

## We're united: Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar's bonhomie after breakfast meet

Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar used a high-command-prompted breakfast meeting in Bengaluru to project unity, discuss 2028 election strategy and dismiss speculation of a leadership rift in Karnataka.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A carefully choreographed breakfast with upma, idli and sambar laid out at the Chief Minister's residence set the tone for Karnataka's warring power centres on Saturday as Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar met to calm the churn inside the Congress. The high command-nudged meeting came amid yet another round of speculation over a leadership reset in the state.

Soon after the meal, Siddaramaiah moved to shut down the political noise, insisting that "there are no differences" between the two leaders and there won't be any in the future as well. "Our agenda is the 2028 elections. Local body elections are important. We discussed them. We also discussed bringing back Congress in the 2028 elections. We discussed that we will go together. There are no differences between us and there will be no differences in the future," the Chief Minister said while addressing a press conference.

Siddaramaiah also reiterated that he would follow Congress high command's decision on the brewing issue. "We have decided that we will

follow whatever the high command says. There will be no confusion from tomorrow. There is still no confusion. Some media reporters have created confusion," he said.

The Chief Minister also brushed aside talk of an



impending no-confidence motion challenge from the opposition BJP.

"The BJP and JDS have a habit of making false allegations. They said they will bring a no-confidence motion. They are only 60 and 18. We are 140. This is a futile exercise. We will confront their false allegations," he said. Even DK

Shivakumar, who joined Siddaramaiah for the press conference, echoed similar sentiments, calling himself a loyal soldier of the Congress party. He also said that he would go to New Delhi when summoned by the Congress high command.

"As far as the leadership issue is concerned, we follow our party high command. Whatever they say, it is our decision. We have been loyal soldiers of the party. We know that the party is going through difficult times in our country. But we are confident that Karnataka will play a major role, we will repeat government in 2028, and move forward in 2029 as well under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

Both leaders posted pictures from the meeting within minutes of each other, signalling an attempt at course correction. In one, Shivakumar is seen sharing breakfast with the CM, captioning it as a "productive discussion on Karnataka's priorities and future plans". The detente came as the leadership question in Karnataka simmered again. The party's 2023 victory revived old tensions between the two camps over an informal power-sharing arrangement.

Follow J&K Reorganisation Act in letter & spirit, restore statehood urgently: Omar Abdullah

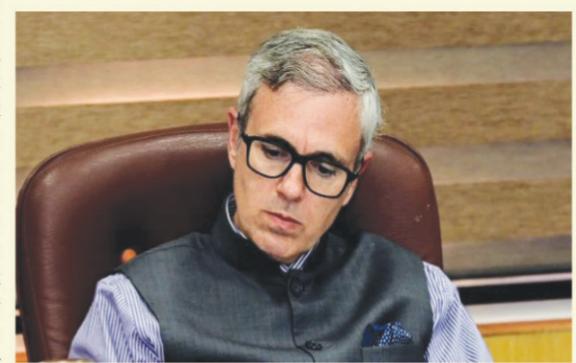
"We are not stepping out of our boundaries but our ambit is being infringed upon," he said in response to a question at the end of the two-day working committee meeting of the ruling National Conference.

Srinagar.(Agency)

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said Friday that the J&K Reorganisation Act must be followed in letter and spirit to end the "confusion" with regard to its governance. "We are not stepping out of our boundaries but our ambit is being infringed upon," he said in response to a question at the end of the two-day working committee meeting of the ruling National Conference.

The NC vice-president has previously said that a dual system of governance is "built for failure." On Friday, Omar said that for now, the separation of powers (under the J&K Reorganisation Act) must be respected, but "statehood must be urgently restored".

Emphasising



that the elected government is not responsible for the episodes used to argue against restoring statehood to J&K, Omar said: "Whether it is Pahalgam or the attack in Delhi, if it's a security failure, security is not our responsibility. I was CM (of J&K as a state) for six years, did an attack like Pahalgam or Delhi occur then? Give us this responsibility and then see." Responding to a question on the absence of party MP Aga Ruhullah from the working committee meeting, the CM said, "This committee exists for those that understand party discipline and for those who do not choose to speak to the party leadership through the media." The two-day session concluded Friday with a reaffirmation of the party's "commitment to Special Status" of Jammu and Kashmir and a condemnation of the Delhi terror attack. The demand for restoration of Statehood was also reiterated.

**BJP's sleeper cell: DMK Minister slams Sengottaiyan for joining Vijay's party**

Chennai.(Agency)

Tamil Nadu's Law Minister Raghupathy on Saturday tore into expelled AIADMK veteran CA Sengottaiyan, calling him a "BJP sleeper cell" planted inside actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettai Kazhagam (TVK). His attack came after Sengottaiyan formally joined Vijay's new party earlier this week.

Raghupathy alleged that Sengottaiyan remained "operated by remote control" from the BJP leadership. "If Amit Shah calls, he will run. He still works under their command," he said, insisting the former minister's move to TVK was part of an assignment to steer Vijay's outfit closer to the BJP. According to him, the Sengottaiyan's political trajectory told its own story. "He went to Delhi, met Amit Shah, then held talks with Dhinakaran, OPS, Sasikala, and finally joined TVK. There is a clear understanding with the BJP, not with EPS. Edappadi K Palaniswami had hated him and chased him away," Raghupathy said.



On speculation that DMK leaders had also approached Sengottaiyan after his fallout with EPS, Raghupathy downplayed the chatter. "When someone exits a party, anyone may reach out in a friendly manner. But he didn't join us because he was a sleeper cell," he said.

Raghupathy dismissed the exodus from AIADMK as politically irrelevant. "We are not considering them at all. AIADMK has weakened and is continuously losing under the present leadership," he said. The Tamil Nadu Minister also took aim at TVK's anti-corruption pitch, launching a sweeping attack on the Tamil film industry. "Black money is the first money in cinema. No actor can function without it. If someone earns Rs 100 or 200 crore, nobody shows it in their accounts to pay Rs 80 crore tax," he said, challenging those promising a corruption-free government to first "expose their own corruption".

## Kurubas warn Congress brass against removing Siddaramaiah from CM post

BENGALURU.(Agency)

At a time when the Vokkaligas are rallying behind Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to occupy the top post, the members of the Kuruba community, to which Chief Minister Siddaramaiah belongs, are throwing their weight behind him to continue to lead the state. Shivakumar hails from the Vokkaliga community. The Kuruba community leaders, under the guidance of Tinthini Mutt head Sri Siddaramanandapuri, held a meeting at the Kuruba Sangha office in Bengaluru on Friday and issued a stern warning to the Congress high

command that if Siddaramaiah is removed from the CM's chair, they will vote against the party in the 2028 Karnataka Assembly polls.

They blamed the high command for not taking the right political measures that could have prevented the ongoing leadership crisis. "This is not just the Kuruba community's stance, as Siddaramaiah has identified himself as an Ahinda (a Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes, and Dalits) leader.

Therefore, the high command should act in a way that does not cause any



downtrodden," he said. Siddaramaiah should not be removed from the post of Chief Minister for any reason, he said. "We will campaign against those among the 140 Congress MLAs who are against Siddaramaiah and defeat them," the Kuruba leaders warned.

They also suggested that a Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting should be convened to resolve the issue.

**Vokkaliga seer meets Shivakumar**

Kunchitiga Vokkaliga seer Sri Nanjanadhwata met Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and expressed his solidarity with the latter.

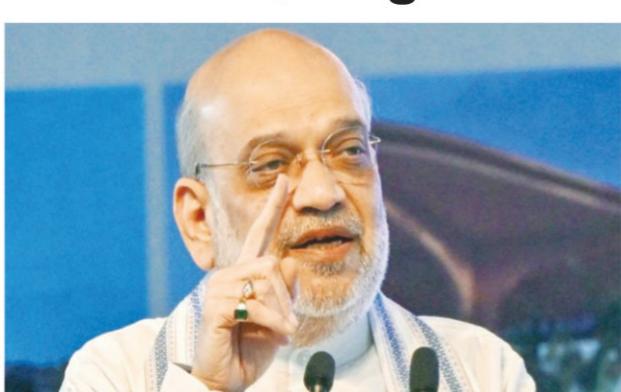
## Naxalism on last legs, Amit Shah tells top cops to focus on narcotics, organised crime next

Raipur.(Agency)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said India would be "completely free from the problem of Naxalism" soon and urged the security machinery to launch "a 360-degree offensive against narcotics and organised crime".

Shah was speaking on the first day of the DGP/IGP conference, which is being held in Chhattisgarh's capital city of Raipur this time. The conference is attended by top police officers from across the country.

Shah said, "Before the next DGP/IGP conference, the country will be completely free from the problem of Naxalism. For the past 40 years, three hotspots that had become a persistent wound for the country — Naxalism, Northeast, and Jammu & Kashmir — have been given permanent solutions by the [Narendra]



Modi government." He said that work is being carried out on three key points — accuracy of intelligence, clarity of objectives, and synergy in action — to deliver a strong blow to radicalisation, extremism, and narcotics.

"We must launch a 360-degree offensive against narcotics and organised crime, and create such a system that drug traffickers and criminals are not able to gain even an inch of space in this country.

The time has now come for the state police, together with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), to launch a stringent crackdown on narcotics syndicates operating at the state, national, and international levels, and to put their kingpins behind bars," Shah said.

On November 29 and 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also attend the conference. The conference will host detailed deliberations on key security issues, such as Left-wing extremism, counter-terrorism, disaster management, women's safety, and the use of forensic science and artificial intelligence in policing, officials said.

## Indo-Pacific, Global South countries see India as reliable partner: Rajnath Singh

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said India's economic growth, technological capabilities and principled foreign policy have positioned it as "a voice of balance and responsibility in the changing global environment", with countries across the Indo-Pacific and the Global South "viewing us as a reliable partner". He was speaking at the Chanakya Defence Dialogue organised in New Delhi on Friday on the theme 'Reform to Transform — Sashakt, Surakshit aur Viksit Bharat'. Rajnath Singh asserted that "India is shaping global discussions of today with a sense of responsibility, strategic autonomy and confidence rooted in civilisational values, and the global trust it has earned is due to the path-breaking reforms, and its consistent stand for

respect of sovereignty of nations and rules-based order." The Defence Minister emphasised that geopolitical uncertainty and challenges such as terrorism, cross-border support to extremist elements, attempts to alter the status quo, maritime pressures and information warfare require constant vigilance and clarity of purpose, making reforms a strategic necessity rather than a choice.

He said reforms strengthen the adaptability of institutions, enhance the agility of the Armed Forces and give the nation the confidence to shape its own destiny. "We are strengthening border and maritime infrastructure to support security and connectivity. We are modernising our forces through new platforms, technologies and



structures. We are reforming procurement processes to ensure speed, transparency and accountability," he said.

"Through Aatmanirbharata, we are building a defence industrial ecosystem that encourages innovation, supports industry and reduces

external dependencies. We are investing in start-ups, deep-tech capabilities and R&D that will shape the battlefields of the future. We are ensuring that the interests and welfare of our soldiers, veterans and their families remain central to our decision-making," stated Rajnath Singh. Advocating that resilience is as important as capability, the Minister said a resilient India can absorb shocks, adapt quickly and continue moving forward irrespective of circumstances. He described the Armed Forces as the strongest pillar of the nation's resilience, stressing that their capability, readiness, restraint and firmness allow India to deal with neighbourhood challenges while contributing to regional stability.

He was speaking at the Chanakya Defence Dialogue organised in New Delhi on Friday on the theme 'Reform to Transform — Sashakt, Surakshit aur Viksit Bharat'.

## News box

**In Gurgaon, two youths on bike die as bus veers into their lane on highway****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Two youths were killed after a bus rammed their motorcycle on NH-919 near Kiruri turn in Tauru on Thursday afternoon. The victims, Kaif (22) and Muzammil (24) were residents of Chahalka village in Tauru, said police. The youths were heading towards Sohna for some personal work when the accident took place. Around 200 metres ahead of the Chahalka turn, a bus coming from the opposite direction, allegedly at high speed, veered into their lane and crashed into the motorcycle.

A case has been registered at Tauru Sadar police station. According to a local resident, the impact of the collision was so severe that the person driving the motorcycle died on spot and the pillion rider suffered critical injuries. He was rushed to a nearby hospital in Tauru, where the doctors declared him dead. The motorcycle was mangled in the collision, said police. The accident had triggered chaos in the area as villagers and commuters gathered at the spot, leading to a massive traffic jam. However, the situation was brought under control after a team from Sadar police station reached the scene. The bodies of the victims were shifted to a govt hospital in Nuh for autopsy. A case has been registered under Section 281 (rash driving) and 106 (death by negligence) against the bus driver at Sadar Tauru police station, who fled the scene after the incident.

**Driver of canter that crushed cop held in Gurgaon after two-day chase****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A canter driver was arrested on Friday and his vehicle seized in a hit-and-run case in which a police constable was killed near the Sirhaul toll plaza a day earlier. According to police, constable Lokesh (29), posted at Udyog Vihar police station, was part of a night highway patrol team when the accident took place around 2am on Nov 26. A complaint filed by the zonal officer (night highway-1) said Lokesh was standing on the side of the carriageway when a speeding truck struck him from behind. The driver fled with the vehicle.

The officer was rushed to a nearby hospital, but he died of his injuries on the way. Investigators said they traced the vehicle using CCTV footage from industrial units.

The driver, Pawan Kumar (34) of Gonda district in UP was arrested in Palam Vihar, said a police officer.

"Kumar was transporting goods from Bhiwadi to Ghaziabad when the accident occurred. He was driving at high speed and did not stop after the collision," the officer added. Lokesh, who served in the force for nearly eight years, was known among colleagues for his diligence during night-duty operations. His death was the second incident involving a cop on duty in less than a week. Earlier, constable Ajay was killed on Nov 20 when a speeding truck rammed a barricade during a late-night vehicle check in Gwal Pahari. Police said heavy vehicle movement, poor visibility in the early hours and speeding continued to make the expressway a dangerous stretch for personnel on foot.

**8 years late, Ghaziabad Development Authority now starts to hand over PMAY houses****Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

Nearly an eight-year delay, Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) has begun giving possession of flats to the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-urban (PMAY) beneficiaries. In Madhuban Bapudham, over 300 registries have been completed of 856 constructed units. Beneficiaries, selected through a lottery system, are being given possession. Officials said work in other zones is also finished, with possessions likely to begin soon. This includes 1,200 units in Pratap Vihar, 480 in Noor Nagar and 528 in Newari, where an approach road and a 400 KLD STP have been built for Rs 3 crore.

PMAY was launched in 2015 and aims to provide affordable homes to the economically weaker sections.

In Ghaziabad, the scheme was announced around 2017, but since then it has been hit by delays. Initially, due to a lack of funds, multiple agencies, like PWD, UP Jal Nigam and the power department, failed to provide electricity, water and sewer connection and approach road to the housing complexes within the stipulated time. Under the scheme, the per-unit cost of a flat is Rs 6 lakh, out of which the central govt's share is Rs 2.5 lakh, the state govt's share is Rs 1 lakh, and the eligible beneficiary is required to contribute Rs 2.5 lakh. To avail of the benefit of the scheme, the annual family income of the beneficiary should be less than Rs 4 lakh.

While GDA has started delivering units in its colonies and housing schemes, private developers are yet to give possession of units. In Ghaziabad alone, 11 developers were to construct 6,481 units under PMAY, but so far, less than 50% of the work is done and not one unit is allotted. This is despite private developers being offered some incentives for constructing units under the scheme.

Due to the failure in the construction of PMAY flats, the Authority earlier cancelled the licence of the Signature Building project in the Raj Nagar Extension township. The developer was mandated to make over 400 units under PMAY. Of the incentives offered to private developers are a 50% rebate on the development fee and no land use charge. However, they must complete the work within 24 months, or else they will not be entitled to the same. Since all developers failed to adhere to the 24-month deadline, they are not entitled to any waiver or concession.

**Pathways to dining areas: Revamp to breathe fresh life into Bhondsi camp****Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

Bhondsi nature camp is set for a major upgrade, with the Haryana Forest Development Corporation (HFDC) rolling out a plan to redesign its accommodation blocks, overhaul visitor facilities and rebuild core infrastructure.

The project includes revamped pathways, safer movement zones, refurbished dining and common areas, and refreshed outdoor activity spaces such as trails, camping spots and open learning zones. Landscaping and improved green cover management are also part of the plan.

"The tender outlines an extensive revamp. The operator will have to rebuild ageing cottages and dormitories, redesign interiors, improve ventilation and lighting, and install cleaner washrooms. Upgrades to power and water systems, drainage, waste management and campus-wide signage are also included," said divisional wildlife officer RK Jangra. Officials said the objective is to transform the largely underused camp into a functional eco-tourism site. HFDC is



inviting technical and financial proposals from agencies with experience in tourism and hospitality. The selected operator will manage the site for 19 years on an as-is-where-is basis. Bids are due on Dec 18 at 2pm and will be opened an hour later. Terms and conditions are available on the

corporation's website. Situated in the Aravali Hills, the camp was developed by the Haryana Forest Department as a low-impact eco-tourism and nature education site. Since it is popular for birdwatching, particularly during the summer when migratory birds

visit, it has long been used by school groups, NCC cadets, and day visitors for basic outdoor learning experiences. The camp offered dormitories, a few cottages, activity areas, short trails and programmes led by forest staff on birds, plants and conservation. Its biggest strength is its location adjacent to the Bhondsi forest block, which links to the Asola-Bhatti wildlife corridor and the wider Aravali landscape. Because of this, the department positioned it as a nature-education hub rather than a commercial resort. However, years of limited upgrades took a toll. Accommodation blocks deteriorated, utilities became unreliable and activity zones saw little maintenance. With the city expanding and private retreats opening up in the Aravalis, footfall at the state-run camp declined sharply, leaving much of the site underutilised. HFDC is now seeking a private operator to modernise and run the camp for nearly two decades, aiming to revive a site that still has strong potential due to its forest setting.

**Reflective tapes to crash barriers: As fog blankets Gurgaon, police intensify steps to avert accidents at expressway blackspots**

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Amid a worrying rise in road accidents this year, the city traffic police have stepped up their winter safety preparations by installing 25 crash tyre barricades at key points along the Gurgaon-Delhi expressway (NH 8) and adjoining stretches. Reflective tapes have also been placed on around 300 vehicles. The steps follow data showing 900 accidents and 377 deaths in the district this year as of Oct 31, underlining the urgent need for better visibility during the fog season. According to traffic police data, two-wheeler riders remain the most vulnerable, with 430 accidents causing 140 deaths and 300 injuries. Pedestrians accounted for 150 deaths in 290 crashes, while 17 cyclists died in 29 accidents. As many as 24 car-driver deaths were recorded in 66 car accidents, reflecting the high risk of winter driving in Gurgaon.

