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PM unveils Rs 100 coin at RSS event, Bharat Mata features on currency for 1st time

RSS, Israel's Zionists like twin brothers who agree on many things: Pinarayi Vijayan

Kerala. (Agency)

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday drew a parallel between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Zionists in Israel, calling them "twin brothers" who "might agree on many things." He made the remarks at a remembrance meeting for former CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan in Kannur.

Criticising the Centre's move to commemorate the RSS centenary, Vijayan, in a post on X, said issuing a postage stamp and a Rs 100 coin is "a grave insult to our Constitution."

He added that the honours effectively legitimise an organisation that "abstained from the freedom struggle" and promoted a divisive ideology, calling the recognition "a direct assault on the memory of our true freedom fighters and the secular, unified India they envisioned."

The postal stamp features RSS swayamsevaks' participation in the 1963 Republic Day Parade. CPI(M) termed this a falsification of history.

During his speech in Kannur, Vijayan also questioned the Congress, asking if the party had conducted any Palestine solidarity events in major centres across India. On the issue of reduced GST, the Chief Minister said that while the government expects consumers to benefit from lower taxes, many companies have increased their product prices. He specifically noted that cement companies have already raised rates.



>The Rs 100 coin features the national emblem on one side and, on the other, a striking image of Bharat Mata in Varada Mudra, a gesture of benevolence with the palm outward, alongside a lion.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday released a special postage stamp and a commemorative coin, marking the centenary celebrations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and featuring the first-ever depiction of Bharat Mata on Indian

currency.

The Rs 100 coin features the national emblem on one side, while the other side depicts a majestic image of Bharat Mata in Varada Mudra, a gesture of offering with the palm outward, accompanied by a lion. Swayam sevaks are shown bowing before her in devotion and dedication. The coin also bears the RSS motto "Rashtriya Swaha, Idam Rashtraya, Idam Na Mama," which translates to "Everything is dedicated to the nation, Everything is the nation's, Nothing is mine."

alongside the coin highlights RSS workers' participation in the 1963 Republic Day Parade, underlining the organisation's historic contributions.

Hosabale, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, and Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

Founded in 1925 in Nagpur by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, the RSS was established as a volunteer-based organisation with the aim of fostering cultural awareness, discipline, service, and social responsibility among citizens. PM Modi himself was an RSS 'pracharak' and made a mark as an organiser before being shifted to the BJP, which draws its ideological inspiration from the Hindutva organisation.

The celebrations and releases also aim to highlight the RSS's social service work and involvement in nation-building, from blood donation drives and food distribution to relief efforts during disasters such as the Kedarnath and Bihar floods and the Covid-19 pandemic.



"For the first time in the history of independent India, the image of Bharat Mata has been featured on Indian currency, which marks a moment of great pride and historical significance," PM Modi said at the launch event in Delhi. The postal stamp released

PM Modi described the moment as a proud tribute to Bharat Mata and the RSS's century-long journey of service and dedication. The centenary celebrations were organised by the Ministry of Culture and attended by RSS general secretary Dattatreya

'Pahalgam Attack Showed Which Nations Are India's Friends': RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat

The RSS chief also talked on the recent unrest in Nepal, where a nationwide movement led to a change in regime. He said, "Neighbourhood unrest is not a good sign..Violent uprising doesn't lead to anything. They only lead to anarchy."

Nagpur.(Agency)

The stance of nations after the Pahalgam terror attack showed the nature and extent of their friendship with India, said Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday. Speaking at RSS's annual Vijaya Dashami rally, Bhagwat said that when it comes to national security, New Delhi needs to be more careful, watchful and stronger.

"Even though we maintain friendly relations with other countries, and we will continue to do so, when it comes to our security, we need to be more careful, more

watchful and stronger. After the Pahalgam attack, the positions taken by various countries also revealed which of them are our friends, and to what extent," the RSS chief said at the event that also marked the centenary of the organisation.

The remark seems to be directed towards China, Turkey, and Azerbaijan -- three nations that were often seen standing by Islamabad on the international stage post Operation Sindoor, including at the United Nations and the Organisation

of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Referring to Operation Sindoor, Bhagwat said terrorists crossed the border



and killed 26 Indians after checking their religion in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, which drew a fitting response from the country. "This caused

immense pain and anger in the country. Our government made complete preparations and gave a firm rebuttal. In the aftermath, the leadership's resolve, the valour of our armed forces and the unity of society were evident."

He said extremist elements had faced action from the government, while society too distanced itself after recognising their "hollowness". "They will be controlled. A major hurdle has now been removed in that area," the RSS chief said.

Andhra Pradesh forms ministerial panel to regulate social media, curb misinformation

Andhra Pradesh has formed a Group of Ministers to oversee social media regulations in the state. The GoM will review existing laws, global practices, and platform accountability. It aims to tackle misinformation, harmful content, and protect citizen rights.

Andhra Pradesh.(Agency)

The Andhra Pradesh government has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to oversee social media regulations in the state.

The committee includes IT and Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Nara Lokesh, Health Minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav, Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar, Housing and I&PR Minister Kolu Parthasarathy, and Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha.

The GoM will review existing laws, rules, and guidelines applicable to social media platforms in India and identify gaps in accountability, compliance, and enforcement.

It will also study international best practices

and analyse global approaches to social media accountability, including transparency standards, platform obligations, and user protection measures.

The committee is tasked with recommending measures to hold social media platforms accountable for harmful content, misinformation, online abuse, and threats to national security. It will also advise on safeguarding citizen rights and suggest creation or strengthening of nodal agencies for continuous monitoring.

The Commissioner/Director of I&PR will serve as the convener to coordinate the committee's proceedings, and the GoM may seek assistance from other departments or experts as needed.



DMK ally leader alleges BJP shielding Vijay after Karur stampede that killed 41

DMK ally leader Thol Thirumavalavan criticised Tamil Nadu Police over selective action in the Karur rally stampede case, questioned political pressure, and alleged the BJP is trying to shield Vijay for political gains.

Tamil Nadu.(Agency)

DMK ally Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) leader Thol Thirumavalavan on Thursday criticised the Tamil Nadu Police for what he described as selective action in connection with the Karur rally stampede case that claimed 41 lives, questioning why a case was filed against Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) general secretary Bussy Anand but not against party chief Vijay.

Speaking to reporters, Thirumavalavan said, "The Tamil Nadu Police's actions are shocking. Tamil Nadu Police registered a case against Bussy Anand but why not against Vijay? Both are from the same party and were at the same event. The question arises if justice is different for Bussy Anand and Vijay. If a case cannot be registered against Vijay, the case against Bussy Anand should be withdrawn."



The VCK leader also raised questions about political influence in the matter. "Why is there a case against only four and arrests made, but protection given to Vijay? Does that mean we can say there is an underground dealing between Vijay and the DMK? They (TVK) claim there was a dealing between the BJP and the DMK, but as no case has been filed and protection has been given, can we question if there is any underground dealing between DMK and Vijay?" he said. Thirumavalavan further alleged that the BJP was attempting to shield Vijay for its own political purposes. "The BJP is trying to save Vijay. They want to use Vijay like Anna Hazare," he said, adding that such developments raise doubts about who is pressurising the police not to act against the actor-politician.

Pakistan Planning Attack On India From Gujarat Side? Rajnath Singh Warns Pak Over Military Buildup At Sir Creek

New Delhi.(Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday warned Pakistan against any misadventure and affirmed that India is capable of giving a decisive response that will alter the geography and history of the area. Defence Minister Singh's remark came amid reports of military buildup by the Pakistani Army on their side of the Sir Creek. He said that while India has tried to resolve the border issue through dialogue but Pakistan's intention is questionable.

Rajnath Warns Pakistan

Speaking to the Indian Armed Forces after attending a multi-agency capability exercise and performing the Shastra Poojan ceremony at the Lakki Nala Military Garrison in Kutch, Singh said India has repeatedly tried to resolve the border dispute through dialogue, but Pakistan's unclear intentions and recent military build-up near the area are concerning.

"Even after 78 years of independence, a dispute over the border in the Sir Creek



area is being stirred up. India has made several attempts to resolve it through dialogue, but there is a flaw in

Pakistan's intentions; its intentions are not clear. The way in which the Pakistan army has recently expanded its military infrastructure in areas adjacent to Sir Creek reveals its intentions," he said.

India Will Change Region's Geography: Singh

Rajnath Singh added that the Indian Army and BSF are vigilantly guarding the borders. "The Indian Army and BSF are jointly and vigilantly protecting the borders of India.

Nitin Gadkari's 2 Philosophies That Can Help India Become 'Atmanirbhar'

New Delhi.(Agency)

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has shared two philosophies that he believes would help the country achieve its dream of becoming 'atmanirbhar Bharat'. 'Knowledge to wealth' and 'no material is waste' are the two paths that can revolutionise wealth creation in the country, the minister said at Banega Swasth India, the country's longest running public health campaign.

"Innovation, entrepreneurship, science, technology, research skills, and successful practices are what we refer to as knowledge. This knowledge is power. The conversion of this knowledge into wealth will determine the future of the



country," said Mr Gadkari.

Stressing that the 'no material is waste' philosophy can help wealth creation from waste, he said that "creating value from waste will help end pollution and save the environment. It will also create jobs and reduce imports. The customers will benefit in a win-win situation as fuel

will get cheaper."

Sustainable development requires an approach that makes the country pollution-free, substitutes import, and is cost-effective and indigenous, according to him. "If we follow this, India will become atmanirbhar," the minister added. The BSI Season 12 was launched by actor Ayushmann Khurrana on October 2. Speaking at the event, Mr Gadkari agreed that renewable energy such as biofuels and solar power could be part of the sanitation projects, keeping in mind the four aspects: proven technology, economic viability, availability of raw material, and the availability of markets for finished products.

News box

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

Gurgaon.(Agency)
A 31-year-old labourer died after falling from the balcony of a rented accommodation in Ashok Vihar Phase 3 on Tuesday morning.Police said the deceased, Pardeep, was a native of Jhansi, UP and had come to Gurgaon two days ago in search of work. He was staying with a relative."The incident occurred around 5.50am. The balcony had a low cemented railing. He lost his footing and fell from the second floor," an officer said.

Tougher curbs soon, driving drunk to lead to suspension of your licence in Gurgaon

Ghaziabad.(Agency)
The district administration is planning tougher steps against those found driving drunk. Until now, police issued challans in such cases, but revised protocols may see straight suspensions of driving licences for three to six months for first-time offenders and cancellation of licence permanently for repeat offenders, which the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, provides for.

The move is part of broader initiatives to curb road accidents and fatalities. In the first half of 2025, the city recorded 541 accidents claiming 223 lives, with drunk driving cited as a major cause. Until Sept, over 5,000 challans were issued for alcohol-related offences, compared to 25,968 in 2024 and 5,181 in 2023.According to cops, most drunk driving cases occurred near weekend party hubs like Sector 29, Cyber Park, MG Road, Golf Course Road, and 32 Avenue. While police are routinely deployed in these areas—including Mall Mile, Ambience Mall, Galleria Market, and Sector 29 Huda Market—fines and licence suspensions are expected to serve as strong deterrents.

Emphasising on the need for strict enforcement during a recent road safety meeting, deputy commissioner Ajay Kumar said, "Norms for licence suspension are already in place. These must be implemented rigorously to curb drink and drive cases," he said. Section 185 of the MV Act stipulates that first-time offenders may face a fine of up to Rs 10,000, six months' imprisonment, or both. Repeat offenders within three years may incur a fine of Rs 15,000 and up to two years' imprisonment, along with permanent cancellation of their driving licence.

The administration is also set to make the process of getting a driving licence more stringent. "All SDMs should monitor the licence-making procedure in their areas to ensure compliance with safety norms," Kumar said.Beyond enforcement, the DC directed departments to identify accident-prone areas and implement corrective measures. Tree pruning, timely maintenance of T-junctions and U-turns, and installation of reflectors on major roads ahead of the winter season are among the initiatives aimed at improving visibility and preventing accidents.Public awareness campaigns are also a key component of the strategy. Kumar stressed that understanding traffic rules and following them can significantly reduce accidents. Police have been asked to prepare action plans targeting overspeeding and risky driving behaviours, alongside the ongoing drive against drunk driving.

2 held for minor’s abduction, forced conversion in Nuh

Gurgaon . (Agency)
Over a month after a minor girl went missing from Nuh's Tauru area, two persons have been arrested. Those arrested have been identified as Raisuddin, a cleric, and main accused Tariq, who allegedly converted the 17-year-old and married her. She has been rescued. Police said the girl went missing on Aug 20. However, a complaint was lodged on Sept 26 accusing Tariq ((aged around 25) from UP's Bhadangpur of luring her away. Investigations revealed that Tariq arranged the girl's marriage while the names of witnesses mentioned in the marriage certificate (Nikahnama) were completely fabricated.According to officials, after the Hanuman Nagar (Khorī Kalan) resident went missing, her family lodged a complaint at Sadar Tauru police station.The probe established that Raisuddin played a key role in conducting the marriage. Police recovered the Nikahnama along with other documents that falsely attempted to show the minor as an adult."After registering the case, we got the girl medically examined, provided her counselling and recorded her statement in court. During interrogation, the main accused told us that he pressured the girl for religious conversion and established relations with her against her will," DSP (Tauru) Abhimanyu Lohan said.Two other suspects have also been detained. "During questioning, they told us that the nikah was also performed wrongly. The persons shown in the nikah were not present there. When they asked for the girl's consent, she refused. Yet they performed her nikah," the officer added.

5 arrested for knife attack on pharma store owner in Noida

Gurgaon.(Agency)
Two men — allegedly hired to attack a medical store operator in Dadri for a promised sum of Rs 50,000 — were injured in an encounter with police on Tuesday evening. Three other accomplices were arrested later. Police said the accused from Dadri — who had been hired along with two others for the murder by a man — sustained bullet injuries during a check near Shahpur Road underpass on Peripheral Expressway. Those injured have been identified as Raj Kumar, a resident of Gautampuri, and Sajid, a resident of Neelkanth Colony. According to police officials, a patrol team signalled the two men riding a motorcycle to stop for checking."The suspects tried to flee and later opened fire on our team when they were surrounded. In retaliatory firing, both accused were injured and taken to hospital for treatment.

Mission Shakti: 33 honoured for bravery, social work by Noida Police

Noida.(Agency)
Police on Wednesday honoured 33 women and girls for acts of bravery and social service under Mission Shakti Abhiyan 5.0. The event was held at the police commissioner's office auditorium in Sector 108 under the leadership of commissioner Laxmi Singh. The awardees were recognised for supporting police in crime prevention, standing up against offences, as well as working for women's empowerment. "These women are the true face of courage in our society. Their fearless actions inspire others and strengthen our mission of a safe society," Singh said.Mission Shakti, a flagship govt campaign, aims to empower women by making them secure, self-reliant, and aware of their rights. As part of the initiative, police conduct awareness drives on cybercrime, domestic violence, sexual offences,

and women's safety, along with distributing pamphlets and cards with helpline numbers. Additional CP (Law and Order) Dr Rajeev Narayan Mishra said the awardees "represent role models for others, proving that courage and determination can bring real change in society." The programme also featured cultural performances, including classical dance performances by students from Tyagaraj Centre for Music and Dance and a play on Rani Lakshmi Bai.Senior officers, including DCP (Women Safety) Preeti Yadav, ACP (Women Safety) Prashali Gangwar and representatives of NGOs and women's organisations attended the event.Among those felicitated were Deepa Devi, Jayanti Raghavan, Anushka Yadav, Lagni Devi, Radha Devi, Mamta Yadav, Pooja Awana, and Meenakshi Tyagi, among others.



Perks for farmers, checks on vehicles & industrial units: How Haryana plans to fight air pollution

Gurgaon.(Agency)
Incentives and penalties for farmers, stricter checks on vehicles and industry and tighter controls on dust from roads and construction — Haryana's winter pollution battle plan has introduced tougher curbs.On Wednesday, Haryana rolled out its Winter Action Plan 2025-26, a detailed strategy to tackle the sharp rise in air pollution expected over the next few months.From Wednesday, the state has enforced the NGT and Supreme Court ban on diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years: Nearly 15 lakh vehicles fall in this category.Incentives for farmers have been raised to Rs 1,200 per acre for residue management, Rs 8,000 for diversifying out of paddy and Rs 4,500 for direct seeding of rice.More than 5.6 lakh farmers signed up, with nearly Rs 472 crore set aside for payments.The penalties

for violators have been doubled, ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 30,000, with FIRs and denial of MSP benefits for two years. The plan — with a focus on Gurgaon and Faridabad — has been prepared by the state pollution control board (HSPCB). The state says it will ensure round-the-clock power supply to reduce dependence on DG sets in both Gurugram and Faridabad.Head of HSPCB's air cell Nirmal Kashyap said, "Both cities are required to register projects above 500 sqm on the HSPCB dust portal, install CCTV and low-cost sensors, and carry out fortnightly self-audits. Violators will face fines and site closures."The state expects 85.5 lakh metric tonnes of paddy straw from the current harvest and has drawn up a disposal map: 44.4 LMT will be managed on fields, 19.1 LMT sent to industries and power plants and 22 LMT used as fodder.A 'parali protection force'

made up of police, agriculture and revenue officials will monitor villages, backed by satellite alerts and a new reporting app.All 5,400-plus fuel-based industries in NCR districts are now running on approved fuels, mostly biomass and gas.More than 99% of brick kilns have switched to zig-zag technology and new rules mandate co-firing with paddy straw pellets, starting at 20% next year.Over 695 red-category industries have online emission monitors connected to HSPCB. Dust management is one of the biggest thrust areas this season.Gurgaon will scale up sprinklers from 8 to 40 and add 29 new road sweepers, taking the total to 54.Authorities will also deploy over 850 anti-smog guns at construction sites.In Faridabad, sprinklers will be increased from 25 to 38, with 15 new sweepers to join the fleet.

Citing partial OC from MCD, Rera brings old project handed over in 2008 under its ambit

Noida . (Agency)
Delhi Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has directed state-run NBCC Ltd to register its NBCC Plaza Complex at Saket, an old, completed establishment where allottees got possession 17 years ago, as an 'ongoing project' under the Rera Act 2016.

The direction, from a majority bench headed by chairperson Anand Kumar and member Ajay Kumar Kuhar, followed hearings into a complaint filed by Gurgaon-based Rajeshwari Realty Pvt Ltd, one of the largest buyers in the project, that NBCC failed to execute conveyance deeds, form an association of allottees, and hand over common areas — key obligations under the Rera framework.The bench observed that the occupancy certificate issued by Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in 2011 was only a partial one. "A partial occupancy certificate cannot be equated with a completion certificate. Hence, the project remains incomplete and is liable for registration under the Act," the bench noted.

