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Record Phase 1 turnout in Bihar polls. Who should be more worried?

After Sengottaiyan, AIADMK expels 14 members who supported him

Chennai (Agency)

Fourteen supporters of expelled leader KA Sengottaiyan, including a former MP, were removed from the AIADMK for anti-party work, AIADMK said on Friday. The party general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami has ordered the removal of the 14 members, who have been supporting Sengottaiyan in the latter's efforts in coercing party leadership to reunite the factions ahead of the Assembly election next year.

The latest move follows the disciplinary action initiated against Sengottaiyan, former state minister, for meeting and interacting with ousted leaders: O Panneerselvam, V K Sasikala and her nephew T T V Dhinakaran, recently in Ramanathapuram district.

Former MP, V Sathyabama, was among the 14 removed from the primary membership of the party. "The members from Erode Suburban West district were expelled from the AIADMK for conducting themselves contrary to policies, objectives and principles of the party; going against the rules and for bringing disrepute to the AIADMK," a statement from the party said.



>In the first phase of the Bihar elections, the voter turnout touched 64.66%, a jump from the 56.1% recorded in the 2020 assembly polls. What do the record voting figures in Bihar indicate?

Patna (Agency)

The record voter turnout of 64.66% in the first phase of the high-stakes Bihar elections, a jump of 8.5 percentage points from the 56.1% recorded in 2020, has set the political corridors abuzz, with both the NDA and the Mahagathbandhan interpreting the surge to their advantage. Voting in the second phase will take place on November 11, with results on November 14.

On Thursday, 121 constituencies across 18 districts went to the polls, with 3.75 crore voters turning out on a weekday - a nearly two-thirds participation. In the 2020 assembly elections, where 71 constituencies voted in the first phase, 2.06 crore of the 3.70 crore eligible voters cast their ballots. Traditionally, higher voter turnout has often been seen as a sign of anti-incumbency — a desire for change. However, this theory isn't foolproof. At times, it has indicated pro-incumbency enthusiasm.

A LOOK AT BIHAR'S ELECTORAL HISTORY

The electoral history in Bihar suggests that whenever the voter turnout has increased by more than 5%, it has led to a change of government. In 1967, the voter turnout rose from 44.5% (1962) to 51.5% — an increase of 7 percentage points. Then, the Congress lost power for the first time, and a coalition of non-Congress parties came to power.

In 1980, the turnout surged by nearly 7% (50.5% in 1977 to 57.3%). It saw the fall of the Janata Party government and Congress's return. Again, in 1990, voting jumped from



56.3% to 62% — a 5.8% rise. The Congress was ousted, paving the way for Lalu Prasad Yadav's Janata Dal. In 2005, though the voter turnout fell by 16%, it too resulted in a change of guard, bringing JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar to power for the first time. Now, with a record 8.5% surge, the political circles are

abuzz if history will repeat itself.

THE POLITICAL STAKES

Most of the seats that voted in the first phase lie south of the Ganga, constituencies that have often determined the pulse of Bihar politics. It covers the Mithilanchal, Kosi, Munger, Saran, and Bhojpur belts. In the 2020 elections, the contest across these 121 seats was neck and neck. The Mahagathbandhan, comprising the RJD, Congress and Left parties, won 61 seats, while the NDA bagged 59. The RJD, led by Tejashwi Yadav, emerged as the largest party with 42 seats, followed by the BJP (32), JD(U) (23), and Congress (8). Left parties together won 11 seats, while smaller parties like VIP, LJP, and others shared the rest. However, this time the equations have changed with shifting alliances. Chirag Paswan and Upendra Kushwaha, who contested alone in 2020, are back with the NDA.

No Shortage of Essential Medicines in Delhi Govt Hospitals: Dr. Pankaj

The Sikh Times
Sourabh Sharma

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Health Department has strongly refuted a recent newspaper media report alleging a shortage of medicines and consumables in its hospitals, terming the claims as 'baseless' and aimed at creating unwarranted fear among the public. The clarification comes after Delhi Health Minister, Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh, took immediate cognizance of a news article regarding medicine availability in government hospitals. Swinging into action, the Hon'ble Health Minister conducted a swift review of the drug availability across government healthcare facilities.

Following the review, Medical Superintendents of the concerned hospitals, including Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Mangolpuri, confirmed that there is no shortage of essential medicines. A detailed report from Lok Nayak Hospital and Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, was furnished, listing the status of all items mentioned in the article.

The information received from the Lok Nayak Hospital read, "The report is factually incorrect and misleading. It is submitted that



all essential and life-saving medicines, as per the Delhi Governments approved drug list, are adequately available in the hospital. The allegations of shortage appear to have been made without verifying the actual ground situation. Moreover, to ensure uninterrupted patient care, a robust supply chain mechanism is in place wherein daily stock positions are monitored, and any shortfall—if observed—is immediately replenished through the approved procurement process." The report from LNJP, Sanjay Gandhi Memorial, Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospitals confirms the availability of over 40 critical items, including vital injections like Amikacin,

Meropenem, and Vancomycin, vaccines, syrups, tablets, and key surgical supplies like IV cannulas and normal saline. "The report published is baseless and is creating unnecessary fear among the people. As medicines are essential needs, the media should refrain from making such unverified claims and creating panic among the public. The Hon'ble Rekha Gupta-led Delhi government is committed to providing uninterrupted access to free medicines and quality healthcare for all citizens in its hospitals," said Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh, Delhi's Health Minister.

The government hospitals report, however, does note that a few specific items, such as Injection Linezolid and Syrup Ipravent, are not available as they are not part of the Essential Drug List (EDL), with suitable alternatives available in the hospital's inventory and distributed to the patients. The report also emphasizes that the supply of medicines and surgical consumables is an ongoing process, with any shortages promptly resolved through timely procurement. The Health Department urged the public to rely on official communications for accurate information and reaffirmed the government's steadfast commitment to public health.

"Bihar Rejected RJD's Package Of Lies": PM Modi After Record Phase 1 Polling

The 121 seats that were polled in the first phase of Bihar elections recorded a turnout of 64.66%, the highest in the state's history.

New Delhi (Agency)

The record voter turnout during the Phase 1 polling in Bihar shows that the people have taken the lead in securing the return of the NDA government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today, noting that the public has rejected the Opposition's "package of lies." The 121 seats that were polled in the first phase yesterday recorded a turnout of 64.66%, the highest in the state's history.

"Bihar witnessed the highest voter turnout ever. Nearly 65 percent voter turnout was recorded in the first phase," the PM pointed out at a rally in Aurangabad. "This shows the people of Bihar have taken the lead in securing the return of the NDA government."

Tearing into the opposition, the PM said that it's clear in the first phase that the people don't want 'jungle raj' back at any cost.

"Even the Congress does not have faith in their (RJD) promises. Congress does not even talk about the RJD's manifesto. Bihar has also rejected RJD's package of lies. The voters of Bihar trust Narendra Nitish's track record and support our strong intentions. It is confirmed from the



first phase of the polls, 'Phir ek baar, NDA sarkar'," he said. PM Modi also pointed out that voting was largely peaceful in Bihar

yesterday, flagging this as a major contrast between good governance and jungle raj. "We saw the difference between Sushasan and Jungle Raj. Yesterday, every section of Bihar voted without any hindrance. There was a time of jungle raj when booths were looted, bullets were fired on polling.

"This is not just a journey, but a celebration of Sanatan consciousness": CM Rekha

The Sikh Times
Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, 7 November 2025

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta yesterday joined the "Sanatan Hindu Unity Padayatra 2025 - The Meeting of Shri Bageshwar Balaji and Shri Banke Bihari" held at the Katayani Shakti Peeth in Chhatrapur. Surrounded by thousands of devotees, the Chief Minister described the event as a deeply spiritual and emotional experience. She said the Padayatra is not just a display of faith, but a celebration of India's eternal Sanatan tradition, a way of life that has, for centuries, united people through values of dharma, duty, compassion, and humanity. Delhi Cabinet Ministers Manjinder Singh Sirsa and Kapil Mishra were also present at the event. Led by the revered



Acharya Dharendra Krishna Shastri of Bageshwar Dham, the historic Padayatra began from the Katayani Shakti Peeth in Chhatrapur and will conclude at the Shri Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan. Throughout the journey, the chants of "Jai Shri Ram" and "Hari Bol" echoed in the air, filling the atmosphere with devotion, energy, and a sense of unity. The massive participation of devotees turned the event into a nationwide celebration of faith and cultural harmony.

The Chief Minister stated that this Padayatra is sending a powerful message of unity, faith, social harmony, and spiritual awakening to the entire nation - a message that is particularly vital today. She described it as a living and inspiring symbol of India's rich cultural heritage.

Concluding her address, the Chief Minister prayed to Shri Bageshwar Balaji to continue bestowing his divine grace upon Delhi and the entire nation, so that the country may keep progressing on the path of peace, harmony, prosperity and awakened spiritual consciousness.

No one has discussed cabinet expansion with me: DyCM Shivakumar

Bengaluru (Agency)

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president DK Shivakumar dismissed any political revolution in the party in November. The only revolution will be Congress returning to power in 2028, he said. The DCM told reporters that they have been given responsibilities for the Bihar election and are busy with it. The Congress leader, who was in New Delhi, said there was no plan to meet any leader, and no one discussed cabinet expansion with him either.

"No one has discussed cabinet expansion with me. I will only discuss party organisation. If there is any

discussion on cabinet expansion, it is in the media. Have I spoken about leadership change, or has the CM spoken about it? We will go by what the party says. If they say the CM will be there for five years, he will be there. If they say he will be there for 10 or 15 years, he will be there for as many years," Shivakumar said, adding that he is a disciplined soldier of the party and will never cross the party's line.

Action against party leaders

Shivakumar said stringent action will be taken against those party leaders who have not actively taken part in the



signature campaign against vote theft.

"We have already collected lakhs of signatures against vote theft. We will bring it to New Delhi on November 9. I will have a word with block presidents and take stringent action against those

who haven't actively managed the signature campaign. The AICC general secretary has clearly given instructions to remove all those who have not managed their responsibilities in the signature campaign, from party positions," Shivakumar said. The DCM said they have collected 70-80 lakh signatures in the state.

Some block leaders and MLAs have not taken this seriously, and strict action will be taken against them. He said they are making people aware of vote theft, and people will decide at an appropriate time.

Get Owaisi to temple: BJP Minister slams Revanth Reddy for wearing skull cap

New Delhi (Agency)

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar triggered a political storm on Thursday after accusing Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of "religious posturing for votes" during a campaign rally in Hyderabad's Borabanda.

Addressing a gathering in the Jubilee Hills constituency in Hyderabad, where a by-election is set for November 11, Bandi Sanjay mocked the Chief Minister for wearing a skull cap at a recent Congress rally. "If a day comes when I must wear a skull cap for votes, I'd rather cut off my head. I'm an unapologetic Hindu - I won't insult other faiths by faking a namaz," the BJP leader said. Furthermore, Kumar dared Revanth



Reddy to get AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi to perform 'arti' at the temple. "Even Muslim leaders like Azharuddin and MIM didn't wear it. But CM Revanth Reddy and the Congress candidate did - just for votes. Does CM have the courage to ask Azharuddin to chant Vakratunda Mahakaya? Or take Owaisi to Bhagyalakshmi temple and

make him do arti to win Hindu votes?" he asked.

Revanth Reddy, who was wearing the skullcap, should make Azharuddin recite prayer and have 'tilak', the Union Minister said.

"Bhagya Lakshmi temple is there in the old city. Did Akbaruddin Owaisi or Asaduddin Owaisi ever had darshan there and broke a coconut or offered 'arti'. Revanth Reddy should think about it and answer. They don't pray or have tilak. Shamelessly, these people (Congress leaders) wear caps and are greedy for their votes," he added. Upping his communal ante, Kumar urged the Election Commission of India to check faces before voting, referring to 'burqa-clad women', stating that "Constitution and Election.

News box

Property tax camps in Gurgaon zone 3 from Nov 8 to help clear dues

Gurgaon.(Agency)
MCG on Thursday announced a series of property tax camps across zone 3 colonies between Nov 8 and Nov 30 to help residents clear dues, correct details and obtain on-site self-certification.
According to a schedule issued by the civic body, all camps will operate between 10am and 3pm. Residents have been advised to bring their Aadhaar and PAN cards, and property ownership documents, preferably in digital format, to complete self-certification and verification.MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said, "The objective of these special camps is to provide a quick resolution to the problems related to property tax and drinking water connection faced by citizens. I appeal to everyone to visit the camps in maximum numbers and avail these benefits."The first camp will be organised on Nov 8 at house number 384, Ramlila ground, Jacobpura. It will be overseen by the ward number 27 councillor, Ashish Gupta.
The second camp is scheduled for Nov 9 at house number J-S/21, DLF-2, under councillor Vipin Yadav, followed by another camp on Nov 15 at house number A-56, Ashok Vihar, Phase-1, near Hanuman Mandir, to be managed by civic officials and councillor Parminder Kataria. On Nov 16, another camp will be held in Sector 21 at the councillor's office, Pocket E, near the police mess, which will be managed by officials and ward number 3 councillor Rakesh Yadav.
Two other camps – on Nov 22 at house number V-40/2, DLF-3 and on Nov 23 in Sector 23A at house number 4579P, near the govt school – are also scheduled.

Township near Hindon terminal to now have 100-bed hospital

Ghaziabad.(Agency)
The Ajantapuram township, set to come up near the Hindon Civil Terminal, will have 400 dwelling units, a 100-bed hospital and a college. The layout plan for the township was approved by the UP Housing Board Commissioner last month, after being delayed for three decades."As per the layout plan, Ajantapuram township has been designed according to the features of the unified Master Plan 2031. The township's road, which leads to the Hindon Civil Terminal, will be widened to 12m. The township will be self-sufficient, as provisions for a 100-bed hospital, which will be called the medical enclave, will come up in an area of 34,052 sqm. A college up to graduate level, power substations, and a playground have also been planned," said an official from the UP Housing Board.
A total of seven societies and two group housing societies are set to come up in the township.Of these, Lakshmpur Society will be developed in an area of 29,825 sqm, Priyanka Sekhri Cooperative Society in 63,000 sqm, Jan Vihar in 140,700 sqm, Lok Vihar in 167,384sqm, Ram Krishna Society in 60,255 sqm, and Chandra Vihar in 36,066 sqm.According to the official, the township will cover an area of 274 hectares. "We are in possession of 114 hectares of land. From Jan 2026, we will start external development work, which entails roads, sewer, water, and electricity pipelines," the official said.
The township will come up in the vicinity of the Hindon Civil Terminal in Sikandarpur village. The UP Housing Board has taken possession of 114 hectares of land, which includes 68 hectares that belonged to cooperative societies. For this, Rs 89 crore have been disbursed to beneficiaries, with ADM-Land acquisition acting as a facilitator.Around 75 hectares of land marked for the Ajantapuram township belonged to 12 cooperative societies, with an understanding that the UP Housing Board would return 80% of the developed land to them. Four societies were later disqualified.

Digital arrest: Cons pose as ED officials, cheat 83-yr-old from Noida of Rs 31L

Noida.(Agency)
An 83-year-old woman from Sector 100 was allegedly cheated of Rs 31 lakh by cyber fraudsters in a 'digital arrest' scam. The cons impersonated officers from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).An FIR was registered at cyber crime police station on Nov 3.
According to the FIR, the woman received a phone call on Oct 24 from an unknown person. He claimed to be a TRAI official. He told her that her Aadhar Card number was attached to a Canara Bank account that had been involved in fraudulent activities. A case for money laundering had apparently been registered in her name at Daryaganj police station.
She started receiving video calls at least twice a day from scammers posing as officers from the Delhi police or the ED. She was told that she had been channelised Rs 80 lakh through that purported bank account.
The scammers threatened her, saying Supreme Court had launched an investigation into the case and allegedly issued a summons in her name. They pressured her to transfer all her fixed deposits and cash to an account to avoid arrest in the next four days.
Fearing legal trouble, she transferred Rs 23 lakh on Oct 28 and Rs 8 lakh on Oct 29 to a firm named Zimplet Enterprises' IndusInd Bank account in Dwarka.
The fraudsters continued to contact her through video calls till Oct 30, posing as officials from the so-called ED Court. Following this, all channels of communication dried up and she realised that she had been cheated. Police registered a case under sections 308(2) (extortion), 318(4) (cheating), and 319(2) (cheating by personation) of BNS and Section 66D of the Information Technology Act.Cybercrime officials have once again urged citizens to remain vigilant and verify any such calls from alleged govt departments. "No law enforcement agency ever demands money or personal banking details over phone or video calls," a senior police officer said.

Stalker who shot Faridabad teen fires at cops during gun search, hit by bullet

Gurgaon.(Agency)
Jatin Mangla, who shot at a college student he had been stalking for months in Faridabad on Nov 3, was injured in a gunfight with police on Wednesday evening. The 30-year-old, who had been arrested earlier that day, was guiding police to a hidden pistol near Kabulpur village when he fired at the cops, prompting them to retaliate.
According to police, Jatin — a resident of Sirmathla in Gurgaon who handles accounts at Rawal Institute College — had been harassing the 17-year-old girl since June.
The ordeal began when the two met at the 'Classmate' library, where the girl was preparing for her board exams and engineering entrance. Despite her repeated rejections and attempts to avoid him — including changing libraries — Jatin persisted in his unwantedIn Oct, he went so far as to purchase eight different

SIM cards to contact her after being blocked multiple times.The harassment escalated last Saturday when the girl confided in her family. Her parents confronted Jatin and involved his mother, who promised he would not trouble the girl again. Jatin apologised, but the situation took a violent turn just days later.
On the evening of Nov 3, CCTV footage captured Jatin waiting near his motorcycle in Ballabhgarh's Shyam Colony.As the teenager walked past with two friends, Jatin crossed the road, drew a country-made pistol, and fired at her. The girl instinctively raised her hand, and the bullet pierced her palm, grazed her shoulder, and caused facial injuries from fragments.Local residents, initially mistaking the gunshot for firecrackers, rushed to help after hearing her screams. Her friends fled in panic as Jatin discarded his weapon and escaped on a



bike.The girl was taken to Sarvodaya Hospital in Faridabad, where she underwent a surgery. Her father said she was discharged on Thursday morning, but had to be taken back to hospital following persistent pain.
Jatin was arrested in Sahupura village a

couple of days later.He told cops he was carrying two guns on the day of the attack, and had hidden the other weapon near Kabulpur village.A police team took Jatin to the location to recover the illegal gun. But as they reached there, Jatin retrieved the gun hidden among stones and fired two rounds at the cops, prompting a retaliatory response in which he was shot in the leg."During the attack on the minor girl, Jatin was carrying a bag on his bike in which he kept the other weapon. While he dumped the gun at the spot after firing at the girl, he hid the other weapon at an isolated place near Kabulpur village," said ACP (crime) Varun Kumar Dahiya.Police recovered the country-made pistol Jatin had hidden, four live rounds, and two empty cartridges. Jatin was taken to hospital, where doctors said he was stable.A fresh case of attempt to murder and under provisions of the Arms.