Following the directions of DCP (traffic) Rajesh Mohan and ACP (traffic) headquarters/highway Satyapal Yadav, officials installed the crash tyre barricades at fog-prone and high-risk stretches. These include IFPCO Chowk, Signature Tower, Atlas FOB, the Lemon Tree cut traffic light, areas near HUDA City Centre and Crowne Plaza, and Sector 44. The reflective barricades are meant to improve visibility at night and in fog, helping drivers identify diversions and road edges from a safe distance. In a parallel initiative, reflective tapes were placed on around 300 bicycles, rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, tractor-trolleys, trucks and school buses. Reflective jackets were also given to those who are frequently out on the roads at night, like truck drivers. DCP Mohan said, "Roads become more vulnerable during winter or heavy fog. To prevent crashes, we are taking safety measures and have alerted our teams. We are installing reflectors and hazard-markers at all vulnerable points to increase visibility. We have also asked the civic authorities to repair street lights." He added that the traffic police are carrying out a detailed survey of all entry and exit points on the Delhi-Gurgaon expressway to remove any obstruction that may pose a risk during low-visibility periods.

**Illegal mobile towers set up in protected Faridabad Aravalis face demolition, telcos to be served notices****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A field survey has found around 15 mobile towers installed at most ecologically sensitive areas of Faridabad Aravalis in Anagpur, Pali, Mehta, Maharajpur, Lakkarpur, Mangar, and Ankhir, which are protected under Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA). The forest dept is likely to send notices to telecom operators next week, initiating a cleanup effort. The drive started on Friday in Pali, where a tower installed at a PLPA-notified stretch was dismantled. Officials said this tower had been operating for years without the necessary statutory permissions required for any construction on protected forest land. The demolition marks the start of a comprehensive initiative that the dept will pursue till all identified towers in PLPA zones are dismantled. The survey revealed installations built with concrete foundations, platforms and ancillary structures, all of which amount to encroachment inside the protected land. Violators even carved new access tracks for maintenance vehicles, altering natural slopes and allowing deeper human entry into the hills. The drive has started and

will continue. Once notices are served, the rest will be removed in phases," said DFO Surender Dangi. Over the past two decades, the Aravalis in Faridabad have witnessed a gradual increase in encroachments, ranging from farmhouses and scrap godowns to mining routes and utility structures. According to officials, mobile towers have become an additional layer in this expansion, often erected through agreements with private

landholders without verifying if the land falls under PLPA. Since PLPA-notified areas are considered forest land for regulatory purposes, any construction or commercial activity requires prior clearance. The department's recent actions follow a series of inspections across the division, aimed at mapping structures within forest patches and tracing the approvals. Teams documented tower coordinates, base dimensions, and service access paths before identifying them as violations. Officials said the list of violations is likely to grow as more field checks are conducted next week, particularly in the ridge-facing areas of Mangar and Anagpur. Once operators receive the notices early next week, the department will commence a phased dismantling schedule. Each site will be cleared, the concrete base dismantled, and the area restored. In locations where access tracks have been created, soil work and minor contour restoration may also be undertaken. According to officials, the cleanup will continue through Dec as more unauthorised installations are found during inspections.

**'In Noida, it's like spending a whole month in a gas chamber'****Noida.(Agency)**

The city's air quality has remained in the hazardous zone for straight 22 days, offering little respite to residents. The AQI slipped into 'very poor' on Nov 7 and has hovered in the hazardous range since, touching the 'severe' level on five occasions. The worst spike was recorded on Nov 11, when the index soared to 425. In the last 28 days this month, the city has logged 20 'very poor' days and only three in the 'poor' range. On Friday, the overall AQI was 388 at 4pm, almost unchanged from Thursday's reading of 391. "It feels like we are living inside a gas chamber," Manoj Kataria, a resident of 7x sectors, said. "For over a month, my entire family has been struggling with a constant cough and burning throat. Even inside the house, there's no relief. Our air purifiers run 24x7, but still the AQI doesn't drop below 350. We can't take evening walks, kids are missing outdoor activities, and elderly

people are barely able to breathe. This is not a city anymore, it's a health hazard. How long do we survive like this? The govt must be active now on the issue." The Sector 116 air quality monitoring station, which records data for 7x and nearby residential sectors, saw average AQI of 417 (severe) on Friday. In Sector 125, which covers areas off the Noida Expressway, recorded 410, also in the severe category. Sector 1 station recorded 376 and Sector 62 saw 345, both in 'very poor' category. Last Nov, Noida had seen only one 'severe' and 11 'very poor' days. It was no better in Greater Noida, where AQI moved from 381 to 378 in the last 24 hours. Its Knowledge Park V station recorded an AQI of 398 and Knowledge Park III at 358. In Nov, the city's air remained 'severe' for five days, 'very poor' for 17 days, 'poor' for another five days and 'moderate' for only one day. In neighbouring Ghaziabad, AQI data

showed eight 'severe' days, followed by 17 'very poor' days and three 'poor' days this month. On Friday, its AQI was 346, slightly better than Thursday's 358. Last Nov, Ghaziabad had a couple of 'severe' days and 13 'very poor' days. "The city is slowly becoming unlivable. For the last 30 days, the smog has been so dense that I can't see the building opposite mine. My father has severe breathing problems, and stepping outside for even five minutes triggers coughing fits. We pay high taxes, we vote, we follow rules, but still we suffer because authorities are busy blaming each other. Doctors are even suggesting to leave the city," Vivek Tyagi, a resident of Indirapuram, said. According to CPCB data, AQI in Loni was 'severe' at 427, in Indirapuram it was 'very poor' at 381, however it remained in the 'poor' category with Vasundhara at 297 and Sanjay Nagar at 282.

**Gurgaon civic body hires firm for sterilisation, mass vaccination of stray dogs****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Months after ending contracts with agencies responsible for vaccination and sterilisation of stray dogs, MCG has issued a new work order under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme. The order, effective from Friday until Nov 28, 2027, has been awarded to a private firm, which will receive Rs 700 per dog for sterilisation and Rs 250 per dog for vaccination.

MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said, "The campaign is extremely necessary considering the increasing number of stray dogs in the city and threat of rabies. Our objective is to move forward with animal welfare, public safety, and health — all three together in the city. Comprehensive sterilisation and vaccination will not only stop uncontrolled growth of dogs but also provide effective protection from dangerous diseases like rabies."

Sterilisation and vaccination efforts will be conducted under the supervision of MCG's chief



medical officer Dr Ashish Singla. Officials have ensured a robust system of monitoring and reporting to maintain transparency and effectiveness throughout the campaign. They underscored the initiative as an important step towards ensuring public safety and health, promoting animal welfare and controlling the stray dog population. The civic body has also urged residents to cooperate in making the

campaign successful. A report by TOI on Oct 9 revealed that the two ABC centres in Baliawas and Basai, intended as the city's primary facilities for stray dog sterilisation and vaccination, have been abandoned. The Baliawas centre, equipped with 20 kennels, an operation theatre, and a post-operative ward, has been locked for over three months. The combined monthly sterilisation capacity of these

centres is 500, yet the city operates on an estimated population of 50,000 community dogs without a formal census. The Basai centre, with 18 kennels, has been inactive for over a year and is in a state of disrepair.

Initially, the civic body sought to hire four agencies, one for each city zone, to manage stray dogs, including their sterilisation and vaccination. However, due to a lack of response, the tender was revised in Oct to hire only two agencies for all four zones. The agency awarded the work order on Friday will handle vaccination and sterilisation in zones 2 and 3. On Oct 28, MCG signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Anil Agarwal Foundation, the CSR arm of Vedanta Group, to launch a comprehensive animal welfare programme in the city with an initial investment of Rs 10 crore. Under this MoU, the foundation will manage the sterilisation and vaccination of stray dogs, operate the existing ABC centres in Begumpur Khatola and Basai, and expand the network to other city areas.

The agreement is set for 15 years, with the possibility of a 15-year extension.

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Editor-in-Chief

Gurcharan Singh Babbar

Mob: 9654077232, 9971359517

Website : www.thesikhtimes.in

Email : sikhstimesindia@gmail.com

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# Only 57% income in MCG coffers, set to fall way short of fiscal target

Gurgaon: With less than two months left for the current fiscal year to end, MCG has collected Rs 910 crore in revenue in the first three quarters. It is just 57% of its target of Rs 1576.9 crore for the fiscal year (FY) 2024-25. The civic body has earned 23.8% more than its income in the first three quarters of the previous year's of Rs 735 crore. The expenditure, however, was Rs 1,020 crore between April 1 and Dec 31 last year, 31.8% lower than a budgetary allocation of Rs 1,495 crore. At Rs 110 crore, the expenditure on road infrastructure saw a rise of over twofold compared to Rs 45 crore allotted in the previous FY. The civic body spent Rs 220 crore on sanitation in the first three quarters, 67.7% of the allocated Rs 325



crore. Notably, no funds have been utilised for environmental projects for solid waste management and NGT, including solid waste management and NGT initia-

MCG's earnings came from stamp duty collections of Rs 310 crore. It is, however, 11.4% short of its estimates of Rs 350 crore. The property tax collection amounted to demolition waste collection fees against the estimated revenues of Rs 50 crore and Rs 10 lakh, respectively. As a result, MCG estimated no income from EDC for the upcoming fiscal year. From the external development charges (EDC), we received nothing so far as the state govt designated HSV and the town country planning department to collect the EDC charges. We have also improved our income in advertisement and building plan approvals. However, the recovery of property tax needs to be enhanced," a senior MCG official said.

From FD interests, the civic body earned just Rs 24 crore (48%) compared to an estimated Rs 50 crore. As a result, the income projection for this category in fiscal year

2025-26 has been pegged at Rs 25 crore. MCG earned a mere 30% of the estimates for water and sewerage charges in the three quarters. Of the estimated Rs 40 crore, only Rs 12 crore was collected. CG has drafted its budget for fiscal year 2025-26. The projected income and expenditure are slightly lower than the figures for the current FY. The civic body expects to send Rs 1,393 crore, a reduction of 6.8% from the Rs 1,495 crore allocated in the current fiscal year. The draft estimates the corporation's income at Rs 1,450 crore, 8.5% lower than the current year's anticipated earnings pegged at Rs 1,576.9 crore. The draft has yet to be approved by the urban local bodies (ULB) department.

## Parents should get their children vaccinated on time: Dr. Parminder

Phagwara: Civil Surgeon Kapurthala Dr. On the orders of Harpal Singh and under the guidance of District Vaccination Officer Kapurthala Dr. Ranveer Singh and the able leadership of Senior Medical Officer Dr. Parminder Kaur, Mamata Diwas was celebrated at EPI Unit Civil Hospital Phagwara. Giving information in this regard, Senior Medical Officer Dr. Parminder Kaur said that parents should cooperate with the health department and get their children vaccinated on time so that they can be protected from diseases and their development is healthy. She advised them not to neglect the vaccination of their children in any way. Sharing more information, she said that during Mamata Diwas, parents must bring their Aadhaar card, ID card and their phone so that the vaccination can be done online on U-Veen by the ANM on time. Dr. Parminder Kaur also asked pregnant women to register in Ayushman Arogya centers on time so that they can get all the health facilities provided by the health department on time. Those pregnant women were identified and treated on time. He also said on this occasion that CHO ANM and ASHA workers encourage as many pregnant women as possible to deliver in government hospitals so that they can take advantage of the health services and facilities provided by the health department. Meanwhile, ANM Madam Sona posted at EPI said that to make Mamata Diwas a success, ASHA workers go door to door to inform parents about the vaccination of their children in advance so that parents can reach the session site on time to get their children vaccinated. He further said that ASHA workers also encourage pregnant women to go door to door to get their health checked from time to time so that they do not face any problem during delivery. On this occasion, ANM Madam Usha, Ekta, Dalvir Kaur, Gurpreet Kaur, ASHA workers Rajinder Pal Kaur, Kulwinder Kaur, Savita, Aarti, Chandan etc. were present.

## GNDU Successfully Concludes Counselling for 2025 Undergraduate Admissions

Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, has successfully completed the counselling process for its 2025 undergraduate session under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Karamjeet Singh, conducted through the University Common Entrance Test (UCET) and University Common Admission Test (UCAT). The process, marked by transparency and efficiency, covered courses under the university's 14 departments within the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering. The counselling witnessed overwhelming participation, reflecting growing student interest and trust in GNDU's academic excellence. Nearly all seats across various courses were filled, with demand for some programmes exceeding expectations, signaling the university's rising prominence. Dr. Tejwant Singh Kang, UCET Coordinator, noted that this response underscores GNDU's commitment to quality education. Dr. Kang further announced that counselling for supernumerary quota seats, reserved for students from border areas and rural regions, will soon be conducted at the departmental level. These seats have also garnered significant interest, with the process expected to conclude on time. For any vacant seats, waiting lists will be handed over to departments by July 10, 2025, enabling them to contact eligible candidates and ensure optimal seat allocation. Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Karamjeet Singh commended Dr. Kang, Prof. Balwinder Singh, and the entire counselling team for their seamless and transparent execution of the admission process. Congratulating the newly admitted students, he urged them to pursue their studies with dedication and integrity, contributing meaningfully to society. This successful counselling process not only reaffirms GNDU's academic excellence but also highlights its commitment to shaping a bright future for its students.

## Cops add criminal conspiracy charges

New Delhi: The Delhi Police added charges of criminal conspiracy following revelation by the two arrested accused in connection with the alleged assault on Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at her camp office in Civil Lines. A senior police officer said the fresh charge was added after investigators found evidence suggesting the assault was not an isolated act but part of a planned conspiracy. Both accused - Rajeshbhai Khimji and Tahseen Syed - who are already in custody, were earlier booked under assault and related sections. Criminal conspiracy charges under Section 61 of the BNS have now been added to the case. According to Section 61 of the BNS, when two or more persons agree to commit an illegal act, or an otherwise legal act through illegal means, such an agreement amounts to a criminal conspiracy. It further states that conspirators to offences, punishable with life imprisonment or rigorous imprisonment of two years or more, face the same punishment as if they had abetted the offence. Following the incident, the Delhi Police have significantly intensified security arrangements for Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, permanently deploying 40 personnel and ordering multiple frisking of visitors before their entry to any of her events. Initially, the Union Home Ministry had directed the CRPF to extend Z-category cover to the Chief Minister, but that arrangement has now been withdrawn. Instead, the Delhi Police have taken over her protection with additional deployment.

# No arrest so far in stolen 'kalash' case, Delhi Police trace suspect's movements

New Delhi: No arrest has been made so far in connection with the theft of a gold-and-jewel-encrusted 'kalash' (urn) worth around Rs 1 crore from a Jain religious ceremony near Red Fort, police said on Sunday. The Delhi Police have traced the movements of the suspect and obtained crucial leads about his hideout. The theft occurred on September 3 during a prayer ceremony attended by several dignitaries, including Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The suspect, dressed in a traditional dhoti-kurta to blend in with devotees, allegedly exploited the commotion created when Birla arrived for the event and fled with the vessel. The urn, made of 760 grams of gold and embedded with 150 grams of diamonds, rubies and

## 10-yr-old missing girl reunited with kin under Op Milap

New Delhi: A 10-year-old girl, who reportedly went missing, was reunited with her family at the Subzi Mandi police station, North Delhi. The girl was located near Ghanta Ghar Chowk on Friday evening. During patrolling, the police saw a girl surrounded by people. She was not able to provide her address.

## 12% of Haryana's forests taken over by invasive species: Lantara Camara, a rapidly growing species, tops list of 5 plants, including kikar

Gurgaon: Lantana camara — an aggressive invasive species — tops the list of environmental challenges in Haryana's reserved forest areas. The plant infests approximately 89sqkm of the state's forested regions, dominating the native flora and leading to a decline in biodiversity. Five major invasive species have gained strong footholds in the state, covering 12% of its forests (or 201 sq km), according to experts. The second most invasive species is Prosopis juliflora, also known as Neltuma juliflora (Vilayati kikar), which thrives in arid conditions, displacing native vegetation and altering soil composition. The species covers 61 sq km of forest areas. Experts also warned that without inter-

vention, these invaders could permanently alter Haryana's forests, making conservation efforts more challenging than ever.

Haryana's forests face a severe threat from invasive species like Lantana camara and Prosopis juliflora. As these species expand their reach, they disrupt natural ecosystems, hinder wildlife movement and increase vulnerability to fires. The assessment suggests that immediate intervention is crucial. The govt could prioritise active removal and management strategies to curb their spread. This includes community engagement in removal efforts and restoring native flora through reforestation projects. Also, implementing strict monitoring and

introducing educational campaigns can raise aware-

tor. Lantana camara often grows due to deforestation,

ness about these ecological challenges. Such comprehensive policy measures are essential for preserving ecological balance and ensuring long-term health of forest ecosystems. While competition for nutrients, water and sunlight was significant, spread of the species extended beyond only outcompeting

native flora. The species steadily spread in Gurgaon and Faridabad Aravali ranges, said forest analyst Chetan Agarwal, adding that it's visible on both sides of Gurgaon-Faridabad highway while crossing the Mangar stretch. Forest research in Mangar hills showed an average presence of 250-300 lantana bushes a hectare. In some patches, it crossed 1,000 bushes per hectare. The species became the second most prolific shrub after jhadber that adversely affected native shrub vegetation. A similar situation prevails in the Badkhal catchment. We need a concerted lantana removal exercise — arresting its spread will be more beneficial to biodiversity than undertaking new

## Jackals escape enclosure at Delhi zoo

New Delhi: One jackal was safely herded back into the enclosure on Sunday morning, while teams continued search for the remaining animals within the premises, zoo officials said. The officials said the incident took place on Saturday when three to four golden jackals were sighted outside their off-display holding area, near the bushy forest belt behind Azimganj Sarai in Beat No. 10 of the zoo. "Trap cages were placed and staff were deployed to bring the animals back to the holding area for their safety," the zoo said in an official statement. Teams from the animal section and the zoo's security wing have been deployed across the area. "A tranquillisation team has been kept on standby," the officials said. Staff members are tracking the animals through ground patrols and CCTV surveillance. The zoo clarified that the jackals "are not in the visitors' areas." Preliminary inventory checks show that one to two animals may also be free-ranging. The Joint Director of the National Zoological Park has been asked to hold an inquiry and submit a detailed report. As of now, the zoo authorities have not clarified how the animals managed to flee their enclosure. Zoo officials maintain that efforts are underway to locate the remaining jackals and guide them safely back. The incident comes barely weeks after the Delhi Zoo reopened earlier this month following a two-month closure due to an avian influenza outbreak. The zoo was shut on August 30 after several painted storks and black-headed ibis died of the H5N1 virus. It reopened on November 8 after multiple rounds of testing and sanitisation, following clearance from the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases, Bhopal. The reopening drew over 8,000 visitors on the first day, including hundreds of schoolchildren, and introduced new features such as an "Insta Ticket Booking Service" using QR codes and UPI payments.