An NBCC spokesperson told TOI, "We are presently examining the referred order of Delhi Rera and upon due examination, shall take further steps in accordance with law, in due course of time."In 2007, when NBCC auctioned commercial space at the Saket Plaza Complex, Rajeshwari Realty purchased over 78,000 sqft of built-up area along with 118 parking slots for Rs 158 crore. Although possession was handed over in 2008, the company maintained that NBCC had never obtained a valid completion certificate, nor had it executed the requisite lease deed for the land.NBCC, in its defence, argued that the project was completed long ago and fully occupied, and that the partial occupancy certificate was sufficient proof of completion. However, Delhi Rera cited NBCC's own internal records and filings, including disclosures in its red herring prospectus, where it had described the

Illegal commercial building razed in DTCP demolition drive

Gurgaon . (Agency)
MCG on Wednesday razed a commercial building that belongs to Congress functionary Rajesh Yadav and his brother in Sector 68.The demolition drive, led by the district town planner and duty magistrate, turned tense after a heated confrontation broke out between Yadav and the enforcement team. According to DTP RS Bath, the building was constructed on a 1,000 square yard land without mandatory approvals and was being used for commercial purposes. Bath said a furniture showroom, offices and many other shops were operating from the building.

As an earthmover began dismantling the structure, Rajesh Yadav objected to the action alleging that the MCG team was acting under "instructions from a cabinet minister" and that he was not given sufficient time to vacate. "They served me

a notice on Monday evening and promised two days' time. But the very next morning, they arrived with bulldozers," Yadav said. Videos from the scene showed the



Congress leader being verbally aggressive towards the team, claiming that the DTP had been hired to demolish the building. Police escorted Yadav to the station after he allegedly disrupted

proceedings. He later apologised and was released after giving an undertaking.Refuting all allegations, DTP said, "This is a lawful demolition under MCG orders. I am a duty magistrate, not a mafia. We have demolished over 1,500 illegal buildings so far. Anyone obstructing official work will face strict legal action." Yadav, however, maintained that the action was politically motivated and accused officials of targeting him selectively. "No action is taken against builders who have constructed illegal complexes worth crores," he said. The corporation said it will continue its crackdown against unauthorised constructions across Gurgaon, particularly in new sectors and developing zones.

Ghaziabad crime rate down 14% in 2023, but rape & cybercrime cases up: NCRB

Ghaziabad.(Agency)
Long considered among the more crime-prone districts of NCR, Ghaziabad has recorded a notable fall in overall criminal cases in 2023.According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, the city registered 11,384 cases in 2023 compared to 13,207 in 2022—a decline of 13.8%. The year before, in 2021, police logged 16,495 cases.The decline was most visible in heinous crimes and street offences. Murder cases dropped by 26%—from 61 in 2022 to 45 in 2023. Kidnapping cases, too, fell sharply, from 55 to 33, with police noting that many were e l o p e m e n t - r e l a t e d incidents.Vehicle thefts, among the most commonly reported crimes in the district, declined 14%, from 2,036 to 1,740. Road crash fatalities caused by hit-and-run cases also came down, with 164 incidents reported in 2023 compared to 197 the year



before.Crimes against women, in general, showed a decline of nearly 15%. A total of 904 such cases were filed in 2023, down from 1,063 in 2022. Within this category, dowry deaths reduced from 32 to 26. While the decline in crime could be largely attributed to the establishment of a commissionerate system in Nov

2022, yet the NCRB report also highlights worrying reversals. Rape cases increased by 22%—from 68 in 2022 to 83 in 2023. Similarly, incidents of assault on women with intent to outrage modesty rose to 146, up from 130. House burglaries surged by 22%, with 177 cases compared to 144 the previous year. Cybercrime also continued its upward climb, with 686 cases reported in 2023, up from 626 in 2022.Crimes against children showed a 9% rise, moving from 189 cases in 2022 to 208 in 2023. Most of these, lodged under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, which saw a jump from 134 to 169 cases. While kidnapping and abduction of children dipped from 50 to 18, the overall increase signals greater vulnerability of minors.Police officials say they

are addressing these trends with targeted measures.Additional commissioner of police (law & order) Alok Priyadarshi said teams under Mission Shakti are

Railway station feel’: Must expand Hindon terminal, says Union minister

Ghaziabad.(Agency)
Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) completed the allotment of industrial plots under its mixed land use (MLU) scheme in Sector 24 on Tuesday. The total planned investment across these 11 units is estimated at around Rs 1,000 crore, expected to generate approximately 4,500 jobsThe scheme was open from May 8 to July 31 and received a total of 30 applications.

visiting schools to educate children about personal safety and preventive steps.

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National consultation on sugarcane exposes contrast between science, farm realities

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: The National Consultation on the Sustainable Sugarcane Economy, organised by the Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research (IISR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), held at AP Shinde Hall, National Agricultural Science Complex, New Delhi, brought out a sharp contrast between scientific priorities and farmers' immediate concerns. While researchers and industry leaders emphasised varietal seed development, crop diversification and mechanisation, farmers from major sugarcane producing states highlighted delays in payments from sugar mills, insufficient compensation and the banning of certain sugarcane seed varieties by mills. Dr P Govindaraj, Director of the Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, outlined how sugarcane breeding began in Coimbatore in 1912 and had since produced more than 200 varieties, including CO-0238 in the north and CO-8632 in the south. "Problems like red rot, top borer and Pokkah boeng (a serious sugarcane disease) have increased the cost of cultivation," he said, noting that new varieties such as CO-118, CO-15023 and CO-17018 are being developed to replace those under stress. Industry representatives stressed

the need to simplify and accelerate the release of new varieties. Roshan Lal Tamak, Group Executive Director, DCM

ture has to be increased." He added that the variety release process must not only be transparent and rigorous but also faster,



Shriram Ltd, said, "There are two fundamental things if agriculture has to be sustained — one is ease of growing and the other is fiscal health. Agriculture has to be made easier and the income from agricul-

suggesting tissue culture for seed multiplication and small harvesters to address labour shortages. Dr Dinesh Singh, Director of the Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow, said the All

India Coordinated Research Project linked 49 centres to develop varieties and improve crop management. "If we invest one rupee, we can get two to two-and-a-half rupees back when the crop is cultivated with potato or garlic," he said, underlining the role of intercropping in raising incomes. On the sidelines, farmers voiced concerns that differed from research agendas. "The new seeds they give us are banned by the mills," said Vikas Baliyan from Muzaffarnagar. Another farmer, Yogendra Malik, added, "We don't get payments on time. My dues from the mill have been pending for two years." Farmers also said cane prices remained inadequate. "We are paid Rs 390, the actual rate is Rs 480, but what we need is Rs 550," one farmer said. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who also attended the consultation called for a farmer-focused approach in sugarcane farming. Union Minister for Agriculture, Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday announced that a separate team would be formed under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to focus exclusively on sugarcane research and policy. Addressing a national consultation session on the sugarcane economy held at ICAR's Pusa campus in New Delhi, Chouhan said the team would examine

practical challenges faced by farmers and the industry and ensure that research was aligned with their requirements. The event was organised by 'Rural Voice,' a digital media platform, primarily focused on agriculture and rural sectors, in collaboration with the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories. Chouhan noted that while the 0238-variety showed good sugar content, many others were affected by red rot disease. He said the sector must address how long a variety remained viable and simultaneously develop alternatives. "New varieties bring new diseases. The key question is how to counter them," he said. The minister pointed to the risks of monocropping, which he said invited diseases, reduced soil nitrogen fixation and depleted nutrients. He suggested that the viability of intercropping with other crops should be examined. Other issues highlighted included the need to raise productivity, mechanisation, lowering production costs and improving sugar recovery. On water use, Chouhan said efficiency must be improved with approaches such as "per drop, more crop," but acknowledged the challenge of farmers meeting the costs of drip irrigation systems. He also asked the ICAR to examine how bio-products and natural farming could help reduce fertilizer dependency.

8 arrested for extortion call to bizman

New Delhi: Eight people were arrested, as the police unearthed a gang being operated from abroad, for allegedly firing at a property dealer's office in Narela and demanding Rs 5 crore, an official said on Monday. The accused include main assailants Dinesh, Sourav and Hemant, weapon suppliers Ashish Tyagi, Vansh Malik and Rahul, and financiers Sandeep and Sachin, who executed the conspiracy on the directions of a man named Jora, who claims to be the brother of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, he added. According to the police, the incident dates back to September 14, when two assailants on a white bike opened fire outside the office of a property dealer, five minutes after he received the demand of Rs 5 crore from Jora. A case under the relevant sections of the BNS and the Arms Act was registered at the Narela Police Station.

Man posing as IAF officer dupes woman of Rs 2.5 lakh, held

New Delhi: The Cyber police station of South District arrested a 20-year-old man for allegedly impersonating an Air Force officer to cheat people. The accused has been identified as Tasleem Khan from Alwar, Rajasthan. According to the police, the incident came to light when a woman from Chhatrapur lodged a complaint alleging that she was cheated of over Rs 2.5 lakh by a man impersonating an Air Force officer. The woman told the police that the accused sent her fake invoices and letters on Air Force letterhead, demanding token fee, security checks and gate pass charges. Acting on the complaint, the police launched a manhunt. Using the money trail and technical surveillance, the location of the accused was traced to Alwar. The police conducted a raid and arrested Khan. Investigation revealed that he posed as an Air Force officer on Quikr and induced victims to transfer money using fabricated documents. WhatsApp chats retrieved from his mobile phones showed that he had defrauded several people. At least, seven victims have been identified so far. The police said further investigation was on to identify possible accomplices and trace other victims.

Exchange of fire in Delhi's Sanjay Van: 2 wanted criminals nabbed

New Delhi: In a dramatic early-morning encounter, the South-West District Police arrested two wanted criminals following an exchange of fire near Aruna Asaf Ali Road, Sanjay Van, Kishangarh, police said on Wednesday. According to police, the incident took place around 6:15 a.m. Acting on a tip-off, the team tried to intercept two suspected criminals. On being challenged, the duo opened fire at the police party while attempting to flee. The police retaliated in self-defense, during which one accused, Arman (26), a resident of JJ Colony, Bawana, sustained a gunshot wound in his right leg. The second accused, Basheer (24), also from JJ Colony, Bawana, was caught on the spot with an illegal firearm and a live cartridge. In the crossfire, one of Arman's bullets struck the bulletproof jacket of a police officer, but no injuries were reported. The Crime Team and FSL were called in to examine the site and collect forensic evidence. Preliminary investigation revealed that Arman has an extensive criminal record, with over 50 cases of robbery, snatching, and violations of the Arms Act registered against him. Both accused are now in custody, and further investigation is underway.

Delhi Police slaps MCOCA on Nandu gang; ex-AAP MLA among 9 booked

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has invoked the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against nine members of the Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu gang, including AAP leader Naresh Balyan and gangster Kapil Sangwan's brother, an official said on Wednesday. The crackdown follows a rise in ransom calls and extortion attempts allegedly made by the Nandu syndicate in Dwarka, West and Outer Delhi, police said. The gang, led by proclaimed offender Kapil Sangwan, is accused of running a network involved in murders, extortion, armed assaults, and firing incidents across Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, they said.

"Shooters, facilitators and conspirators have been arrested, and extortion money as well as illegal firearms have been seized. Investigation is underway to identify and attach proceeds of crime under MCOCA," Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Surender Kumar said. The accused include Naresh Balyan, who is a former MLA from Uttam Nagar. "He is actively facilitating the extortion activities and providing the targets i.e. local builders of the area to Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu and later on the way of settlement, he earned his share," Kumar added. His role was later revealed from disclosure made by the co-accused and a voice clip surfaced over social media of the

conversation between him and Kapil Sangwan, the Joint CP said, adding that he was involved in four criminal cases including extortion. Sangwan's brother Jyoti Prakash alias Baba catalysed Kapil to indulge in the crime world after the death of their brother in law Sunil alias Doctor, he said. He is the main recruiter of the shooters for the gang from the jail. He was involved in 24 criminal cases including murder, extortion and arms act cases. Others include Kapil alias Peter, Rohit Sharma alias Anna, Sachin Chhikara, Vijay Gahlot, Sahil alias Poli, Vikas Gahlot, and Amardeep Lochab. Their roles ranged from executing targeted killings and

firing incidents to collecting extortion money, arranging arms, and managing hawala transactions, the police said. According to the police, the syndicate, which evolved from revenge killings in 2015, grew into a structured network executing contract killings and extortion rackets by 2021-24. Sangwan, declared a proclaimed offender, is currently believed to be hiding in the UK, with a Red Corner Notice issued against him. Among the incidents linked to the gang are multiple murder cases, extortion demands running into crores, and firing at establishments including builders' offices, schools, and shops. In April 2023, members of the gang allegedly killed a

rival, Surender Solanki, in Uttam Nagar, while in 2024 they were involved in a triple murder in Panchkula, Haryana. The police said the syndicate generated huge assets through extortion, land dispute settlements and coercion, with proceeds funnelled into maintaining

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, KAMALA W/O KATE SH. JAI SINGH R/O H NO 03, CHHADIYA USPUR(117), PO- CHULKANA, TEH- SAMALKHA, DISTT-PANIPAT, HARYANA-132101, declare That name of mine has been wrongly written as KAMLA DEVI in my husband PPO-24043. The actual name of mine is KAMALA, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, Mohammad Ramjan, S/O Mohammad Kayum, R/O RC-54, Vandana Enclave, Khora Colony, I.E. Sahibabad, PO: I.e. Sahibabad, DIST: Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh -201010, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as MD.RAMZAN in my minor son namely Md Sadique aged 13 years, in his school record. The actual name of mine is Mohammad Ramjan, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I hertho known as RENU RANI alias EKTA D/o Jai Prakash Verma W/o Ishan Bhardwaj R/O WZ-24, Rishi Nagar Rani Bagh, Saraswati Vihar S.o. North West Delhi-110034 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as EKTA.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, GOVIND S/O KARAM SINGH, R/O H.No.1-2005 Gautam Vihar Ghonda North East Delhi-110053 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as GOVIND SINGH in my CAST CERTIFICATE NO/SC04/ 42/3109/154/ 2009/104284/699 and RATION CARD NO.0770 02821657. The actual name of mine is GOVIND which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I SURAJ KUMAR THAKUR S/O DEEPAK THAKUR R/O I-1st, 2840, Gali No. 15, Sangam Vihar, Delhi, PO: Ambekar Nagar, District South Delhi, Delhi-110080. Do hereby undertake that I SURAJ KUMAR THAKUR want to change my name MAYA THAKUR and gender as female. I SURAJ KUMAR THAKUR henceforth be known as MAYA THAKUR D/O DEEPAK THAKUR.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, MOHD ZUBAIR, S/O MOHD SHAKIR R/O House No. 21624, Gali No. 22, Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, New Mustafabad, Gokul Puri, North East Delhi, Delhi-110034, declare that name of my father and my mother has been wrongly written as MD SHAKIR and RIVAZMEEN in my all educational documents and name of my father has been wrongly written as MD SHAKIR in my Aadhaar card No. 371975934914. The actual name of my father and mother are MOHD SHAKIR and RIVAZMEEN respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as PRIYADARSHNEE D/o NAGESHWAR PANDEY, R/O 261, Harijan Basti, Vasant Vihar, Rajokri, A F Rajokri, South West Delhi, Delhi-110038, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SAFALTA SHRI.

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as POOJA alias PRAGYA VERMA W/o ABHISHEK VERMA R/o 3555, Gali Than Singh, Sita Ram Bazar, Chawri Bazar, North Delhi, Delhi G.P.O. Delhi-110006, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PRAGYA VERMA.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, SANJAY BAID S/o VIJAY SINGH BAID R/o 5595, S/F, G.T Road, Mohi Ram Road, Near Jindal Oil Mill, Mansarovar Park, Shandara, North East Delhi, Delhi-110032, declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as NIDHI BAID in my minor daughter namely KRITIKA BAID aged 13 year, in her school record. The actual name of my wife is NAVNIDHI, which may be amended accordingly.

Public Notice
It is for general information that I, AJEET SINGH S/O ROSHAN LAL R/o H. No-472, Baprola Village, Najafgarh, West Delhi, Delhi-110043, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as AJIT SOLANKI in my minor son NAMAN SOLANKI aged 17 years in her 10th and 12th class educational documents and Birth Certificate No-MCDOLR08029769. The actual name of mine is AJEET SINGH which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, LALIT KUMAR S/O ARJUN DEV R/O H.N-748/28, JYOTI PARK, OPP- H.N.1602, SEC-7, EXTN. GURGAON, HARYANA-122001 HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR SON NAME FROM "ADVIT CHUTANI" TO "ADMIT CHUTANI" FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as ARCHANA KUMARI Alias ARCHANA SINGH D/O ABHAY PRATAP SINGH W/O RANJAN SINGH R/O House No-5-3, SECOND FLOOR, KAILASH COLONY, GREATER KAILASH, DEFENCE COLONY, SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110048, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ARCHANA KUMARI.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, GIRESH SINGH S/O JAI SINGH Presently Residing at Qtr. No-297/H, 3rd Floor, Pocket-II, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, New Delhi, Delhi-110091, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as DEEPA S in my minor daughter namely ADVIKA PRASANTHI aged 6 year, in his Birth Certificate No. MCDOLR-0119-007297560. The actual name of mine is DEEPA PRASANTHI, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, DEEPA PRASANTHI W/o LATE PRASANTHI KUMAR P. Permanent R/o Maya Bhavan, Kochaloomooda, Nellikkunnam, Ummannoor, Nellikkunnam, Kollam, Kerala-681520, Presently Residing at Qtr. No-297/H, 3rd Floor, Pocket-II, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, New Delhi, Delhi-110091, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as DEEPA S in my minor daughter namely ARCHITH KRISHNA aged 13 year, in his Birth Certificate No. 28462011. The actual name of mine is DEEPA PRASANTHI, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as SANDEEP KUMAR SINGH S/o SHRI RAM SINGH R/o Plot No. 84, First Block-A, Vikas Vihar, Kakrola, PO: N.S.I.T. Dwarka, South West Delhi, Delhi-110077 have changed the name of my minor son SHRAURYA KUMAR SINGH aged 04 years and he shall hereafter be known as SHRAURYA KUMAR SINGH.

Uttar Pradesh: 11 more devotees test positive in Magh Mela

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday said it has conducted searches against the promoters of a Himachal Pradesh-based company engaged in aerospace and real estate sectors as part of a foreign exchange violation probe linked to alleged undisclosed foreign assets. The action was undertaken on September 19-20 at six premises located in Delhi and Himachal Pradesh belonging to Manavinder Singh, his wife Sagri Singh and linked entities of the Imperial Group. The action was undertaken under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in a probe related to "undisclosed" assets, investments and financial interests of the promoters held outside India, the agency said in a

statement. The ED said it has seized financial statements and records apart from foreign bank account pass books during the



searches and it was estimated that the value of these assets, located in Singapore, Dubai, British Virgin Islands and Thailand, was more than Rs 80 crore. It claimed to have found alleged secret "financial interest" of the promoters in a Singapore

based company named Aerostar Venture Pte Ltd and a similar stake in a Dubai-based company named United Aerospace

residents of the Auramah Valley residential project located in Naldehra, Himachal Pradesh, according to the ED. The agency said the promoters were the "beneficial owners" of a Rs 16 crore worth villa in Koh Samui, Thailand. It was also found that a "part sale consideration" of about Rs 29 crore for the flats in the Naldehra residential project was received in cash, it alleged. "The total cash seized during the search operations is Rs 50 lakh in Indian currency (including cash of Rs 50,000 in old 500-rupee currency notes) in addition to foreign currency of USD 14,700," the agency said. Three lockers have also been frozen during the search operations apart from seizure of "incriminating" records relating to Singh, his wife and the Imperial Group, it said.