Murdered woman was 7 months pregnant, boyfriend prime suspect

Gurgaon.(Agency)
A 28-year-old woman, who was found dead at her rented accommodation in Dundaheera on Tuesday, is lying in the mortuary with no claimants.The woman was identified as Angoori. A police officer privy to the investigation said her family had refused to take her body. "I tried to reason with them, but her father was adamant that they no longer had any connection with her. We will talk to them again," the officer said.Originally from Bihar, Angoori and her family lived at Kapashera on the Delhi-Gurgaon border. In 2023, she took an autorickshaw ride to Badshahpur and struck up a conversation with the driver, Anuj. He was from Kannauj in UP and also lived in Kapashera. The two became friends and eventually began a romantic relationship.
In Aug 2023, Angoori got married to Sadrudin. According to her father,

Mohammad Munna, she was to go to her in-laws' house in Bihar a month after the wedding. She never made it. While en route, Angoori met Anuj at Gorakhpur railway station and fled.
Angoori's elder sister Shabnam, who is married to a tailor in Delhi, told, "She ran away with all the gold jewellery that my in-laws had given me."
The family lost all contact with her. "We had no clue where she had gone. We tried to find her, but nothing came of it," Munna said.In 2024, Angoori began working at an export company in Gurgaon's Udyog Vihar, where she met Vishal. The two wed at an Arya Samaj Mandir and registered their marriage in court in April that year.
Angoori's family learned that she had remarried only when they stumbled across a Facebook reel. "She never tried to contact us," her father said.Vishal told

TOI that Angoori had kept her religion a secret from him. "It was revealed through her Aadhaar card during the court marriage. My family had no issue with it, they knew we loved each other and wanted to be together."
Vishal discovered, however, that this was not the only thing Angoori had been hiding from him. "One night, she got a call around 3am but refused to tell me who it was. We fought about this. Later, she told me she used to talk to a man named Anuj."
A month and a half after the wedding, Angoori was gone. "She ran away while I was at work. After a couple of months, she called and said she was five months pregnant.
My family and I tried to convince her to come back, but she did not listen. We later got to know that she terminated the pregnancy," Vishal said.

'Lack of eligibility, conflicts': Centre rejects Haryana's nominee list for green bodies

Gurgaon.(Agency)
The Union environment ministry has pointed out flaws in Haryana's proposal to set up new environmental appraisal and clearance bodies, stating several nominees do not satisfy the eligibility criteria specified in Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006."Education qualification and experience of Lalit Kumar Batra, Rajwanti Panchal, and Sunita Baghel are not as per Appendix-VI of EIA Notification, 2006, and Mohan Lal Baggan has exceeded 75 years of age. Hence they are not eligible," stated a letter sent by MoEFCC to additional chief secretary of Haryana's environment and climate change department.The letter specified that the proposal to reconstitute State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) and State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) was reviewed in accordance with EIA Notification, 2006, and its amendments.
The ministry also raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest, flagging that "the affiliation of Naveen Aggarwal appears to be related to real estate projects", which could lead to a conflict of interest if he was appointed a member of SEAC. It also urged the state govt to ensure that proposed candidates "have no conflict of interest and possess the requisite experience as per Appendix-VI of the EIA Notification, 2006." It questioned relevance of the experience of Maj Gen (ret'd) Ajay Wadhwa and Naveen Aggarwal, instructing the state to clarify their current roles and expertise.
Underscoring procedural lapses, the ministry requested the state govt to submit a proposal only after confirming that the nominees meet the eligibility criteria specified in Appendix-VI of the EIA Notification, 2006.It also said the chairman "shall be an expert in one of the specified fields, with sufficient experience in environmental policy-related issues, in management or in public administration dealing with various developmental sectors."

Refund or flat? Supreme Court sets December 5 deadline for Jaypee claims

Noida.(Agency)
Supreme Court has issued an ultimatum to Jaypee Infratech homebuyers to either claim their refunds or apply for flat allotments by Dec 5. The court's order — delivered on Nov 3 by Justices Sanjay Kumar and Alok Aradhe — asked all remaining claimants to approach Suraksha Realty Limited, the company now steering the long-stalled Jaypee projects, and made it clear that no further extensions would be granted.The court also instructed Suraksha Realty to make a public announcement, informing all affected homebuyers of the cut-off date. By Thursday, Suraksha had already come out with a notice."Several homebuyers are still coming forward with claims for flats or refunds. The SRA, Suraksha Realty Limited, is willing to entertain claims for refunds from homebuyers within the time frame fixed by this court. In view of the

above, we allow all homebuyers who have not yet raised their claims for refund or for allotment of flat to put forth their cases



before the SRA, Suraksha Realty Limited, latest by Dec 5," the court said, adding that buyers must remain vigilant as no further time would be allowed.
The legal controversy began in 2017, when Jaypee Infratech entered insolvency, leaving more than 20,000 homebuyers

stranded across projects in Noida, Agra, and Aligarh. The company's flagship, Wish Town in Noida, launched between 2010 and 2011, promised possession by 2014-15 but was derailed by financial troubles, legal disputes, and protracted insolvency proceedings.
After years of uncertainty, National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved Suraksha Realty's resolution plan on March 7, 2023. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) later acknowledged the grievances of buyers who had missed earlier claim deadlines, ruling in Feb 2024 that such claims should be handled during the implementation stage by the monitoring committee and Suraksha Realty, rather than reopening the insolvency process.

Gurgaon's unsafe roads: A pedestrian died in road crash every other day this year

Gurgaon.(Agency)
Numbers do not lie. And in this city, they paint a grim picture of life for pedestrians.The city streets are perilous for those on foot, with police data revealing that almost half of all road accident deaths in the first nine months of this year were pedestrians. Yet, despite the mounting toll, authorities have done little to make the streets safer for its most vulnerable users.
Between Jan and Sept this year, 333 people died in road crashes across the city. Of these, 141 were pedestrians — forced to navigate chaotic, vehicle-choked roads with little more than hope and caution to protect them. This means, a pedestrian was the victim of a road accident every second day in the first nine months.
The daily struggle for safety is so acute that many, like Bhawna Sharma, a Delhi resident who

commutes to Udyog Vihar for work, say they rely on prayers just to cross the street."It is scary to cross the roads amid speeding vehicles or heavy traffic. My shuttle drops me near Ambience Mall daily, after which my struggle to go across unhurt towards Udyog Vihar starts. The vehicle flow is so much that I risk my life to cross the road, praying in my mind. It is disturbing and surprising at the same time that authorities are not bothered about pedestrians and have made Gurgaon a city of cars. There is no infrastructure for walkers at all," she told.The situation is no better at some of the city's busiest intersections. Shankar Chowk, for instance, sees a relentless stream of vehicles but offers no safe crossing for pedestrians. Promised solutions, such as a pedestrian subway, have been delayed repeatedly, leaving people to

fend for themselves. Even basic measures — like crossing signals, proper footpaths or manual assistance — are absent.The numbers have barely improved over time. During the same period last year, 143 pedestrians were killed.
After walkers, it's those on two-wheelers who face the maximum risk. Till Sept this year, two-wheeler riders accounted for 122 deaths in the city. The total number of road accidents is also on the rise, with 810 cases registered so far this year against 771 in 2024. Of these, 328 were fatal, resulting in 333 deaths and 65 injuries. Last year, 345 fatal accidents led to 363 deaths.
Non-fatal accidents have also been on the rise. The first nine months of this year saw 478 non-fatal accidents, compared to 381 in the corresponding period last year. This year, 524

people were injured in such incidents, up from 449 last year. The number of people escaping unhurt has dropped sharply too — from 45 last year to just four this year. Cyclists also are at risk — 10 died in 24 accidents this year, while last year saw 18 deaths in 27 incidents. Twenty-one car drivers lost their lives in 62 crashes up to Sept.
Senior officials acknowledged the problem.DCP (traffic) Rajesh Mohan admitted, "There is no doubt that pedestrians are the most vulnerable group on roads. So, a strong infrastructure for them is necessary — including underpasses, foot overbridges, subways, road markings, and pedestrian signals."But at the same time, he added, road users need to act more responsibly. "Almost all foot overbridges in the city, even those in the Golf Course area or along the

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MCD gardener held for forging CMO letters

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: A gardener employed on a contractual basis with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been arrested for allegedly forging letters on the official letterhead of the Delhi Chief Minister's Office to cheat patients seeking free treatment in private hospitals under the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category. According to the police, the 27-year-old accused, Sonu, targeted poor patients outside private hospitals who could not afford costly treatment. He used to promise them to arrange approval letters from the CM's Office for Rs 5,000 per patient. He also impersonated a government official over the phone to convince hospitals to admit patients under the EWS quota. The case came to light after Maharaja Agrasen Hospital sent an email to the CM's Office seeking confirmation about one such letter. The hospital also received a document bearing the name of "Anil Aggarwal, Officer-in-Charge, CM Office, Delhi." It even got a phone call from a person identifying himself as "Balbir Singh Rathee" from the CM Office. The caller allegedly directed the hospital to provide treatment to a patient, Shyam Shankar, under the EWS category. The hospital authorities grew suspicious after noticing spelling errors, inconsistent fonts and poor alignment in the letter. They reported the matter to the CM's Office, which confirmed that the document was fake. Officer on Special Duty (OSD) SC Vashishtha sub-

sequently lodged a complaint at the Civil Lines police station. A case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was



registered. A team, led by Civil Lines SHO Inspector Hanumant Singh, and supervised by ACP Vikas Meena, was constituted to trace the accused. During the probe, the police questioned Shyam Shankar, who revealed that his wife had received the letter from a man named Sonu. Technical surveillance on the mobile number used to contact

the hospital led the police to the MCD office in Karol Bagh, where Sonu was employed. A raid was conducted on October 29, but Sonu

managed to flee, leaving behind his bag and a motorcycle. The police recovered a fake MCD identity card, multiple forged CM Office letters and other incriminating documents from the bag. On October 30, the police traced Sonu to Double Storey, Tagore Garden, and arrested him. His phone contained multiple SIM cards used for making

impersonation calls to hospitals. During interrogation, he admitted to using a stolen CM Office letterhead to create forged letters using Google Translate to insert patient details. The police recovered a mobile phone with two SIM cards, an original CM Office letter, several fake letters, fake MCD and

Haryana government ID cards and a motorcycle with a tampered registration plate. Originally from Jhajjar, Haryana, Sonu dropped out of school after his father's death in 1999. He previously worked as a gardener and watchman in Bahadurgarh before moving to Delhi in 2023.

NGT seeks states' response on tree protection framework

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed states and Union Territories to review and submit their responses within four weeks to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) final report on strengthening tree protection and conservation frameworks. The CPCB, in its final report dated May 21, recommended that states and Union Territories without a legal framework for tree protection should establish one, while those with existing laws should align them with the objectives of the National Forest Policy, 1988. The report emphasised the need for robust enforcement mechanisms, the use of modern technologies for monitoring, and adequate staffing and resources for effective implementation. According to the report, "States and UTs not having a legal framework at present for promoting the growth of trees and enabling protection should take up the process of establishing the required legal framework." It further suggested that, "States/UTs with the existing legal framework may align with the broader objectives of national forest conservation efforts by integrating applicable advisories into their existing frameworks." The CPCB also advised that tree management in non-forest areas should be governed by clear guidelines, including authorization for felling, preservation of heritage trees, and preparation of plantation augmentation plans. It proposed that Tree Authorities should include representatives from government departments, urban planners, ecologists, arborists, legal experts, NGOs, and community members for "a holistic approach to tree management." The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has been asked to provide policy guidance, capacity-building support, and financial assistance under schemes such as the Green India Mission. The Tribunal directed that all respondents must also submit their views on the conduct of a tree census, including proposed modalities for its implementation, particularly in major urban local bodies (ULBs).

IIT study warns of privacy risks from location permissions on Android apps

New Delhi: A new study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has revealed that mobile apps on Android devices requiring precise location permissions can access far more information than users realise, potentially exposing sensitive details about their surroundings and activities. The research conducted by Soham Nag, an MTech student at the Center of

Excellence in Cyber Systems and Information Assurance, IIT Delhi, and Smruti R Sarangi, Professor in the Computer Science and Engineering Department, IIT Delhi, found that even in environments where GPS signals were weak, it was possible to determine the user's immediate environment. Such as whether they were in a small or large room, underground, overground, or even on a

flight. The study, titled "AndroCon - An Android Phone-based Sensor for Ambient, Human Activity and Layout Sensing using Fine Grained GPS Information", has been published in ACM Transactions on Sensor Networks, a widely-read journal in the field of privacy-aware sensing. The researchers proposed that AndroCon, the first system to demonstrate that the fine-grained GPS data

already accessible to Android apps with precise location permissions, could act as a covert sensor. Without using the camera, microphone, or motion sensors, AndroCon interprets nine low level GPS parameters, such as the Doppler shift, signal power and multipath interference, to infer whether someone is sitting, standing, lying down, inside a metro, on a flight, in a park or in a crowded outdoor space. It can also detect if a room is crowded or empty. To convert this raw GPS data into meaningful insights, the

researchers combined classical signal processing with modern machine learning. "Across a year-long study spanning 40,000 sq km and a lot of different phones, AndroCon achieved up to 99 per cent accuracy in detecting surroundings and over 87 per cent accuracy in recognising human

activities, even subtle ones like hand-waving near the phone," Prof Sarangi said. While this opens up new possibilities for context-aware services, the study warns that any Android app could in this way potentially infer sensitive information.

Delhi's air quality remains poor

New Delhi: Delhi's air quality improved slightly on Wednesday but remained in the 'poor' category with an AQI reading of 273. Twenty-seven monitoring stations recorded air quality in the 'poor' category, while Shadipur was in the 'very poor' category with a reading



of 308, according to the CPCB's Sameer app. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 to 100 "satisfactory", 101 to 200 "moderate", 201 to 300 "poor", 301 to 400 "very poor" and 401 to 500 "severe", as per the CPCB classification. The minimum temperature settled at 18.4 degrees Celsius, 3.1 notches above the season's average, while the humidity was recorded at 89 per cent at 8.30 am. The maximum temperature is likely to hover around 30 degrees Celsius with the weather department forecasting mist.

Man out to eat momos with wife

New Delhi: A 22-year-old youth who stepped out to eat momos with his wife was shot at multiple times by unidentified assailants in Geeta Colony, the police said on Tuesday. The injured, identified as Aditya, sustained two bullet injuries when three assailants opened fire at him before fleeing the scene. He was rushed to hospital where his condition remains stable. According to police officials, the incident took place on Monday night and information about the shooting was received from the hospital around 10.10 pm, following which teams reached both the crime spot and the hospital for investigation. A case has been registered at Geeta Colony police station under sections related to attempt to murder.

Four held for killing stray dog in Gurugram

Gurugram: The Gurugram police have arrested four accused, including a minor, for allegedly killing a stray dog in the Partap Nagar area while it was asleep outside a park. According to the police, on Sunday early morning, one of the suspects threw a huge boulder at the dog while the remaining three assaulted the dog using sticks. The suspects then wrapped the dog's body and took it away. Based on a complaint filed by residents on Monday, the police registered an FIR against the four suspects under Section 325 (causing the death or permanent injury to any animal) of the BNS at New Colony police station. While investigating, the police arrested four accused who were identified as Kulbhushan, Dev Kumar, Himanshu and a minor, all residents of Nai Basti in Gurugram. "During interrogation, it was revealed that Kulbhushan worked for a private company in Gurugram and all the accused were from the same family. A few days back, the stray dog had bitten Kulbhushan, and it is because of this that the four decided to kill the dog. They threw the body in garbage," a police spokesperson said.

NAME CHANGE
I, Aijay Kumar Sharma S/O Munshi Lal Sharma, R/O X-22B, TGB Mehrgudham F Block Sec 50 Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar UP 201301 Have changed my name to Aijay Sharma for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Rahiman W/o Maksod Khan R/O Makan N D 58, Ward No.05, Near Masjid Bhimsika, Palwal-121103, Haryana have changed my name to Rahimi for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Maksud S/O Afzal Khan R/O Makan N D 58, Ward No.05, Near Masjid Bhimsika, Palwal-121103, Haryana have changed my name to Maksod Khan for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, SAGAR KUMAR CHACHRA S/O PARMOD KUMAR CHACHRA R/O CD-257 GROUND FLOOR PITAMPURA NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI 110088, have changed my name from SAGAR KUMAR TO SAGAR KUMAR CHACHRA for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Atul Kumar Sharma S/O Om Datt Sharma R/O 107B, 1st Floor, Gali Raja Uggar Sain, Sita Ram Bazar, Delhi 110006 have changed my name to Atul Sharma.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Sanjay Kumar & Mr. Rakesh Kumar are the owner of Freehold Residential Plot No. 42, area measuring 70 Sq. Yds, out of Kharsa No. 11/119, situated in the area of Village Matiala, colony known as Mansa Ram Park, in Block-D/1, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi. by virtue of Regd. GPA along with ATS & Will Dated 11.04.2008 duly registered in SR. II Janakpuri, as doc no.5332, vol no. 12086, book no. IV, page no.12-17, dated 11.04.2008 & GPA along with ATS and Will Dated 05.12.2013 now our client is declaring that that any other person does not have any right over the said property and same property Sold too be Mr. Ravit & Mrs. Renu and same has been financed by SMFG India Home Finance Company Limited Branch: Moti Nagar, New Delhi. If any persons(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.
[NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA] Advocate
F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziabad
Uttar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 0955871432

NAME CHANGE
I, SUNIL KUMAR S/O SH HUKAM PARKASH R/O PLOT NO 237/GF, LEEAWATI ENCLAVE PHASE-3 NEAR DIVINE ACADEMY, NAWADA TIGAOON ROAD FARIDABAD (84) HARYANA - 121004 have changed my name from RAJ KUMARI TO RAJESH KUMARI for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is for general information that I, Pankaj Kumar Meena S/O Bhagochan Lal Meena R/O 102/11A, BLOCK-GA PUL, PEHLAD PUR, DELHI 110044, declare that name of mine, my father and my mother have been wrongly written as Pankaj Kumar, Jag Mohan and Phoolwati in my 10th class educational document. The actual name of mine, my father and my mother are, PANKAJ KUMAR MEENA, JAGMOHAN LAL MEENA and PHOOLWATI MEENA, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
I, MANARATNAM Mother of No. 15696478W, Rank-LJAV, Name-SARATH BABU G residing at H.NO-22-51, CHUKKA VEEDHI, ONE WAY TRAFFIC, SRUNGAVARAPUKOTA, VIZIANAGARAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-535145, have changed my name from MANARATNAM TO GUN-DAPU PRAKASH RAO for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 07/11/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, SHUBHAM S/O Surendra Thakur R/O H.NO.2059, Ramesh Colony, Gali No.7, Near Durga Mandir Village, Sahelpur, Sector-91, Faridabad-121013, have changed my name to SHUBHAM THAKUR permanently.