## 16-year-old girl rescued from prostitution racket in Dwarka

New Delhi: A 16-year-old girl was rescued from a prostitution racket during a raid conducted by the Dwarka Police on Tuesday. The child revealed that she was trafficked into the trade nearly a year ago and was forced to attend to 8 to 10 clients every night. The minor confessed that whenever she complained of pain, she was given painkillers to suppress the symptoms and sent back to work. For her labour, she was handed only Rs 500 and that too neither frequently nor voluntarily.

When she begged to leave, the traffickers threatened her with videos they had recorded, warning her that they would be leaked if she resisted or tried to escape.

A year ago, she was lured by a friend who told her that she would introduce her to someone who will solve all her financial problems. "My friend introduced me to one 'bhaiya'

who promised me lot of money. I did not realise what I was being pushed into. As soon as I under-

n't know, I have told him that I work in a call centre so my work hours are at night," she said. Every day,

she stood and I wanted to quit, they threatened me and said if I tried to escape, they would make my videos public," she said. The minor lost her mother several years ago and currently lives with her alcoholic father. When asked whether he was aware of her situation, she silently shook her head, indicating he did not know. "He does-

she leaves home around 5 pm and attends clients till 5-6 am. Every day without any leave, anywhere five to 10 customers visited her. "Our team posed as customers and got in touch with the linchpin. It took us almost a month to gain his trust. Finally, after much dilly-dallying, advance online payment and change of location, he final-



Shishupal Singh Advocate, Supreme Court of India, BCI Chairman Mr. Madan Mishra and Attorney General of India Mr R. Venkatraman and Law Minister Mr. Arjun Meghwal and civil advocates



## A week after 2-year-old's death, 2 injured in Greater Noida wedding firing as stray bullets hit cooks in necks

NOIDA: A 23-year-old man was arrested on Monday after bullets he fired from his pistol during a wedding procession injured two cooks, a week after a two-year-old boy was killed during a similar incident of celebratory firing. The latest incident occurred on Sunday night near Ashirwad Marriage Home in Greater Noida's Shakipur village. Two confectioners who were preparing hot milk and jalebis — Santosh (35), from Morena in MP, and Ishwar — who was from the groom's

side — fired several shots after whipping out a pistol from his pocket, responding to repeated prods from his friends who knew he was carrying a firearm. Stray bullets hit Santosh and Ishwar in their necks. The back-to-back incidents of celebratory firing prompted a string of orders from Noida police for wedding organisers. According to DCP (central Noida) Shakti Mohan Avasthy, organisers would have to ensure there are no weapons with visitors at

their events, functional fire systems and alarms at venues, proper electrical safety measures, adequate parking arrangements and CCTV cameras. The officer also asked wedding guests to follow traffic rules and not drive any vehicle under the influence of alcohol. He also said that disc jockeys and music systems should adhere to Supreme Court guidelines. DCP Avasthy asserted that owners of marriage halls and other such establishments would be

held responsible along with those carrying weapons in case of celebratory firing. "Legal action will be taken against operators and owners if any of these guidelines are not followed," he added. Wedding organisers, who were handed notices regarding these guidelines, were encouraged to contact the local police station or dial 112 for assistance if needed. On Feb 16, two-year-old Ansh — who was sitting in his father's lap on their

third-floor balcony in Aghapur and watching a wedding procession pass by — was struck by a stray bullet fired by two guests. The toddler was taken to Prayag Hospital, where he died within minutes. A lawyer and a second-year law student from Gurgaon were arrested in connection with the child's death. Friends of the groom, Deepanshu and Happy had fired from the buggy as the bazaar weaved its way through a narrow street last Sunday.

## NEWS BOX

## Russia threatens total ban on WhatsApp

MOSCOW . (Agency)

Russia said Friday it was considering banning popular messaging service WhatsApp, accusing it of failing to prevent crime, and urged its tens of millions of users to switch to domestic alternatives.

US technology giant Meta, which owns WhatsApp, said Russia was trying to ban the application because it "defies government attempts to violate people's right to secure communication". Russia blocked users from making calls on the platform in August, part of a broader crackdown on Western-owned social media that critics say is designed to tighten government control over the internet. In a statement on Friday, Russian communications watchdog Roskomnadzor said it could ban the application "completely" unless it complied fully with Russian law. "If the messenger fails to comply with Russian legislation, it will be completely blocked," it said, urging Russians to switch to "national services". WhatsApp is one of the two most popular messaging services in Russia, alongside Telegram. Moscow wants both messengers to provide access to data upon request from law enforcement, for fraud probes and for investigating activities that Russia describes as "terrorist".

It has also encouraged users to switch to Max, a domestic messaging service that lacks end-to-end encryption, requiring that it be pre-installed on all new smartphones and tablets. Rights advocates fear the moves could be used for mass surveillance and to target critics of President Vladimir Putin and the Ukraine war.

## Death toll from floods and landslides on Indonesia's Sumatra island rises to 248, authorities say

AGAM. (Agency)

Rescue workers in Indonesia struggled on Saturday to reach victims in several devastated areas that were hit by an earthquake and tsunami, and authorities feared the confirmed death toll of 248 would rise further. The areas were largely cut off by damaged roads and downed communications lines, and relief aircraft were delivering aid and supplies to the hard-hit district of Central Tapanuli in North Sumatra province and others in the region. Rescue efforts were also hampered by damaged bridges and roads and a lack of heavy equipment.

The National Disaster Management Agency said



rescuers in West Sumatra's Agam district recovered more bodies, increasing the death toll to 248 with more than 100 people still missing. Monsoon rains over the past week caused rivers to burst their banks in North Sumatra province. The deluge tore through mountainside villages, swept away people and submerged thousands of houses and buildings, the National Disaster Management Agency said.

## Black Friday Sees \$8.6 Billion Online Sales As Shoppers Avoid Braving Cold

United States. (Agency)

US shoppers spent \$8.6 billion online on Black Friday, an Adobe Analytics report showed, as more consumers turned to laptops and phones instead of braving brisk weather to snap up deals during the holiday shopping weekend. Online spending rose 9.4% through 6:30 pm ET (1130 GMT) on Black Friday compared with last year, according to Adobe Inc's data and insights arm, which vets e-commerce transactions, covering more than 1 trillion visits to US retail sites. Consumers were expected to flock to



stores, but the bargain-chasing was subdued on post-Thanksgiving morning as shoppers fear overspending amid persistent inflation, trade policy-driven uncertainty, and a soft labour market. READ: Black Friday 2025: Shopping Safety Tips To Avoid Scams And Protect Your Data. However, the data firm expects consumers will spend between \$11.7 billion and \$11.9 billion on Friday, following a final tally, and said it will set a new record for online sales on Black Friday. It anticipates consumers will spend \$5.5 billion on Saturday, which represents growth of 3.8% from last year, and \$5.9 billion on Sunday, a rise of 5.4%, as discounts remain elevated. Cyber Monday is expected to be the season's biggest online shopping day again, Adobe projects, driving \$14.2 billion in spending, up 6.3% from last year. Adobe, which earlier forecast Black Friday online sales rising 8.3% to \$11.7 billion, last month said it expects US holiday online sales to grow at a slower pace this year.

## Munir's Sinister Plan Exposed: How Pakistan Is Manipulating Global Powers To Destroy Taliban | DNA

WORLD. (Agency)

Something deeply sinister is unfolding in Pakistan, and it involves a plan so devious that it would make master manipulators proud. Army Chief Asim Munir has morphed from a brutal dictator into a cunning strategist, orchestrating a propaganda campaign designed to turn the world's superpowers against Afghanistan. Like a venomous spider weaving its web, Munir is exploiting recent terror incidents to manipulate America and China into doing Pakistan's dirty work against the Taliban. This isn't just military strategy; this is psychological warfare at its most calculated and ruthless. The plan is breathtakingly audacious in its hypocrisy. Pakistan, the world's undisputed terrorism capital, is now pointing fingers at Afghanistan for global terror attacks. The nation that harbored Osama bin Laden, nurtured Hafiz Saeed, and spawned countless jihadis is now playing the victim card with shameless perfection. Munir's scheme? Use two recent incidents to paint Afghanistan as the new global

terror threat, hoping America and China will do what Pakistan's pathetic military cannot: destroy the Taliban. Two incidents have given Munir the ammunition he desperately needed for his propaganda war. First, an Afghan national attacked National Guard soldiers near the White House in Washington, DC, killing one and critically injuring another. Second, a drone strike hit a gold mine in Tajikistan, killing three Chinese workers, an attack allegedly launched from Afghanistan. Munir saw these incidents and his eyes lit up with opportunity. Both attacks had one common thread: Afghanistan. Now Pakistan is frantically spinning these incidents, trying to convince America and China that Taliban-controlled Afghanistan is the new global menace. Unable to defeat the Taliban alone, Pakistan is desperately seeking the backing of two global superpowers.

## The Ultimate Hypocrisy

Pakistan's brazen accusations against Afghanistan represent hypocrisy so staggering it defies belief. This is the same Pakistan that has exported terror

US soil. The 2015 California massacre by Pakistani-origin terrorists Rizwan and Tashfeen killed 14 innocent people. In 2010, Pakistani attacker Faisal Shahzad attempted a suicide bombing in New York's Times Square. Yet this terror-exporting nation dares to lecture others about terrorism.

## Taliban Strikes Back

The Taliban isn't taking Pakistan's propaganda lying down. Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen delivered a crushing counter-attack: "Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI is orchestrating these incidents to frame the Taliban because we're building relationships with India and the international community." The accusation is devastating because it's likely true. Pakistan cannot tolerate Afghanistan's growing independence or its warming ties with India. So Munir has deployed the oldest trick in Pakistan's playbook, false flag operations and propaganda, to manipulate global powers.



## Cyclone Ditwah | 80 dead, many missing in Sri Lanka

WORLD. (Agency)

At least 80 people have died and many remain missing till Friday night in Sri Lanka, which is bearing the brunt of massive destruction caused by Cyclone Ditwah. With torrential rains, landslides and floods displacing thousands in the island nation, India has launched a swift humanitarian response for the island nation.

New Delhi has rushed emergency relief under Operation Sagar Bandhu, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveying condolences and stressing India's commitment to stand by its closest maritime neighbour in its hour of distress. By Friday evening, Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre said the cyclone had affected 43,991



people. Many regions of the country remain submerged and inaccessible, with officials warning that rising water levels in the Kelani and Attanagalu rivers pose a grave threat to Colombo and the populous Gampaha district.

Outages have hit nearly a third of the region, and two major hydropower plants have been shut down.

Responding to the escalating crisis, India has dispatched 4.5 tonnes of dry rations and 2 tonnes of fresh rations, including staple foods, ready-to-eat meals, dairy products, and other essential provisions. Additional survival supplies have also been handed over. The relief consignments were delivered by INS Vikrant and INS Udayagiri, both docked in Sri Lanka, an official

release said.

Ditwah is likely to reach southwest Bay of Bengal near north Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh by November 30, IMD said.

## India Launches Op Sagar Bandhu, Sends Relief Material To Flood-Hit Sri Lanka

Colombo. (Agency)

An Indian Air Force aircraft carrying emergency relief material for those displaced by unprecedented floods arrived in Sri Lanka early on Saturday morning.

The C130 aircraft, carrying essential food items and sanitary supplies reached Colombo's Bandaranaike International Airport airport at around 1.30 am and was received by the Indian High Commission officials and Sri Lanka Air Force officers. India on Friday launched 'Operation Sagar Bandhu' to assist Sri Lanka in its hour of crisis, and the first tranche of relief materials was handed over after the consignments were transported by the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and frontline ship INS Udaigiri to the island nation. The relief came as Sri Lankan authorities warned of an "unprecedented disaster situation" in the Western Province from Friday night due to rising water levels in the Kelani and Attanagalu rivers.

Sri Lanka is facing one of its worst disasters as cyclonic storm Ditwah wreaked havoc, causing floods and landslides that left a trail of destruction and damage to infrastructure. The Disaster Management Centre (DMC) has confirmed 69 dead till 6 am on Saturday morning while at least 34 people remained unaccounted for. More than 200,000 people from



## 'Trump 2028, Yes': US President Hints At Running For 3rd Term With AI Image

The "Trump 2028" message, already appearing on merchandise and in subtle references during public events, has become a recurring element of his second term.

WORLD. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump drew attention after posting an AI-generated image on his Truth Social account showing him holding a blue sign that read "TRUMP 2028, YES!". The post was captioned "TRUMPLICANS!", a blend of "Trump" and "Republicans." The image quickly renewed debate over the 22nd Amendment, which limits presidents to two elected terms, and whether Trump is attempting to signal interest in a future campaign beyond that limit. The post comes nearly ten months into Trump's second non-consecutive term, which began on January 20, 2025, as he works with a Republican-controlled Congress to



advance his "America First 2.0" agenda, including an immigration crackdown and higher tariffs on major trading partners. The "Trump 2028"

Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer. In October, House Speaker and prominent Republican leader Mike Johnson downplayed the possibility and claimed the president was just having a "good time...trolling".

"There is the 22nd Amendment...I think the president knows. And he and I have talked about the constraints of the Constitution," he told reporters at a news conference. Trump also appeared to acknowledge that he could not run again. "I'm not allowed to run, it's too bad," he said last month.

A new McLaughlin and associates survey shows Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., is gaining traction among Republican voters as a possible candidate for the 2028 nomination, positioning him as a key rival to Vice President JD Vance. In August, Vance held a 20-point lead, with 36 per cent support compared with Trump Jr.'s 16 per cent. By October, the race began to tighten: Vance led with 38 per cent while Trump Jr. rose to 20, narrowing the gap to 18 points. The trend has continued into November, when Vance's lead shrank to 10 points, with support falling to 34 per cent as Trump Jr. climbed to 24 per cent.

61,000 families have been affected by the disaster, it said. However, the Central Province's Kandy relief officials said the death toll would be much higher as the toll in the Kandy district itself had reached more than 50 by late Friday night and remained unverified officially. Badulla in the central hills is another district badly hit by landslides with many people missing and over 35 dead. Cyclone Ditwah caused spills in all major reservoirs and rivers with authorities warning people to evacuate. The weather bureau said more rains over 200 mm were expected to fall although Ditwah may exit the island by late Saturday.

Nearly 35 per cent of the areas in the island are without power since early Friday with around 7 million of the state power entity Ceylon Electricity Board customers affected.

## Zelenskyy's chief of staff resigns after anti-corruption investigators search home

KYIV .(Agency)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced Friday the resignation of his powerful chief of staff, Andrii Yermak, who was also the country's lead negotiator in talks with the U.S. after Yermak's residence was searched by anti-corruption investigators. The unprecedented search at the heart of Ukraine's government was a blow for the Ukrainian leader that risked disrupting his negotiating strategy at a time when Kyiv is under intense U.S. pressure to sign a peace deal nearly four years after Russia's full-scale invasion. Yermak has long been a trusted confidant of Zelenskyy, who has resisted persistent pressure to replace him. In a nod to the controversy over Yermak's long stay at his side, Zelenskyy said Russia was waiting for Ukraine to make missteps and upset the delicate and tense peace negotiations. "We don't have a right to retreat or argue between ourselves. If we lose unity, we risk losing everything, ourselves, Ukraine, our future," Zelenskyy said. "We must unite, we must hold on. We have no other choice. We won't have another Ukraine." "To preserve our internal strength, there must

be no reasons to be distracted at anything else except for defense of Ukraine," he added. "I don't want anybody to be questioning Ukraine, and that's why we have today's decisions." In his nightly address, Zelenskyy announced that he was "resetting" the presidential office. He said Yermak had submitted his resignation and that he would begin consultations Saturday to appoint a new chief of staff.

Yermak's name did not appear on a list of officials that Zelenskyy said would make up the Ukrainian delegation for the next round of negotiations with the United States. The delegation will now be jointly lead by Andrii Hnatov, the head of Ukraine's armed forces; Andrii Sybiha, Ukraine's foreign minister; and Rustem Umerov, head of Ukraine's security council, Zelenskyy said. He said negotiations would happen "soon."

Two national agencies fighting corruption in Ukraine said their search targeted Yermak. Oleksii Tkachuk, a spokesperson for Yermak, said the anti-graft agencies had not served Yermak a notice of suspicion, meaning he was not a suspect in an

investigation. Yermak was not told what the searches related to, Tkachuk said.

Yermak confirmed the search of his apartment inside the presidential compound in downtown Kyiv, where



checkpoints limit public access. Media reports said Yermak's office was also searched, but investigators declined to comment on that. It was not clear where Zelenskyy or Yermak were at the time of the morning raid. "The investigators are facing no obstacles," Yermak wrote on the

messaging app Telegram. He said he was cooperating fully with them and that his lawyers were present.

In an interview Thursday with The Atlantic, Yermak said that as long as Zelenskyy is president, "no one should count on us giving up territory." Ukraine, he said, is prepared to discuss only the question of what land each side controls, as indicated by the location of the front lines. "All we can realistically talk about right now is really to define the line of contact," Yermak said. Energy sector scandal: The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office are leading a major investigation into a \$100 million energy sector scandal involving top Ukrainian officials that has dominated domestic headlines in recent weeks. It was not clear if the searches were connected to the case, and a spokesperson for the NABU, Anton Tatarikov, declined to comment, citing legal restrictions on revealing details on an ongoing probe.

## NEWS BOX

**Youngster preparing for competitive exams found dead, cops suspect suicide**

**PUNE. (Agency)** A youngster preparing for competitive examinations was found dead at his residence in Navi Peth area of Pune city, on Friday.

Police have identified the deceased as Sagar Subhash Pawar (26), native of Buldhana district of Maharashtra. Police suspect that Sagar died by suicide, but a probe was launched to confirm the cause behind the death.

Police said Sagar was residing in Pune for the last few years while he was preparing for the competitive examinations conducted by the government for different posts.

He was residing in a rented house with his roommates in Navi Peth area of Pune city. Police suspect that he died by suicide when his friends left the roommates on Friday.

When his roommates returned in the afternoon, they knocked on the door of the house, but there was no response. So they informed the police control room. A police team reached the spot. The cops entered the house by breaking the door, but found Sagar dead. Police sent the dead body to a hospital for postmortem.

Senior police inspector Pradip Kasbe of the Vishrambag police station said that the deceased had not left any note before his death. A prima-facie probe revealed that he had been under stress for the last few days.

