

## Bhagwant Mann's Vision Turning Punjab into "Rangla Punjab": A State in Full Flight

The Sikh Times  
Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi 1st December: Since taking oath as Chief Minister of Punjab, Bhagwant Mann has embarked on a resolute mission to transform Punjab: socially, economically, culturally and infrastructurally. Under his leadership, the state is witnessing a flurry of welfare schemes, development drives, and reforms aimed at uplifting the common people — especially the marginalized, farmers, workers, women, the elderly, and youth.

One of the headline achievements of Mann's government is the launch of Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana (MMSY), a universal health-cover scheme offering ₹10 lakh annual cashless treatment per family, irrespective of income. The scheme, covering all families in Punjab, provides access to both government and empanelled private hospitals.

Under social security measures, the state has directed significant funds toward support for widows, destitute

women, elderly persons and other vulnerable groups so that social welfare becomes not charity, but a right. Through the Ashirwad Scheme, the government is offering financial assistance (₹51,000) for marriages of girls from low-income families belonging to SC, backward or economically weaker sections — a step to ease financial burdens on poor families and promote social dignity. These measures reflect Mann's promise that "Punjab belongs to Punjabis" — ensuring that no honest citizen is left behind, and that welfare is inclusive, transparent, and respectful.

Understanding that welfare must be matched by infrastructure and development, the Mann government has launched Rangla Punjab Scheme — a sweeping development programme under which each assembly constituency is allocated funds for local infrastructure, roads, community projects, and more. On November 27, 2025, the first instalment of ₹213 crore was released (out of a total ₹585 crore



earmarked for the year), aimed at ensuring no village, town or city is left behind. Officials say funds will go to panchayats, zila parishads and urban bodies kickstarting projects that were long overdue. According to statements, the state is also pushing to improve roads: reports mention tens of thousands of kilometres of road network upgrades under government planning. Moreover, under Mann's leadership, the government has pledged major works for grassroots including rural

upliftment, urban infrastructure, connectivity and local development with committees of MLAs and officials monitoring the work to ensure transparency and accountability. Bhagwant Mann's government is also pushing for economic revival across sectors. Through support for small industries and agro-enterprises, efforts are ongoing to encourage entrepreneurship and generate jobs, particularly for labourers and daily-

wage workers. The path of organised agro-industry in line with national schemes but with state-level facilitation. These moves aim not only to uplift rural Punjab, but also to curb the persistent agrarian distress by providing alternate livelihoods and better income avenues beyond traditional agriculture. Understanding that Punjab's future lies with its youth, Mann's administration is said to be planning as per internal announcements the development of multiple sports stadiums, youth-oriented infrastructure, and community facilities.

According to government sources, thousands of stadiums are to be built across rural and urban constituencies under the Rangla Punjab plan.

Such investments aim to give Punjabi youth a platform to excel in sports, arts or community development rather than being drawn to drugs, despair or migration. The larger narrative under Mann's vision is: build hope, build future, build Punjab as a land of opportunity.

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## E Shinde's 'Coalition Dharma' Note As 'Poaching Row' Rocks BJP-Led Mahayuti

Mumbai.(Agency)

The violation of a 'non-poaching' pact between the BJP and its ally, the Shiv Sena, in Maharashtra has ramped up tension in the ruling Mahayuti alliance as it prepars for the Mumbai civic election, a battle for the world's richest municipal corporation.

Alliance leaders Devendra Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde tried to play down talk of a rift.

Asked if he deliberately avoided meeting Shinde last week - at a hotel while both were on the campaign trail - Fadnavis laughed and said, "I came in late at night and had to leave before him... my meetings are scheduled earlier than his. So, we did

not meet. But we will. What is the big deal? We're both busy campaigning now but we talk on the phone every day..."

Shinde - who led a 2022 rebellion, allegedly orchestrated by the BJP, which broke the then-undivided Sena and helped the BJP reclaim power - offered similarly reassuring comments. "I don't take such comments seriously. From the day I became Chief Minister I have seen and heard many such accusations. Instead of getting caught in that, I focus on my work." "This alliance was not formed yesterday or today.

This alliance is built on a shared ideology and common principles," he said, referring to Bal Thackeray, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and LK Advani. But one comment - "we

fully follow principles of coalition dharma... our alliance partners should also follow" - has raised eyebrows, suggesting all is not well within the partnership.

And a comment by Manikrao Kokate from the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party, the third member of the Mahayuti, has added to that unsettled feeling. "The BJP appears completely divided... it no longer has anything of its own. Their entire life revolves around manipulation, splitting here and there," he said. "And their old workers are all at home."

## Lalu, RJD run in circles after 10 Circular Road eviction notice

New Delhi.(Agency)

Patna's 10 Circular Road, probably the city's hottest real estate address after CM Nitish Kumar's 1 Aney Marg, has housed the RJD first family for two decades. But after the NDA swept the Assembly polls in Bihar, former CM and the Leader of Opposition in the state Council, Rabri Devi, has been allotted a new bungalow at 39 Hardinge Road, barely a kilometre away and closer to her workplace.

Just the mention of the RJD first couple having to shift out of the 10 Circular Road bungalow, which is considered the party's power centre, has sparked consternation among its leaders, triggered a controversy and sparked a house hunt.

The RJD family has shown clear reluctance to move out. And even as the political back-and-

forth played out, reports surfaced that Lalu Prasad Yadav had visited a sprawling under-construction



mansion in Patna's Danapur.

The visit triggered a political storm, with the JD(U) questioning the source of funds and its spokesperson Neeraj Kumar dubbing the

mansion "grander than Golghar", Patna's iconic 18th-century granary.