NAME CHANGE
I, Mohd Ikramuddin S/O Mohd IMDAD HUSSAIN, R/O E-18, Jasola Gans, Okhla, Jamia Nagar, PO New Friends Colony, (DIST South Delhi, Delhi 110025, HEREBY DECLARE THAT MY NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM IKRAMUDDIN SAFI TO Mohd Ikramuddin, FOR ALL PURPOSES.

NAME CHANGE
I, RAJESH KUMARI W/O SH. SUNIL KUMAR R/O PLOT NO 237/GF, LEEAWATI ENCLAVE PHASE-3 NEAR DIVINE ACADEMY, NAWADA TIGAOON ROAD FARIDABAD (84) HARYANA - 121004 have changed my name from RAJ KUMARI TO RAJESH KUMARI for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as BILLU S/O JAMAL BHATT R/O K-5, Division-V, Katipudi Colony, Pandav Nagar, Patel Nagar, Central Delhi-110008 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BILLU BHATT.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as DHARM SINGH S/O SUKHI RAM R/O 490, 1st Floor, Sardar Mohalla, New Sunrise Public School, Tughlakabad Village, Badarpur, Badarpur, Kalka ji, South Delhi, Delhi-110041 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NAWAL SINGH.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as VIKRANT S/O RAMPHAL KHATRI R/O 1525, Sadha Wali Gali, Jatwara Bahadur Garh, Jhajjar, Haryana-124507, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VIKRANT KHATRI.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as DUMMA DEVI W/O KRIPAL SINGH R/O E-168, NEAR MUTHOOT FINANCE, DEVLI VILLAGE, PUSHPA BHAVAN, DELHI-110062 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as DHUMANA DEVI. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in the connection

NAME CHANGE
I, ANUMUTHU Father of No. 16135910K, Rank-SPR Name-AJITHKUMAR A residing at H.NO-51/16, GALI NO-14, NAI BASTI, ANAND PARVAT, DELHI-110005, have changed my name to DIVYAAGGARWAL for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, DIVYA W/O SHIVAM AGGARWAL R/O H NO-51/16, GALI NO-14, NAI BASTI, ANAND PARVAT, DELHI-110005, have changed my name to MOHD JAMEEL AHAMAD for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, MAULANA JAMIL AHMED S/O SALEEM KHAN R/O H NO-20, MADARSA ALIYA, MASJID FATEH-PURI, LAHORI GATE, CHANDINI CHOWK, DELHI-110006 have changed my name to MOHD JAMEEL AHAMAD for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, RANO DEVI Mother of No. 17007726K Rank-NK Name- LUCKY SINGH residing at, PARNALLA, TEHSIL-BILLAWAR, DIST-KATHUA, JAMMU AND KASHMIR-184203, have changed my name from RANO DEVI TO RAM PYARI for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 11/10/2025 before Executive Magistrate, Billaوار, Jammu and Kashmir.

NAME CHANGE
I, Laxmi W/o Late Sh. Malkhan Singh resident of house No. F-3/324, Gali No. 3, Sangam Vihar, New Delhi-110080, Love Verma aged 23 years is my grand son. He is not in good terms with me and he is leading his own independent life. I severed my all relation and disowned my grand son namely Love Verma from my all movable and immovable properties due to his misconduct and misbehavior. I shall be not responsible for any of his liabilities and activities.

NAME CHANGE
I, Panamthundil Padinjattethil Sankunni Anil Kumar S/O Sankunni R/O H. No.27, Second Floor, Kilkari Oppside Maharani Bagh, Taper Chamber, Ashram, Delhi-110014 have changed my name to Anil Kumar for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Ashok Kumar S/o Gop Ram Mittal R/O D-34, Oxford Apartments, Patparganj, P Extension, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Ashok Kumar Mittal for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Seema W/o Ashok Kumar Mittal R/O D-34, Oxford Apartments, Patparganj, P Extension, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Seema Mittal for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, HARDIK CHADHA S/O BHUSHAN CHADHA, R/O H.NO. H-11, Street No.7, Old Goiding Pura Extn, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110091, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as BHUSHAN CHADHA in my Educational Documents. The actual name of my father is BHUSHAN CHADHA, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, JIJUMAN KHAN S/O SULEMAN, R/O B-149, Jawahar Mohalla, Patparganj, East Delhi-110091, declare that name of my mine has been wrongly written as AALAM SAIFI in my Passport No. P5148891. The actual name of mine is JIJUMAN KHAN, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I, SANTOSH YADAV, S/O HIRO YADAV, R/O Plot No.121 B, Kh. No.109, 3rd Floor, Gali No.11, Nasirpur Colony, Harjan Basti, Palam Village, South West Delhi-110045 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as HIRA PRASAD in my Pan Card No. AIHPY1147R. The actual name of my father is HIRO YADAV, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client SANT RAM & MEENA KUMARI BOTH R/O 14-A, VEENA ENCLAVE, NANGLOI, DELHI-110041 have sever all their relations and debar their daughter Sonia from all their movable, immovable properties due to their misconduct. My clients will not be responsible for their any acts/deeds.
JITENDRA KUMAR MISHRA (Advocate)

NAME CHANGE
I, MOHD ZAID KHAN S/O MOHD SHAHVEZ KHAN Residing at C-724 OLD C-31 GALI NO-3 MANDIR WALI, CHAUHAN BANGAR SEE-LAMPUR, NORTH EAST DELHI 110053 have changed my name to ZAID KHAN for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, MEHTAB FATMA W/O MOHD SHAHVEZ KHAN Residing at C-724 OLD C-31 GALI NO-3 MANDIR WALI, CHAUHAN BANGAR SEELAMPUR, NORTH EAST DELHI 110053 have changed my name to MEHTAB FATIMA for all future purpose.

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NEWS BOX

Israel strikes Hezbollah targets across southern Lebanon after evacuation orders

World . (Agency)

Israeli jets struck several towns in southern Lebanon on Thursday after urging residents to leave, marking an escalation in their near-daily strikes on the country. The airstrikes came hours after militant group Hezbollah urged the Lebanese government not to enter negotiations with Israel.

Israeli Arabic spokesperson Avichay Adraee warned residents in Tayba near the border, Teir Debba located just east of the coastal city of Tyre, and Aita al-Jabal in southern Lebanon, to flee 500 meters (about 1,600 feet) away from residential buildings they are targeting, which they say have been used by Hezbollah. It later issued more warnings for the towns of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Kfar Dounin.

The Israeli military said it targeted military infrastructure for Hezbollah in those areas, including "weapons storage facilities... constructed in the center of civilian-populated areas."

It accused the group of rebuilding its capabilities almost a year after a US-brokered ceasefire went into effect that ended a monthslong war. While most residents evacuated the threatened areas ahead of the strikes, Lebanon's health ministry reported one person wounded. "We will not allow Hezbollah to rearm themselves, to recover, build back up its strength to threaten the state of Israel," Israeli government spokesperson Shosh Bedrosian said at a briefing Thursday.

Russia accuses Pakistani paper of serving 'foreign sponsors' in anti-Russia push

World.(Agency)

The Russian Embassy in Pakistan has launched a scathing attack on The Frontier Post, a Pakistan-based English-language daily, accusing it of publishing a "series of anti-Russian articles" and spreading "Western propaganda" against Moscow.

In a strongly worded statement posted on X, the embassy said the publication's stance had taken an overtly anti-Russian tone. The embassy questioned the newspaper's Pakistani identity that deliberately selected articles "from ardent Russophobes".

"We have taken note of a series of anti-Russian articles published in the English-language Pakistani newspaper, The Frontier Post," the embassy said. "To start with, we would like to emphasise that this periodical can hardly be called 'Pakistani', given that its global news service is headquartered in Washington." "The statement alleged that the paper's editorial board consistently chose content critical of Russian foreign policy and leadership, leaving no space for balanced reporting. "Recently, it has been impossible to find a single article in the international section of the newspaper that portrays Russia or its leadership in a positive or even neutral light," the embassy noted.

While reaffirming respect for press freedom, the embassy argued that The Frontier Post's content had crossed into propaganda. "The current barrage of anti-Russian articles containing standard Western propaganda and lacking any alternative viewpoint makes one wonder whether the editorial board's policy is based on a political agenda promoted by anti-Russian forces rather than on freedom of speech." "The embassy also criticised it for its coverage choices, pointing out its failure to report on the Moscow Format of Consultations on Afghanistan held on 7 October 2025. The event, which was covered widely across Pakistani media, was reportedly "completely ignored" by the Frontier Post.

Prayed to god, please save me: Freed Israeli hostage alleges sexual violence

World .(Agency)

"I was praying to God, please save me, get me out of this already," said Rom Braslavski, a 21-year-old Israeli hostage who endured two years of captivity in Gaza, where he says he was subjected to sexual violence and daily beatings. Braslavski, who was kidnapped from the Nova music festival on October 7, 2023, is the first male hostage to publicly allege sexual abuse by Palestinian militants.

In an interview with Channel 13's Hazinor programme, excerpts of which were shared with the news agency Reuters, Braslavski recounted being stripped naked, tied up, and assaulted by one of his captors. "It was sexual violence, and its main purpose was humiliation. Its goal was to humiliate me, to crush my dignity," he said, holding back tears.

Braslavski was held by Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian militant group allied with Hamas that also took hostages during the October 7 attacks. During his captivity, the group released a video showing him appearing skeletal and distressed. An Islamic Jihad official denied the allegation, calling it "incorrect" without providing further explanation. An Israeli government spokesperson described Braslavski's testimony as "living proof" of what she called the true nature of Gaza's militant organisations.

At least four women hostages have previously come forward with accounts of sexual abuse during captivity. In March 2024, United Nations experts reported finding "clear and convincing information" that some hostages taken to Gaza were subjected to sexual violence. Hamas, which held most of the hostages, has denied the allegations. Braslavski also detailed enduring regular beatings. "You just pray to God for it to stop. And while you're there, every day, with every beating, every day, you say to yourself, I have completed another day in hell," he said.

Trump to blame for Mamdani victory: Why MAGA knives are out for their hero

The MAGA crowd, Donald Trump's support base, has gone berserk after electoral defeats in mayoral and gubernatorial polls. Zohran Mamdani's victory in New York City is particularly stinging. Supporters are blaming Trump, saying his obsession with foreign politics and ignoring crucial domestic issues caused the setbacks.

World . (Agency)

US President Donald Trump, the hero of the MAGA movement, is now facing backlash from his own supporters following a bunch of Republican defeats in the US, most notably in New York City, where Zohran Mamdani became the first Muslim-immigrant to win the mayoralty. Now, the MAGA base is openly blaming Trump, arguing that his focus on foreign policy distracted him from focussing on domestic issues, leaving the Grand Old Party (GOP)

vulnerable. Tuesday's elections dealt heavy losses to Republicans in Virginia, New Jersey, California, and New York City, with Mamdani's high-profile victory drawing national and international attention.

The defeats have sparked a blame game among Trump loyalists, raising questions about whether the president's influence can still deliver results for the GOP. Mike Cernovich, Jack Posobiec, Laura Loomer, and Michael Boyle are among MAGA leaders who questioned Trump over the loss.

Additionally, Indian-origin Republican leader Vivek Ramaswamy and Trump's 2024 campaign political director James Blair suggested that domestic issues contributed to the GOP's electoral defeats.

Many MAGA supporters slammed Trump for focusing more on foreign issues than problems at home, while others attributed the defeat to Republicans' internal feuds amid a string of texting

scandals. Meanwhile, voters say Trump and Republicans in Congress are more to blame for the ongoing government shutdown, according to a new NBC News

working without pay, the BBC reported.

MAGA leaders have criticised Trump for ignoring domestic issues and focusing on foreign affairs. Majorities of voters disapprove of Trump's job performance. In many states, including Virginia, more than half of the electorate saw their vote as sending a message to Trump, according to CNN.

Voters appeared particularly critical of Trump's tariff and immigration policies. Right-wing personality Mike Cernovich slammed Trump for prioritising foreign policy over domestic issues. "Trump spent all year on the Middle East, his big donors loved it, the voters did not.

Virginia is going to be under a Democrat supermajority now," Cernovich wrote on X Tuesday evening. "Keep listening to Mark Levin (Fox News host), Mr President, and you'll be back to impeachment trials in 2026," he added in another post on X.



Why Kazakhstan joined the Abraham Accords: A new geopolitical balancing act

World . (Agency)

Kazakhstan has officially joined the Abraham Accords — the United States-brokered diplomatic framework that normalised relations between Israel and several Muslim-majority nations. While Kazakhstan has already maintained full diplomatic and economic ties with Israel, its entry into the accords carries significant symbolic and strategic weight, particularly in the context of shifting geopolitics in Central Asia and West Asia.

The move coincides with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's visit to Washington for meetings with President Donald Trump, alongside the leaders of other Central Asian states. The summit forms part of Washington's renewed attempt to strengthen its influence in a region long regarded as part of

Russia's geopolitical orbit and now increasingly drawn into China's economic sphere. Central Asia today is at the centre of a quiet strategic competition, and the United States is



attempting to reinsert itself into regional affairs.

For Washington, Kazakhstan joining the accords signals that the United States remains a relevant player in shaping political alignments across the Muslim world, even as the Gaza

crisis places diplomatic pressure on Israel's partnerships. The expansion of the accords had largely stalled during the conflict, but Kazakhstan's accession allows Washington to demonstrate continued diplomatic momentum. For Kazakhstan, the decision aligns with its long-standing "multi-vector" foreign policy, a delicate balancing act that seeks to maintain positive relations with Russia, China, Western states, and regional partners simultaneously. By formalising its role within the Abraham Accords, Kazakhstan positions itself as a diplomatic bridge:

between Israel and Muslim states, between the East and the West, and between Washington and the broader region. There is also a clear economic dimension. Kazakhstan is attempting to diversify its economy beyond oil and extractive industries.

US Supreme Court allows Trump to enforce two-gender passport policy

world.(Agency)

The US Supreme Court on Thursday allowed President Donald Trump's administration to enforce a policy restricting passport gender markers to only "male" or "female," reversing lower-court orders and igniting sharp debate over transgender rights and safety.

The ruling permits the administration to proceed with the policy while a lawsuit challenging it continues. It halts a lower-court order that had required the State Department to let applicants choose "M," "F," or "X" on passports to align with their gender identity. The court's three liberal justices dissented, according to The Associated Press.

The decision marks another victory for

Trump on the court's emergency docket. Since the beginning of his second term, the Supreme Court has issued nearly two dozen short-term



orders favouring his administration in various policy disputes, including one that barred transgender people from serving in the military.

In an unsigned order, the conservative

majority said the policy does not violate equal protection principles. "Displaying passport holders' sex at birth no more offends equal protection principles than displaying their country of birth," the court wrote. "In both cases, the Government is merely attesting to a historical fact without subjecting anyone to differential treatment."

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, joined by the court's two other liberal justices, issued a strong dissent. She warned that the ruling puts transgender and nonbinary Americans at risk.

"This Court has once again paved the way for the immediate infliction of injury without adequate (or, really, any) justification," Jackson wrote, arguing that the policy.

Body of Indian MBBS student, missing for 19 days in Russia, found in dam

World . (Agency)

A 22-year-old medical student from Rajasthan's Alwar, who had been missing in Russia for nearly three weeks, was found dead near a dam in Ufa city, his family members confirmed on Thursday. The student, identified as Ajit Singh Chaudhary, was pursuing an MBBS degree at Russia's Bashkir State Medical University since 2023. Ajit had gone missing on October 19 after stepping out of his hostel around 11 am, telling friends he would return within half an hour after buying milk. He never came back.

Days after his disappearance, local authorities found his clothes, phone, and shoes near the White River. Nineteen days later, Ajit's body was recovered from a dam adjoining the same river. The Indian Embassy in Moscow informed both the family and local representatives in Alwar about the discovery.

Fellow students identified the body, and officials said arrangements are being made to conduct a post-mortem through a medical board before sending the remains back to India. The repatriation process, coordinated between the Indian Embassy and Russian authorities, is expected to take two to three days, officials said.

Ajit's suspicious death has left his family and village in shock. Relatives said they had sold nearly three bighas of land to fund his medical education in Russia. "We sent him with so many dreams. Now, we are only waiting for his body to return," a family member said.

Local leaders confirmed receiving updates from the Indian mission. Community members held a meeting at the Alwar Jat hostel, expressing anger over what they called a slow response to the student's disappearance and urging the government to ensure his body is brought back swiftly.

Congress leader Jitendra Singh Alwar expressed deep grief over the death, calling the circumstances 'suspicious'. In a post on X, he urged the External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, to expedite the repatriation and ensure a thorough investigation. "An untoward incident has occurred with the boy in suspicious circumstances; it must be investigated with complete seriousness. The family should not have to run around your offices any more," Jitendra Singh Alwar, a former Union Minister, wrote.

Ajit's parents, Roop Singh and Santra Devi, are devastated and his family members have demanded a detailed inquiry into how the young student ended up dead in a foreign land.

Nuclear hotspots: Where the world tests its most dangerous weapons

World . (Agency)

Last week, just before his meeting with China's Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump stirred a hornet's nest by saying the US would resume nuclear weapons testing. Five days later, Russian President Vladimir Putin asked his security council to prepare for nuclear tests. The developments have raised concerns of a destabilising nuclear arms race. Trump has justified his move by claiming that Russia, China and Pakistan were testing nuclear weapons. US energy secretary Chris Wright, however, clarified that the President didn't mean full-scale nuclear tests. But Trump's statement travelled around the world, particularly in Beijing, Moscow and Pyongyang. If the US does indeed test weapons, it will trigger a global chain reaction. Russia and China could follow the US and begin their own tests. At the Kremlin meeting on November 5, Russian Defence Minister Andrei

Belousov advised immediate preparations for full-scale nuclear testing. The readiness of the forces and assets at the

Central Test Site on the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, he said, made it possible for tests to be carried out within a short timeframe. Israel is the only one of the nine nuclear-weapon states to have never conducted a confirmed nuclear test. The eight others have detonated over 2,000 nuclear devices since 1945. Over 80% of these tests were carried out by the US and the former USSR.

