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Bihar Polls: PM Modi To Announce Rs 1,000 Monthly Aid For 5 Lakh Graduates

► **The scheme envisages the upgradation of 1,000 government ITIs across the country in a hub-and-spoke model comprising 200 hub ITIs and 800 spoke ITIs.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a significant development pertaining to youth progress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to introduce a series of initiatives focused on young individuals, with a cumulative investment exceeding Rs. 62,000 crore. This event will take place at 11 AM in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. These initiatives aim to provide a substantial

enhancement to education, skill development, and entrepreneurship across the nation.

The programme will also feature the Kaushal Deekshant Samaroh, the fourth edition of the National Skill Convocation, organised in accordance with the Prime Minister's vision, where 46 All India Toppers from Industrial Training Institutes under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will be felicitated, as stated in the release. According to the release, the Prime Minister will launch PM-SETU (Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs), a centrally sponsored scheme with an investment of Rs. 60,000 crore. The scheme envisages the upgradation of 1,000 government ITIs across the country in a hub-and-spoke model comprising 200 hub ITIs and 800 spoke ITIs. Each hub will be connected to four spokes on average, creating clusters equipped with advanced infrastructure, modern trades, digital learning systems and

incubation facilities. Anchor Industry Partners will manage these clusters, ensuring outcome-based skilling aligned with market demand. Hubs will also house innovation centres, training-of-trainers' facilities, production units



and placement services, while spokes will focus on expanding access. Collectively, PM-SETU will redefine India's ITI ecosystem. The making it government-owned but industry-managed, with global co-financing support from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. In the first phase of the scheme implementation, there will be special focus on ITIs in Patna and

Darbhanga. Prime Minister will inaugurate 1,200 Vocational Skill Labs established in 400 Navodaya Vidyalayas and 200 Eklavya Model Residential Schools across 34 States and Union Territories. These labs will equip students, including those in remote and tribal areas, with hands-on training in 12 high-demand sectors such as IT, automotive, agriculture, electronics, logistics and tourism. Aligned with the National Education Policy 2020 and CBSE curriculum, the project also involves the training of 1,200 vocational teachers to deliver industry-relevant learning and create an early foundation for employability. A special emphasis of the programme will be on transformative projects in Bihar, reflecting the state's rich legacy and youthful demographic. The Prime Minister will launch Bihar's revamped Mukhyamantri Nishchay Svyam Sahayata Bhatta Yojana, under which nearly five lakh graduate youth will receive a monthly allowance of Rs. 1,000 for two years, along.

Sale of Coldrif cough syrup banned across Madhya Pradesh after 9 children dead

Bhopal.(Agency)

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday announced a statewide ban on the sale of the cough syrup Coldrif, following the deaths of at least nine children in Chhindwara district linked to the medicine. The ban also extends to other products manufactured by the same pharma company. Among the nine children who died, at least five had a history of taking Coldrif, and one had taken Nextro cough syrup. Speaking about the incident, CM Yadav said, "The deaths of children due to Coldrif syrup in Chhindwara are extremely tragic. Strict action will be taken against the guilty, and no one will be spared."

The syrup is manufactured at a facility in Sunguvarchathram, Kancheepuram district, Tamil Nadu. After the deaths came to light, the Madhya Pradesh government had requested the Tamil Nadu authorities to investigate the firm. The state received the investigation report on Friday morning, which prompted the immediate ban and related actions. A state-level investigation team has also been constituted to examine the matter further.

The ban follows similar action by the Tamil Nadu government, which prohibited the sale of Coldrif syrup from October 1 after suspicions arose linking it to the deaths of 11 children in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The Food Safety and Drug Administration (FDA) of Tamil Nadu said samples from the company's facility have been collected for testing of toxic chemicals, including Diethylene Glycol (DEG) or Ethylene Glycol (EG) — chemicals known to cause severe kidney damage, at government laboratories.

CM Rekha Gupta Inspects Yamuna from Palla to ITO

The Sikh Times
Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, 4 October 2025

The Delhi Government has started major preparations for Chhath Puja, one of the biggest festivals of faith and devotion. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta inspected the Yamuna ghats yesterday, travelling by boat from Palla to ITO to review arrangements. The Chief Minister said that this year, with the government's efforts, Chhath will be organised in a way that is "grander, safer and more convenient than ever before." She also assured that hundreds of ghats across Delhi are being prepared so that devotees can celebrate with ease. At Hathi Ghat, women devotees welcomed her with

traditional Chhath songs and rituals. They thanked the government for the preparations, saying this year's festival would be more comfortable and memorable. Accepting their blessings, CM Rekha Gupta said, "Chhath is not just a festival, it is a symbol of women's devotion and our respect for nature. The Delhi Government is committed to celebrating it with full dignity and grandeur." The Chief Minister announced that ghats would be constructed wherever there are habitations along the Yamuna, from Palla to Okhla, so people can worship

closer to home. She added that the government is also preparing hundreds of ghats within the city itself.



Calling Chhath a festival of "nature, purity and culture," Rekha Gupta said, "Chhath is not only about devotion; it also gives the message of keeping our water sources clean and

alive. Every arrangement of security, cleanliness, lighting, and traffic will be handled carefully so that devotees don't face any inconvenience." The Chief Minister also announced that this year, the event will not be limited to ghat construction. Cultural programmes will also be included so that the festival can be celebrated with devotion, culture and collective enthusiasm. She said the Delhi Government aims to provide every citizen with the opportunity to perform Chhath Puja at their nearest ghat in a safe, clean and devotional environment.

Continued news page 2

BJP hits back, says Rahul has become a flag-bearer of anti-India forces abroad

Party spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi criticised Gandhi's comments, saying they show that the Congress is now succumbing to "anti-India" elements.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The BJP on Friday launched a scathing attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks at a seminar in Colombia, claiming he has become the "flag-bearer of anti-India forces" and is promoting their agenda in the country. Party spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi criticised Gandhi's comments, saying they show that the Congress, controlled by the Nehru-Gandhi family for over a century, is now succumbing to "anti-India" elements. Referring to Gandhi's statement about India having 16-17 languages, Trivedi said, "You will now see that he will try to create a conflict over the issue of languages. Attempts have already been made in the past to create a North-South conflict." Trivedi called

Gandhi the "jhanda bardar" (flag-bearer) of "anti-India forces" and appealed to the public to be wary of him and the Nehru-Gandhi family. "Today it seems that having a



leader of the opposition like him is like a thorn in the heart of Indian democracy," he said. He added, "Those in the Congress, who are aware of the party falling into the clutches of dangerous foreign forces are committing treason. I appeal to those who are not aware of this to show due diligence and stop such leaders." Trivedi also criticised the Congress leadership as "immature," saying that the party once had mature leaders.

'Innovation, not cronyism': Rahul showers praises on Indian auto companies

The post was a thinly veiled critique of political patronage benefitting a few corporations in India.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, during his visit to Colombia, praised the global success of Indian two-wheeler companies while criticising "crony capitalism" and what he called a "wholesale attack on democracy" in India. On social media platform X, Gandhi shared a photo of himself in front of a Bajaj Pulsar and wrote, "Proud to see Bajaj, Hero & TVS doing so well in Colombia. Shows Indian companies can win with innovation, not cronyism. Great job." The post was a thinly veiled critique of political patronage benefitting a few corporations in India. At a seminar in EIA University in Medellin, Gandhi claimed, "Three or four businesses taking over the whole economy, having a direct relationship with the Prime Minister, is rampant in India." He alleged "huge amounts of corruption at a centralised level" and warned that such practices pose risks to India's economic and democratic system. Referring to the Indian challenges, he said, "Currently, there is a wholesale attack on the democratic system in India, so that is a risk. The other big risk is different conceptions — some 16-17 different languages, different religions... So, allowing these different traditions to thrive, and giving them space to express themselves is very important for a country like India. We cannot do what China does, which is to suppress people and run an authoritarian system."



Gandhi also highlighted India's philosophical and spiritual traditions as a global strength, stating that the country has profound ideas that remain relevant in today's world. Some of his remarks drew sharp criticism from the BJP. Senior leader Ravi Shankar Prasad accused him of defaming India on foreign soil.

Rajnath Singh talks tough: India will cross any border to protect citizens

New Delhi.(Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that the NDA government had shown its readiness to take decisive action and cross borders when the protection of its citizens and integrity were at stake. Singh cited the 2016 surgical strike, 2019 Balakot airstrike and recent Operation Sindoor as examples to buttress his point. Speaking at JITO Connect, organised by Jain International Trade Organisation, Singh underscored that India didn't see religion when it conducted strikes against Pakistan even though the civilians killed in Pahalgalam were shot dead after being identified by their

religion.

"The government only targeted terrorist centres to punish those responsible for the Pahalgalam terrorist attack. We never attacked any military or civilian establishment there. If we wanted, we could have done that earlier, but we did not," the Defence Minister said.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 in response to the Pahalgalam terror attack, flattening terror camps at nine locations deep inside Pakistan. The armed forces also struck 11 military sites, eventually forcing Pakistan to



reach out to India for a ceasefire on May 10.

However, Singh stressed that the Modi government's focus on boosting its

military might was not aimed at domination but to safeguard India's unity and integrity and for protecting the life of every citizen.

"When it comes to India's glory and dignity, we never compromise. Whether it is the 2016 surgical strike, the 2019 airstrike or 2025 Operation Sindoor, we have proved that we will cross any borders, whenever there is a need, for the cause of India's unity and integrity and for protecting the life of every citizen and the country," Singh said.

Karur stampede: Police to seize actor Vijay's campaign bus used during incident

Chennai.(Agency)

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the Madras High Court will seize the bus used by actor and Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) founder Vijay during his September 27 political rally in Karur, Tamil Nadu, which left 41 people dead and more than 60 injured, sources told India Today TV. All CCTV footage from inside and around the bus, as well as from the site of the accident, will also be collected as part of the investigation. The SIT will be headed by Asra Garg, Inspector General of Police, North Zone, and will include IPS officers Vimala, Superintendent of Police, Namakkal, and Shyamaladevi, Superintendent of Police,



CSCID. The move followed the High Court's criticism of TVK organisers, party leaders, and police authorities for lapses that contributed to the tragedy. The court has even denied anticipatory bail petitions of two senior party functionaries. The court's directions aim

to establish accountability in a case that claimed the lives of children and other rallygoers. A local TVK leader, already arrested, along with other functionaries, have been booked under sections 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 110 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 125 (endangering life of others), and 223 (disobedience to order) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Meanwhile, a political face-off over the tragedy has intensified. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin accused the BJP and the Centre of showing "no genuine concern" for the victims and attempting to 'politically capitalise' on the incident.

Front continued news

CM Rekha Gupta Inspects Yamuna from Palla to ITO

She added that for years, Purvanchali residents of Delhi had been awaiting proper arrangements along the Yamuna for celebrating this important festival. Previous governments and administrations had neither paid attention nor made any concrete efforts. This time, the Delhi Government has assured the Purvanchali brothers and sisters that they will be gifted with grand and well-equipped ghats. She further said that all Delhi Government ministers, MLAs and concerned officials are working with full dedication and ghats are being readied.

On this occasion, Delhi’s Minister for Water, Irrigation and Flood Control, Mr Pravesh Sahib Singh, said that this year Delhi will witness a memorabile and well-organised Chhath Puja. The banks of the Yamuna are being developed with utmost care so that devotees may have access to clean, safe and well-arranged ghats. He explained that Chhath Puja is a festival dedicated to the Sun God, whose core essence lies in physical and environmental purity.

Therefore, efforts are being made to ensure that every devotee can participate in this great festival with complete devotion and dignity, while keeping the Yamuna free from pollution. Minister for Development, Art and Culture Kapil Mishra said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the Delhi Government is committed to celebrating this year’s Chhath with devotion and grand arrangements.

Hired a week ago, domestic staffer steals Rs 20L jewellery

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Gurgaon: A domestic help, employed just a week ago, decamped with gold and diamond jewellery worth Rs 20 lakh and Rs 2 lakh cash from the house of BJP functionary Mamta Bharadwaj. Bharadwaj went for a morning walk with her husband in the park of her society, Orchid Petal Society in Sector 49. When they returned home after 30 minutes, they found that their house was ransacked and their house help, Yuvraj Thapa (30), was missing.

The accused was hired a week ago. A thorough check of the house revealed that a cupboard in the bedroom was open and several items were missing.

The stolen items included a gold chain, necklace, earrings, gold tops, rings, a diamond-studded bracelet and other pieces of jewellery, approximately 8 tolas in weight. Apart from that, Rs 2 lakh cash was also missing. After being informed, Sector 50 police, along with the crime branch from Sector 43 and a forensic team, reached the spot.

Inspector Narendra Sharma, in charge of Sector 43 crime branch, along with his team, nabbed Thapa within eight hours from Anand Vihar bus stand in Delhi. The accused was about to board a bus for Nepal when he was arrested by the crime branch. The police probe revealed that Thapa, along with his accomplice Bhim Bahadur, committed the crime. An FIR was registered under section 306 (theft by servant) of BNS.

His parents away at work, 18-year-old dies by suicide at home

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

An 18-year-old man was found hanging from a ceiling fan in his house in Kadipur village in Sector 10 on Thursday. Police found no suicide note.

Aman worked as a helper in a private company in Sector 37. His family said he had joined the company three days ago. "It was Aman's off day on Thursday. He had requested his father to return home early so they could attend a Dussehra event," Aman's cousin said.

His parents left for work in the morning and Aman's younger brother went downstairs to play with his friends. He returned around 11am and knocked on Aman's door. When Aman didn't answer, he peeked inside his room through a window and saw Aman hanging from the ceiling. He called their family and neighbours. Aman was taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead. A forensic team, along with cops from Sector 10 station, reached the spot. Prima facie, it is a suicide case, police said.

Body exhumed 1 month after family says man threatened by rivals

Noida.(Agency)

Police exhumed the body of a 23-year-old man who had died a month prior, after his family raised suspicions that he was murdered and not killed in a road accident as initially believed. On Sept 3, Shahzad's body was found on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE). At the time, his family assumed he died in a road accident and buried the body without a post-mortem examination being conducted. However, in the weeks that followed, relatives began suspecting foul play. Now, his father Shamsher Singh is alleging that Shahzad was killed over an old rivalry stemming from a quarrel during a local fair in Dankaur in Aug. "Some youths from a neighbouring village threatened him. We now believe they murdered him and later dumped his body on the expressway to make it look like an accident," Singh claimed. The family had approached local authorities not long after his burial, demanding an investigation and postmortem to establish the cause of death. After nearly 20 days of persistent appeals, the district administration finally permitted the exhumation. On Friday, the body was exhumed from the village graveyard in the presence of SDM (Judicial) Jewar Durgesh Kumar, SSI Sohanpal, and local police officials. Villagers gathered in large numbers as well.

Rain and wind clear NCR air, AQI satisfactory after ‘poor’ show

Noida . (Agency)

Rain and strong winds came to Noida's rescue after Dussehra, averting a pollution spike from the burning of effigies. The showers cleared the air, pushing the city's AQI into the 'satisfactory' category at 76 on Friday.

AQI had slipped into the poor category earlier this week with the city recording an AQI of 227 on Wednesday. It improved marginally to 136 on Thursday following light rain in the day.

This was the first time since Sept 18 that Noida registered satisfactory air quality.

At 88, Delhi's AQI was also in the satisfactory category on Friday, compared to 123 in the 'moderate' category a day earlier. Delhi's AQI was 155 in the 'moderate' range on Dussehra day in 2024, but it deteriorated to a 'poor' 224 the next day. The city had recorded its highest post-Dussehra AQI in the year 2020 — at 353 in the 'very poor' category — followed by 2018, when it stood at

326. Neighbouring Ghaziabad, which has so far avoided poor-category air this season, also saw a notable improvement—from Thursday's 148 to 82 on the day. Greater Noida recorded 102 (moderate), better than Thursday's 139. Station-wise data showed Noida Sector 62 at 58, Sector 125 at 97, Sector 1 at 73, and Sector 116 at 75—all in the satisfactory category. In Greater Noida, Knowledge Park V reported 127 (moderate), while Knowledge Park 3 stood at 77 (satisfactory). Ghaziabad's Vasundhara, Sanjay Nagar, and Loni stations recorded 85, 81, and 79, respectively, all in the satisfactory category. Several parts of the city received moderate rainfall. "Rain and strong winds caused the dispersion of pollutants, leading to better AQI. As another spell of rain is forecast, frequent events will keep the air quality clean," said Dipankar Saha, former head of CPCB's air laboratory. According to

Delhi Pollution Control Committee's real-time data for hourly PM2.5, several stations recorded a rise on Thursday night, but the meteorological conditions



aided in the dispersion of pollutants. AQI levels are expected to remain in the moderate category on Saturday, as per Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology. While the immediate respite was aided by weather conditions, officials are bracing for the winter months, when stubble burning and

festive firecrackers worsen NCR's air. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which comes into force in Oct, has not yet been enforced this season, but the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) said it is closely monitoring weather patterns before imposing curbs. In a statement on Friday, CAQM directed Delhi-NCR states to take strict action against crop residue burning, terming it a "grave concern" for the region's air quality. The commission issued statutory directions to Punjab, Haryana and UP, calling for effective enforcement of their action plans and warning of accountability in case of official inaction. UPPCB regional officer Reetesh Tiwari said inspection teams were already active. "Once CAQM orders enforcement of GRAP measures, we will implement them," he added. Meanwhile, India Meteorological Department has predicted another spell of rain from Sunday to Tuesday.

Leopard enters Maruti’s Manesar plant, rescued after 6-hour search

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A male leopard — around three years old — that strayed into the Maruti Suzuki campus in Manesar on Friday morning was rescued by the wildlife department after a six-hour intensive operation.