As per the legal procedure, an accidental death report was lodged at the Vishrambag police station and an investigation was initiated to confirm the cause behind his death, police said.

**Bengaluru records below-normal temperature; AQI levels rise amid cloudy skies****BENGALURU. (Agency)**

As the city braces for winter, temperature below normal was recorded on Friday, with the minimum temperature being recorded at 16.1°C and the maximum at 25.2°C, that is 1.1°C and 2.2°C below normal, according to readings from Indian Meteorology Department (IMD). The maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely to be around 25°C and 16°C respectively until Saturday and cloudy sky in the city. The dip in the temperature comes as a cyclonic storm Ditwah developed over the southwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining the Sri Lanka coast, as per the IMD forecast. Additionally, the maximum temperature according to IMD stood at 25.3°C against the normal maximum temperature of 27.4°C on Friday in the city.

The forecast also notes that the movement of the cyclonic storm is also expected to likely bring light to moderate rain or thundershowers at a few places over Bengaluru (Rural), Bengaluru (Urban), Chamarajanagar, Chikkaballapura and other districts of south interior Karnataka over the next week.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in various parts of the city has seen a downward trend due to the cloudy weather prevailing in the city; as the AQI recorded at the Central Silk Board station was at 156 on Friday as compared to the AQI 134 on Thursday, as per KSPCB data.

**BSWML's 'Declutter' app to raise complaints on waste dumping awaits launch date****BENGALURU. (Agency)**

The much-anticipated app, which allows people to raise complaints related to bad footpaths, roads and dumping of waste and get it cleared by Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), is awaiting a launch date. The app has been named as 'Declutter'. With the image of Bengaluru taking a beating due to poor garbage management and increasing number of black spots, BSWML has come up with a slew of measures.

In October, BSWML CEO Karee Gowda invited solid waste management experts, activists, bulk waste recyclers and other stakeholders to a meeting, where they discussed measures to be taken to keep the city clean.

One of the major complaints during the meeting was the increasing number of black spots in the city, where not only garbage, but also broken cots, sofas, mattresses and other waste are dumped. Pourakarmikas, meanwhile, clear only garbage and leave the broken furniture there.

Realising this, BSWML decided to come up with an app, allowing people to raise complaints by posting pictures and locations of black spots. As broken cots and furniture can't be transported by regular garbage-lifting vehicles, trucks will be used to clear them. People can also use the app to book BSWML's service to dispose of their broken or unused furniture or bulk waste.

BSWML sources told that the app is ready for launch. But BSWML is yet to get an appointment from Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to launch the app.

**Cyclone Ditwah: SDRF, NDRF teams on standby in 14 districts**

**To effectively manage any situation, requests have been made to mobilise additional NDRF teams from neighbouring states.**

**CHENNAI. (Agency)**

Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday visited the State Emergency Operations Centre in Chennai and reviewed the precautionary measures being taken in 14 districts following heavy rainfall alerts issued due to Cyclone Ditwah. With the cyclone expected to move towards the northern Tamil Nadu coast and cause heavy rainfall on November 29 and 30, 16 SDRF and 12 NDRF teams have been deployed in vulnerable districts so far.

The chief minister, through video conference, instructed collectors and officials in the 14 districts to ensure full coordination, readiness, safe shelter arrangements, essential supplies, floodwater drainage, and the quick restoration of power.

**To effectively manage any situation, requests have been made to mobilise additional NDRF**

teams from neighbouring states. Central forces, including the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Indian Coast Guard, have been asked

going out unless necessary, and remain in safe places.

A release said SDRF and NDRF teams have been deployed in Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, Chennai, Vellore, Ranipet, Tiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Pudukkottai, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi. During the review, the CM instructed all departments to work in full coordination and ensure people are accommodated safely in relief centres. He also directed monitoring officers to remain stationed in their respective districts. Responding to a query, the CM said Chennai too will receive heavy rains, and precautionary steps have been taken. On the allegation by Edappadi K Palaniswami that the state government has been betraying the people of the delta districts, the CM said, "It is enough if he refrains from betraying them. There is no truth in what he says."



to remain on standby as needed. In a post on X, explaining the measures taken to safeguard the people during the heavy rains, the CM appealed to the public to follow the meteorological department's warnings, avoid

**'People disrespect the disabled': Meet the man who has become face of racist attacks on Indians****PUNE. (Agency)**

Rajendra Panchal, 47, knew news reports from 2018 about the surgery that corrected his fused jaw and skull bones were available online. What he didn't know was that in recent days, his photos were being shared on social media to make racist attacks against Indians.

His family was surprised the photos had surfaced the way they had. But it was nothing that he hadn't seen before, says Panchal. "Tiraskar bharpoor karta loka (People disrespect the disabled a lot.)"

He was around a year old when Panchal fell chin first on the ground. The fall was so severe that it fused his jaw and skull bone on both sides and left him unable to open his mouth. The family lived in Dhaba in rural Osmanabad (now Dharashiv), and Panchal's father worked as a carpenter. They never had the means to consult a doctor, and for the next 38 years of his life, Panchal lived with the condition, called temporo-mandibular joint ankylosis, unable to eat solid food.

In 2017, a team of maxillofacial surgeons at Pune's M A Rangoonwala Dental College took on his case for free. A surgery changed his life, allowing him to open his mouth, eat solid food,



and speak clearly. His weight gradually increased, from 45 kg pre-surgery to over 60 kg now. The doctors at the time also shared his photos before and after surgery, which have now resurfaced online, in racist attacks seeking to represent "an archetypal Indian".

Dr J B Garde, the lead surgeon in the operation on Panchal, says he was shocked when he saw the

context in which his photos were being shared online. Showing photos of patients with a similar condition from across the globe, he says: "Rajendra's condition has nothing to do with being Indian or other nationality. The etiology (cause) of this condition is not genetic but mostly physical trauma, birth injury or ear infection."

Panchal stumbled upon the cure by sheer luck. At the age of 17, having dropped out of school after Class 4, he ran away from home after an argument with his parents, and landed in Pune. By then, he had spent years seeing people shrink away from him. "If a disabled person comes and sits next to you, will you let him? People still don't talk respectfully to disabled people, so you can imagine what I went through that long back." In Pune, not knowing anyone, Panchal went without almost any food for days, with his first few jobs only giving something to eat and no money. "I did everything from pulling out weeds to sweeping rooms to daily labour."

**Kurubas warn Congress brass against removing Siddaramaiah from CM post****BENGALURU. (Agency)**

At a time when the Vokkaligas are rallying behind Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to occupy the top post, the members of the Kuruba community, to which Chief Minister Siddaramaiah belongs, are throwing their weight



behind him to continue to lead the state. Shivakumar hails from the Vokkaliga community.

The Kuruba community leaders, under the guidance of Tinthini Mutt head Sri Siddaramanandapuri, held a meeting at the Kuruba Sangha office in Bengaluru on Friday and issued a stern warning to the

Congress high command that if Siddaramaiah is removed from the CM's chair, they will vote against the party in the 2028 Karnataka Assembly polls.

They blamed the high command for not taking the right political measures that could have prevented the ongoing leadership crisis. "This is not just the Kuruba community's stance, as Siddaramaiah has identified himself as an Ahinda (a Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes, and Dalits) leader.

Therefore, the high command should act in a way that does not cause any harm to the community," the seer said. "It is wrong for a swamiji of any community to take a stand on the CM change issue. We are not supporting Siddaramaiah because he is from the Kuruba community. We are because he is in favour of the poor and the downtrodden," he said.

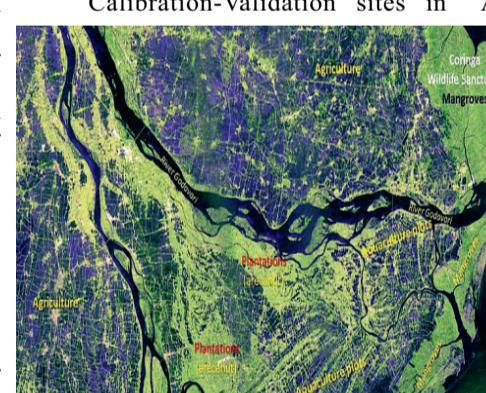
**BENGALURU. (Agency)**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday shared details of the images captured from the S-Band radar of the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite.

"The first image of S-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) acquired on August 19 captures the fertile Godavari river delta in Andhra Pradesh. Mangroves, agriculture, arecanut plantations, aquaculture fields, etc are clearly seen in the image. The image highlights NISAR's S-Band SAR ability to map river deltas and agricultural landscapes with precision," the ISRO team said.

The NISAR satellite, a joint effort of NASA and ISRO, was launched on July 30 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre. The ISRO

team added that since the first acquisition on August 19, the S-Band SAR is regularly imaging over Indian landmass and Global Calibration-Validation sites in



reflectors were deployed around Ahmedabad and a few more locations in India for calibration of the images. Data acquired over Amazon rainforests were also used for calibration of spacecraft pointing and images. Based on this, payload data acquisition parameters were fine-tuned resulting in high quality images. Initial analysis by scientists and engineers revealed the potential of S-Band SAR data for various targeted science and application areas like agriculture, forestry, geo-sciences, hydrology, Polar regions, Himalayan ice, snow and oceanic studies," the ISRO team said.

The researchers added that on the 100th day of NISAR in orbit, ISRO will release the S-SAR images to the public.

**In Kasba Peth, one of India's smallest museums holds a treasure trove of history**

**In a 10x12 ft room, Anandi Sansar houses a collection of 1,000 artefacts of brass, copper, and silver, drawing people with a passion for art and heritage.**

**PUNE. (Agency)**

Near Phadke Haud in Pune's Kasba Peth, a housing society looks like a little more than a collection of boxy apartments. The ground floor is used as parking for scooters and motorcycles, electric wires dangle overhead, tube lights promise respite from the shadows, and thick pipes hold walls in tight hugs. Yet, like so many things about Kasba Peth, this building holds a surprise. On the other side of an ordinary iron door stands what is arguably one of the country's smallest museums. Artefacts of brass, copper and silver glow from shelves, hang on walls, rise from the floor, and beckon you to explore your past in a way that is not written in history books. This is Anandi Sansar, which houses a collection of 1,000 pieces in a 10x12 ft room.

Plates, glasses, kalash, cups and

vases share space with old coins, a saxophone that evokes bygone music, alarm clocks, small models of scooters, cars, trucks and bullock carts, busts of tribal figures and a metal purse. There is an embellished hair ornament in silver that was once tucked into long braids. A copper basin from 1847 that was used to hold warm water for baths. A range of swords, with intricate hilts and scabbards. A koeri with an ingenious locking system that is 100 years old is made up of sections to hold rice, kumkum, and other essentials for ritual prayers.

**Grandmother's legacy**  
The museum is the brainchild of Girish Potphode, who retired as senior manager (finance) of Tata

Motors in 2019, and his wife Girija. The duo has been collecting the artefacts for 35 years, inspired by Girish's grandmother, Anandi

Potphode, added to the collection," he says.

One of the displays is a utensil that Anandi used to clean rice. "She used to make delicious idlis from that rice," says Girish. Another display is a large tawa to make puranpoli. "They used to make large puranpolis that were sweet and fulfilling. I still remember the taste. I have not seen that size anywhere else," he adds.

The small size of the museum is also a pointer to an earlier time. "An entire family could live in a space of this size. There would be space for a kitchen and a bathroom. Today, of course, even children's bedrooms in flats are bigger than

this," says Girish.

The museum is separated into four sections—antiques, utensils for the kitchen, equipment for the bathroom, and items that are being created by the present generation of coppersmiths at Tambat Ali.

**A room with memories**

Girish started exhibiting the collection during the milestone years of the Ganeshotsav of Twashti Kasar Samaj Samstha, the committee of coppersmiths of Tambat Ali. "We displayed the collection when our Ganeshotsav turned 75, 100 and 125. People came from across Pune and enjoyed the display. Well-wishers told me that I should create a permanent exhibition. This was difficult because we need security as the items are very expensive," says Girish.



Potphode. "I belong to the Tambat community, so we are fond of utensils. All the utensils in my collection are the most precious to me. My grandmother started collecting utensils. My father, Krushna

## The need to throw light on shadow banks

In the 2008 crash, unregulated financial institutions—structured investment vehicles, asset-backed commercial paper issuers, securitisation structures, money market and hedge funds—contributed to global instability. In the aftermath, regulators promised to control these ‘shadow banks’, which themselves prefer to be known by the less pejorative terms market-based finance or non-bank financial institutions. But it didn’t happen.

Shadow banks’ share of global financial assets in 2022 was around 47 percent, up from 25 percent in 2007-08, compared to conventional banks’ 40 percent. And the phenomenon is global. While some structures have declined or disappeared, others have prospered and new ones appeared. Today, the shadow banking complex is dominated by asset managers such as insurance companies, pension funds, non-bank financial companies, and collective investment vehicles (funds, investment companies or partnerships, hedge funds) who invest client funds in public and private equity, debt, or hybrid securities. Other examples include securitisation vehicles which repackaged existing obligations into new securities with different characteristics and various quantitative or multi-strategy trading firms. There are also specialised microloan organisations, trade financiers, asset-based lenders (providing leasing, secured loans or receivable finance), payday lenders as well as pawn shops and loan sharks. China has a particularly wide range of shadow banks providing wealth management products, trust loans, entrusted loans, and undiscounted bank acceptance bills. There are commonalities within these disparate operations. They intermediate capital flows between investors (retail, high-networth individuals, family offices, institutions, and sovereign investment vehicles) and businesses. They trade in financial markets using a variety of strategies to profit from buying and selling financial instruments. Most importantly, there is limited regulation relative to that applicable to banks, because they theoretically do not take deposits from the general public and are not part of the payments system. The current regulatory concerns about the sector are disingenuous as policymakers’ actions underlie their growing role. Stricter bank regulations, such as the Basle 3 accord agreed after 2008, restricted or raised the cost of certain types of lending, especially to smaller enterprises, real estate companies, and projects. This allowed shadow banks to expand to meet the credit needs. The prolonged period of low rates between 2008 and 2021 simultaneously encouraged investors to seek better returns in an ever-mutating investment universe. In Asia, non-performing loans of banks made it difficult for them to meet loan demand. Differences in capital, leverage, and liquidity requirements drove regulatory arbitrage.

The effects of policy are subtle. Securitisation thrives, in part, because the US Federal Reserve, the Bank of Japan, the Bank of England, and the European Central Bank hold 16, 53, around 27, and over 30 percent of their outstanding government debts.

Highly-rated securitised debt meets the demand for safe assets and as collateral for secured loans. Interestingly, regulated banks have benefitted from the growth of the shadow banks. They have refocused their business models on the ‘moving’ rather than the ‘storage’ business. Banks can now ‘sweat their capital’ more effectively, increasing return on shareholder funds by underwriting and distributing loans assets to funds and insurers. For central banks, this increases the velocity of money within the economy. Circumventing limitations on proprietary position taking, many banks now set up former star in-house traders in external hedge funds.

DEMOCRACY has rarely survived and thrived in Bangladesh. Military coups, assassination of two Presidents (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman), autocratic regimes, rigged elections — this small nation has seen it all during its 54-year history. Now, it finds itself at a crossroads yet again. A parliamentary election and a nationwide referendum are scheduled to be held on the same day in February next year. The referendum pertains to the July Charter, which envisages much-needed political reforms through constitutional amendments. The charter owes its origin to the ‘student-peoples’ uprising in July-August 2024 that overthrew the repressive government led by Sheikh Hasina and forced her to take shelter in India. A brutal crackdown carried out on her orders claimed the lives of over 1,400 protesters and left hundreds of others maimed. No wonder the deposed Prime Minister is an integral part of the political discourse in the run-up to the elections. Last week, a special tribunal sentenced Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to death on the charges of “crimes against humanity”. On Thursday, a Bangladeshi court sentenced her to 21 years of imprisonment in three corruption cases.

Hasina-led Awami League ruled the country without a break from 2008 to 2024. The long reign was marked by impressive economic growth, even though increasing authoritarianism took its toll on democratic institutions and constitutional safeguards. The party has now been reduced to a bystander in view of suspension of its activities. The top contender is the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by ex-PM Khaleda Zia. The Begum’s indifferent health has prompted her London-based son Tarique Rahman to take charge of the party’s campaign. He appears prominently on BNP posters and hoardings, which also carry images of Zia and her late husband, ex-President Ziaur Rahman.

Differences between the interim rulers and the BNP are coming to light. Earlier this week, the party slammed the government for signing long-term deals with foreign companies to operate key ports. Tarique Rahman has asserted that an ‘unelected’ administration cannot determine the country’s future. The BNP has also accused Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus of violating the July Charter by going beyond the scope of earlier political consensus. Clearly, the BNP is already projecting itself as the next incumbent. The BNP’s main rival is its long-term ally, the Jamaat-e-Islami, which is banking on religion to win over voters. Also in contention is the National Citizen Party, which was formed by students in February and aims to establish a viable third front. Students were at the forefront of the protests last year, but it is doubtful whether they can make a significant impact in the

## Bangladesh awaits a democratic dawn

India should be well prepared to engage with an elected government in Dhaka



upcoming elections. Amid the poll buzz, Bangladesh is rightly laying stress on international outreach, exemplified by the recent Bay of Bengal Conversation in Dhaka. This annual geopolitical forum showcases the host nation as a progressive player in the global scheme of things. A key foreign stakeholder in Bangladeshi affairs is none other than India. The interim government has intensified pressure on New Delhi to hand over Hasina so that she can be brought to justice in Bangladesh. It appears that India is finally realising which way the wind is blowing in the neighbouring country. The Ministry of External Affairs has stated that India is examining the request for Hasina’s extradition and remains committed to Bangladesh’s stability and the well-being of its people. It’s also important for India to rebuild ties with Bangladesh because Pakistan is out to exploit the situation created by the Delhi-Dhaka impasse. Pakistan is set to export 1,00,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh — a sign of the fast-improving trade relations between the two countries. During the Joint Economic Commission meeting held in Dhaka last month, the Pakistani government offered Bangladesh the use of the Karachi Port Trust to increase its trade with other regional countries, including Central Asian states and China. Direct flights between the two

nations are scheduled to begin in December, while the engagement between their militaries is also growing. The majority of the Bangladeshi citizens today were not even born when the 1971 War of Liberation gave birth to their nation. The genocide carried out by Pakistani troops, India’s military intervention and humanitarian support — these are chapters from the distant past for the voters at large. The 2024 uprising is the all-important epochal event for them; participants as well as witnesses see it as nothing less than ‘Second Independence’ for their country. There is a lot that India has done in recent years to boost infrastructure development in Bangladesh. These gains must not be frittered away. Dhaka needs to be convinced that allying with a stable India is a much wiser option than siding with an unstable and unreliable Pakistan. The interim dispensation’s Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain said last week that Bangladesh would prioritise its national interest and regional stability rather than “pick sides”. However, Dhaka won’t find it easy to walk a tightrope in South Asia. India, which is closely watching the developments in the neighbourhood, should be well prepared to engage with an elected government in Dhaka. Finding a way out of the Hasina tangle must be a top priority. At the same time, the importance of countering Pakistani propaganda cannot be overemphasised.