HOW ARE NUCLEAR WEAPON TEST SITES CHOSEN?

From Nevada to North Korea, choosing a nuclear test site is a meticulous, multi-step process balancing science, secrecy and safety. There are three key factors that go

into making up a nuclear weapons test site.

Geological stability

Open nuclear testing was banned in 1963.



Countries thus have to rely on deep-buried shafts to test their weapons. Hence, geology becomes an important factor. The area must be seismically quiet - meaning it shouldn't have active faults that could

trigger earthquakes. It must have hard, dry rock that won't leak radioactive gases when the shaft is sealed.

Hydrogeology

The test site must be deep, hundreds of metres below the ground, so that the radiation does not poison the water table. At India's test site at Pokharan, for instance, the water table is more than 500 metres deep.

Buffer zones

It must be ensured that there is no human habitation, and operational secrecy should be preserved to prevent other countries from detecting nuclear tests.

WORLD'S NUCLEAR WEAPON TEST SITES

United States

The US was the first country to test and use nuclear weapons.

NEWS BOX

TN signs MoUs with leading game developers

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The Tamil Nadu government signed partnerships with leading gaming companies on Thursday at the India Game Developer Conference (IGDC) in Chennai, as part of its initiatives for long-term investment in game development, design and immersive media. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were inked with Nazara Technologies, Lakshya Digital and Reliance Games, alongside a skilling and research tie-up between the Game Developer Association of India (GDAI) and Hindustan University in the presence of Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin. IT Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan was also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the second day of IGDC 2025, Udhayanidhi who described himself as “an avid gamer”, positioned the state’s animation, visual effects, gaming, comics and extended reality (AVGC-XR) agenda as the next chapter in a decades-long digital push. He traced the roots of TN’s tech-led development to former chief minister M Karunanidhi, crediting him with establishing India’s first IT department in 1998 and introducing computer education in schools. That legacy, he said, has been expanded under CMMK Stalin.

Sridhar Muppidi, chairperson of GDAI, said that TN has set a benchmark for how states could cultivate innovation and a youth-led digital economy. Cross-state collaboration also featured at the event. Kerala’s AVGC-XR network signed partnerships, including an MoU linking a Kerala-based studio with Datsi School, the CSR arm of Zebu Animation, to jointly develop and co-own original intellectual property (IP), a model billed as a first for student-led game.

Modern command and control centre for coastal security soon, says Odisha DGP Khurania

BHUBANESWAR. (Agency)

Director General of Police YB Khurania on Thursday said a modern command and control centre of the coastal security wing will soon be set up for real-time surveillance of the state’s coastal regions.

After inaugurating a one-day capacity building workshop for field officers of railway and coastal security wings, he said, the state government has sanctioned Rs 150 crore to strengthen the coastal security system of Odisha. About 10 drones equipped with latest technology, three trawlers and 140 special police officers have already been appointed for coastal security. Besides, work is underway to cover 32 fishing harbours with CCTV systems. The process to purchase new boats has also been initiated, he added.

The DGP said the government is making all efforts to make Odisha Police one of the most significant and well-equipped police organisations of the country.

Speaking about Railway Police, Khurania said major steps are being taken to further modernise the wing. The process to create new Railway Police districts and government railway police stations is also continuing. The government has allocated funds to install CCTV cameras in 15 more government railway police stations, he added.

Mysuru child care centre found defunct; NICU overcrowded with two newborns per warmer

MYSURU. (Agency)

In a disturbing revelation that exposes the state of child healthcare in Mysuru district, the Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) operating at Cheluvamba Hospital was found virtually defunct, with empty kitchen boxes, no food, and not a single malnourished child admitted.

The shocking discovery came during a surprise inspection by Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) in-charge chairman Shashidhar Kosambe, who was disturbed by what he saw. The centre, meant to provide nutritious food and medical care to malnourished children under the National Health Mission (NHM), is lying idle, its purpose defeated.

The inspection team, which included KSCPCR member Tippeswamy and District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr Kumaraswamy, found the NRC kitchen in complete disuse -- no food is cooked, there is no activity in the ward, except two patients from the OPD made to rest there.

Officials, including head of the department of pediatrics and superintendent of the hospital accompanying the chairman, were left embarrassed when questioned about the non-functioning facility.

Two newborns share single warmer

The NRC was established to treat severely malnourished children (SAM category) through a combination of special diets, regular health monitoring and caregiver counselling. However, the facility appears to have been reduced to a nameplate, a cruel irony in the Chief Minister’s own home district, where the state’s commitment to welfare and child health is under question. To compound the situation, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the same hospital was overcrowded, with two newborns sharing a single warmer in almost all warmers, raising serious safety and infection-control concerns.

2018-scale floods may hit every 25 years in Kerala, warns study

KOLLAM. (Agency)

Floods of the scale Kerala witnessed in 2018 — earlier believed to occur only once in 150 years — could now hit every 25 years, a new study has found.

Analysing four decades of river flow data in Kerala, the study, carried out by researchers from the civil engineering department of TKM College of Engineering, Kollam, warns that the state’s current flood models underestimate real flood risk by up to 40%, leaving key infrastructure vulnerable as climate change intensifies.

The study notes that Kerala’s flood maps, dam safety norms and drainage design standards no longer reflect current rainfall patterns, explaining why towns go underwater even after moderate rainfall. It warns that unless design standards are urgently updated, even routine monsoon spells could trigger severe flooding across both urban and rural regions.

The shift was identified using non-stationary flood frequency analysis — a method that accommodates climate variability linked to factors such as El Nino, the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO). The team analysed 40 years of flood discharge records (1980-2019) from the Irrigation Design and Research Board.

Study: Flood designs need to evolve with climate reality

At the Muvattupuzha station, the 2018 flood discharge of 2,412 cubic metres per second — earlier estimated to occur once in 150 years — was recalculated to have a return period of



just 25 years. At Thodupuzha, a 62-year event was shortened to 25 years, while at Kakkadassery, a 75-year event now has a return period of only 12 years. The study also found that the estimated magnitude of floods could increase by 29 to 40% when climate change is factored in. “Our infrastructure was built on the assumption that climate change would not occur, that climatic events such as temperature and lunar cycles would remain the same. But that isn’t the truth. Our bridges, dams, and drainage systems are in jeopardy as their capacity to handle sudden downpours is limited,” said

professor Adarsh S, head of civil engineering department at the TKM College of Engineering, who led the study.

From Thiruvananthapuram to Kochi, waterlogging has become routine even after moderate rain. Researchers said this was because Kerala’s drainage network, culverts, and bridges were designed using a flood map that no longer reflects current rainfall patterns.

“Kerala receives over 80% of its annual rainfall in just four months and has faced major floods in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2024. These back-to-back events show that floods are becoming more intense and frequent. If flood designs do not evolve with climate reality, the cost will be devastating,” the study noted.

The study was carried out with assistance from the Core Research Grant under the Department of Science and Technology’s Science and Engineering Research Board. Professor Adarsh and research scholar Meera GMohan were the team members.

The results of their research have been published in journals such as Water Resources Management, Physics and Chemistry of the Earth, Theoretical and Applied Climatology, Water Security, and H2Open Journal. Climate change vulnerability is factored in.

SIT arrests former Thiruvabharanam Commissioner in Sabarimala gold theft case

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Thursday arrested former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) Thiruvabharanam Commissioner in connection with the theft of gold from dwarapalaka idols in Sabarimala. K S Baiju was arrested after the sleuths questioned him at the Crime Branch office in Thiruvananthapuram. Baiju has been listed as the seventh accused in the case and the charge against him is that he deliberately skipped the event in 2019 where gold sheets from Sabarimala were handed over to the main accused Unnikrishnan Potti.

Being the custodian of the holy artefacts of the hill shrine, it was Baiju’s responsibility to



maintain the mahzar regarding valuables of the temple and also to take stock of the weight and condition of the artefacts. The SIT finding is that he consciously made lapses in his duty to aid the loot orchestrated by Potti and others. He is also alleged to have recorded gold-plated

sheets as copper sheets on Sabarimala records, which was part of the ploy to loot gold. The SIT had earlier arrested three people, Potti and two TDB former officials, in connection with the case. With the arrest of former TDB officials, the noose is tightening around heavyweights, including former TDB chief N Vasu.

Custody of Murari Babu, Sudheesh Kumar sought

The SIT has sought court permission to get former Sabarimala officials Murari Babu and D Sudheesh Kumar back into custody for further interrogation. The move comes as part of the team’s renewed focus on verifying details related to the alleged tampering of gold from the sanctum’s door and door frames.

Farmers seek Krishna water for Rabi crop

This year, irrigation authorities released 124 TMC ft of water for Kharif — 70 TMC for the Krishna Eastern Canal system, 47 TMC for the Krishna Western Canal, and the rest for Guntur and other channels.

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

Farmers across the Krishna Delta have urged the government to release water from reservoirs for Rabi cultivation to end the prolonged drought-like conditions that have persisted for more than 15 years. Despite reservoirs remaining full for several seasons, authorities have not released water, leading to frustration among cultivators. The delta covers Krishna, NTR, Guntur, Bapatla, Prakasam and Eluru districts, with an ayacut of 13.05 lakh acres that requires nearly 100 TMC ft of water for Rabi operations.

Farmers said they could cultivate

both Kharif and Rabi crops without interruption until 2002. However, in the past two decades, water was released for Rabi cultivation only



two or three times. They pointed out that Rabi paddy yields and profits are significantly higher than Kharif crops. On average, farmers

earn Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per acre from Rabi paddy, producing 3,500 to 4,000 kg per acre compared with 2,000 to 2,500 kg in

Kharif, provided that there will be no natural calamities like cyclones and rains.

So, the farmers have been waiting for years for the release of water for Rabi season; however, it has not materialised so far.

This year, irrigation authorities released 124 TMC ft of water for Kharif — 70 TMC for the Krishna Eastern Canal system, 47 TMC for the Krishna Western Canal, and the rest for Guntur and other channels. Officials said this was surplus water that would have otherwise flowed downstream.

Two brothers held in Kovai gang rape involved in similar crime last year

COIMBATORE. (Agency)

The two siblings arrested in the Coimbatore college student gang-rape case are believed to have a history of similar crimes. A senior police officer said that the duo — T Satheesh, alias Karuppasamy (30), and T Karthik, alias Kaleeswaran (21) — had committed a similar assault on a couple at an isolated location within the Thirumuruganpoondi police jurisdiction in Tiruppur last year. This came to light during investigation with the suspects, the officer added.

The police said the victims of the assaults had been reluctant to approach them about the attacks. The siblings took advantage of this to continue their criminal activities.

“As habitual offenders, they might have continued their criminal activities in areas like Brindhavan Nagar, behind Coimbatore Airport. We are working to take them into custody to conduct a thorough investigation. Once we confirm their involvement in the incidents, we can add additional charges against them,” said a police officer privy to the case investigation.

The duo’s relative M Guna, alias Thavasi (20) is also a suspect in the 20-year-old college student’s gang rape near the Coimbatore airport on Sunday night. Chief Minister MK Stalin has assured the police will file the charge sheet within a timeframe of one month and ensure that the offenders face the maximum penalties.

“In some major cases, the Tamil Nadu police have completed charge sheets within a week. However, it relies on having substantial material evidence. Having classified this (Coimbatore gang rape case) as a high-priority case, we expect to receive the reports from the forensic science department soon,” said A Saravana Sundar, Coimbatore city police commissioner.

There is no eyewitness, and the police need to collect corroborative evidence such as forensic and DNA reports. Simultaneously, they need to conduct a Test Identification Parade (TIP), a procedure in which the

victim identifies suspects from a group of individuals in the presence of a magistrate to confirm the accuracy of the identification.

As all the three suspects (Coimbatore gang



rape case) sustained leg injuries, the TIP will be conducted accordingly. The police have collected clear CCTV footage showing the movements of the suspects at four locations, along with statements from the rape survivor and her male friend. The seized weapons will also be considered

major pieces of supporting evidence for this case.

Meanwhile, they plan to take the suspects into custody for detailed questioning, subject to their recovery from their injuries. “Under the BNSS, the standard timeframe for filing a charge sheet is 90 days from the arrest date. However, we are striving to expedite these procedures within a month and speed up the court trial,” police sources said.

The three suspects (Satheesh, Karthik, and Guna) from Sivaganga were shot in the leg by the Coimbatore police and apprehended late on Monday. Police sources said Satheesh had four prior criminal cases against

him, while Karthik had five. Despite being arrested in a house-breakin case by Tiruppur police in 2015, Satheesh managed to quash the FIR by moving the high court. Subsequently, the siblings continued to be involved in extortion and theft cases, the sources added.

Major power outage sparks chaos at King George Hospital in Vizag

VISAKHAPATNAM. (Agency)

A major power outage at King George Hospital (KGH) in Vizag on Thursday left patients in several key wards suffering without electricity, ventilation, and medical equipment.

The outage, caused by damage to a critical power cable during ongoing work on the hospital premises, began at 1:45 pm, and disrupted services in all orthopaedic, paediatrics, women’s, Rajendra and Bhavanagar wards, leading to discomfort and anxiety among patients and their families.

Patients and their families reported significant inconvenience as they were left waiting in dark and humid conditions. While emergency units such as the ICU, NICU, and CSR blocks continued functioning with the help of generators, other wards experienced prolonged power failure. Hospital staff and authorities were engaged in efforts to restore power throughout the evening.

“A major power cable was disconnected near the critical care unit, leading to the outage. Our technical team is addressing the issue, and we expect the power to be restored by around 2 am,” said Deputy Superintendent Dr M Chandra Sekhar Naidu.

“We were told repeatedly that power would return in 30 minutes, but by 10:30 pm also nothing had changed. The environment is extremely uncomfortable, and even basic amenities like water in the washrooms are affected,” family members told.

“The power supply at King George Hospital was disrupted after electric cables were damaged during ongoing construction work. Efforts are being made to restore regular power, and the hospital is currently running essential services through generators.

As soon as the issue came to my notice, I spoke to the concerned officials to ensure immediate action,” said Health Minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav.

When the grand old centrist party moves to a side

The term ‘ideology’ has made a comeback to dominate the Indian public and political landscape in the last few years. It had become somewhat less fashionable since the early 1990s, but had a faint revival in 2014, when the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power. It found greater traction and mobility ever since the BJP sealed its dominance in 2019.

If ideology, as a somewhat rigid set or system of ideas, has seen a resurrection in more recent years, it can be argued that the reason is not the BJP, but the Congress. Since the Congress, under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, began to perceive the BJP more as an intransigent ideological machine and less as a political opposition, it too began to devise a stubborn ideological response at the opposite end of the spectrum. From being a party with definite ideas and principles, it began to fancy being ideological. This response pattern has been a kind of global playbook, and therefore Rahul Gandhi definitely came before Zohran Mamdani; but, for distinct reasons, their levels of success have varied. Anyway, this ideological game witnessed a new flashpoint in the last few days. First, Priyank Kharge, son of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and a minister in Karnataka, wrote a letter to his own government demanding that the RSS’s activities in public places and government premises be regulated, if not banned. Next, Kharge Senior took the idea to Delhi. On October 31, he asked for banning the RSS. The Congress seems to believe that to debilitate the RSS, often described as the ideological parent or mentor of the BJP, is to checkmate the saffron party. It may never have such a clear and straight outcome, but it is an assumption not without some logical basis. Interestingly, when Mallikarjun Kharge said he would prefer the RSS to be banned, he clarified that it was his “personal view”. Kharge Senior may have appeared diffident and treaded cautiously, but the idea had become the party’s mainstream opinion before he became the party’s president. Rahul Gandhi’s blunt assertions on the RSS and its mentors have often got him into legal trouble. In May 2022, he had said, “My fight is with the ideology of the RSS and BJP, which is a threat to our country. I fight against the hatred and violence these people spread.” Again, in January 2023, he said he would never enter an RSS office, “I’ll have to be beheaded before that. My family has an ideology.” In Karnataka, this ideological battle finds new expression every now and then. In the latest round, the Congress government is allegedly allocating government land at subsidised prices to the Congress Bhavan Trust across the state in over a hundred places. When the BJP was in power in the state, it had allocated large tracts for its own party offices and to RSS’s affiliate and sympathetic organisations. Now the Congress is doing something similar as an apparent ideological counter, although legally it may be in troubled waters. Interestingly, the Congress did not cancel the land allocation the BJP had made to itself and its affiliates; on the contrary, it made it an ideological raison d’être to allocate itself more land. This has been revealed in detail by The File, a site that uses RTI as its primary investigative tool.

Despite such ideological battles that the Congress endeavours to construct across the nation, ironically, the RSS and BJP have always visualised their mission as cultural and civilisational. They do not use the registers that overtly communicate an ideological strife. It is always about cultural and civilisational recovery, restoration and rebuilding.

G2 won’t be music to India’s ears

The new deal between the US and China is all about give and take



increasingly restless over the Chinese decision not to buy American soyabean. The US suspended the implementation of measures under its Section 301 investigation targeting China’s maritime logistic and shipbuilding industries for a year.

The US will now drop its overall tariff rate for China to 47 per cent. This is, in effect, where it was before Liberation Day, April 2. If we take the 20.7 per cent tariff that existed before Trump assumed office and add 10 per cent of the reduced fentanyl tariff, we are left with just 10 per cent additional tariff which was the baseline figure applicable to all.Both sides have agreed to cooperate on the fentanyl issue, but there are other matters that need to be resolved, such as Chinese access to Nvidia chips and the ownership of TikTok. The Taiwan issue seems to have been sidestepped for the present.A major reason for China’s success has been tactics. While Beijing systematically prepared for a possible clash in the last few years, Trump led Washington to hit out recklessly on the tariff issue. Instead of targeting China alone, as it had done in 2020, the US sharply escalated the fight with China and hit the whole world with its Liberation Day tariffs, alienating friends and allies.

To an extent, this was also an underestimation of Chinese developments in recent years. There was a belief that the American economy, with the help of artificial

intelligence (AI), had gained a decisive edge, while Covid-19 travails, economic slowdown, unemployment and military purges had weakened China.

The détente, which now seems to be verging on an entente, has brought a sense of relief around the world.A US-China implosion would have had consequences for the entire global economy. But the developments should not generate a false sense of security. Despite Trump’s and Hegseth’s effusive take on the China relationship, the reality is that there have been too many recent ups and downs to predict a stable future.