The animal was first spotted around 7.30am. Within 20 minutes, a team of eight wildlife officials arrived with a cage, nets and tranquiliser guns to rescue it. They cordoned off the campus, urging company employees to stay away from the premises. Around 2.30pm, the team tranquilised the animal and moved it into the cage. The leopard, which was believed to have strayed from the adjoining Aravalis, evaded detection for hours before being spotted in a thicket inside the campus, said a wildlife official, adding that the animal will be released into its natural habitat later. "The leopard is in good health and shows no signs of stress or injury. Our priority was to ensure a safe rescue without harm to the animal and people. We set up a net trap in the area to ensure that it doesn't venture into the Maruti plant. It's a subadult, and not fully independent. So, we could

rescue it easily," said divisional wildlife officer RK Jangra, who was involved in the search operation. Manesar and its surrounding areas have experienced repeated incidents of leopards wandering into industrial or residential zones due to



their proximity to the Aravalis. Wildlife experts said habitat fragmentation, a shrinking prey base and extensive construction activities in the region are driving big cats into human-dominated areas. This is not the first time Maruti's facilities in Manesar have faced such a situation. In 2017, a leopard entered the company's Manesar plant, one of its key

manufacturing units, causing a temporary halt in operations. At that time, forest officials had deployed many traps and conducted extensive searches before rescuing the animal. The Manesar plant is close to the Aravali foothills, an area that historically served as a wildlife corridor but has become increasingly fragmented by roads, buildings and factories. According to wildlife experts, this habitat loss coupled with dwindling prey availability, has forced leopards to stray into industrial and residential areas around Gurgaon, Sohna and Faridabad.

Conservationists have long advocated for safe wildlife passages, such as underpasses and ecological corridors, to mitigate human-animal conflict. "The Aravalis is one of the last refuges for leopards in the region. Without ensuring safe movement routes, both animals and people will remain at risk," said Vaishali Rana, a wildlife activist. For now, officials have confirmed that the rescued leopard will be released safely later at night. "We are monitoring the leopard for

After TOI’s report and NGT prod, joint Yamuna task force on cards

Noida . (Agency)

Inter-state coordination to safeguard Yamuna's banks will finally take shape after UP and Delhi agreed before National Green Tribunal to set up respective task forces. The Ghaziabad administration has formed UP's task force to tackle illegal mining along the riverine border, which will work in coordination with Delhi's task force as well as those of other Yamuna districts like Noida and Baghpat. The move follows NGT taking suo motu cognisance of a TOI report on sand miners building a road across Yamuna along the Delhi-Ghaziabad border by laying sandbags. This July, Delhi CM Rekha

Gupta had written to the UP govt, calling for action against illegal mining in the border areas. The UP task force comprises Ghaziabad's ADM (finance/revenue), the Loni ACP, SDM, a regional transport office official, and the district mining officer. The north and northeast districts of Delhi as well as Gautam Budh Nagar and Baghpat administrations have been requested to nominate their members as well. Ghaziabad district mining officer Saurabh Chaturvedi told TOI on Friday the decision was taken during a meeting on Aug 13. "It was decided that an inter-state joint task force will be told to carry out a demarcation of Yamuna river plains on

UP-Delhi borders and to curb illegal mining here. All officials will function together as one joint task force. We are yet to receive replies from other districts on this," he said. Chaturvedi said the Yamuna coordination task force will be different from the anti-mining task force that has been operating in UP districts since 2023. Officials in the Gautam Budh Nagar administration said they are yet to appoint officials for the task force.

In July, a statement from the Delhi CM's office said, "CM Gupta has informed CM Yogi Adityanath that NGT has consistently raised concerns over illegal sand mining in the Yamuna.

Manohar Lal Khattar proposes new drain to avert flooding during rains

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who was in Gurgaon on Friday, asked GMDA and the irrigation department to plan a new stormwater drain from Gurgaon to Palwal via Sohna and Nuh, saying the Najafgarh drain has reached its limit.

He said a report, factoring in reservoirs, natural flow patterns and the feasibility of lifting stormwater in hilly stretches, should be placed before the NCR Planning Board within a month. Experts, however, warn that the plan is not viable. Gurgaon's runoff naturally drains north-east into the Najafgarh basin. Forcing it south would need heavy pumping or re-engineering, making the project costly and ecologically damaging. Alternatives such as restoring Najafgarh as a wetland, creating reservoirs in low-lying areas and adopting distributed recharge systems are seen as more practical.

"So far, rainwater from Gurgaon has been reaching the Yamuna only through the Najafgarh

drain, but it has its own limitations. An alternative plan will be prepared. Under this plan, a new drain will be constructed from Gurgaon to Palwal via Sohna and Nuh, which will carry stormwater to the Yamuna. The Centre has also agreed to take up this new project for a long-term solution to waterlogging in Delhi and Gurgaon," Khattar said during the meeting.

According to the irrigation department data, the Najafgarh drain has a carrying capacity of around 10,000 cusecs, but during monsoon the inflow rises to 12,000-13,000 cusecs. "Earlier, water would percolate into adjacent agricultural land, but due to rapid urbanisation over the past few years, runoff has increased sharply. At present, water from Rohtak and Jhajjar also flows into Najafgarh. This is why an alternative alignment is being discussed," an official said. According to officials,



Ujjina diversion drain already carries water from Palwal to Yamuna. "A Sohna to Yamuna drain connectivity already exists, but its capacity will have to be enhanced for the alignment of the proposed stormwater drain to work. Discussions have been held, and a detailed plan will be prepared soon," the official added. Since the route lies within Haryana, officials believe land acquisition and approvals will be less of a challenge. The Najafgarh drain begins at the Dhansa regulator and eventually outflows into the Yamuna, passing through catchment areas in both Haryana and Delhi. It also carries stormwater from Jhajjar

district.

Manu Bhatnagar of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Intach), however, told TOI that draining stormwater to Palwal, which lies in the south of the city, would require a very deep drain—at least to a depth of 16m—to cut through the topography in the initial stretches. "And once monsoon is over, this drain could be rendered useless for the rest of the months," he said. In 2014, Intach filed a petition in the NGT urging that Najafgarh lake be declared a wetland and adequate steps be taken to conserve it. The plea is still pending. Former expert member of Delhi State Expert Appraisal Committee Chetan Agarwal said Gurgaon was still paying for the earlier mistake of abandoning the Badshahpur nullah downstream of Ghata and replacing it with a straightened artificial concrete drain parallel to SPR, which cut its retention and recharge capacity. "Given the high level of policy attention

to the waterlogging issue in Gurgaon, this is the right time for our engineers and planners to do an in-depth feasibility and cost-benefit analysis of this proposed stormwater drain. But careful evaluation.

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Absconding self-styled ‘godman’ withdrew over Rs 50 lakh after FIR against him

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: Self-styled godman Swami Chaitanyananda Saraswati, accused of sexually harassing 17 girl students of a Delhi institute, allegedly used different names and particulars to operate bank accounts and withdrew over Rs 50 lakh after FIR was registered against him, investigators claimed on Friday. During the investigation, it was revealed that Saraswati had allegedly been operating a bank account under two different names by submitting documents with varying particulars at the time of account opening and transfer. Police also said that around Rs 50-55 lakh had been withdrawn since the registration of the FIR. Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Friday dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of Saraswati in a case of alleged cheating, forgery and criminal conspiracy against him. Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur said, “Investigation of the present case is at a nascent stage and the investigating officer (IO) requires custodial interrogation of the applicant/accused to establish the entire chain of fraud, cheating, conspiracy and misappropriation of funds. As per the version of IO, the applicant/accused is not available at his given address, and his mobile phone is switched off.” “Considering the seriousness of allegations and gravity of offence, this court is not inclined to grant

anticipatory bail to the applicant/accused. Therefore, the present bail application stands dismissed,” the judge added. The

Management Research in the “fraudulent trust” created by him. The court said the accused vested a specific plot into the fraud-



investigation, so far, the court noted, showed creation of a fraudulent trust, namely Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management Research Foundation Trust, by Chaitanyananda “to disburse” the property of Sri Sharada Institute of Indian

Management Research and the peetham ulent trust and sublet the same without any approval or intimation to the authority concerned. “Revenues and funds generated from plot number 7 were intended for the benefit of Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management Research and the peetham

(Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamsthanam Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri), but the accused diverted these revenues and funds for his own benefit and criminally misappropriated the property and funds of the peetham,” the order said. Saraswati has been booked for allegedly sexually harassing 17 female students, who he controlled by confiscating their mobile phones and original certificates, creating a sense of fear that compelled them to comply with his demands, according to a friend of one of the victims. “He marked students first and asked them to deposit their phones so they could ‘focus on studies’.” The phones would remain in his custody for some time, and in return, he would hand over a new one of his choice. This ensured that communication was under his control and did not reach anyone else,” the friend, who attended the same institute, alleged. Requesting anonymity, he said, once a student was admitted, his rule made it mandatory to submit all original documents and certificates, which were returned only upon completion of the course, he claimed. “This created a sense of fear, as every student’s career was locked there. If anyone dared to resist or complain, they were worried that their certificates might never be returned, ruining their careers,” he alleged. He further alleged that female students were threatened with fail-

ure or expulsion for not complying with Saraswati or his close aides. “Girls were frequently warned that their careers would be destroyed if they opposed him. Some were even expelled from the institute. Finally, someone dared to raise her voice,” he claimed. Saraswati remains on the run, and more stories are emerging about the “inescapable web” he created to intimidate students and maintain control over the institute’s operations. A student from the EWS quota filed a complaint in March, alleging that she was asked to pay an additional amount, despite paying Rs 60,000 as a donation, a family friend of the woman said. Chaitanyananda (62), a former chairman of the management institute in southwest Delhi, had built a network of loyalists inside the institute by appointing them to posts they did not even qualify for, he alleged on condition of anonymity. “She was told by Chaitanyananda that either she should pay another Rs 60,000, work without salary at the institute for a year, or leave the college,” he claimed. An FIR was registered on August 4 against Chaitanyananda after an IAF officer filed a complaint about the matter to the administration of the private management institute. The complaint stated that during a virtual meeting with over 30 female students, several of them narrated instances of sexual harassment, manipulation and threats by him, police said.

Over 3,500 kg of illegal firecrackers seized from house

New Delhi: The Delhi Police seized 3,580.4 kg of illegal firecrackers from a house in Vishal Enclave, Rajouri Garden, preventing a potential fire tragedy in the thickly populated area, they said on Saturday. The police also arrested three members of a family for repackaging the firecrackers for sale ahead of the festive season. The accused have been identified as Sushil Kakkar (53), his wife Upasana Kakkar (50) and their son Shivam Kakkar (28). On the basis of specific intelligence, the Special Staff team conducted a raid at a residential premises on September 25. During the raid, officers found crackers stored throughout the house, including the kitchen. The family members were caught red-handed while repacking the crackers into smaller consignments for supply in Delhi. The police said the family runs a shop selling namkeen and other eatables in Moti Nagar, but had been illegally procuring crackers from Meerut, Gurugram and Ghaziabad to sell these at higher profit margins in Delhi. A case has been registered under Section 9-B of the Explosives Act and appropriate sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at the Rajouri Garden police station. The police said the recovery ensured compliance with the Supreme Court’s orders and averted a possible large-scale fire accident in the congested neighborhood.

Mobile thefts account for 87% of crimes reported in Delhi Metro

New Delhi: Mobile thefts account for nearly 87 per cent of crimes reported in Delhi Metro, mostly linked to organised syndicates, according to the Delhi Police. To address this issue, the Delhi Police Metro unit had launched “Mission Reconnect 2.0 – Your Phone’s Journey Back Home” in June. As part of this initiative, the Metro unit has come up with five specialised teams — a technical unit to trace phones through e-FIR data and technical surveillance, a field unit to catch offenders, a nodal officer unit to coordinate with the police across states, a court facilitation unit to simplify legal procedures through virtual hearings and a reconnecting unit to return phones directly to victims, said Kushal Pal Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Metro).

Gurugram DC directs traffic cops to suspend drunk drivers’ licences

Gurugram: Amid the festive season picking fervour and surge in liquor sales, Gurugram DC Ajay Kumar has ordered the traffic police to come down heavy on cases of drunk driving. Kumar, while chairing a road safety meeting, asked the traffic police officials to suspend the licences of drivers commuting in an intoxicated state, urging a zero tolerance stance. “Drunk driving should be dealt with sternly. There can be no mercy, no respite to the offenders. Licences should be suspended to ensure safety on the roads,” said Kumar. It was decided that the licences of those found driving under the influence of alcohol would be suspended for three months. Kumar directed that all SDMs should monitor the licencing process in their respective areas and that the departments concerned should take effective measures to prevent accidents. “The number of road accidents and the resulting fatalities must be reduced,” he said, urging the police to raise awareness about road safety. The police have also been asked to develop an action plan to prevent cases of speeding. Kumar also directed that trees and bushes be trimmed to enhance visibility at the various T-point and U-turns. The DC also directed that, with the winter season about to begin, proper reflectors be installed on all major roads to prevent accidents due to fog.

2 Gogi gang members held after encounter in Gurugram

New Delhi: Delhi Police Special Cell, in a joint operation with Gurugram police, arrested two members of the Gogi gang wanted in the murder of Neeraj Tehlan, a key witness in a Najafgarh double murder case, after a brief exchange of fire in Sector 99, Gurugram, on Friday. The men have been identified as Mohit Jakhad (29), a resident of Goyla Khurd, Chhawla, Delhi, and Jatinder Rajput (21), of Vipin Garden, Dwarka Mor. The encounter took place in the early hours of September 26, when the

police team. Sub Inspector Vikas was hit in the arm, while another bullet struck Head Constable Narpat’s bulletproof jacket, leav-



ing him unharmed. The police retaliated in self-defence and

managed to overpower the duo, who sustained gunshot wounds to their legs. They were taken to hospital along with the injured officer. The arrests are linked to the killing of Tehlan on July 4, in Najafgarh. Tehlan, a prime witness in an earlier double murder, was targeted by gangster Sanjeev alias Sanju Dahiya, a former associate turned rival who blamed him for informing police about his move-

had attacked Tehlan in a Najafgarh salon, killing two of his associates, Sonu Tehlan and Ashish Sindhu. Though Chintu was later arrested after being deported from Mexico, Dahiya remains absconding. The police said the two men arrested on Friday admitted they acted on Dahiya’s instructions and sought revenge against Tehlan. Officers added that both, influenced by gangster culture, had fallen under Dahiya’s sway. Delhi Police said its crackdown on organised crime has intensified in recent weeks, with 44 gang members and six juveniles apprehended across Delhi-NCR in the past month alone.

JNU forms India’s first varsity-based animal welfare society

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has established the Animal Welfare Society of JNU (AWS-JNU), becom-

of Education (MoE) and University Grants Commission (UGC) to set up Animal Welfare Societies in Higher

campus life.” Earlier, under her leadership, the reconstituted Animal Birth Control (ABC) Committee in 2024 played



ing the first higher education institution in India to constitute a statutory body dedicated to animal welfare. The society was formally notified on September 26, by JNU Vice-Chancellor Prof Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, in line with the directives of the Ministry

Educational Institutions, and in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The Vice-Chancellor has been at the forefront of the initiative, with the university stating that “the endeavour aims not only to inculcate animal welfare into the curriculum but also everyday

a crucial role in advancing humane animal management and fostering peaceful coexistence between humans and animals on the campus. The newly-constituted AWS-JNU will be chaired by Prof Piyush Pratap Singh, Associate Dean of Students (III) and Chairperson of JNU’s ABC

Committee. The AWS-JNU will introduce a structured framework to promote animal welfare and sustainability. The university noted that this framework would focus on “awareness and education on animal welfare, zoonoses and environmental ethics,” along with “campus-based initiatives

like feeding zones and first-aid teams”. It will also encourage “research and capstone projects on animal law, ecology, and sustainable lifestyles”, and provide “internships and field exposure in collaboration with SPCAs, veterinary hospitals, and the Forest Department.” According to the universi-

ty, the formation of JNU AWS embodies the spirit of the NEP 2020, which envisions cultivating ethical, compassionate and environmentally conscious citizens, while also fulfilling the constitutional duty under Article 51A(g) — to show compassion towards all living beings.”

IIT-Delhi develops breakthrough method to recycle denim into high-quality garments

New Delhi: In a significant breakthrough, researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (IIT-Delhi) have developed a method to recycle denim waste into knitted garments without compromising on quality. Led by Prof Abhijit Majumdar and Prof BS Butola of the Department of Textile and Fibre Engineering, the team successfully converted waste denim

into yarn with minimal damage to fibre properties by optimising process conditions. The recycled yarn is then blended into knitted fabric using seamless whole-garment technology, resulting in garments containing 25 per cent to 75 per cent recycled yarn. The team found that up to 50 per cent recycled yarn content could be used in knitted clothing without affecting the feel of the fabric. “To reduce the roughness of recycled yarns, a softening treatment is applied, ensuring the final product feels just like one made from virgin materials,” said Prof Majumdar. He added that while the study focused on denim waste, the method could be extended to other types of textile waste. The research, published in the Journal of Cleaner Production, also included a life cycle assessment (LCA) to quantify environmental benefits in the Indian context. PhD scholar Satya Karmakar collected energy and material data from the Panipat textile

recycling cluster. The LCA showed that recycling could mitigate 30-40 per cent of environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions, acid rain and fossil fuel depletion. For ozone layer depletion, the reduction is as high as 60 per cent. Using recycled fibres also reduces the demand for virgin cotton, thereby saving water, pesticides and fertilisers used in cotton cultivation — a process that alone contributes 24 per cent to global warming among all production stages. “The team is now exploring the feasibility of recycling textile waste multiple times,” said Prof Butola. India generates about 3.9 million tonnes of post-consumer textile waste annually, of which only 4 per cent is recycled. Most of this waste ends up in landfills due to variability in fibre blends and colours. Mechanical recycling also weakens fibre quality, making it challenging to produce high-quality garments from recycled textiles.