UP STF busts extortion racket targeting entrepreneurs, 3 arrested

The Sikh Times

Noida: The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) on Tuesday arrested three persons allegedly involved in extorting entrepreneurs in Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddh Nagar districts by filing false complaints against them, officials said. The arrested suspects have been identified as Ankur Gupta (52) of Dariyaganj, Delhi, and father-son duo Narendra Dhawan and Harnam Dhawan, residents of Shastrinagar, Delhi. Authorities seized four mobile phones, Rs 62,720 in cash, one US dollar, a

fake Aadhaar card and 17 postal receipts from them. According to the STF, the suspects targeted entrepreneurs and builders in the NCR region by filing fabricated complaints with multiple government agencies, including the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Income Tax, development authorities, and Economic Offences Wing (EOW) offices. These complaints were then publicised in print and electronic media to damage the reputation of businesspersons and coerce

them into paying money to avoid harassment, the STF



said in a statement. Investigations revealed that the gang demanded ransom from builders, initially seeking Rs 15 crore, later reducing it to Rs 5 crore, of which some amount was collected

while pressure was exerted for the balance. The

Gautam Buddh Nagar on September 29. After collecting evidence of their criminal activities, all three were arrested today, the agency said. During questioning, Ankur Gupta admitted that he started filing false complaints after a bank loan dispute over his clothing shop in Delhi. He later roped in journalists from small media outlets and a YouTube channel to publicise such complaints, coercing entrepreneurs to pay money to protect their image. The STF said several builders' projects were delayed, causing financial losses to hun-

dreds of buyers and reputational damage to the developers. The STF registered a case against the three at Indrapuram police station in Ghaziabad under Sections 308 (extortion), 351 (dishonest misappropriation of property possessed by a deceased person at the time of his death), 318 (cheating), 336 (forgery) and others of the BNS. Investigation is ongoing and details of affected victims are being collected to expand the probe, the STF said. Harnam Dhawan was previously jailed in 2021 in Delhi under an IPC 376 (rape) case, the STF added.

NEWS BOX

Gaza-bound Global Sumud flotilla carrying aid presses on despite Israeli interception

world. (Agency)
A flotilla carrying aid to Gaza said dozens of its ships were still "sailing strong" towards the war-battered Palestinian territory on Thursday despite an interception by Israeli naval forces.The Global Sumud Flotilla , involving around 45 vessels carrying politicians and activists including Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg -- left Spain last month, aiming to break Israel's blockade of the Palestinian territory, where the United Nations says famine has set in.The Israeli navy intercepted the flotilla on Wednesday after warning it against entering waters it says fall under its blockade, with Thunberg's ship among those stopped from going further.
But the flotilla said most of its vessels were continuing their journey as of early Thursday morning, nearing the coast of the Gaza strip despite the interruptions.
"30 boats still sailing strong on their way to Gaza, just 46 nautical miles away, despite the incessant aggressions from the Israeli occupation navy," the flotilla posted on X with a time stamp of 3:20 am local time (0020 GMT).Flotilla spokesman Saif Abukeshk said Israeli forces had intercepted 13 boats carrying around 200 people in total, including many from Spain and Italy. But, he said in a video posted on Instagram, "our mission is going on".
"They are determined. They are motivated, and they are doing everything within their hands to be able to break the siege by this early morning," he said of the remaining vessels.The interceptions occurred at about 8:30 pm on Wednesday, the flotilla said, describing the move as "illegal" as they were traversing international waters."Beyond the confirmed interceptions, live streams and communications with several other vessels have been lost," the statement added.

Planes collide on runway at New York's LaGuardia airport

NEW YORK.(Agency)
Two planes operated by a Delta subsidiary collided Wednesday on the runway at New York's LaGuardia airport, the local port authority and the airline said.The incident involving two Endeavor Air jets occurred at 9:58 pm (0158 GMT on Thursday) as one was landing and the other about to take off, according to a statement from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.
One person was taken to hospital after suffering "non-life threatening injuries," it added. Delta reported one minor injury to a flight attendant.Images shared by US media, which AFP was unable to immediately verify, showed damage to the nose of one of the jets. The port authority said operations at LaGuardia, one of



the United States' busiest airports, were not interrupted.Delta, the parent company of Endeavor Air, said it would "work with all relevant authorities to review" safety measures following what it described as "a low-speed collision during taxi."
Citing preliminary information, Delta said the wing of the plane taxiing ahead of its departure for Roanoke, Virginia, made "contact... with the fuselage of the arriving aircraft."The two jets had a total of 93 passengers and crew members on board, Delta added.

Philippine quake death toll rises to 72; govt says 294 people injured, around 20,000 fled homes

BOGO. (Agency)
The death toll from a powerful earthquake in the central Philippines rose to 72 on Thursday, rescuers said, as officials turned their efforts to the hundreds injured and thousands left homeless.Firefighters and rescuers pulled a woman and her child from the rubble of a collapsed hotel overnight Wednesday in the city of Bogo, near the epicentre of the 6.9-magnitude quake that struck on Tuesday.The body of another woman was also retrieved from the site earlier in the day, AFP journalists saw.The national government said 294 people were injured and around 20,000 had fled their homes. Nearly 600 houses were wrecked across the north of Cebu island, and many are sleeping on the streets as hundreds of aftershocks shake the area.Cebu provincial governor Pamela Baricuatro made several urgent appeals for help on Thursday, saying thousands needed safe drinking water, food, clothes and temporary housing, as well as volunteers to sort and distribute aid."Many homes were destroyed and many families are in need of help to recover... They need our help, prayers and support," she said on Facebook.President Ferdinand Marcos flew to Cebu with senior aides on Thursday to inspect the damage and coordinate relief efforts. He did not immediately speak to the press.A tiny village chapel is serving as a post-quake home for 18-year-old Bogo resident Diane Madrigal and 14 of her neighbours after their houses were destroyed. Their clothes and food are scattered across the chapel's pews."The entire wall (of my house) fell, so I really don't know how and when we can go back again," Madrigal told AFP.

Rohingya Muslims plead for help at the UN to stop the killings in Myanmar

Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya Muslim minority to be “Bengalis” from Bangladesh even though their families have lived in the country for generations.

LIVERPOOL.(Agency)
UNITED NATIONS: Rohingya Muslims pleaded with the international community at the first United Nations high-level meeting on the plight of the ethnic minority to prevent the mass killings taking place in Myanmar and to help those in the persecuted group lead normal lives.
“This is a historic occasion for Myanmar, but this is long overdue,” Wai Wai Nu, the Rohingya founder and executive director of the Women’s Peace Network-Myanmar, told ministers and ambassadors from many of the UN’s 193-member nations in the General Assembly Hall.The Rohingya and

other minorities in Myanmar have suffered decades of displacement, oppression and violence, while seeing no action in response to determinations that they are victims of genocide, she said. “That cycle must end today,” Wai Wai Nu said.
Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya Muslim minority to be “Bengalis” from Bangladesh even though their families have lived in the country for generations. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982.
In August 2017, attacks by a Rohingya insurgent group on Myanmar security personnel triggered a brutal campaign by the military that drove at least 740,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh. The military is accused of mass rape, killings and burning villages, and the scale of its operation led to accusations of ethnic cleansing and genocide from the international community, including the UNMyanmar has been wracked by violence since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi

in February 2021 and brutally suppressed nonviolent protests. That triggered armed resistance and fighting across the country by pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic minority armed forces seeking to oust the



military rulers, including in western Rakhine state where tens of thousands of Rohingyas still live, many confined to camps.The United States in 2022 said it had determined that members of the Myanmar military committed crimes against humanity and genocide against the Rohingya.UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi,

who recently visited Myanmar, told the high-level meeting Tuesday that Bangladesh is now hosting close to 1.2 million Rohingya refugees, and since fighting reignited in Rakhine in 2024 between the military and the Arakan Army, an additional 150,000 have sought safety in the neighboring country.The Arakan Army, the well-armed military wing of the Rakhine ethnic minority, which seeks autonomy, now controls almost all of Rakhine state, Grandi said, and the situation of the Rohingya there has not improved.They still face discrimination, the burning of their villages, exclusion from work, a ban on moving freely, restricted education and health care and the threat of arrest, he said. “They are subjected to forced labor and forced recruitment” and “their lives are defined every day by racism and fear,” Grandi said.Julie Bishop, the UN special envoy for Myanmar, said there was little sign that the political crisis could be settled, with no agreed ceasefire, pathway to peace or political solution.

No more signs of life in Indonesia school collapse: rescuers

SIDOARJO. (Agency)
Rescuers detected "no more signs of life" at a collapsed Indonesian school where 59 people were believed missing days after it gave way, an official said Thursday, raising fears no more survivors would be found.
Part of the multi-storey boarding school on the main island of Java suddenly collapsed on Monday as students gathered for afternoon prayers.
After days of rescue operations, 59 people were still feared buried under the rubble after at least five people had been confirmed dead."We used high-tech equipment like thermal drones, and, scientifically, there were no more signs of life," said Suharyanto, the head of the country's disaster mitigation agency.Distraught and tearful families waited anxiously near the site for news of their loved ones. Residents near the school offered the families to stay in their homes as they waited, AFP saw."I've been here since day one. I am hoping for the best news, that my brother survives. I am still hopeful," said Maulana Bayu Rizky Pratama, whose 17-year-old brother is missing.

"It's been four days, I hope my brother will be found soon. I feel sad thinking of him being down there for four days," the 28-year-old added.Rescuers pulled five survivors from the rubble on Wednesday as frantic parents



demanding searchers speed up efforts to find dozens of children believed to still be trapped.Abdul Hanan, whose 14-year-old son is missing, said children under the rubble had been crying for help."The rescue operation must be accelerated," he urged.Investigations into the cause of the collapse in the town of Sidoarjo are ongoing, but initial signs point to substandard construction, experts have said.Complex operation

The rescue operation is complex as vibrations happening in one place can impact other areas, said Mohammad Syafii, head of the National Search and Rescue Agency."So now, to reach the spot where the victims are, we have to dig an underground tunnel," he told reporters.But digging itself poses challenges, including destabilising the rubble. And any tunnel will only provide an access route around 60 centimetres (about 23 inches) wide because of the structure's concrete columns.Thermal-sensing drones are being used to locate survivors and the deceased as the 72-hour "golden period" for best survival chances comes to an end.

The families of the missing agreed on Thursday for heavy equipment to be used, Pratikno, coordinating minister for human development and cultural affairs said, adding that rescuers would exercise "extreme caution".But the operation could last longer than seven days if people are still missing, a search and rescue agency official told AFP.

Singer Zubeen Garg died in Singapore while swimming, says media report

SINGAPORE. (Agency)
Musician Zubeen Garg died last month after swimming in waters off Singapore island and not while scuba diving as per earlier media reports. The Singapore Police Force (SPF) said they have extended a copy of the autopsy report, along with its preliminary findings on Garg's death, to the High Commission of India, upon its request, The Straits Times newspaper reported.The SPF had earlier ruled out foul play in the death of 52-year-old Garg.
"In the case of Zubeen Garg, a coroner's inquiry could possibly shed light on the sequence of events leading up to his drowning," the Singapore broadsheet quoted Ng Kai Ling, associate director at LIMN Law Corporation here, as saying.She added that a coroner's inquiry could ascertain the identity of the deceased and how, when and where

the death took place.According to the Singapore daily, Ng also said that there is no statutory definition for the term "foul play", but SPF's initial statement could be understood to mean that they do not suspect that Garg was murdered



or died as a result of some criminal violence.The police took Garg from St John's Island to a hospital on September 19.He was pulled out of the water unconscious and was rushed to Singapore General Hospital but died that same day.According to earlier

media reports, the iconic singer was with more than a dozen people on an unnamed yacht on September 19 when tragedy struck.A video posted on X on September 20 showed him jumping into the water for a swim while wearing a life vest.But according to media reports, a person who posted the video, which has since garnered over 600,000 views, said Garg took off his life jacket minutes later and jumped into the water again.The SPF had advised members of the public in Singapore not to share any videos or images related to Garg's death.According to various media reports, Garg's death certificate, issued by a Singapore hospital, lists the cause of death as drowning.The singer was in Singapore for the celebration of the 60th year of India Singapore Diplomatic Relations and to celebrate India ASEAN Year of Tourism.

South Korea's president apologizes over poorly managed foreign adoption programs

SEOUL.(Agency)
South Korea’s president apologized Thursday for poorly managed foreign adoption programs that were rife with abuses and fraud, months after the country’s truth commission admitted state responsibilities for such practices for the first time.President Lee Jae Myung said in a Facebook post that he was offering “heartfelt apology and words of comfort” on behalf of the country to South Koreans adopted abroad and their adoptive and birth families.Findings by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and recent court rulings have confirmed some cases of human rights abuses in the course of international adoptions, Lee said, adding that the government failed to play its role in such cases. He did not elaborate.Lee said he “feels heavy-hearted” when he thinks about “anxiety, pain and confusion” that South Korean adoptees would have suffered when they were sent abroad as children. He asked officials to formulate systems to safeguard the human rights of adoptees and support their efforts to find their birth parents.South Korea has faced growing pressure to address widespread fraud and abuse that plagued its adoption programs, particularly during a heyday in the 1970s and 1980s when the country allowed thousands of children to be adopted each year.
Many adoptees discovered their records were falsified to portray them as abandoned orphans, while others were carelessly removed, or even stolen, from their birth families.In a landmark report in March, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded the government bore responsibility for facilitating adoption programs that were driven by efforts to reduce welfare costs. The report followed a nearly three-year investigation into complaints from 367 adoptees in Europe, the United States and Australia.
Its finding broadly aligned with a 2024 Associated Press investigation, in collaboration with Frontline (PBS), which detailed how South Korea's governments, Western countries and adoption agencies worked in tandem to supply around 200,000 Korean children to parents overseas, despite years of evidence that many were procured through questionable or outright unscrupulous means.After years of delay, South Korea in July ratified the Hague Adoption Convention, an international treaty meant to safeguard international adoptions. The treaty took effect in South Korea on Wednesday.rkforce 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 libhich ones.

Youth-led anti-government protests in Morocco turn deadly, with 2 killed in small town

The demonstrations, organised by a leaderless movement dominated by internet-savvy youth, have taken the country by surprise and emerged as some of Morocco’s biggest in years.

RABAT. (Agency)
Anti-government demonstrators in Morocco filled the streets for a fifth straight night on Wednesday, as protests over the state of public services descended into deadly violence. Police opened fire at the protesters in a southern town, reportedly in self-defence, killing two people.The deaths in Leqliaa, about 500 kilometres (312 miles) south of the capital of Rabat, were the first fatalities as anger mounts across this North African country over conditions

and government spending.Morocco's state news agency, MAP, cited local authorities as saying the two “troublemakers” were killed by police acting in self-defence. It said those shot were attempting to seize police weapons, though no eyewitnesses could corroborate the report. There were no further details.
The demonstrations, organised by a leaderless movement dominated by internet-savvy youth, have taken the country by surprise and emerged as some of Morocco’s biggest in years. By midweek, they appeared to be spreading to new locations despite a lack of permits from authorities.Those taking part in the so-called “Gen Z protests” decry what they see as widespread corruption. Through chants and posters, they have contrasted the flow of billions in investment toward preparation for the 2030 World Cup, while many schools and hospitals lack funds and remain in a dire state.But chants were fewer as violence broke out in several cities on Wednesday evening, following days of

mass arrests in more than a dozen cities, particularly in places where jobs are scarce and social services are lacking.In Sale, the poorer city just across the river from



Morocco’s capital, an Associated Press reporter saw hundreds of masked youth — mostly teenagers — torching cars, banks and shops, smashing windows and looting, with no police in sight.The chaos came despite warnings from authorities, political parties in government and the opposition and the organisers themselves. In a

statement published on Discord, the Gen Z 212 protest movement earlier on Wednesday implored protesters to remain peaceful and blasted “repressive security approaches.”“The right to health, education and a dignified life is not an empty slogan but a serious demand,” the organisers said.
Marginalised areas transform neglect into rage
Still, the protests have escalated and become more destructive on Tuesday and Wednesday, particularly in cities far from where development efforts have been concentrated in Morocco. Local outlets and footage filmed by witnesses on Tuesday show protesters hurling rocks and setting vehicles ablaze in cities and towns in the country's east and south, including in Inzegane and Ait Amira.In Oujda, eastern Morocco’s largest city, a police vehicle that rammed into demonstrators in Morocco left one person injured, local human rights groups and the state news agency MAP said.

Ex-IOCL official gets 3-yr jail for embezzling funds

Ahmedabad . (Agency)
The CBI Court of Ahmedabad on Tuesday convicted a former Assistant Manager (Finance) of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Rajkot division, for his involvement in embezzling funds from 2005 to 2008 and sentenced him to three years’ rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 90,000 on him.

The CBI had registered a case against Saji Sajeev, former Assistant Manager, IOCL, Rajkot, on charges of criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust by a public servant, forgery and criminal misconduct, on November 21, 2011.

The case was registered on the basis of primary investigations done by the Chief Vigilance officials of IOCL, New Delhi. In the initial complaint, it was alleged that officials of IOCL, Rajkot, were involved in the financial misappropriation to the tune of Rs. 18.90 lakh from 2005 to 2008. The Vigilance department officials of IOCL had also handed over their investigation report, accusing Sajeev as the key accused, to the CBI. Sources stated that the finance department of IOCL, Rajkot, was maintaining a GL Cash Imprest account for making cash payments. Sajeev was the sole in charge/custodian of the GL Cash Imprest account as accounts officer (Finance), IOCL, Rajkot. During the investigation, it was found that cash was fraudulently withdrawn by Sajeev from the account from 2005 to 2008.

The CBI had arrested Sajeev and filed a chargesheet on September 30, 2013. After the case trial and arguments from the prosecution and defence, the CBI court on Tuesday sentenced Sajeev to three years’ rigorous imprisonment.

CBI court convicts five in Rs 1.08 crore ‘bank fraud’, sentences them to 3 years in jail

The convicts have been identified as Salauddin Shaikh, Kriti Kumar R Saha, Kamlesh D Rao, Mahendra C Vakharia and Bhupendra Manilal Vakharia.

Surat . (Agency)
The CBI Court of Ahmedabad, on Wednesday, convicted five persons in connection with the Rs 1.08 crore bank fraud case while sentencing them to three years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 50,000 each.

The convicts have been identified as Salauddin Shaikh, Kriti Kumar R Saha, Kamlesh D Rao, Mahendra C Vakharia and Bhupendra Manilal Vakharia.

According to the official statement, the Central

From cobras to cubs: Viloo C Poonawalla Wildlife Hospital marks 4 years, treats 2,500 animals

In recognition of its growing impact, forest department authorities have suggested the hospital expand its operations and treat sick and injured animals from Purandar, Baramati, Bhore and adjacent areas during the golden hour to reduce morbidity and mortality.

Pune . (Agency)
From rescuing leopard cubs and treating injured vultures and flamingoes to performing intricate surgeries on turtles and cobras, the Viloo C Poonawalla Wildlife Hospital, Pingori village in Purandar taluka of Pune district, entered its fifth year of service. Over the past four years the facility has treated nearly 2,500 wild animals across diverse species.