## No closure for Nellie massacre survivors from probe report

Probe reports are meant to fix accountability. But since no accused even reached the trial stage, that objective has been rendered useless



On February 18, 1983, the vilest of human instincts manifested in Assam’s Nellie village when about 2,000 Bengali-speaking Muslim settlers were slaughtered at the height of an anti-immigrant agitation. Many of the victims of that mass murder 42 years ago were women and children. After the dust settled, as many as 688 criminal cases were filed; 310 reached the chargesheet stage, while the rest were closed due to ‘lack of evidence’. Two years down the road, all 310 chargesheeted cases were dropped by the then Assam Gana Parishad government as part of deal to forge the Assam Accord. None of the accused ever faced trial. Adding insult to injury, successive governments sat on the reports of two commissions that probed the bloody pogrom—one official and the other commissioned by NGOs. Both those reports were finally made public this week, months before Assam goes to the polls. Add to the cauldron a bill recently tabled in the state assembly banning polygamy—and ‘othering’ to accentuate pre-poll

polarisation becomes a possibility.

The official one-man panel headed by retired IAS officer T P Tewary had submitted its report to the Assam government in 1984. Three years later, the report was formally tabled in the assembly, but access was limited as the speaker’s office had only one copy. Now that the Himanta Biswa

Sarma government has made the elusive report public, it’s odd to note that Tewary did not read any communal angle in the savage butchery, observing that the clashes were primarily economic in nature, resulting from land disputes. The panel faulted the police for sleeping on a specific alert from within the department on Nellie being a tinderbox waiting to explode. Pointing to the slew of violent episodes across the state before and after Nellie, the report stated: “The victims were not confined to one religious, ethnic, or linguistic group. In some places, the attackers were Assamese and the victims were Bengali-speaking people, both Hindus and Muslims.”

Probe reports are meant to fix accountability. But since no accused even reached the trial stage, that objective has been rendered useless. Yet, the Tewary report ought to have been made public four decades ago to give the survivors some sense of where things stood. Denying them the courtesy of even that understanding was highly unfortunate.

## Nationwide SIR | When a clean-up becomes a mess

Cleaning of voter lists is an essential exercise. But the EC’s decision to hurry through the current nationwide special intensive revision of rolls is creating chaos and stressing out those conducting the massive drive. There’s a simpler solution using Aadhaar

A year ago, the idea of a massive nationwide exercise to visit every single household to verify, add, or delete voters was not on anyone’s radar. After all, the Narendra Modi government did not even conduct the mandatory decadal census. Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar took charge in February 2025 and, for three months, did not utter the term ‘special intensive revision’ (SIR). Suddenly, one day in June, the CEC announced a nationwide SIR beginning with Bihar. Why so suddenly and so hastily? It all started after the 2024 Maharashtra election, when the Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and I demonstrated comprehensively how the election was stolen using fake voters. More voters were added in five months in Maharashtra than in the entire previous five-year period. And all these new voters seem to have magically voted only for the BJP alliance. This was proved with data and groundwork.

Further, Rahul Gandhi exposed similar voter-list frauds in other states. The Election Commission steadfastly refused to accept our demand for providing voter lists of all states in a machine-readable form for further analysis. Public belief about faulty voter lists was rising and the EC’s credibility was rapidly falling. Clearly something was amiss, and hence the need to announce an SIR to clean the lists and wash past sins.

The last nationwide SIR took three full years, starting in 2002 and ending in January 2005. There were 700,000 polling stations and 65 crore voters then. India today has more than 100 crore voters and 12 lakh polling stations—a huge increase from 2005. Yet, CEC Gyanesh Kumar now wants to rush and finish the SIR process in a third of the time. In SIR Phase 2, the EC wants 5.3 lakh booth-level officers (BLO) across nine states and three Union territories to visit crores of homes and enumerate, verify, add, or delete 51 core voters in just a month! These BLOs have to distribute voter forms, help the vast majority of voters fill it, manually verify each voter’s existence in the 2003 electoral rolls, collect the



appropriate documentation for proof of age, citizenship, and residence, and then submit these forms. Now, is there any surprise that five BLOs have lost their lives tragically due to stress and work pressure of SIR, including by suicide? The EC is culpable for these horrendous and utterly avoidable deaths of five Indians. To be crystal clear, India’s voter lists are riddled with ghosts, fakes, and duplicates, and need to be cleaned and purified. Voter lists are the aadhaar or foundation of any democracy. India’s democracy today stands on a shaky foundation of flawed voter lists. So, any exercise to clean

the lists is welcome and much-needed. It is unwise to oppose list cleaning or even the idea of SIR. But Gyanesh Kumar’s SIR is a cure worse than the disease. There were absolutely no discussions, deliberation, consultation with political parties and the public before the launch of a nationwide SIR. This is in direct contrast to the SIR exercise in 2002, when the EC held joint discussions with all parties and gave enough notice before launching the SIR. This rush to launch SIR has left all political parties, BLOs, and voters unprepared. Consequently, there is utter chaos among voters, extremely stressed EC

workers, and agitated political parties. The Supreme Court now must stop this chaotic and messy SIR exercise and first ask the EC to prepare a comprehensive process document for voter list cleaning in consultation with all political parties. In the interim, the EC can use Aadhaar as a tool to eliminate duplicates and fake voters. It is true that Aadhaar does not imply citizenship and only Indian citizens must be allowed to vote. Every Aadhaar holder need not be a voter, but every voter must have an Aadhaar. So, even without an elaborate SIR, Aadhaar can be used to eliminate a vast chunk of the current problem by asking every voter to link their Aadhaar with their voter ID. This is a simple and established process.

Yes, there is a Supreme Court ruling that prohibits the EC from making Aadhaar mandatory for voters. But guess what? The EC already has made Aadhaar mandatory for revision of voter details. If one wants to change their address or any other information in their voter ID, then a Form 8 needs to be submitted with the desired change which will be verified using the person’s Aadhaar details and a one-time password sent to the Aadhaar-linked mobile number. So, if a person has not linked their voter ID with Aadhaar, they cannot change any details.

In other words, the EC has already surreptitiously made Aadhaar mandatory for voter ID modification. Then why not link all voter IDs to Aadhaar and use it to remove fake and duplicate ones? Regardless of their views in the past, nearly all political parties now support using Aadhaar to clean voter lists. The current SIR process is an effort to cover past mistakes in the voter list than to clean. Hence the haste and ensuing chaos resulting in tragic deaths of innocent people, erosion of public trust in the EC, and utter lack of faith in elections by opposition parties. It runs the risk of collapsing the very edifice of India’s democracy. The Supreme Court must step in and ask Gyanesh Kumar: why this ‘kolahuray da’?

## NEWS BOX

**Mirzapur road accident: Four killed, including father-son duo****Mirzapur. (Agency)**

Four people, including a cancer-stricken father and his son, were killed in a tragic road accident on Friday at Katka Padav on the Varanasi-Prayagraj highway under the Kachhwa police station area. The collision was so severe that the car became lodged deep beneath the rear of a stationary truck. Around 8 am, Anurag Yadav, a resident of Daulatpur village in Sora police station area of Prayagraj, was taking his father, cancer patient Shyam Krishna Yadav, to Mahamana Cancer Hospital in Varanasi in a Swift car for treatment. Meanwhile, a container truck had been parked on the Varanasi-Prayagraj lane as the driver and conductor had crossed over to the opposite lane to drink tea.

As the two were returning, Anurag Yadav's car reportedly went out of control, hit the driver and conductor, and rammed into the stationary container from behind. Shyam Krishna Yadav and Anurag Yadav died on the spot, while the injured truck driver and conductor were rushed to the Kachhwa Community Health Center, where doctors declared them dead on arrival.

The identities of the truck driver and conductor are still unknown, and police are working to establish them. The accident temporarily disrupted traffic on the Varanasi-Prayagraj route, but movement resumed after police removed the damaged vehicle from the road.

**HPNLU Shimla conducts workshop on "charge-sheet under the BNSS, 2023" as part of Trial Advocacy Competition 2025****Shimla. (Agency)**

Clinical Legal Education Centre, HPNLU Shimla, under the leadership of Prof. (Dr.) Priti Saxena, Vice-Chancellor, conducted a focused workshop, titled "Charge-sheet under the BNSS, 2023: Practice & Procedure" on 27 November 2025.

The session formed an integral component of the HPNLU Trial Advocacy Competition 2025 and aimed at equipping students with practical, procedural, and field-based insights into the criminal justice system.

The workshop was graced by Advocate Kapil Mohan Gautam, District Attorney, Shimla, who served as the subject expert for the session. His detailed deliberations on the structure, preparation, and legal significance of a charge-sheet under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, provided participants with valuable exposure to real-world prosecutorial processes. He further engaged with the students on emerging procedural standards and the evolving investigation-trial framework under the new criminal law regime.

The event reaffirmed HPNLU Shimla's commitment to fostering experiential learning and strengthening students' advocacy skills through interactive academic-professional collaborations. The event was organised by Prof (Dr.) Girijesh Shukla, Chairperson, Clinical Legal Education Centre.

**BMC announces 18-hour water cut in Kandivali, Borivali on December 4-5**

In a statement issued Friday, the civic body said two 900 mm-diameter aqueducts will be connected to create a new path for water flow, which is expected to improve supply.

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

Water supply in several parts of north Mumbai's Kandivali and Borivali will be suspended for 18 hours between December 4 and 5 as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) undertakes maintenance work on the existing water supply pipeline. Areas such as Chikooowadi, Jaun Pada and Gorai will be among those affected.

In a statement issued Friday, the civic body said two 900 mm-diameter aqueducts will be connected to create a new path for water flow, which is expected to improve supply.

"The said activity will be taken up around 1.30 pm on December 4 and will continue till 7.30 am the next day. During this period the water supply to the Kandivali and Borivali areas will be stopped," the BMC said.

The civic body added that localities such as Thakur Village and Samata Nagar in Kandivali (East), which receive water between 6.25 pm and 8.25 pm daily, will not get any supply on December 4, as the work will begin that afternoon. These areas will receive normal supply again from the evening of December 5. "We urge citizens to use water cautiously and to prevent any wastage," the statement added.

**Threat call by Canada gangster: SAD candidate's daughter arrested**

The arrest, which sparked allegations of political vendetta from the Akali leadership, stems from an FIR registered at Jhabal police station during the bypoll period against Amritpal Singh Bath, a Canada-based gangster.

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

The Punjab Police Friday arrested Kanchanpreet Kaur, the daughter of Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhwinder Kaur Randhawa who unsuccessfully contested the November 11 Tarn Taran bypoll, following an extensive interrogation.

The arrest, which sparked allegations of political vendetta from the Akali leadership, stems from an FIR registered at Jhabal police station during the bypoll period against Amritpal Singh Bath, a Canada-based gangster.

During the bypoll, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, without naming Bath, had accused Akali Dal of "giving ticket to a gangster's mother-in-law". State Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring had alleged that Bath is Randhawa's son-in-law. Randhawa has three daughters, but only Kanchanpreet was active in her campaign. On her part, Kanchanpreet has neither confirmed nor denied any family link to Bath.

Sources said that Kanchanpreet arrived at the Majithia police station around noon, reportedly in response to a summons regarding a passport-related inquiry and existing cases. According to the official ground of arrest

Kanchanpreet had already secured bail in three other cases registered against her during election period.

After about six hours of questioning, police



formally detained her at 5:30 pm. The arrest was executed under FIR No. 208, which includes charges under sections 174 (non-attendance in obedience to an order from public servant), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), 351(3) (criminal intimidation by anonymous communication), and 111 (organized crime) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

On November 11, Jhabal police registered a case against Bath for allegedly making a WhatsApp call to a voter, threatening him, and pressuring him to vote for the Akali Dal in the Tarn Taran bypoll.

Gurmeet Kaur, wife of Narinder Singh, resident of Padhri Kalan, had alleged that she received a WhatsApp call in which the caller said, "I am Amritpal Bath speaking, you must vote for Shiromani Akali Dal; if you don't, we know other ways to get votes cast."

Kanchanpreet was nominated in this FIR on Friday. At least four such FIRs were registered against Bath during the bypoll. AAP's Harmeet Singh Sandhu won the election.

**Alipurduar (NOQ), Kokrajhar (KQJ), Alipurduar Junction (APDJ), New Mal Junction (NMZ), Hasmara (HSA), Dinhata (DHH), Dalgaon (DLO), Fakiragram Junction (FKM), Jalpaiguri Road (JPE), Dhubri (DBB), Gossaigaon Hat (GOGH), Bamanhat (BXT), Dhubguri (DQG) and Falakata (FLK). The commissioning of**

these machines is expected to significantly enhance passenger convenience by offering a user-friendly digital alternative to manual ticket purchasing. With this development, Alipurduar Division continues to strengthen its efforts toward creating technologically advanced, efficient, and passenger-friendly station environments. Northeast Frontier Railway remains committed to introducing innovative digital solutions and further improving rail travel experiences for millions of passengers across the region.

**Himachal's mining policy overhaul has boosted revenue: Industries Minister**

**Shimla. (Agency)**

Himachal Pradesh Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan said the state government has amended the mining policy to tighten the noose around illegal mining.

Replying to a question by MLA Malendra Rajan during question hour in the State Assembly during the winter session on Friday at Dharamshala, he said that strict action will be taken against those involved in illegal mining under the new policy.

He added that the issue of demarcation dispute with the Punjab government in Indora area of Kangra district has been raised earlier as well, and the state will take up the matter again with Punjab.

The minister said that due to the demarcation dispute, controlling illegal mining in this region has become difficult.

Several times, people engaged in illegal mining flee to Punjab along with their vehicles, making it tough for the police to take action.

He informed that 34 crusher units are operating along the Beas river in Indora, and the government has not approved any new crusher units.

Chauhan said that after the changes in the mining policy, revenue has increased steadily.

In 2022-23, royalty collection stood at Rs 241 crore, which rose to Rs 314 crore in 2023-24 and Rs 354 crore in 2024-25. This year, the government aims to increase mining royalty revenue to Rs 400 crore.

He said illegal mining will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Meanwhile, Health Minister Colonel Dhaniram Shandil, replying to a question by MLA Chandrashekhar, said that construction work on incomplete health institutions will be completed soon depending on the availability of funds.

He said that 90 percent of the construction work of Civil Hospital Dharmapur has been completed, while 95 percent of the work at Civil Hospital Tihra is finished. Construction of the Civil Hospital in Sandhol is 80 percent complete, whereas only 35 percent of the work at CHC Mandap has been done.

**NFR Advances Digital Ticketing with New ATM Installations in Alipurduar Division****The Sikh Times**

Maligaon, 29th November: In line with Indian Railways' commitment to digital transformation and enhanced passenger amenities, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) successfully commissioned 21 no's of Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATMs) across 15 key stations under the Alipurduar Division. All ATMs have been fully operational since 17 November 2025, marking a significant milestone in the modernization of unreserved ticketing services across the region. The introduction of ATMs is aimed at promoting digital ticketing, reducing congestion at Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) counters and enabling passengers to obtain unreserved journey tickets and platform tickets quickly through a seamless, cashless interface. With the facility to use smart cards, passengers can now experience faster ticketing services, especially during peak travel hours, thereby minimizing waiting time at conventional booking counters. ATMs have been installed at the following stations, New Coochbehar (NCB), New

**'Wage cut' message triggers strike at Surat diamond firm****Shimla. (Agency)**

Hundreds of diamond polishers employed with Surat-based Greenlab Diamond Company – that produces lab-grown diamonds – struck work for a few hours Friday following a circulated message purportedly saying they would face a wage cut. They returned to work after intervention from the management.

This is the same firm that manufactured the lab-grown diamonds that Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted to the former first lady of the United States, Jill Biden, during his January 2025 visit.

Experts in the diamond industry said the Greenlab diamond firm at Ichhapore, Surat city, is among the bigger firms in the lab-grown diamond industry.

The company grows diamonds, cuts and polishes them, and sets them in jewellery. In addition to domestic sales, the company also exports to foreign markets. Sources among diamond cutters said a message circulated within the company that the management firm had cut regular per-carat wages. The news spread like wildfire, as a result of which, diamond cutters reached the company gate on Friday morning and staged a demonstration demanding restoration of wages. There are around 1,500

workers and roughly per carat cutting wage is around Rs. 200. The company management immediately rushed to the factory on Friday morning and discussed the issue with the management staff. Later in the afternoon, the company managers broadcast voice messages on the mobile phones of all the diamond workers staging protests outside the company, stating that there would be no wage cut. The diamond artisans entered the company and, after talking to the management staff, continued their work.

Talking to The Indian Express, Greenlab LLP director Smit Patel said, "We are really disappointed with the incident which has happened for the first time in our firm. I spoke with the management and the diamond cutters, and later, the matter was resolved.

A small misunderstanding has been resolved, and the diamond artisans are now back to work. There was a discussion among management about the inventory side and other aspects of the company. Somebody seems to have spread misinformation, which resulted in the incident." Diamond Workers' Union Gujarat vice president Bhavesh Tank said, "After Diwali, a growth is seen in the demand of the Lab Grown Diamond industry in the domestic and international market.

**Temperatures, AQI spiral above normal range in Gujarat****Ahmedabad. (Agency)**

Temperatures across cities in Gujarat as well as the Air Quality Index (AQI) on Friday spiraled above normal ranges.

According to the National Air Quality Index issued by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the AQI was recorded as "very poor". The highest AQI was 308 in Raikhad, followed by Gyaspur at 258 and 245 at Space Applications Centre (SAC) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bopal.

Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) Chairman RB Barad told The Indian Express, "It is usually seen that during winters – November to January – the AQI levels are higher than normal owing to the inversion effect. Factors other than industrial units like vehicular traffic, road condition and construction activity also contribute to higher pollution levels. This can be seen by comparing the AQI levels at SAC ISRO Bopal with no industrial units but the high construction activity."

On the measures taken to control pollution levels, Barad said, "We are regularly monitoring the AQI levels. Combined efforts by different departments including GPCB, police, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) are in place to spread awareness and control high pollution levels."