National capital tops list in road accident deaths: NCRB report

New Delhi: Walking or driving on Delhi roads remains fraught with danger, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. The newly released Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India 2023 report has ranked Delhi as the most unsafe city for road users among 53 major Indian cities. The report shows that in 2023, nearly four people lost their lives every day on the Capital roads, while at least 13 people were injured daily. Overall, Delhi recorded 5,715 road accidents, accounting for 8.2 per cent of the 69,910 accidents reported across all major cities during the year. Bengaluru, with 4,980 accidents, and Chennai, with 3,653 accidents, followed Delhi in second and third positions, respectively. Delhi also topped the list for fatal accidents, registering the highest num-

ber of deaths at 1,457 in 2023. Bengaluru ranked second with 915 deaths, while Jaipur was third with 848 deaths. In compari-

auto-rickshaws, caused 95 deaths. Trucks were linked to 94 deaths, buses to 34 deaths and bicycles to 78 deaths. Delhi also



son, Delhi had reported 5,560 accidents, 1,461 deaths and 4,713 injuries in 2022. In 2021, the city recorded 4,720 accidents, 1,239 deaths and 3,989 injuries. Two-wheelers were the leading cause of fatal accidents in Delhi, responsible for 622 deaths in 2023. Cars followed with 327 deaths, while three-wheelers, including

led in pedestrian fatalities at crossings, with 159 deaths in 2023. Durg-Bhilai Nagar in Chhattisgarh was second, with 115 pedestrian deaths. The NCRB report covered 53 major cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Indore, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Ahmedabad and Amritsar, among others.

NEWS BOX

AI Used To Create Celebrity Deepfakes In Multi-Million Dollar Instagram Scam

MEXICO CITY . (Agency)

A group of suspected scammers in Brazil using Instagram ads featuring deepfakes of supermodel Gisele Bundchen and other celebrities appears to have made millions of dollars through online fraud, according to police investigators. Authorities arrested four suspects tied to the scheme this week and froze assets across five states in an investigation that found over 20 million reais (\$3.9 million) in suspicious funds identified by federal anti-money laundering organ COAF. The operation marks one of the first attempts in Brazil to counter the growing use of artificial intelligence tools to manipulate images and videos of celebrities for online scams. Brazil's Supreme Court ruled in June that social media platforms can be held liable for criminal ads posted by users if they fail to act swiftly to remove the content, even without a court order.

Instagram owner Meta said that its policies forbid "ads that deceptively use public figures to try to scam people," and that it removes such ads "when detected." The company added in a statement that it has "specialised systems to detect celeb-bait, invests heavily in trained review teams, shares tips on avoiding scams and offers tools to report potential violations." Bundchen did not respond to a request for comment. She previously warned followers about fake videos circulating on social media using her image to perpetrate scams. The probe announced this week by police investigators in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul began in August 2024 after a victim reported being misled by an Instagram ad showing an altered video of Bundchen promoting a skincare product. Another ad used the supermodel's likeness to promise a giveaway of suitcases, with buyers paying shipping fees for items that never arrived. "We identified that the criminal group carried out a series of other scams, involving deepfakes of other celebrities and false betting platforms," Eibert Moreira Neto, head of Rio Grande do Sul's cybercrime unit, told Reuters.

Europe Getaway Turns Tragic For Nagpur Family, Couple Killed In Italy

world.(Agency)

An Indian family's European getaway turned tragic on Thursday, with a businessman and his wife losing their lives in a road accident in Italy. The victims have been identified as Nagpur-based hotelier Javed Akhtar and his wife, Nadira Gulshan. The Indian Embassy in Italy has confirmed the deaths and said they are in touch with their family back home and the local authorities.

Who Was Javed Akhtar?

Akhtar, 55, is a renowned hotelier and entrepreneur from Nagpur, Maharashtra. He and his wife, Gulshan, 47, were travelling with their three children - daughters Arzoo Akhtar, 21, and Shifa Akhtar, and son Jazel Akhtar - when the family met with an accident on the Aurelia Highway near Grosseto. The family owns the Gulshan Plaza hotel near the Sitabuldi flyover in Nagpur.

Reports suggest they started their holiday from France on September 22 before reaching Italy. The accident occurred when they were on their way to a sightseeing stop in a nine-seater minibus.

Help Arrived Late?

The Nagpur couple were among three people killed in the accident that involved a van and a minibus carrying tourists of Asian origin, local reports suggest. It is understood that the collision occurred after a truck rammed the broken-down van. The minibus driver and the couple died on the spot. Their daughter, Arzoo, suffered severe head injuries in the crash. She is admitted to Lee Scott hospital in Siena and is critical, while Shifa and Jazel are recovering at hospitals in Florence and Grosseto.

"Best Decision Ever": Barack Obama's 33rd Anniversary Post For Wife Michelle

world. (Agency)

Barack and Michelle Obama have marked a personal milestone, celebrating 33 years of marriage. The former United States president shared a message for his wife. Posting on X (formerly Twitter), Obama shared a picture of the couple together and accompanied it with a note that read, "The best decision I ever made was marrying you, @MichelleObama. For 33 years, I've admired your strength, grace, and determination — and the fact that you look so good doing it all. Happy anniversary!" Barack Obama's post quickly drew many reactions online, with users both congratulating the couple and reflecting on what their marriage symbolises. One user praised the longevity of the relationship with humour, writing, "33 years married... legendary. I can't even commit to one Netflix series." Another highlighted the rarity of such stability, saying, "People clown marriage nowadays, but this is power: two people aligned for 3+ decades. Stability like this is rare in politics, business, or culture and that's exactly why it stands out." Some users saw the Obamas as an inspiration. One response read, "In the world today, a couple such as this reminds many of us out here that marriages do actually work. It may not always be a walk in the park but it is great fun unto the pair that choose to keep growing in love. So 'Yes we can'." The post also encouraged people to share old photographs of the couple. A black-and-white image from their wedding day resurfaced. Comparisons across time also appeared, with one user sharing two photos of the Obamas, one from the 1990s and another from the 2020s.

Trump's 'paper tiger' jab at Russia echoes Mao's propaganda against the US

In a Sept. 23 Truth Social post, Trump called Russia “a paper tiger.” Though he later backed off, he repeated the jab before U.S. generals and admirals Tuesday.

WASHINGTON . (Agency)

Nearly 80 years after Mao Zedong called the United States a “paper tiger” to boost morale at home, U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are exchanging barbs who is the paper tiger of today.

In a Sept. 23 post on Truth Social, Trump mocked Russia's military powers and called the country “a paper tiger,” prompting the Kremlin to push back. Trump backed off, but on Tuesday he brought back the dismissive rhetoric when addressing a roomful of generals and admirals. “You’re four years fighting a war that should have taken a week,” Trump said of Russia's war with Ukraine. "Are you a

paper tiger?" On Thursday, Putin retorted, “We are fighting against the entire bloc of NATO, and we keep moving, keep advancing and feel confident, and we are a paper tiger; what NATO itself is?” He added: “A paper tiger? Go and deal with this paper tiger then.” Those familiar with modern Chinese history have found it amusing, odd and not without irony that an American president should be using a classic Chinese propaganda slogan — words that came from the heart of a communist government that is the polar opposite of what the Trump administration frames as the best way to run a country.

“As a Chinese historian I had to laugh at the irony when President Trump appropriated one of Chairman Mao’s favorite expressions in calling Russia a ‘paper tiger,’” said John Delury, a senior fellow at Asia Society. “Mao famously said this about the United States, at a time when the U.S. had a growing nuclear arsenal and China was not yet a nuclear power. ... How times have changed. Now the leaders of the United States and Russia are calling one

another ‘paper tigers’ as Chinese leader Xi Jinping sits back looking like the adult in the room.” How paper tiger became a propaganda term in China

The phrase — “zhilao hu” in China's dominant dialect — is well-rooted in the



culture of the Chinese Communist Party. Perry Link, a well-known American scholar on modern Chinese language and culture, recalled that Lao She, a famous Chinese writer, referred to U.S. troops as the “paper tiger” during the Korean War years. “There’s a Cold War echo across this whole story,” said Rana Mitter, a British historian specializing in modern Chinese

history. Accounts by Chinese state media and essays by party theorists say the phrase entered into the party vocabulary when Mao, the founding revolutionary, told the American journalist Anna Louise Strong in a 1946 interview that the atom bomb by the United States was a “paper tiger,” which the “U.S. reactionaries use to scare people.” Mao then used the Chinese phrase “zhilao hu,” which means paper tiger literally. But his interpreter translated it into “scarecrow,” according to state media reports, before an American doctor who was present suggested “paper tiger,” which Mao approved. The phrase largely refers to something that is seemingly powerful but actually fragile.

Delury said at the time that Moscow, which took the nuclear threat seriously, was aghast that Mao “casually” dismissed the threat and was annoyed that “Mao would brazenly use ‘paper tiger’ rhetoric at a time when if nuclear war broke out, China would rely on Russian involvement.”

Vladimir Putin orders government to soften trade imbalance with India

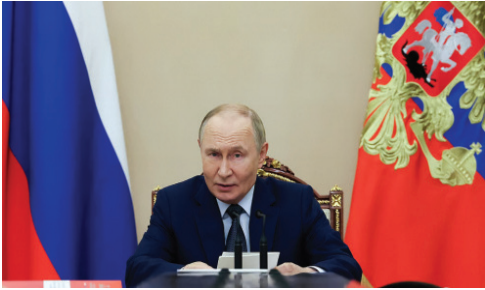
SIDOARJO . (Agency)

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed enthusiasm for his upcoming visit to India in early December and instructed his government to develop measures to address the trade imbalance caused by India's substantial crude oil imports from Russia. Speaking at the Valdai Discussion Club, an international forum of security and geopolitical experts from 140 countries, including India, held in the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Thursday evening, Putin underscored the enduring and cordial relationship between Moscow and New Delhi. "We have never had any problems or interstate tensions with India. Never," the Russian leader stated, highlighting the "special" nature of Russia-India ties dating back to the Soviet era, when India was fighting for its independence.

"In India, they remember this, they know it, and they value it. We appreciate that India has not forgotten it," he said.

Putin referred to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "friend" and

described their relationship as based on trust and mutual respect. He praised India's nationalist government under Modi, calling the Prime Minister a "balanced, wise," and "nationally oriented" leader. He further lauded India's firm stance on continuing oil



imports from Russia despite pressure from the United States, noting, "The losses faced by India due to punitive US tariffs would be balanced by crude imports from Russia. Plus, it will gain prestige as a sovereign nation."

To help reduce the trade imbalance, Putin proposed increasing Russian imports of Indian agricultural products and pharmaceuticals. "Certain steps

can be undertaken from our side for medicinal products, pharmaceuticals," he noted. While acknowledging the vast potential for economic cooperation between the two nations, Putin stressed the importance of resolving practical issues in financing, logistics, and payment systems. "We need to solve the whole range of tasks to unlock our opportunities and potential advantages," he remarked. He also recalled that the declaration of a "special strategic privileged partnership" between Russia and India will soon mark its 15th anniversary, adding, "That's what it really is." "Our foreign ministries work very closely together," Putin said, emphasising that Russia and India regularly coordinate their positions on key international issues. In a notable gesture towards future cooperation, Putin welcomed a proposal by Dr Arvind Gupta, Director General of New Delhi-based Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), to create a joint fund for the development of artificial intelligence and other cutting-edge technologies.

Two million people rally in Italy for Gaza as general strike halts key services

TBILISI. (Agency)

More than two million people across Italy rallied in over 100 cities on Friday (October 3, 2025) for a one-day general strike to support the residents of Gaza and a humanitarian aid mission, Italy's largest union said.

Italian unions proclaimed the strike after the Global Sumud Flotilla that was trying to break Israel's naval blockade to deliver aid to Gaza was intercepted by Israeli naval forces Wednesday night. Protests and demonstrations have sprung up all over Europe and globally since then, but they have been particularly strong in Italy. Italy's conservative Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni had criticized the strike. She anticipated it would cause widespread disruption across the country and said it was politically motivated and targeted her right-wing government. According to the CGIL union, 300,000 people marched

through the streets of Rome alone, while the national average participation in the general strike stood at around 60%, halting all the main services in key sectors including transportation and schools. In Florence, protesters approached the gates of the Italian national soccer team's training center to demand its upcoming World Cup qualifier against Israel not be played because of the war in Gaza. Italy is scheduled to host Israel in Udine on October 14.

But UEFA is considering suspending Israel over the war. The players were not at the Coverciano training center in Florence, but the squad will convene there on Monday. Protesters appeared to behave peacefully on the opposite side of the street from the soccer complex, holding aloft a banner that read in Italian, "Let's stop Zionism with the resistance." On Friday morning, around 100,000 people

participated in a rally in the northern city of Milan. Clashes there briefly erupted after a group of protesters blocking the city's highway started throwing bottles at police, who responded with smoke bombs. Isolated scuffles also happened in Turin, Bologna and Naples but the majority of the protests were peaceful.

"I still believe that all this brings no benefit to the Palestinian people. On the other hand, I understand that it will cause a lot of problems for the Italian people," Ms. Meloni told reporters on Thursday, condemning the strike. "Revolutions and long weekends don't go well together." The Italian leader has been facing mounting pressure to change Italy's stance as a longtime supporter of Israel in the Gaza conflict, as growing calls have emerged to stop the massive humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza.



Saturday, authorities hanged Saman Mohammadi after convicting him for "Moharebeh" -- waging war against God -- for his alleged membership in terrorist and Takfiri groups, Tehran's term for Islamist militants. Mohammadi, arrested in 2013, was reportedly involved in the 2009 killing of the Friday prayers imam in the western city of Sanandaj, as well as in armed robberies and kidnappings, including the killing of a conscript. The executions came less than a week after Iran said it hanged a man it described as one of Israel's top spies. The Islamic republic, which carries out executions by hanging, is the world's second most prolific executioner after China, according to human rights groups including Amnesty International.

Apple, Google block apps that crowdsource ICE sightings; Some warn of chilling effects

ICEBlock, the most widely used of the ICE-tracking apps in Apple's app store, is among the apps that have been taken down.

BERLIN. (Agency)

Apple and Google blocked downloads of phone apps that flag sightings of US immigration agents, just hours after the Trump administration demanded that one particularly popular iPhone app be taken down. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said such tracking puts Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers at risk. But users and developers of the apps say it's their First Amendment right to capture what ICE is doing in their neighborhoods — and maintain that most users turn to these platforms in an effort to protect their

own safety as President Donald Trump steps up aggressive immigration enforcement across the country.

ICEBlock, the most widely used of the ICE-tracking apps in Apple's app store, is among the apps that have been taken down. Bondi said her office reached out to Apple on Thursday “demanding that they remove ICEBlock” and claiming that it “is designed to put ICE agents at risk just for doing their jobs.” Apple soon complied, sending an email Thursday to the app's creator, Joshua Aaron, that said it would block further downloads of the app because new information “provided to Apple by law enforcement” showed the app broke the app store rules. According to the email, which Aaron shared with The Associated Press, Apple said the app violated the company's policies “because its purpose is to provide location information about law enforcement officers that can be used to harm such officers individually or as a group.” n a

Friday interview, Aaron decried the company for bending to what he described as “an authoritarian regime.” And immigration rights advocates like Kica



Matos, president of the National Immigration Law Center, added that these actions marked “a disturbing example of how tech companies are capitulating to Trump.” “These apps are a lifeline for communities living in uncertainty and fear of when ICE might show up to tear their families apart,” Matos said in a statement. Downloads of apps like ICEBlock have

surged since Trump took office for his second term earlier this year. Aaron said he launched the app in April as a way to help immigrant communities protect themselves from surprise raids or potential harassment. It had more than 1 million users, he said. While not specifying details on the total number of platforms removed, Apple confirmed to the AP on Friday that they removed “similar apps” due to potential safety risks that were raised by law enforcement. Google followed their move, saying that several similar apps violated their policies for Android platforms. While some advocates don't find all of these apps particularly useful — pointing to potential misinformation and false alarms — they echoed criticism of moves to suppress them. What really worries me is the kind of precedent that this sets” where the government can “basically dictate what kinds of apps people have on their phones,” said civil rights attorney Alejandra Caraballo, who works at Harvard University's Cyberlaw Clinic.

Religious slogans spark tension in Jalandhar

Ahmedabad . (Agency)

Tension prevailed in Jalandhar Friday following an altercation between members of two communities during a protest march near the district administrative complex, leading to a case registered against leaders of one of the groups.

On Friday morning, members of an organisation gathered to submit a memorandum to the Police Commissioner over an issue of ‘I Love Mohammad’ poster row. The members alleged that during their protest, a scooter rider passing by raised religious slogans, which led to an argument. The matter was sorted following the police intervention.

But later the same rider, who was from other community, was allegedly stopped and his scooter keys were taken away, resulting in a scuffle and a protest by the Hindu community leaders.

The protestors left the area after the members of the other group reached the spot and staged a blockade at Press Club Chowk. They shifted to the BMC Chowk later in the evening, where police attempted to disperse them. Many leaders including BJP leaders K D Bhandari and Sheetal Angural, along with Shiv Sena leaders, also joined the protest.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Naresh Dogra said earlier when one of the groups gathered to submit a memorandum to the Police Commissioner, both the groups had a minor scuffle near the district administrative complex.

The DCP said, later in the afternoon the people of the other group, based on some videos, filed complaints. Following which, a case was registered against Ayub Khan, Namin Khan and two others. He said the case has been registered under BNS Sections 115 (voluntary causing hurt), 126 (wrongful restraint), 351 (criminal intimidation) and 299 (act to outrage religious feelings) etc.

Apathy continues: Bad road kills two sisters in Hoskote

Bengaluru . (Agency)

Close on the heels of the death of a 22-year-old student, Dhanushree, due to the poorly maintained road in Avalahalli police station limits, yet another similar incident was reported on Friday in the Hoskote traffic police station limits, where two sisters died.

The deceased are Shyla, 25, and her sister Shwetha, 22. Both were returning to their house at Attivatta in Hoskote from the Kaiwara temple on Friday around 1.45 pm. While riding on the Hoskote-Chintamani State Highway, the two-wheeler skidded on a road which was scattered with jelly stones, near the



Shivanapura Cross. The stretch is also reportedly filled with potholes. The sisters who came under the wheels of a canter vehicle that was coming from behind died on the spot. A case has been registered against the driver.