One thing is clear: the threatened decoupling of the Western and Chinese economies is not around the corner. The race now is for global leadership amidst some shaky guardrails between the G2. Here, while the US has been seeking ephemeral gains through tariffs, the Chinese are preparing for another future. Their latest five-year plan focuses on quantum technology, bio-manufacturing, hydrogen energy and nuclear fusion. China already leads in some of these fields, but the US remains ahead overall and has placed its current bets on AI.The economic and geopolitical consequences of competitive US-China relations in these areas are hard to forecast. But they cannot be particularly comforting for countries like India that had counted on the US to maintain geopolitical heft against China.

To make our streets safer, follow Supreme Court order on strays

At the heart of the hatred for animals lay fear and the conflict over sharing habitats in a rapidly urbanising ladscape

Life is cheap in the animal world. In Bengaluru, a caretaker recently slammed a chihuahua to death in an apartment lift; during Diwali, some miscreants tied crackers to a dog’s legs and exploded them, while others stuffed a dog’s mouth with fireworks and set them alight. In our anthropocentric world, horror stories of animal abuse pop up regularly. This happens even after activists have brought about a major shift in laws to curb animal cruelty—under Section 325 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, killing or maiming an animal attracts five years in prison, a penalty, or both. However, the provision is observed more in breach.

At the heart of the hatred for animals lay fear and the conflict over sharing habitats. Chilling incidents of packs of dogs mauling children and senior citizens, and rising cases of rabies have made them targets. This August, a Supreme Court bench stayed another bench’s decision to move all strays in the National Capital Territory into shelters after a petition showed it ran counter to the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2023;



instead, it ordered all states and Union Territories to report back after creating dedicated feeding spaces for strays. When none did, in a rare move earlier this week, the top court summoned and upbraided all the chief secretaries, who tendered an unconditional apology.The act of feeding

street dogs itself sparks a furious debate in cities. While animal lovers claim it blunts aggressive canine behaviour, others warn it increases the menace. The Bengaluru authorities’ plan to provide one nutritious meal a day at designated feeding locations for the city’s street dogs—a step farther than the Supreme Court’s order—can put the debate to rest. It can prevent dogs from forming aggressive packs to hunt for food. Revitalised vaccination and sterilisation programmes, which suffered during and after the pandemic, will also help. Maintaining demarcated habitats for larger animals is itself proving to be a tough ask for governments at a time human habitats are expanding and animal

conflicts are on the rise. At least in our cities, we will have to come to terms with the fact that dogs are here to stay. The Supreme Court’s order, itself the result of a careful consideration of the dangers, cannot be wished away. In its spirit, the motto should be to live and let live.

Stillness of the discerning in Bihar

For a state whose told stories have travelled the arc from chaos to order and back through impossible political contortions, a known form of stability still commands an instinctive nod.

Bihar has never been short of noise. Certainly not when it mattered. Its politics has marched through history with a daring swagger — JP’s call that shook New Delhi, Mandal’s churn that redrafted power, the long years of Lalu raj that jolted the old order. Even the subtler Nitish era made bold strokes on the canvas, turning India’s polity yet again with the caste census narrative and grand alliance politics.Yet this election arrives on soft feet. On November 5, the campaign for the first stretch of 121 constituencies is winding down, and the battle for the remaining 122 — those border districts where sentiment often travels across rivers and frontiers — will begin soon. And through it all, there hangs a curious quiet.Whether in Nitish Kumar’s native Bakhtiyarpur, or hamlets like Gauspur and Chitapur fringing Patna, whether in Dalit ‘tolas’ where caste is still geo-tagged or along the mobile 100-km sweep to Gaya on NH-22, out in villages like Barachati and Tekari near where a legend named Dashrath Manjhi once moved mountains, the stillness is audible.Even in places like Mokama where bullets flew the other day, or Barh, which saw fisticuffs after this writer left, the action is all on one slim band where politics does its business. The people seem unmoved. Almost cold. This is not indifference. It is an extended pause — a thinking state, perhaps it’s the hush of crores of people thinking harder. The old Bihar election grammar is still here: the woven caste alliances, the search for the right symbol atop the right community, the deft stitching of booth workers and social equations. But listen closely, and the dialogues are shifting pitch.



It is no longer enough to promise representation; people want opportunity. Bihar’s young — impatient, painfully aware of the ticket-to-life stamped “migration” that’s been their lot for years, and now uniformly literate about the ways of the world beyond their panchayat WhatsApp group — are asking sharper questions.Identity of the other sort has not dissolved; only its fabric has thinned in the face of this new common identity, an identity of experience. Numbers are never incidental here. OBCs and EBCs together form roughly two-thirds

of Bihar — a demographic truth that still underwrites strategy.

Yadavs remain the single biggest OBC bloc, Kurmis and Kushwahs count in pockets where one village’s mood can bend a seat, Dalits and Mahadalits together hold a weight politicians can never ignore, and the elite castes — though numerically modest — continue to influence candidate choice and the political discourse, particularly in the plains Bihar has chosen reflection over rhetoric for now

Tejashwi Yadav stands at the pivot of this transition—bearing a surname thick with history, and yet determined to build a politics whose vocabulary begins not with past entitlement but future dignity.His rallies have energy, his phrasing has a way of finding the young and speaking to them. In the village alleys, you hear a new sentence: “Chance toh milna chahiye.” A chance must be given.

Across the aisle, Nitish—visibly ageing, visibly weary—remains, remarkably, a comfort choice. This is something adjacent to loyalty; more like habit, the trust evoked by an old armchair.

For a state whose told stories have travelled the arc from chaos to order and back through impossible political contortions, a known form of stability still commands an instinctive nod.

His alliance with the BJP brings an electoral machine that can calculate with the cold precision of algorithms. But the BJP’s quiet ambition glimmers beneath its dutiful partnership: a desire, someday, to govern Bihar not by the consent of allies but on its own steam.The Congress lingers at the edge—a memory, a partner, a seeker of relevance in a landscape it once defined and now must negotiate seat by seat.Thus Bihar stands at a crossroads marked not by fury but by thought. The shouting has dimmed. The electorate may not be bored or disinterested, it is discerning. A state long animated by political passion has chosen—at least for this moment—reflection over rhetoric. In a pause.

Still waters do run deep. Bihar may simply be listening to itself before it speaks again.

NEWS BOX

TNPDCCL signs 11 power deals to procure 1,580MW; Vedanta bags largest share

Chennai. (Agency)

To meet the rising electricity demand, the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDCCL) has entered into Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with 11 power companies to procure a total of 1,580MW of electricity. Among these, Vedanta Limited has secured the highest share of 500MW through its two thermal power units — Meenakshi Energy Limited (MEL) in Andhra Pradesh and Vedanta Limited Chhattisgarh Thermal Power Plant (VLCTPP). MEL will supply 300MW, while VLCTPP will contribute 200MW. The tariff has been fixed at Rs 5.38 per unit, and the five-year agreement will come into effect from February 1, 2026, lasting till January 31, 2031. Speaking to, J Radhakrishnan, chairman and managing director of the TN Electricity Board, confirmed the signing of the pacts. "Apart from Vedanta, the discom will procure 150MW from Orissa Alloy Steel, Thoothukudi, 160MW from OPG Power Generation and 50MW from Suryadev Alloys, both in Gummidiipoondi. Power Trading Corporation and Jindal Power Limited have also won bids," he said. Rajinder Singh Ahuja, CEO (Power), Vedanta Limited, said in a release, "Reliable base load power is crucial for India's energy security, and thermal energy continues to play a key role in ensuring stability. This win highlights Vedanta's leadership in efficient and dependable power generation."

Karnataka HC refuses to lift stay on govt order restricting RSS events in public places

HUBBALLI. (Agency)

The Karnataka government suffered a setback with the Dharwad bench of the Karnataka High Court rejecting the government's plea to vacate the stay given by the single bench on restriction of private events in public places. A division bench comprising Justices SG Pandit and Justice Geeta KB asked the government to go back to the single bench to get the stay vacated. The government had recently issued an order restricting private events in public places in a move to curb the RSS's activities in the state.

The government's decision was challenged in the Dharwad bench of the Karnataka High Court by Punaschetana Seva Sangh, VK Foundation, Rajiv Malhar Kulkarni and Uma Chavan.

Justice M Nagaprasanna on October 28 issued a stay, saying that the government's order was against Article 19(1) AB of the Constitution. The government then filed a petition on Tuesday, challenging the single bench's order before the division bench. The bench had reserved its verdict on Tuesday.

BJD attacks Odisha govt over delay in fertiliser supply, paddy purchase

NUAPADA. (Agency)

Turning the heat on the ruling BJP ahead of Nuapada bypoll, the BJD on Thursday accused Chief Minister Mohan Majhi's government of 'failing the farmers of Odisha by delaying fertiliser supply and stalling paddy procurement'. Senior BJD leaders held a series of public meetings at Golabandh, Dharambandha, Bharuamunda and Chulabhata panchayats under Nuapada block and accused the BJP government of being anti-farmer and failing to ensure basic agricultural support like fertiliser supply and paddy procurement.

The BJD leaders alleged that the state government led by CM Majhi failed to provide fertilisers to cultivators in time or begin paddy procurement from mandis, thereby pushing farmers into distress.

The BJP government was following exploitative and anti-people policies, they claimed. The party leaders further said under former chief minister Naveen Patnaik's leadership, the previous BJD government had introduced several welfare and empowerment programmes for women, farmers, workers, and kendu leafpluckers.

"Naveen babu ensured land, forest and livelihood rights for tribal women, and launched multiple initiatives for their safety, education, health and self-reliance," said former minister Pratap Jena.

Among others, MLAs Ramesh Chandra Behera and Manas Madkani besides BJD state general secretary Sanjit Mohanty spoke. The meetings witnessed large participation from grassroots workers, women leaders, and local villagers.

NFR Celebrates 150 Years of 'Vande Mataram' with Nationwide Spirit of Unity and Pride

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 7th November: On 7th November, 2025 Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the year-long commemoration of the National Song "Vande Mataram", at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi. On the occasion, Hon'ble Prime Minister also released a Commemorative Stamp and Coin, marking the beginning of a yearlong nationwide celebration from 7th November 2025 to 7th November 2026. The celebration honours 150 years of the patriotic song that inspired India's freedom movement and continues to evoke pride, unity and devotion to the nation. As part of the nationwide observance, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) celebrated the 150 years of "Vande Mataram" with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour across its jurisdiction. The main celebration was organised at the NFRSA Complex, Maligaon, where Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager, NFR, led the programme in the presence of a large gathering comprising senior officials, railway staff and their family members. The celebration reflected a deep sense of national unity and reverence, as railway personnel, school children and members of various organisations came together to sing the full version of "Vande Mataram" in unison. The collective voices filled the air with emotion, transforming the venue into a resounding tribute to the spirit of India's freedom, unity and cultural heritage. The NFR

(Construction) Organisation also observed the day at the GM (Construction) office, Maligaon. Across all five divisions of NFR Tinsukia, Lumding, Rangiya, Alipurduar and Katihar as

local residents joined their voices in unison. The event generated a wave of positive energy, unity and pride, reminding every participant of the timeless message of devotion to the



well as at major railway stations, schools and offices, the day was celebrated with great zeal. Patriotic songs, cultural performances and community participation brought together railway employees, students and the public in a shared spirit of nationalism and harmony. A Mass Singing of the full version of "Vande Mataram" was held at around 9:50 AM across the country, including at various NFR locations, where railway staff, school children and

Motherland that "Vande Mataram" embodies. Composed by Bankimchandra Chatterji on Akshaya Navami, 7th November 1875 and first published in Bangadarshan as part of his celebrated novel Anandamath, "Vande Mataram" continues to symbolize India's indomitable spirit, unity and self-respect. The 150th anniversary marks a proud milestone, reaffirming the nation's collective resolve to uphold the ideals of harmony, patriotism and national pride.

Kerala's dark turn: Taxi unions threaten to drive tourists away

KOCHI. (Agency)

Kerala, God's Own Country, is slowly earning a new, less favourable tag — Taxi Unions' Own Territory.

For a state that has precious little manufacturing muscle, tourism has long been its golden goose. But that goose is beginning to look bruised, thanks to the growing menace of taxi and autorickshaw drivers unions who have decided that they, not the law, get to say who drives whom. At beaches, hill stations and even airports, visitors are being greeted not with smiles and kathakali murals, but with warning boards telling them not to use online ride-hailing apps. From Thiruvananthapuram to Munnar and Kumarakom, 'No Ola, No Uber' signs are popping up faster than selfie



spots. And that's a problem. For the state's tourism sector had just started finding its feet after the pandemic sucker punch. Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas recently announced glowing numbers: over 1.19 crore domestic tourists visited Kerala in the first

half of 2025 — a 10.5% jump from last year. Foreign arrivals too climbed 6.87%, touching 3.83 lakh. The trajectory was encouraging. However, industry insiders warn that the rising tide could soon hit a wall built by local unions.

"Just like how mindless trade unionism crippled our industrial growth, tourism will also pay the price," warns Jose Dominic, former CEO of CGH Earth and one of the earliest champions of responsible tourism. "The taxi union chaos we saw in Goa is creeping in here too," he says.

Manu P V, founder of Discover Kerala Holidays, says taxi unionism is rampant at almost every major tourist hotspot. "Look near any Club Mahindra resort or big hotel; the local taxi union runs the show."

India set to add 500 billion annually to global economy from manufacturing by 2030, says Pralhad Joshi

BENGALURU. (Agency)

India is a global manufacturing hub and is expected to contribute more than \$500 billion annually to the global economy from the manufacturing sector by 2030, said Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi on Thursday.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the 7th edition of the India Manufacturing Show (IMS) 2025 in Bengaluru. Calling the current decade a turnaround in India's industrial journey, Joshi highlighted that 33% of employment and 45% of exports come from MSMEs.

"The Union Government has reserved 15,350 defence items for domestic manufacturers, especially MSMEs. Earlier, we imported almost everything in defence. Today, nearly 90% of bulletproof jackets are manufactured in India," Joshi said. Referring to the recent Operation Sindoor, he added, "Our enemy didn't even realise when we acted — much of the equipment used was manufactured by our MSMEs."



exports, calling them "partners in India's development and key to becoming a global manufacturing hub". Reinforcing the message of industry-led growth, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V Narayanan said that Indian manufacturing now forms the backbone of India's space operations.

Buoyed by success of packages, KSRTC budget tourism to spread wings outside state

KOTTAYAM. (Agency)

As the KSRTC vertical Budget Tourism Centre (BTC) completes four years, tourism packages have turned out to be a significant revenue generator for the transport utility. Buoyed by the success of intra-state packages, BTC is poised to introduce inter-state packages. As part of the expansion of BTC, the state government launched special buses exclusively for tourism packages last week.

The budget tourism initiative, launched in November 2021, has recorded steady revenue growth, from Rs 13.54 crore in the first year to Rs 33.06 crore until October this year, marking a whopping 245% increase in revenue. The corporation aims to raise it to Rs 40 crore by the end of December. Currently, BTC offers around 1,600 packages through nearly 80 KSRTC depots — out of total 93 — across the state. The number of scheduled trips have risen to 1,200 trips per month.

Inter-state packages

As BTC prepares to launch inter-state services, the number of packages and schedules will increase accordingly. BTC officials confirmed that the service to Tamil Nadu will commence soon, and its formalities have been completed. "Earlier, BTC packages could only operate to

destinations where KSRTC had secured route permits outside Kerala. Now, permission has been granted to organise packages across Tamil Nadu, by securing contract carriage permits for six days," Suresh Kumar, BTC coordinator at Kilimanor depot, told. The BTC authorities are planning to conduct trips to destinations



like Ooty, Kodaikanal, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam and Mahabalipuram. However, obtaining special permits from Tamil Nadu is a complex process, as destinations must be notified in advance and the complete list of passengers should be uploaded online before applying for the permit. Hence, the authorities have to announce the trip in advance. For instance, the Kilimanor depot has announced a Madurai-Rameshwaram-Kodaikanal trip scheduled for December, with bookings opening in October.

Doctors' body hails Kerala HC interim order preventing 'Dr' prefix for physiotherapists

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. (Agency)

Hailing the Kerala High Court's interim order restraining physiotherapists and occupational therapists from using 'Dr' prefix, a doctors' body said this would prevent professional misrepresentation and ensure the public is not misled on the qualifications of healthcare professionals.

The Indian Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (IAPMR) said the interim direction reinforces the position that the title 'Doctor' is protected under the Indian Medical Degrees Act, 1916, and that Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy professionals function as vital supportive healthcare providers under the supervision of qualified medical professionals, not as independent first-contact practitioners. Dr Muralidharan PC, President IAPMR, said,

"We are grateful to the High Court for recognising the sanctity of medical qualifications and ensuring patient safety."

"This order upholds the integrity of the medical profession and clarifies the rightful role of allied health professionals within the healthcare system."

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) National President, Dr Dilip Bhanushali, also welcomed the interim order and said it is binding on the government. Speaking to, he said, "We are waiting for the final order and will accordingly move forward."

The Kerala High Court on November 4 observed that there exists an apparent conflict between the provisions of the Indian Medical Degrees Act, 1916 and the clauses in the Competency-Based



Curriculum for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy (Approved Syllabus 2025) issued by the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP). The Court directed the authorities to ensure that the prefix 'Dr' mentioned in the said curricula is not used by Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists who do not hold a recognised

medical qualification.

The case is now posted for further hearing on December 1. Kerala-based Dr KV Babu said that the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) order on prefixing 'Dr' by physiotherapists was withdrawn within 24 hours following the objections raised by the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) chairperson on the issue of jurisdiction only, though it raised substantial legal problems. "The decision of the IAPMR to approach the High Court and seek interim relief is a welcome development," he added. Dr Babu was referring to the flip-flop by the DGHS on the issue in September. First, the DGHS, Dr Sunita Sharma, said that physiotherapists cannot use the 'Dr' prefix.

Experts warn release of non-native fishlings into Kumaradhara river may threaten Western Ghats biodiversity

MANGALURU. (Agency)

Release of nearly 10,000 non-native fishlings into the Kumaradhara river in the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats has drawn flak from aquatic experts, who fear the move could threaten the region's native and endangered fish species. Common Carp and Major Indian Carp (Catla) were released into the river on November 4 by a group of political activists in the presence of gram panchayat officials. This move is aimed at improving fish stocks and supporting local fishermen.

Experts point out that Kumaradhara, a tributary of the Netravathi, supports nearly 90 species of fish, including several that are endemic to the Western Ghats such as dwarf puffer fish (Carinotetraodon imitator), Canara pearlspot (Etroplus canarensis) and Harobagrus brachysoma catfish. The introduction of non-native species may gradually alter the ecological balance and threaten native biodiversity.