In recognition of its growing impact, forest department authorities have suggested the hospital expand its operations and treat sick and injured animals from Purandar, Baramati, Bhore and adjacent areas during the golden hour to reduce morbidity and mortality. September 30 marked four years since Viloo C Poonawalla Hospital for Wildlife – The Transit Treatment Centre of



“We enter the fifth year now. The MOU of the TTC was signed just before the Covid -19 pandemic in 2019 between Ela and Maharashtra Forest Department. Because of a generous donation from Dr Cyrus Poonawalla, Managing Director, Serum

Institute of India, a well equipped wildlife hospital was set up,” Dr Satish Pande, noted ornithologist and director of the hospital.

Apart from an X-Ray department, biochemistry and haematology laboratory and operation theatre, the facility also includes animal feed preparation kitchen, holding, quarantine, recovery and ward areas. In fact, instances of rescue and re-wilding of Chinkara or Indian Gazelle fawns who were brought to the Pingori treatment facility have also been published in veterinary science journals. This helps document the threats faced by the Chinkara like habitat destruction, overgrazing by livestock animals and predation risk that sick animals face especially from stray dogs and others.

Sheetal Rathod, Assistant Conservator of

Forest, Bhore, when contacted, said that they had a population of chinkara, hyena, jackals and so on. “There are minor accidents that occur – at times due to road traffic or them even being attacked by stray dogs. The transit centre at Pingori is the closest and most of the animals are sent there for treatment. After recovery they are released back in the wild,” Rathod said.

According to Dr Pande the injured fawns are checked for their physical fitness, treated and bottle-fed. After recovery they are released from the same area where they were found. “We have treated several species of wildlife not only in our hospital, but also provided advisory services for more than 2500 animals including birds, mammals and reptiles, and have protected wildlife habitats,” Dr Pande added.

NCRB Crime in India report for 2023: 68% rise in crimes against children in a yr in Pune

Pune . (Agency)
According to a report titled ‘Crime In India’ for the year 2023 released by the National Crime Records Bureau on Tuesday, Pune reported an over 36.4 percent rise in cyber crime cases as compared to 2022 figures. The report also saw an over 23 per cent rise in crime against women as well as a 68 percent rise in crimes against children.

After Kochi and Kolkata, Pune recorded the third highest chargesheeting rate of 94 per cent for crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in the country in 2023.

Chargesheeting rate
Under the broader head of total IPC, Pune recorded 9,511 cases in 2021; 11,074 in 2022 and 12,542 in 2023. The 2023 figures reflected a 13.3 per cent increase over 2022. The 2022 numbers had shown a 16.4 percent rise compared to 2021. In cases registered under the head of ‘Special Acts and Local Laws’, collectively referred to as SLL, Pune recorded 3,458 in 2021; 3,099 in 2022 and 4,480 in 2023.

The chargesheeting rate was calculated as the percentage of cases charge-sheeted among total cases disposed off by police. In 2023, Pune recorded a 94 per cent chargesheeting rate. Pune



stood third in chargesheeting rates among 19 metro cities of India with Kochi (97.2 per cent) and Kolkata (94.7 per cent) taking first and second rank. Under SLL, Pune recorded an even higher chargesheeting rate of 98.9 per cent.

Among major crime heads in Pune city registered in 2023 were 101 murders, four culpable

homicides, 361 deaths due to negligence — of which 345 were road accidents and among those 115 were hit-and-run cases. There were six dowry deaths, 70 cases of abetment of suicide, 787 cases of kidnapping and abduction and 22 cases of human trafficking. Pune City reported 3,574 thefts of which 1,991 were those of vehicles. There were 612 burglaries and 349 robberies. Pune reported 134 cases of narcotics seizures in 2023.

Cyber Crime
A total of 86,420 cases were registered under Cyber Crimes head across India, showing an increase of 31.2 per cent in registration over 2022, when 65,893 cases were registered. Crime rate under this category increased from 4.8 in 2022 to 6.2 in 2023. Crime rate is the number of cases registered per one lakh population. During 2023, 68.9 per cent of cyber-crime cases registered were for the motive of financial fraud, followed by sexual exploitation, 4.9 per cent, and extortion, 3.8 per cent.

Rajkot: 3 from West Bengal sentenced to jail for remainder of their life for conspiracy to wage war against state

Rajkot court convicts three men who were arrested by the Gujarat ATS with a weapon and propaganda material

Ahmedabad . (Agency)
The additional sessions court in Rajkot Tuesday convicted three men from West Bengal for conspiring to wage war against the State and sentenced them to imprisonment for the remainder of their natural life.

Abdul Sukarali alias Abdullah Hajrat Sheikh (20), Aman Siraj Malik (23), and Saif Navaz Abu Sahid (23), who were arrested by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) on July 31, 2023, from Rajkot, had been booked under IPC Section 121(a) (conspiring to overawe, by means of criminal force or the show of criminal force, the central government or state government) and Sections 25(1-B)A (illegal possession of firearms and ammunition) and 27 (unlawful use of arms and ammunition) of the Arms Act.

The three were employed as jewellery artisans at Rajkot’s Soni Bazaar from where they were arrested for alleged links with militant organisation Al Qaeda. Malik belongs to Hooghly district while Sheikh and Sahid belong to Bardhaman district of West Bengal.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Public Prosecutor S K Vora said, “The ATS, on July 26,

2023, received information that some people were spreading propaganda regarding the state of Kashmiri Muslims. Based on the



information, the three men were arrested on July 31, 2023. The ATS seized a pistol and 18 cartridges from the accused. Devices with WhatsApp messages on Kashmiri Muslims and propagating disaffection against the government were also recovered from the accused. Based on these chats, the charges were proved.”

Vora said that the defence had argued that the chats didn’t mean they were waging war against

the state. “But the Section itself provides that if such a conversation is carried out, it amounts to conspiring to wage war against the state,” he said.

“I argued that such people are trained for months together, otherwise they wouldn’t have such a mindset and weapons. I also argued that if they are released from jail in 4-5 years, they could be radicalised further,” said Vora.

Regarding the background of the convicts, Vora said that they had come to Gujarat from West Bengal and worked as labourers. Additional Sessions Judge Ikramkhan Bashir Khan Pathan held the three guilty for waging, attempting to wage, or abetting the attempt to wage war against the state in the order pronounced on Tuesday.

Vora, however, confirmed that the prosecution did not establish the alleged ties of the convicts to any fundamentalist, radical or terrorist groups.

Regarding evidence presented during the one-and-half-year trial, Vora said, “The evidence included the pistol, cartridges, and chats in a group called ‘Rah-e-Hidayat’ and admissions of visiting certain masjids.”



targets warning them that their devices had been affected by malware. Then a call was made to the victims that their financial data including bank account details, credit card details would soon be stolen and misused. Then the callers used to take money from the victims on the pretext of installing antivirus protection or device safety applications. The money was being sought in various ways including cryptocurrency payments.

Police raided the call centre located on Magarpatta Road and arrested three persons identified as Nirmal Ajay Shah (38), the proprietor of the call centre and managers Atul Praveen Shrimali (30) and Ugandhar Sanjay Hadge (34). As many as 29 people working at the call centre have been booked and a search has been launched for two more proprietors/managers.

PMC identifies 20 land plots for parking near Pune Metro stations, to develop them independently

The lack of parking facilities is causing inconvenience for Pune Metro commuters, leading to traffic congestion, particularly as the feeder bus service has not been implemented.

Pune. Due to the growing demand for vehicle parking from commuters using the Pune Metro, the Pune civic body has identified 20 locations for parking. These include seven on J M Road, five on Nagar Road, and three on Karve Road.

However, instead of meeting the Pune Metro’s request for the land, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) plans to develop these parking areas independently. This approach will allow them to maintain ownership of the land and generate a revenue source for the civic body.

The Pune Metro currently operates two lines: from Pimpri Chinchwad to Swargate and from Vanaz to Ramwadi, with extensions of both routes underway. However, the lack of vehicle parking has been causing inconvenience for commuters, making last-mile connectivity difficult. Very few metro stations offer parking facilities, and even

those that do have insufficient space.

The feeder service, operated by PMPML through public transport buses, has not been implemented, leading to commuters parking their vehicles on the roadside and contributing to traffic congestion on the roads. The commuters parking illegally on roads are penalised. Thus, the Pune metro has been seeking land to develop parking infrastructure near the metro station for the convenience of citizens.

“There are many citizens who want to commute via metro rail to avoid loss of time in traffic jams. However, the lack of parking facilities is keeping them away from using the metro service as they find it inconvenient to travel from home to the



metro station in the absence of a feeder service and insufficient parking for vehicles near the station,” said a Pune Metro officer.

If parking facilities for private vehicles are not provided soon, commuters who have begun using the metro service are likely to return to

private vehicles, he said. There is a need for more parking options to attract additional commuters to the Pune metro rail and to help reduce traffic congestion on the city roads, he added.

“The PMC administration has identified 20 land parcels that can be developed for vehicle parking near metro stations. This will be for the convenience of commuters. The Pune metro has been demanding land for developing a parking facility, but the civic administration is exploring the possibility of developing it on its own,” said Dinkar Gojare, chief engineer of the PMC.

The civic body has to acquire land or hand over its land for the parking facility to Pune Metro, he said, “If the PMC develops the parking facility, then it will continue to hold

ownership of land and the infrastructure. It will also be a regular source of income for the civic body. This plan is under consideration.”

The civic body is undertaking the same initiative for Line 3, from Hinjewadi to Shivajinagar, which is scheduled to be operational by March next year. This development is planned for the first two metro lines, according to a civic officer.

Commuters welcome move
Civic activist Qaneez Sukhrani said the PMC decision to make available land for vehicle parking near metro stations will provide much relief to existing traffic congestion, especially on Nagar Road.

She said that residents of Nagar Road, including herself, had raised the issue in the Bombay High Court, and five such parking bays are likely to be constructed in the Nagar Road area.

Horace Alexander: A distant keeper of Gandhian faith

It is commonplace to say that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi made deep connections and commanded a loyal following not just within India, but from outside too. But it is true that only a few of his friends and collaborators in faraway lands are remembered and celebrated. Many significant ones have, over time, quietly gone behind the curtains of amnesia.

A new generation of Indians may benefit from their resurrection with a simple hope that it may cross-pollinate a new wave of idealism that may anywhere be in the making. But then, idealism itself has not remained a simple construct anymore. It is difficult to say if we are in the age of ruinous indifference or deliberate pragmatism. Perhaps this is unfair cynicism when it is the 156th anniversary of Gandhi’s birth tomorrow.As the violence of words and the noise of war engulfs us, when a whole category of idealists who were seen as conscientious objectors of war, as pacifists, peaceniks and disarmament activists have become extinct, it may be relevant to recall on Gandhi’s birthday one of his most devoted and significant Quaker friends and followers: Horace Alexander.

He was a Britisher who had shifted to the US in the late 1960s and lived there to be centenarian. He was 20 years younger to Gandhi, and till the very end evaluated everything he saw with a sparkling Gandhian lens.Alexander visited India for the first time in 1927-28, and was introduced to Gandhi by none other than Charles Freer ‘Dinabandhu’ Andrews. Andrews had written to Alexander in September 1927 from Rabindranath Tagore’s Shantiniketan on how to track and meet Gandhi while in India. Alexander met Gandhi for the first time in March 1928 at the Sabarmati ashram.

However, the primary reason for Alexander’s 1927 visit was not to see Gandhi. Andrews had persuaded him to fight the opium addiction in India from which the British government derived a large revenue. While at the League of Nations conference the same year for the limitation of drugs, Alexander had received a wire from Gandhi, the first serious communication between them, which urged him to tell the conference that India wanted prohibition of drugs except for medicinal purposes.Later, in 1931, when Gandhi went to London for the Round Table Conference, Woodbrooke, a Quaker institution in Birmingham, sent Alexander to assist Gandhi at his London office. That was the beginning of a purposeful and lasting relationship. By 1942, the friendship between Alexander and Gandhi had deepened, but Andrews, their common friend, had passed away. It is then, at the Sevagram ashram in Wardha, that Gandhi asked Alexander to keep his conscience: “I want you to do for me what Andrews used to do. Since he died two years ago, I have had no one to tell me when what I propose to do might alienate British people. I don’t want to do that. I want to win them. You must take Andrews’ place.”

Significantly, Alexander was with Gandhi when the communal tensions rose in the run-up to India’s partition. On the eve of independence, Alexander had spent time with Gandhi and H S Suhrawardy, the Muslim League chief minister of Bengal, in a deserted Muslim home in the Hindu quarter of Calcutta, where Gandhi persuaded a hostile crowd to accept Suhrawardy as a man who had turned his back to communal violence. He negotiated a tricky peace in what was seen as a very volatile and dangerous moment. Suhrawardy was seen as being largely responsible for the August 1946 Calcutta killings, he had therefore become totally untrustworthy for the Hindu population that comprised half of undivided Bengal. During this trying moment, Alexander brought a unique perspective and balance to Gandhi’s thought process

Chance to make H-1B curbs irrelevant

India can’t afford to ignore the basics if it wants to become a leader in technology development

US President Donald Trump recently signed a proclamation titled ‘Restriction on Entry of Certain Non-immigrant Workers’, imposing a \$100,000 fee on H-1B visa applications filed on behalf of workers currently outside America. The order will remain valid for 12 months — and it may be extended.The sudden announcement created panic among H-1B visa holders who were travelling outside America. Many took flights to return immediately before the rule came into force. Then, the White House clarified that the restriction did not apply to current H-1B holders or to applications filed before the specified date. It also said that case-by-case exemptions may be granted if the hiring was considered in the national interest or posed no threat to American welfare or security. The White House fact sheet said the new measure was necessary to curb abuse of the H-1B programme, prevent displacement of American workers and reinforce wage protections.The decree is likely to impact American companies, particularly in technology, finance and consulting sectors, which rely significantly on H-1B visas to bring in specialised skills in software engineering, data science, etc. Large companies will either relocate some roles overseas or hire more domestic graduates. They might encourage remote work so that talent remains outside America but can still contribute to US-based projects. Technology companies are assessing the damage the new measure can cause.

Tech stocks on Wall Street have remained relatively steady in the immediate aftermath, with only some companies heavily dependent on H-1B labour under pressure. In the long run, if key technical roles become costlier to fill, innovation cycles may slow down.Although the initial reaction to the Trump move in India was that of extreme shock, subsequent clarifications have brought much relief to IT services companies that cater to American clients. Typically, Indian outsourcing firms provide IT services to the American banking, finance, insurance and healthcare sectors. They do this both onsite (posting Indian engineers to work with clients in America) and offsite (employing engineers in India to work for American clients). Large services and development projects usually have both onsite and offsite components.

When the data communication infrastructure was not developed in India and Indian firms were yet to gain the confidence of their clients in the 1980s, all the work used



to be done onsite. Groups of Indian engineers would go to America and work with the clients there — a practice known as ‘body shopping.’ Indian firms have come a long way, progressively reducing the proportion of onsite work. The new visa rule could bring down onsite work to a bare minimum. In any case, the number of H-1B employees is only a fraction of the total headcount of the Indian IT industry. So, the overall impact is going to be marginal.As American and Indian firms adjust their strategies following the new visa rules, the larger questions relate to the future of the Indian talent pool in STEM (science, technology, engineering and

India for the quality of the workforce and scale as well. Even large pharmaceutical, aerospace giants and automobile firms are setting up centres in India to take advantage of the Indian STEM pool. This explains the boom in R&D outsourcing from India and the establishment of mega development centres by top tech firms such as Google, Amazon and Meta in Indian cities. The Indian STEM pool is generating patents, new processes, products and semiconductor designs for their parent companies while working for American and European firms operating from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Noida, etc. This is great as it generates high-class employment, brings foreign investment and contributes to the development and growth of the tech ecosystem. However, it is the same talent pool which is critical for India to gain an edge in technology and innovation.The benefits of the intellectual property generated by Indian techies in India centres of MNCs accrue to the parent companies. The same STEM pool can help generate patents and wealth for Indian corporations, provided they are willing to invest in R&D. India spends less than 1 per cent of its GDP on R&D, and the share of the private sector is abysmal.

As we move ahead, the quality of the STEM workforce also becomes critical. A study has found that fresh engineering graduates in China and America have a big head start over those from India and Russia in terms of critical thinking. Chinese graduates also have better skills than their counterparts in India and Russia in maths and physics. Such a comparatively poor show of Indian engineers may be due to an overemphasis on rote academic learning at the expense of higher-order cognitive skills, the study has concluded.

If India aspires to be a leader in technology development, as is often projected in the rhetoric of government officials, it can’t ignore the basics. We need enhanced and focused investment in fundamental research in universities and research institutions, private sector investment in R&D, improvement in the quality of education in elite and non-elite educational institutions and a clear pathway to develop quality STEM manpower for the benefit of India. This is the only way to make blips like the H-1B curbs irrelevant.

Settle dispute on dues for sustainable telecom sector

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 dispute between the Union government and telecom companies over calculating adjusted gross revenue (AGR) has dragged on for far too long. In a fresh petition filed Monday, Vodafone Idea, the country’s third-largest telecom operator, asked the Supreme Court to allow new grounds to seek relief from paying about Rs 83,000 crore in AGR-related dues. It has urged a waiver of nearly Rs 45,000 crore in penalty, interest, and interest on penalty, citing a recent Supreme Court judgement in Mineral Area Development Authority vs Steel Authority of India, where interest and penalties on disputed tax liabilities were waived even as the principal was upheld.The Supreme Court, however, has consistently ruled against the industry on AGR. It dismissed a similar plea by Vodafone, Airtel, and Tata Teleservices in May, and has since turned down all review petitions. The crux of the dispute lay in whether licence fees and spectrum charges should be calculated only on telecom revenues, as operators argued, or also on non-telecom



earnings such as capital gains and dividends, as the government insisted. The court sided with the government in 2019, closing a long legal battle but leaving the industry saddled with massive dues.

For the sake of a strong and sustainable telecom sector—the backbone of India’s digital economy—the government must now weigh whether persisting with litigation is in the national interest.