Shyla was working as a nurse while Shwetha was a nursing student. The bodies have been handed over to the family members in the evening after the postmortem at the Hoskote Government Hospital.

Locals blamed the poorly maintained road for the incident. Despite the road work going on, no service road was made for the safety of motorists. The gravel that had been carelessly scattered on the road was the reason for the vehicles skidding. Stringent action should be taken against the concerned authorities and also the contractor to whom the work has been allotted,” locals said.

It may be recalled that Dhanushree, a resident of Hoskote, fell from her scooter while trying to avoid loose gravel on a poorly maintained road near Budigere Cross on Monday morning.

Mumbai: Six women, a catering unit and a fire that snuffed out their lives, dreams

On September 24, a fire that fed on the gas from a leaking cylinder swallowed the narrow cooking area and spread through the 500 sq ft unit. All six women sustained severe burns. A week later, they were all dead

Mumbai .(Agency)

Shivani Gandhi, Raksha Joshi, Durgavati Gupta, Janaki Gupta, Nitu Gupta, and Punita Gautam. Led by Shivani, the six, members of a catering unit in Mumbai’s Kandivali, had a lot in common — besides the practised ease with which they rolled out theplas, took breakfast and lunch orders, and passed on thalis with barely a spill.

Most of them lived in the Ram Nagar slums nearby. So whenever they stole some time off their hardscabble lives back home, they would walk down to the catering unit, where they were paid by the hour.

And then, on September 24, a fire that fed on the gas from a leaking cylinder swallowed the narrow cooking area and spread through the 500 sq ft unit. All six women sustained severe burns. A week later, they were all dead. It was around eight years ago that Shivani, 53, started ‘Shivani Catering

Services’, a popular eatery and takeaway that she ran out of a rented space at Ram Kishan Mistry Chawl on Military Road, around 400 metres from Kandivali (East) railway station. Shivani began with the Gujarati thepla, the snack that serves as a meal in itself and is a popular eat-on-the-go dish among the unit’s clients — mostly people from the nearby hostels and slum pockets. The unit recently started taking lunch and dinner orders as well.

Over time, Shivani had built a network of workers who she would call depending on the orders that day, paying them Rs 50-60 an hour. A month ago, she moved to a space a couple of shops away. It was this shop that caught fire on September 24. The board, left behind by the earlier occupants, still says ‘Geeta

Timber House’, its yellow shutters down. “Shivani was particular about clearing the



payment of her workers at the end of each day because she wanted them to have cash in hand when they went back home every evening. Sometimes, she would give them

an advance payment since they had a lot of responsibilities — school fees, health issues and so on. They were like family members. Shivani even went on trips with them,” says Shivani’s husband, Mitul Gandhi, who runs an opticals business and lives in the Ashok Nagar area of Kandivali with his daughters, aged 25 and 22, who work in private firms. He says he is yet to take a call on whether to restart Shivani’s catering unit.

“Shivani employed several poor women in her unit. They worked from 7.30 am till late in the night, depending on the orders. She gave them money on an hourly basis so whenever the women got time, they came for work,” says Yogendra Mistry, who rented the space to Shivani for Rs 50,000 a month.

FB friendship ends on bitter note: Pune police look out for woman accused of extorting sweet shop owner

Pune .(Agency)

The Pune city police are on the lookout for a woman who allegedly befriended a sweet shop owner on Facebook, met him in person, and later began extorting money from him by threatening to make their ‘relationship’ public.

The 30-year-old woman from Sangli district was booked on charges related to extortion, robbery and criminal intimidation following a First Information Report (FIR) lodged by a 45-year-old man from Pune Camp, who runs a sweet shop on the prominent Laxmi Road in the city. The case was lodged at the Faraskhana police station on Friday.

As per the FIR, the man came in contact with the woman over Facebook a few days ago,



following which she came to meet him at his sweet shop on September 25. Threatening to defame him before his family members, the woman allegedly extorted Rs 500 and also took

some sweet boxes from him forcefully, the FIR stated. The woman allegedly approached him later and demanded Rs 70,000. The sweet shop owner initially refused, but after she blackmailed him, saying she would contact his family members, he gave the money to her, as per the FIR.

Later, the woman allegedly demanded Rs 2 lakh from the complainant. When he asked her to come to his shop to collect the money, she refused and forced him to pay Rs 25,000 through Google Pay, the FIR alleged.

As the blackmail continued, the man approached the police. A police team, including Assistant Police Inspector Shital Jadhav, who is investigating the case, is on the lookout for the woman.

‘Not allowed to leave home’: UP LoP says Samajwadi Party delegation barred from visiting Bareilly

Lucknow .(Agency)

A Samajwadi Party delegation led by Leader of Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey was stopped by police from going to Bareilly, which cited the sensitive situation prevailing there due to the violence that occurred last week over the ‘I Love Muhammad’ row.

The party had announced that it would send a delegation to take stock of the situation. But LoP Pandey, 83, the senior most leader in the Assembly, was not allowed to leave his house by the Lucknow Police, which served him the letter from Bareilly District Magistrate (DM) Avinash Singh.

Pandey was initially served a notice issued by the SHO of the local PGI police station in Lucknow. He, however, refused to follow the notice, stating that it should have been from the DM. The Bareilly DM’s letter was later handed over to him.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Pandey said, “A 14-member delegation comprising party MPs were to reach Bareilly today since we had been receiving phone calls and messages that... innocent people were being sent to jail. Our intention was to get to the truth and help those in

need.” “The MPs had left from Delhi, but were stopped from leaving their homes in their constituencies. I had to leave Lucknow at 8 am today. I reached my home in the PGI area last night from my constituency in Siddharthnagar and found policemen deployed outside my



house. A sub-inspector handed over a notice issued by the local SHO, stating that I was not allowed to go to Bareilly as it would disturb the law and order situation. How can a sub inspector serve me such a preventive order? This morning, the police handed me a letter from the Bareilly DM. This letter cited preventive orders in force in the district... and stated that my visit

may escalate the situation and disturb law and order. Therefore, the DM letter asked me to stay home,” Pandey said.

Taking a dig at the ruling party, the LoP further said, “What can be expected from such a system when the Chief Minister of the state himself says ‘me inko sabak sikhaunga (I will teach them a lesson)’.”

“The preventive orders are in force in the district, but not beyond its borders. They should have stopped us at the borders of the district, not at our homes. The policemen are not even allowing me to go to the party office in Lucknow,” the LoP added.

Hitting back at the SP, UP deputy chief minister and BJP leader Keshav Prasad Maurya wrote on X: “Sending a delegation to Bareilly by SP chief Shri Akhilesh Yadav is a childish step. The SP is known for its dirty politics of Muslim appeasement. The SP’s downfall and wipeout in the 2027 assembly elections are certain. A riot-free UP, good governance, and law and order are our identity and achievement. This is exactly what the SP supporters cannot stomach.”

Single-window access, cashless treatment: how IPHSA aims to streamline patient care in Mumbai’s civic hospitals

The BMC’s Integrated Patients Healthcare Schemes Assistance (IPHSA) is a technology-driven platform for patient eligibility checks, enrolment in public healthcare schemes, and claim settlement.

Mumbai. Mumbai’s civic hospitals are set to undergo a digital overhaul as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) rolls out the Integrated Patients Healthcare Schemes Assistance (IPHSA) system. Here’s a closer look at IPHSA and how it will benefit patients, their families and BMC-run healthcare centres.

What is IPHSA?

IPHSA or Integrated Patients Healthcare Schemes Assistance is a technology-driven platform designed to serve as a single window for patient eligibility checks, enrolment in public healthcare schemes, and claim settlement. According to a senior BMC official, “Whatever is defined by the government authorities, whether it is the state government, the central government or the Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), the system will verify and support automatically.”

This means eligible patients can avoid multiple counters and endless paperwork, gaining access to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPJAY), Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), ESIC, and other key schemes at a single helpdesk. The system is also designed to integrate contributions from employees and employers for ESIC, ensuring that eligible patients are identified automatically when they visit hospitals.

Why is it being introduced?

Officials say IPHSA’s primary goal is to bridge the communication and administrative gaps that have often prevented low-income patients from receiving timely, cashless care. “The class we are catering to does not have any information, so only stringent criteria will ensure service delivery,” an official noted. By digitising the system, BMC aims to cut down delays, reduce bureaucratic

burdens on staff, improve claim settlement cycles, and make hospitals financially sustainable.

The policy is designed to enable civic hospitals to sustain operations from scheme revenues within five to eight years as capacity grows. It also seeks to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure for patients, especially those who previously had to approach multiple counters or were dependent on charitable funding for uncovered treatments.

How will it work for patients?

Patients will no longer have to pay upfront for medical procedures covered by government schemes. Whether the treatment is at major BMC institutions or PPP centres within civic hospitals, those found eligible will be registered and treated cashlessly. “There is no upfront payment for anything, even emergency services,” a BMC official

confirmed. Documentation is verified digitally using Aadhaar and scheme IDs, and patient complaints can now be registered via



a portal, which must be resolved before reimbursement.

The system supports both emergency and elective treatments, with dashboards tracking every claim’s status in real time.

This includes treatment in peripheral hospitals and specialty services like dialysis, MRI, and other investigations under the schemes, ensuring the patient experience remains completely cashless regardless of service location.

What about hospitals and the financial model?

From the hospital’s perspective, IPHSA represents a major shift in accountability and timely payments. Claims are settled directly to BMC accounts, and all supporting documents are scanned and monitored centrally. Each geographic zone of Mumbai will have a separate service agency, selected not just for the lowest cost but for proven results and infrastructure. “Below 70 per cent coverage, you are not paying. This is why there is a chart for gradation in the tender itself,” said an official involved in procurement.

The rise and rise of Pakistan’s field marshal

The ‘family photo’ from the White House after an almost-90-minute meeting last Thursday between the US President Donald Trump, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir would have stunned the Indian foreign and security policy establishment. Things are getting to be very serious indeed.

That the meeting was a foreign policy strategy session is apparent from the presence of two other participants—Vice-President J D Vance and the Secretary of State and acting National Security Advisor Marco Rubio, who form the core group in Trump’s foreign policy team. The event underscored the high importance Trump attaches to a constructive partnership with Pakistan in the geopolitical arc of what Americans traditionally called the Greater Middle East—stretching from the Levant to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia including Afghanistan.Trump’s first term as president ended with a foreign policy ‘scoop’ in 2020—the Abraham Accords, aimed at Israel’s integration into its Muslim neighbourhood. But the four years since have witnessed phenomenal changes in regional politics—in particular, the October 2023 attacks on Israel and the ensuing Gaza war that has resulted in Israel’s regional isolation, a diplomatic rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and Iran’s surge as a nuclear-threshold state. All of this has significantly eroded American influence in the region, as evident most glaringly in the BRICS membership of Egypt, the UAE and Iran, and even Saudi Arabia just outside the tent looking in.

By hedging its bets, Saudi Arabia called attention to its acute need of improved security and political relations by diversifying its network of international partners and its assertion as an independent regional powerhouse. Trump took note of it when he picked up the threads where he left them in January 2020, and prioritised the Saudi demand for a defence pact to safeguard its security and a peaceful nuclear programme to match Iran’s.Unsurprisingly, neither the US nor Israel has condemned the Saudi-Pakistan defence pact. Trump received the Pakistani leaders, civilian and military, within a fortnight of the signing of the pact. Iran has been left to figure out that in any future war with the US, retaliation against American attack would need to exclude Saudi territory, especially Saudi oil fields and assets in the Persian Gulf.Ashington and Tel Aviv visualise the Saudi-Pakistan pact as a cornerstone of the New Middle East emerging against the backdrop of an unrestrained Israel, a wounded Iran, and an unpredictable US.The Saudi-Pakistan pact was a few years in the making and it should not be seen as a reaction to the present moment. But it can be regarded as a response to the broader tectonic shifts in the region—a moment where both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan need to create options for themselves.Of course, the two countries have been intertwined for decades. Pakistan’s long road to the nuclear club was paved with Saudi petrodollars. Pakistani troops were deployed on Saudi Arabia’s northern border during the Iran-Iraq war. Saudi money for Afghan Mujahideen was routed through Pakistani intelligence. Pakistani military advisors help train the Saudi military; a former army chief commands the Saudi counter-terrorism force. That said, Pakistan’s relationship with Saudi Arabia has not always been smooth. Pakistan refused to join the Saudi-led air strikes on Yemen in 2015. Again, Saudis have long sought nuclear technology from Pakistan.For Trump, an American presence in Afghanistan is vital for advancing the containment strategy towards Iran. But recently, the Taliban rebuffed his demand that the Bagram air base be under US control.

How to help those who help us

The Supreme Court recently called for urgency in safeguarding the rights of domestic workers. Though some states are leading the way with welfare boards, steps are needed to legally guarantee their protection nationwide. While alignment with ILO standards is needed, so is being sensitive to some uniquely Indian conditions

The Supreme Court, in the Ajay Malik (2025) case, has underlined the urgency for a legal framework to protect and regulate domestic workers’ rights. The judgement stated, “Any avenue for employment—domestic help—being opened to marginalised women merit celebration” and that the legal gaps must be plugged to ensure the rights of this indispensable workforce for Indian households.

Rapid urbanisation, migration, shifting family dynamics and double-income middle class households have led to the surge in domestic work as ‘employment’ for women. As reported in a Periodic Labour Force Survey in 2023-24, approximately 11 percent of employed women were working as domestic workers in urban areas, reflecting the gendered and urban character of this sector. This outlines the need for ensuring effective social protection for the women working in this sector. The judgement reflects factual considerations that need to be aligned with the emerging legal standards and ongoing policy efforts for gender equity and labour rights.

An International Labour Organization report published in 2023 estimated that 75.6 million people were engaged as ‘domestic workers’ around the world, constituting 4.5 percent of the workforce, with the Asia-Pacific region having the highest proportion. Labour standards such as ILO’s Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (C189) has triggered an international response to develop industrial legality (converting good practices into law), which the Ajay Malik judgement takes note of. C189 recognises that the rights of domestic workers are not only labour rights, but human rights too, and provides definitional clarity on domestic work and domestic worker in employment relations.The convention provides provisions such as a formal written employment contract, social security, right to privacy, special sensitivity to migrant domestic workers, provision for national helpline service, and working hours to ensure decent terms of employment while addressing violence and harassment. Another 2023 ILO study reviewing 108 countries on legal protection for domestic workers revealed that 95 countries—Italy, South Africa, Uruguay, and the Philippines among them—legally recognised the identity and rights of domestic workers.In the Ajay Malik judgement, the court also recorded that since 1959, seven bills relating to domestic workers’ rights and their service conditions were initiated, but none could become a law, reflecting the complexity of the situation. Legal protection requires a balance between labour market flexibility and workers’ rights.The Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Act, 2008 (now part of the Code on Social Security, 2020) has been ensuring social security rights for all unorganised workers, with



recognition of domestic workers as ‘wage workers’ and households employing them as ‘employers’.Around 12 states have already brought legal minimum wage rates and welfare boards for domestic workers, and have also identified work categories and their applicable rates. Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and West Bengal have constituted welfare boards that provide schemes for contingencies like health insurance, pensions and maternity benefits.Achieving the goal of legislative intervention aligned to C189 requires acknowledging labour rights as fundamental human rights. Chile, for one, has recognised legal protection, community awareness and societal response as integral elements of the legal framework.

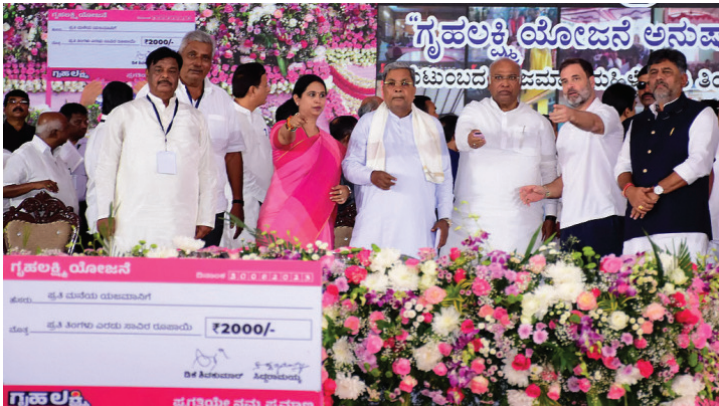
This case is interesting as it uses ‘symbolic enforcement’, wherein a threat of inspection is issued to households that are habitual and severe violators. Ireland also follows such a community approach in enforcement. Since ‘household’ cannot be treated as ‘industries’ or establishments (unit of labour enforcement), inspection remains a challenge.Since domestic worker recruitment is only network-based, reliant upon social connectedness, any legal framework needs to be sensitive to this aspect. Here, the role of resident welfare associations and private maintenance agencies can play

significant roles as first units for enforcement. They already operate a digital system for police verification, duty management and worker database for residents, which can be leveraged to ensure compliance. Identity cards issued for domestic workers can serve as a de facto registration mechanism that can be shared with the labour department. RWAs can be entrusted to share cases of habitual and gross violations, and can nudge erring employers into following fair practices. Labour departments may hold regular outreach camps within these societies.Certain steps can be taken keeping in mind flexibility, household privacy and non-intrusive enforcement. For example, sensitisation campaigns must be initiated to educate domestic workers about their rights. Best practices like mandatory registration, formal employment contracts, minimum wages, employer cess for social security contribution, journey allowance (for migrant workers), ban on hiring unregistered workers, and medical aid can be consolidated into a clear set of actionable guidelines.Encouragingly, many of these enabling provisions are already embedded in the labour codes that lay the legal framework for extending protections to the unorganised sector. What remains is to build upon this momentum to properly protect the rights of domestic workers.