As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the weather was dry but officials said that "minimum temperatures rose appreciably to markedly in parts over the North Gujarat and Saurashtra." The reason attributed by IMD officials is the wind direction. "Due to Easterly and Southeasterly, warm winds from East and South East have resulted in higher temperatures in the state. Pollution level might be one of the reasons but it is more because of the warm winds and moisture incursion. There is no impact of the Ethiopian Volcano in Gujarat," IMD regional director AK Das told this paper.

However, Das said with the Northeasterly to Easterly winds prevailing at lower levels over the region from Friday onwards, the minimum temperatures will gradually fall after two days by 2-3 degrees.

**Outside Himachal House, parallel protests by BJP and Congress set the tone for day****Dharamshala. (Agency)**

The ongoing stalemate inside the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha spilled outside Friday with both the ruling Congress and Opposition BJP holding parallel protests in the Tapovan Assembly complex before House was convened for the day's session. Holding placards, the BJP and Congress legislators raised slogans against each other.

While the Congress members staged the protest demanding the immediate release of the Rs 1,500-crore special package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 9, the BJP leaders demonstrated against the government over pending pension arrears among others.

The Congress leaders alleged that it has been three months that the PM announced the special package but the state was yet to receive any funds. The party accused the BJP-ruled Centre of adopting a "step-motherly" attitude towards the hill state that has been trying to rebuild the infrastructure lost during the monsoon-induced disaster.

staged a protest in Dharamshala and warned that they will intensify the agitation if their demands are not met.



stated that employees and failing to fulfil the poll promises.

Among others, they have been demanding immediate decisions on pending Dearness Allowance, salaries, pension payments, medical bill clearance, reinstatement of Himcare benefits, and OPS commitments.

Sharma said the Congress had sought the support of employees and pensioners by assuring the timely disbursal of Old Pension Scheme (OPS) benefits, salaries, pensions, DA and medical reimbursements. "However, even after three years in power, most of these assurances remain unfulfilled and instead of improving, the situation is deteriorating," he said and claimed that despite the state's rising debt burden, instalments of DA, arrears, and health-related schemes like Himcare were being cut or delayed, creating serious difficulties for retired employees seeking medical treatment.

# Muslim cleric confronted for refusing to chant 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' in viral video

**A heated confrontation at Naharlagun's Jama Masjid in Arunachal Pradesh has sparked widespread debate after APIYO leaders challenged the mosque's cleric over patriotic slogans. The incident highlights tensions around identity, immigration, and nationalism in the region.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

A confrontation inside Naharlagun's Jama Masjid in Arunachal Pradesh has now gone viral after two leaders of the Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Association (APIYO) challenged the mosque's cleric for refusing to say "Bharat Mata ki Jai".

The video of the incident, filmed on November 27, shows tempers rising quickly as more people gather and chants grow louder. APIYO General Secretary Tapor Meying and President Taro Sonam Liyak are seen in the clip pressing the cleric to repeat the slogan. The cleric replies with "India Zindabad", but the group insists he must use the exact phrase they demand.

During the argument, Liyak is heard

saying, "Not every Muslim is a terrorist but why is every terrorist a Muslim?", further escalating the situation. The cleric maintains his position, responding, "India Zindabad hi kaafi hai. Bharat Mata ki Jai nahi bolenge hum. (India Zindabad is only enough. Will not say Bharat Mata ki Jai)"

He is also heard explaining that he can say "Hindustan ki Jai" or "India ki Jai" but will not use "Bharat Mata", saying a person has "only one real mother". The stand-off comes at a time when APIYO has been running a month-long campaign over what it describes as rising illegal immigration into Arunachal Pradesh.

The group had announced a bandh on

November 25 over the alleged illegal construction of a Jama Masjid near the Naharlagun helipad, but called it off after the Home Department intervened and assured action.

During Thursday's exchange, APIYO members questioned the cleric's identity and immigration status, alleging he may be a Bangladeshi Muslim who entered the protected state without the required Inner Line Permit (ILP) under the Bengal Frontier Regulation Act of 1873.

The clip has since spread widely across local social media channels, prompting sharp debates on patriotism, religious expression, and APIYO's ongoing mobilisation in the region. Police have not issued a formal response yet.



## Ghazipur Police Station Opposite Landfill Makes Delhi 'Shine', Ranked India's Best

New Delhi.(Agency)

A police station standing opposite to Delhi's towering Ghazipur landfill -- a site known more for stench and toxic fumes -- has scripted a success story by emerging as the best police station in India at the All India Police Conference in Raipur.

For most Delhites, the name Ghazipur instantly evokes the image of the "garbage mountain" that dominates the skyline and spreads an overpowering odour across the neighbourhood. "Amid all difficult backdrop, the police station opposite the landfill has quietly transformed itself into one of the country's finest, excelling in crime control, public service delivery, hygiene, infrastructure and community engagement," Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Abhishek Dhania told PTI. The officer said the Ministry of Home Affairs evaluated police stations across nearly 70 parameters -- ranging from investigation quality and case disposal to behaviour of staff, cleanliness, accessibility and overall grievance response. Ghazipur police station topped the national list after scoring exceptionally across these categories. This is the first time a police station in Delhi has secured a top-three position at the national level, and Ghazipur has gone straight to No. 1, he added.

Despite being located in one of the city's most challenging areas, the police station stands out for its spotless interiors and warm, citizen-friendly setup. "Inside, it looks more like a private office than a police station," another officer said, adding that the staff maintains rigorous cleanliness even though strong winds often carry the landfill's foul smell straight into the building.

Visitors are greeted by a mirror at the entrance inscribed with the message 'Aap bahut khoobsurat hain' (you are beautiful), meant to create a positive first impression and reduce the anxiety people often feel while entering a police station. Senior citizens, women and first-time visitors frequently describe the environment as friendly, the officer added.

## FIR against pan masala baron's son, wife in daughter-in-law suicide case

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Police has booked the son and the wife of pan masala baron in connection with his 38-year-old daughter-in-law's alleged suicide. A senior police officer said an FIR has been registered on the complaint of the victim's mother at the Vasant Vihar police station.

"On the complaint of mother of deceased, a case under section of 108/3(5) Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) (306/34 of the IPC) has been registered at Vasant Vihar police station against the husband and mother-in-law for further investigation," the officer added.



On Tuesday around 12 pm, the Vasant Vihar police station received information regarding the suicide of a woman. Her husband found her hanging from the ceiling at her in-law's house, following which he informed other family members and the police.

She was rushed to a hospital, where the doctors declared her brought dead. The body was shifted to Safdarjung Hospital mortuary. A police team inspected the spot and recorded statements. The post-mortem examination was conducted by the board and the body handed over to the family, police said. She got married in 2010 and was a homemaker.

The advocate of the family said, "Both families have decided to jointly carry out the cremation because we want to give full respect to her. It is a loss for both the families. The reports claiming 'marital discord' are false. There are no allegations in the suicide note. She has not held anyone to be responsible for this."

## Supreme Court sends back Bengal teacher hiring pleas to Calcutta High Court

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Supreme Court on Friday directed all matters related to the West Bengal school teacher recruitment controversy to be heard by the Calcutta High Court, emphasising that candidates previously identified as 'tainted' must not be allowed in the fresh selection process.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and Alok Aradhe noted that the apex court had been monitoring compliance with its earlier judgment, but with the High Court already examining the recruitment process in detail, it was appropriate for the state court to act as the first-instance authority. "The High Court shall ensure that none of the tainted candidates are permitted to slip through in the fresh selections, be it on any pretext. The High Court shall also ensure that the list of tainted candidates is placed in the public domain with full details," the Supreme Court said.



Earlier this week, the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) released a fresh comprehensive list of 1,806 'tainted' teachers who had been recruited earlier through the State Level Selection Test (SLST) conducted in 2016. Many petitioners had sought to withdraw their appeals from the Supreme Court to approach the High Court directly. The bench allowed these withdrawals and dismissed the petitions with liberty to move the Supreme Court level. With this, the Calcutta High Court now has full authority to conduct a comprehensive review of the recruitment process while ensuring transparency and fairness.

For remaining petitions, delays were condoned, but all issues were

ultimately referred to the Calcutta High Court.

The Supreme Court also reminded the High Court that candidates previously found untainted in the 2016 recruitment exercise must be allowed to appear in the fresh exams, and their prospects cannot be affected by the new rules framed for teacher appointments in 2025.

"The untainted candidates in the past selection were allowed to sit for the selection tests to be held afresh and their candidature cannot be adversely affected by application of the new rules," it said. The bench left interpretative questions arising from its earlier judgments to the High Court, disposing of all pending petitions and applications at the Supreme Court level. With this, the Calcutta High Court now has full authority to conduct a comprehensive review of the recruitment process while ensuring transparency and fairness.

## Airlines In India Work On A-320 Fix After EU Agency's Critical Alert

New Delhi.(Agency)

Hundreds of Airbus aircraft flown by Air India and IndiGo were affected by an emergency airworthiness directive issued by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The airlines will ensure full compliance of the mandatory checks by the end of the day, and no flights are likely to be cancelled, sources said. Any flight delay due to this issue will remain under 30 minutes, they said. The emergency airworthiness directive (EAD) temporarily grounds up to 6,000 Airbus A320-family aircraft globally until critical flight control fixes are made.

The civil aviation regulator DGCA in a 'mandatory modification' notice marked 'most urgent' to all airlines said they must check and replace what's technically called 'ATA 27' with flight controls and elevator aileron computer. The affected Airbus aircraft are of the series A318, A319, A320, A321/5. Air India in a statement said their engineers have been working round-the-clock to complete the task at the earliest.

"We have already completed the reset on over 40 per cent of our aircraft that are impacted by this, and are confident of covering the entire fleet within the timeline prescribed by EASA," it said.

Air India said there have been no flight cancellations due to this task and there isn't any major impact on schedule integrity across its network.

IndiGo said it has completed the mandatory Airbus safety update on 160 out of 200 mandated A320-family aircraft with minimal delays and zero cancellations. "Our diligent and hardworking engineering teams have already completed the mandatory Airbus safety update on 160 out of 200 AIB mandated A320-family aircraft, ensuring our fleet remains ready, reliable, and safe for your travels," IndiGo said.

"The remaining aircraft will be fully compliant well within the required timelines, and we're committed to keeping your experience smooth every step of the way."

### What Triggered Alert

The trigger of the EASA alert was a midair incident last month on a flight from Cancun to Newark, when an A-320 cruising at 35,000 feet suddenly pitched nose-down without pilot input, causing a brief but harrowing drop in altitude. The plane diverted safely to Tampa. Investigators zeroed in on a glitch in the elevator aileron computer or ELAC, a key system that translates pilot commands to the wings and tail.

## India, US Sign Rs 7,995 Crore Deal For Navy's MH-60R Seahawk Chopper Support

New Delhi.(Agency)

India on Friday sealed a Rs 7,995 crore deal with the US as part of "follow on support" package for Indian Navy's fleet of 24 Seahawk helicopters for five years. The signing of the contract came amid some strain in ties between the two countries after US President Donald Trump slapped a whopping 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods in late August. The defence ministry said it signed Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs) with the US for sustainment support of the MH60R helicopter fleet through follow-on support and supply for five years at an approximate value of Rs 7,995 crore. MH-60R, manufactured by Lockheed Martin Corporation, is an all-weather



helicopter designed to support multiple missions with state-of-the-art avionics and sensors.

The LOAs were inked under the foreign military sales programme of the US. India had signed an agreement with the US for procurement of 24 MH-60Rs in February 2020. The MH-60R Seahawk is a maritime variant of the Blackhawk helicopter.

The sustainment support is a comprehensive package which includes provisioning of spares, support equipment, product support, training and technical support, repair and replenishment of components, according to the defence ministry.

It also provides for setting up of intermediate level component repairs and periodic maintenance inspection facilities in India for the choppers.

"In-country development of these facilities will ensure capability build-up in the long run and reduced dependence on the US government, thus aligning with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat," the ministry said.

## Delhi Terror-Accused Doctors' Love Story And Slow Descent Into Terrorism

**Muzammil Shakeel, a Kashmiri doctor, was Shaheen Saeed's junior at the Al-Falah University in Haryana's Faridabad.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

A doctor, two failed marriages, a newfound love and a slow descent into terrorism -- that is the story of a 46-year-old woman, Shaheen Saeed, one of the key accused in the 10/11 blast near the iconic Red Fort in Delhi. Shaheen Saeed and Muzammil Shakeel, the two doctors who lost their licenses following the Delhi blast, married in September 2023 and this union, according to sources, is what introduced Saeed to the world of terrorism and led her to take the path.

### Lucknow To Delhi

Raised in Lucknow's densely populated Daliganj area, Saeed was a bright student. She pursued a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, or MBBS, from Allahabad and then specialised in pharmacology. Saeed's father, Syed Ahmad Ansari, is a government

employee and the family is considered a modest, educated, and socially respected one.

### 10 Years Of Marriage

Saeed married ophthalmologist Dr Zafar Hayat in 2003, and the couple had two children. But the relationship did not last long. "We were married in November 2003 and both pursued medical studies separately, with me being her senior," Dr Hayat said in an interview with . "Our divorce took place towards the end of 2012. I am not sure what was on her mind that led to it. There was never any dispute or quarrel between us. She was a loving and caring person. I never had any inkling that she could be involved in such activities. She was deeply attached to her

family and children, loved them immensely and took care of their studies. Recalling their years together, Dr Hayat said Saeed never wore a burqa

"Once she suggested that we settle in Australia or Europe for a better salary and quality of life. But I told her we already live a good life here, have good jobs and kids. We have our relatives and everyone here, we would feel alone there," Dr Hayat recalled.

### Distressed, Saeed Marries Again

The divorce was reportedly a significant blow to Saeed, who started to feel lonely. She abruptly withdrew from the Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial (GSVM) Medical College, where she used to teach, and stopped attending college without any notice. Saeed remained incomunicado for eight years, said sources, and in 2021, her job



except during their wedding. Professional stress, career, and Saeed's desire to move abroad are cited as the reasons for the

## NEWS BOX

**ICC warns members of 30% reduction in revenue next cycle****CHENNAI. (Agency)**

Mumbai batter Ayush Mhatre shattered Rohit Sharma's record following his breathtaking century in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Group A fixture against Vidarbha on Friday, November 28. Mhatre became the youngest player in the history of the game to register a century in all three formats of cricket namely First-class, List A and T20. The 18-year-old surpassed Rohit Sharma in the list, who achieved the feat at the age of 19y 339d. Former India under 19 World Cup winning captain also appears in the list on the third spot, having achieved the feat at 20 while Quintin de Kock and Ahmed Shehzad are also in top five. Mhatre produced a magnificent unbeaten 110 off just 53 balls to guide Mumbai to a commanding seven-wicket victory over Vidarbha in their Elite Group A encounter. The young opener unleashed eight sixes—many of them dispatched over the on-side—and struck eight boundaries in total to bring up his maiden T20 century in spectacular fashion. Mhatre's remarkable knock came on the very day he was



announced as India's captain for the Under-19 Asia Cup, scheduled to begin on December 12 in Dubai. Courtesy of his innings, Mumbai chased down the target of 193 with 13 balls to spare, finishing at 194/3 in 17.5 overs. Mhatre got involved in crucial stands with Suryakumar Yadav (35 off 30) of 88 from 59 deliveries for the third wicket and a quick fire 85-run partnership off 35 balls with Shivam Dube (39\* off 19) for the fourth wicket. Earlier, Mhatre got his name into the record books as he scored the fastest-ever hundred in the history of youth Tests. He completed the milestone in just 64 balls to help the team chase down 355 to win on the final day of the match. He was in stunning form during the series, scoring 340 runs from four innings as India won the series by 2-0. The teen sensation also had a phenomenal season for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in Indian Premier League 2025 (IPL 2025), scoring 240 runs in seven innings at an average of 34.28 and a strike rate of 188.97. Mhatre has been retained by the franchise ahead of the mega auction for the next season.

**Umran Malik vows to make India comeback, adds new tricks beside 150 kph speed****New Delhi. (Agency)**

Umran Malik has vowed to make a strong comeback to the Indian team. Once touted as a potential challenger to Shoaib Akhtar's record for the fastest delivery in international cricket, the pace sensation has slipped out of favour and lost his place in the national setup. After a breakout season with Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL, Malik has



endured inconsistent performances in recent editions. However, he has shown promising form for Jammu & Kashmir in the ongoing Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. He began the tournament with an impressive 4-0-24-2 against Maharashtra, followed by a 4-0-37-3 spell against Uttar Pradesh on Friday.

Umran said that with his rare ability to consistently bowl at over 150 kph, he remains confident of forcing his way back into the Indian side. He added that he is also working on making yorkers and slower balls key elements of his bowling arsenal.

**DOING BETTER NOW**

"It is not that I will feel bad mentally. I know that I will do well now. I will come back to the India team. I have confidence in myself because I am the only one who bowls at 150. But now I am bowling slower (balls) as well, which I am working on, and also the yorker. I am doing that in red-ball formats too, I'm working hard there," Malik told select media after J&K's match against UP. The rest is up to the selectors when they let me play. I am doing better now. Playing again for India is my aim now," Malik said.

"A bowler who bowls at 150 knows that he is a king and he has to back himself. Not everyone can bowl 150 kph. It takes real guts to bowl at 150 kph and I have been doing this for the last five years," he added.

Umran Malik has taken 24 wickets in 10 ODIs and nine T20Is for India since making his debut on the Ireland tour in June 2022. He has not featured for the national side since the 2023 tour of the West Indies.

**Courting hits & misses: Interview with tennis star Tamara Zidansek and Indian captain Vishal Uppal****In the city for the Billie Jean King Cup, tennis star Tamara Zidansek and ex-Davis Cup champ Vishal Uppal share what happens behind the scenes****New Delhi. (Agency)**

or the first time last week, India played host to the Billie Jean King Cup's playoffs, at the SM Krishna Stadium. Amidst the intense competition between The Netherlands, India and Slovenia, world number 163 Tamara Zidansek defeated India's Shrivalli Bhamidipaty with a 2-1 score, advancing to the qualifiers. We caught up with her for a brief talk on everything from the secret to her composure to Bengaluru travel plans, while veteran tennis player and Indian team captain Vishal Uppal weighed in on where the home team went wrong, the secret to nurturing champions and more. Excerpts:

Compared to when you were playing in the 2000s, how has Indian tennis changed?

There's lot more awareness now. You can see

how the girls worked hard with little support and reached a world playoff stage, which tells you the game is growing in the country. I've often said tennis is one of the popular sports but the worst marketed. We need to make sure that we get current and future generations the opportunities which we never got. Among all the players you've coached, mentored and played with, are there any that really left an impression on you?