The Fisheries Department, which supplied those fishlings, defended its action. However, aquatic scientists warned that such interventions may disturb the natural riverine ecosystem.

Dr Shivakumar Magada, professor, Aquatic Biology, College of Fisheries, Mangaluru, said the release of exotic or non-native species into the natural water systems is not advisable. "Common Carp and Major Indian Carp may not prey on native species, but they compete for food and space, disrupting the food chain in a low-productive system," he added.

He said instead of non-native fish species, indigenous ones such as 'Carnaticus' and 'Mahseer' could be released under the guidance of fisheries officials. "What has been done is not condemnable. It is not ecologically advisable," Dr Magada added. A reconstruction.

India fortifies Chicken's neck: 3 new garrisons set up on Bangladesh border

► **India has fortified its eastern border by establishing three new military garrisons along the Indo-Bangladesh frontier to secure the strategic Siliguri Corridor amid shifting regional alliances. This move aims to enhance surveillance and rapid response capabilities in a sensitive area connecting mainland India to its northeast states.**

Agency New Delhi. India has strengthened its eastern frontier by setting up three new fully operational military garrisons along the Indo-Bangladesh border, at Bamuni (near Dhubri), Kishanganj, and Chopra, to secure the strategic Siliguri Corridor, commonly known as the “Chicken’s Neck”.According to top intelligence sources, the move is part of a broader plan to plug tactical gaps, enhance surveillance, and boost rapid-response capabilities in one of India’s most sensitive regions. The Siliguri Corridor, a 22-kilometre-wide strip in North Bengal, connects the rest of India with its seven northeastern states and lies sandwiched between Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and China. **INDIA ON GUARD AS DHAKA REORIENTS POLICY** The development comes amid reports of increased engagement between Bangladesh’s

interim Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and Pakistan’s military establishment, including a recent meeting with Pakistan’s Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Sahir Shamshad



Mirza, reportedly to discuss connectivity and defence cooperation.Since Yunus took charge following former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s ouster, Bangladesh’s policy direction has undergone a marked shift, with

overtures to China for investments and a reset of ties with Pakistan. Intelligence assessments describe this as part of a strategic attempt to “reshape the power balance” in the eastern neighbourhood, potentially affecting the security of the Siliguri Corridor. **‘CHICKEN’S NECK IS OUR STRONGEST LINK’** Contrary to perceptions of vulnerability, senior Indian military officials have emphasised that the region is India’s “strongest defence corridor.” An Army source said, “The Siliguri corridor is under multi-layered security cover. The new garrisons will enhance our quick mobility, logistics, and real-time intelligence integration.”Earlier, the Indian Army Chief had remarked, “As far as the Chicken’s Neck is concerned, I see it from a different perspective. It is our strongest region because our entire force deployed in West Bengal, Sikkim and the Northeast.

Congress's Bhupinder Hooda to face trial in land scam case as court rejects plea

Agency New Delhi. Former Haryana Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda will now stand trial in the alleged Manesar land scam case after the Punjab and Haryana High Court dismissed his petition challenging the proceedings.The order cleared the way for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) special court in Panchkula to frame charges against Hooda and others in connection with the alleged scam. The CBI had already filed a detailed chargesheet in the case, naming Hooda among 34 accused. The central agency's probe began in 2015 following Supreme Court directions, and culminated in a nearly 80-page chargesheet submitted in 2018. The court will now proceed with framing charges, paving the way for a full-fledged trial. The case dates back to 2005, when Hooda, as Chief Minister, issued a Section-6 notification to acquire land in Manesar for an Industrial Model Township. Compensation was fixed at Rs 25 lakh per acre, and a notice under Section-9 followed soon after. However, between 2005 and 2007, several builders allegedly bought around 400 acres from farmers at throwaway prices, anticipating the acquisition. The then state government, under Hooda, later released the land from acquisition in 2007, which officials said caused a loss of nearly Rs 1,500 crore to farmers. In its earlier ruling, the Supreme Court had described the Hooda government's decision to cancel the acquisition as 'malafide' and amounting to fraud. It directed the CBI to investigate the "undue gains" made by middlemen and ensure that every penny was recovered by the state. With the High Court's dismissal of the Congress leader's plea, Hooda will now face trial before the CBI special court.

Delhi: Rat droppings in mid-day meal flour at Narela kitchen, probe ordered

Agency New Delhi. Rat droppings in wheat flour, expired salt, tobacco packets, and a foul stench of rot: that is what Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) officials found during a surprise inspection at a Narela kitchen supplying mid-day meals to over 20,000 schoolchildren.The kitchen, run by the Dalit Manav Uththan Sansthan (DMUS), had been flagged for similar violations in 2023 as well, when the then deputy director of education recommended its blacklisting. However, no action was taken, and the NGO continued to feed thousands of children across MCD schools. The MCD has formed an enquiry committee to probe the workings of the kitchen and submit a report in seven working days. Amit Kharkhari, vice chairman of the MCD Education committee, who conducted the inspection on Tuesday, told this newspaper, “We received complaints about kitchen, following which I went for a surprise inspection. This kitchen caters to over 20,000 schoolchildren in MCD schools and Anganwadi centres.” This kitchen has two other branches in other zones as well, which we are yet to be inspected by the MCD. Kharkhari was disappointed with the hygiene condition in the kitchen. “It was shocking to see gutka packets lying in the middle of the kitchen where food was prepared, and then there were rat droppings all over,” he said. “We will take further action in this matter after receiving the committee’s report,” he further said. Currently, there are 15 kitchens in Delhi which serve mid-day meals in MCD schools and Anganwadi centres.In 2023, the Department of Women and Child Development had issued an order stating that the DMUS had been delivering inadequate supplies of weaning food to Anganwadi centres and was leaving vulnerable sections, like pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children, deprived of supplementary nutrition.In the same year, the department had again flagged the performance of the organisation and issued a show-cause notice, saying that the performance of the DMUS had been non-satisfactory and it had not met the expected standards in providing adequate and timely supply of supplementary nutrition.

BJP sent voters to Bihar in large numbers: AAP's 3 big expose on vote chori

Agency New Delhi. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Saurabh Bharadwaj has turned up the political heat ahead of the second phase of Bihar Assembly elections, releasing a series of videos on social media accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of orchestrating a “massive voter fraud” by transporting voters from other states to cast ballots in Bihar.In a dramatic social media campaign branded “Vote Theft”, the Delhi AAP chief claimed that the BJP had systematically identified its loyal voters during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and ensured their names were not deleted in Delhi or Haryana. According to him, these same voters were later sent to Bihar on special trains arranged by the party, complete with tickets and logistics handled by BJP functionaries.

“The BJP identified voters during the SIR and made sure their votes weren’t deleted. Then lakhs of such voters were sent to Bihar before the elections, all arrangements made by the BJP,” Bharadwaj alleged in his posts, sharing the videos, citing footage from



YouTube channels.In another post, he pointed to visuals from Kamal railway station, claiming the local BJP district president was seen supervising the departure of voters to Bihar. “This is

not just manipulation, this is organised theft of democracy,” he said. Bharadwaj further questioned the operation of “special trains” run in the name of Chhath Puja, suggesting that their real purpose was political.“If these trains were for Chhath, why are they still being sent after the festival? The reason is simple, Bihar elections. Government machinery and public money are being used to buy democracy,” he said. The first phase of Bihar elections was held on Thursday, with voter turnout reportedly reaching one of the highest levels in decades.Yesterday, Bharadwaj alleged that some BJP leaders, including Rajya Sabha MP Rakesh Sinha and Delhi BJP Purvanchal Morcha president Santosh Ojha, had cast votes in both Delhi and Bihar, despite the Election Commission’s claim of eliminating duplicate entries from the rolls.

Why Dreamliner Crash Probe Is A Struggle Between Science And Emotion

Agency New Delhi. The Supreme Court's comments today, which gave comfort to the father of the pilot-in-command of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner that crashed in Ahmedabad, has brought the focus back on theories of electrical malfunction and other probable causes. No one can blame the pilot of the Dreamliner for the crash in June that killed 260, the Supreme Court told the pilot's father today and sent notices to the Centre, the civil aviation regulator (DGCA), and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB). The order came on a petition by Pushkaraj Sabharwal, whose son Sumeeet Sabharwal was the pilot-in-command of the Boeing 787

Dreamliner, seeking an independent judicial probe into the crash. Justice Surya Kant, who heard the petition, told the 91-year-old grief-stricken father of the late pilot, "This crash was



extremely unfortunate, but you should not carry this burden that your son is being blamed."The AAIB in its preliminary report released in July said fuel supply to both engines was cut off shortly after takeoff. The two fuel control switches were moved to the

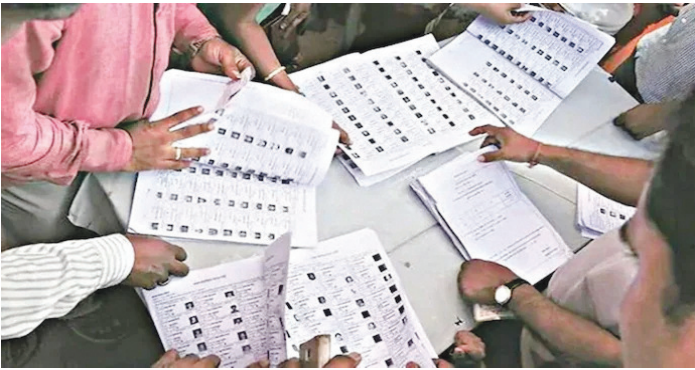
"cutoff" position in quick succession; although the switches were turned back on about 10 seconds later, the engines had already flamed out, leading to the crash, the report said. The court's observations come at a time when there are credible theories from experienced aviation experts pointing to the possibility of a massive electrical short circuit caused by water ingestion in one of the bays of the Boeing 787.This, the theories suggest, resulted in a cascading set of failures causing the logic in the aircraft's systems to shut down fuel flow to the engines of the Dreamliner as a safety feature, albeit one that eventually resulted in the crash of the aircraft - since there was no time, altitude or airspeed for the engines.

Supreme Court to hear DMK's plea against 'unconstitutional' SIR in Tamil Nadu

The DMK's plea has termed the exercise as being violative of Articles 14, 19 and 21 (right to equality, freedom of speech and right to life) and other provisions of the Constitution and the Representation of People Act and the Registration of Electors Rules of 1960.

Agency New Delhi. The Supreme Court on Friday said it would hear on November 11 petitions filed by Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK party and civil society group Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) challenging the Election Commission of India's (ECI) move to carry out a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.The latest petitions come as the top court is already hearing pleas challenging the validity of the poll panel's decision to conduct the SIR exercise in Bihar, where the first phase of Assembly polls were

conducted on Thursday, with the final phase scheduled for November 11. During the hearing today, senior advocate Vivek Singh, appearing for the DMK,



urged the bench comprising Chief Justice of India BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran to urgently take up the

party's petition for deliberation."We have also sought an urgent stay on the process," he said.The DMK's plea has termed the exercise as being violative of Articles 14, 19 and 21 (right to equality, freedom of speech and right to life) and other provisions of the Constitution and the Representation of People Act and the Registration of Electors Rules of 1960. “Issue a writ of certiorari calling for records pertaining to the order dated October 27, 2025 of the respondent directing that a Special Intensive Revision be conducted in the state of Tamil Nadu,” it added. In response, the Chief Justice said, “List

the matter for Tuesday (November 11).” Earlier this week, RS Bharathi, organising secretary of the DMK, approached the top court against the SIR, calling the exercise "unconstitutional, arbitrary, and a threat to democratic rights". Meanwhile, another Supreme Court bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi agreed to hear a bunch of anti-SIR petitions from November 11 onwards after advocate Prashant Bhusan, appearing for the Democratic Reforms, said the exercise "goes to the root of democracy". Bhusan said the urgency of the matter is because the SIR exercise is being conducted across 12 states and Union Territories from November 4 to December 4.

"Photo Was Mine But Name Was Someone Else's": Haryana Voter On Fraud Row

New Delhi. (Agency) The controversy over Rahul Gandhi's 'H-bomb' – renewed allegations of centralised voter fraud involving the Election Commission and the ruling BJP – rolled on Friday with NDTV talking to another voter whose photographs appeared against multiple voter IDs, 223 in this case. The voter in this case is 75-year-old Charanjit Kaur, who lives in Dhakola village in Haryana's Ambala district. Kaur told NDTV she voted – in last year's Assembly election – just once. She also said everyone told her photo had been displayed on several voter ID cards. "When I went to cast my vote, the photo (on the list) was mine but it was against someone else's name," Kaur said. "I told my son about it," she told .Her son, Tejinder Singh, who contested the village sarpanch election, said he filed a complaint with officials, stating his mother's photo had been placed in multiple lists but with incorrect names and addresses. It seemed to be a printing mistake, he said, but no action was taken. In Malikpur village in Sonapat district, for example, several voters - including four members of one family - mysteriously disappeared from the list. One voter, Anjali Tyagi, said she voted in the April-May federal election last year, but could not vote in the state poll five months later.

Left makes clean sweep, campus turns red again

Agency New Delhi. The Left Unity has emerged victorious in the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) election, winning all four central panel positions with clear margins over their right counterparts. Aditi Mishra, who belongs to the All India Students' Association (AISA), secured the top post of president of the union with 1,861 votes, defeating Vikas Patel of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), who received 1,488 votes.The win restores the Left's dominance on the campus after the ABVP had managed to win the joint secretary's post last year, which was a joint for it in a decade. After the results were declared, Mishra said, “It is not just a win, it is a reaffirmation of the JNU's political character.”Reacting to the victory, the president of the Students' Federation of India (SFI), which is part of the Left Unity, Adarsh M Saji said, “The Left Unity panel, comprising AISA, SFI and DSF, has registered a sweeping victory, securing all four central panel posts by significant margins. K Gopika Babu, SFI's candidate for the post of vice president, won by an impressive margin, marking a major political achievement for the Left progressive movement inside the campus.” Babu garnered 3,101 votes, while Tanya Kumari of ABVP trailed behind with 1,787 votes. She is a PhD scholar at the Centre for Study of Law and Governance.

In a contest for the post of general secretary, Sunil Yadav of the Left Unity triumphed with 2,005 votes, edging past Rajeshwar Kant Dubey of the ABVP, who polled 1,901 votes. For the post of joint secretary, the Left's Danish Ali further strengthened the sweep by winning the post with 2,083 votes, defeating ABVP's Anuj Damara, who managed 1,797 votes. The ABVP had won the post of joint secretary in 2015. For the next decade, the Left swept all four central panel seats. Last year, the ABVP had briefly broken the streak with another win of the joint secretary's post.Amid the spirited contests and shifting alliances, one of the most significant victories was of Komal Devi, who secured the School of Social Sciences (SSS) councillor seat in Thursday's JNUSU election results.

NEWS BOX

Hong Kong Sixes: Livestreaming details, full squads as India play Pakistan

New Delhi. (Agency)

Dinesh Karthik’s India will face Abbas Afridi’s Pakistan in the Hong Kong Sixes on Friday, November 7, as the arch-rivals renew their cricketing rivalry in a unique six-a-side format. The high-voltage clash comes amid the ongoing standoff between the two nations, adding another layer of intrigue to an already fiery contest.

India and Pakistan met three times earlier this year in September during the Asia Cup, and each encounter had its share of drama, both on and off the field. Despite being an invitational tournament, the latest meeting promises to be no different, with both teams eager to assert their dominance at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Sixes is known for its fast-paced, entertaining brand of cricket, where each side fields six players. The format often produces explosive batting displays and quick results, making it a fan favourite among followers of the shorter formats. This year’s edition has attracted plenty of attention, especially with several familiar Indian names returning to the field.

Dinesh Karthik will lead a strong Indian squad that features experienced campaigners such as Stuart Binny, Bharat Chipli, Abhimanyu Mithun, Shahbaz Nadeem, Priyank Panchal, and Robin Uthappa. Pakistan, under the captaincy of Abbas Afridi, have chosen a younger side with players like Abdul Samad, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Shahzad, Saad Masood, and Shahid Aziz. Although Pakistan’s squad lacks major international stars, their youthful energy and aggressive style could pose a strong challenge.

The match between India and Pakistan will begin at 1:05 PM IST on Friday, November 7, at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground in Hong Kong. Fans in India can watch the live telecast on Sony Sports Ten 5, while live streaming will be available on the FanCode app and website.

Bangladesh Cricket Board to investigate Jahanara Alam's sexual harassment allegations



New Delhi. (Agency)

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has initiated an investigation into sexual harassment allegations raised by former Bangladesh women's cricket captain Jahanara Alam, who claims a former selector and other board officials acted inappropriately toward her during the 2022 ODI World Cup. The BCB announced the formation of a committee to conduct an inquiry and submit its findings and recommendations within 15 working days. The board stated that it will take appropriate actions based on the committee's report.

In a statement released just before midnight, the BCB said: "The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has noted with concern the allegations reported in the media made by a former member of the Bangladesh national women's cricket team regarding alleged misconduct by certain individuals associated with the team. As the matter is of a sensitive nature, the BCB has decided to form a committee to investigate the allegations thoroughly.

The committee will submit its findings and recommendations within 15 working days. The BCB is committed to ensuring a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all its players and personnel. The Board takes such matters with utmost seriousness and will take appropriate action based on the findings of the investigation."

JAHANARA'S HARRASSMENT CLAIMS

Jahanara, who now resides in Australia, stated in an interview with journalist Riasad Azim that a former selector behaved inappropriately toward her when he was the women's team selector and manager. She claimed that he asked her lewd questions and that a couple of BCB officials also acted inappropriately with her. She said she reported the incident to former BCB director Shafiul Islam Nadel and the board's chief executive, Nizamuddin Chowdhury.

"I faced several times (indecent proposal) not once. Definitely, when we are involved with the team, we cannot speak out about many things, even if we want to. When it comes to your bread and butter, when you are known by a few people, you cannot say or protest many things even if you want to," Jahanara told The Riasat Azim YouTube channel.

After T20I retirement, Kane Williamson pulls out of ODI series against West Indies

Kane Williamson will not feature in New Zealand's ODI squad for the upcoming three-match series against the West Indies, following his recent retirement from T20 internationals.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Kane Williamson will sit out New Zealand’s upcoming three-match ODI series against the West Indies, marking the start of a new chapter for the Black Caps following his recent T20I retirement. The veteran batter, who remains pivotal to New Zealand’s Test ambitions, has opted to focus on preparations for the ICC World Test Championship series against the Caribbean side, set to begin next month.