Guarantees pay back in development gains

Women-targeted schemes in Karnataka—Gruha Lakshmi, a cash transfer of ₹2,000 to women family heads, and Shakti, providing free bus travel—have largely impacted chief minister Siddaramaiah’s incumbency sentiment

Women could remain Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah’s biggest cheerleaders if a report on his government’s five guarantees is any indication. The government has spent around ₹96,000 crore on the subsidies since May 2023, which has begun paying happy dividends. Two schemes targeted at women—Gruha Lakshmi, a cash transfer of ₹2,000 to women family heads, and Shakti, providing free bus travel—have had the biggest impact, uplifting women’s economic condition and households’ well-being. Free mobility has boosted access to education, jobs and healthcare, and women’s participation in the workforce is up 23 percent. The survey of 6,300 women by an independent policy consultant along with Lokniti-CSDS, Bangalore University, Tumkur University, and Indus Action was carried out across 15 districts over a year.It appears the Congress has hit upon the right formula by putting money into the hands of women, who are using it for their families: 91 percent spent it on food, 85 percent on healthcare, 52 percent on education, and 27 percent on repaying loans. The Shakti scheme saves women up to



₹1,000 a week, which is ploughed back into the home budget. Women claimed to have gained dignity, as they travelled independently for work and leisure. Karnataka’s expenditure till now has indeed been heavy—‘₹5,450 crore for the five guarantees. However, the schemes have brought considerable succour to a post-Covid society in

financial distress.Yet, the spend has led to a persistent debate on whether the government has compromised on development and ignored the urban middle class, which also suffered losses during the pandemic. The BJP has accused the Congress of making “unreal promises”. According to the Comptroller and Auditor General, Karnataka’s net market borrowing of ₹63,000 crore in 2023-24 was ₹37,000 crore higher than the previous year’s, when the BJP was in power. While the number is critical, several economists also hold that the government has alleviated people’s financial burden and kickstarted local economies. The report admits that cash infusion has “reduced economic disparities and supported human capital development”, but says that without rationalisation, the subsidies will drain the economy. The government has acknowledged this and launched an exercise to weed out ineligible beneficiaries. However, it remains steadfast in the claim that fiscal restraint cannot come at the cost of social development.

Prashant Kishor looks to break the Bihar binary

His Jan Suraaj Party, which was launched on Gandhi Jayanti last year, has positioned itself as a centrist outfit.

IN recent decades, electoral politics in Bihar has almost always panned out in a binary format, resulting in head-to-head battles between parties of socialist vintage. Even the so-called mainline parties — the BJP and the Congress — have remained within the orbit of the Janata Dal (United) or the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and have not been able to carve out an independent space in the hurly-burly of Bihar’s politics.The BJP latched on to the JD(U), helmed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, while the Congress hung on to Lalu Prasad Yadav, the RJD founder and head. These parties created coalitions consisting of larger partners as well as smaller outfits that derived their primary importance from caste-based identities. Bihar never made room for a third party or formation, unlike its neighbour, Uttar Pradesh, that usually witnessed multi-cornered contests.

However, the upcoming Assembly elections could rework the political dynamics with the emergence of the Jan Suraaj Party (JSP), established by Prashant Kishor, once a strategist and consultant to nearly every party that counts as electorally significant, regardless of its ideological affinity. Kishor — PK to well-wishers and colleagues — will baulk at these appellations, but that’s what he was after he left the UN’s strategic planning and social policy group in Africa as a gangling 34-year-old in 2011 and landed in Narendra Modi’s inner circle in Gandhinagar.Modi, then Gujarat CM, seeded Kishor in his election behemoth with an eye on the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. At the peak of his power, Kishor was considered to be as integral to

the Modi schema as Amit Shah and Arun Jaitley. Many in the BJP argued that had Kishor not ‘appropriated’ credit for Modi’s 2014 victory, he would still be ensconced in the Prime Minister’s charmed circle — but that was not to be. But he left



a national footprint as an advisor to parties such as the Congress, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the Trinamool Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party during elections. He sundered his links with each of them not out of rancour but to foster his ambition as an independent political leader of consequence. Kishor wanted to forge his own party and fight elections, preferably without tying up with another entity.The JSP (which translates as People’s Good Governance Party) came into being on Gandhi Jayanti last year and positioned itself as a centrist outfit. According to his friends, he set the bar for himself: if you are to the right of centre, you must

disapprove the assaults on minorities, and conversely, if you lean towards the left, you don’t have to justify everything that the communists do. The JSP emerged from the Jan Suraaj Abhiyan, a campaign Kishor devised to engage with the people of Bihar and develop a governance template for the state. He believes this is the only feasible counter to the NDA/BJP’s emotion-laden Hindutva agenda and the saffron party’s unmatched financial as well as organisational strength.Kishor’s alternative to the Modi brand of politics envisages playing up Bihar’s regional identity and its developmental aspirations and minimising the state’s dependence on the Centre to grow and prosper. This agenda has laid the foundation of the JSP’s consistent pitch to create more jobs in Bihar, stem migration and discard the unwanted label of being a basket case — themes that Kishor says arose out of Delhi’s ‘apathy’ towards Patna for decades.While the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan (MGB) is embroiled in Rahul Gandhi’s preoccupation with ‘fudged’ electoral rolls and the Election Commission’s alleged omissions and commissions to the detriment of state-specific issues, Kishor is focusing on the plight of Bihar. He says the state continues to be blighted by corruption and criminalisation of politics. He has picked on three BJP leaders as symbols of all that went wrong under the NDA: state party president Dilip Jaiswal and ministers Samrat Choudhary and Mangal Pandey.There is an inclination to get excited over a newbie in the political arena (though Kishor is not a

stranger to Bihar, thanks to his former association with Nitish and the JD-U), but is that good enough to win one’s spurs? As the founder of his consultancy firm Indian Political Action Committee, Kishor circumscribed his role as a political consultant acting like a “force multiplier” to help a party win an election. As the proprietor of a party, he has his task cut out for him.Kishor’s first test, albeit a small one, was in the November 2024 bypolls to four Assembly seats. The NDA swept these seats, wresting three from the RJD. Two JSP candidates finished third, while another ended up fourth. Kishor drew comfort from the fact that his party’s vote share averaged 10 per cent in the constituencies which his padyatra had not yet covered.The JSP was accused of being a “vote katua” (vote cutter) — a politically incorrect label in Bihar — of the RJD. Kishor predictably repudiated the charge, maintaining that the Opposition had to blame itself for not standing up to the NDA.Nonetheless, analysts nd bookies are hard at work, speculating on whose votes the JSP will eat into. In recent weeks, Kishor has inundated social media with interviews in which he has studiously attacked the BJP, then Nitish and ignored the MGB. His pitch on governance, development and infrastructure, bereft of caste-specific appeals, suggested that his target audience was the upper castes which can create the right atmosphere for the party but not bring in substantial votes. Unlike UP, in ‘Mandalised’ Bihar, the savarnas cannot tilt the caste equations in most constituencies.

NEWS BOX

M S University's Fine Arts faculty mourns 22-year-old artist who died of electrocution while working in studio

Vadodara. (Agency)

The Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University in Vadodara reopened Friday morning under a pall of gloom, mourning the loss of 22-year-old Kajal Chaudhary, a masters' student of painting who had died, allegedly of electrocution, while working on a project in the studio on the campus on Monday afternoon.

At the memorial meet held in the faculty auditorium, friends and teachers remained inconsolable – and shocked. It was an ordinary Monday afternoon when Chaudhary set out to de-starch her canvas in the studio using a technique she had recently learnt.

Ambika Patel, Dean of the Faculty, told The Indian Express, "It was raining that day and she was working close to the terrace area of the studio where she had pulled out an extension board for an electric plug and connected the heating coil to destarch the canvas... Usually, the students soak the canvas overnight in water but it is possible that she wanted to hasten the process. She had recently visited New Delhi and learnt a new process of dyeing the canvas and it is likely that she was working on one of her new projects accordingly... She had brought the heating coil on her own..."

Two other students, working in the same space, saw Chaudhary "falling to the ground" after hearing a sound, says Patel. "They alerted the faculty but by the time she was rushed to the Narhari hospital (about 1 kilometre away) in the Fatehgunj area, she was declared dead on arrival..." Patel added.

Famed for its traditional garba, the faculty called off the celebration that evening and cancelled all other Navratri-related events, including the Dussehra puja.

Man arrested for recording minor in dressing room at mall

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

A 27-year-old man was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly recording a 15-year-old girl at a trial room of a cloth store in a mall in Ahmedabad, police said.

"The girl saw the phone in the cubicle, and she picked it up and went out and gave it to her mother who was standing outside the trial rooms. Meanwhile, the accused also came out to take his phone back from them," said ACP Roshni P Solanki of the SC/ST Cell of Ahmedabad City Police.

The police were called and the man, also a customer, was booked and arrested for trying to record the minor in the trial room of the cloth store.

Police said that the trial rooms had a common partition wall, and the accused allegedly tried to record the girl through a small hole at the bottom.

Based on the complaint by the girl, an FIR was filed against the man, identified as Ravi Suresh Prajapati. He was booked under various Sections of the Information Technology Act, POCSO Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The accused was detained and later placed under arrest by Vastrapur police. The case was subsequently handed over to the SC/ST Cell. "According to the complaint, there were videos of at least three other women on the phone. The phone has been seized and sent to FSL for verification," said ACP Solanki.

NSA recommended against 8 more accused in Oct 2024 violence in UP's Bahraich

Lucknow. (Agency)

The administration and police in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich have recommended that the stringent National Security Act (NSA) be invoked against eight more accused in the October 2024 communal violence in the district's Maharajganj area, in which a person was killed and several properties were set on fire.

Mahasi Circle Officer (CO) Dharendra Kumar Srivastava said the recommendation has been sent to the state government for approval after the District Magistrate endorsed to invoke the NSA against the eight accused two days ago.

The eight accused – Zeeshan, Afzal, Maroof, Fahim and Nankau, Javed, Shoeb and Saif – have been lodged in jail on charges of murder and communal riots.

Five other accused were booked under the Act on March 10 after the government had earlier approved the recommendation for the same by the administration and police, said CO Srivastava.

Communal clashes erupted in Maharajganj on October 13 last year after some locals allegedly asked for the music to be turned off as a Durga idol procession passed through a neighbourhood. A heated argument escalated into clashes and stone-pelting between two communities, police had said. The situation worsened when gunshots were allegedly fired, and a local resident, Ram Gopal (22), sustained a bullet wound, police said. He was taken to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. The violence intensified following the killing and several properties, including business establishments and houses, were set on fire.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom: Punjab proposes special House session at Anandpur Sahib

Anandpur Sahib was founded by Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1665. He had named it Chak Nanaki after his mother, Mata Nanaki

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Punjab government has proposed a special session of the Vidhan Sabha to be convened in Anandpur Sahib on November 24 as part of the series of events to mark the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains Friday said.

If held, it will be for the first time that the session is organised outside the Vidhan Sabha complex in Chandigarh.

Anandpur Sahib was founded by Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1665. He had named it Chak Nanaki after his mother, Mata Nanaki. The government has zeroed in on Bhaji Jaita Ji Memorial, to be thrown open to public on October 5 by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, as the possible venue for holding the session.

The government had earlier tried to hold the Vidhan Sabha session at Dashmesh Academy and Virasat-E-Khalsa, a museum of Sikh history in Anandpur Sahib.

Bains told The Indian Express, "We are trying our best that history is created and the special session is convened in Anandpur Sahib. This has never happened in Punjab earlier. Vidhan Sabha session has always been convened in Chandigarh. Other states like Himachal Pradesh do this often. Maharashtra has also done it. The secretariat of Punjab Vidhan Sabha

has already visited all three places. It is likely that Jaita Ji Memorial would be finalised for the session. However, Vidhan Sabha has very strict protocol. The secretariat has handed a list to us. We have to make arrangements for the security, Speaker's gallery, treasury and Opposition benches. Besides, there has to be officers' and



media galleries too," said Bains.

The minister added that this was the wish of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann that the session be held in Anandpur Sahib. "Let us see. Being a student of the law, I can tell you that it is doable. If the Cabinet gives its nod, the Assembly session can be organised elsewhere too. Just that its sanctity is supreme and protocols have to be followed. Once the Cabinet gives its nod, the file has to go to the Governor. If all goes

well, the Vidhan Sabha will meet in Anandpur Sahib".

Bains and Deepak Bali, advisor to the state tourism and cultural affairs department, held a marathon meeting with Rajya Sabha MP and environmentalist Baba Balbir Singh Seechewal and other religious leaders to chalk out the plan.

Bains said the the state government has planned a series of events to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of the ninth Sikh Guru.

The events, including 'Nagar Kirtans', 'Kirtan Darbars', light and sound show, drone shows and major religious gatherings at Sri Anandpur Sahib, will honour the Guru's legacy of sacrifice and secularism.

The events aim to spread the Guru Sahib's timeless message of secularism, universal brotherhood and sacrifice, promoting harmony and social unity among people of all backgrounds, said Bains. He said that the Punjab government is organising a nation-wide observance to commemorate the 350th martyrdom anniversary, reflecting the profound reverence for the 'Hind Di Chadar'. The events have been meticulously planned to perpetuate the Guru's legacy of sacrifice, secularism and human rights, he said.

Chandigarh's Sohana Eye Hospital unveils Tricity's first Myopia Management Clinic

A team of 15 professionals, including senior consultants, junior doctors, and vision therapists, will lead the Myopia Management Clinic.

Mumbai. (Agency)

Sohana Eye Hospital in Chandigarh, a pioneer in eye care in North India, has launched the Tricity's first exclusive Myopia Management Clinic, aimed at tackling the rising incidence of shortsightedness among children and adolescents.

With over three decades of service, 20+ senior consultants, 500+ staff members, and an impressive record of 2.5 million successful eye surgeries, Sohana Eye Hospital, a charitable hospital run by the gurdwara management, has built a formidable reputation in ophthalmology. The new clinic comes at a critical time, as the

Covid-19 pandemic saw a steep rise in myopia cases among younger patients.

The clinic will operate every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 3 pm to 5 pm, offering advanced diagnostic and treatment facilities to slow or halt the progression of myopia. "Myopia management is more than just prescription glasses; it requires thorough evaluation, advanced treatment, and expert care. That is exactly what Sohana Hospital intends to offer," said Dr Amanpreet Kaur, Senior Refractive & Cataract Surgeon and COO. She highlighted that a dedicated team of 15 professionals, including senior consultants,

junior doctors, and vision therapists, will lead the initiative.

Trust Secretary Sardar Gurmeet Singh added, "Sohana Hospital has always been at the forefront of eyecare. This dedicated clinic, equipped with the latest technology, was the need of the hour".

Currently, the hospital handles a daily OPD footfall of 800 to 900 patients across specialties, including cataract, glaucoma, retina, cornea, dry eye, and neuro-ophthalmology. With this visionary step, Sohana Hospital reaffirmed its mission of advancing eyecare across North India.

In hope for Punjab's Kandi belt farmers: PAU develops ginger cultivation model after 7 yrs of research

Chandigarh. Agency)

Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, Friday, announced a major breakthrough in crop diversification with the development of a complete package of practices for successful ginger cultivation in the state's Kandi belt, covering sub-mountainous tract along foothills of Shivalik Hills in Pathankot, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Ropar districts of Punjab.

The achievement comes after seven years of sustained research and trials at the Regional Research Station, Ballawal Saunkhri. Vice-Chancellor Satbir Singh Gosal said that the innovation would not only reduce Punjab's dependence on ginger supplies from other states but also provide farmers with a profitable alternative suited to the challenging conditions of the Kandi belt.

He added that ginger, known both as a culinary staple and for its medicinal value in easing nausea, indigestion and colic, had so far been largely imported from outside Punjab despite its heavy local demand.

Studies conducted at PAU reveal that an average Punjabi household consumes

about one kilogram of ginger per month. To meet this requirement within the state, nearly 11,000 acres would need to be brought under ginger cultivation.

Recognising this opportunity, scientists at Ballawal Saunkhri began systematic experiments in 2018 and eventually developed a region-specific package of



practices.

According to Director of Research Ajmer Singh Dhatt, the trials clearly showed that ginger thrives in the Kandi tract. The crop performs well in loose, friable soils rich in organic matter and slightly acidic in nature. Being sensitive to water stagnation, it requires raised beds and efficient drainage.

1965 Indo-Pak war hero's 60th martyrdom anniversary: Protest held seeking immediate restoration of memorial

A Public Action Committee (PAC), along with ex-servicemen association, senior citizens, bar association, farm unions, students and other social organisations, are demanding that Ludhiana district administration should immediately restore the memorial of the war hero at the city's heart - Bharat Nagar Chowk.

Ludhiana. (Agency)

A silent protest along with a public meeting was held in Ludhiana's Bharat Nagar Chowk to mark the 60th martyrdom anniversary of 1965 Indo-Pak war hero and Maha Vir Chakra awardee Major Bhupinder Singh, Friday.

A Public Action Committee (PAC), along with ex-servicemen association, senior citizens, bar association, farm unions, students and other social organisations, are demanding that Ludhiana district administration should immediately restore the memorial of the war hero at the city's heart – Bharat Nagar Chowk. Major Bhupinder Singh's statue and a captured Pakistani army tank once proudly stood at the city's busiest roundabout. However, it was later relocated to an

insignificant location near Rose Garden. The PAC members said that even after years, the memorial has not been restored to its original location and "lies dumped" near Rose Garden where hardly anyone sees it.

Also, the roundabout has now been allotted to the private bicycle manufacturing doyen – Hero Cycles- for maintenance which has installed its own insignia and a huge cycle replica for its own promotion, said PAC.

The PAC has given the deadline of Diwali (October 20) to the administration for restoration of the memorial, "else bigger Punjab-wide action would follow", they said in a statement. In a symbolic gesture, PAC members Kuldeep Singh Khaira and Gurmpreet Singh Plaha brought soil from the fields of the martyr's native village

Harnampura and mixed it with the soil of the roundabout. A flex bearing the image of



Major Bhupinder Singh and the tank was also installed at the Chowk as a mark of protest. PAC further said that a contempt notice has already been served to Hero Cycles Ltd., the National Highways

(nine); stalking (three); kidnapping/abduction (one); rape of women (seven) and rape of children under POCSO Act (two).