A one-time settlement, limited to recovery of principal while waiving penalties and interest, could provide much-needed stability without undermining the rule of law. After all, AGR itself was under dispute for years, and the government today is not just regulator and licensor but also a significant stakeholder through its equity in Vodafone Idea and its control of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited. The sector has endured repeated controversies; it is time at least the AGR issue was brought to a close

In mission mode for critical tech

India is building its own capacity in semiconductors, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, space technology, and biomanufacturing. All of it for missions aimed at ensuring self-reliance in critical technologies. There will be challenges ahead, but the road is worth travelling on

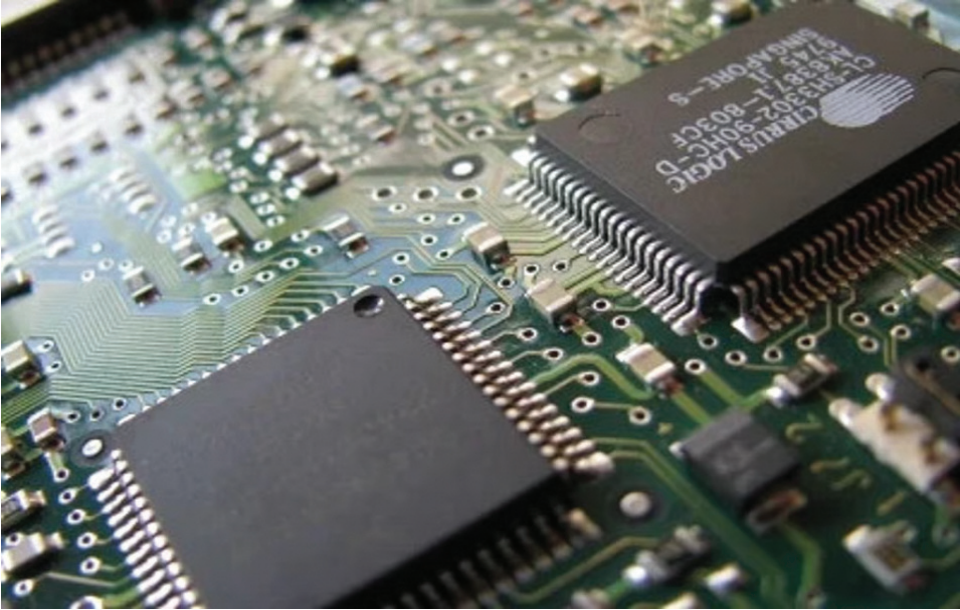
For decades, India’s brightest young minds often dreamed of working on technologies that seemed out of reach—chips, rockets, quantum computers. Those dreams are no longer distant. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, they are turning into reality, stitched into a national story of confidence and self-reliance. Modi has often said that “science and innovation are the pillars of Viksit Bharat”, and his government has treated this not as a rhetoric but as a roadmap.In the first 100 days of his third term, we saw decisions that spoke of intent: a ?1,000-crore fund for space startups, the National Biomanufacturing Policy (BioE3) to build a sustainable bioeconomy, and new systems to strengthen weather forecasting through space and IT integration. These moves, bold yet practical, signalled that India is not waiting for the world’s future, it is shaping its own.

Few things capture this better than semiconductors. For most Indians, a chip is invisible—it sits inside the phone, the car, the satellite. But in today’s world, semiconductors are power. They decide whether supply chains survive, whether economies thrive, whether nations remain secure. For too long, India depended on others for this power. That is now changing.In August 2025, the Union cabinet approved four new semiconductor units worth nearly ?4,600 crore in investment. With earlier approvals, the India Semiconductor Mission has already attracted projects of about ?1.60 lakh crore across six states—spanning fabs, compound semiconductor plants, and design-linked initiatives. Modi calls semiconductors “the new

steel of the digital age”—and in his vision, India will forge this steel for itself.

The semiconductor story is just the beginning. India is also entering frontiers that once felt like science fiction. The National Quantum Mission, with an outlay of ?6,000 crore, is nurturing hubs for computing, secure communication, sensing, and advanced materials. Partnerships with global leaders like IBM are ensuring that Indian scientists work shoulder-to-shoulder with the best in the world. The atmanirbhar 4G technology adopted by Bharat Sanchar Nigam (BSNL) in coordination with the Centre for Development of Telematics, Tata Consultancy Services and Tejas Networks is yet another step taken by the Union government. I have no doubt that in a few years, BSNL will be among the most trusted scalable and configurable telecom networks in the world.

Artificial intelligence is no longer just a buzzword, it is being woven into governance, farming, healthcare, and education. Modi has been clear that “technology must come with trust and transparency”, and India is positioning itself as a global voice for responsible AI. Startups working in cybersecurity, defence tech, and space systems are being



encouraged to think big. Young innovators now see deep tech not as a Western dream but as an Indian opportunity.And then there is biotechnology where technology meets life itself. BioE3 aims to make India a \$300-billion bioeconomy by 2030. Built

material can do so in India, for India, and for the world.What makes this push so different is the way it feels personal. Modi does not talk about chips only as industry, he talks about them as hope for a young graduate. He does not announce AI missions only as policy, he frames them as tools that will help a farmer predict weather or a doctor detect disease. In his words: “Technology must not remain locked in labs. It must touch the lives of the poorest, it must empower the youth, and it must become a bridge to Viksit Bharat.”That is why this moment feels like more than policy—it feels like participation. The student writing code for quantum algorithms, the startup founder designing drones, the scientist in a biotech lab—all now know that their government is backing them, and that their work is not on the margins but at the centre of India’s story.

The road ahead is demanding. Semiconductors will require precision and scale, AI will need guardrails, quantum breakthroughs will take time. But the foundation has been laid. This year, ‘Made in India’ chips were realised. By 2030, India will be a global leader in biotechnology. Quantum hubs will expand, AI startups will multiply, and deep tech will no longer be a niche but a mainstream driver of growth.

NEWS BOX

Feud over compensation in Olympian's family: Two brothers 'assault' his wife, booked

Lucknow. (Agency)

The ongoing demolition of Olympian hockey player Mohammed Shahid's ancestral house for a road widening project in Varanasi has turned into a full-blown family feud, with his wife, Parveen, getting an FIR registered against her two brothers-in-law for alleged assault.

Officials said the feud has erupted in Shahid's family over the compensation money offered to them by the Varanasi district administration for razing the house in the Kacheri area of the city.

While Shahid's wife and other family members have accepted Rs 32 lakh compensation, Shahid's two elder brothers — Riyazuddin and Moinuddin — have refused to accept it, calling it inadequate.

In her complaint to the police, Parveen alleged that the two brothers-in-law, Riyazuddin and Moinuddin, in their late 60s, tried to strangle her and hurled abuses for accepting the compensation money.

"The FIR has been lodged on a complaint by Parveen against her brothers-in-law. While some of her family members have taken the compensation, others have not. This has led to a family dispute. She has alleged that when she went to the house to gather her belongings on Tuesday night, an attempt was made to strangle her," said Additional Superintendent of Police (Varanasi Cantonment) Nitin Taneja.

Police said Riyazuddin and Moinuddin have been booked under BNS sections for physical assault.

Speaking over the phone, Parveen said: "Acting on the evacuation notice, we had gone to the ancestral house on Tuesday night to collect our remaining belongings. There, my husband's two elder brothers — Riyazuddin and Moinuddin — misbehaved with me and used foul language. Later, they held me by my neck. They blamed me for settling for lesser compensation."

More arrests, 'encounter': Bareilly on edge, houses locked, families fearful

Lucknow. (Agency)

There are no customers in the markets, some homes in the area are shut, the families of many of those arrested are fearful, with at least one claiming they haven't been to meet the accused, and there have been fervent appeals for the administration to at least stop demolishing residences.

When The Indian Express reached Bareilly Wednesday, five days after clashes erupted over the "I Love Muhammad" row, a palpable sense of unease pervaded lanes and markets in the areas affected by the violence. At Old City, "I Love Muhammad" banners and posters hung between houses or were pasted on the gates and walls of homes. The areas near Nourahli Masjid and Ala Hazrat Dargah were under heavy police cover.

The police said they had arrested nine more associates of Ittehad-e-Millat Council (IMC) chief Maulana Tauqueer Khan — including two who were shot in the leg in another "shootout" — for their alleged role in the violent protests on September 26. The latest arrests took the total number of those held over the violence to 82.

Tauqueer, accused of "masterminding" the clashes that erupted after Friday prayers, was arrested on Saturday. On Tuesday, IMC district president Tazim was arrested after an "encounter" during which he was shot in the leg.

A missed call, secret relationship, and a chilling discovery in a well: How Hardoi Police cracked 2-year-old murder case

HYDERABAD. (Agency)

Nearly two years after a 30-year-old Dalit woman went missing in Hardoi, the district police on Tuesday claimed to have cracked the case — she was allegedly murdered by a youth from another community who she was in a relationship with, they said.

Police said in August 2023, the youth and the victim had an argument and she allegedly threatened to lodge a false rape case against him. Police said he allegedly killed her and disposed of her body by dumping it in a dry well.

Circle Officer Santosh Kumar Singh said the youth, Maseedul (25), is on the run, and Hardoi Police have arrested his younger brother, Sameedul (21), and their father, Mohammad Ayub (57), for their alleged involvement in the crime. Singh added that raids are underway to trace and arrest Maseedul.

Acting on information provided by the arrested duo, police went to the well and recovered skeletal remains, as well as clothes, a hair clip, and slippers. The woman's family later identified the items as hers. The remains have been sent for a postmortem examination and the report is awaited.

"We managed to crack the case through the victim's call detail records and other linked phone numbers," said Singh, adding that a DNA test of the remains will be conducted.

Police said the relationship began when Maseedul received a missed call from the victim and the two then started speaking regularly over the phone.

NFR observes Gandhi Jayanti with reverence Monthlong Special Campaign 5.0 on Swachhata launched

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 02nd October:

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) observed the 156th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi today with due reverence and solemnity. Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager led the observance by lighting the ceremonial lamp and offering floral tribute to the Father of the Nation at the NFR Headquarter Complex. Shri Arun Kumar Chaudhary, General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction) offered floral tribute to the Father of the Nation at Nirman Vatika, adjacent to the office complex of the General Manager (Construction), Maligaon. The event was marked by the participation of senior officials, staffs at various locations who collectively remembered Mahatma Gandhi's values and teachings. The occasion served as a reaffirmation of N.F. Railway's commitment to Gandhiji's ideals of truth, non-violence, cleanliness and selfless

service to society. A tree plantation program was also undertaken on the occasion at Maligaon. General



Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway & General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway (Construction) alongwith other senior officials planted saplings on

this auspicious occasion. As part of Swachhata Hi Seva 2025, Northeast Frontier Railway undertook a significant green initiative on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 156th Birth Anniversary. Passengers of 29 Mail/Express trains originating on Gandhi Jayanti from various stations of NFR like Naharlagun, Agartala, Silchar, Kishanganj, Alipurduar, Guwahati etc were provided with compostable bags manufactured by IIT Guwahati for bedroll distribution. These are in addition to the 26 Mail/Express trains where such initiative was launched from 17th September, 2025. Unlike conventional plastic, these bags are eco-friendly, non-toxic and made from renewable resources. They decompose naturally without leaving harmful

residues, support waste segregation and composting and help in reducing single-use plastic pollution. The expenditure towards this eco-friendly initiative is being borne by the State Bank of India, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, making it a Net Zero cost project for NFR. This initiative reflects NFR's continued commitment to promoting a cleaner and greener environment. Alongside this, the Ministry of Railways has launched Special Campaign 5.0 to be held from 02nd till 31st October, 2025, a focused initiative to institutionalize Swachhata across all Government offices, including Indian Railways. The campaign will emphasize scrap disposal for revenue generation, e-waste management, space optimization, e-file review and weeding and timely grievance redressal. Special focus areas include waste-to-wealth projects and effective e-office practices. Cleanliness drives will also be undertaken and citizen-centric 'Amrit Samwad' programs will be organized at major stations, including 105 Amrit Bharat Stations, to raise public awareness and participation. Through this initiative, NFR aims to inspire sustainable practices in railway operations while contributing to the nationwide movement towards environmental preservation.

Cheema announces Rs 10k interest-free festival loan for Group D employees

Jalandhar. (Agency)

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Wednesday announced a significant benefit for the state government's Group D employees, offering an interest-free advance of Rs 10,000 each to celebrate the upcoming festival season. This initiative aims to provide financial support to nearly 35,894 employees.

In view of the Diwali festival on October 20, the finance minister announced that the disbursement of the amount is scheduled to be withdrawn from the treasury by October 17. "The repayment of this interest-free advance will be recovered in five equal monthly instalments, with the deduction process



commencing from the salary of November 2025."

Highlighting the government's commitment to its workforce, Cheema said during the fiscal 2024-

25, the state had 36,065 Group D employees, of whom 13,375 (approximately 37 per cent) availed themselves of the same advance, which incurred an expenditure of Rs 13,37,50,000.

He said, "If all eligible Group D employees avail themselves of this advance this financial year, the total expenditure is estimated to be Rs 35.89 crore."

He confirmed that an initial budget provision of Rs 20 crore has been made for this purpose for 2025-26. "Should additional expenditure be required to cover all applications, the necessary funds will be secured by obtaining additional allocation through the revised estimates for this financial year," Cheema said.

Build a society that ensures safety, and equality for women : Hema Malini

The Sikh Times

Mathura, – Mathura Sri Ram Leela Sabha to burn 85 ft effigy of Ravan, this evening, an office bearer of Sri Ram Leela Sabha said. The effigy of Ravan's Brother Ahiravan will be 65 ft high, Jayanti Prasad Agrawal, President of Sri Ram Leela Sabha, said.



An electronic firecracker show will follow the burning of the Effigy of Ravan, he added. 180-year-old Ramlila is going to deliver an important message this year, to end the use of single-use Plastic "Ravan" this year. Media coordinator Amit Bhardwaj said. It's very important to raise awareness among people towards very important issues of our society, connecting religious festivals with these societal issues may benefit every stakeholder, he added. Mathura MP Hema Malini, while extending her wishes on Dusshera said the day becomes special as birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri falls on the day of Vijay Dashmi. "The day symbolises triumph of good over evil and celebrates ahimsa, truth and humility," Hema Malini added. As the UP government is running a program to empower women called Mission Shakti 5, it's important to end the evil of domestic violence against women and to build a society that ensures safety, equality, and opportunity for women, she said. The Ram Leela Sabha has made elaborate arrangements for this evening. Tight security arrangements are in place, and an appropriate traffic plan is in place to ensure congestion free movement of traffic.

Sanjay Gupta gets additional charge of Chief Secy, Prabodh Saxena appointed HPSEBL chairman hours after retirement

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh government on Wednesday handed over additional charge of the Chief Secretary to Sanjay Gupta, a 1988-batch IAS officer and the senior-most officer of the state, after Prabodh Saxena vacated the post after his retirement on Tuesday.

However, within hours of his retirement, Saxena, a 1990-batch IAS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre, was appointed the chairman of the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited (HPSEBL) for a three-year term.

Gupta, who holds a diploma in management and a degree in civil engineering, was serving as the HPSEBL chairman, but was shifted to the Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board (HSPSCB) to accommodate Saxena.

"Till the notification of a permanent Chief Secretary, Gupta will hold the additional charge of Chief Secretary," a senior government officer said. Besides, Gupta has also been assigned the charge of Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Town and Country Planning and Housing, replacing 1998-batch

IAS officer Devesh Kumar.

Meanwhile, ACS Onkar Chand Sharma, who is in charge of the Tribal Development Department, has been given additional charge as Managing Director of the Ropeways and Rapid Transport System Development Corporation Ltd.

ACS Kamlesh Kumar Pant, a 1993-batch IAS officer, will serve as the ACS (Revenue) and Financial Commissioner (Revenue).

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu told mediapersons, "Any IAS officer can be given the charge of officiating Chief Secretary."

The names of 1988-batch Sanjay Gupta and 1993-batch Kamlesh Kumar Pant were among the front-runners for the post of Chief Secretary. As per the notification, the new HPSEBL chairman, Saxena, a 1990-batch IAS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre, will hold the rank, status, and responsibilities equivalent to those of the Chief Secretary and report to Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.



Punjab Mandi Board to transfer Mohali's fruit and vegetable market to Urban Development Authority

Mohali. (Agency)

The Punjab Mandi Board has decided to transfer Mohali's modern fruit and vegetable market in Sector 65 (Phase XI), which has been closed for 11 years, to the Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA). In its meeting held on September 25, the board of directors approved the transfer of the 12-acre site to PUDA under certain conditions.

The state-of-the-art mandi, inaugurated on February 8, 2014, by then chief minister Parkash Singh Badal during the Akali Dal regime, was constructed on 21 acres of land in the village of Kambali, which also houses the Punjab Mandi Board's office. While the Board office will continue to function from the premises, PUDA will now take over the mandi's unused space and infrastructure. During the meeting, it was noted that Punjab's

chief secretary had recommended transferring unused government properties to PUDA, following which the matter was formally approved. Electricity Regulatory Commission?

Chairing the meeting, Mandi Board Chairman Harchand Singh Barsat said, "The 12-acre fruit and vegetable market in Mohali, which has been lying shut for the past 11 years, will be handed over to PUDA. This transfer will fetch the Mandi Board over Rs 700 crore from PUDA."

He further announced that the Board plans to set up a new mandi on a much larger scale. "In the first week of October, advertisements will be issued to purchase approximately 200 acres of land on a



national highway for the establishment of a new modern mandi. Construction work will begin as soon as the land is finalised," Barsat said. According to a letter written on September 26 by the Mandi Board's deputy

general manager (Estate) to the administrative secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department, the land transfer will be carried out at the current collector rates. Additional conditions include refunding the amount paid by shopkeepers during the e-auction of mandi shops, with 6 per cent interest, to the buyers.

PUDA will also bear the entire cost incurred by the Mandi Board in the construction of the existing market. Furthermore, the existing solar power agreement for the sheds will be terminated. With the transfer, the decade-old unused project will pave the way for new urban development, while the Mandi Board shifts focus to creating a bigger and more functional mandi hub on a national highway.

Two crore footfall in state's Shaktipeeths during Navratri: UP govt

Lucknow. (Agency)

FIFTY-ONE SHAKTIPEETHS in Uttar Pradesh witnessed a footfall of nearly two crore during the nine days of Shardiya Navratri, including 50 lakh at Vindhyavasini Dham in Mirzapur alone, the state government said on Wednesday.

According to a government statement, Mirzapur's Vindhyavasini temple, regarded as the state's most prominent Siddhpeeth, witnessed a surge in devotees this Navratri. Against the usual 100,000-150,000 daily visitors, the shrine saw 400,000-500,000 devotees each day, with numbers touching 600,000-700,000 during the final three days. The newly built Vindhyachal Corridor eased the heavy footfall, offering pilgrims improved facilities and access.

The data said that Maa Vishalakshi temple, one of the 51 Shaktipeeths, devotees' numbers multiplied during Navratri compared to normal days.

From Saptami to Navami, 20,000-30,000 devotees visited daily. At Gayatri Shakti Peeth Choura Devi temple in Varanasi, more than 100,000 devotees came until Navami, while at Maa Kushmanda temple in Durga Kund, more than 12 lakh devotees visited in nine days. In the past three days alone, around 200,000 visited daily.

Western UP's Saharanpur witnessed nearly seven lakh visiting Shakumbhari Dham and around four lakh offering prayers at the Tripur Bala Sundari temple. At Maa Pateshwari temple in Balrampur, nearly 650,000 devotees arrived this Navratri. The largest crowd gathered from Saptami to Navami. The temple management also organised a 15-day fair.

During Navratri, Maa Alop Shankari Dham in Prayagraj witnessed a massive influx of devotees, with over 12 lakh people visiting the temple. To accommodate the large crowds, the government invested nearly Rs 6 crore in passenger sheds, lighting and beautification works. At the Tarkulha Devi temple in Gorakhpur, around 50,000 devotees visited daily, crossing 100,000 on Navami.

Rain soaks ravanas, CM Rekha Gupta hails ‘little goddesses’

►**The CM bowed at the feet of young girls, removed their footwear, applied tilak on their foreheads and tied sacred mauli threads on their wrists in a symbolic gesture of reverence and maternal affection.**

Agency New Delhi.