The ODI series, which begins in

Christchurch on November 16, will see Mitchell Santner leading the side in Williamson’s absence. The selectors have opted for a well-balanced squad that blends experience with emerging talent, rewarding players who impressed during New Zealand’s recent 2-1 ODI series victory over England. Pace bowler Matt Henry makes a welcome return to the side, strengthening the bowling attack after a spell out of action. However, key players such as Finn Allen and Lockie Ferguson remain unavailable due to injuries.

Head coach Rob Walter expressed confidence in the group selected to face the West Indies, praising the recent performances of Blair Tickner. “We couldn’t have asked for more from Ticks against England,” Walter said. “He brought plenty of energy, and his pace and bounce proved to be a real test for some of the best batters in the world.”

Walter added that the selection reflects New Zealand’s commitment to rewarding consistent performers. “It was pleasing to see him come in at short notice and perform



at that level. That’s a testament to the hard work he’s been putting in away from the group,” he said. “It’s great to be able to keep rewarding players who work hard and deliver when given the opportunity, and we know he’ll be a big asset for us in another important series.”

The 14-member squad for the series includes

Mitchell Santner (captain), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Nathan Smith, Blair Tickner, and Will Young. Looking ahead, Walter acknowledged the challenge posed by the West Indies, describing them as a side full of match-winners. “The West Indies are always dangerous and have a host of players who can change a game in any format,” he said. “We’re expecting a competitive contest throughout the series.”

The three ODIs will be played in Christchurch (November 16), Napier (November 19), and Hamilton (November 22). Walter stressed the importance of the series in helping the side build towards future tournaments. “It’s another key series for us as we continue to grow and improve in the format, so we’re looking forward to what’s to come,” he concluded.

Turkey orders arrest of 17 referees, one club president in football betting probe

New Delhi. (Agency)

Turkish prosecutors have ordered the arrest of 21 individuals, including 17 referees and a Super Lig club president, as part of an extensive investigation into alleged football betting and match-fixing, state media reported on Friday. According to the Istanbul Chief Prosecutor's Office, 18 of the 21 suspects have already been detained in operations conducted across 12 cities. The suspects face charges ranging from abuse of duty and manipulating match results to spreading misleading information on social media. Among those detained are a club president from Turkey's top division, a former club owner, and a former association president.

The arrests mark an explosive escalation in a scandal that has rocked Turkish football in recent weeks. It comes just days after the Turkish Football Federation (TFF)

suspended 149 referees and assistant referees for betting on football matches, a serious breach of national and international football regulations.



In its own investigation, the TFF's disciplinary board imposed bans ranging from eight to 12 months on 149 officials involved in betting, with three more cases still under review. The full list of penalised

officials has been published on the federation's official website.

The scale of the betting activity uncovered by the TFF has stunned football authorities and fans alike. The federation's five-year probe revealed that 371 of Turkey's 571 active referees had betting accounts, and 152 of them were actively gambling. While some referees were found to have placed only a handful of bets, 42 had wagered on more than 1,000 matches each. In one extreme case, a referee had placed a staggering 18,227 bets. The findings have triggered what TFF president Ibrahim Haciosmanoglu called a "moral crisis" in Turkish football. "There is a moral crisis in Turkish football. There is no such thing as structure. The fundamental problem at the core of Turkish football is an ethical one," Haciosmanoglu told CNN Trk on Friday.

Manchester United's Ruben Amorim responds to Cristiano Ronaldo's criticism

New Delhi. (Agency)

Manchester United head coach Ruben Amorim has admitted that the club "made a lot of mistakes" in the past but urged everyone to focus on the future, after Cristiano Ronaldo suggested that he could not "work miracles" with the current squad.

In a wide-ranging interview with Piers Morgan earlier this week, Ronaldo, who won eight major trophies during his two spells at Old Trafford, said that while he believed Amorim was doing a good job, the Portuguese coach would struggle without proper structural support from the club.

"We say in Portugal, 'miracles only happen in Fatima,'" the 40-year-old Al-Nassr forward said. "United are not on a good path. Amorim is not going to do miracles because they don't have a structure. You have to work with smart people to create a base for the future."

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid forward, who shared the national dressing room with Amorim for Portugal,



added that the problems at Old Trafford run deeper than coaching. "While some of the players are good, others do not have the mind of a player for this club," Ronaldo said. "You have to work with smart people to create a base for the future. Right now, they don't have a structure." Ronaldo also expressed sadness over what he called United's "decline," warning that the club lacked long-term vision and that Amorim could not be expected to fix everything overnight.

Speaking to the media ahead of United's

Premier League trip to Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday (12:30 GMT), Amorim chose not to respond directly to Ronaldo's remarks but made his message clear: the past cannot be changed, and the club's energy must now be directed toward progress.

"He [Ronaldo] knows he has a huge impact with everything he says," Amorim said on Thursday. "We know as a club we made a lot of mistakes in the past. We are trying to change that. Let's not focus on what happened [in the past]."

"We are changing a lot of things; the structure, the way we do things, the way we want the players to behave. We are improving. Let's forget a little bit the past."

Amorim, who replaced Erik ten Hag in November 2024, has overseen a period of gradual stabilisation. United have shown signs of progress under his leadership, climbing to eighth place in the Premier League - just two points off second - after a four-game unbeaten run.

Suryakumar Yadav out of form? Ashwin defends captain's 10-ball 20 knock vs Australia

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ravichandran Ashwin has come out in support of India captain Suryakumar Yadav amid his lean patch in T20Is. Speaking on his YouTube channel after the fourth T20I between India and Australia, Ashwin said that although Suryakumar's short innings might not look impressive on paper, his quick bursts often have an impact that goes beyond numbers.

Suryakumar Yadav has endured a noticeable dip in form since taking over the T20I captaincy. Once regarded as one of the most explosive batters in the shortest format, he has managed to score only two half-centuries since the T20 World Cup 2024. Despite recent struggles, he showed signs of rhythm in the fourth T20I against Australia on Thursday, November 6.

Coming in at a crucial stage, Suryakumar struck two sixes off Adam Zampa immediately after arriving at the crease but was dismissed in the 16th over while attempting another big shot against Xavier Bartlett. Reflecting on the 10-ball cameo, Ashwin praised the intent and the value of those quick runs in a game situation that required momentum in the middle overs.

"Ten balls for 20 from Suryakumar Yadav was extremely valuable. I always think in T20 cricket, 10 balls for 20 at a 200 strike rate is more valuable. Even today, Abhishek and Shubman had a decent partnership at the top, so Surya came in and gave that amazing impetus and momentum. I would always think 10 balls for 20 is far more valuable than a strike rate of less than 125, 120, or 130 in a T20 game, unless, of course, you are chasing a total," Ashwin said on his channel.

"If you are chasing and players are going all out, one side has to play in double gear. But today, everyone knew that 160 was a good score. The way Shubman paced the innings was the way he had to play, and he did that. So credit where it's due, but I am happy with Surya's 10-ball-20. What he could do, he did," Ashwin added.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has adopted a high-octane approach with the bat and has repeatedly said that he is fine with players getting out while trying to play attacking shots, as long as one of them carries on to make a big score.

On Thursday, Shubman Gill anchored the Indian innings with a 46-run knock on a tricky surface at the Carrara Oval. India set a target of 167 runs for Australia and bowled out the hosts for just 119 in reply. The teams will now travel to Brisbane for the fifth and final T20I of the series. India currently lead 2-1 and will look to land the final knockout punch at the 'Fortress Gabba'.

Mandhana vs Wolvaardt: Mercurial batters nominated for player of the month award

Women's World Cup: India's Smriti Mandhana has been nominated for the ICC Women's Player of the Month for October following her outstanding performances in the tournament. She will be vying for the award against Laura Wolvaardt and Ashleigh Gardner.

New Delhi. (Agency)

After leading India's Women's World Cup charge with the bat, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has been nominated for the ICC Women's Player of the Month for October. Opening the innings for India, Mandhana produced a series of brilliant performances, scoring 434 runs at an average of 54.25, guiding India to their maiden Women's ODI

World Cup Trophy. Mandhana will compete for the honour alongside South African captain Laura Wolvaardt, who enjoyed a tournament of her life, and Australia's dynamic batting all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner, who impressed with both bat and ball throughout October.

Mandhana's leadership at the top of the order, particularly her partnerships with fellow opener Pratika Rawal, created a buzz in the tournament. After a relatively quiet start, she came into her own with a blistering 80 against seven-time champions Australia, followed by a combative 88 against England.

Though India lost both matches, Mandhana's form was undeniable. In the must-win clash against New Zealand, she rose to the occasion with a brilliant 109, forging a match-winning 212-run partnership with Rawal. In the final

against South Africa, she provided a solid start with 45 runs and shared a century partnership with Shafali Verma at the top. Wolvaardt, meanwhile, turned around South



Africa's campaign after a humiliating 69-run opening defeat to England, scoring 571 runs at an astounding average of 71.37. She played a pivotal 70 against India in the

league stage, half-centuries against Sri Lanka and Pakistan, and a record 169 in the semifinal against England, guiding the Proteas to the final. She then scored 101 in the final, though India's collective effort denied South Africa a maiden World Cup title.

Australia's Gardner contributed heavily in almost every game, scoring centuries against New Zealand (115) and England (104 not out), while also taking seven wickets in October, proving her value as a genuine all-rounder.

Deepthi Sharma Snubbed

Surprisingly, player of the tournament in the Women's ODI World Cup, Deepthi Sharma was snubbed from the list of nominees. Deepthi became the first player, man or woman, to achieve a double of 200 runs and 20 wickets in a single edition of the tournament.

Sensex, Nifty tumble in early trade dragged by foreign fund outflows, weak global peers

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled in early trade on Friday as relentless foreign fund outflows and weak trends in global markets hit investors' sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 631.93 points to 82,679.08 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 184.55 points to 25,325.15. From the Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, NTPC, Tata Consultancy Services and Maruti were among the biggest laggards.

However, ITC, ICICI Bank, Eternal and Power Grid were among the gainers. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index traded sharply lower.

Shanghai's SSE Composite index quoted marginally down. US markets ended significantly lower on Thursday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,263.21 crore on Thursday, however, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 5,283.91 crore, according to exchange data.

"A significant feature of the present market trend is that despite the DIIs buying far more than what the FIIs are selling (Rs 5,283 crore DII buying vs Rs 3,263 crore FII selling yesterday) the market continues to drift down.

The huge shorting by FIIs are overpowering the DII and investor buying in the market." The success of the FII strategy of sustained selling in India and moving money to cheaper markets has emboldened them to continue the strategy and continue shorting the market. Short covering can lead to trend reversal but there are no immediate triggers for that in sight. But markets have an uncanny ability to surprise," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.30 per cent to USD 63.57 per barrel.

Why urban millennials are renting lifestyle products instead of buying them

New Delhi.(Agency)

For urban millennials, the idea of ownership is quietly losing its shine. From furniture to gadgets and even fashion, a growing section of young city dwellers are choosing to rent instead of buy. It's not a passing trend — it's a lifestyle shift powered by flexibility, rising costs, and changing ambitions. "Urban millennials are choosing to rent over ownership because they prioritise flexibility and low-commitment living," says Neha Mohhata, CEO and co-founder of Brize. "People have become smart. They ask why invest in depreciating assets when you can rent and upgrade without worry?"

Her words reflect a larger cultural rethink. Millennials today are no longer obsessed with collecting assets — they want experiences, mobility, financial breathing room, and fewer long-term ties.

FLEXIBILITY OVER PERMANENCE

From job hopping to co-living spaces and compact apartments, urban life is constantly shifting — and so are the needs that come with it. "As millennials change jobs or move to smaller homes, they prefer renting products that are light and easy to move," Mohhata explains. Owning bulky furniture or expensive appliances no longer fits the lifestyle of a generation that may change cities within months.

For many, the appeal lies not just in saving money, but in escaping the stress around maintenance. Broken AC? Faulty coffee machine? With rentals, someone else handles it.

IS IT AFFORDABILITY OR MINDSET? THE ANSWER IS BOTH

Rising prices, EMIs, and daily expenses have made big purchases harder to justify — but millennials are also rethinking the psychology of ownership itself. "This shift is driven by both affordability and evolving attitudes," says Mohhata. "People now value using things over owning them. Renting lets them avoid depreciation, maintenance, and storage challenges."

Planning voluntary retirement under UPS? All you need to know

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) has issued guidance on voluntary retirement rules under the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for central government employees. With the November 30, 2025 deadline approaching to opt into UPS under the National Pension System (NPS), the government wants to remove confusion and lay out the process in plain terms.

The latest circular focusses on who can take voluntary retirement, how much notice must be given, whether the decision can be reversed, and how pension will be calculated.

WHO CAN TAKE VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT UNDER UPS?

Under Rule 13 of the UPS regulations, any central government employee who has completed 20 years of regular service can apply for voluntary retirement (VRS). This applies only to those who have opted for UPS under NPS.

This means employees cannot seek VRS under UPS unless they have served the minimum required period of 20 years.

NOTICE PERIOD: 3 MONTHS, BUT RELAXATION POSSIBLE

An employee wanting to take VRS must submit a written notice of at least three months to the appointing authority. However, there is flexibility. The appointing authority can shorten the notice period if early retirement does not disrupt office work or create administrative issues. This decision is taken on a case-by-case basis.

RBI's M&A funding move aimed at boosting real economy: Governor Malhotra

New Delhi.(Agency)

The regulatory move to allow banks to fund mergers and acquisitions is aimed at supporting the real economy, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra has said. Last month, the RBI announced a raft of measures and intentions, including allowing banks to fund domestic acquisitions, permitting foreign borrowings for the real estate sector, and raising the cap on loans for buying shares through IPOs. These steps were part of broader efforts to boost bank lending in Asia's second-largest economy.

"These measures come, as you are aware, with guardrails—such as limiting bank funding to 70% of the deal value and setting limits on the debt-to-equity ratio—which will ensure safety while allowing banks and their stakeholders to benefit from additional business," the RBI chief said while addressing a State Bank event in Mumbai on Friday. Stating that the RBI is moving with caution,

Malhotra said the need for courage had prompted the easing of bank norms. He made it clear that while the Reserve Bank continues to act cautiously, the decision to relax certain regulations reflects a willingness to display courage in policy reform. The liberalisation of external commercial borrowing (ECB) norms, he said, comes amid a strengthening external sector and strong capital inflows, describing it as a "natural step" in the country's financial evolution.

According to Malhotra, RBI projections indicate that capital flows will remain "quite strong" for the remainder of the fiscal year.

On the move to allow real estate companies to borrow from abroad, the governor clarified that the ECB route will be permitted only for projects compliant

with foreign direct investment (FDI) norms and will remain prohibited for speculative activities or land purchases. He added that the RBI is striving to make rule-making more open,



data-driven, and evidence-based, following public consultations and impact assessments. Malhotra emphasised that the higher responsibilities now placed on banks stem

from their improved performance and governance, noting that the central bank has sufficient tools to rein in any errant behaviour. He further said that the RBI does not wish to micromanage, as no regulator can or should substitute for boardroom judgment. Each case, he stressed, must be assessed on its own merit. "We need to allow regulated entities to take decisions based on the merits of each case, rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all rule," he reiterated. Since assuming office, Malhotra has underscored the importance of simplifying regulations to improve ease of doing business, while also accounting for the cost of regulation before introducing new measures. "While we move with caution, we need to display courage," he said, explaining the rationale.

Tesla shareholders approve Elon Musk's \$1 trillion pay package

Mumbai.(Agency)

Tesla shareholders on Thursday overwhelmingly endorsed a massive pay package for CEO Elon Musk that could reach \$1 trillion. The pay package, crafted to ensure Musk's continued service to Tesla as the company pursues breakthrough technology on artificial intelligence and robotics -- won more than 75 percent support from shareholders, a Tesla official said at the company's annual meeting.

"I'd like to just give a heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported the shareholder votes," a euphoric Musk told the gathering. "I super-appreciate it." Cheers of "Elon" broke out after the vote result was announced at the gathering, which was held at the company's factory in Austin.



billionaire's resonance with investors.

The package aims to ensure Musk stays at Tesla for at least seven-and-a-half years. It would lift Musk's holding in Tesla from about 12 percent when the

package was introduced in September to potentially more than 25 percent.

Musk has described Tesla's potential growth as nearly boundless, saying in July that it "will be the most valuable company in the world by far" if it delivers on envisioned advances on autonomous driving and AI.

But Musk himself has hinted he could leave Tesla or take a back seat if his ownership share is not raised enough to give him the influence over its future that he desires. In urging shareholders to back the proposal, Tesla Chair Robin Denholm argued keeping Musk was essential to Tesla's future, warning the company's stock could dive if he exited. The board has shrugged off criticism that the billionaire's embrace of contentious political figures has weighed on sales.

OpenAI faces seven lawsuits claiming ChatGPT drove people to suicide, delusions

New Delhi.(Agency)

OpenAI is facing seven lawsuits claiming ChatGPT drove people to suicide and harmful delusions even when they had no prior mental health issues. The lawsuits were filed Thursday in California state courts allege wrongful death, assisted suicide, involuntary manslaughter and negligence. Filed on behalf of six adults and one teenager by the Social Media Victims Law Center and Tech Justice Law Project, the lawsuits claim that OpenAI knowingly released GPT-4o prematurely, despite internal warnings that it was dangerously sycophantic and psychologically manipulative. Four of the victims died by suicide.

The teenager, 17-year-old Amaurie Lacey began using ChatGPT for help,

and, eventually, counseled him on the most effective way to tie a noose and how long he would be able to "live without breathing." "Amaurie's death



was neither an accident nor a coincidence but rather the foreseeable consequence of Open AI and Samuel Altman's intentional decision to curtail safety testing and rush ChatGPT onto the market," the lawsuit says. OpenAI did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

Another lawsuit, filed by Alan Brooks, a 48-year-old in Ontario, Canada, claims that for more than two years ChatGPT worked as a "resource tool" for Brooks.

Then, without warning, it changed, praying on his vulnerabilities and "manipulating, and inducing him to experience delusions. As a result, Allan, who had no prior mental health illness, was pulled into a mental health crisis that resulted in devastating financial, reputational, and emotional harm."

ED makes third arrest in Rs 68 crore fake bank guarantee case linked to Reliance Power

Amar Nath Dutta was

arrested on Thursday

under the Prevention of

Money Laundering Act

(PMLA) and remanded to

four days of Enforcement

Directorate custody.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has made a third arrest in connection with a money laundering investigation involving businessman Anil Ambani's group company, Reliance Power. The probe pertains to the issuance of an alleged fake bank guarantee worth Rs 68 crore, official sources said on Friday. A man identified as Amar Nath Dutta was taken into custody on Thursday under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). A special court subsequently

remanded him to four days of ED custody, the sources added.

Earlier, the agency had arrested former Reliance Power Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Ashok Kumar Pal and Partha Sarathi Biswal, Managing Director of Odisha-based Biswal Tradelink, in connection with the same case. The investigation concerns a bank guarantee of Rs 68.2 crore submitted to the Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) on behalf of Reliance NU BESS Limited, a subsidiary of Reliance Power, a listed company, which was later found to be "fake". The company was formerly known as Maharashtra Energy Generation Limited. According to the ED, Biswal Tradelink was allegedly operating a racket providing fake bank guarantees to various business groups. The Reliance Group has clarified that Anil Ambani "has not been on the Board of Reliance Power Limited for

more than three and a half years and is not concerned with this matter in any manner." The money laundering case stems from a November 2024 FIR filed by the Delhi Police's Economic Offences



Wing (EOW). It was alleged that Biswal Tradelink issued fake bank guarantees for a commission of eight per cent.

Investigations revealed that Reliance NU BESS Ltd. had submitted a bank guarantee purportedly issued by FirstRand Bank, allegedly located in

Manila, Philippines. However, the said bank does not have a branch in that country, according to the ED.

Reliance Power earlier stated that it was a "victim of fraud, forgery and cheating conspiracy" in this case and had made due disclosures to the stock exchanges on 7 November 2024. A company spokesperson added that a criminal complaint had been lodged with the Delhi Police's EOW in October 2024 against the third-party accused company, and that the "due process" of law would follow. The ED further claimed that Biswal Tradelink used a deceptive email domain, s-bi.co.in, closely resembling the official State Bank of India

domain sbi.co.in, to create a "facade" of authenticity in its communications with SECI. Investigators also found that Biswal Tradelink was a "mere paper entity", with its registered office located at a residential property belonging to one of Biswal's relatives.



willing to pay for unlisted shares, has dropped significantly over the past week. On October 31, the GMP stood at Rs 95, implying a strong potential listing gain of 23.63%.

It later fell sharply to Rs 85 on November 1, Rs 59 on November 3, and continued to slide to Rs 10.5 as of November 7. Based on this latest GMP, the estimated listing price is around Rs 412.5, indicating a modest 2.61% gain over the issue price of Rs 402. Despite the muted short-term outlook, analysts remain cautiously optimistic about Lenskart's long-term prospects.

Shivani Nyati, Head of Wealth at Swastika Investmart, said that Lenskart is India's largest organised eyewear retailer and has a strong omnichannel business model combining online and offline presence. "The eyewear market in India is growing fast, offering a strong opportunity for expansion. While the IPO has been heavily oversubscribed, the grey market premium has cooled from very high levels to a modest 2-3%. Given the steep valuation, much of the value will depend on post-listing execution not just a strong "listing pop," she added.

Nikki Tamboli's

Boyfriend Arbaaz Patel 'Nearly Confirmed' To Enter Bigg Boss 19? Find Out

After impressing everyone with his stint in Rise and Fall, Nikki Tamboli's boyfriend, Arbaaz Patel, is now likely to enter Bigg Boss 19. If a viral post on X is to be believed, Arbaaz has been approached by the makers to participate in Salman Khan's show and is 'nearly confirmed' as a wildcard contestant. "As Per Strong rumours, The Nearly Confirmed Name That Is coming is of #ArbazPatel," the viral post read. Check it out here: Previously, Malti Chahar also entered the Bigg Boss 19 house as a wild card contestant. The show, which premiered in August this year, is also likely to get an extension of three week. As per Bigg Boss Khabari reports, the reality show is likely to get an extension of three to four weeks. While there has been no official announcement so far, reports suggest that the move is being discussed due to the growing popularity of the season. Earlier reports claimed Bigg Boss 19 would conclude on December 7. However, if the makers extend the show, the finale will be postponed by almost a month. **Arbaaz Patel Was**

Recently Seen On Rise And Fall

Arbaaz Patel was recently seen in Rise and Fall. Initially placed in the "Rise" group, he earned praise for his leadership and ability to form alliances. However, mid-season, a series of confrontations and trust issues led to his downfall, pushing him into the "Fall" zone. Despite facing constant challenges and emotional lows, Arbaaz managed to win audiences over with his honesty and resilience. In one of the episodes, Nikki Tamboli also appeared as a guest to cheer her beau. Rise and Fall was won by Arjun Bijlani.



Tejasswi Prakash's

Infectious Smile Adds Glam To Laughter Chefs 3 Red Carpet

Laughter Chefs: Unlimited Entertainment, the Bharti Singh-hosted cooking-based reality show, is all set to make a return with its third season soon. This time, the viewers will see several new celebrities who will engage in the chaotic blend of cooking challenges and comedy. Among all, Bigg Boss 15 winner and TV actress Tejasswi Prakash is also a part of the lead cast of the show. Reportedly, in the forthcoming season, the actress will be paired with her boyfriend and actor Karan Kundrra. **Tejasswi Prakash Spotted On Sets**

On Thursday, the Swarigini actress was papped on the sets of Laughter Chefs 3. In a video shared on Instagram, the diva is seen striking a pose in front of the shutterbugs stationed at the location and flaunting her adorable smile.

Coming to her look, the actress opted for a neon-green outfit featuring a sleeveless top paired with a matching long skirt. She accessorised her look with silver heels, kept her hair open in soft curls and let them cascade down her shoulders.

What Did Fans Say?

In no time, the comment section was flooded with reactions from fans and admirers. An Instagram user wrote, "Gorgeous Teju." Another one commented, "Beautiful." One of them shared, "Stunning."

Laughter Chefs 3 Plot

Apart from Tejasswi, other new faces that will be seen in Laughter Chefs 3 include: Vivian Dsena, Debina Bonnerjee, Gurmeet Chaudhary, Isha Malviya and Eisha Singh. Jannat Zubair will be making a return to the show after Season 1.

Krushna Abhishek, Kashmera Shah, Karan Kundrra, Elvish Yadav, Aly Goni, Abhishek Kumar and Samarth Jurel will also be returning to entertain the audience with their comic timing and culinary art. With such an interesting lineup and star power, Laughter Chefs season 3 already looks like a perfect recipe for entertainment and laughter.

Tejasswi Prakash's Work Front

She has been a part of numerous shows, including Swaragini: Jodein Rishton Ke Sur, Pehredaar Piya Ki, Sanskaar: Dharohar Apno Ki and Naagin 6, among others.



Mira Rajput's Fitness Advice For Fans This Winter: 'Get Moving'



Mira Rajput Kapoor, wife of Bollywood heartthrob Shahid Kapoor, is a fitness fanatic, and her toned physique and radiant skin are proof of that. Known for her regular gym appearances and wellness tips on social media, the 31-year-old continues to motivate fans with her regular exercise routine that includes some rigorous workouts to stay fit. Mother of two, Mira, regularly shares glimpses from her workout sessions, yoga practices, and lifestyle habits, encouraging followers to prioritise their health. Her latest offering is another inspirational post for those who are too lazy to start their workout routine. Taking to Instagram, she shared a glimpse of her early morning workout routine. Mira posted a distant mirror selfie from her gym along with the caption, "Get moving and good morning."

Mira Rajput's On Balancing Wellness With Motherhood

In an interview with Hello! Magazine, Mira earlier talked about how she manages to stay active while juggling motherhood. As a mom to Misha and Zain, she revealed that she has gradually reshaped her fitness routine to align with her energy levels and her family's needs.

Proving that health and parenting can go hand in hand, she stated, "I like to work out three or four times a week. I like Pilates and functional training with light weights. Earlier, I used to feel an energy dip around 3pm. And that's when my kids get home from school. So I decided to scale back the intensity of my workouts to be able to spend time with my family without feeling exhausted or cranky... The most important factor, though, is sleep. It's so underrated!"

What Is Mira Rajput Up To These Days?

Beyond fitness, Mira Rajput has successfully transitioned from homemaker to entrepreneur. She recently stepped into the world of wellness with her wellness centre, Dhun, located in Mumbai's Bandra. The venture comes after she co-founded Akind, a skincare brand focused on mindful, clean beauty.

Shraddha Kapoor Trains In Lavani For Vithabai Narayangaonkar Biopic Eetha: Report



The film is based on the extraordinary journey of Vithabai Narayangaonkar, one of Maharashtra's most revered Tamasha performers.

Shraddha Kapoor has reportedly begun shooting for her next film, which is a biopic on legendary Marathi folk performer Vithabai Narayangaonkar and has been titled Eetha. The actress will be playing the tutorial role. Fresh updates mention that she has reportedly begun training in Lavni, the traditional Maharashtrian dance form. Middyay has quoted a source saying, "With her mother Shivangi Kolhapure being Maharashtrian, Shraddha is deeply steeped in the culture. Another advantage was her dancing skill since it formed a big part of Vithabai's life story. Shraddha picked up Lavani and Gavlan, the two folk dance forms that originated in Maharashtra. They are widely used in Tamasha, which traditionally combines storytelling with singing, dancing, and satire."

About Marathi Folk Legend Vithabai In Laxman Utekar's Biopic Eetha

Production for the film officially commenced on November 1, 2025. The title Eetha is derived from a regional pronunciation of Vitha, the affectionate name by which the legendary performer was known in parts of Maharashtra. The film is based on the extraordinary journey of Vithabai Narayangaonkar, one of Maharashtra's most revered Tamasha performers. Born in July 1935 in Pandharpur, located in Solapur district, Vithabai came from a family deeply rooted in traditional folk performance. She began her career as a child and went on to become an iconic figure in the world of Lavani and Tamasha theatre. Known for her commanding stage presence, expressive voice, and high-energy performances, Vithabai's contribution to Indian folk culture earned her two President's Awards, first in 1957 and later in 1990. The title Eetha carries local significance, representing how Vitha, a familiar form of the artist's name, is pronounced in certain parts of rural Maharashtra. Utekar, who is known for blending emotional depth with realism in his storytelling, is expected to highlight not just the artist's career but also the personal struggles behind her celebrated public life.

Shraddha Kapoor's upcoming work

The actor is set to return in Stree 3, scheduled for release in August 2027. She also has the ambitious fantasy trilogy Naagin lined up, in which she will play the titular role. Dinesh Vijan had explained the idea behind the MHCUC and even revealed why Stree 3 won't get a 2026 release.

Recently, I drove down to Pushkar from Delhi and stayed there for 2 days and unlike other destinations that I cover, there wasn't a lot of sightseeing that I did.

Pushkar

Religion, mythology and psychedelia

Pushkar has 3 or 4 places of interest , but the beauty is that one can spend a lot of time just seeing these places only. Doing a solo trip always makes you connect with your inner self and a place like Pushkar was the perfect choice of destination!Why? Here's a destination that's of significant religious importance for Indians, has the most fascinating mythology attached with it and the town itself looks like a psychedelic cross between Banaras and Tel Aviv. Let me take you through my Pushkar trip then!

Climate
Any place in Rajasthan is best visited during the winters and Pushkar is no exception. While summers can be scorching hot, between end November to February, the afternoon sun will more or less blind you than burn you out!

History
One of the oldest cities of India, Pushkar city is associated with Lord Brahma(The Creator Of The Universe) and a fascinating mythological story. As the legend goes, Brahma was in search of a place for his Mahayagna and he found the city of Pushkar suitable. But in the city of Pushkar there was a demon, Vajranash

who was killing people for fun. Thus the Lord intoned a mantra on a lotus flower that instantly killed the demon. During this process a part of the Lotus flower fell in Pushkar and gave birth to the Pushkar lake. After the killing of vajranash, Brahma performed a yagna to protect the place from demons. The consort of Brahma, Saraswati, was also needed to offer Ahuti for the yagna but since she was not there that time so Gayatri, a Gurjar girl, was married to Brahma and performed the yagna. This act made first wife of Brahma, Saraswati very angry and she cursed Brahma saying that he would be worshiped in Pushkar only. From that day on people say that the only Brahma Temple in the World exists in Pushkar!

Food
Pushkar is strictly vegetarian so meat lovers beware! While some of the restaurants do serve egg, any form of meat is a strict nono. However the quality of food is really good weather you are having Dal Chawal or a woodfire Pizza. Due to the huge influx of Israeli tourist, many restaurants serve more Continental food that Indian food. Some restaurants have the menu written in both English and Hebrew , which reminds me of certain beaches of South Goa where its Russian!

Shopping
While on the Walk from the Entry of the ghats to



the Brahma Temple, there are lots of handicraft shops selling beautiful ethnic footwear, bags, bed sheets. If you are a good negotiator, you can get some genuinely good stuff! One tip though : First talk around with a few shopkeepers and get a feel of the rates and then buy , because many of the shops want to make a quick buck by quoting high prices. I found the right shop to buy footwear for my wife and the shop owner was an elderly woman who proudly said that they are

Marwaris and they have been making footwear for over 100 years.

Places of interest
The 52 Ghats : The most important thing to do in Pushkar is to spend substantial amount of time at the Ghats. An early morning session and an evening sessions are about perfect. There are about 52 ghats around the Pushkar Lake. Jagannath Ghat, Nagar Ghat, Chir Ghat and many more. The otherwise serene ghats have though one nuisance - the Pandas(The

men who perform religious ceremonies). The problem is that most of these are people looking to earn an easy buck with the pilgrims. They will conduct a small puja and then ask for a fee. Now how do you avoid these Pandas and enjoy the beauty of the lake. One trick is that befriend one of them in the beginning only and tell him that you will see thr ghats and offer a Puja at the end. In this way, any other Panda that comes to you can be told that you are already booked. I applied this and was left quite at peace most of the time.

Walk around the Pushkar town: Walking around Pushkar town is a must do because it's seldom that you can see such amalgamated mix of people and food and signboards.

Pushkar is a great place to unwind and procrastinate for a couple of days or if you are in the introspective mood, a couple of weeks. The place has a natural rugged beauty with an enchanting lake, nice simple Rajasthani people ,Spicy but tasty food and loads of similar people around you in search of inner peace. As an Indian ad says, Push Karo , Khush raho (Push the Button and Be Happy), I guess an entry into Pushkar makes you happy mentally and spiritually!

Seasonal attractions
The Pushkar Fair or the Pushkar Mela, is an annual five day camel Fair and is actually the world's largest camel fair.

Estonia had never featured on my 'must-see countries' list. Why then, would I go to this far-flung, erstwhile Soviet state? Well, my aunt had a conference in Tallinn and she asked me if I would like to free-load. So I said yes. Shamelessly. Never mind the fact that I wasn't expecting much from the city. I mean, how different could it be from the cliché of a struggling Soviet offshoot, fraught by the shadows of its past? But a free ride is a free ride. And so, in Tallinn, I promptly landed.

I slowly scanned the view of the city from our hotel window. Grey skies. Grey buildings. Desolate streets. So far, the city was living up to my preconceived notions. Then suddenly, as my gaze shifted to the right, a burst of colour dotted my view. I

could see vibrant, red-tiled spires soaring in stark contrast to the rest of the city's modern landscape. I was told later that I had been staring at the city's Old Town.

The old town
The next morning, while my aunt toiled away at the conference, I set out on foot to explore Tallinn's fairytale like Old Town,

one of the most well preserved gothic towns in the world. As I passed between a pair of imposing, ivy-covered towers at the beginning of Viru Street — the main archway into Old Town, I got the distinct impression that I had dived from the 21st century straight into the heart of a bygone era. I ambled through winding cobbled streets towards the Town Hall, which was flanked by a large market square and many charming open-air cafes. I shuffled within earshot of a tourist guide and overheard him tell his group that the site had witnessed a memorable execution centuries ago. "A priest was beheaded here for killing a waitress in the late 1600s," the guide bellowed. "What was his crime?" he was asked. "She brought him a really bad omelette," he said solemnly. I decided that I liked this guide, with his penchant for drama. So I discreetly hot-footed after him,

Tallinn

up a good score

Be it fairytale-like charm, surrender to Tallinn's magic and lose track of time.

as he shepherded his group through the heady cocktail of spire-crowned architecture and twisting alleys to the Russian Orthodox Alexander Nevski Cathedral. "The classic onion-domed 19th-century Church has become the city's tourist symbol," the guide rumbled. "But nationalist Estonians are not happy because they regard it as a symbol of Soviet oppression."

The group fervently nodded. So did I. Minutes later, he turned around and huffed towards a church with a soaring spire. I trailed him as he chattered to his group that the 13th-century Olaf's church was the tallest building in the world till a couple of centuries ago. Over the centuries, unfortunately, its poor spire had been repeatedly ambushed by lightning, thereby reducing its original height. I panted all the way up to the top of the spire on the heels of the heaving group. The view was magnificent, but with vertigo lurking around the corner, I quickly wobbled down and waited for the drama king and his subjects.

Our next stop was the ex-KGB Estonian headquarters outside the Old Town. I suddenly felt as if I were at large in a Robert

Ludlum novel, as I shadowed the guide round the spooky building like a shifty spy. "This," he boomed dramatically, "Is where the KGB tortured suspected rebels." He then theatrically wagged a finger towards the basement windows. "They are covered up with concrete to suppress the sound of screams," he said, his eyes goggling. I shuddered. So did the rest of the group. Minutes later, the guide, the group and the budding stalker stood outside the gigantic Hotel Viru. "This was a notorious den of Cold War intrigue," I heard him say. "Every room was tapped and monitored by the KGB."

The singing revolution
Later that evening, I visited the Song Festival Grounds with my sight-seeing averse aunt. While she grumpily stood shivering in a corner, I hung on to the words of a local who mentioned that the grounds had been host to over 30,000 music artistes from all over the world and that it was here that the Singing Revolution or the patriotic, night-singing demonstrations took place in the late 1980's, fuelling Estonia's liberation from Russia.

The next day, I went back to Tallinn's roots, the Old Town Square and sat in a cafe, sipping wine and soaking in the sun, which had, for a few brief minutes



managed to burst through the clouds. The waiter brought me the menu, with a pamphlet stuck in between its pages. Culture Calls, the pamphlet screamed. Below was a list of more than 250 cultural events, dotting Tallinn's epochmaking annual calendar. The city, clearly had a new reason to celebrate, as Europe's Cultural Capital for the year. I realised two things then - that first impressions aren't necessarily lasting and that it wasn't just me enjoying a moment in the sun; it was all of Tallinn.

Highlights
Museum of Occupations: Brings alive life under Soviet and Nazi regimes.
Kadriorg Palace: The majestic summer palace of the Tsar. A portion of it is closed to the public and is occupied by the Office of the President.
Open Air Museum: An open complex of Estonian rural architecture from the Tsarist era.
Getting around: Tallinn is a well connected city - you can avail of its trams, trolleybuses or taxis