In absolute numbers, seven cases were registered in 2023 under Prevention of Atrocities Act against people belonging to Scheduled Tribe (ST), compared to four in 2022, and seven in 2021. As per the NCRB, the chargesheet ratio wherein suspects booked or arrested in the cases of atrocities against SC people was



recorded 61 percent in 2023.

Expressing concern over the NCRB report, member of Himachal Pradesh Scheduled Caste Commission, Vijay Dogra, said, "The numbers are alarming. There are certain areas, especially the upper reaches in districts including Shimla, Sirmour, Kullu and Mandi, where casteism is still prevalent".

Authority of India (NHAI), and Ludhiana Municipal Corporation for "illegal alterations" at the chowk.

"If the administration fails to act by Diwali, we will give a call to the entire Punjab for a bigger gathering. The Punjab government, which seems bent on sidelining the heroes of Punjab, must not be allowed to erase the memory of our martyrs and our heritage," said Jaskirat Singh, PAC member.

Brigadier Inder Mohan Singh (Retd), President of the Indian Ex-Services League, added: "This is a very genuine and rightful demand and I will write to the Western Command to communicate to the Chief Minister directly and ensure this is done in the most respectful manner for our martyr."

India, Brazil hold strategic dialogue, focus on defence and energy cooperation

India and Brazil advanced their strategic partnership in New Delhi, reviewing cooperation on defence, energy, critical minerals, health, and multilateral engagement.

Agency New Delhi. National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval on Friday met Special Adviser to the President of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Luis Nunes Amorim, in New Delhi for the 6th India-Brazil Strategic Dialogue. Ambassador Amorim was accompanied by a delegation of senior Brazilian officials and advisors. According to a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the dialogue provided "an opportunity to follow up on the issues identified under five pillars of cooperation during the State Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Brazil in July 2025". During the discussions, NSA Doval and Ambassador Amorim reviewed ongoing progress across key areas of the strategic partnership, including defence and security, energy, rare earths and critical minerals, and health and pharmaceuticals. Cooperation in multilateral forums such as Brics, IBSA, and the upcoming

COP-30, to be hosted by Brazil in November, was also discussed. The MEA noted that "both sides agreed to carry forward the work to implement the vision laid



down by Prime Minister Modi and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva". External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar described the meeting as a "useful exchange on the

current global scenario and on opportunities for deepening our strategic cooperation". The dialogue came against the backdrop of recent global developments, including US President Donald Trump's 50 per cent trade tariffs on India and Brazil. In August, President Lula had spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the fallout, and the two leaders pledged to strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, defence, and technology. Lula also announced plans to visit India early next year. For India, the strategic dialogue with Brazil holds both geopolitical and economic importance. Closer alignment with Brazil aims to enhance trade resilience, energy security, and technology partnerships, while cooperation on critical minerals and defence supports India's push for supply-chain diversification and self-reliance. Joint engagement in forums such as Brics and IBSA further provides a counterbalance to Western-led groupings.

Parity with NCR as new draft liquor policy likely this month



Agency New Delhi. Delhi is all set to implement its new excise policy. The final draft may be ready in a month, following stakeholder consultations at a high-level committee chaired by PWD Minister Parvesh Verma, according to sources. For now, the government has extended the old excise policy till March 31, 2026, to ensure continuity until the new framework is rolled out. The sources said that the new policy would allow premium liquor brands to be sold across all liquor shops in the city. They are currently limited to a few outlets, resulting in consumer complaints and revenue losses. "The idea is to bring Delhi on par with NCR in terms of availability and pricing of premium liquor," a source said, adding the move is expected to plug revenue leakage and check the outflow of buyers to Gurugram and Noida. The committee also discussed the possibility of reducing the legal drinking age for beer, but officials familiar with the deliberations said that no consensus was reached. On August 4, CM Rekha Gupta announced the establishment of a committee to a transparent and socially secure excise policy, headed by Verma. The committee reviewed the excise policies of several states to adopt best practices. She said that the new policy would incorporate several excise reforms, including scientific testing of liquor quality, digitisation of the sales system, strict action against illegal sales, and transparency in the licencing process.

Delhi government hospitals facing shortage of surgical equipment, gloves: AAP



Agency New Delhi. The AAP on Friday alleged that Delhi's government hospitals are now reeling under chaos. The party claimed that shelves meant for medicines lay empty, surgical equipment and gloves are missing, and hospital administrators have been barred from even making local purchases. "After empowering private school mafias in education, the BJP-led government is now dismantling public health to favour private hospitals," the party alleged. Addressing a press conference, AAP Delhi unit president Saurabh Bharadwaj said, "It has been nearly eight months since the BJP formed government in Delhi. The condition of government hospitals in Delhi is very bad at this time, never before have the hospitals been in such a state. There was a time when all medicines in Delhi government hospitals were provided free of cost because Arvind Kejriwal had made them free." He added, "All tests were also free. Today, there is chaos in government hospitals. Essential items like medicines, surgical equipment, gloves and implants are not available, forcing patients to buy medicines from their own pockets."

Delhi govt plans substation to secure VVIP area

Agency New Delhi. After repeated major blackouts exposed the fragility of north Delhi's grid, Delhi is moving to fortify power to Civil Lines — home to Raj Niwas, the chief minister's residence, and the Vidhan Sabha. Officials said on Friday that a new substation and a battery energy storage system (BESS) are planned to provide an alternate feed for VVIP installations and critical infrastructure, reducing reliance on the 400 kV Mandola source. "Uninterrupted supply to Raj Niwas, the chief minister's house, Vidhan Sabha and other VVIP installations is very critical. It is imperative to establish an alternate source to ensure reliable supply in case of any critical contingency affecting the primary source," a senior government official privy to the information said. TPDDL has asked Delhi Transco Limited (DTL) for an alternate feed at the Timarpur 220 kV substation via the 220 kV Sarita Vihar substation, officials said. DTL is also considering a 400 kV substation at Gopalpur to further reduce dependency on Mandola and boost regional stability. Outages at Mandola have wide effects. In August, a sudden 550 MW drop from 220 kV grids caused a blackout that left nearly eight lakh residents in parts of north Delhi without power. Several areas of North Delhi, in June last year, also faced outages for varying lengths as the substation of power grid in neighbouring UP's Mandola caught fire. Delhi receives about 1,200 MW from Mandola, and failures there can disrupt the metro and the Inter Bus Terminus at Kashmere Gate, officials noted. At its recent Operation Coordination Committee meeting, the administration advised TPDDL to plan a BESS to supply the VVIP network during emergencies. OCC had emphasised that contingency arrangements for VVIP feeds and rapid restoration were essential to prevent disruptions during high-profile events. Officials said improved redundancy would help manage sudden load drops. The committee has directed discoms BYPL and TPDDL to ensure back-feeding arrangements for the 33 kV Sabzi Mandi substation via Wazirpur and Devnagar so essential feeders can be maintained during a full shutdown. Officials said the government is preparing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for quicker restoration during major outages, part of a broader push to harden the system and improve contingency response across the capital.

No questioning in \$2 billion PNB scam: India assures UK on Nirav Modi's extradition

India has assured the UK that Nirav Modi will not be questioned in the \$2 billion PNB scam case. A written assurance was submitted ahead of his extradition hearing in the Westminster Court.

Agency New Delhi. Ahead of the extradition hearing of fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi in Westminster Court, India has assured the United Kingdom that the Fugitive Economic Offender will not be "questioned" in the \$2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case. A written assurance or sovereign guarantee has been submitted to the UK through the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). If extradited, Nirav Modi will be lodged in Arthur Road Jail, Barrack No. 12, in Mumbai. India had earlier given a similar assurance to Belgium in the Mehul Choksi case. India assured Belgium that fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi will not be held in solitary confinement if extradited and will be housed in humane conditions in line

with international standards. Last month, Nirav Modi filed a fresh application in a UK court against his extradition, according to



sources. Nirav Modi has been in a UK prison since March 2019. He and his uncle, Mehul Choksi, are accused of carrying out India's biggest bank fraud, defrauding Punjab National Bank of nearly \$2 billion.

In 2022, Nirav Modi exhausted all legal options in UK courts. In May, the UK High Court rejected his tenth bail plea, calling him a flight risk.

Recently, officials from the UK Crown Prosecution Service visited Tihar Jail to assess whether fugitives extradited from the UK would be provided with adequate facilities and basic amenities. This was a necessary step after past extradition requests from India were rejected by UK courts, which expressed serious misgivings about jail conditions. Last month, a special CBI court granted pardon to Maiank Mehta, the brother-in-law of fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi, in the Rs 13,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case, after accepting his plea to turn approver.

MCD's property tax amnesty scheme extended till December 31

Agency New Delhi. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has said that the Property Tax Amnesty Scheme 2025-26 has brought major relief to the Delhi citizens, as more than 1.29 lakh taxpayers have benefited from this initiative. Property tax to the tune of Rs 519 crore was collected up to 30th September. The corporation had recently expanded the scheme for another 3 months till December 31 with a provision of a 2% late fee on the principal amount. The officials informed that the total collection as of 30th September for the current year (including the SUNIYO Scheme) is

Rs 2,270 crore from 11.79 lakh taxpayers vis-a-vis the tax collection of around Rs 1,736 crore from 9.9



lakh taxpayers over the corresponding period of the previous year. The SUNIYO scheme offers complete waiver of dues, interest, and penalties up to FY 2019-20, provided

taxpayers pay the principal for FY 2020-21 to 2025-26, the MCD officials added. Delhi mayor Raja Iqbal Singh has urged all citizens to take advantage of the Property Tax Amnesty Scheme 2025-26 — SUMPATTIKAR NIPTAAN YOJANA (SUNIYO). Under this scheme, taxpayers can get a full waiver on property tax dues, including interest and penalties, up to FY 2019-20. To qualify, they must pay only the principal property tax amount for the current year (2025-26) as well as for the past five years (FY 2020-21 to 2024-25), with no additional interest or penalties. Originally scheduled.

"Privileged Strategic Partnership": Ministry On 25 Years Of India-Russia Ties

While addressing the weekly MEA briefing, Mr Jaiswal stated that "Today is a special day, 3rd of October. On 3rd October 2000, we established the India-Russia Strategic Partnership. Today, we are celebrating 25 years of this special partnership."

Agency New Delhi. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal hailed the completion of 25 years of the India-Russia strategic partnership on Friday, saying that both countries enjoy a "special, privileged strategic partnership." While addressing the weekly MEA briefing, Mr Jaiswal stated that "Today is a special day, 3rd of October. On 3rd October 2000, we established the India-Russia Strategic Partnership. Today, we are celebrating 25 years of this special partnership." "India and Russia enjoy a special and privileged strategic partnership. We look forward to strengthening these ties and want to enhance each and every segment we are working on together, including trade issues, economic issues,

investment issues, defence relations, and science and technology," he added. Further, Mr Jaiswal noted that "both sides are committed," and India looks forward to strengthening our economic ties. We look forward to further building on our ties with Russia." Mr Jaiswal's comments came as India and Russia are finalising dates for Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India, which is expected to take place in early December, sources said. Earlier in the day, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov highlighted the 25th anniversary of the India-Russia strategic partnership. In a post on X, Alipov said, "On October 3, 2000, Russian President Vladimir Putin



and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed the declaration on strategic partnership, which opened a new chapter in bilateral relations. Today we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of this historic declaration." Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is also expected to visit India before President

Putin's visit to prepare for the summit and discuss bilateral issues. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday (local time) hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, calling him a "wise leader" and stating that PM Modi thinks first about his country, according to Russia Today. Putin was speaking at the plenary session of the Valdai Discussion Club in Sochi and mentioned that India and Russia both share a "special" relationship. "People in India do not forget about this and our relations, I believe. Some 15 years ago, we made an announcement about a privileged strategic partnership, and that is the best description."

NEWS BOX

Flying Reddy: After not getting to bat, Nitish grabs stunner as India strike early

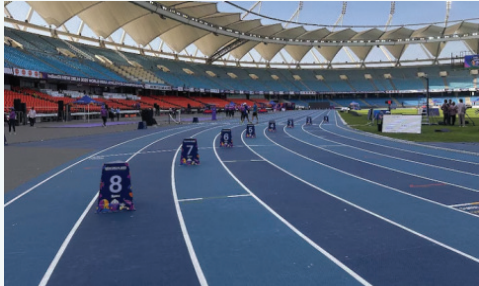
New Delhi. (Agency)
Eyebrows were raised when India decided to declare with just a 286-run lead. Ravindra Jadeja was unbeaten after crafting a brilliant century, Washington Sundar had just walked out to bat, and the likes of Nitish Kumar Reddy hadn't yet had a chance to showcase their skills. Yet, the 22-year-old all-rounder from Hyderabad wasted no time making a massive impact in his first Test at home. His calmness under pressure and natural athleticism were on full display, immediately signalling that he is a player to watch in this new era of Indian Test cricket.Reddy remained unfazed by India's unexpected declaration. Early in the innings, he produced a spectacular moment in the field that gave India their first breakthrough. Chanderpaul Tagneraine, attempting a drive off Mohammed Siraj, mishit the ball toward square-leg. Reddy's anticipation, combined with perfect timing and a full-length dive to his left, saw him secure a stunning catch. It was not only a crucial wicket but also a statement of intent from the young all-rounder, showing that he can influence the game in multiple dimensions.India



maintained the pressure, with Jadeja claiming the second wicket of the day. John Campbell misjudged the bounce and directed a tame shot straight to silly-point, where Jadeja was perfectly positioned. Later, the left-arm spinner struck again, using the turn on offer to dismiss Brandon King. Between Jadeja's craft and Reddy's athleticism, India's fielding and spin attack created the perfect environment to dictate terms.Reddy's opportunities with the ball have so far been limited. In the first innings of this Test, he bowled just four overs. However, despite the spin-friendly conditions in Ahmedabad, there is an opportunity to leave a mark with his bowling as well. With every chance he gets, Reddy will be keen to demonstrate his versatility as a genuine all-rounder, contributing not just in bursts but consistently across innings.

Stray dogs bite foreign coaches at World Para Athletics Championships in

MILAN . (Agency)
In an embarrassing incident for the organisers, stray dogs bit coaches from Kenya and Japan in separate incidents during the World Para Athletics Championships here on Friday. Both victims, though, are out of danger after being treated at a nearby hospital.Kenyan coach Dennis Maragia was speaking to one of his athletes outside the competition arena of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium when a stray dog suddenly came and bit him, according to the official.Later, the organisers also informed that Japanese coach Meiko Okumatsu was also bitten by a stray dog while she was supervising training of her athletes at the warm-up track adjacent to the main competition area."Our coach Mr Dennis, was speaking to an athlete near the call room, and a stray dog came out from nowhere and bit him," Joel Atuti, who accompanied the team as a Government of Kenya representative, told PTI."The incident happened around 10 am. Blood was oozing out of his leg, and the medical team stationed at the stadium reached him. He was



taken to a hospital and given treatment, including injections," he added."He is otherwise fine, no problem as of now. He will take some medicines also."The call room is the area where the players assemble before their respective events. Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium has two call rooms, both some meters away from the main competition arena.In some athletic events, the call room is located just near the warm-up area.The organisers said both the coaches were immediately attended to and provided on-spot medical attention at the Athlete Medical Room. They were then taken to Safdarjung Hospital, where they received appropriate treatment, after which they were taken to their respective team hotels."The Organising Committee reiterates its unwavering commitment to ensuring an uncompromised environment of safety, health, and security for athletes, officials, and spectators," a statement from the organisers said.

Pedro Neto opens up on missing Diogo Jota, Chelsea's undeterred focus despite setbacks

Pedro Neto, one of Chelsea's quiet catalysts under Enzo Maresca, reflects on belief, pressure, and purpose. In an exclusive chat with India Today, the Portuguese winger opened up on growth, loss, and Chelsea's evolving identity.

New Delhi. (Agency)
When it comes to clubs that have truly reinvented themselves, Chelsea under Enzo Maresca has been one of the standout stories in English football. The Italian coach inherited a side that looked like a jigsaw puzzle spilt across the floor — an inflated squad, confused roles, and no real direction. But slowly and surely, Maresca has started to piece it together.The UEFA Conference League and FIFA Club World Cup titles that followed were proof that something was beginning to click. The criticism didn't go away overnight, but the mood around

Stamford Bridge shifted. And at the heart of that quiet revival beats a new Portuguese rhythm—Pedro Neto.
A Portuguese Pulse in Blue
When Neto swapped Wolverhampton for Chelsea in August 2024, he walked into a dressing room full of uncertainty. Yet, within months, he became one of Maresca's key players — energetic, fearless, and always demanding the ball.At 25, he fits perfectly into Chelsea's long-term vision: a young core capable of growing together and carrying the club forward. His seven-year deal signalled that this was not another short-term experiment. And his seamless impact paved the way for similar success stories, like that of Joao Pedro, who has quickly become a force across the Premier League.For Neto, though, this rise has never felt like pressure. His football, much like his words, is grounded in calm confidence. "I don't see it as pressure," Neto told India Today in an interaction facilitated by JioStar. "The talent we have in the team, including the new arrivals like William Estevo and Joao Pedro, definitely helps the team progress and grow. It's a collective boost

rather than a source of pressure. Personally, I believe each player must challenge themselves rather than focus on others coming into the squad."