As the national capital prepared for Dussehra celebrations, a sudden spell of rain on Tuesday cast a shadow over the festive spirit, leaving artisans and organisers scrambling to salvage what they could and despairing over how they will ever recover their losses. While Shardiya Navratri concluded with Maha Navami, the city witnessed a mix of emotions—devotion and anticipation tempered by weather-induced setbacks. From sprawling Dussehra grounds in Subhash Nagar and Dwarka to local parks across Delhi, artisans had been working for weeks to construct towering effigies of Ravana, Meghnad and Kumbhkaran. However, Tuesday evening’s downpour damaged many of these creations—some beyond repair—leading to concerns over mounting financial losses. For many, the unexpected rain turned excitement into anxiety, dampening the mood ahead of one of the city’s biggest annual

events. Meanwhile, on the occasion of Maha Navami, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta performed the traditional Kanya Pujan at the Government Girls’ Secondary School in Haiderpur, Shalimar Bagh.



She bowed at the feet of young girls, removed their footwear, applied tilak on their foreheads and tied sacred mauli threads on their wrists in a symbolic gesture of reverence and maternal affection. Describing the girls as “little goddesses,” Gupta said their innocence

reflects the true embodiment of the Divine Mother. “The brightness of the future shines through their smiles,” she said. She added that Navratri celebrates not just faith and devotion, but also the strength and compassion represented by women and girls.

The chief minister reaffirmed her government’s commitment to ensuring equal opportunities and a safe environment for every girl in the city. She highlighted the Delhi government’s Honslon Ki Udaan (Flight of Courage) scheme, which aims to identify and nurture the talents of children who lack the resources to realise their potential. “Navratri reminds us of our responsibility to empower daughters with education, opportunity and safety. Every girl is the hope and strength of our society,” Gupta said.

The chief minister stressed that daughters are the foundation of families and society, and their empowerment is essential for the progress of the nation. She said the festival serves as a reminder of the collective duty to ensure education, equal opportunities and a safe environment for girls.

Two gangsters contracted to kill an influencer held in Delhi after gunfire exchange



Agency New Delhi.

Two alleged members of Rohit Godara-Goldy Brar-Virender Charan gang were arrested on Thursday morning following an encounter in southeast Delhi’s Jaitpur-Kalindi Kunj Road, police said. The accused have been identified as Rahul, a resident of Panipat in Haryana, and Sahil, a resident of Bhiwani in Haryana.

According to the police, the accused were allegedly attempting to kill a social media influencer. On Thursday morning, following an encounter with a team of Special Cell on Jaitpur-Kalindi Kunj Road, they were apprehended, a senior police officer said.

During preliminary information, Rahul was found involved in the triple murder case that took place in Yamuna Nagar, Haryana in December last year. He had been absconding as he was not identified, the officer said. These two criminals, under instructions from overseas-based gangsters Rohit Godara, Goldy Brar, and Virender Charan, had been attempting to kill a social media influencer. They had already conducted reconnaissance of their target in Mumbai and Bengaluru over the past few days, the officer stated.

Both injured were taken to the hospital for treatment. The firearms used by them and a motorcycle have been seized from the scene, and further legal proceedings are underway, police added.

Police recover forged photos, porn material in Delhi godman's molestation case



Agency New Delhi.

Delhi Police has recovered CDs with alleged pornographic content, a sex toy and three forged photos during the ongoing investigation into godman Chaitanyanand Saraswati, accused of sexually harassing 17 female students at a private institute in Vasant Kunj.

The items recovered include forged photos purportedly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former US President Barack Obama, and a UK leader, a senior police officer privy to the investigation said.

As part of the investigation, police, along with Saraswati, revisited the institute and conducted a fresh search of his premises. The police have also traced the accused’s movements to several locations in Uttarakhand, where he stayed while evading arrest, the officer added. Saraswati, who is in police custody, has been reportedly evasive in his responses to questions, failing to cooperate with investigators. Police discovered chats on his phone where he allegedly manipulated and coerced several girls, along with photos of air hostesses and screenshots of other girls’ mobile display pictures. The chat records found on his phone showed that the accused called the women “baby doll” multiple times. The police are also probing Saraswati’s use of a Volvo with a forged diplomatic number plate, “39 UN 1,” which was found at the SRISIIM institute.

Drunk teacher abuses, snatches food from delivery agent in Delhi's Narela

Agency New Delhi.

A food delivery boy was allegedly heckled by a teacher who refused to give money after taking the order from him in outer north Delhi’s Narela area, police said on Wednesday. The teacher was allegedly in an inebriated condition when the incident took place.

According to the officials, they received information on September 29 where one caller Arjun, a food delivery boy, reported that two people in an inebriated state, ordered food. “At the time of delivery, they hurled abuses at him, snatched the order and refused to pay,” police said. A police team responded to a call made by the delivery agent, by visiting the spot and found a visibly drunk man, who was later identified as Rishi Kumar, a teacher by profession, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outernorth) Harekshwar Swami said. The officer said Kumar resisted the police’s order to comply and was forced to undergo a medical examination. Subsequently, he was taken to hospital for medical examination (MLC), where he tested positive for alcohol. At the hospital, he said his name was ‘Ram Kumar’ to conceal his identity, he said.

Arjun could not file a formal complaint at the time since he had to rush, the DCP said. Though at the time, Rishi Kumar was counselled and sent home, the matter is still being investigated, he added. In another incident, an MBBS student at GTB hospital was allegedly physically harassed by an assistant professor. GTB Enclave police station received a PCR call on September 26 where the woman caller stated about the incident.

Delhi government compiling data on ICC in public, private organisations

Agency New Delhi.

The Delhi government is conducting a survey of all public and private organisations to compile data on the formation of internal complaints committees (ICC) to ensure that the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, is properly implemented.

The move comes in the wake of a recent Supreme Court order directing strict implementation of provisions of the Act by all states and Union territories. The Act provisions intend to ensure a safe workplace and provide easy access to a redressal mechanism to victims of sexual harassment at workplaces. Section 4 of the Act provides that every employer employing 10 or more employees will mandatorily constitute an Internal



Complaint Committee (ICC).

The Supreme Court, hearing a case in August this year, passed certain directions, including a survey of such organisations or establishments having ICCs, by the district officers concerned, and assistance from labour commissioners. The Women and Child Development department of the Delhi government, in a letter, has said that the data of organisations will be shared by all the labour department offices in the districts and the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health with the district magistrates concerned, a Delhi government officer said. Urgent compliance with the apex court order has been directed.

The district magistrates have been appointed as district officers under Section 5 of the said Act and have an overall responsibility for the effective implementation of various provisions of the Act.

Delhi to get two biomedical waste plants, says Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa

Agency New Delhi.

Delhi is set to get two modern biomedical-waste treatment facilities to strengthen its disposal system, Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said on Wednesday. The plants will serve the east, northeast and Shahdara districts (Region 1), and the west, southwest and central districts (Region 2). The move follows a review which found that the capital’s existing facilities cannot handle the biomedical-waste load, currently around 40 metric tonnes a day. The Niloti plant, operating on repeated extensions, will be phased out and replaced by the new units.

Sirsa said the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has been directed to issue tenders within three months, with letters of award finalised soon after. The projects will run on a build-own-operate (BOO) model with a 10-



year term. The National Productivity Council (NPC) has been engaged for transparency and rigorous scrutiny. “This is 24x7 work with clear deadlines—choosing long-term fixes over short-term optics so results are visible on the ground,” Sirsa said. He added that the new facilities would ensure biomedical waste never becomes an air or health hazard for the national capital.

Daily dashboards on tender stages, land readiness, clearances and

mobilisation will be submitted to the minister’s office to track progress and prevent service gaps during Niloti’s transition. Officials said the two plants would ease logistical bottlenecks and bring capacity closer to healthcare clusters. Delhi currently lags behind other metros operating more treatment units despite similar population sizes. “By strengthening capacity where it is needed most, Delhi is rebuilding the foundation—coverage, monitoring, and compliance,” Sirsa said, stressing that the initiative would create “future-ready infrastructure that protects public health and the environment.” The government said the initiative aligns with its broader push to plug legacy gaps in waste management and ensure compliance with Central Pollution Control Board and DPCC norms.

Pollution forecast more accurate now in Delhi

Agency New Delhi.

Delhi’s air pollution forecasting system has shown remarkable progress in recent years, with a new study finding it can now warn residents of poor air quality days with more than 80 per cent accuracy.

The analysis, released on Wednesday by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), assessed the performance of the city’s Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) during the last two winter seasons and found its predictions to be far more reliable. According to the study, AQEWS successfully anticipated 83 out of 92 instances of “very poor and above” air quality (AQI over 300) in the winter of 2023–24. In the following winter, its accuracy improved further, correctly

forecasting 54 out of 58 such days. Severe pollution episodes (AQI above 400), which are traditionally harder to predict, also showed better



outcomes: while the system flagged only one out of 15 such days in 2023–24, the number rose to 5 out of 14 in 2024–25. “The high accuracy of Delhi’s early warning systems is a positive sign. Updated emission inventories can improve the accuracy

further. It would enable us to have a better understanding of what pollutes Delhi’s air and in what quantities,” said Mohammad Rafiuddin, programme lead at CEEW. He stressed that scaling up such systems across India would require “science, funding and transparency” to strengthen credibility and ensure that mitigation plans are rooted in robust evidence. Eight other Indian cities, including Pune, Ahmedabad and Jaipur, are already using AQEWS, with more set to adopt it under the National Clean Air Programme. First introduced in Delhi in 2018 after recurring smog episodes and dust storms, AQEWS is jointly operated by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the India Meteorological Department.

Fake QR code scam at petrol pumps across five states exposed, two arrested

Former fast-food vendors who plunged into the world of crime after incurring losses in their business, the accused targeted unsuspecting customers and petrol pumps across multiple states, swindling lakhs of rupees.

Agency New Delhi.

A high-tech scam involving fake QR codes at petrol pumps has been uncovered by police in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, exposing a widespread operation that tricked customers into paying fraudsters instead of the pump owners. Former fast-food vendors who plunged into the world of crime after incurring losses in their business, the accused targeted unsuspecting customers and petrol pumps across multiple states, swindling lakhs of rupees. The scam came to light on September 23 at Rana Filling Station in Doaghat, Baghpat, when the pump owner noticed missing payments during a routine account check. After a complaint was filed, police and the cyber cell launched an investigation that revealed the method used by the accused.

Police said the two men would visit petrol pumps late at night, remove the legitimate QR code, and replace it with a counterfeit one linked to their own bank account. As a result, unsuspecting customers’ payments for fuel were diverted directly to the fraudsters while petrol was dispensed as usual.

CCTV footage captured the suspects in the act of switching QR codes, which provided police with crucial evidence. The accused were identified as Rinku Kumar from Bathinda, Punjab, and Vipin from Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh. During questioning, they admitted to previously running a fast-food business in Haridwar before turning to cybercrime after suffering business losses. “The police received information that fake QR codes were being used to



defraud petrol pumps. The cyber team was assigned to the case, and after continuous investigation, two people were arrested who had carried out scams in UP, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh. They were previously involved in a fast-food business, and after incurring losses, they turned to this criminal activity,” Superintendent of Police (Baghpat),

Suraj Kumar Rai, said.

Police said the duo generated QR codes tied to Rinku Kumar’s bank account and placed them not only at petrol stations but also in other public places across Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. They reportedly swindled lakhs of rupees through these transactions.

Further investigation revealed that this was not an isolated incident in Baghpat. Other complaints had been filed on the national cybercrime portal from locations including Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur, indicating a broader network of targeted petrol pumps. Authorities seized numerous fake scanning devices from the suspects, which were used to swiftly change QR codes at targeted sites.

NEWS BOX

Afghanistan's Rashid Khan blames media for 'second-best in Asia' tag

New Delhi. (Agency)

Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan has distanced his team from the 'Asia's second-best team' label ahead of the T20I series against Bangladesh, emphasising that the title was given by media and fans rather than the squad itself. Afghanistan's group-stage elimination at the Asia Cup 2025, after losses to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, sparked disappointment from supporters and pundits. Addressing the media before the Sharjah T20I series, Rashid Khan clarified that his squad never self-proclaimed the widely discussed tag. "There is one thing which is always going around the media, people saying, best second Asia team, this, that. We didn't say that, but I think in the past, we performed, and that's where we got the tag. If you look into Asia Cup, World Cup semifinal, ODI World Cup, we beat in big teams. Champions Trophy, we beat England. That's why we got the tag. In future, if we don't perform well, definitely we will be number three, four, five, six. I feel we haven't given ourselves that tag. We always trying our best to be better team and to perform better on the day. Sometimes you do well, sometimes you don't. That's a part of the game. But your



mindset should be positive in always having that hunger to perform well. But that topic around the media going on, second best Asia team, out of the Asia Cup, this, that, we haven't given ourselves that tag," Rashid said. Rashid Khan voiced his frustration at the mockery Afghanistan faced post-elimination, calling the criticism unfair. "They bring something into the table where people discuss it and make fun of it. And I feel like nowadays, the more you make fun of someone, the more people like you. And I feel like it's going on a different level. And then it doesn't look nice," Rashid added. He admitted the squad had not played many T20Is recently: "We haven't played much T20Is as a team to be honest. Before the tri-series, the last we played was in the World Cup which was seven-eight months ago. But to get back from that, gather as a team, it does take time. But it is good for us," highlighting the importance of match practice.

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick blames fatigue for Champions League loss to PSG

MILAN. (Agency)

FC Barcelona coach Hansi Flick has blamed fatigue from the tough schedule behind the team's Champions League loss to Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday, October 1. PSG came from behind to beat Barca 2-1 away from home, in a match where they dominated the play in the second half. Barcelona manager Hansi Flick conceded that Paris St Germain were worthy winners at the Montjuic Olympic Stadium and said that his team needed to improve in key areas. Speaking at the post-match press conference, Flick acknowledged that his side, who took the lead through Ferran Torres in the 19th minute, were second-best for much of the contest. PSG, despite missing several key players, equalised through 19-year-old Senny Mayulu in the first half



before substitute Goncalo Ramos scored a 90th-minute winner. "Today, I don't think we can say we're on the same level," Flick admitted. "I believe in my team, but today we didn't show our best side. After 35 minutes, PSG took control of the match. I don't think we played to our full potential. But that's also important in the Champions League. They deserved the win."

Players Were Very Tired: Flick
Flick pointed to fatigue as a factor in Barcelona's struggles during the second half, where PSG dominated possession and created the more dangerous opportunities. I think you could see in the second half that some players were very tired," he explained. "When you're a bit tired, it shows on the pitch. But everyone gave their all on the pitch. With the score at 1-1, you have to have better structure in defence. We have to learn and improve." The German manager also emphasised the importance of maintaining defensive organisation and making better use of possession, praising PSG's ability to exploit spaces and impose their game.

AFC Champions League: FC Goa loses to FC Istiklol in Two Group D clash

FC Goa lost 0-2 to FC Istiklol in their second AFC Champions League Group D match, as the Tajik champions secured their first win of the campaign.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Two second-half goals condemned FC Goa to a 0-2 defeat against Tajikistan's FC Istiklol in their second Group D outing of the AFC Champions League 2, leaving the Indian Super League side still searching for their first points in the tournament. Istiklol bounced back from a heavy opening loss to claim their first win, while FC Goa now face an uphill task to revive their campaign. The match saw both teams create chances in a scrappy first half, with FC Goa goalkeeper Hrishik Tiwari producing a series of saves to keep the scores level. FC Istiklol, who had suffered a 0-5 defeat to Saudi Arabia's Al



Nassr in their previous outing, showed greater attacking intent after the break and capitalized on defensive errors from their Indian opponents. Rustam Soirov broke the deadlock just a minute into the second half, capitalizing on a mix-up between Sandesh

Jhingan and Pol Moreno near the six-yard box to fire into the top left corner past Tiwari. Earlier, Tiwari had denied Soirov, Manuchehr Safarov, and Muhammadjon Rahimov in the opening exchanges. FC Goa's best opportunity in the first half came in the

22nd minute when Borja Herrera's corner resulted in a goalmouth scramble, but Pol Moreno was unable to convert, sending his effort over the bar. Another chance saw Herrera connect with a Boris Singh cross, but Istiklol keeper Stosic Nikola produced a crucial save to keep the match goalless at halftime. The second half saw Istiklol increase pressure on the Goan defense. Substitute Reza Dehghani, who entered in the 66th minute, doubled his side's lead eight minutes later, pouncing on a loose ball after Rahimov's fumbled shot and blasting past Tiwari from outside the area.

Despite falling behind, FC Goa pressed forward in search of a goal. Javi Siverio and Brison Fernandes had chances in the 55th minute, but neither could find the target. In stoppage time, Dejan Drazic's last-ditch strike in a crowded box was sent high, as Istiklol held firm to secure a clean sheet. FC Goa have now suffered back-to-back losses in Group D. FC Istiklol, after their initial loss to Al Nassr, moved up with their first three points in the group. Both teams are set to play again on October 22, with FC Goa hosting Al Nassr and Istiklol meeting Al Zawraa.

India U19 hammer Australia U19 in 1st Youth Test after Devendran, Suryavanshi heroics

MADRID. (Agency)

India Under-19 started their Youth Test campaign in style, defeating Australia Under-19 by an innings and 58 runs in Brisbane. The visitors dominated all departments, with Vaibhav Suryavanshi's blistering hundred, Vedant Trivedi's patient 140, and Deepesh Devendran's eight wickets shaping a one-sided contest.

After bowling out Australia for 243 in the first innings, India took charge through Suryavanshi and Trivedi. Suryavanshi smashed 113 off just 86 balls, hitting nine fours and eight sixes at a strike rate of over 130. At the other end, Trivedi played the perfect anchor, compiling 140 from 192 deliveries. Contributions from skipper Ayush Mhatre (21), Khilan Patel (49) and Abhigyan Kundu (26) carried India to 428 in just 81.3 overs, handing them a big lead of 185 runs. For Australia, Hayden Schiller's 3/88 and captain Will

Malajczuk's 3/70 were the only positives in an otherwise expensive bowling effort. Earlier, in Australia's first innings, Steven Hogan showed resilience with a



marathon 92 off 246 balls. He held the innings together while Hollick (38) and

Malajczuk (21) chipped in. But Deepesh Devendran ripped through the middle and lower order, finishing with 5/45, while Kishan Kumar bagged three wickets to end Australia's hopes of a bigger score.

Australia's second innings collapsed under pressure. Openers fell cheaply, and only Aryan Sharma offered some resistance with an entertaining 43 off 44 balls, striking three sixes. Skipper Malajczuk (22) and Hollick (13) tried to grind, but wickets kept tumbling. Deepesh added three more wickets to his tally, while Khilan Patel (3/19) and Anmoljeet Singh (2/55) also chipped in. The hosts were bundled out for 127 in 49.3 overs. On Day 5, Australia resumed still far behind and had no answer to India's bowling. Aryan Sharma's counterattacking knock gave brief hope, but once he fell to Kishan Kumar, the end came quickly. Deepesh claimed the last wicket, sealing a memorable win.