If I were to single out one person, that would be unfair to everyone that I've coached. I've been fortunate enough to have a very beautiful relationship with all my trainees, whether they've gone on to play serious tennis or not. While I'm considered a teacher or a coach, I'm actually a student because kids can teach you so much if you're willing to learn.

**What have your students taught you?**

Every kid brings a unique quality and you have to be open to understand that in order to help them. It's a thought provoking process, not a one-size fits all situation. You have to tackle people's personalities. India lost to Slovenia in the play offs by a small margin. What do you think of the team's performance – what



did they do well and where did they slip up? My team gets an A+ for effort. All the girls really fought hard. The Slovenians were better in their athleticism and maturity. You could see why they are top 100 players, because when the match was getting tight, they just became more solid. That's something we have to learn because at top level tennis, if you give too many free points, it hurts you. Do you have a core or overarching philosophy as a mentor? How do you keep the team motivated after losses?

While everyone made a big thing about us creating history, we're fighting for something bigger – equality and opportunities for women in sports. I don't think I need to motivate my girls for that,

they're motivated themselves because they are the true ambassadors of women's tennis in India and they understand their struggles.

**What's next for the team?**

We will reassess what we did well, what we struggled with and then the work will begin again. What were some of the emotions running through your mind during the match in Bengaluru? It was tough, I feel like we had one of the toughest set-ups because we played The Netherlands who are the favourites. It was a long day and then, we came out against the home team which is always difficult. We had no days off, so it was hard to stay focused, but I'm really happy that I managed to do it. You've got a reputation of having great composure. How do you cultivate mental strength, especially with the pressure that comes with playing at the international level? I've had ups and downs in my career where I wasn't able to do that. But I've been able to by just focusing on myself, knowing that losing a tennis match doesn't mean everything at the end of the day, trying to separate tennis and my personal life and staying true to myself.

**Ben Stokes hits back at critics: Call England rubbish, but not arrogant****New Delhi. (Agency)**

Ben Stokes hit back at critics after England faced severe backlash for their eight-wicket defeat to Australia in the Ashes opener, where Mitchell Starc's seven-wicket haul and Travis Head's 69-ball century dismantled them. The match ended inside two days, making it the third-shortest Ashes Test in history.

Following the loss, Ian Botham, Mitchell Johnson and several others criticised England's approach. Johnson had earlier labelled the team "arrogant" in his column for The West Australian, while Botham said Stokes and his men might as well return home if they weren't willing to change their methods. Stokes responded by saying that questioning England's performance is fair, but calling them arrogant is not. He acknowledged that England faltered in Perth but insisted they still had their moments. Look, you can call us rubbish, call us whatever you want. We didn't have the Test match that we wanted to. We were great in passages of that game but I think arrogant might be a little bit too far," Stokes said before England's training on Saturday. "But that's okay. We'll take the rough with the smooth. I'd rather words like 'rubbish', but 'arrogant', I'm not so sure about that," Stokes said.

**ENGLAND ARE DESPERATE**

After the Perth setback, England will look to



the way they were expected. So many times has the FIH president Tayyab Ikram come to this city for international matches and events that he started his ceremonial speech in Tamil on Friday. No wonder, by the time

someone who has spent close to three decades watching from the best possible place the game could afford, knowing the angles, gaps, positions, drifts, drags and flicks, understanding the game and finally, imparting lessons, seems like a natural progression. The former India goalkeeper did not waste time cooling off after his second Olympic bronze medal. He had seen enough from the goal-line and shifted his attention to the sidelines where the master of orchestra in hockey would position himself as the coach. On Friday, in his biggest assignment of his nascent career as a coach, he was there watching his wards enact a performance a teacher would be happy with. It took 15 minutes for the team to warm up, but soon all the pieces of the 18-piece ensemble jived in unison. From the defence to the forwards, the transition in between, the players at the Junior World Cup performed like a well-oiled unit. The team arrived in Chennai early and got the feel of the turf and the weather and those vagaries of conditions were laid to rest. On Friday, they were at home. For the coach too Chennai is where he usually thrived in his greatness and it's this place he calls a home.

**DRS: Who is responsible for the lowest point in Indian cricket****Nikhil Naz**

Indian cricket has never had it this bad. Two home series whitewashes in a span of 13 months is unarguably the lowest point in Indian cricket. It's no coincidence that this phase has coincided with India's obsession with trying to play red-ball cricket with a white-ball mindset. Whether it's the obsession with all-rounders, IPL performances resulting in Test selection, or shuffling the playing XI on the basis of match-ups — in effect, all white-ball concepts cocking a snook at the grammar of Test cricket. As for the players — who is responsible for players' poor technique? With a think tank that refuses to get rid of the rank-turning pitches, never allowing players to fully adjust to one set of conditions and maximise 'home advantage', the players will struggle to develop the craft of prize wickets or batting with patience.

season. In today's edition of the Democratic Review System, where India Today journalists share their views on the sport's most pressing issues, we pose a straightforward question: Who is truly responsible for the mess Indian cricket

bounce back when the pink-ball Test begins on December 4 at The Gabba in Brisbane. Stokes said the visitors never give up the ghost and will give their all to draw level in Brisbane and keep their Ashes hopes alive. "We know that there'll be a lot of disappointed fans in England after that first defeat. But it's a five-game series, we've got four games to go, we've lost the first one - we're absolutely desperate to come home with that goal from before we even started the series, which is to win the Ashes," Stokes said. England have struggled in Australia since Andrew Strauss led them to a 3-1 series win in 2010-11, losing 14 of their last 16 Tests there, with the remaining two ending in draws.

**Kapil Dev slams India after South Africa series loss: More occupied with ODIs and T20Is**

**Kapil Dev has strongly criticised the Indian cricket team after their 0-2 whitewash loss to South Africa at home. He highlighted poor domestic cricket exposure and unfavourable pitch conditions as key reasons behind the team's struggles.**

**LONDON. (Agency)**

Legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev has lashed out at team India following their recent whitewash against South Africa on home soil. India suffered their second series loss in last 12 months at home, being whitewashed

0-2 at the hands of South Africa. It's the first time since 1984 that India lost a home Test series in back to back years, making the current phase one of the lowest in their Test history. Throughout the series, India batters capitulated South Africa's well-rounded bowling attack and had no answers to off spinner Simon Harmer, who was also adjudged player of the series. As India's struggles against spin once again came out in the open, Kapil Dev questioned the current lot of players for not playing domestic cricket on a variety of pitches to improve their technique. "That was because they had individual style, footwork, and the fact that they played good domestic cricket on a variety of pitches. I just want to know how many of today's top players are playing domestic cricket. That's the most crucial thing. If you don't play domestic cricket and don't face quality bowlers, you are going to struggle," Kapil Dev told Sportstar. The 1983 World Cup winning



skipper also criticised the pitch prepared for the first Test in Kolkata, where the match ended inside three days. He mentioned that in the modern era where main focus is on white-ball cricket, batters don't encounter bowler-friendly pitches and hence aren't able to counter challenging conditions. The pitches are very, very important. Not the type where the game ends in two and a half days.

You lose the toss and lose the game. What is the point of having a pitch where no team crosses 200? It is not good for the state of the five-day game. We are more occupied with T20s and ODIs, which means that batters hardly encounter bowler-friendly pitches. On surfaces offering a lot of help to spin and seam, you need patience and a different set of skills to thrive," he added.

Meanwhile, after suffering the whitewash, India have slipped to fifth spot in the ongoing WTC cycle with four wins from nine matches, holding a points percentage of 48.15. The Shubman Gill-led side will not play Test cricket for a while now, until their tour of Sri Lanka next year. With nine more Tests remaining in the ongoing cycle, four of which will be away from home, India face an uphill task in their bid to reach the final.

## Lancor Holdings to work on three redevelopment projects in Chennai

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Tamil Nadu's leading property developer Lancor Holdings Limited said that it is redeveloping three major projects within the Chennai city limits, which are Lancor Ananya on Warren Road, Mylapore, Lancor Residences in Alwarpet, and third at Kalakshetra Colony in Besant Nagar and also coming up with affordable housing in Sriperumbudur in Kanchipuram district.

The project on Warren Road has been approved by the authorities, Alwarpet project is in an advanced stage with documents been submitted to the authorities concerned and the Kalakshetra Colony project is proposed stage peaking to TNIE, JM Chandrasekar, CEO of Lancor, during the launch of senior citizen apartments Lancor Harmonia Pavilion at Sriperumbudur, said, "There are many more redevelopment projects we are taking up. But they are all at discussion state, so we don't want to disclose any details about. Moreover, we are also building an affordable housing complex in Sriperumbudur." Speaking about upcoming projects, Chandrasekar said the company plans to expand into affordable housing once its current project is completed. "We have a lot of land parcels available in Sriperumbudur. After finishing the ongoing project, we will start work on affordable housing there," he said. According to him, the government is extending support for such projects, with the Directorate of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) offering a subsidy of 90 per sq m outside city limits. "We don't have to pay any premium if a project does not exceed normal FSI limits," he added. Lancor recently secured a major relief in a 15-year legal dispute with the Menon family over Menon Eternity, a prime commercial property in RA. Puram that houses several leading IT companies. The dispute centred on the joint development agreement, under which Lancor was to receive 50% of the built-up area. In October, the Supreme Court, invoking Article 142, ruled in Lancor's favour. Internal assessments peg the property's current value at around Rs 190 crore.

The company, which reported a net loss of Rs 2.52 crore in Q2 FY26, expects the Supreme Court ruling to significantly improve its financial position.

"We will be getting about Rs 10-12 crore per annum after the judgment. We also have a few other projects to be rolled out over the next year. By the first quarter of FY27, we will report profits," said RV Shekar, Chairman and Managing Director of Lancor.

## India's growth fairy is back, but experts are warning of a slowdown in the second half

New Delhi.(Agency)

Real GDP grew by 8.2% in Q2, FY25 as against 5.6% a year ago, beating both the RBI and consensus estimates. For the first half of FY26, growth rate stood at a robust 8%.

The economy remained resilient, thanks to rising private consumption, investments, and front-loading of production and exports ahead of steep US tariffs. Economists, however, warn that growth could slow in the second half of the fiscal year due to a high base effect, the impact of tariffs and because of the private investments slowdown amid global uncertainty.

The recent GST cuts laid a welcome mat for consumption during the festive season, but it may or may not open that life-altering window as the government is anticipating. So analysts have pared down Q3 and Q4 growth projections to 6.5% and 6.3%, respectively. In other words, the rest of the year may not be as zestful as in the first half.

The IMF too has lowered the full fiscal FY26 growth projections to 6.6% in FY26, down from its July forecast of 6.4% citing high US tariffs. For FY27, it pegged growth at 6.2%. However, the RBI has retained its forecast and so has the government, which too stuck to its projections of 6.3%-6.8% in FY26.

On its part, the government insists that it'll withstand trade-related uncertainties and maintain growth through the rest of fiscal riding on strong demand, steady public spending and easing inflation. Above all, it believes that led by a favourable impact of GST rate rationalisation, the Indian economy was now on a stable footing.

## Cancer care: Insurance companies in India pay 70% of treatment costs, finds study

Kolkata.(Agency)

Getting insurance companies to pay -- and pay sufficiently so that patients do not suffer a hole in their pocket for medical treatment -- even after paying hefty premiums year after year, is one of the big financial concerns of the common Indian. In a recent survey report, it has come to light that insurance companies generally pay approximately 70% of claims related to cancer treatments, which leaves a gap of about Rs 4-5 lakhs, which poses a financial challenge for most of the patient parties. The report titled 'Cost of Cancer report' composed by insurance-tech company Plum was done after analysing 8,102 insurance claims of different insurance companies. It has found that in three years, claim deductions have jumped by 58%. What is most significant is that almost 30% of the bill generated by a hospital for a cancer patient has to be borne by the patient party -- patients had to cough up Rs 23.2 crore against Rs 78 crore paid by insurance companies. The report has stated a frightening piece of statistic -- if a patient has insured himself/herself for Rs 10 lakh, he/she might end up paying Rs 4-5 lakh from his/her pocket. The reason: exclusions applicable to modern drugs and sub-limits of treatments.

**Highest cost of treatment can get the lowest payout**  
The report has also flagged systemic flaws in policy design. It has mentioned that off-label drugs which are frequently used in modern cancer care are excluded from coverage. There is a 50% sub-limits on oral chemotherapy and advanced treatments. Furthermore, there are restrictive clauses such as room rent caps, waiting periods, and mandatory co-pays.

# With Gold Rallying And Markets Steady, What's The Best Strategy For Investors

**This trend has left many investors wondering whether they should shift towards gold, continue investing in equities, or split their portfolios between the two.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

New Delhi: Gold prices continue to surge while equity markets remain resilient, creating a rare scenario where both traditional safe-haven assets and growth assets are performing well at the same time. This trend has left many investors wondering whether they should shift

towards gold, continue investing in equities, or split their portfolios between the two. Gold's current rise is driven by global uncertainty, geopolitical risks, and expectations of looser monetary policies. Investors are increasingly turning to gold for safety and wealth protection, as it continues to act as a hedge against inflation and market volatility. Meanwhile, equities are supported by strong corporate earnings, improving macroeconomic indicators, and steady inflows from both domestic and foreign investors. Market experts believe that both asset classes are being fuelled by liquidity and broader confidence in long-term growth. In such a situation, financial planners suggest that investors shouldn't pick only one asset class. Instead, the



focus should be on diversification. Allocating a portion of one's portfolio to gold helps balance risk and protects against sudden corrections, while equities continue to offer long-term growth opportunities. Many advisors recommend holding at least 10-15 percent of a portfolio in gold, while keeping the rest

diversified across equities based on personal risk appetite. The current moment is also a good time to reassess financial goals and time horizons. If an investor needs liquidity in the near future, gold provides stability. For those with a longer investment horizon, equities may continue to perform, especially in an economy supported by strong fundamentals.

In short, the rise in gold and firm equity performance suggest that investors should avoid extreme shifts in allocation. Instead of betting on only one asset class, building a diversified portfolio—combining the safety of gold with the growth potential of equities—may be the most effective strategy in today's market situation.

## Weekly Review: Volatile start, record-setting rally, flat finish — D-Street closes week with restraint

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Indian equity markets delivered a turbulent yet ultimately constructive performance during the trading week of 24 to 28 November 2025, marked by a sharp pullback at the start, a powerful recovery in the middle and a muted close as investors paused after record-setting moves. The week began under pressure, with global risk sentiment turning cautious and cyclical sectors facing broad selling. The BSE Sensex declined by more than 300 points on Monday, while the Nifty 50 breached the 26,000 level on the downside to close just below 25,960, signalling the fragility that had built up after weeks of uneven momentum. Market internals showed clear stress in commodity-linked segments, with metals, real estate, chemicals and other economically sensitive pockets seeing the steepest declines, underscoring the pullback's cyclical character. In contrast, the IT sector provided a pocket of resilience even on the weakest day, supported by elevated expectations for a U.S. Federal Reserve rate cut, a theme that would quickly rise to dominate the week. At the start of the week, Motilal Oswal Financial Services projected that Indian equities would remain stable, anchored by healthy third-quarter demand growth, a strengthening consumption outlook for the December quarter, steady capital inflows and investors' preference for building positions during market dips. A senior analyst from the brokerage noted that sentiment was expected to stay resilient. "Any meaningful progress in India-U.S. trade negotiations could act as a pivotal near-term catalyst and provide an additional lift to market confidence," the analyst said. From Tuesday through Thursday, sentiment underwent a dramatic recalibration as global cues improved and domestic participants turned aggressive buyers at lower levels. The shift in tone was underpinned by rising conviction that US interest rates were near a peak, which not only stabilised currencies across Asia but also revived demand for Indian equities that had underperformed relative to peers in the preceding fortnight. This change brought a pronounced relief rally, during which both the Sensex and the Nifty 50 surged to fresh lifetime highs in intraday trade on Thursday. The Sensex climbed beyond 86,000 at its peak, while the Nifty 50 moved sharply above 26,200, reflecting a broad-based advance propelled by financials, diversified large caps and consumer-facing names.

## India On Path To Become 3rd Largest Economy By 2030 With \$7.3 Trillion GDP

New Delhi.(Agency)

Already the world's fourth largest economy, the nation is charting a confident course towards becoming the third largest one by 2030 -- with GDP projected at \$7.3 trillion, according to an official statement.

India's economic ascent continues to capture global attention and the current growth phase reflects the strength of decisive policymaking, structural reforms, and India's deepening global integration, the statement added. As per the latest data, the real GDP of India, adjusted for inflation, is estimated to grow by 8.2 per cent in Q2 of FY 2025-26 against the growth rate of 5.6 per cent during Q2 of FY 2024-25. The GDP in Q1 of FY 2025-26 grew at 7.8 per cent against the growth rate of 6.5 per cent during Q1 of FY 2024-25. Nominal GDP has witnessed a growth rate of 8.7 per cent in Q2 of FY 2025-26. Each sector of the economy is playing a pivotal role in the growth of the country. Primary sector experienced a remarkable softening, underscoring

GVA growth rate of 3.1 per cent in Q2 FY 2025-26. Similarly, the Secondary (8.1 per cent) and Tertiary Sector (9.2 per cent) have boosted the Real GDP growth rate in Q2 of FY 2025-26.



Real GDP in H1 (April-September 2025-26) registered a growth rate of 8 per cent in comparison of 6.1 per cent growth rate witnessed in H1 of FY25. Primary sector (2.9 per cent) experienced a moderate growth, whereas secondary (7.6 per cent) and tertiary sector (9.3 per cent) exhibited sustained expansion. India's inflation trajectory in October 2025 reflects a remarkable softening, underscoring

the economy's robust fundamentals and effective price management measures. Headline inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) eased to 0.25 per cent over the previous year, marking the lowest level recorded in the current CPI series.

The inflation remains well within the tolerance band of RBI. The moderation in inflation is consistent with the RBI's decision to maintain the repo rate at 5.50 per cent with a neutral stance, reflecting confidence in price stability and growth prospects, according to the statement. "India's economy is progressing on a stable and resilient growth path, supported by structural reforms, digital transformation, and a strong focus on inclusive development. With international organisations' confidence in the growth trajectory of India and stable macroeconomic indicators, the economy is well positioned to sustain its economic momentum," it added.

## MSMEs brace for higher business costs under new labour codes

New Delhi.(Agency)

The new labour codes could increase the cost of doing business for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), even as they are expected to enhance productivity and workforce stability over time, according to industry experts. "Labour Codes are a mixed bag. While they reduce compliances, they increase the cost by covering all employees—workers, managers, etc.—across factories, shops or offices under minimum wage. The cost would increase for unorganised MSMEs. The compliance cost of gratuity would also go up," said Anil Bhardwaj, Secretary General, Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME). The new codes mandate minimum wages, health coverage and access to basic facilities such as canteens, drinking water and rest areas.