"I strive to compete against myself, always pushing to improve day by day. If I perform well today, my goal is to work even harder tomorrow to get better. This mindset reflects the current mentality within our team," he added.
Maresca's Measured Revolution
When Todd Boehly's ownership era began, Chelsea felt like a science experiment gone wrong. Too many new faces, too little structure, and too much noise. But Enzo

AFG vs BAN: Rashid Khan rattles Bangladesh, but Nurul, Rishad seal tense chase

MADRID. (Agency)
Bangladesh overcame a dramatic middle-order collapse to clinch a four-wicket victory over Afghanistan in the first T20I in Sharjah on Thursday, taking a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. The win came despite a sensational spell from Rashid Khan, who ripped through the Bangladesh line-up with four wickets in the space of two overs.Chasing 152, Bangladesh got off to a dream start through openers Parvez Hossain Emon and Tanzid Hasan. The pair added 109 runs in just 11.3 overs, dominating the Afghan bowlers with a flurry of boundaries. Emon struck 54 off 37 balls, while Tanzid matched him with 51 off 36, both bringing up impressive fifties to set up what looked like a comfortable chase.Afghanistan's fielding, however, added to their misery early on. Fareed Ahmad dropped Emon on 27 and Rahmanullah Gurbaz spilled a chance behind the stumps, allowing Bangladesh to motor along. The punishment was severe as the openers slammed sixes off Mohammad Nabi, Noor Ahmad and Sharafuddin Ashraf to post Bangladesh's first century stand

against Afghanistan in T20Is. Just as the game appeared to be slipping away, Rashid brought Afghanistan roaring back. The legspinner first removed Saif Hassan with a googly and dismissed Tanzid in the



same over. He returned to trap Jaker Ali and Shamim Hossain lbw in quick succession, reducing Bangladesh to 118 for 5. Noor Ahmad then pinned Tanzim Hasan lbw, and Bangladesh had suddenly lost six wickets for just nine runs in 25 deliveries, leaving the contest wide open.From there, it was left to Nurul Hasan and Rishad Hossain to steady the innings. Despite the pressure,

Nurul played with assurance, striking two crucial sixes in his unbeaten 23. Rishad, who had struggled for form recently, held his nerve to collect three boundaries, including the winning shot, as Bangladesh crossed the line with eight balls to spare.
Earlier, Afghanistan struggled to build momentum after being sent in to bat. They lost three wickets inside the powerplay – Ibrahim Zadran bowled by Nasum Ahmed, Sediqullah Atal caught off Tanzim Hasan, and Darwish Rasooli run out after a mix-up with Gurbaz. The slide continued as Mohammad Ishaq holed out to deep square leg against Rishad.Though Gubaz top-scored with grit, Bangladesh's disciplined bowling prevented Afghanistan from getting away, restricting them to 151. The total looked under-par, especially after Emon and Tanzid's assault, but Rashid's brilliance nearly turned the match on its head. In the end, however, Nurul and Rishad ensured Bangladesh's blushes were saved in a tense finish.

Usain Bolt x Sunil Chhetri: Sports icons link up for exhibition match in Mumbai

Usain Bolt and Sunil Chhetri shared the pitch in a thrilling 5-vs-5 football match in Mumbai. The event celebrated Indian football culture and brought global and local stars together, ending in a 5-2 victory for Bengaluru FC.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Mumbai was treated to a unique sporting spectacle as two global icons—Usain Bolt and Sunil Chhetri—shared the pitch in a thrilling 5-vs-5 all-star exhibition match at Mumbai. Organised by the event celebrated Indian football culture and brought together talent from Bengaluru FC and Mumbai City FC, much to the delight of fans.

The world's fastest man, Bolt, swapped his spikes for football studs and showcased bursts of the pace and energy that made him



a legend. He thrilled fans with surging runs, neat touches, and his trademark flair, proving how much he relishes the game.The evening ended with Chhetri's Bengaluru FC side securing a 5–2 victory over Mumbai City FC in a contest that had the perfect blend of competitiveness and entertainment.Chhetri, meanwhile, brought

the sharpness and vision that have defined his career. His crisp passing and movement gave Bengaluru FC control, and his link-up play created several scoring opportunities. Watching Bolt and Chhetri face off—and occasionally combine—was the highlight of the night. The match wasn't just about global stars—it also featured some of India's finest footballers. Gurpreet Singh Sandhu stood tall in goal with excellent saves, while Mumbai City FC's Suresh Wangjam, Akash Mishra, and Phurba Lachenpa impressed with their effort and skill. Despite their fight, Bengaluru FC proved too strong, pulling away to finish 5–2 winners.Reflecting on the event, Bolt said," Football has been one of my first loves after Track & Field, and playing in Mumbai alongside athletes, celebrities, and fans was electric. The passion, the noise, the atmosphere—this is the kind of high that stays with you long after the final whistle.

Simran wins 100m gold, Nishad leaps to glory in World Para Athletics Champs

World Para Athletics Championships 2025: Simran Sharma won gold in the women's 100m T12 with a personal best of 11.95 seconds in New Delhi on Friday. Nishad Kumar won his maiden gold medal at a world meet in men's high jump T47 event on his birthday.

New Delhi. (Agency)
On a day when India's tricolour soared high, it was Delhi's own Simran Sharma who set the tone - sprinting her way into history with a golden run in the women's 100m T12 final. The 25-year-old, running alongside her

guide Umar Saifi, clocked a personal best of 11.95 seconds, clinching her maiden World Para Athletics Championships gold and India's first medal of the day.Simran's triumph was more than just a race. Born prematurely at six-and-a-half months and battling visual impairment since infancy, she had once been kept alive in an incubator for half a year. From those fragile beginnings to the roar of the crowd at the world meet, her journey has been stitched together with resilience and the unwavering support of her father Manoj Sharma.It's fun to run for my country. I always wanted to do something for my country," she told PTI news agency, the medal gleaming as brightly as her words.
Having tasted success in the 200m in the last edition and bronze at the Paralympics, Simran now runs with a promise – "I will give my best to win the 200m."
NISHAD KUMAR BEATS LEGENDARY TOWNSEND
If Simran's race was about speed and spirit,

Nishad Kumar's gold was about patience, perseverance, and poetic timing. On his 26th birthday, he soared to an Asian record of 2.14m in the men's high jump T47, finally



clutching the gold he had long craved. It was his maiden gold in either Paralympics or world para championships.He won a silver each in the Tokyo and Paris Paralympics, a bronze in the 2019 world championships and a silver in the 2023 edition. "I already have silver medals I haven't looked

Maresca has managed to steady the ship with a calm, methodical touch.
The former Leicester City boss has built a system grounded in possession, pressing, and purpose — an identity Chelsea fans had long been waiting to see. And though the results haven't always been smooth, the progress is undeniable.Last season's double triumph — the UEFA Conference League and FIFA Club World Cup, capped by a stunning 3-0 win over PSG in the final — felt like the start of something tangible. It was football with identity, and Stamford Bridge had begun to believe again.But as football tends to remind, the journey back to the top is never linear. A rough patch this season, including defeats to Brighton, Manchester United, and Bayern Munich, once again tested Chelsea's mentality.For Neto, though, setbacks don't shake belief — they sharpen it."The mood in the dressing rom is one of frustration and determination," he said. "We want to win, and our mentality is always focused on improvement with every game. While the results against Bayern Munich and Manchester United were disappointing, the team showed a strong reaction.

Australia's Cameron Green ready for bowling role in home Ashes: I feel stronger

New Delhi. (Agency)
Former wicketkeeper Saba Karim said India might bring back Renuka Singh for the crucial Women's World Cup match against Pakistan on Sunday in Colombo. Renuka recently returned during the ODI series against Australia after a six-month break following the Women's Premier League but missed two of the four games.The speedster also sat out India's World Cup opener against Chamari Athapaththu's Sri Lanka on September 30 in Guwahati, raising questions about her fitness and India's cautious approach to managing her workload.Stay updated for complete coverage of Women's World Cup 2025 with India Today! Get full schedule, team squads, live score, and the updated ICC women's world cup points table.
Karim added that if Renuka returns, young Kranti Gaud, who took one wicket against Sri Lanka, might have to make way, especially considering Amanjot Kaur's strong performance in that match.
"There is a strong possibility that India may try



and do that. I think the Indian team management is trying to ease her in because she remains an instrumental bowler for the side. She has a wicket-taking ability, and with the new ball, she brings it into the right-handers," Saba Karim said while responding to India Today's query during a Media Day hosted by JioStar ahead of the marquee clash.
'Pakistan batters susceptible to incoming deliveries'
Karim, who played one Test and 34 ODIs for India, said Renuka could be crucial against the Pakistani batters, who struggled against Marufa Akter recently. Marufa, who won the Player of the Match award for Bangladesh, took the wickets of Omaima Sohail and Sidra Amin, guiding her team to a seven-wicket win at the R Premadasa Stadium.

Tata Capital and LG IPOs open Monday — why the market sees them as special

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Two of India’s most anticipated public issues — LG Electronics India and Tata Capital — are set to open for subscription on Monday, October 6, 2025, marking a key test for investor sentiment amid a volatile market backdrop. Analysts say both offerings are unique in scale and significance, likely to draw strong institutional interest while reflecting the resilience of India’s primary market.

Tata Capital’s IPO, valued at over Rs 20,000 crore, is among the largest this year and the biggest-ever public issue by a non-banking financial company (NBFC) in India. The price band has been set at Rs 310–Rs 326 per share. The company already raised about Rs 4,642 crore from anchor investors, including LIC, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and top domestic mutual funds, underscoring robust institutional confidence.LG Electronics India’s IPO, worth around Rs 11,600 crore, will be priced in the Rs 1,080–Rs 1,140 range per share. The issue is structured as an Offer for Sale (OFS), meaning the Korean parent, LG Electronics, will divest a portion of its holding without infusing new capital into the Indian arm. Despite this, analysts believe the listing will be closely watched given LG’s strong brand recall, market leadership, and plans to expand local manufacturing — including a new \$600 million facility in Sri City. Why these IPOs stand out

According to market analysts, both issues are “special” because they represent leadership in two contrasting but high-growth sectors — consumer electronics and financial services. Tata Capital’s offering reflects confidence in India’s formal credit ecosystem, while LG’s listing showcases the country’s growing importance as a manufacturing and consumption hub. Analysts note that Tata Capital’s pricing strategy appears measured, leaving room for potential listing gains and appealing to long-term investors seeking exposure to a diversified, stable NBFC. For LG, the focus will be on its growth narrative and profitability track record, as investors assess how much premium to assign to a consumer electronics major going public in India for the first time.

Sebi not considering regulatory framework for family offices

New Delhi.(Agency)

Market regulator Sebi on Friday said it is not considering any regulatory framework for family offices.The clarification comes after sections of the media reported that the market regulator was exploring the possibility of bringing family offices under its purview.However, Sebi made it clear that no such proposal is currently under discussion.

In a statement, the regulator said, “It has come to Sebi attention that certain media reports have suggested that Sebi is considering regulatory oversight of family offices. These reports are factually incorrect. Sebi is not examining or pursuing this matter at present”.Family offices typically manage wealth and investments for high-net-worth individuals and their families.

Auto companies face logistical woes amid festive rush

New Delhi.(Agency)

The festive rush is there but car and two-wheeler companies, flush with orders after GST reduction and price cuts, are now facing a unique problem — ‘on time delivery’ of vehicles during festivals.

While customers are seeking delivery around Dhanteras and Diwali, companies are finding it challenging to do so due to shortage of trucks and trailers. The shortage of rare earth magnets, despite initial assurances around normalisation of supplies from China, is also delaying production, particularly of electric and two-wheelers.

Industry officials told TOI that sudden rush in demand for deliveries — across automobiles, FMCG, ecommerce, fashion and lifestyle segments — has put a huge pressure on the truck industry with fleets working round-the-clock to deliver across the country. “Add to this the usual gifting rush around Diwali and you have a problem that is increasingly becoming very challenging to solve,” an industry official said.Surge in festive demand has led to significant constraints on availability of trailers. We are working to improve dispatches to our dealer network within constraints,” Nalinikanth Gollagunta, CEO, automotive division, M&M said.The same situation is being faced by Maruti, which has seen a huge recovery in demand for small cars after GST cut. “We have pending deliveries of 2.5 lakh vehicles, and most people prefer it around Diwali . We are working overtime and are now using railways to ensure that dispatches happen faster and on time,” Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer (marketing & sales) at Maruti Suzuki, said.Amit Kamat, chief commercial officer at Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, said surge in demand for trailers and trucks began after Sept 22 as new GST rates came into play. “We expect this surge to be temporary and are working with logistics partners to expedite dispatches... Despite challenges, we are working tirelessly to expedite deliveries to our dealerships in time for Diwali celebrations.”Luxury players, such as BMW, are also feeling the pinch due to sudden rush in demand. “Customers like to take the delivery on Dhanteras and Diwali. This year, demand for deliveries on these specific days is much higher as pent-up demand from Aug-Sept is also coming into play...

Sweeping ECB reforms: RBI moots \$1 billion cap, wider eligibility, easing fund usage

The new draft proposals, issued late Friday night, mark a decisive shift from rigid ceilings toward a more market-oriented regulatory regime for corporates aiming to raise funds externally.

New Delhi. (Agency)

MUMBAI: Following up quickly on the reform flourish announced this Wednesday along with the monetary policy announcement--the Reserve Bank has proposed sweeping liberalization of the external commercial borrowing (ECB) framework, suggesting removal of cost caps, widening the eligibility, and tying fundraising limits to financial strength of the borrower to make it easier for companies to access foreign funds.Governor Sanjay Malhotra had said during Wednesday’s monetary policy

announcement that the RBI would make certain changes to ECB rules along with 21 other amendments to existing regulations.The new draft proposals, issued late Friday night, mark a decisive shift from rigid ceilings toward a more market-oriented regulatory regime for corporates aiming to raise funds externally.Through the new norms the monetary authority plans to increase the ECB limits and widen its access to raise money at cheaper rates from overseas. The RBI also wants to permit wider usage of ECB proceeds so that they can be invested abroad.The shift from a fixed monetary cap to a lever tied to network is designed to better align the borrowing capacity with actual balance-sheet strength.The new proposals, issued late last night, seeks to allow companies to raise funds through ECBs up to \$1 billion in a financial year or up to 300 percent of their network, whichever is higher, substantially more than the current ceiling of \$750 million.“The proposed ECB framework shall be taken into consideration while checking compliance

with the borrowing limit,” said the draft guidelines.A key change being sought to introduce is the elimination of cost caps on ECBs. Previously, the RBI mandated a maximum spread of 450 bps over the benchmark for foreign-currency for ECBs, and similarly over government securities yield for rupee-denominated ECBs. Under the proposed regime, interest rates and spreads will be based on market-determined levels, giving borrowers and lenders greater flexibility. The changes are a positive development for domestic firms looking to raise funds overseas, especially at a time when rates have been slightly cheaper overseas, including hedging costs for certain players. Up to July, domestic issues have raised \$12.44 billion through ECBs, marginally down from \$14.68 billion in the year-ago period.

Another important proposed change is in the maturity and end-use rules of ECBs. The central bank has proposed shortening the minimum maturity requirement for most sectors to a floor of three years. But

for manufacturing companies, maturity between one and three years may be allowed.The RBI also wants to permit wider use of ECB proceeds so that they can be invested abroad. For example, in deposits, certificates of deposit, or high-quality treasury bills of up to one-year maturity or used in foreign branches or subsidiaries of domestic banks.Additionally, the regulator is also expanding the eligible borrower and lender-base. Even companies undergoing restructuring or investigations could raise funds through ECBs, a departure from the previous norms that excluded such entities.Eligibility for tapping the ECM markets will no longer be limited only to entities allowed to receive foreign direct investment, and reporting and compliance requirements will also be simplified to lighten the burden on corporates, the RBI said.

The draft norms also propose that the ECB currency may be changed to another foreign currency, and even the rupee and vice versa.

Gold-Silver Remains Bullish This Week, Hitting All-Time Highs

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian bullion prices remained bullish this week, hitting all-time highs amid uncertainty looming due to shutdown in the United States, tariff concerns and tight global geopolitical conditions. The price of 24-carat gold (10 grams) started the week at Rs 1,15,454 on Monday, rose to hit an all-time high of Rs 1,17,332 on Thursday, according to data published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).However, the gold price fell a bit from its all-time high on Friday to end the week at Rs 1,16,954 per 10 grams, but remained Rs 1,500 higher than the Monday price. Meanwhile, the Silver price reflects the yellow metal's journey, ending the week at Rs 1,45,610 per kg, up Rs 1,223 from Rs 1,44,387 on

Monday.Given the strong trending price action in recent sessions, sharp two-way moves cannot be ruled out. Key support is placed at Rs 1,16,500 and \$3,840, while resistance is seen at



Rs 1,18,500 and \$3,900," said Jateen Trivedi of LKP Securities.Overall, gold remains in a bullish structure, but volatility is likely to stay elevated around the data release, Trivedi said

further. In the domestic futures market as well, the precious metal's prices have seen an uptick.On the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX), the gold contract expiring on December 5 ended the week at Rs 1,18,100 per 10 grams, while the silver future contract, expiring on the same date, closed at Rs 1,45,599 per kg.

Meanwhile, according to analysts, the gold prices continue to receive support from robust central bank purchases and sustained inflows into ETFs due to uncertainty in the global trade order. The gold and silver have outperformed Indian equities for the fourth consecutive Diwali-to-Diwali cycle, continuing a trend where the yellow metal has outperformed equities in seven of the last eight years.

Tata Capital IPO anchor book attracts Rs 4,642 crore with 5 times subscription frenzy

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Non-banking financial company Tata Capital on Friday collected Rs 4,642 crore from 68 domestic and global institutional investors, with the anchor book witnessing demand nearly five times higher than the allocated amount.This comes days before its much-awaited Rs 15,512 crore maiden public offering open for subscription.The anchor round received widespread participation from domestic and foreign institutional investors, including the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund (MF), Nippon India MF, Motilal Oswal MF, Amansa Holdings, Nomura, Morgan Stanley, Government Pension Fund Global, and Goldman Sachs, according to a circular uploaded on the BSE website.