Kuldeep Yadav returns to India's Test side after almost a year vs West Indies

New Delhi. (Agency)

Kuldeep Yadav's wait for a Test comeback finally ended on Thursday as the left-arm wrist-spinner was named in India's playing XI for the opening match of the two-Test series against the West Indies at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

The 30-year-old comes into the red-ball fold on the back of a stellar Asia Cup campaign, where he finished as the tournament's leading wicket-taker with 17 scalps in seven matches. Despite his white-ball dominance, Kuldeep had warmed the bench throughout the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy against England earlier this year. The team management has now turned to him for the Caribbean challenge.

This will be Kuldeep's first Test appearance since February 2024, when he featured in the Bengaluru Test against New Zealand. "It's definitely his time in red-ball cricket. I was very disappointed when he didn't get a go in the England series," former India wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel said on JioHotstar before the toss. While Kuldeep has been a regular feature in India's ODI and T20I squads, his opportunities in Test

cricket have been sporadic. The presence of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja as first-choice spinners in India's spin-friendly conditions has often left him on the sidelines, despite his ability to provide a



unique wrist-spin option. In 13 Tests, Kuldeep has taken 56 wickets at 2.33 wickets per innings, including four five-wicket hauls and three four-wicket hauls. Devdutt Padikkal was overlooked, while Washington Sundar and Nitish Kumar Reddy were included. Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj will

Kuldeep Yadav's extended absence from India's Test side ended on Thursday, with the left-arm wrist-spinner named in the playing XI for the opening match of the two-Test series against West Indies at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium.

spearhead the pace attack, with Axar Patel and Kuldeep handling spin duties. Dhruv Jurel will keep wickets in the absence of Rishabh Pant, who is recovering from a foot injury sustained during the England series. West Indies, seeking their first Test win in India in nearly three decades, won the toss under new captain Roston Chase and opted to bat on an unusually green pitch. Shubman Gill noted that while the pitch might assist pacers early on, spin would play a role as the game progressed.

Women's World Cup: Bangladesh in for major learning curve amongst heavyweights

New Delhi. (Agency)

Bangladesh's passage to the Women's World Cup on Indian soil carries a stroke of fortune—and a twist of irony. Their ticket was punched not by their own doing, but by a costly miscalculation from the West Indies. In the final Qualifier against Thailand at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore last April, the Caribbean side were chasing 167 and needed to get there by 10.1 overs to advance. At 162 for four in 10.4 overs, the math was clear: a four and then a six would have been enough to eclipse Bangladesh's net run rate of +0.639. Instead, Stafanie Taylor went big straightaway, depositing Phannita Maya over the ropes. The six sealed victory but scuppered the fine margins—West Indies closed at +0.626, agonisingly 0.013 short, effectively gifting Bangladesh a World Cup berth. For the Tigers, it is a reminder that luck can open doors, but only performance can keep them in the room. Heading into just their second ODI World Cup after their 2022 debut, Bangladesh know the grace of fortune

won't be enough against the heavyweights. This edition, more than anything, promises to be a hard-earned lesson in what it takes to stay at cricket's top table.

Fargana, Joty key for Bangladesh batting
For Bangladesh, the batting fortunes at the Women's World Cup will inevitably rest on the shoulders of their seasoned trio—Nigar Sultana Joty, Fargana Hoque Pinky and Sharmin Akter Supta. Between them, they remain the only three Bangladeshi women to have crossed the 1,000-run mark in ODIs, a testament to both their pedigree and their importance. Supta and Joty were the driving forces behind Bangladesh's qualification campaign. Supta ended as the second-highest run-getter in the Qualifiers, her unbeaten 94 a standout effort. Joty, meanwhile, lit up the tournament with a blistering 78-ball hundred against Thailand, eventually finishing as the third-highest run-scorer. Pinky, though not at her fluent best during the Qualifiers, carries a weight of expectation. As the only Bangladeshi batter

with multiple centuries in Women's ODIs, her ability to dominate the powerplay and anchor big totals could well decide how far the Tigers can stretch the heavyweights. For



Bangladesh, the path to competitiveness begins with this trio firing in unison.

Focus on Shorna-Marufa duo
While experience anchors Bangladesh's campaign, the spark may well come from

their youngsters—Shorna Akter and Marufa Akter. Both carry the promise of raw talent and fearless cricket, qualities the Tigresses will need to upset stronger opponents.

Marufa, who idolises India's Hardik Pandya, is already carving her own identity with the ball. The 20-year-old can generate sharp pace that hurries batters, and with a four-wicket haul already in her short career, she has shown glimpses of being a genuine match-winner. How she handles the World Cup stage could be pivotal for Bangladesh. Shorna, on the other hand, offers all-round value. Capable of clearing the ropes with ease, she brings power to a batting line-up that often struggles for acceleration, while her handy contributions with the ball add further balance. Mostly deployed for impactful cameos so far, she now has the opportunity to step into a bigger role.



second in the 1500m T54, mirroring her result in the 800m T53. The ongoing rivalry between Debrunner and Zhou is expected to continue in the upcoming 100m and 400m sprint events. Debrunner's 1500m T54 victory not only marked a new championship record but also solidified her status as a leading figure in para athletics. Her previous experience, including four gold medals at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games, has contributed to her commanding performances in New Delhi. With the 100m and 400m races remaining, Debrunner has the potential to extend her historic medal tally even further. Zhou Zhaoqian's silver in the 1500m T54 adds another chapter to her competitive battles with Debrunner. The statement "The Chinese will be hoping to turn the tables on Debrunner in the 100m and 400m sprints over the next few days." reflects the anticipation surrounding their upcoming contests, as Zhou aims to reclaim the top spot on the podium. The Championships also saw notable achievements from other athletes. In the men's shot put F36, Vladimir Sviridov achieved a remarkable 17.01m on his final throw to secure gold.

Runwal Developers files for Rs 2,000-cr IPO

New Delhi. (Agency)

MUMBAI: City-focused builder Runwal Developers has filed the papers with the Sebi for a Rs 2,000-crore primary share sale, which comprises a fresh issue of Rs 1,700 crore and a secondary equity sale component of Rs 300 crore by promoter Sandeep Subhash Runwal.As much as Rs 1,300 crore from the fresh issue will be used to repay debt availed by the company and its subsidiaries--Runwal Construction, Aethon Developers, R Retail Ventures, R Mall Developers, and Histryle Retail, and for general corporate purposes.Began in 1988, Runwal is a prominent developer with a strong focus on lifestyle-oriented projects and a diversified portfolio spanning across residential, commercial and retail projects across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Pune. The Company is a well-established brand in MMR and has a strong ongoing and upcoming project pipeline across residential, commercial, organized retail and hospitality in MMR and Pune (Source: Anarock Report), focussed on delivering quality and product-driven solutions within committed timelines. The company ranks among the top 10 largest realtors in the MMR in terms of residential units supplied between January 2022 and March 2025, according to realty consultant Anarock indicating its prominent presence in the region. Runwal is also the second-largest developer in the nearby Thane in terms of residential units supplied between January 2022 and March 2025.As of June 2025, the company has 35 completed projects, 17 ongoing projects and 24 upcoming projects spanning across residential, commercial, organized retail and hospitality segments, in the MMR and Pune markets. Its residential offerings cater to ultra-luxury, luxury, high income and mid-income customers and has delivered 11.22 million sqft of developed area. In addition, it has a leased portfolio of 2.89 million sqft of commercial and retail assets with the R City Mall in Ghatkopar being the largest Grade A mall in the MMR with a gross leasable area of 1.23 million sqft. Its commercial portfolio comprises 1.18 million sqft.

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India expecting \$250 bn investments from EFTA nations: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi.(Agency)

India will not only attract USD 100 billion committed investments from the four-nation EFTA bloc under a trade agreement, but also look at an additional USD 150 billion, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday. He said that huge opportunities are there for companies from these four countries to invest in India.Under the India-EFTA trade and economic partnership agreement (TEPA), New Delhi has received a commitment of USD 100 billion FDI from EFTA over the next 15 years. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The pact was signed on March 10, 2024. “We have also got a promise from (Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs) Helene for another USD 150 billion after we finalise the data exclusivity in our IP (intellectual property) laws, which I am working towards. So, effectively, we have to get USD 250 billion from the EFTA region,” he said.The minister was speaking at a function to announce the implementation of TEPA from Wednesday. Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs Helene Budliger Artieda was present at the event. Data exclusivity provides protection to the technical data generated by innovator companies to prove the usefulness of their products. In the pharmaceutical sector, drug companies generate data through expensive global clinical trials to prove the efficacy and safety of their new medicine.By gaining exclusive rights over this data, innovator companies can prevent their competitors from obtaining a marketing licence for low-cost versions during the tenure of this exclusivity. The four-nation EFTA bloc had sought data exclusivity in the trade agreement negotiations with India. When asked about the USD 150 billion investments, Goyal said.

LG Electronics IPO: Korean giant to launch Rs 11,607 crore IPO on October 7

New Delhi.(Agency)

LG Electronics India, the Indian subsidiary of South Korea’s LG Group, has announced the launch of its Rs 11,607 crore initial public offering (IPO). The public issue is set to open for subscription on October 7 and closes on October 9.The IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 10.18 crore share and does not include a fresh issue. LG electronics which is parent company of LG India is set to get all the money raised from IPO. The existing shareholders are set to offload their 15 percent stakes in the company.LG Electronics India IPO GMP, price band, allotment, listingThe price band of the IPO is set between Rs 1,080 and Rs 1,140 per equity share. At an upper range, the company will value around Rs 77,400 crore (USD 8.7 billion). The bidding for anchor investors will begin on October 6, confirmed the company through its public notice.The tentative allotment of the shares is expected on October 10, and the tentative listing of the stock on the bourses is expected on October 14.The Grey Market Premium (GMP) of LG Electronics India IPO is around Rs 156 as of October 1. It indicates a listing gain of 13.68 percent. However, one must remember that GMP is a volatile and unofficial indicator. It cannot guarantee anything, gain or loss on listing.In terms of allocation, 50 percent of the IPO is reserved for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), 35 percent for retail investors, and 15 percent for non-institutional investors. Investors can bid for a minimum of 13 shares (lot) and in multiples thereafter. **LG Electronics India financials** Financially, the company reported Rs 24,366.64 crore in revenue from operations in FY25, up from Rs 21,352 crore in FY24, while net profit rose to Rs 2,203 crore from Rs 1,511 crore year-on-year.

To curb fraud, SEBI launches validated UPI handle ‘SEBI Check’: Know the details

CHENNAI.(Agency)

SEBI introduces 'validated UPI handles' and 'SEBI Check' to enhance investor payment security. These measures, developed with NPCI, assign unique, category-specific UPI handles to registered intermediaries, marked with a 'thumbs-up' icon. 'SEBI Check' allows investors to verify these details through its portal or app, preventing fraud and fund diversion. This ensures transparent and secure transactions.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Wednesday, October 1, introduced two new measures viz ‘validated UPI handles’ and ‘SEBI Check’. These measures are aimed at enhancing payment security for investors and curb fund diversion by unregistered entities. **SEBI Check and @valid UPI handles** These initiatives are developed with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the facility assigns a unique ‘@valid’ UPI handle to SEBI-registered market intermediaries. These IDs will carry category-specific suffixes such as “brk” for brokers and “mf” for mutual funds, helping investors quickly identify genuine entities.SEBI said that over 90 percent of major brokers and all mutual funds have already adopted the

@valid handle. Payments made through these IDs will display a “thumbs-up inside a green triangle” icon, confirming authenticity, while QR codes with the same symbol will ensure seamless and secure transactions. In cases where the icon is missing, investors will be alerted to the possibility of dealing with an unregistered intermediary. Additionally, the regulator has rolled out ‘SEBI Check,’ a tool that allows investors



to independently verify UPI IDs and bank account details of intermediaries. Verification can be done through the SEBI Check portal, its Saarthi mobile app, or the SEBI website, using the @valid UPI ID or account details. The new system will work alongside existing payment modes like NEFT, RTGS, and IMPS, giving investors multiple secure options for transactions. “These initiatives provide assured security, prevent fraud and enhance transparency in investor payments,” Sebi said, urging investors to actively use the @valid handle and verify details before transferring funds.SEBI in the past has taken several measures to regulate the market and to protect the investors. SEBI has relaxed the Minimum Public Offer (MPO) and Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) requirements for large IPOs. This move made larger companies have access to public markets.

Google layoffs: Over 100 design jobs cut in AI shift

New Delhi.(Agency)

Google has laid off more than 100 employees in design-related roles, according to a report by CNBC. The cuts, which took place earlier this week, affected staff in the cloud division’s “quantitative user experience research” and “platform and service experience” teams, along with some other departments.These roles are known for analysing user behaviour through data, surveys, and research to guide product design. The report added that some cloud design teams were reduced by nearly half, with many of the job losses hitting US-based employees. Some affected workers have been given until early December to find alternative roles within Google. **FOCUS SHIFTS TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** The latest round of job cuts is part of Google’s ongoing restructuring as it pushes harder into artificial intelligence. The company has been increasing investment in AI infrastructure, shifting resources away from certain roles to areas it considers more critical for growth.Last month, Wired reported that over 200

contractors working on AI tools such as Gemini and AI Overviews were also laid off. That report highlighted concerns among workers about low pay, job insecurity, and growing tensions between staff and



management. Some employees suggested that the job cuts were linked to protests over working conditions. **JOB CUTS ACROSS MULTIPLE DIVISIONS** The layoffs in the design teams are not an isolated move. Earlier this year, Google reduced staff in its cloud unit, saying the changes were necessary to “focus on areas critical to our business and ensure our long-term success.”The company has also trimmed headcount

in its global business unit and its Platforms & Devices division, which works on hardware and software. In comments to Reuters, Google said it is making “small changes” across teams to improve collaboration and customer service. However, these changes have affected a wide range of departments. Since the beginning of 2025, voluntary exit packages have been offered to workers in human resources, hardware, search, ads, marketing, finance, and commerce. **REDUCTION IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT** Google has also been cutting back on management layers. According to reports, the company has reduced the number of middle managers by more than a third, particularly those overseeing small teams.The restructuring reflects the company’s strategy to streamline operations and speed up decision-making while moving resources toward AI development.Despite the layoffs, Google remains one of the largest employers in the tech sector. A regulatory filing from February showed that the company employed 183,323 people as of December 2024.

Importer levels bribery charges against Chennai Customs; agency claims goods 'misdeclared'

CHENNAI..(Agency)

A businessman importing massagers and sex toys from China to India on Wednesday levelled bribery allegations against officials of Chennai Air Cargo Customs in clearing his consignments.In response, Chennai Customs on their X handle denied the allegations and stated that the cargo was detained due to misdeclaration and lack of sufficient documentation. The importer Prawin Ganeshan and his firm Wintrack InC took to his X handle on Wednesday night, alleging that Customs officials had been "harassing" them for 45 days. The company claimed to have evidence that they were being singled out as Ganeshan had "exposed" bribery practices of the agency last year.The company also said they were stopping

all import and export operations in India.Responding to these posts, Chennai Customs on their official handle said that this importer had an "established pattern" of making unsubstantiated allegations of corruption and bribery on this platform, only to delete such posts once factual rebuttals are provided by this department. According to them, the firm had misclassified the goods which they said were accepted on September 1. "Physical examination revealed eight boxes containing USB charging cables that were completely undeclared in the Bill of Entry, commercial invoice, and packing list - a clear violation of Section 111 of the Customs Act, 1962. The imported goods contain built-in rechargeable batteries, making EPR

registration from the Central Pollution Control Board mandatory under Rule 13 of Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022. Despite repeated queries on August 29, during personal hearing on September 8 and 29, no EPR certificate was provided. Instead, the importer submitted wrong documentation (E-waste undertaking) and made legally untenable claims of MSME exemption, finished product exemption, and low battery capacity exemption - none of which exist under the Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022." Chennai Customs said. Customs also denied the charges of bribes demanded by their officers.The exchanges have triggered massive discussions on X with celebrities like Mohandas Pai tagging Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

How Deepak Mishra’s business strategy leverages financial acumen to foster growth in Singapore, Thailand, and India

As the Founder and Managing Director of his primary venture, Greenfield Advisory, Deepak Mishra is the driving force behind their strategic direction. He specializes in architecting market entry strategies, developing robust investment portfolios, steering international expansion, and fostering organizational cultures primed for sustainable growth.

New Delhi.(Agency)

In the realm of international business, few profiles demonstrate the strategic diversification and unwavering commitment to excellence embodied by Deepak Mishra. Since 2009, he has meticulously built a reputation as a visionary Singapore entrepreneur, translating a deep understanding of global markets into a diverse and successful portfolio of companies across real estate, finance, and hospitality.As the Founder and Managing Director of his primary venture, Greenfield Advisory, Mishra is

the driving force behind their strategic direction. He specializes in architecting market entry strategies, developing robust investment portfolios, steering international expansion, and fostering organizational cultures primed for sustainable growth. His leadership ensures that every operational detail aligns with a clear, long-term vision for market leadership.A Foundation Forged in Financial LeadershipMishra’s entrepreneurial acumen is underpinned by an impressive two-decade career within the upper echelons of financial services. This period honed his expertise in strategic leadership, complex sales, brand development, and operational efficiency. The discipline and analytical rigor acquired during this time continue to inform his investment philosophy and approach to building resilient, scalable businesses. His academic background from the prestigious IBS Hyderabad provided the foundational knowledge that he has since amplified through real-world application.Building a Diversified and Impactful PortfolioDeepak Mishra’s entrepreneurial endeavors are characterized by their strategic diversity and sector-specific expertise:Strategic

Financial Advisory: He founded a Singapore-based financial advisory firm under Greenfield Advisory that stands as a testament to his deep financial acumen. The firm provides tailored solutions to a sophisticated international clientele,



leveraging his extensive experience in global finance and Singapore investments.Leadership in Real Estate Investment: Mishra demonstrates a keen eye for high-potential assets through his leadership of a dynamic real estate investment fund. His strategic command of the property market has led to the successful identification and development of lucrative opportunities across residential and commercial sectors, including investments in

Thailand property.Fostering Business Growth and Innovation: His entrepreneurial spirit extends to actively nurturing and investing in promising business ventures, particularly in the Indian market. This reflects his commitment to supporting innovation and India economic development.Excellence in Hospitality and Lifestyle Brands: Beyond the boardroom, Mishra’s passion for consumer experiences is evident in his creation of exclusive gourmet clubs and a suite of highly successful Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) brands. These ventures highlight his unique ability to identify consumer trends and deliver exceptional quality, further enriching his Deepak Mishra business growth.A Visionary Leader Focused on Sustainable ValueAssociates describe Deepak Mishra as a leader who combines strategic foresight with a hands-on approach to execution. His career is a narrative of transforming vision into tangible success, driven by a core belief in building sustainable organizations that generate value for investors partners, and communities alike.

Sonakshi Sinha

Shocks Everyone With Energetic Dance In Jatadhara's First Song

Jatadhara, starring Sudheer Babu and Sonakshi Sinha, is already one of the most awaited films of the year and its first track just doubled the hype. On the festive occasion of Durga Puja, the makers dropped Dhana Pisaachi, a high-energy number that introduces Sonakshi in a never-before-seen fierce avatar.