MSMEs will need to reorganise wage structures to align with a unified wage definition and formalise HR processes. "Many smaller businesses don't have dedicated HR expertise, so interpreting the Codes and updating policies can be a daunting task. Adjusting working-hour norms, safety processes and payroll components may also create short-term uncertainty among employees," said Jayanth Neelakanta, Founder & CEO of Equip, a human resource firm that works closely with MSMEs. A note issued by the India SME Forum observed that MSME workers are now clearly covered under the Social Security Code. While this will strengthen worker protection and reduce high attrition levels, it may also push up payroll costs and prompt MSMEs to adopt cloud-based HR systems for

seamless compliance. Industry representatives say that while a wider social security net could make the sector more attractive to workers, support and awareness will be critical for smooth implementation. According to India SME Forum President Vinod Kumar, wider ESIC/EPF and insurance coverage for casual workers, fixed-term employees, gig and platform workers, and employees in hazardous industries will expand the social security net, requiring MSMEs to understand contribution rules and manage more structured monthly compliance. "Firms will need to be cautious to avoid legal consequences," he added. For many MSMEs, enforcement mechanisms could be another key concern. "The most challenging provision is the change in procedure for filing violations.

## Refund Stuck Know The Interest Payable To Salaried Individuals On Delayed ITR

New Delhi.(Agency)

Many salaried taxpayers who filed their income tax returns for Financial Year 2024-25 are still waiting for their refunds, even though several weeks have passed since the filing deadline. While the tax department generally processes refunds within a few weeks, this year many returns are under additional scrutiny—data mismatches, deduction verifications and backend checks have slowed things down. As a result, legitimate refund payments have been delayed beyond the usual processing timeframe.

To ease the burden on affected taxpayers, the law provides for interest on delayed refunds through Section 244A of the Income Tax Department (ITD). Under this provision, if a refund becomes due and the delay is not due to the taxpayer's own error, the department must pay simple interest at 0.5 percent per month (roughly 6 percent per annum) on the amount payable. For returns filed before the official deadline, interest accrues from April 1 of the assessment year until the refund is issued. If the return was filed late, the interest period begins from the



actual date of filing. That said, the interest applies only if the refund delay is attributable to the department. If the delay stems from mistakes by the taxpayer—such as incorrect bank or PAN details, late verification, or discrepancies in declared information—the interest may be waived. Similarly, in certain cases (e.g.

very small refund amounts, or refunds arising from only self-assessment tax adjustments), interest may not be granted despite the delay. Therefore, being diligent at the time of filing—ensuring correct bank details, Aadhaar/PAN linkage, accurate deductions and prompt compliance with

any notices—remains crucial. Taxpayers keen to check their refund status can log in to the official e-Filing portal using their PAN or user credentials. Under "View Filed Returns," the status will show as "Refund Issued," "Refund Partially Adjusted," "Refund Failed," or other relevant messages. If the refund has failed due to incorrect bank validation, there may be an option to submit a "Refund Re-issue Request." Regularly checking the portal and keeping contact information updated helps ensure that once the refund is processed, money—along with any applicable interest—lands in your bank account smoothly. With most pending refunds expected to be released soon, eligible taxpayers should receive not only their excess tax amount but also compensation in the form of interest for the delay. While the compensation may not be large, it represents a recognition that taxpayers should not suffer financially due to administrative delays. In the meantime, staying vigilant about return accuracy and e-verification can help avoid added delays or denial of interest.



# Rashmika Mandanna

Looks Stunning In Ethnic Wear, Fans Call Her Their 'Crush'

**R**ashmika Mandanna is undeniably having one of the strongest years of her career, delivering a streak of major hits including Chhaava, Sikandar, Thamma and her much-talked-about film The Girlfriend. Even weeks after its release, The Girlfriend fever continues to grip fans and Rashmika's latest Instagram post has only added to the ongoing excitement. The actress treated her followers to a beautiful photo series, showcasing her love for traditional Indian wear, leaving fans awestruck with her graceful ethnic looks.

#### Rashmika Radiates Royal Charm in an Embroidered Off-White Ensemble

In one of the photographs, Rashmika was seen wearing a long, off-white kurta adorned with rich gold and red embroidery around the neckline and bodice. She accessorised the look with elegant rings and a dainty gold bracelet. Her hair gently cascades in loose, soft waves parted at the center, enhancing the serene vibe of the outfit. She keeps her makeup subtle and luminous, highlighting her eyes with bold kohl or winged eyeliner paired with a nude or mauve-pink lip shade.

#### Rashmika's Blush-Pink Look Steals Hearts with Minimalist Grace



Another picture from the carousel features Rashmika wearing a full-sleeved blush-pink kurta enriched with delicate lace detailing along the sleeves and front. The round neckline includes understated embroidery. Her hairstyle changes to a relaxed half-tie with loose fringes framing her face, making the look feel effortless yet elegant. With small gold earrings and a fresh, dewy makeup finish focusing on warm lip tones and strong brows.

#### Rashmika Adds a Musical Touch With Em Jaruguthondi From The Girlfriend

To add more emotional depth to the post, Rashmika paired the images with the song "Em Jaruguthondi" from The Girlfriend. For the caption, she kept things simple and expressive, using just two white hearts and a bow emoji.

#### Fans Shower Rashmika With Praises

The comment section was instantly flooded with love, appreciation and heart emojis from fans. One user wrote, "Bhooma was not only just a character but also a girl where every girl went through that phase where Bhooma faced thank you for making such a good film Rosh!!"

Another admirer commented, "Wow, you look beautiful. These eyes are like pearls" while a third user simply wrote, "Crush", expressing their admiration for the actress.

**Mahhi Vij Set To Return To TV With A Bang, Ankita Lokhande Wishes Good Luck: 'So Proud Of You'**



**M**ahhi Vij is gearing up for her upcoming show, Seher Hone Ko Hai, garnering immense love from her fans and industry friends. She will star in the role of a fearless mother in Colors TV's new series, alongside Parth Samthaan and debutant actress Rishita Kothari, among others, in key roles. Now, Ankita Lokhande extended her heartfelt wishes for the Balika Vadhu star, who is returning to TV after three years. Taking to her Instagram stories, Ankita Lokhande reshared a promo video for Seher Hone Ko Hai, featuring her friend, Mahhi Vij. The clip teases audiences with the latter's upcoming on-screen role as a mother who will go to any lengths for her daughter's career.

Praising Mahhi's versatile acting skills, the Pavitra Rishta star penned a note atop the video and also extended her heartfelt wishes for the upcoming show. "@mabhivij so proud of you girl.. wishing you lots and lots of success and a heartiest looking forward to watch this!! Happiness," read her caption.

#### More About Seher Hone Ko Hai

The upcoming television serial is a story of a mother's courage in support of her daughter's dreams. Produced by Richa Yamini under Icecream Dreams and Aarambh Entertainment, and Sargun Mehta, Seher Hone Ko Hai will premiere on December 2 on Colors TV. It stars social media influencer and debutant actress Rishita Kothari in the titular character, opposite Parth Samthaan as Mahid Niyazi. Mahhi Vij will appear as Kausar, Seher's mother, while Apurva Agnihotri will be seen as Dr. Farid.

#### Mahhi Vij Returns To TV After 3 Years

Best known as Nakusha in Laagi Tujhse Lagan and Nandini in Balika Vadhu, the 43-year-old actress has appeared in numerous television shows, films and music videos. Her first film was in Malayalam, starring Mammootty, titled Aparichithan. Afterwards, she entered the television industry in 2006 as the supporting female lead in the TV series Akela. After being part of several projects, she got married to actor Jay Bhanushali in 2011. In 2017, they fostered a boy named Rajveer and a girl named Khushi. Following this, they welcomed a daughter, Tara, into their lives in 2019 and continue to share heartfelt moments on their respective social media platforms.

#### Mahima Chaudhary Stuns In Chic

**Airport Look Days After New Film Announcement**



**M**ahima Chaudhary, who recently created buzz by announcing her upcoming film, is once again winning hearts with her effortless style.

The actress has been serving looks with her latest airport appearance, and as always, Mahima greeted the paparazzi with her warm smile and posed graciously before heading inside.

Clicked by photographers at the airport, she looked stylish yet comfortable in a laid-back ensemble. Mahima wore a navy-blue coat layered over a crisp white T-shirt, paired with relaxed, black, baggy pants.

A shirt tied casually around her waist added an extra edge to her outfit. She completed the look with a blue cap and black sunglasses.

#### Viral Wedding Video With Sanjay Mishra Leaves Fans Confused

A few days earlier, Mahima sparked a wave of curiosity when a video of her dressed as a bride beside veteran actor Sanjay Mishra went viral across social media platforms. The clip featured Mahima draped in a stunning red saree, while Sanjay Mishra appeared in a traditional shawl. Their picture-perfect "newlywed" pose had fans wondering whether Mahima had secretly remarried. The reality behind the viral visuals was much different. The scene was part of a promotional shoot for their film Durlabh Prasad Ki Dusri Shaadi, directed by Siddhant Raj. In the film, Mahima and Sanjay Mishra portray a middle-aged married couple and the wedding-themed shoot was created solely for promotional impact.

#### The Teaser of Durlabh Prasad Ki Dusri Shaadi Delights Audiences

The pairing of Sanjay Mishra and Mahima Chaudhary has quickly become one of the most refreshing collaborations of the year. Their natural chemistry and playful dynamic have now been highlighted in the official teaser of Durlabh Prasad Ki Dusri Shaadi, which recently dropped online.

# Aisha Sharma

Spotted In An All-Black Outfit, Fans Scream 'Kya Baat Hai'

**A**isha Sharma, known for her role in Satyamev Jayate, has become a favourite of the paparazzi. Frequently spotted out and about, she shares a warm rapport with the photographers, who often capture her candid moments around the city. In a recent paparazzi video, Aisha Sharma was seen stepping out of her car in an all-black outfit. She completed her look with a blue cap and a sling bag. The actress patiently posed for the photographers and waved back at them before heading inside the venue. Fans were quick to react to the video. A user wrote, "Looking so pretty." Another one added, "Kya baat hai!"

#### Aisha's Love For Black

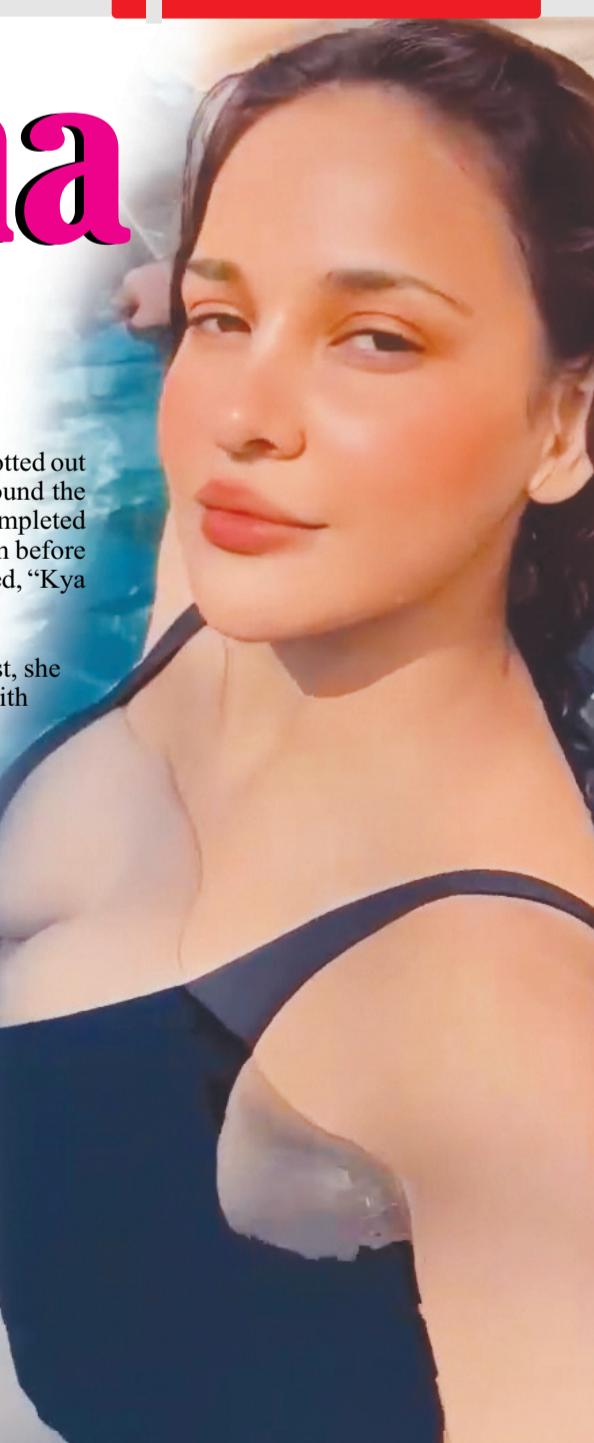
Whether it's casual paparazzi moments or high-end events, Aisha always sticks to black. In her latest Instagram post, she stunned in a sexy backless black dress with a deep neckline. Her caption read, "Fit Check, wearing @flockthelabel. Unrushed. Unbothered. Undeniable."

A comment on her post read, "Both Neha and Aisha are so nice and humble. Grounded people with pure hearts." Another user commented, "How can you be so perfect? Upar wale ne fursat mein banaya hoga, take a bow." Someone added, "Your elegance is unmatched, such a classic beauty." A user chimed in, "Looking so gorgeous, Aisha!" An individual remarked, "Loved this outfit so

much and the colour, uff!!"

#### Aisha Admits She's Feeling Nervous

On Thursday, Aisha put up a story saying she was feeling nervous. The following day, she shared another one which was a rant about all the messages she received after that story. The actress explained that people kept asking her 'what' and 'why,' and she responded by saying that there is no what or why, and she's just nervous. She explained, "It doesn't happen often, but when it does, there usually isn't a specific reason." She also mentioned that someone messaged her saying her nervousness must be because of love. Addressing this, Aisha said she doesn't understand why people connect every emotion to love, and she doesn't want everything to be linked to it.



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**S**mall spaces are often perceived as restrictive design challenges, but an effective design strategy can transform them into aesthetic, functional environments. With its inherent veining and polished finish, marble can reshape these intimate areas into expansive reveries, exuding luxury and finesse. The natural stone enhances a room's aesthetic appeal and creates a sense of openness that defies the physical limitations of such areas.

The light-reflective properties of marble can enhance spatial perception in compact spaces. The stone's polished surface, particularly in neutral shades like Michel Angelo, Angelo White or Statuario, reflects daylight, making a zone appear brighter and more spacious. This reflective subtlety can strategically expand visual dimensions, creating an illusive ambience fluidly dissolving the confines of walls. In small areas where light is often limited, the luminous quality of marble plays a transformative role, infusing the room with an ethereal glow that elevates the entire atmosphere.

The innate veining of marble adds a layer of sophistication without overwhelming the eye. Its gentle, organic lines bring movement to surfaces, guiding the

gaze across the space and fostering a sense of fluidity. A feature wall adorned with dramatic Sodalite Gold stone or a sleek backsplash in Maurizio or Emerald Quartz marble can become a compact space focal point, introducing texture and richness while maintaining a seamless flow. This quiet elegance transforms small interiors from a constricted area into a polished, inviting retreat.

The versatility of marble also allows it to play multiple

## Small space solutions Using marble to make Rooms feel larger



roles in small areas, making it a multifunctional and artistic material. Marble can be effortlessly integrated across various surfaces, creating continuity and extending visual space. For instance, a kitchen island with a marble countertop can serve as a functional kitchen surface and a classic dining table, merging utility with visual poetry. Likewise, marble flooring throughout a residence or a commercial area creates a harmonious cohesion, making individual zones a part of a larger continuum.

Bespoke marble designs can redefine a space, conveying artistry and grandeur. Its timeless appeal is also a testament to its longevity, making it a sound investment for small areas where quality endures over time. With proper care, natural stone's strength and durability ensure it retains its aesthetic allure for years. It is ideal for high-traffic areas like entryways, foyers, or kitchens, which face constant and inevitable wear and tear.

Marble plays a significant role in small spaces, transcending its physical presence to serve as an architectural expression of light, texture, and intrinsic beauty. It is a statement of refined taste and an exemplification of perpetual design, making even the most compact rooms expansive, luminous, and memorable.

## 5 herbs you can easily Grow on your balcony



**T**here is nothing quite like the flavour of adding some freshly minced parsley to your creamy spaghetti. Whether it's a sprinkle of parsley on your soup or a sprig of mint in your tea, fresh herbs elevate our culinary experience.

While having a huge garden might seem like a luxury, putting together a garden on your balcony is achievable. Here are five herbs that you can grow

easily in your balcony garden.

### Basil

Basil is a quintessential herb for many cuisines. The aromatic basil leaves are perfect for making pesto, adding flavor to pasta, or topping a classic Margherita pizza. This herb comes with minimal maintenance. Watering the plant regularly and occasionally pruning it will keep your basil plant lush and healthy. If your



balcony is well-lit by the sun, basil herb would be a perfect addition to your garden. The delightful fragrance of the basil leaves also makes it a great natural air freshener for your balcony.

### Cilantro

Cilantro aka coriander is a star ingredient in various cuisines. All it needs is well-drain soil and moderate sunlight to flourish. Cilantro is perfect for small spaces as it grows quickly and doesn't need much room. The leaves can be used both as a garnish and also as an ingredient in various curries, soups, and salads. The flavourful spice will grow all around the season, and give a steady supply!

### Thyme

This culinary herb needs minimum to zero maintenance, making it ideal for a balcony garden. The hardy herb is drought-resistant, and grows best in well-drained soil, and requires plenty of sunlight. The earthy aroma and robust flavor of thyme make it a standout herb. From roasted vegetables to meat dishes

and stews, you can use thyme in a variety of dishes. As the herb is compact, it is perfect for the balcony.

### Parsley

Parsley is a staple herb, used in various cuisines. This low-maintenance herb will grow well in pots. The plant requires moderate sunlight and regular watering. There are several varieties of parsley available, and you can buy one according to your preference. They are a great addition to soups, stews, and salads.

### Mint

How can you call it a garden without a mint plant? This is probably one of the easiest herbs to grow and maintain. Mint can adapt to both sunny and partially shaded areas, and hence it is perfect for balconies with varying light conditions. They grow quickly and it is best to plant them in separate pots. From teas to mojitos, and desserts, this refreshing and cooling herb is a summer favorite. Planting one in your garden will give you the herb all around the year.