Tata Capital has allotted 14.24 crore equity shares to anchor investors at Rs 326 apiece, which takes the transaction size to Rs 4,642 crore, the circular showed.Its diversity of participants, spanning domestic mutual funds, sovereign funds, insurers, and FPIs, reflects the broad appeal of Tata

Capital’s financial services model.“Due to strong demand, investors did not get the kind of stake they were looking to have in the company and had to be satisfied with



limited subscription,” market sources said.The company’s maiden public offering will open for subscription during October 6-8 in the price range of Rs 310 to Rs 326 per share.

At the top end of the band, the non-banking financial company (NBFC) commands a valuation of about Rs 1.38 lakh crore.The IPO, comprising a total of 47.58 crore shares, includes a fresh issue of 21 crore equity shares and an offer for sale (OFS) of 26.58 crore shares.Under the OFS component, Tata Sons will offload 23 crore shares, while the International Finance Corporation (IFC) will divest 3.58 crore shares.Currently, Tata Sons holds an 88.6 per cent stake in Tata Capital, while IFC owns 1.8 per cent holding.Proceeds from the IPO will be used to strengthen the company’s Tier-1 capital base, supporting future capital requirements, including onward lending.Tata Capital, the financial services arm of the Tata Group, earlier filed draft papers in April through the confidential pre-filing route and secured approval from market regulator

Sebi in July. This will mark Tata Group’s second public listing in recent years, following the debut of Tata Technologies in November 2023.



index, and steady base metal prices,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd.Meanwhile, gold extended its safe-haven appeal, while silver rose on the back of strong industrial demand and supply-side constraints. Consumer-facing sectors gained momentum on expectations of festive demand, whereas IT and pharma lagged amid the lack of progress on the US-India trade pact, said analysts.According to a note by Bajaj Broking Research, benchmark indices ended the truncated week on a positive note, posting gains of nearly 1 per cent. PSU bank stocks were another major contributor, with the Nifty PSU Bank index climbing over 4 per cent for the week. In Friday's session, metals, PSU banks, and consumer durables led the gains, each rising between 1 per cent and 2 per cent.Bank Nifty continue to demonstrate notable strength over the past 3-4 sessions. The formation of a bullish candle with a higher high and higher low in the daily chart signals continuation of the positive momentum underpinned by strength in large cap banking stocks.Looking ahead, market momentum is expected to be supported by strong H2 FY26 earnings and seasonal demand tailwinds.

From meters to centimetres — how Airtel and Swift promise pinpoint precision beyond standard GPS

The partnership addresses long-standing challenges in India such as signal reliability in dense urban areas and limited availability of cost-effective correction networks.

New Delhi.(Agency)

CHENNAI: Airtel Business has entered into a strategic partnership with Swift Navigation to deliver high-precision location services in India, aiming to set a new benchmark in accuracy and reliability. The collaboration brings together Swift’s Skylark cloud-based GNSS correction platform with Airtel’s extensive 4G and 5G network coverage, offering location accuracy down to the centimetre level—far superior to conventional GPS services.The Skylark platform provides real-time corrections by modelling atmospheric errors across multiple stations, ensuring wider

coverage, consistency and device compatibility. This technology supports applications in autonomous mobility, precision agriculture, fleet telematics, utilities, mapping and emergency services, where accuracy and reliability are critical.Airtel’s role strengthens the offering by delivering low-latency correction streams through its telecom infrastructure, bundling services with IoT solutions, and leveraging its enterprise reach to scale adoption. The initial rollout, starting with key markets like the NCR, is designed to provide rapid coverage in high-demand regions.

The partnership addresses long-standing challenges in India such as signal reliability in dense urban areas and limited availability of cost-effective correction networks. By integrating Swift’s technology with Airtel’s connectivity and enterprise solutions, businesses will benefit from lower total costs of ownership, faster onboarding, and easier integration with a wide range of devices and chipsets.

Analysts believe this partnership positions Airtel to gain an edge in emerging sectors that require centimetre-level positioning, including advanced driver assistance

systems, automated tolling, robotics and logistics. However, adoption may depend on factors such as device compatibility, pricing, and regulatory approvals, particularly for safety-critical applications."Overall, the Airtel-Swift Navigation alliance is seen as a decisive step in transforming India’s location



services market, with the potential to deliver unmatched accuracy and open new opportunities across industries," says an industry advisor with a foreign consultancy firm, seeking not to be identified due to his company's policy. The Global Positioning System (GPS), operated by the United States government, is the most widely used

satellite navigation system worldwide. Standard GPS receivers typically provide accuracy within a range of about 5 to 10 meters under open-sky conditions. This level of precision is sufficient for general navigation, mapping, and consumer applications such as smartphone location tracking or vehicle routing.

However, GPS signals are subject to several sources of error, including atmospheric delays, satellite clock and orbital inaccuracies, and signal reflections from buildings or terrain (multipath effects). These factors prevent GPS from offering the centimetre-level accuracy required for advanced applications like autonomous driving, precision agriculture, or high-precision surveying.To achieve centimetre accuracy, GPS data needs correction from external sources. Systems such as Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) and Precise Point Positioning (PPP) use correction signals from reference stations or cloud-based networks to model and eliminate most of the errors in satellite data. Without these corrections, standard GPS remains too coarse for mission-critical tasks, where even a meter-level deviation could compromise safety, efficiency, or operational reliability.

Raveena Tandon Says Daughter

Rasha Thadani

Wanted To Be Ariana Grande: 'She Had The Keeda Since Childhood'

2025 has been a year dominated by star kids, with several newcomers making their mark in Bollywood. Among them, one name that has stood out for both talent and charisma is Rasha Thadani, daughter of veteran actress Raveena Tandon. Following in her mother's footsteps, Rasha has quickly captured attention with her strong screen presence, expressive performances, and electrifying dance skills. Her Bollywood debut film Azaad gave audiences a glimpse of her potential, with the track "Uyi Amma" becoming an instant chartbuster. The song not only showcased her infectious energy but also cemented her as one of the most promising newcomers of her generation. But while Rasha is now being hailed as a star in the making, her career path wasn't always aimed at cinema. In fact, as Raveena recently revealed, her daughter once dreamt of becoming Ariana Grande.

"First She Wanted to Be Ariana Grande"

Speaking in an interview on The Right Angle with Sonal Kalra, Raveena opened up about Rasha's journey from childhood dreams to Bollywood. She recalled, "You know, it's very surreal because honestly we didn't expect it. We did know that she had the keeda since childhood. I used to ask her,



'so what do you want to become?' First her thing was, 'I want to become Ariana Grande.' Then from Ariana Grande it became, 'I want to become a rockstar.' Then from a rockstar it became, 'you know what mom, I think I want to act.' I was like, 'oh, okay, we didn't know.' It was very sweet."

Raveena joked that her daughter's love for the camera was evident from the very

beginning.

"Purani Heroine Ki Aatma"

Sharing an amusing childhood memory, Raveena explained how Rasha had always been drawn to mirrors, even as a baby, "When she was a 3-4 month baby, if she used to cry, the minute we picked her up and showed her the mirror, she would stop crying and just stare at herself. The minute we moved her away from the mirror, she'd start crying again. I actually have videos of her watching herself cry in the mirror. I used to tell my mom, 'Naani ji, isme na kisi purani heroine ki aatma hai, Rasha mein.'" According to Raveena, it was this natural love for expressions and the camera that gradually led Rasha to acting.

Mother-Daughter Collaboration

In another exciting revelation, Raveena shared that she and Rasha recently shot their first project together—an advertisement for a jewellery brand. The collaboration, Raveena admitted, felt surreal, considering her daughter had once only dreamed of pop stardom.



Wamiqa Gabbi

Joins Asif Ali's Actioner Tiki Taka, Fan Says 'Welcome Back To Mollywood'

Wamiqa Gabbi is set to return to the Malayalam film industry with the upcoming movie, Tiki Taka. Directed by Kala fame Rohit VS, the film is led by Asif Ali, who is gearing up for the action flick after garnering rave response for his performance in the suspense thriller Mirage. Now, the makers have also released the other lead cast members, leaving the audience jumping with utmost enthusiasm. On Instagram, Wamiqa Gabbi shared the first poster of her upcoming movie, Tiki Taka, in a collaborative post with Rohit VS. The poster featured the lead cast of the upcoming action entertainer, assembled together while holding their arms, sparking immense curiosity among fans.

Rohit VS' Tiki Taka's Poster Is Released

The movie's poster was released by the makers just a day after T-Series announced that they would be one of the film's main backers. The caption alongside the poster read, "YOU WERE NOT READY FOR THIS !! 'Wreathed in red, Restored to this great gallery of the game'." Alongside this, the post also unveiled the list of lead actors in the action

entertainer.

Although the movie's release date hasn't been revealed yet, it has been delayed due to Asif Ali's personal challenges. He reportedly endured a severe injury during fight training, which led him to take an eighteen-month break.

Lead Cast Members Of Tiki Taka

The poster revealed that Asif Ali will be joined by Wamiqa Gabbi, as well as the Lokah star Naslen, As I'm Suffering From Kadhalar star Sanchana Natarajan, and Operation Java star Lukman Avaran. The film is produced under the banner of Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar's T-Series Films, in association with Panorama Studios, Vellmade Productions and Adventure Company.

The movie will mark Gabbi's return to Mollywood after her appearance in the 2026 movie titled Nine, where she played the role of Eva. Undoubtedly, fans became ecstatic about her stunning comeback and began reacting to the update. A user said, "Welcome Gabbi!" Another added, "Excited, Can't wait to see this, All the best Ma'am, You're going to rock it."



Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham Actress Malvika Raaj Names Baby Girl 'Mahara', Shares FIRST Glimpse



Actress Malvika Raaj, who played young Poo (Kareena Kapoor's character) in the film Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, welcomed her first child with hubby Pranav Bagga on August 23. She announced the arrival of their baby girl through a lovely post on Instagram. Now, 40 days after the birth of their daughter, Malvika has announced the baby's name. She revealed that on the auspicious occasion of Dussehra, she and Pranav named their daughter 'Mahara'.

Malvika Raaj And Pranav Bagga Name Their Daughter 'Mahara'

On Friday, Malvika Raaj and Pranav Bagga took to their Instagram to share the first glimpse of their baby girl Mahara. Sharing pictures with her from Dussehra celebrations, they wrote, "40 Days of MAHARA On the auspicious day of Dussehra, we officially named our Baby Girl! #namingceremony #Mahara #Maharani #babygirl #ourangel #ourqueen #mydoll." Interestingly, the actress was seen wearing a necklace with her daughter Mahara's name. The dupatta of her dress also had her daughter's name written over it.

The first picture shows Malvika and Pranav posing with their daughter Mahara during the naming ceremony. The couple twinned in matching ivory floral printed outfits. While Pranav held their daughter in his arms, Malvika gazed at him lovingly. The picture didn't reveal the baby's face, but offered a delicate glimpse of the baby wearing a floral headband, and her tiny form wrapped snugly in a swaddle. The second picture shows the K3G actress holding her baby girl, and looking at her with a smile on her face.

In August, Malvika and Pranav shared a joint post to announce the arrival of their little princess. They shared a cute pink-themed poster featuring balloons, and the text over it read, "Pink bows, tiny toes and a love that overflows. Welcome to the world baby girl. 23.08.2025. Malvika And Pranav." In the caption, the new parents wrote, "From our Hearts to our Arms, Our Baby Girl is Here #babygirl #ourworld #babybagga."

Gauahar Khan Recreates Viral 'Chai Bana Aur Sabko Pila' Meme With Awez Darbar



Gauahar Khan jumped on the internet's favourite Bigg Boss 19 trend by recreating the viral "Chai bana aur sabko pila" moment with her brother-in-law, Awez Darbar, following his eviction from the reality show. Their hilarious recreation struck a chord with fans, quickly spreading across social media platforms and leaving netizens entertained.

Sharing the video on Instagram, Gauahar captioned it, "Trend setter !!!! Awez Darbar so proud of you . Acche aur seedhe.. aur Zaid Darbar ka track combo . #best #family"

Zaid Darbar Joins the Fun with His Own Rendition

Adding to the excitement, Zaid Darbar, Awez's brother and Gauahar's husband, created a fresh rendition of the viral track. Zaid not only produced the version on which Gauahar and Awez danced but also performed it himself before posting it to his own Instagram feed. His fun twist on the meme further amplified the craze surrounding the moment.

The Bigg Boss 19 Moment That Sparked a Meme Trend

The meme traces back to a light-hearted spat between Awez Darbar and fellow contestant Neelam Giri inside the Bigg Boss 19 house. In his signature witty style, Awez told Neelam, "Chai bana aur sabko pila (go and make tea for everyone)," which sent the other housemates into laughter and immediately became a fan-favourite clip.

Zaynul Jiwani Turns Viral Exchange into a Music Video

Popular music producer and content creator Zaynul Jiwani, known for transforming funny dialogues into catchy reels, spotted the entertaining exchange and gave it a musical spin. He released a quirky music video of the clip on Instagram, which further boosted its popularity.

In his caption, Zaynul wrote: "Just say: 'Chai Bana Aur Sabko Pila' and move on. I watched this part on repeat. Awez Darbar nailed it!"

Darbar Family Celebrates the Trend Together

The fun didn't stop with Gauahar, Awez and Zaid. Joining the viral trend, Anam Darbar, Awez's sister, performed on the track along with their mother. Nagma Mirajkar also made a dance reel on the audio. Their lively participation showcased the family's united front in celebrating Awez's Bigg Boss 19 journey and turned the viral phrase into a full-fledged family trend.



Give your Bedroom a romantic touch

Considering that we spend a major part of our lives in our bedrooms, we should make it one of the most comfortable zones in our homes. It should be a room that spells romance and makes you feel good as soon as you step inside — a space that stimulates your senses. So, what do you need to make your boudoir a cosy love nest? Read on to find out some tips...

Make it look great:

The way your bedroom is lit, can make or break the look you want to create. Interior designer Ketki Passi says, "The right kind of lighting can help create a romantic ambience."

Candles can work wonders — they are what romance is all about. the mysterious light and shadow effect of a candle can give a very special aura to your bedroom. Bright, harsh bulbs are a big no-no. For the ideal romantic look dim, soft lights are key. Use heavy curtains to escape the glare of harsh street-lights. Of course, table and floor lamps are

indispensible.

Make it comfortable:

A bed that looks comfortable is a basic essential here. Four-poster beds look romantic. Use light fabric drapes in pastel shades around the bed to get a soft look. When it comes to bedspreads and covers, avoid rough and uncomfortable fabrics

— soft, smooth and comfortable ones like satin, silk and very good quality airy cotton are essential. Using sexy colours makes your room look, well, sexy. Choose bright bold colours like red, orange or rust. Place plush pillows on the bed of different sizes to make it look comfortable and inviting. Two large pillows, four medium

Bedroom decor should have a romantic essence to it, don't you think?



rectangular pillows and around four to five smaller square cushions. A fluffy and soft comforter can add to the romantic look.

Prioritise privacy:

Curtains spell romance — pretty, flimsy, sheer curtains that sway with the breeze, light ones in lovely pastel shades that leave you feeling calm and relaxed. Of course, you should also have those heavy drapes to guard your privacy.

Indulge the senses:

Romance is about titillating the senses and the sense of smell is important. Spraying room freshener is passe. Opt for fragrances of incense sticks, scented sachet, aromatic candles in lavender, vanilla, and camomile etc. Go and have fun doing up your bedroom!



5 cool makeover tips for your Room

Interior designer Rakshita Singh gives some simple design tips that can add some drama in your bedroom decor.

When decorating your bedroom, you need to make sure that your aesthetics are in place and more importantly, you need to ascertain whether you want the 'me only' look for your bedroom or the 'we' look. Here are some simple design tips that can add drama to your bedroom decor...

Keep the magic alive:

Dedicate one wall of your room to your partner with a large number of tiny framed photographs in a heart shape. This will remind you of each other and the best times you have spent together. It will also help to keep the magic alive.

All about the 'we' not 'me':

It's not about his or her, BUT it's about 'WE'. Opt for more neutral tones of colour like beige, purple and whites when renovating a room for a newly married couple.

Add some romantic drama:

Add some extra canopy of cloth in your bedroom to add some drama and closure. Choose and name your bed sides before you get hitched by putting the name above your bed heads.

Make a cozy nook:

Adding a love seat in a bright and attractive colour to your bedroom decor can jazz it up.

Light it right:

Add some drama by adding tea lights and lamps in the corner of your rooms. It does make it romantic.

Plan ahead:

Even if you are a great believer in spontaneity, give that a miss. Give attention to planning to avoid any last minute trouble. a day of prep here and there will make the lead-up to your party much more manageable. Apart from your food and drinks, do pay attention to your playlist, flower arrangement, lighting and the like.

Choose a theme:

Let us admit that everybody loves a theme. It might not be a



4 ways to organise a cool party

When you are entertaining, do it with a sense of ease and elegance. Here are four simple ways to throw a party which will make the guests feel at home

very very strict theme but people enjoy the party when a theme is there. A theme actually adds more fun and life to a party. Don't go overboard but give a little crazy thinking while choosing a party theme.

It's all in the details:

Yes, life's in the details. It's the little things that make people smile, and remember even long after your party is over. Keep in mind the likes and dislikes of your guests. If you have kids accompanying the adults in the party, remember to keep their food and drinks preference in mind.

Be a relaxed host:

When you are throwing a party at home, don't behave like a caterer. Don't run around like a worried soul. Remember, it's just a party. The whole point of a party is to spend time with your guests in the spirit of celebration. So, just relax and soak in the mood of fun and revelry.

How to take care of your Woollen clothes

- * Use lukewarm water and baby shampoo or a light detergent for washing woollen clothes.
- * Regularly brush up your coats and jackets to avoid any bacteria breeding on them.
- * Dry them in the shade; else they will lose their colour and sheen.
- * Fold and then store the heavy sweaters instead of hanging them.
- * Try wearing the woollen clothes after a gap of two or three days as it takes times for them to regain their original shape.



Woollens are hard to maintain but they can last you a long time if you take good care of them. Few tips to maintain your woollens:

