initially, the U.S. Navy-overseen Joint Maritime Information Center said the Minervagracht had no ties to Israel, but a note Tuesday said the center was "reviewing vessel affiliations for possible links to Israel."

The attack wounded two mariners on board the Minervagracht, whose 19-member crew hailed from the Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka and Ukraine. They were forced to evacuate the ship after the strike inflicted substantial damage. A European naval force operating in the region, known

as Operation Aspides, said Tuesday the Minervagracht was on fire and adrift after the crew's rescue. The Houthis have launched missile and drone attacks on over



100 ships and on Israel in response to the war in Gaza, saying they were acting in solidarity with the Palestinians. However, some of the group's targets have had tenuous links or no connections at all to

Israel. The Houthi attack widens the area of the rebels' recent assaults, as the last recorded attack on a commercial vessel in the Gulf of Aden before the Minervagracht came in August 2024. Their attacks over the past two years have upended shipping in the Red Sea, through which about \$1 trillion of goods passed each year before the war. The Houthis stopped their attacks on shipping and Israel itself during a brief ceasefire in the war. They later became the target of an intense weeks-long campaign of airstrikes ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump before he declared a ceasefire had been reached with the rebels.

The Houthi campaign against shipping has killed at least eight mariners and seen four ships sunk. Meanwhile Wednesday, the Houthis said they had levied sanctions against multiple American oil companies, including Chevron Corp., ConocoPhillips and Exxon Mobil Corp., as well as individuals and two ships. The rebels in the past have issued such designations before launching attacks.

## US government shutdown will halt some work at a diminished Education Department

**WASHINGTON. (Agency)**

Already diminished by cuts by the Trump administration, the U.S. Education Department will see more of its work come to a halt due to the government shutdown. The department says many of its core operations will continue in the shutdown kicking off Wednesday. Federal financial aid will keep flowing, and student loan payments will still be due. But investigations into civil rights complaints will stop, and the department will not issue new federal grants. About 87% of its workforce will be furloughed, according to a department contingency plan.

Since he took office, President Donald Trump has called for the dismantling of the Education Department, saying it has been overrun by liberal thinking. Agency leaders have been making plans to parcel out its operations to other departments, and in July the Supreme Court upheld mass layoffs that halved the department's staff. In a shutdown, the administration has suggested federal agencies could see more positions eliminated entirely. In past shutdowns, furloughed employees were brought back once Congress restored federal funding. This time, the White House's Office of Management and Budget has threatened the mass firing of federal workers.

Appearing before the House Appropriations Committee in May, Education Secretary Linda McMahon suggested this year's layoffs had made her department lean — even too lean in some cases. Some staffers were brought back, she said, after officials found that the cuts went too deep. "You hope that you're just cutting fat. Sometimes you cut a little muscle, and you realize it as you're continuing your programs, and you can bring people back to do that," McMahon said. The department had about 4,100 employees when Trump took office in January. It now has about 2,500. Federal student loans One of the department's major roles is management of the \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio. Student aid will be largely unaffected in the short term, according to the department's shutdown contingency plan. Pell Grants and federal loans will continue to be disbursed, and student loan borrowers must continue making payments on their debts. About 9.9 million students receive some form of federal aid, spread across some 5,400 colleges, according to the department. Within the Office of Federal Student Aid, the department plans to furlough 632 of the 747 employees during the shutdown, although it didn't say which ones. For most student loan issues, borrowers work with loan servicers hired by the department rather than directly with FSA staff.

## NEWS BOX

**Maharashtra approves Rs 22.36 crore for newly created Anti-Narcotics Task Force**

**MUMBAI. (Agency)**

The Maharashtra government has formally approved budget allocations for the newly constituted Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF), with 346 posts created to strengthen the state's crackdown on drug-related crimes. According to the Government Resolution, the Cabinet has sanctioned ₹19.24 crore as recurring expenditure and ₹3.12 crore as non-recurring expenditure for the new ANTF office. The expenditure will be accounted for under a newly created budget head within the Police Department (Major Head 2055 – Police, Sub-Head 101 – Criminal Investigation and Vigilance, Anti-Narcotics Task Force Office).

The proposal, initially put forward by the



Special Inspector General of Police (Administration), Office of the Director General of Police, Mumbai, sought the creation of a new account head to streamline allocations for the force.

The ANTF was cleared earlier this year following Cabinet approval and is expected to function as the state's dedicated agency to coordinate investigations, intelligence, and enforcement against narcotics trafficking.

**Ex-SP MLA Irfan Solanki released from jail**

**Lucknow. (Agency)**

FORMER SAMAJWADI Party (SP) MLA Irfan Solanki was on Tuesday released from the Maharajganj jail, where he had been lodged for the past 34 months in connection with multiple cases.

"Seven cases are still pending against Irfan Solanki, and he has been released after being granted bail in all of them," said his lawyer, Shiva Kant Dixit. This comes days after senior SP leader Mohammad Azam Khan was released from the Sitapur jail.

Solanki, who has been a four-time MLA from Sisamau in Kanpur, lost his Assembly membership following his conviction last year in a 2022 land-grab case. His wife, Naseem Solanki, contested the subsequent bypoll on a Samajwadi Party ticket and won the seat. In a video that surfaced on social media on Tuesday, Solanki can purportedly be heard saying, "This is victory of justice."

Government counsel Bhaskar Mishra said the last case in which Solanki secured bail was filed under the UP Gangster Act.

In November 2022, Irfan Solanki, his brother Rizwan Solanki and others were booked by the Kanpur police for allegedly harassing a woman and setting her house on fire to seize her land in the posh Defence Colony area of Kanpur. Solanki and his brother Rizwan later surrendered before the police.

In June last year, a Kanpur court sentenced Irfan Solanki, his brother Rizwan and three others to seven years' imprisonment in the arson and land grab case. This remains the only case in which Irfan Solanki was convicted. Solanki has filed an appeal against that verdict in the Allahabad High Court, his lawyer said.

**Placed under house arrest ahead of visit to violence-hit Bareilly: Congress MP Imran Masood**

**HYDERABAD. (Agency)**

Congress MP from Saharanpur, Imran Masood, claimed he has been placed under house arrest ahead of his visit to violence-hit Bareilly on Wednesday. Saharanpur police denied this and said they have deployed personnel around the MP's house and that of Samajwadi Party MLC Shah Nawaz Khan after receiving inputs of law and order issues. According to Masood, he was heading to Bareilly to meet the Bareilly DIG and assess the situation on the ground following last week's violence. "I had received numerous requests from the people in Bareilly," he said.

Masood claimed, "On behalf of the party, Shah Nawaz and I were to travel by train to Bareilly and planned to return within two weeks. Yet, we were stopped with the excuse that the situation was 'not good.' How is it not good? We are peacemakers, we can calm the situation, not inflame it. People are being assaulted merely for showing posters... The truth is, the BJP is hiding its failures behind the smokescreen of communal hatred. They fear losing the 2027 elections." Saharanpur (City) Superintendent of Police, Vyon Bindal, said forces were deployed outside the MP and MLC's houses after reports of law and order issues were received from the Local Intelligence Unit. "We have not put him under house arrest but have just deployed our forces," said Bindal. The Congress MP's visit comes in the wake of violent protests in Bareilly, which erupted after Friday prayers on September 26.

# Eviction of Malerkotla DC, SSP stands as high court rejects Punjab's recall plea: 'Challenge judicial order or comply with it'

**Slamming Punjab over its failure to provide housing for judicial officers even four years after Malerkotla district was created, the high court pulled up its justice secretary over the "objectionable" plea.**

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

Holding that a judicial order cannot be undone on the basis of an administrative committee's decision, the Punjab and Haryana High Court Wednesday dismissed a plea by the Punjab government to recall its earlier order seeking the eviction of the Malerkotla district commissioner (DC) and senior superintendent of police (SSP) to make way for judicial officers.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry, which had summoned Punjab's Secretary (Justice) G S Khaira to appear before it virtually on Wednesday, recorded his apology for filing an application that the bench said contained "very objectionable paragraphs."

Khaira told the bench: "My only intention is to apologise... There was no malice. The government had placed the matter before the building committee, land has been identified, drawings prepared and approvals taken. The gap was that the counsel could not apprise my lords of these developments on the last date." But Chief Justice Nagu underlined that the state had acted improperly in seeking to undo a judicial order through administrative means. "You only have two options in such a situation: either challenge this order before a higher court, or file an appropriate recall application. What you have filed seeks to go behind a

judicial order by relying on an administrative decision. That cannot be done," he said, rejecting the plea. At one point, Chief Justice Nagu asked whether the court should withdraw the judicial division.

'Repeated failure to provide infra' for judicial officers On September 12, the high court, citing Punjab's "repeated failure to provide infrastructure," directed that the guest house



occupied by the DC and the residence of the SSP at Malerkotla be vacated forthwith for the district and sessions judge. The bench recorded that, despite Malerkotla being carved out as a district in June 2021 and a sessions division notified in August 2023, the Justice Department had admitted in an affidavit that no suitable accommodation existed for judicial officers.

The court noted that while its Building Committee had resolved on September 2 to construct permanent courtrooms and residences within a year, it had also permitted diversion of executive officers' houses if the deadline was not met.

'No third option,' says HC

When Punjab's counsel Salil Sabhlok sought two months' time to demonstrate the state's bona fides and progress on infrastructure creation, the bench was unsparring.

"If you want to do something, you can do it in two days," the Chief Justice remarked, pointing out that the state had declared a revenue district in 2021 without making even basic infrastructure available.

"It has been four years. You have not been able to create facilities even for top officers, leave alone the judiciary. How can a sessions division be declared without judicial infrastructure?" CJ Nagu asked. Sabhlok pressed the court for indulgence, saying: "Show some faith in us, my lords. Give us two months. We only want to show progress, not go behind the order."

The chief justice, however, refused. "Showing bona fides in effect means recalling our order. That cannot be permitted. Either you challenge the judicial order, or you comply with it. There is no third option," he told the state counsel.

**Former minister Gayatri Prajapati attacked in Lucknow jail; Samajwadi Party says 'no one safe in UP'**

Samajwadi Party (SP) leader and former minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati was attacked inside Lucknow Jail on Tuesday night. The party has now demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident, while his family has sought security.

Prajapati was arrested in February 2017 in connection with a rape and molestation case. The FIR against him was registered on the court's directions.

Officials said the incident took place on Tuesday night at the jail hospital, where he was undergoing treatment, after a heated argument broke out between Prajapati and a fellow prisoner.

Sources said Prajapati had sought water from an undertrial, who was on cleaning duty at the jail hospital at that time. When the undertrial refused, Prajapati allegedly used abusive language and the prisoner hit him on his head. Prajapati was taken to the trauma centre of King George Medical University for further treatment.

"Gayatri Prajapati was admitted to the jail hospital at Lucknow District Jail. An altercation with a prisoner on cleaning duty at the hospital led to a scuffle. During this altercation, the prisoner... became enraged and hit him with the sliding part of a cupboard, causing superficial injuries to Gayatri Prajapati. Necessary treatment was immediately administered, and he is now completely fit," said the Uttar Pradesh Prisons Administration Department, in a statement, on the incident.

Speaking to the media, his daughter, Ankita Prajapati, however, alleged, "He is not well... Despite being innocent, he has been in jail for the past 8.5 years... Now, he has been attacked with the intention to kill. We would request the Chief Minister to meet us and listen to us. Our father is not a terrorist. We also demand justice from the judiciary considering that even the woman concerned has been saying that nothing wrong has been done to her."

## Machines aplenty, but farm fires rage on in Punjab

**Jalandhar. (Agency)**

In Punjab, where over 1.57 lakh Crop Residue Management (CRM) machines have been distributed since 2018-19 on subsidised rates to tackle the menace of stubble burning, the sight of smoke curling up from farmlands raises a pressing question: why are farmers still setting their fields ablaze, even when the tools to prevent this are idling nearby?

This year, the paddy harvesting season has only just begun, with around two lakh tonnes —approximately one percent of the expected 17 to 18 million tonnes (170 to 180 lakh tonnes) — harvested so far. Yet, in just two weeks, Punjab has recorded 95 fire incidents. Though the figures are much lower than 129 in 2024 and 214 in 2023 in the same period, 51 FIRs have been filed this year, including 22 in Amritsar and 11 in Tarn Taran, under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Authorities have also marked 32 red entries in land revenue records. Amritsar has till date

reported 55 farm fires, followed by Tarn Taran (11), Patiala (10), Malerkotla (4), and Kapurthala and Barnala (3 each). The Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) has physically



verified 51 stubble burning sites and environment compensation totaling Rs 2.30 lakh have been imposed in 48 cases, and Rs 1.80 lakh recovered. Punjab accounts for 61.7% of the total farm fires reported from the six states including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi between

September 15 to September 29, this year — as against 55.1% in 2024 (Last year, the official harvesting of paddy in Punjab had begun on October 1 while it was allowed from September 16 this due to advance transplantation of paddy).

When such fires occur even before the peak pressure on CRM resources, the issue is not machine availability but economic feasibility and a lack of behavioral shift, an agriculture expert said. With 1.57 lakh CRM machines — 1.48 lakh distributed since 2018, and an additional 9,000 out of 12,500 planned for this year already been handed out — their presence doesn't equate to accessibility. Even if 10% of them are non-functional, over 1.41 lakh machines are still operational, the expert said. If each machine manages just 23 hectares (around 57 acres), the entire stubble spread across more than 32 lakh hectares could be cleared within a week to 10 days of continuous operation. However, the ground reality tells a different story.

## Restore statue of 1965 war veteran Maha Vir Chakra awardee Major Bhupinder Singh in heart of Ludhiana city: PAC

**Ludhiana. (Agency)**

Public Action Committee (PAC), a people-led group, has urged the Ludhiana district administration to restore the statue of Maha Vir Chakra awardee Major Bhupinder Singh, a 1965 Indo-Pak war veteran, at its original place Bharat Nagar Chowk in the heart of Ludhiana city.

PAC members at a press conference here said the statue, along with a captured Pakistan Army tank, were placed at Ludhiana's bustling roundabout Bharat Nagar Chowk for decades and were an identity of the city, but later the memorial was removed from the chowk and never restored.

The statue of Major Singh and the captured tank, which once stood at Bharat Nagar Chowk and were an inseparable part of the city's history and pride, have been missing. At their place, Hero Cycles has installed its bicycle model and insignia. Even the name 'Bharat Nagar Chowk' has been removed from the roundabout signage, creating space for the area to slowly be referred to as 'Hero Cycle Chowk'. This is a deliberate attempt to erase the memory of the city's real hero," said PAC member Kapil Arora.

"The statue has now been lying dumped at

an insignificant location near Rose Garden, where hardly anyone can see it. It is not even visible to city residents, and no one knows about its location. Earlier, it was visible to every commuter crossing Ludhiana, including those from other cities and states. We demand the statue and the tank be restored to their original location immediately," said another PAC member Jaskirat Singh.

Major Singh, a native of Harnampura village in Ludhiana district, was given the Maha Vir Chakra posthumously for his exemplary leadership and gallantry in the tank battles of Phillora and Sodreke during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. During the battle of Phillora and Sodreke between September 11 and 19, 1965, Major Singh skillfully led his squadron to destroy numerous Pakistani tanks and other enemy equipment. His tank was hit several times, but he remained in command. However, on September 19, 1965, his tank was fatally hit by Pakistani missiles, and he succumbed to burn injuries on October 3, 1965.

The PAC expressed strong concern over the "deliberate erasure of Ludhiana's historic identity and the dishonour shown towards a war veteran".

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

Garba dancers are flocking to the western suburbs to enjoy the extended deadline for loudspeakers from 10.00 pm to midnight over Ashtami-Navami Sept 30-Oct 1. This year indoor dandiya events have an advantage as they are insulated against heavy rain. Outdoor venues have fortified themselves using tarpaulin and plastic covers.

Tuesday marked the 'Sandhi' (cusp) of Ashtami-Navami, so the city witnessed Sandhi Puja, fire sacrifice and Kanya Puja rituals. Mumbai Devi temple and Bengal Club will perform 'hom havan' and Kumari Puja respectively at Navami Wednesday. Tuesday night, a touching sight unfolded when the Rajawadi Navratri Mandir in Ghatkopar invited 108 little girls for Kanya Pujan. Organiser Mukesh Vaghela said, "We are celebrating our non-commercial Navratri since 57 years with dhol and dandiya rass. On Ashtami 5,000 people come to witness 'havan'. This is when we invite 108 girls aged 4-10 years. They perform the aarti, we feed them choice delicacies and later ply them with five-six bags full of gifts like clothes, imitation jewellery and household items. They are very excited! Our group of 80-85 donors contributes heartily every season. The scriptures say that the Devi resides within little girls, so we are happy that we have been

able to continue this tradition."

Meanwhile singers who concur Jagran, Mata Ki Chowki, Ramkatha and Gondhal are having a busy season. In Sion, Gulshaan Rajmalani and his peers are organising Mata Ki Chowki in households and performing Jagran in society



compounds. Their Shri Bhawani Jagran Samiti which began as a fledgling group of five friends led by PC Ahuja in 1983 has survived the ups and downs of the changing cityscape. In Worli, Bhaskar Kate, a Gondhal artiste, laments the competition among his fraternity. "Gondhalis have mushroomed just the way vada pao sellers have sprouted in the city," said the performer. "My father had started our troupe and I inherited his legacy. I have been performing Gondhal since 27 years. But newcomers have an edge over us now." by Gadwal.

## Hours after retirement, Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena appointed Chairman of Himachal Pradesh

**Shimla. (Agency)**

Within hours of his retirement as Chief Secretary on Tuesday evening, Prabodh Saxena, 1990 batch IAS officer of Himachal Pradesh cadre, was appointed chairman of the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited (HPSEBL) for a three-year term.

As per the notification, being chairman, Prabodh Saxena enjoys the rank, status and responsibilities equivalent to that of Chief Secretary and report to Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

To make way for Saxena, the government transferred incumbent HPSEBL chairman Sanjay Gupta, 1988 batch IAS officer, to the Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board. Gupta too will function under the

administrative control of the Chief Minister and will hold the status and rank of Chief Secretary.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena was accorded a warm farewell by the Secretariat Administration department on his retirement at the State Secretariat in Shimla on Tuesday. In his address, Saxena said that Himachal Pradesh has made remarkable progress since its formation, due to the collective efforts of its people, leadership, officers, and employees. He lauded the dedication of state employees who, despite adverse weather conditions, consistently delivered exemplary services.

Additional Chief Secretary K.K. Pant praised the exemplary services of Prabodh Saxena and felicitated him on the occasion, while

wishing him a long and healthy life. Secretariat Administration Secretary Rakesh Kanwar welcomed the Chief Secretary. The officer hit headlines for the Rs 1-lakh worth holy bashi he organised at Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC)-run Hotel Holiday Home.



On the last day of his service, 1990-batch IAS officer Saxena, the only chief secretary in the state to get a six-month extension two days before his scheduled retirement in March this year, spoke with The Indian Express at his office. Did you seek an extension in March?

I never applied for an extension. The political leadership decided that I should continue for the time being. Hence, I was given a six-month extension in March. Would you like to comment on the case about your extension in the High Court and the INX Media Corruption case? The INX Media corruption case has been ongoing for six years. I received an extension as per the rules. I didn't influence anyone.

## Beyond Gaza's rubble: A diplomatic map India must read

The war in Gaza has dragged on for months with no sign of closure. Israel's military machine has inflicted massive destruction on the densely-packed strip, killing thousands of Palestinians. But the elusive goal of 'final victory' remains beyond reach. Daily reports of two dozen or more casualties are less a measure of military progress than a commentary on Israel's inability to impose its terms. Simultaneously, the diplomatic ground is shifting in ways that may prove more consequential than battlefield maps—and India, as always, must read both carefully.

Gaza is a narrow coastal enclave of just 365 sq km, home to some 2.1 million people. Israel has committed tens of thousands of troops in a campaign of relentless airstrikes and grinding urban combat. Despite repeated announcements of control over neighbourhoods in Gaza City and other towns, Hamas remains far from annihilated. The urban layout and embedded militias make conventional dominance difficult.

What emerges is a paradox. Israel wields overwhelming firepower, yet cannot translate it into decisive political outcomes. Hostages taken during the October attacks constrain operational freedom. International outrage remains high. Domestic fatigue over prolonged deployments and casualties erode confidence. The result is a war of attrition where Israel can destroy but not fully conquer. Victory in war is rarely black-and-white. While Gaza's streets lie in ruins, the mood in diplomatic corridors has shifted distinctly. In New York, Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to the UN General Assembly was defiant, rejecting recognitions for a Palestinian state by European and Australian governments. He dismissed them as "rewards" for terror. Yet his speech drew walkouts and protests, symbolic of Israel's growing isolation. The recognitions are historic. France, the UK, Belgium, Portugal, Luxembourg, Australia and others have joined over 155 UN members who now formally acknowledge Palestine. Recognition does not alter borders or lift Gaza's blockade, but it changes the diplomatic balance. The Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas gains fresh legitimacy just as it seeks to reposition itself as the alternative to Hamas. Addressing the UNGA virtually, Abbas called for a ceasefire and signalled the PA's readiness to assume responsibility for Gaza if Hamas is excluded. The momentum is scripting its own narrative, with a significant diplomatic push for the two-state solution. The US stands uneasily against this tide. It has shielded Israel repeatedly in the Security Council, vetoing harsher resolutions. But it faces domestic disquiet—Arab-American communities, progressive Democrats, and a restless younger generation are critical of Israel's conduct. The European and Australian recognitions have widened the Atlantic gap. America's line that "now is not the time" for statehood looks increasingly lonely.

For India, the challenge lies in balancing history with present realities. New Delhi was among the earliest non-Arab states to recognise Palestine, doing so in 1988, and it continues to affirm support for a two-state solution. At the same time, India's ties with Israel have grown into a strategic partnership, underpinned by critical defence cooperation, intelligence sharing, and technology transfers that directly strengthen its security.

The US remains a central partner in India's Indo-Pacific calculus. Current shifts in India-US relations should be read as tactical adjustments rather than a strategic rupture; but the India-US equation in West Asia must not be viewed through a tactical prism alone. In this triangle of relationships.



## It was easy for officials to shift the blame on him when a five-year-old Ladakhi protest turned violent

LAST week, when Ladakh erupted in violence and four persons were shot dead by security forces, police and other officials started blaming Sonam Wangchuk for inciting the protests, describing him as anti-national, while saying that they were also investigating "his visit to Pakistan in February" — as if that was a crime against India by itself. I know about that visit only too well. He was an invitee to a conference organised by Dawn group, one of Pakistan's leading media houses. The conference was about tackling climate change. I know about it because I was invited as well. I wrote about the conference in the columns of this newspaper.

That's where I met Wangchuk for the first time — in Islamabad. Dawn had embarked on an ambitious South Asian project to draw awareness to climate change. The media group brought together people from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India, making the case that climate change was a challenge that needed an "all of South Asia" approach. After all, the countries in the region are all joined by mountains to the north, rivers and river systems flowing east and west, and coastlines and seas further down. An environmental disaster in one country does not leave its neighbour untouched. When a dust haze settles over Delhi in the winter, Lahore is similarly enveloped. The floods that devastated Punjab caused widespread destruction in the Punjab province of Pakistan too. And so on. I recall thinking all the time during the two-day conference that this is what SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) might have devoted itself to quite usefully, had it not been so uselessly defunct. After India's refusal to attend the Islamabad summit in 2016 over the Uri attack, SAARC has died in Delhi's eyes. BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) became India's most-favoured go-to alternative regional grouping, but Delhi's interest in this group too has waned with Sheikh Hasina's departure from Bangladesh. Now, India has no real friends in the neighbourhood. But that's another story. 'Breathe Pakistan' was the title of the Islamabad conference. Dawn's publisher Haroon Hameed, who has a fund of interesting stories about his road journeys in India back in the day when this was possible, was the moving force behind it. The venue was the renovated Jinnah Convention Centre, where the SAARC summit would have been held had it taken place, up a small hill past the Diplomatic Enclave. When I was posted in Pakistan as the correspondent of The Hindu, I heard Karen Armstrong speak at the convention centre on the topic of 'Tolerance and Islam'. That was in February 2008 when she visited to celebrate the golden jubilee of

the Aga Khan, the head of Islami Shia sect of Islam, and Pakistan was grappling with a string of deadly terrorist attacks by then newly-formed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. The others in the group from India were Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali Angmo, Soumashree Sarkar of The Wire and Harjeet Singh of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative (Harjeet also heads the Satat Sampada Climate Foundation). Soumashree and I were in a panel discussion on focusing media attention on climate change. Wangchuk was on a panel titled 'Glacial Melt: A Sustainable Strategy for the Water Towers of South Asia', where he spoke about the Ice Towers that he

and innovator from Ladakh. So I asked Hamid if he had heard of Wangchuk before. When he replied in the negative, I asked him if he had seen 3 Idiots, the Aamir Khan movie. He had, and I told him the story, apocryphal or not, that the character played by Khan in the movie was based on him. I also told him about Wangchuk's padayatra in 2024 from Leh to Delhi for Ladakh's statehood and other rights. Even the newsman, Hamid stood up like a shot, went up close to the dais and began taking photos of Wangchuk. He may have alerted his TV channel as well, for soon after the panel discussion, Wangchuk was surrounded by crews asking him for a 'byte'. Before that,

the only people who seemed to know of him were a group of youth from Gilgit-Baltistan. Wangchuk asked me to take a photo of him with the group. I asked them who they were, and Wangchuk replied: "They are my brothers from the other side". They all posed in an awkward semicircle next to the stage, with Wangchuk in the middle. At a get-together after the conference, I asked a senior person in Dawn why they had not given Wangchuk a full-spectrum introduction. He laughed and said: "There was no need. This was a climate conference, saying all that would have shifted the focus".

Over the last few days, as I thought back on that trip to Islamabad and tried to reconcile it with the accusations about Wangchuk the "anti-national", I also thought about a government that strung Ladakhis along for over five years on their demand for more agency over their own lives — Sixth Schedule, statehood, demographic protection, rights over their land, the right to representation.

When a five-year-old protest turned violent, and the security forces responded with what seems like disproportionate force, and four people were killed in a place that has remained peaceful, it was easy to shift the blame on "Wangchuk who went to Pakistan". Officials accused him of inciting protesters by talking about the Arab Spring and Gen Z protests in Nepal. Did no one think of cautioning him when he actually made those speeches, or did the Centre just fail to see that it had turned a peaceful little town into a festering site of people's grievances and unfulfilled aspirations that was just waiting to burst?

Just over six years ago, on August 5, 2019, Ladakh celebrated the abrogation of Article 370, its freedom from Jammu & Kashmir and its own status as a brand new Union Territory. As we saw last week, so much has changed these past six years.



helped construct in Ladakh. His panel was chaired by the UN coordinator in Afghanistan, Indrika Ratwatte. The other participants were Kanak Mani Dixit of Nepal, Dechen Tsering of the UNEP Asia-Pacific regional office and Aisha Khan, who heads a civil society coalition on climate change in Pakistan. During his presentation, Wangchuk explained the 'Ice Stupa' concept as the creation of artificial glaciers in the winter, which would melt and provide water in the summer. "Freeze, freeze, and freeze", he said, and those are the three words I noted down of his speech. I also recall clearly that he showered praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his visionary leadership in tackling climate change.

What actually surprised me most was that no one seemed to know who Wangchuk was. When the panel discussion began, I was seated next to Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir in the audience. Wangchuk's formal introduction contained no hint of his political activism or his hunger strikes. He was introduced as a climate change activist

## Caste count sets off heat in Karnataka

### The Rs 420-crore Karnataka exercise follows the recent Scheduled Castes Communities Survey for internal reservation and precedes the upcoming nationwide census, which will also enumerate caste.

The Karnataka government's Socio-Economic and Educational Survey, which began last week, has sparked controversy. Communities are debating how to use their numbers to claim a larger share of the socio-political landscape. The opposition BJP claims the survey will foment unrest similar to the aftermath of the Mandal Commission report. There are other unanswered questions, too. The number of castes and sub-castes is confusing, even more so after the Madhusudan Naik Commission has tentatively listed around 1,400 of them in the state. The Lingayats and Kodavas are in a spot on listing their religion as Hindu. And now, the Centre has intervened with a petition in the high court questioning the survey's purpose and seeking a stay, as have Brahmin and Vokkaliga community organisations. The Rs 420-crore Karnataka exercise follows the recent Scheduled Castes Communities Survey for internal reservation and precedes the upcoming nationwide census, which will also enumerate caste. A similar census by the Congress government in 2015 was set aside in 2024.



This time, the enumerators will be asking 60 questions, including details on religion, caste, and sub-caste. Aadhaar is being used to verify identity and prevent duplication. The government says its aim is to assess "the extent of

poverty among caste groups". The data collected will undoubtedly influence welfare policies; on the flip side, it could also become a tool for caste politics and electoral posturing. Amid the controversies stirred by the previous survey, Karnataka's dominant Lingayat and Veerashaiva Lingayat communities are divided over whether to list themselves as Hindu or Lingayat; they seek a separate religious tag. Both sects follow social reformer Basaveshwara, but Veerashaiva Lingayats worship Shiva and follow Hindu rituals, while Lingayats do not worship idols. United, they could form a significant demographic. Agitation over this issue previously hurt Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Congress in the 2018 elections. At the centre is the debate over reservations in education, government jobs, and promotions. While governments can conduct surveys—as Bihar and Telangana have done—the data must be transparent and not manipulated to deny communities their due or create division. Building a society with equal opportunities should be the aim, but that appears an idyll when caste politics reign supreme.

## Indian knowledge systems need to be inclusive to live up to Constitution's spirit

### UGC's proposal to embed Indian knowledge systems across subjects goes against the National Education Policy's multidisciplinary model. It ignores the philosophies and practices of non-Hindu traditions and tribal communities. It's also not aligned with the constitutional commitment to scientific enquiry

Discussions about Indian knowledge systems (IKS) resurfaced after the University Grants Commission released its draft Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework, which aims to embed 'ancient Indian wisdom' across subjects. While the UGC has invited feedback on the framework, the draft is attracting scholarly criticism. Beyond its content, critics note that the framework abandons the multidisciplinary and holistic course model envisioned by the National Education Policy (2020), instead prioritising single-major pathways. With most credits allocated to discipline-specific courses, the framework leaves little room for multidisciplinary exploration. While the goal of multidisciplinary education appears increasingly elusive, the LOCF continues to support the NEP's flagship programme, IKS, through the inclusion of 'Bharatiya philosophy' across modules. To 'decolonise' and 'indigenise' education in India, the curriculum proposes, among other things, the study of Kautilya's Arthashastra in commerce education, as well as the integration of ancient Indian conceptions of paramanu (atom) into chemistry. While the UGC's endeavour to reclaim India's ancient heritage may seem commendable, it raises deeper concerns about the erosion of scientific temper, risking an epistemic crisis.

The foundational principle underpinning IKS—Hindu exceptionalism—is not a recent development. Meera Nanda notes that the idea of Hinduism as a 'religion of science' has nearly a two-century-long history, one that exalted the Vedic tradition for its supposed "non-dogmatic

rationalism" and "supersensory empiricism". Swami Vivekananda most famously articulated this vision of modern science as a handmaiden of Hindu tradition in his 1893 address in Chicago. The confluence between Hinduism and modern science gained momentum during British colonial rule—caught in the tussle between rationalism and nationalism, self-critique and self-assertion, and reform and revival. In independent India, the constitutional commitment to scientific enquiry is not enshrined in any grand clause, but rather embedded in the language of the Directive Principles.

While Nehru's solemn invocation of 'scientific temper' imagined science as a vehicle for national development, this vision soon gave way to inertia. Beyond a brief period of reform and self-critique, the Indian State lacked the political will to cultivate the social conditions necessary for fostering a new way of thinking among the masses. Nor did it succeed in realising the constitutional vision of science as a normative enterprise—one that should be practised, safeguarded, and subjected to critique within democratic institutions through active civic participation.

However, for a nation emerging from the shadow of colonial rule, independent India struggled with questions of authority, legitimacy, and the preservation of its ancient traditions and

knowledge systems. In the effort to decolonise the 'Indian mind' from the lingering effects of colonialism—particularly in the epistemic realms of law, scholarship, and culture—the Sanskritisation of modern science took centre-stage. This process aimed to validate, but rarely



challenge, the epistemic claims of Hindu exceptionalism. Such a decolonisation project risks ignoring the Constitution's vision of a citizen-centric science that thrives on dialogue and dissent. At its core, this decolonising project commits an ontological fallacy: it seeks to universalise a single, privileged mode of knowing, one that is

predominantly aligned with upper-caste Vedic and Sanskritic traditions. This endeavour constructs a static and selective portrait of ancient India, which systematically marginalises the subcontinent's rich heterodoxy—including the materialist and agnostic schools of Charvaka, Buddhism, and Jainism. The IKS also erases the profound contributions of Muslim scholars that were integral to the development of India's cultural syncretism.

Contemporary anxieties regarding the preferred version of 'ancient Indian wisdom' stem directly from this drive for conformity and the assertion of a singular, infallible knowledge system. This attitude is fundamentally antithetical to the critical pluralism and intellectual contestation that are the very bedrock of scientific enquiry. The decolonial preoccupation within IKS scholarship often overlooks the rich reservoir of living indigenous pedagogies. IKS must engage directly with the practices and cultures of early, often understudied, tribal communities.

While aiming to decolonise education by engaging with long-marginalised epistemic traditions, UGC's proposed curriculum risks replacing one form of intellectual hegemony with another. Instead of liberating thought and nurturing critical enquiry, it may mould young minds to adhere to a nation defined by a monolithic history.

32-yr-old woman police constable's body found in Gandhinagar, suspect apprehended

**Ahmedabad .(Agency)**

A 32-year-old police constable's body was allegedly found under suspicious circumstances at a relative's apartment in Gandhinagar on Tuesday, said the police, adding a suspect has been apprehended in connection with the case.

The victim, identified as Rinkal Hasmukh Vanzara, was posted at the police headquarters with the Ahmedabad City Police, said the police officials.



Vanzara's body was found by her brother and sister-in-law at their home in Sector-24 of Gandhinagar, following which they alerted the police. Later, a team from Sector-21 police station rushed to the spot and subsequently filed an Accidental Death (AD) report. The case was later handed over to the Local Crime Branch (LCB) of Gandhinagar Police.

LCB Police Inspector DB Vala in a statement issued on Tuesday evening said, "During the initial probe, it was found that Rinkalben had been murdered. According to our information, a person close to her has allegedly carried out this murder". "The suspect was immediately apprehended by Gandhinagar LCB and is being interrogated," added Vala. The identity of the accused has not been shared by the police.

**Surat District Bar Association launches drive to identify 'ghost or bogus lawyers'**

**Surat .(Agency)**

Acting on the directions of the Bar Council of Gujarat, the Surat District Bar Association (SDBA) has launched a drive to collect filled Practice Verification Forms (PVFs) along with self-attested copies of marksheets from members who were enrolled after 2010 to identify "ghost or bogus lawyers".

In February, two lawyers practising in Mehsana and Anand in Gujarat were caught using the enrolment number of lawyers practising in the Surat district court. The Surat lawyers complained to the Surat District Bar Association, which forwarded the complaint to the Bar Council of Gujarat for necessary action.

According to the Supreme Court of India and the Bar Council of India's Certificate and Place of Practice Verification Rules 2015, all bar associations across the country should make the members fill the PVFs and submit them to the state bar council through the district bar councils.

On September 29, the Gujarat Bar Council (GBC) wrote to all district bar councils in Gujarat, informing that all lawyers enrolled after 2010 should submit PVFs to it before October 15, 2025.

The lawyers will also have to fill PVF with a passport-size photo and submit all their mark sheets from Class 10 to LLB. The applicant must also provide details of their office address, present residential address, and permanent residential address, along with their social media contacts and contact numbers for both the office and residence.

The SDBA has started distributing hard copies of PVFs to all lawyers registered with it. Talking to The Indian Express, SDBA President Brijesh Patel said, "Around 9,000 lawyers have been registered with the SDBA, out of which 6,000 were enrolled after 2010. We have also sent PVF to the members via social media and WhatsApp."

# Once on brink of closure, govt school in Pune village wins World's Best School Prize 2025

**The Zilla Parishad school in Jalindernagar village, Pune, has undergone quite a transformation. Parents and residents attribute the success to the various initiatives spearheaded by Dattatray Ware, the President's award-winning teacher.**

**Mumbai.** A Zilla Parishad (ZP) school from Jalindernagar village in Maharashtra's Pune district has won the Community Choice award in the World's Best School 2025 category. The award by T4 Education, a UK-based global education platform, was declared on Tuesday.

From being at the brink of closure to now being selected among the world's best schools; it has been quite a transformation for the government-run institution in Pune's Khed taluka. The parents and residents attribute the pathbreaking transformation to the various initiatives spearheaded by Dattatray Ware, the President's award-winning teacher. The school is a two-teacher-managed government educational institute. "It is just a dream-like scenario for the entire school, as well as the village, to see that a government school can be among the top schools in the world. This shows a ray of



hope to all government schools that they can compete with new-age private schooling, if

there is a collective will by teachers, administration, state, and the community at

large," said Ware, emphasising that it was the community support that led the Jalindernagar school on this road toward success.

Despite being a ZP school run by the government, Ware said, "We run with a motto, 'don't wait until the government provides'. The school is proactive in obtaining facilities or creating the resources required for our students with the help of villagers. With the help of community collaboration, the standards of education have risen at the school, with many local parents choosing to send their wards here as opposed to the prevalent practice of choosing private school over a government school."

When Ware was transferred to this school in 2021, there were only three to four students enrolled, as a result of the parents' growing demand for private schools. Today, it serves

120 students in classes 1 to 8, supported by just two full-time teachers, and it stands as an example of how community engagement can redefine effective school education with limited resources.

Stating that all this is made possible with community support, Ware shared that the school has upgraded its infrastructure with the help of villagers who donated land to expand the school. The school also runs a skill-based education programme in 22 trades with help from skilled villagers who volunteer as educators to take classes of their respective trade.

The school also has an active peer-learning model, where senior students mentor juniors, help clarify doubts in a comfortable, student-led setting. Due to these initiatives, the school was initially short-listed among the top 10 in the category of community collaboration in June.

# Maharashtra's sugar mills to start operations from November 1

**Maharashtra is expected to crush 1,000 lakh tonnes of sugarcane and manufacture around 115-118 lakh tonnes of sugar this season.**

**Pune .(Agency)**

Maharashtra's sugar mills will begin crushing operations from November 1 this year, a high-level ministerial committee headed by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis decided on Tuesday. Bhairav Nath B Thombare, chairman of West Indian Sugar Mills Association (WISMA), a body of private sugar millers, said the date was fixed, taking the unprecedented floods in Marathwada into consideration. "Due to waterlogging, cane cutters will not be able to enter the fields if the crushing starts in October," he said. Sugar mill owners in western Maharashtra had sought an earlier date, as mills across the Maharashtra-Karnataka border face cane poaching by mills in Karnataka. Thombare said the state government would officially write to the

Karnataka government to ensure that mills there start operations at the same time as Maharashtra. Maharashtra is one of the few states where the crushing season starts on a date decided by the government. Mills in neighbouring Karnataka start as per their convenience. For mills in the border districts of Solapur, Sangli and Kolhapur, this poses a problem as their cane gets poached by mills in Karnataka. Farmers in the border districts leverage their advantage and do not wait for the mills in Maharashtra to start. Many, thus, end up selling their cane to the earliest bidder. Cooperative mill owners had requested October 15 as the start date of



operations, but mill owners in Marathwada opposed it. "Last year, a substantial amount

of cane was harvested by Karnataka mills; with mills increasing their crushing capacity, the availability of cane is a major issue. Thus, mill owners have asked the state government to take steps to ensure they are not at a loss," a sugar miller from Kolhapur said.

Thombare said Maharashtra is expected to crush 1000 lakh tonnes of cane and manufacture around 115-118 lakh tonnes of sugar. Mill owners are expected to divert 12-15 lakh tonnes of sugar for manufacturing ethanol.

Meanwhile, former MP and farm leader Raju Shetti has decided to conduct the Oosh Parishad or cane conclave on October 16.

**Gujarat govt agency clerk dies in hospital 2 weeks after arrest for 'providing official documents' to journalist**

**Chennai.** Nishidh Jani, a clerk at the government-run Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), who was arrested on September 17 for allegedly providing sensitive documents of the board to journalist Mahesh Langa, died shortly after he was admitted to Ahmedabad Civil Hospital on Monday night, police said.

The Gandhinagar Police, which is investigating the case based on the FIR filed on October 22, 2024, had named Langa as prime accused in the alleged theft and possession of confidential documents of the GMB.

DySP DT Gohil of Gandhinagar City Division, who is investigating the case, said, "Jani was arrested on September 17, 2025, after investigation found he had given the documents to Langa. Jani was suffering from a lung-related ailment since January 2025 and was on sick leave since then. He rejoined GMB earlier in September. A day after his arrest, he was presented before court, which sent him to police custody for a day. He was sent to judicial custody on September 19 and had been in Sabarmati Central Jail since then."

DySP Gohil said that before Jani's arrest, police had sought medical opinion from doctors at Gandhinagar Civil Hospital. "The doctors said that he was fit to be arrested as his CT scans were normal and his blood oxygen was 96, and only then did we arrest Jani," the officer said, adding that Jani's medical test was also conducted before sending him to judicial custody. Earlier this year, the Gujarat High Court had asked the police why they had not arrested Jani, to which the police replied that he had been on bed rest.

An Accidental Death (AD) report was filed at Ranip police station in connection with Jani's death, said Bharatkumar Rathod, DCP Zone-2, Ahmedabad City Police.

Five FIRs against Langa Langa, who faces five FIRs since October 7 last year, got anticipatory bail in the case related to the GMB from the Gujarat High Court earlier this year and the Gandhinagar Police had approached the Supreme Court challenging the order. Though the matter was listed for September 18, the hearing did not take place.



Express Highway. The second project includes construction of another bridge that will connect MDP road with the Ryan International School at

between Mahakali Junction to Charkop Naka at Kandivali.

## The making of Navi Mumbai International Airport's floating lotus: decoding the design, symbolism and engineering

**Days before the inauguration of Navi Mumbai International Airport, The Indian Express got a glimpse into its design, and how London-based Zaha Hadid Architects reimagined the national flower in steel and glass.**

**Mumbai .(Agency)**

Ahead of its much-awaited inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 8, the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) received its Aerodrome Licence, which is essential for commencing operations, from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday. While much attention has been on the airport's capacity — with two parallel runways designed to eventually handle up to 90 million passengers a year — the NMIA is also being projected as an architectural landmark.

Ahead of the inauguration, got a peek into the design, and how London-based Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA) reimagined India's national flower in steel and glass. The result is a "floating lotus" terminal that blends functionality with art, borrowing cues from India's traditional architecture.

A lotus beyond ornament

For ZHA, known for their organic, futuristic designs, the lotus was not just a decorative motif but the basis of the terminal's structure. Its

layered unfolding informed the design of



natural light into the concourse and create shifting patterns through the day. Beyond their visual effect, "the columns guide passenger circulation, establishing rhythm and orientation in a way reminiscent of temple halls, where structural supports also carried symbolic meaning," a spokesperson for the NMIA told.

Columns with meaning

The use of columns draws from a long

architectural tradition in India, from the mandapas of temples to the rock-cut halls of Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra. At NMIA, 12 feature columns are shaped as petals in bloom, while 17 mega columns function as invisible roots. These mega columns support the weight of the roof canopy and are engineered to withstand seismic shocks, high winds and heavy loads, and are designed such that the roof canopy appears to 'float' above the terminal.

Together, the expressive feature columns and the structural mega columns form a dual system that blends symbolism with engineering.

"The lotus serves as both a motif and the structural and cultural foundation of the terminal. The 12 sculptural feature columns bring in natural light and guide passenger movement, while the 17 mega columns carry the weight of the soaring roof canopies, creating vast open spaces without obstruction. This balance of expressive design and robust engineering ensures the airport is both efficient and symbolic," the spokesperson said.

# Voter list discrepancies in Maharashtra, Congress alleges vote theft

► **Allegations of large-scale voter list manipulation have surfaced in Maharashtra's Rajura assembly seat. Congress leaders claim fake voter enrolment and 'vote theft', raising concerns over electoral transparency in the region.**

## 3% Dearness Allowance Hike For Government Staff Before Diwali, Dussehra: Sources

### Agency New Delhi.

A three per cent increase in Dearness Allowance, or DA, is expected for government employees and pensioners as the festive season kicks off this month, sources told Wednesday. The hike, once approved by the Union Cabinet, will take retrospective effect from July 1. And, if approved, it will be the second hike this year; in March a two per cent increase was announced, taking DA payouts from 53 per cent of basic pay to 55 per cent. And that was four months after another hike - in October last year - of three per cent.

DA is provided to government employees to compensate for inflation. The hike this month is expected to align with movement of CPI, or Consumer Price Index, data for industrial workers that forms the basis for bi-annual revisions of the Dearness Allowance. The proposed hike will mean an employee with a basic salary of Rs 60,000 will receive an additional Rs 34,800 as DA, up from Rs 33,000 they were being paid after the March increase.

Further revisions of salaries and allowances will be decided by the Eighth Pay Commission that was announced in January. However, an official notification about its members and ToR, or terms of reference, is awaited. Salary increments will depend on the 'fitment factor', a multiplier applied to basic pay. Experts estimate this to be between 1.83 and 2.86, which could mean a hike of roughly 13 to 34 per cent. However, the DA - 55 per cent for now - will likely be reset to zero and merged with basic pay after the commission's recommendations are implemented from January 1, 2026.

## India's 5th-Gen Stealth Fighter Closer To Reality, 7 Firms Make Prototype Bid

### Agency New Delhi.

Seven Indian companies have bid to partner with the Defence Research and Development Organisation to design and develop prototypes of the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft or AMCA - India's homegrown fifth-generation stealth fighter jet. Two bidders will now be shortlisted and receive Rs 15,000 crore between them to build five models of the AMCA - to the highest standards - before manufacturing rights are given.

The seven companies in the mix include Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Tata Advanced Systems Ltd, and Adani Defence, and their bids will be evaluated by a committee led by ex-BrahMos Aerospace chief A Sivathanu Pillai, defence officials told news agency ANI.

The committee will submit its report to the Defence Ministry. The ministry will make the final selection, officials said. The AMCA - the crore of Rs 2 lakh crore manufacturing project expected to produce over 125 fighter jets - is not expected to be ready for induction into the Air Force before 2035.

But, once it does, India will join an exclusive list of countries with fifth-gen fighters. As of May 2025, only the United States (F-22 and F-35), China (J-20), and Russia (Su-57) have these.

### What is the AMCA?

India's first fifth-gen fighter will be a single-seat twin-engine jet with advanced stealth coatings and internal weapons bays like those on US and Russian planes - the F-22, F-35, and Su-57.

It is expected to have an operational ceiling of 55,000 feet and carry 1,500kg in weapons in internal bays, with 5,500kg more externally. The AMCA will likely carry a further 6,500kg in fuel.

Reports indicate there will be two versions; the second will, India hopes, also have an indigenously developed engine, possibly more powerful than the US-made GE F414 in the first. Overall, this will be a supermanoeuvrable and stealthy multirole fighter jet.

### But what is a 5th-gen fighter?

There is no one definition, except to say it incorporates major tech developed in the first part of the 21st century and are, without exception, the most advanced fighter jets in operation.

### Agency New Delhi.

A renewed controversy has emerged in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district after allegations of serious irregularities in the Rajura assembly constituency's voter list. Senior Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, have drawn attention to what they call "vote theft", citing manipulated electoral rolls and questionable enrolments during the last Assembly election.

The issue first came to light when Subhash Dhole, a senior Congress leader, reported discrepancies in the voter list during the 2024 Assembly elections. Following his complaint, Rajura Tehsildar Omprakash Gond filed a police report, naming 20 individuals allegedly linked to fraudulent voter registrations using their mobile numbers. Despite the FIR, police investigations have made little progress in nearly a year, with officers yet to reach those named. A team from Aaj Tak, India Today's sister channel, managed to locate one individual mentioned in the FIR. The person,



speaking under the condition of anonymity, stated, "I received an OTP from the Election Commission 11 months ago, and soon after, a stranger called and asked for the OTP, so I gave it. I have no other knowledge. I did not apply to be listed on the voter roll, nor did I know my name was in the FIR." Investigations by the Aaj Tak team revealed that many names, phone numbers, and addresses listed in the FIR were either fictitious or untraceable. Some numbers led to other states, and several people could not be contacted. In one case, a number was found

to be registered in Gujarat, with the user denying any association. The situation suggests that OTPs sent to random phone numbers were used to enrol fake voters, with further details pending official investigation.

Rajura has long been a Congress stronghold. In the 2024 Assembly election, however, BJP candidate Devrao Bhogade won by a margin of 3,054 votes. Following complaints of irregularities affecting 18,000 votes, election officials annulled 6,853 votes. Despite this, Congress leaders allege that over 11,000 additional fraudulent votes were cast and have questioned the legitimacy of the final result. Congress leader Sachin Bhowar from Gadchandur said, "In just seven days, many new voters were enroled. The names added to the voter list were from different states and did not exist in this assembly area. Some names were so unusual, like Vakil, America Rai, Ayodhya Prasad, YUH UQJJW, that they raised immediate suspicion."

## Who's Tauqeer Raza, the mastermind of 'I Love Muhammad' chaos in Bareilly?

### Agency New Delhi.

Politician-cleric Maulana Tauqeer Raza Khan is behind bars. The alleged mastermind of the 'I Love Muhammad' protests that turned violent in Bareilly is a habitual troublemaker and a power magnet for the Congress, Samajwadi Party, and BSP. Tauqeer Raza, who's in the State's crosshairs following the unrest in Bareilly ka bazaar, is the descendent of Ala Hazrat, the founder of the Barelvi Sunni order. He has been convicted as the mastermind of the 2010 Bareilly riots, which saw weeks-long violence in which dozens of people were injured and temples attacked.

After 'I Love Muhammad' protests in Bareilly turned violent last week, leaving dozens of policemen injured,

Maulana Tauqeer Raza Khan, founder and chief of the Ittehad-e-Millat Council (IMC), was among the 73 arrested. Khan's name appears in

acid bombs were also recovered later. Since Friday, the Uttar Pradesh administration has gone in hard. "His properties" have been sealed,

bulldozers have sprung back to action, and arrests have been made, including that of one of Khan's top aides.

So, who is Maulana Tauqeer Raza Khan? Booked for his "anti-Hindu" speeches and accused of "masterminding" the 2010 Bareilly riots, Khan had in 2007 reportedly announced a Rs 5-lakh bounty on Taslima Nasrin's head.

Police alleged that Tauqeer and his aides directed people to pelt stones at police personnel in Bareilly under the guise of the 'I Love Muhammad' protests. According to officials, around 16,000 people were mobilised through WhatsApp groups as part of an "online toolkit".



seven of the 10 cases related to the violence, and he has been sent to 14-day judicial custody. Police said he was the "mastermind" of the chaos where thousands were instigated to pelt stones. Empty bullet shells and

## 1 Case In 2022, 3,399 In '23: Manipur's Big Spike In Crimes Against Tribals

### Agency New Delhi.

India witnessed a sharp 28.7 per cent rise in crimes against members of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) community in 2023, with the northeastern state of Manipur emerging as the most affected, according to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The number of cases registered nationwide as crimes against Scheduled Tribes surged to 12,960 in 2023, up from 10,055 cases in 2022.

Manipur alone accounted for a staggering 3,399 cases -- a big spike from just 1 case in 2022. Cases in Manipur accounted for 26.2 per cent of all such cases across the country. Behind this massive hike is the ethnic violence between the Meitei and

Kuki-Zo communities following a Manipur High Court order. The

data shows. Despite being in the top three, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have actually reported a decline in such cases as compared to 2022.

### Legal Framework and Historical Context

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which came into force in January 1990, aims to prevent offences and discrimination against the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. It also mandates the establishment of Special Courts for speedy trials and provides for the relief and rehabilitation of victims. However, rising case numbers point to a gap between legislation and implementation on the ground.



conflict spiralled into widespread unrest, leading to mass displacement, destruction of property, and human rights violations.

Nine states account for over 91% of all crimes against Scheduled Tribes, the

## Cough syrup death case: Disease control agency collects samples as probe begins

**Authorities in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have launched investigations and banned specific cough syrups following multiple child deaths and illnesses. The actions aim to prevent further incidents and address public health concerns.**

### Agency New Delhi.

A central team from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has collected samples in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district as part of a probe into the suspected role of cough syrup in the recent deaths and illnesses of children. Similar cases have emerged from Rajasthan, prompting urgent testing of dextromethorphan hydrobromide syrup batches and a halt in distribution across the state.

The probe follows the death of a five-year-old boy in Sikar, Rajasthan, after consuming cough syrup supplied under the state's free medicine scheme, alongside the serious illness of a three-year-old in Bharatpur who took the same syrup. Similarly, Additionally, in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district,

six children have died over the past month from suspected kidney infections after reportedly consuming two types of similar syrups.

According to official sources, multiple samples, including water, entomological, and drug samples are being analysed to rule out infectious disease. However, the quality of the cough syrup has become the central focus of investigation.

### CASES EMERGED IN RAJASTHAN AND MADHYA PRADESH

In Rajasthan, a two-year-old girl who had been administered dextromethorphan hydrobromide syrup at a government dispensary in Sanganer on September 27 was hospitalised in critical condition at a private hospital in Mansarovar, Jaipur.



Initially admitted to the ICU after being found unresponsive, she has since been shifted to the general ward. The medicine, supplied under the Chief Minister's Free Medicine Scheme, is now under suspension pending test results.

This case follows earlier incidents in

Delhi Man Refuses To Pay For Food, Delivery Partner Calls Cops, This Happens



### Agency New Delhi.

A drunk teacher in Delhi's Narela refused to pay for a food delivery, but ended up paying a much heavier price. Refused payment, the delivery partner called the cops. When two policemen came, the heavily drunk customer misbehaved with them and ended up at the police station. A medical test confirmed that he was intoxicated. A CCTV camera outside his doorstep captured the cops forcibly taking Rishi Kumar, the teacher, down the stairs of his building. The delivery partner can also be seen in the CCTV footage. Earlier, the footage, in which the cops can be heard verbally abusing Rishi, went viral on social media. Many users questioned why the cops were forcibly taking him to the police station.

The police have now said that Arjun, who works as a food delivery partner, called the cops on Monday evening. He informed the police that he had gone to deliver an order in Narela. The individuals at the address took the order by force, refused to pay for it, and abused him, Arjun told police.

"ASI Deshpal and Constable Ravish were dispatched to attend the call. Upon arrival, the caller (Arjun) alleged that the individuals physically assaulted him," the police statement said.

## Husband Can't Claim Sole Right To Joint Property Just Because He Paid EMIs: Delhi High Court

### Agency New Delhi.

A husband cannot assert exclusive ownership over a property jointly acquired and registered in the name of both spouses, solely on the basis that he paid the EMIs, the Delhi High Court has held. A bench of justices Anil Khetarpal and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar made the observation on September 22.

"Once the property stands in the joint names of the spouses, the husband cannot be permitted to



claim exclusive ownership merely on the ground that he alone provided the purchase consideration," the court said. It said the husband's claim would contravene Section 4 of the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, which bars a person, claiming to be the real owner of the property, from instituting any suit, claim or action to enforce rights against any other person in whose name the property stands. In her petition before the high court, the wife also claimed that 50 per cent of the surplus amount belonged to her, asserting that it formed part of her 'stridhan' (a woman's absolute and exclusive property as per Hindu Law) and, therefore, she had exclusive ownership over it.

According to the petition, the couple got married in 1999 and jointly purchased a house in 2005 in Mumbai. However, they began living separately in 2006, and the husband filed for divorce the same year, which is currently pending.

Bharatpur and Srimadhopur (Sikar district), where several children fell ill after taking the same syrup. They were admitted to JK Lon Hospital in Jaipur but discharged after treatment. Notably, a doctor at the government hospital in Bharatpur also experienced adverse symptoms after using the syrup himself. In Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district, six children have died over the past month from suspected kidney infections after reportedly consuming two types of syrups, including cough medicines. The Acting Chief Medical and Health Officer, Dr. Naresh Gunnade, confirmed the first suspected case was recorded on August 24, with the first death occurring on September 7.

## NEWS BOX

**Rockstar Amanjot Kaur wows Guwahati with bat and Rajinikanth-style punchlines****New Delhi. (Agency)**

Like it is said, an injured lion takes a step back, to make a big jump." "Hum banne hi udne ke liye hain. Tehraav aye, but hum udna nahin bholenge [I'm born to fly. There'll be setbacks, but it can't clip my wings]."

No, you haven't stumbled onto a Bollywood script. These were lines delivered by Amanjot Kaur in press conferences over just a few months. The 25-year-old all-rounder, fearless on and off the field, has quickly become known as much for her Rajinikanth-style punchlines as her cricketing skills. Earlier this year, she used the flying quote to explain how she stayed motivated during a six-month injury lay-off. The lion analogy, meanwhile, came on Tuesday in Guwahati, during India's Women's World Cup opener. Known as much for her Rajinikanth-style punchlines as her cricket, Amanjot is proving to be equally entertaining off the field. Guwahati's Barsapara Stadium buzzed with anticipation. On an overcast afternoon, India, the hosts, were sent into bat. Thousands turned up to watch the Women in Blue take centre stage. Many, wearing the iconic Smriti Mandhana No. 18 shirt, expected another big innings from the



superstar opener, who had been in the form of her life leading into the tournament. However, Mandhana lasted just 10 deliveries. By the 20th over, the air had grown heavy. Though Pratika Rawal and Harleen Deol tried to rebuild, Sri Lankan left-arm spinner Inoka Ranaweera changed everything with a single, devastating over. Jemimah Rodrigues was beaten by the turn. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur followed almost immediately. Big-hitting wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh faltered. In the space of four runs, India had lost four wickets. The scoreboard read 124 for 6. On the very first day of a home World Cup, disaster loomed.

**THE RESCUE ACT**

That was the moment Amanjot walked in. No nerves, no panic — just intent. At 25, still in the early stages of her international career, she looked every bit the player for the stage, much like she did during her rescue act in her T20I debut.

**After Asia Cup debacle, Pakistan Cricket Board suspends NOCs for overseas T20 leagues****MILAN. (Agency)**

The Pakistan Cricket Board has taken strict steps to stop its cricketers from playing in overseas T20 leagues. The board has refused to provide No Objection Certificates (NOCS) to its players who want to compete in franchise leagues outside of Pakistan.

The move comes after Pakistan were hammered by India thrice in a span of 15 days in the Asia Cup 2025, including the final of the tournament. The Pakistan side were unable to compete against India in all departments of the game, bar the final, where they showed some fight and stayed in the match till the very last over. The Pakistan Cricket Board on Tuesday also revoked all existing NOCs previously issued to the



players. According to sources, a notification issued by PCB Chief Operating Officer Sumair Ahmad Syed read that all NOCs for participation in foreign leagues and tournaments have been placed on hold with immediate effect and until further orders.

IND vs PAK, Asia Cup final: Report | Highlights

Pakistan's Horrid Performance in Asia Cup The differences in cricketing standards showed whenever Pakistan took the field against India in the Asia Cup. Pakistan, who are trying to rebuild their T20I setup, were found short in all departments of the game, especially in terms of batting firepower.

The current generation of stars — Saim Ayub, captain Agha Salman, and Mohammad Haris — failed to provide impetus to the Pakistan line-up in the majority of the games, which resulted in big defeats against India. The Pakistan side had India in trouble with a sensational top-order stand in the final, but ended up losing its last 9 wickets for just 33 runs.

**Women's World Cup: Will India shake hands with Pakistan Amanjot ducks question**

**Women's World Cup 2025: After the drama-filled Asia Cup, where politics and cricket became inseparable in the India-Pakistan clashes, the women's teams are set to meet in Colombo on Sunday.**  
**Following India's win over Sri Lanka in Guwahati, all-rounder Amanjot Kaur was asked whether Harmanpreet Kaur and her side would shake hands with their Pakistani counterparts.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

India all-rounder Amanjot Kaur ducked a bouncer of a different kind while speaking to the press after their 59-run win over Sri Lanka in the rain-affected Women's World Cup 2025 opener in Guwahati on Tuesday, 30 September. When asked if Indian players would be willing to complete the customary on-field formalities by shaking hands with their Pakistani counterparts in the much-anticipated match in Colombo, Amanjot

refused to be drawn into the subject. "Today's game is over, it ended well. Congratulations that India won," she added, after playing a match-winning role in India's opening victory. Amanjot struck a crucial fifty, rescuing India from 124 for 6 in a 103-run partnership with Deepi Sharma that lifted the hosts to 269 in 47 overs. India and Pakistan are set to meet in Colombo in the Women's World Cup group stage, a contest that follows the men's teams facing off three times in the recently concluded Asia Cup. Those encounters were fraught with tension, as they marked the first meetings between the two sides since the terror attack in Pahalgam and the subsequent cross-border hostilities in May. India captain Suryakumar Yadav had set the tone for the Asia Cup stand-off as early as the first group-stage match in Dubai on 14 September, when he avoided a handshake with Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha at the toss. The rest of the Indian team also refrained from the customary gesture after the game. Suryakumar went on to dedicate India's victory to the victims of the Pahalgam attack

and the Indian armed forces. The Pakistan Cricket Board reacted sharply, even threatening to withdraw from the tournament, accusing match referee Andy Pycroft of failing to act when Suryakumar refused to shake hands with Salman Ali Agha. The snub carried through the



tournament, but the drama escalated during the Super 4 clash on 21 September. Pakistan players made provocative gestures, alluding to their government's unverified claims of having shot down Indian fighter jets during the cross-border skirmish. Indian players, in

turn, responded with gestures of their own. The International Cricket Council stepped in, reprimanding Pakistan cricketers Haris Rauf and Sahibzada Farhan for provocative conduct. India captain Suryakumar was also penalised, fined 30 per cent of his match fee for making a comment deemed to carry political undertones. Politics continued to intertwine with cricket throughout the Asia Cup, culminating in a dramatic episode on the final day. India outclassed Pakistan in the final on Sunday, 28 September, but refused to accept the trophy from Asian Cricket Council chief Mohsin Naqvi, who is also the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board and serves as interior minister in the Pakistan government. In a dramatic twist, Naqvi walked off with the silverware, denying India the opportunity to celebrate their triumph with the trophy. On Monday, during an ACC meeting, BCCI officials — including vice-president Rajeev Shukla — confronted Naqvi over his refusal to award India the trophy. Naqvi reportedly retorted that if Suryakumar Yadav wanted the prize, he would need to collect it in person.

**Vaibhav Suryavanshi hits 78-ball hundred in Brisbane youth Test, emulates McCullum****New Delhi. (Agency)**

India's 14-year-old sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi delivered another standout knock, crushing Australia U-19's bowling attack on Day 2 of a youth Test in Brisbane on October 2. Suryavanshi's commanding 113 off 86 balls propelled India U-19 to a strong position against Australia U-19 at Ian Healy Oval, Brisbane. The young left-handed batter not only led his team past Australia's first-innings total but also set new records for six-hitting in Youth Tests, underlining his status as one of the brightest talents in youth cricket. His 78-ball century was the fastest in Youth Tests on Australian soil — India U-19 trailed by just 23 runs when Suryavanshi was dismissed, taking control of the contest. Vaibhav took off his helmet and celebrated his hundred in style as his teammates cheered him on at Ian Healy Oval. Suryavanshi's aggressive approach was on full display as he dominated the Australian bowlers from the outset. Coming in after Australia's first-innings total of 243, he

**Neeraj Chopra watches Sumit Antil win record javelin medal, shares inspirational message****MADRID. (Agency)**

India's ace javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra was in attendance at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium when Sumit Antil shattered the meet record at the World Para Athletics Championships on Tuesday. With the gold medal in his F64 category, the javelin thrower from Haryana secured his third gold medal in the competition, the most won by an Indian athlete. Sumit's distance of 71.37m turned out to be the best throw of the night by quite some distance. The next best, Colombia's Tomas Felipe Soto Mina won the silver medal with a throw of 48.38m. Star Indian athlete Neeraj Chopra expressed happiness with para javelin thrower Sumit Antil winning gold on the newly-laid Mondo track he too would love to compete on this top-notch surface. Two-time Olympic medallist javelin thrower Neeraj had some time ago requested the Union Sports Ministry to install the Mondo track as it would help Indian athletes train better for international competitions. The World Para Athletics Championships is the first mega athletics event taking place on the newly-laid

Mondo track at the JLN Stadium. "I am extremely happy that the Mondo track has been laid here (at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium) because internationally we have



to compete on this surface," said Chopra, who especially came to the venue to watch the para javelin event. "I would love to compete on this Mondo track. I last competed here (JLN Stadium) in 2016 and definitely would like to come here and compete again," the former world champion, who could not defend his title in Tokyo recently, said. The champion thrower said he was happy that Sumit broke the meet record, but said he could have gone for

the world record as well. Sumit continued his golden run by clinching his third successive title at the World Para Athletics Championships, winning the men's F64

event with a meet record throw of 71.37m, bettering his own Championships record of 70.83m set last year. He set the championship record. I thought he could have done even better and created a world record. It's a very big thing that this mega para athletics event is taking place in our country. I congratulate Devendra Jhajharia (Paralympic Committee of India president) for this achievement," said

Neeraj. "India has become a powerhouse in javelin not because of me but because of Devendra Jhajharia. Jhajharia started it (by winning Paralympics gold). Then I came into the Olympics, then Indian para athletes came, Sumit (Antil), Rinku," added Neeraj. Sumit Antil finished his season with the gold at the Para World Championships. He will take a long break and then begin training for the Asian Games 2026.

**Reality check: India learn about early flaws before Pakistan clash, bigger tests****New Delhi. (Agency)**

It is never ideal to make early judgments when you start off a tournament. The teams will be slowly working their success formulas and for some, they may be working out the combinations. For India, the scrutiny begins almost instantly.

Being the hosts and the side who should have a good measure of the conditions, they will be considered as one of the favourites of the tournament. Of course, you have the defending champions Australia, who seem to be a cut above the rest. But as often seen in big ICC events, sometimes all it takes is one day to make the top team crumble. So, when India started off their opening match, the expectation was to lay down the marker from the get-go. What happened was almost the opposite, as India had to work hard for their win. There was a moment when India were 124 for six and the fans feared the worst. Thankfully, Deepi Sharma and Amanjot stepped up for the side with both bat and ball. The bowlers were made to work



hard initially, with Chamari Athapaththu taking them on. But once her wicket fell, India kept chipping away and got the win. While the win was a fine way to start the campaign, India will need to work on a few things to ensure they go all the way. IND vs SL, Women's World Cup 2025 Highlights India Come With a Plan One of the good things to see with the ball from India was that they had a plan to put pressure on the Sri Lankan batters, to take

the fight on and give a chance for the bowlers. While Athapaththu was the key wicket, it was the way in which they made the Sri Lankan captain be a bit more attacking and then got her scalp. Russell Arnold, while talking to the broadcasters, said that Indian spinners worked out a plan for Athapaththu and got her wicket. Once that was done, the Indian spin attack was able to make inroads and seal the deal. "They did that with the bat, and then when it came to the ball, I actually liked the fact that they had a plan. We all know how dangerous Athapaththu is and how the two spinners worked her out, and what was pleasing from India's point of view was it's the specific plan, the two spinners firing it right up there. It's how they got the wicket as well. And the moment they did that, they knew they had the quality and the runs on the board to really choke Sri Lanka out of it," said Arnold.

counterattacked with a blend of composure and flair, reaching his century in just 78 balls. His innings, which included eight sixes and nine fours, broke the existing record for the most sixes in a Youth Test innings, previously set at six. The match's defining contribution came from Suryavanshi, whose 78-ball century was the fastest by any player in a Youth Test in Australia, surpassing Liam Blackford's previous record of 124 balls.

Suryavanshi also became the first player in the world to score two Youth Test hundreds in under 100 balls before his 15th birthday, breaking a record held by Brendon McCullum. His previous Youth Test hundred had come off just 58 balls when Australia's U19 team toured India in October 2024.

**Shakib Al Hasan will not play for Bangladesh again: Sports advisor****New Delhi. (Agency)**

Doors for former Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan's return to the national team have been shut. The 38-year-old, who is regarded as one of the greatest all-rounders of all time, has not played cricket for the national team in 12 months, and as things stand he will not be allowed to return, said Bangladesh's sports advisor Asif Mahmud. Speaking to Bangladesh-based Channel 24, Asif said that Shakib Al Hasan would not be allowed to carry the national flag, and that he will categorically tell the Bangladesh Cricket Board not to pick Shakib Al Hasan in their squads. "We cannot let him carry the Bangladesh flag," Asif said. "It won't be possible for me to allow him to wear the Bangladesh jersey. Maybe I haven't told the BCB before, but now my clear direction for the BCB would be that Shakib Al Hasan can never again play for Bangladesh." The fallout between Shakib Al Hasan and Asif dates back a long time. During Bangladesh's civil unrest, the two were at opposite political

camps. Since the unrest, Shakib, who is known to be close to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has not returned to the country. The all-rounder currently stays in the United States of America and trots the globe to play franchise cricket.

The fight between the duo came to light once again after Shakib wished Sheikh Hasina on her birthday on September 28. Asif took to his Facebook channel and without naming the all-rounder criticised his closeness with the deposed PM. He hinted that he was right to block Shakib from the team. All of you have abused me a lot for not rehabilitating one person. But I was right. End of the discussion," Asif said. After Asif took to Facebook, the all-rounder hit back almost immediately. "So someone has finally accepted that it's because of him that I can never put on the Bangladesh jersey again,

because of whom I can't play for Bangladesh again. Maybe I will return to my motherland one day. Love you, Bangladesh," Shakib wrote on Facebook. Political Unrest in



Bangladesh Shakib has been out of the Bangladesh side since the country's civil unrest in 2024. The protests in Bangladesh were primarily

fuelled by student-led protests against the reinstatement of job quotas for descendants of 1971 war veterans, a policy perceived as favouring the ruling Awami League's supporters. These quotas, abolished in 2018 following widespread protests, were reintroduced by the High Court in June 2024, sparking renewed demonstrations. The government's violent crackdown on protesters, including the use of live ammunition and arbitrary arrests, led to hundreds of deaths and widespread outrage. Despite a Supreme Court ruling in July 2024 that reduced the quotas to 5%, the unrest continued, reflecting deeper issues of political corruption, economic stagnation, and youth unemployment. This culminated in the resignation and flight of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, marking a significant shift in Bangladesh's political landscape.

## Listed Indian Real Estate Developers Healthy Despite Market Headwinds: Report

New Delhi. (Agency)

Despite various unfavourable developments, the relevant market for listed real estate developers is still healthy, and the second quarter of the current financial year (Q2 FY26) could bring back investor interest, changing the perception and a report said on Wednesday. High-level industry data till August suggests that volume demand increased year-on-year (YoY), although on a low base, it was impacted by elections last year. Meanwhile, launches were still slow as developers avoided the inauspicious days during the quarter. Yet our checks suggest that our covered developers combined pre-sales grew 64 per cent YoY," HSBC Global Investment Research said in a report. The new launches largely received a strong response, allowing them to sell a significant part of the projects during the period. According to the report, the sustenance sales were supportive and will be further supported by strong collections.

"We remain constructive on top residential developers. Pricing environment and upgrade demand in the

premium segment (target market for listed developers) remain buoyant and support margins," the report stated. Low unsold inventory and strong balance sheet,

coupled with large real estate regulatory authority (RERA) cash balances, continue to generate confidence among the home buyers, the report added. Large developers continue to gain market share driven by their ability to execute large and premium projects (which are in high demand).

Domestic press and influencers have been very negative on Indian residential real estate. All three large markets have been impacted by the shadow of negativity. Additionally, the headline numbers also indicated a 15 per cent YoY decline in units sold in Q1 FY26. From a narrative perspective, while the National Capital Region (NCR) has been termed fragile and speculative, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is expected to be oversupplied with redevelopment projects.

## Rupee internationalisation: RBI proposes rupee lending to non-residents in 3 countries

Kolkata. (Agency)

Internationalisation of the Indian rupee has been one of the areas where the current government has been working quietly over the past few years. On October 1, while briefing about the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee on the decision to keep interest rates unchanged, RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra outlined three proposals in this area, one of which was to lend in Indian currency to non-residents in three neighbouring countries for cross-border trade.

"The proposal relates to permit AD (authorised dealer) banks to lend in Indian rupees to non-residents from three countries Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka for cross-border trade transaction," he said. The internationalisation of the rupee is a process the objective of which is to promote the use of the rupee in cross-border trade and investments by increasing its global acceptance and demand of the Indian currency. Some of the steps RBI is employing includes allowing non-residents to hold rupee accounts abroad and approving special vostro accounts for banks in other countries. These are designed to pave the way for transaction in rupee.

"The second proposal is to establish transparent reference rates of currencies for India's major trading partners to facilitate rupee-based transactions. Third, permit wider use of SRVA balances by making them eligible for investment in corporate bonds and commercial papers also," said the RBI chief.

## UPS extension: Govt gives employees two more months to opt for UPS

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Finance Ministry on Tuesday extended the deadline for opting for the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) till November 30, following a tepid response by the central government employees covered under NPS. In a communication to the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Chairman, the Department of Financial Services, under the Finance Ministry, informed about the decision to extend the cut-off date for exercising the choice of opting for UPS by another two months from the current deadline of September 30, 2025. "Various positive changes have been announced recently under UPS, including the switch option, benefits on resignation, compulsory retirement, tax exemptions, etc. Requests have been received from various stakeholders that some more time needs to be given to employees to exercise the option in view of these changes," it said.

Accordingly, it has been decided to extend the cut-off date to exercise choice for UPS by two months — up to November 30, 2025, for eligible existing employees, past retirees and the legally wedded spouse of the deceased past retirees, it added. This has been approved by the Finance Minister, the communication to the PFRDA said. As per PFRDA (Operationalisation of UPS under NPS) Regulations, 2025, eligible existing employees, past retirees and the legally wedded spouse of the deceased past retirees have been given a time-frame of three months to exercise choice for UPS — up to 30 June 2025, it noted. However, it said, based on various representations received from stakeholders, this deadline was subsequently extended till September 30, 2025, vide letter dated July 1, 2025.

# RBI announces big push for business reforms and easier lending. Details here

**China's official manufacturing PMI for September slipped to 49.8, contracting for the sixth consecutive month, reflecting persistent strain on larger state-backed firms.**

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.5% after its three-day Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra. Along with this decision, the RBI Governor unveiled a set

of measures aimed at making it easier to do business and improving the flow of credit in the economy.

### SIMPLER RULES FOR BUSINESSES

Flexibility in Bank Accounts: The RBI has suggested giving banks greater flexibility in opening and operating current accounts and CC/OD accounts for borrowers. This move is expected to ease operations for businesses that already come under other financial regulators. Limits on collection accounts may also be lifted. Support for Exporters: The RBI has also taken steps to support exporters. The time allowed bringing back money held in foreign currency accounts at IFSC units will be extended from one month to three months. Merchanting Trade, the window for foreign exchange payments will go up from four months to six months. In addition, the process of clearing pending export and import entries on the EDPMs and IDPMs portals will be simplified. Consolidation of Rules: To cut down on confusion and paperwork, the RBI has merged nearly 9,000 circulars

and directions into subject-wise documents covering 11 types of regulated entities. Drafts of these will soon be released for public feedback.

### MEASURES TO IMPROVE CREDIT ACCESS



The central bank has also introduced five changes to make lending easier and more flexible. Funding Corporate Acquisitions: To support Indian companies looking to grow through acquisitions, banks may soon have a proper framework that allows them to finance such deals.

More Freedom in Lending Against

needed. Cheaper Infrastructure Loans via NBFCs: To make infrastructure loans cheaper, the RBI will reduce the risk weights applied to lending by NBFCs for high-quality, operational infrastructure projects. This move aims to bring down borrowing costs and speed up project funding.

## RBI holds repo rate at 5.5%: How it impacts your EMIs

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India has kept the key repo rate unchanged at 5.5% after its latest three-day Monetary Policy Committee meeting chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra. The central bank has also maintained a neutral stance, signalling that it will continue to watch inflation and growth before making any major moves. For homebuyers and those repaying loans, this decision brings relief and clarity. Let's break down what it means in simple terms.

### NO CHANGE IN EMIs FOR NOW

Since the repo rate—the rate at which banks borrow from the RBI—remains unchanged, banks are unlikely to increase lending rates immediately. This means EMIs on existing floating-rate home loans should largely stay the same. People planning to take a new home loan may also find the current rates stable and manageable.

### DEVELOPERS SEE STABILITY AND CONFIDENCE

Industry experts believe the RBI's decision will bring steadiness to the real estate market.

Ashok Kapur, Chairman of Krishna Group and Krisumi Corporation, said, "The move reflects a cautious and prudent approach to balancing the twin objectives of economic growth and inflation management." He added that although a rate cut would have given an extra push to housing demand, the sector is still benefitting from previous reductions and lending rate adjustments made by banks. According to him, the festive mood and recent GST reforms are already lifting buyer interest. The unchanged rate, he said,

"provides much-needed stability, enabling careful planning and timely execution while building confidence in the sector's long-term prospects." Stable interest rates mean borrowers can continue to enjoy lower EMIs compared to earlier high-rate periods. Those thinking of buying a home may feel more confident about taking a loan. Rohit Kishore, CEO of Hero Realty, called the RBI's decision "steady and reassuring." He said, "Stable borrowing costs will benefit both homebuyers and developers. For buyers, it means continued lower EMIs and easier access to home loans, which can encourage more people to buy homes." He also noted that developers can better manage costs and complete projects on time. He expects luxury housing in metro cities to remain strong, while affordable and mid-income segments will continue to benefit from steady loan rates.

FESTIVE SEASON BOOST LIKELY The timing of the decision also helps. With the festive season ongoing, many buyers prefer to make property purchases now. Stable rates could encourage more people to finalise deals.

## Sensex opens nearly 100 points higher, Nifty above 24,500; Sun Pharma up 2%

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened higher on Wednesday driven by gains in auto and pharma sector stocks as investors awaited key decisions by RBI MPC. The S&P BSE Sensex was up 58.51 points to 80,326.13, while the NSE Nifty50 added 25.65 points to 24,636.75 as of 9:24 am. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that the focus of the market today will be on the monetary policy, particularly the language and message of the policy and comments from the RBI Governor. "Banking stocks will be the focus of attention since a rate cut at this juncture will impact their NIMs and will impact the stock prices. A pause by the MPC—the most likely scenario—will impart resilience to the banking stocks," he added. The top five gainers on Sensex in early trade were Sun Pharma up

2.35%, Trent rising 1.33%, Mahindra & Mahindra gaining 1.23%, Tech Mahindra advancing 1.14%, and Reliance Industries adding 0.83%.

The top losers were Eternal down 1.06%, Bajaj Finance slipping 1.03%, Bajaj Finserv falling 0.71%, Bharti Airtel



losing 0.46%, and Asian Paints also down 0.44%. The weakness and drift in the market continue led by the sustained selling by FII. The near-term may turn out to be frustrating for

investors. Experience tells us that such frustrating times are ideal for long-term investment. Systematic investment in high-quality large caps should be the strategy now and patience will be the key to long-term wealth creation," said Vijayakumar. The Nifty Midcap100 gained 0.52% while Nifty Smallcap100 rose 0.28%, and India VIX dropped 0.97%.

All sectoral indices showed positive momentum with Nifty Media leading at 1.69%, followed by Nifty Pharma at 1.13%, Nifty Realty at 1.04%, Nifty Healthcare at 0.98%, Nifty Auto at 0.72%, Nifty Oil & Gas at 0.59%, Nifty Consumer Durables at 0.48%, Nifty Metal at 0.30%, Nifty Private Bank at 0.28%, Nifty FMCG at 0.26%, Nifty Financial Services at 0.18%, and Nifty IT at 0.11%. Nifty PSU Bank remained flat with no change.

## Commercial LPG Cylinder Prices Hiked By Rs 15.50, No Change In Domestic Rates

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies have revised the prices of commercial LPG cylinders, effective from Wednesday, October 1. The rate of a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder has been increased by Rs 15.50. Following the revision, the retail sale price of a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder in Delhi will be Rs 1595.50 from today. The hike comes as part of the regular monthly revision in LPG prices by oil marketing companies. However, there has been no change in the prices of 14.2 kg domestic LPG cylinders, which are used widely by households for cooking purposes. The adjustment in commercial cylinder prices will mainly impact restaurants, hotels, and other businesses, while households will not face any change in their cooking gas bills. Meanwhile, the prices for 14.2 kg cylinders have remained the same

since April 8. In Delhi, one cylinder costs Rs 853, whereas in Chennai, Kolkata, and Mumbai, the prices have stayed at Rs 868.50, Rs 879, and Rs 852.50, as per data available at Indian

5.10, effective from September 1. After that reduction, in Delhi, the retail sale price of a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder was reduced to Rs 1580. It was a reduction in price of an LPG cylinder from Rs 1,631.50 in August.

In August, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri hailed the Centre's recent decision to pay Rs 30,000 crores to oil companies in 12 parts, which has kept prices of Liquefied Petroleum Gas stable in the country. Union Cabinet, on August 8, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a compensation of Rs 30,000 crore to be paid in twelve parts to oil companies that have kept LPG prices stable despite global uncertainty.



Oil Corporation. Last month, on September 1st, the Oil Marketing Companies reduced the rates of commercial 19 kg Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders by Rs

## LG Electronics India IPO opens next week: 5 key details investors must know

**LG Electronics is set to launch the third-largest IPO of 2025, after Tata Capital's Rs 15,500 crore issue scheduled between October 6 and October 8, and HDB Financial Services, which raised Rs 12,500 crore in June this year.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

LG Electronics India Limited will launch its much-awaited initial public offering (IPO) next week, making it the third-biggest IPO of 2025. The issue size is Rs 11,607.01 crore and will be entirely an offer for sale of 10.18 crore shares. The IPO is drawing significant attention from investors ahead of its opening.

**KEY DATES AND LISTING DETAILS** LG Electronics IPO will open for subscription on October 7, 2025, and close on October 9, 2025. The share allotment is expected to be finalised on October 10, 2025. The company's shares

will list on both the BSE and NSE, with a tentative listing date fixed as October 14, 2025.

### PRICE BAND AND LOT SIZE

The price band for the IPO has been set between Rs 1,080 and Rs 1,140 per share. Investors can bid in lots of 13 shares. For retail investors, the minimum investment required will be Rs 14,820 at the upper price band. For small non-institutional investors (SNI), the minimum lot size is 14 lots, or 182 shares, amounting to Rs 2,07,480. For big non-institutional investors (BNI), the lot size is 68 lots, or 884 shares, which requires an investment of Rs 10,07,760.

### MANAGERS AND REGISTRAR

Morgan Stanley India Co. Pvt. Ltd. is the book-running lead manager of the IPO, while Kfin Technologies Ltd. has been appointed as the registrar.

### PROMOTER AND COMPANY BACKGROUND

The promoter of the company is LG Electronics Inc., the South Korea-based

multinational electronics giant. LG Electronics India Limited was incorporated in 1997. The company manufactures and distributes a wide range of home appliances and consumer

Between the financial year ending March 31, 2024, and March 31, 2025, the company reported a 14% increase in revenue and a 46% rise in profit after tax (PAT). This performance reflects strong demand in the Indian consumer electronics and home appliances market, where LG is already a leading brand.

### MARKET CAPITALISATION

The IPO will give the company a market capitalisation of Rs 77,380.05 crore, making it one of the largest consumer electronics companies to be listed in India. The IPO will provide investors an opportunity to buy into a company with an established brand presence, wide distribution network, and growing profitability. Given the size of the issue and the brand recall of LG in Indian households, market observers expect keen participation across investor categories.



electronics in India and abroad. Its product portfolio excludes mobile phones. Apart from sales, the company also provides installation, repairs, and maintenance services.

### FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

'Bhaiya Edit Karke Daalna':

# Kashish Kapoor's

## Cute Request To Paps

Kashish Kapoor brought glamour and sophistication to a show in Mumbai, turning heads with her lovely outfit and stunning presence. She arrived in a halter-neck black dress that exemplified her elegance. The sleek cut and delicate detail added a touch of enduring appeal, with her natural hairstyle and understated jewellery allowing the dress to remain in focus. As she posed for the pictures, Kashish's bubbly and amiable nature was evident. She smiled at the paparazzi and at one point, said, "Bhaiya thoda edit karke daalna na please."

### Who is Kashish Kapoor?



Kashish Kapoor was born on 1 December 2000 and is 24 years old. She is from Purnia, Bihar. She grew up in a middle-class family with her father, Pawan Kapoor, her mother, Sangita Singh, and her younger brother, Harsh Kapoor, whom she is very close to.

Kashish became famous after her dramatic stint on MTV Splitsvilla X5. Her feisty personality and bold attitude brought her into the limelight. Instead of proceeding to the finale with Digvijay Singh Rathee, she opted to walk out with 10 lakh. Kashish Kapoor, having appeared on Splitsvilla X5, joined Bigg Boss 18 in the first batch of wildcard entries. She entered the Salman Khan-hosted show around the same date as Digvijay Singh Rathee, who was also introduced as a

wildcard. She got eliminated from Bigg Boss' house two weeks before the finale.



# Hina Khan

## Is Ready To Slay Maha Ashtami In Gota Patti Lehenga



accessorised it with a heavy choker, simple bangles, and pink flowers in her hair, which fully complemented the look. She also twirled in the lehenga while giving a pose for the camera, in which she looked absolutely stunning.

Pati Patni Aur Panga

Actress Hina Khan, who is back on television with her latest show Pati Patni and Panga, is now all set for the big Maha Ashtami celebrations.

She has posted a video in which she is seen posing for cameras in a beautiful outfit. Hina was seen wearing a red and pink lehenga with a touch of purple in it. She

Pati Patni Aur Panga – Jodiyon Ka Reality Check is a reality game show featuring celebrity pairs, hosted by Sonali Bendre and Munawar Faruqui. The show has different themes and games to test the bonds between couples on Colors TV.

On the set, Hina carried a couple of stunning looks. One of the highlights was an iconic tribute to Deepika

Padukone's look from Om Shanti Om that quickly caught everyone's attention, including fans and photographers. She also wore a blue co-ord set with intricate white designs in another look. The attire was sleek and trendy, suiting her poised nature to the best.

She also wore a black sleek outfit with silver accessories, bringing glamour and sophistication to her on-set looks. Hina's styles demonstrated her fashion sense and got her applause

from fans. Hina Khan's entry lent star power to Pati Patni Aur Panga, and her fashion sense added visual interest to the show. From conventional to contemporary attire, she showed why she is still a favorite among the masses and fashion circles.

'We're All Back': Vishal Dadlani Returns As Judge On Indian Idol 16 With Shreya Ghoshal, Badshah



Indian Idol, the popular singing reality show, will soon return with another season! Music composer Vishal Dadlani took to his Instagram account to share a behind-the-scenes video with fellow judges Shreya Ghoshal and Badshah, confirming that the trio is returning for Indian Idol 16. This comes months after Vishal bid goodbye to the reality show. Back in April, he shared the reason behind his exit, stating that he wants to get back to making music and playing concerts, and that he cannot stay stuck in Mumbai for 6 months each year. However, looks like he will be joining the latest season of Indian Idol as a judge after all!

### Vishal Dadlani Returns As Judge On Indian Idol 16

On Wednesday, Vishal Dadlani took to his Instagram account to share a fun-filled BTS video with Shreya Ghoshal and Badshah. The playful video shows them striking several poses. In his caption, Vishal confirmed his return, and informed fans that Indian Idol 16 will premiere from October 18. "Two posers (don't miss @shreya\_ghoshal's last Gupli-max pose) and itsyo-seedha-saada @badboyshah not changing position even once! To answer your question, yes, we are all back for #IndianIdol16. So is all the incredible talent that Idol brings! Are you ready? See you from October 18 onwards, on @sonytvofficial," he wrote. Check out the video below!

Soon after he shared the video, Meiyang Chang commented, "The Gang is back," while Shreya Ghoshal dropped laughing emojis. "Delighted to have our 3 musketeers back," wrote one netizen, while another one commented, "Wooww this amazing judge panel is back... What a vibe to this judge panel just mind blowing. Shreya ghoshal can't wait to see you again every week in TV. Love you SG." A third comment read, "Can't wait for it to start."

### About Indian Idol 16

As per reports, Udit Narayan will be hosting this season of Indian Idol 16 as his son Aditya Narayan is currently on the reality show Rise And Fall. Mid-Day reported that Aditya will return to the show once he wraps up Rise And Fall.

## Milind Chandwani Arrives On A Scooter For His Wedding, Dances His Heart Out



Television's beloved actress Avika Gor and social activist Milind Chandwani will officially tie the wedding knot today, September 30, in a celebration unlike any other. Their love story, from proposal to pheras, will be documented and broadcast on the Colors TV show and JioHotstar as part of the ongoing reality series Pati Patni Aur Panga. After the invitation card unveiling and the haldi and mehendi ceremony, the day has finally arrived. Pictures and videos from the occasion are going viral across social media platforms. Among the many clips, a clip showed the grand entry of Milind. In a heartwarming twist, Milind ditched the traditional car entry and arrived on a beautifully decorated scooter for his baraat.

Looking super dashing in a peach sherwani, the social activist was full of energy. His infectious smile and energetic wedding dance quickly became a viral moment, with videos from the venue flooding social media.

### Avika Gor and Milind Chandwani's Wedding Guest List

Held on the sets of Pati Patni Aur Panga, the ceremony will witness the presence of the show's full cast and celebrity guests. Among those attending are host Sonali Bendre, Hina Khan, Rocky Jaiswal, Gurmeet Choudhary, Debinna Bonnerjee, Rubina Dilaik, Abhinav Shukla, Mamta Lehri, Sudesh Lehri, Swara Bhasker, Fahad Ahmed, Isha Malviya and Abhishek Kumar.

Rakhi Sawant, Farah Khan, Krushna Abhishek, and Bigg Boss 17's Samarth Jurel will also be arriving as guests, making it a full-blown star-studded affair. Speaking to the Hindustan Times, Avika earlier expressed her excitement, saying, "There are days when I wake up and remind myself that it's real. I feel very lucky and blessed to have found a partner who supports me, understands me, and always pushes me to grow in life."

"I always used to tell my parents, 'I will either do a court marriage that no one will get to know about or have a grand wedding that the whole world will celebrate.' It's like my childhood dream is coming true," she added.

### Avika Gor and Milind Chandwani's relationship timeline

The couple first crossed paths in 2019 and began dating in 2020. After five years together, the social activist and entrepreneur proposed, and Avika accepted. The couple announced their engagement to the world through a heartfelt Instagram post on June 11.



# Debunking Six common Baby-care

**One unexpected appendage of becoming a parent is the endless advice offered by friends, family and every stranger who finds your baby cute. While some of it will be helpful, some of it is best ignored. Here's debunking a few common ones.**

## Small doses of adult medicines are safe.

A number of medications that help adults can be harmful for children even when the dosage is down-sized. Cough medicines, even those designed for children, aren't a good idea for babies or children under four. Agitation, elevated heart rate and respiratory depression are among the side effects they might develop if they're given cough medicines.

Medications, which ease congestion and sinus problems in adults, are also a no-no for babies and children. Treatment might have a downside in the form of an upset stomach, a rash or diarrhoea.

## Teething can cause fevers.

The danger in some myths is that parents may ignore a problem. Parents often tend to attribute fevers in babies and toddlers to teething. However, research has not shown a strong relationship between the two. A fever in a teething baby shouldn't be written off and medical attention should be sought to determine if something else might be causing the rise in temperature.

## Videos can help babies learn sooner.

Research has shown that specially produced programmes can help young children learn, but those benefits only kick in at two and above. The educational merit of media for children younger than two years remains unproven despite the fact that three-quarters of the top-selling infant videos make explicit or implicit educational claims. The babies seem to watch with awe or attention. But the videos actually seem to lead to delays in language progression.

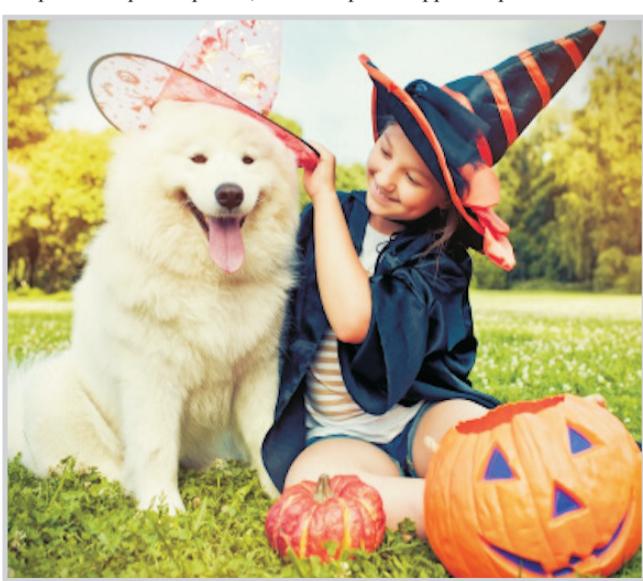
## Walkers are a safe way to help babies walk earlier.

While parents may buy walkers to keep their babies entertained and help little ones walk, a research has suggested that walkers can slow a baby's ability to walk on his own. Also, the enhanced mobility is frequently a problem. A baby in a walker can quickly and unexpectedly approach a staircase, even under a parent's watch. This is a problem known as the myth of supervision.



## Pets don't give your kids allergy

A new study has revealed that exposure of children to pets in early life does not increase the risk of their allergies to these animals later in life. The researchers followed a group of children from birth until they reached adulthood. And at age 18 years, 565 study participants supplied blood samples to the researchers, who measured antibodies to dog and cat allergens in the samples. They found that being exposed to the specific animal in the first year of life was the most important exposure period, and the exposure appeared protective in some groups.



in the first year of life, compared to those who did not live with cats. "This research provides further evidence that experiences in the first year of life are associated with health status later in life, and that early life pet exposure does not put most children at risk of being sensitized to these animals later in life," said Ganessa Wiegienka, the Department of Public Health Sciences, Henry Ford Hospital. The study was published in the journal, Clinical & Experimental Allergy.

## 'Yoga helps me maintain my work-life balance'

### Managing work-life balance

When one runs one's own business, the balance becomes a lot easier to achieve, since hours are flexible. Living close to work is a key factor in saving time - something that we force even our employees to comply with. But the most important factor is yoga, which balances everything out by making one a 'saakshi' - an observer of one's actions. Yoga helps me maintain my work-life balance. Once this is achieved, one is freed of dualities and one remains unaffected by the ups and downs that seem to be so difficult for people to handle. The more you get rid of the conditioning that society has given you, the more relaxed, real and blissful you will be. Start now! Being a fit man

Yoga automatically regulates your diet (if you wish to do it properly), especially kriya yoga. The extremes are avoided and fitness follows. I follow a paleo diet, as it helps me detox, especially after long overseas business trips.

### Energy high and happiness

Happiness and misery are two sides of the same coin and one gets to a state of peace - shanti, which is followed by continuous bliss, as long as one remains unattached to one's actions. This is not as difficult as it sounds - it follows with proper yoga. It's a surprisingly easy journey

and transformation.

### Risk-taker or a micro-planner?

I take risks and I also believe in micro-planning. Both happen and both are necessary, so it depends on situations.

### Spiritual diet

Osho, yoga and kriya are enough to keep one going for a lifetime and beyond.

### Handling failure/success

For me, failure and success don't really matter and the less they matter, the more blissful one becomes!

### Crisis management

Once one has achieved a balance and is not upset with the ups and downs of life, crisis is handled matter of factly. Once they're gone, you realise they were never really a crisis in the first place for the most part.