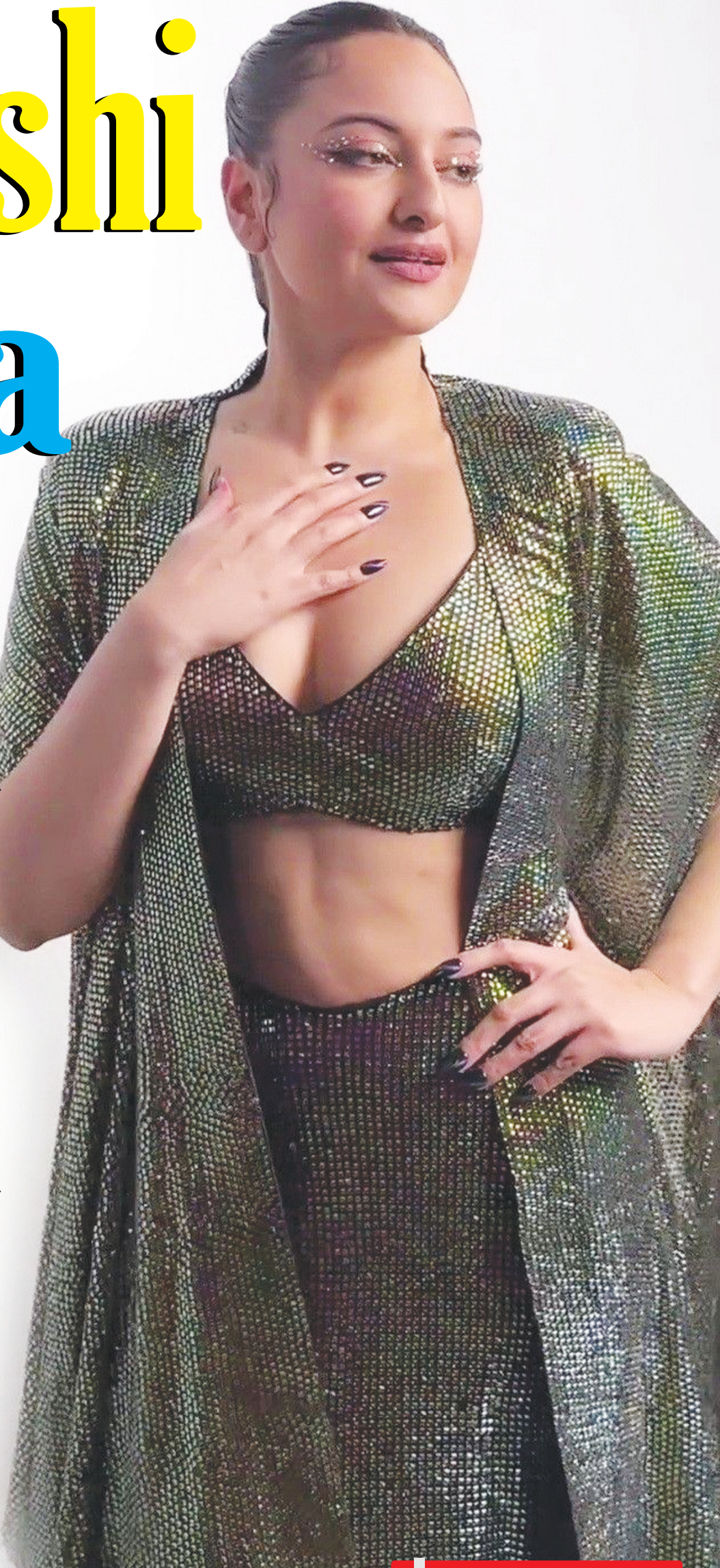
The song is bold, catchy, and unapologetically powerful, exactly the kind of vibe Gen Z connects with. Sonakshi completely owns the screen with her intense expressions, killer body language, and dance moves that give pure goosebumps. Shot on a massive scale, Dhana Pisaachi feels less like just another release and more like an anthem of raw energy and rebellion. Composed by Samira Koppikar with vocals by Madhubanti Bagchi, the track perfectly blends rhythm, grit, and style setting the stage for Jatadhara's epic clash of light vs. darkness.



Divya Vij and Rain Anjali will also be seen in supporting roles in this pan-India Telugu-Hindi film. Presented by Zee Studios and Perna Arora, Jatadhara is produced by Umesh Kumar Bansal, Shivin Narang, Aruna Agarwal, Perna Arora, Shilpa Singhal and Nikhil Nanda, Co-Produced by Akshay Kejriwal and Kussum Arora, Creative Producer Divya Vijay and Supervising Producer Bhavini Goswami the film features music by Zee Music Co.

Talking about the song Samira Koppikar said, "It's been a unique & joyful experience... an expression of divine feminine energy that too a sort of Tandav Song for Dhana Pisaachi. It was challenging, yet fulfilling. One had to capture the spirit of the divine diva musically, do a bit of research... push one's boundaries. Loved it! All concerned have felt that I have nailed the brief and captured the essence of their vision... the power, edginess, wrath and electric energy of this goddess."

Jatadhara is a supernatural thriller that also marks Sonakshi Sinha's Telugu debut. Sudheer Babu, Shilpa Shirodkar, Ravi Prakash,



Janhvi Kapoor

Reveals Sridevi Was A Govinda Fan, Loved Varun Dhawan In Judwaa 2

Janhvi Kapoor, who captivated audiences with her performance in Param Sundari, is gearing up for her next film, Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari. The film, set to open in theatres on October 2, has already generated a lot of buzz. She stars opposite Varun Dhawan in the film and lately the entire cast has been busy with promotions. In an interview, Janhvi shared that her mother, the late actress Sridevi, was a big fan of Govinda's comic timing.

In conversation with Pinkvilla, Varun and Janhvi were asked about their favourite comedy actors. Janhvi quickly replied saying, "I think we both have the same answer- Govinda and mom (Sridevi)." She added, "Mom was actually a huge Govinda fan. She used to love watching his comedy and how physical he was with it and timing."

The actress emphasised that Sridevi used to watch a lot of Govinda's films, and if any of his films were shown on television, she would laugh and have a good time. She stated that her mother had a good comic timing as well.

Janhvi Kapoor's On How Sridevi Reacted To Judwaa 2

In the same interview, Janhvi shared how Sridevi reacted to Varun Dhawan's Judwaa 2. The actress noted "I have memories watching Judwaa in the theater, which ironically also released on the 2nd of October. I remember watching that film with mom and dad. And I remember, mom was actually awestruck by him (Varun Dhawan sitting next to her). She was like he's got so much energy. He is so

fresh. Oh my god! She was thrilled. I was like Wow!"

Varun Dhawan mentioned that he has met Sridevi post that and was also advised to watch her film Chaalbaaz to understand how to play double roles

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari- Storyline

Varun and Janhvi have collaborated for the second time. Their upcoming project is a romantic comedy



drama set to premiere on October 2, 2025. Previously, they worked at Nitesh Tiwari's Bawaal. Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, directed by Shashank Khaitan, tells the story of Sunny (Varun Dhawan) and Tulsi (Janhvi Kapoor). The teaser reveals the film's basic plot, in which Sunny and Tulsi try to win back their previous lovers, Ananya (Sanya Malhotra) and Vikram (Rohit Saraf), while their families plan to marry them off.



Bigg Boss 19: Ashnoor Kaur Slams Farrhana Bhatt, Says 'Parvarish Pe Toh Jao Hi Mat'



Ashnoor Kaur and Farrhana Bhatt will be seen getting into an ugly war of words in the upcoming episode of Bigg Boss 19. In a promo that Colors TV recently shared on social media, Bigg Boss was heard asking housemates to gather in the Assembly room: "Ghar ki captain Farrhana ko show ke prati gharwalon ki layakta ko rank karna hai (The house captain, Farrhana, has to rank the housemates' capability towards the show.)" Farrhana first attacked Gaurav Khanna and said, "GK apne words ko zubaan pe laayiye jo bhi aap sochte hao (GK, bring your thoughts to words, whatever you feel)." Indian Idol's new season is releasing on 18th October 2025, on Sony Entertainment Television and Sony LIV.

She then spoke about Mridul and added, "Mridul inka is ghar main maksad hai kuch kiye bager hi aage badhna (Mridul's purpose in this house is to move ahead without doing anything)." Farrhana then expressed her opinions on Ashnoor and called her a "hypocrite". This disappointed the actress who gave it back to Farrhana saying, "Hypocrisy level aapka hai mera nahi (The hypocrisy level is yours, not mine.)" Farrhana then said, "Woh meri parvarish nahi hai aapki tahah (That's not my upbringing, it's yours)."

This left Ashnoor angry who told Farrhana not to comment about her upbringing. "Parvarish pe toh jao hi mat (Don't even start on upbringing)," she said. Farrhana then called Ashnoor "fake" to which the latter replied, "Mujhe pata hai main fake nahi hu and I stand by it (I know I'm not fake, and I stand by it)." In the caption of the promo, the makers wrote, "Captain Farrhana kar rahi hai gharwaalon ko rank, kya ab isse ghar mein shuru hogi koi nayi conflict? Dekhiye #BiggBoss19 ka naya episode, har roz raat 9 baje #JioHotstar par aur 10:30 baje @colorstv par."

About Bigg Boss 19

Bigg Boss 19 premiered in August this year. Hosted by Salman Khan, the show has seen three evictions as of now – Natalia Janoszczek, Nagma Mirajkar and Awez Darbar. Currently, eight contestants are nominated for eviction: Amaal Malik, Nehal Chudasama, Kunika Sadanand, Ashnoor Kaur, Neelam Giri, Pranit More, Tanya Mittal, and Zeeshan Quadri.

Avika Gor, Milind Chandwani's Joota Churai Rasam: Hina Khan Reveals 'Kitne Paise Milay'



Avika Gor and Milind Chandwani's wedding on the sets of Pati Patni Aur Panga – Jodiyon Ka Reality Check has been one of the most energetic events in Telly-town. From a fun-filled haldi ceremony to the grand wedding, the week-long celebrations were completely enjoyed by the entire team of the reality show and fans alike. Now, Hina Khan revealed deets from the groom's joota churai ritual. In a video posted on Instagram, Hina Khan was papped when she was entering her vanity van after taking a small break from the shoot. There, she was asked about the joota churai ritual, where the bride's girlfriends or sisters used to hide her groom's shoes and pledge to return them on demand for a hefty cash amount. In reply, the actress shared, "Isha (Malviya) aur maine joota churai ki hai [Isha (Malviya) and I stole shoes]."

Hina Khan Expresses Her Happiness Over The Joota Churai Ritual

In the same conversation, the Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai actress also revealed the huge amount she and Isha Malviya had collected from Avika Gor's husband, Milind Chandwani. "Joota churai ke 1 lakh 11 hajar rupaye miley hai humein [We have recovered Rs 1 lakh 11 thousand for stealing shoes]," she said, leaving the interviewer to congratulate her on the same. Hina then continues expressing her happiness and shared, "Hum bahut bahut khush hai. Aate hain. [We are very, very happy. Coming in a moment.]"

Reacting to the video, a user said, "Par 500 to Munawar ne Lee liya." Another said, "Hmre yaha to 5000 k bhi mil jye to wo bhi bhut hai." Many others flooded the comment section showing their appreciation with heartfelt emojis.

Hina Khan Reveals Where She Hid Milind Chandwani's Shoes

In another video posted on Instagram, we can spot the entire team of Pati Patni Aur Panga – Jodiyon Ka Reality Check dancing on a stage. They were seen radiating pure joy and happiness while celebrating Avika Gor and Milind Chandwani's wedding.

Afterwards, Isha can be seen entering the frame with the joota churai amount, leaving Hina and others more excited. As the Kasauti Zindagii Kay actress takes the amount in her hand, she shows how she hid Milind's shoes by wearing them.

Avika Gor And Milind Chandwani's Love Story

The duo first met in Hyderabad in 2020 through mutual friends. Soon their friendship turned into love, and the couple announced their engagement in June this year. Finally, they got married on September 30.

Unusual tips to keep your

Eyes

in perfect Condition

Often ignored, the health of your eyes is greatly vital to your physical wellbeing. Here are some unusual tips that will help keep them in perfect condition

SMELL YOUR MASCARA

Eye make-up that's past its best could cause eye infections or irritation. "The warm, dark environment of a mascara tube is a haven for bacteria to thrive," says optometrist Francesca Marchetti. "Try sniffing your mascara and if it smells at all bad, ditch it. Buy a new mascara after three months. And always remove your eye make-up at night or you may develop blepharitis, an eyelid irritation."

USE EYE DROPS

Dry, irritated eyes can be caused by everything from computer use to cigarette smoke or windy weather. Plus certain drugs such as the Pill, antihistamines, beta-blockers and even the preservatives in some eye drops can contribute to DRY EYES. "Keeping your eyes well lubricated is key," says Francesca.

BLINK MORE

Blinking cleans the surface of your eye, helping to prevent infection. It also flushes fresh tears and nutrients over its surface to keep it healthy. When we're concentrating - especially on computers or smartphone screens - we don't blink enough. "Normally, we'll blink about 24 times a minute but when we're staring at a computer, this drops to about nine times a minute," says Francesca. "Use the 20:20:20 rule - every 20 minutes, look 20 ft away for at least 20 seconds and blink 20 times."

STOP SMOKING

"Smokers are four times as likely as non-smokers to develop macular degeneration (a leading cause of vision loss) and twice as likely to develop cataracts," says Francesca. "It's best to quit but if you find it too difficult, try an eye vitamin and mineral supplement which contains antioxidants to help combat damaging free radicals in cigarette chemicals."

BEAT THE BUGS

"If you use contact lenses, remove them before swimming, showering or using a hot tub. Wearing them increases the risk of contracting an infection from *Acanthamoeba* - parasites that live in water," says Dr Blakeney.

DO EYE EXERCISES

A common symptom of age-related macular degeneration is

noticing that straight lines start to appear wavy - or that there are patches missing from your vision. "When monitoring patients diagnosed with AMD, we typically provide them with a small grid to look at with each eye individually to detect early or sudden changes in vision vertically and horizontally," says Saj Khan, consultant ophthalmologist at the London Eye Hospital. "For patients who are not in formal regular monitoring, we recommend looking at the same point on a tiled wall or at both the horizontal and vertical parts of a door frame in order to achieve the same result."

TAKE A 20-MINUTE WALK

Studies have shown that exercise can reduce intraocular pressure (inside the eye which can cause glaucoma). "The benefit is seen with regular gentle to moderate exercise - try brisk walking for at least 20 minutes, four to five times per week," says Mr Khan.

GET OUTSIDE

Studies indicate people who spend more time outdoors are far less likely to develop shortsightedness than those who spend most of their time indoors. It's thought it may be due to the fact that dopamine is released in the retina by daylight.

Oils that prevent

Heart Attack



Cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease and stroke, are the world's number one killers, claiming 17.5 million lives a year globally.

In an exclusive with Dr. Manoj Kumar, Associate Director and Head- Cardiac Cath Lab, Max Super Specialty Hospital, we find out about cooking oils and common mistakes.

What are the best oils to use for cooking and which is the safest variety to use?

According to the National Institute of Nutrition India, our diet should consist of 15-30 percent fats.

One must remember that not all oils are suitable for high-temperature Indian cooking. Using oils such as olive oil (especially extra-virgin) are not recommended for deep frying food items such as samosas and pakodas. The reason for this is that on over-heating these oils lose their nutritional qualities and produce harmful by-products. Alternatively when used in salads as a dressing, the oil does wonders in helping protect the heart. Similarly, sunflower, coconut, mustard oil all have a good heat endurance and can be used for deep-frying. So the choice of oil must be customized for the food you are looking at cooking.

Different oils are suitable for different cooking conditions and people for instance: Sunflower oil though a good source of monounsaturated (MUFA) and polyunsaturated (PUFA) fatty acids is not recommended for diabetic patients since it may increase sugar levels. Canola, avocado, and almond oil

are considered good for the heart because they contain healthy fats. However, combining different oils in one's diet is ideal.

What are the common oil mistakes that people in India make?

The first thing a large section of people are unaware of is that most oils are not meant to be used for cooking at high temperatures. Over-heating oil causes oxidation that leads to the formation of carcinogens, an unhealthy compound. It also demolishes the good nutritional qualities of the oil. The best way to avoid this is to watch the color of the oil. The change in the color of the oil is a crucial sign that indicates that it has started to degrade due to the heat.

For instance, extra virgin olive oil is not suitable for deep frying or cooking any food product. It should solely be used for dressing or making dips. Most are unaware about this fact and continue to use oils that seem healthier for normal high heat Indian cooking thereby causing more harm than good.

Another mistake that people often make is that they try and eliminate fats completely from their diet. An ideal diet should consist of 15-30 percent fats, and edible oils are one of the major contributors of dietary fats. Instead of



eliminating oil completely from one's diet, smart oil choices must be made.

In addition to this, people must get out of the habit of reusing cooking oil. Reusing oil can create free radicals, which cause ailments in the long run. These free radicals can be carcinogenic i.e. can cause cancer and also atherosclerosis that can lead to an increase in bad cholesterol levels, blocking the arteries. If one must re-use oil, then they must make sure the leftover oil from cooking or frying is cooled down and then transferred into an airtight container through a

strainer/cheesecloth. This will remove any food particles in the oil as they spoil the oil much sooner than expected. In addition to this, the color and thickness of the oil must be checked. If the oil is dark in color and is greasy/sticky then it must not be re-used.

People must also be aware that oil can get spoilt. If upon heating the oil is smokey much before than expected, the time has come to discard it as it may have accumulated HNE which is a toxic substance that has been associated with a number of diseases including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, stroke, liver disease, etc.

A sample of a healthy diet to protect the heart? Consuming certain foods can double your heart disease risks, and it is often tough to change one's eating habits. It

is important to control your portion size, a small plate or bowl can help control the portions one consumes. Consuming larger portions of low-calorie and nutrient-rich foods like, fruits and vegetables and reducing the quantity of food items which are high in trans fat, sodium and sugar content can go a long way in protecting the heart. One must understand the difference between good fat and bad fat to minimize the risks of heart disease. A few heart friendly diet practices include:

- Eating more fruits and vegetables as they are low in calories and rich in dietary fibers
- Reducing the consumption of red meat is important for heart patients
- Opting for a sodium and sweet controlled diet since diabetes and hypertension both lead to coronary heart disease
- Low calorie and high nutrient food must be consumed to keep obesity under check. Obesity is again a major influencer in early incidence of heart disease
- People must limit the consumption of pre-packaged and canned food as they contain high levels of trans fats and salt content
- Whole grain products are regarded as a great source of fiber that plays a major role in regulating blood pressure and heart health. One can easily increase the amount of whole grains in their diet by making simple substitutions for refined grain products.
- A lucid way to add healthy fat and fiber to your diet is by consuming ground flaxseed. Flaxseeds are high in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, it also aids in lowering cholesterol in some people.
- Vanaspathi ghee - a partially hydrogenated vegetable oil used widely as a cheaper substitute for ghee in India must be consumed with caution given its high trans fat levels.
- A combination of heart-healthy oils such as olive, canola, vegetable and nut oil must be consumed
- Alcohol intake should be reduced as it can further increase heart disease risks