The Bihar Building Construction Department, after the new NDA government took oath, issued a notice to former CM Rabri Devi, directing her to shift to 39 Hardinge Road. The 10 Circular Road bungalow was allotted to Rabri Devi in 2006 after she vacated the CM's residence.

Since then, the Lalu family has lived at 10 Circular Road continuously, irrespective of Rabri Devi's political role. Now, the eviction notice has effectively left Rabri Devi with no option but to vacate 10 Circular Road. The move hasn't gone down well with the RJD. The Yadav family may be maintaining silence, but party leaders are in full attack mode on the NDA government.

## Mallikarjun Kharge vs Kiren Rijiju in Rajya Sabha over Jagdeep Dhankhar's exit

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday welcomed Vice President CP Radhakrishnan as the new Rajya Sabha Chairman, but mentioned the "unexpected exit" of former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, who resigned on health grounds in July. Kharge's remarks drew a fiery response from Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who flagged the "unkind words" used by the Opposition on Dhankhar in the past. Kharge, the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, delivered his customary remarks, welcoming Radhakrishnan as the new Chair, but said that the House did not get an opportunity to hold a grand farewell ceremony for Dhankhar. "...I hope you will not mind that I am constrained to refer to your

predecessor's completely unexpected and sudden exit from the office of the Rajya Sabha Chairman, which is unprecedented in the annals of parliamentary history. The Chairman, being the custodian of the entire House, belongs as much to the opposition as to the government," Kharge said.

"I was disheartened that the House did not get an opportunity to bid him a farewell. Regardless, wish him, on behalf of the entire opposition, a very healthy life," the Congress President said, drawing slogan from the BJP members.

Hitting back at Kharge, BJP leader and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju questioned the former's need to raise

Dhankhar's resignation on a "solemn occasion". He then attacked the Opposition for using "unkind words" on Dhankhar in the



past. "Why did the Leader of the Opposition refer to a case that was not necessary to raise at this point? I want to remind the House of the

language used to insult the former Vice President. The unkind words that you used against the former Vice Chairman and the removal motion that you served, a copy of which we still have, we have not forgotten," Rijiju said as Opposition benches started to protest. Appealing to Kharge and the Opposition members to refrain from talking about Dhankhar's resignation, Rijiju said, "Just think how much you have tarnished the dignity of the Chair. We should respect everyone in a democracy. This is unfortunate."

During his address, Kharge reminded Radhakrishnan of his past association with the Congress and urged him to remain impartial, warning that any tilt towards the BJP could be "dangerous."

Sloganeering broke out in the Rajya Sabha after Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge mentioned the "unexpected exit" of former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar earlier this year, drawing a retort from Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju.

Front continued news

## Bhagwant Mann's Vision Turning Punjab into "Rangla Punjab": A State in Full Flight

One of the recurring commitments of Chief Minister Mann is a zero-tolerance stance against gangsterism, drug smugglers and organised crime that had long plagued certain parts of Punjab. In public addresses, he has affirmed that "no Pakistani-backed or domestic gangster will be spared," and that every Punjabi, regardless of status, will get protection under law. By combining welfare, development and security, the Mann government seeks to restore the faith of ordinary Punjabis that the State cares — not just for the elite, but for every citizen.

In Mann's own words: when Punjab advances, the nation advances. The renewed focus on infrastructure, health, agriculture, industry, social welfare and youth development is meant to make Punjab a model state one that can contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress. Under his leadership, the aim is to create a "number-one" Indian state, where every Punjabi's dignity, livelihood and future are safeguarded.

Ensuring effective delivery of welfare and development funds at grassroots — through vigilance monitoring, transparency and accountability. Overcoming entrenched bureaucratic inertia, vested interests, and the legacy of neglect in many rural or underprivileged areas. Making social welfare, infrastructure, health and development schemes sustainable so that short-term gains translate into long-term progress. Ensuring equitable growth balancing benefits across different castes, communities, rural and urban zones, to avoid inequality or regional imbalance.

However, the early signs under Mann's government are promising. With bold schemes like Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana, Ashirwad, Rangla Punjab — and a public commitment to uplift farmers, workers, women, the elderly and youth — Punjab is charting a new path. For decades, political promises in Punjab often remained paper-bound, or limited to the elite. Mann's approach appears different: inclusive, expansive, ambitious aiming to touch every village, every family, every citizen. If implemented with sincerity and oversight, these policies can usher a transformational change for Punjab: economically, socially and morally. It could end youth restlessness, curb migration, reduce crime and drugs, and restore Punjab's pride as a land of valor, culture and enterprise.

For readers of The Sikh Times, especially Punjabis across states and abroad this is a defining moment. The narrative of "Rangla Punjab" isn't mere slogan: it is a hope for a new beginning.

## 59-lakh salary scam in Nuh school leads to FIR against DDO

### Gurgaon.(Agency)

An FIR has been lodged against a former drawing and disbursing officer (DDO) and a messenger at a govt school in Nuh district after a former teacher discovered that over Rs 59 lakh was siphoned off using employees' unique codes. The mathematics teacher — who was transferred eight years ago — has alleged that "sizeable amounts were withdrawn in his name, without his knowledge". Following directions from the SP office, Bichhor police registered the FIR on Nov 28, naming former DDO Mohammad Ali and school messenger Wahid Ahmad as accused. The complainant, Hamid Husain, alleged the fraud began while he was posted at Government Senior Secondary School, Singar, Punhara, between 2009 and Sept 2017.

Hussain alleged the duo used similar tactics to tamper with the unique codes and financial details of multiple employees, siphoning off a total amount exceeding Rs 59,28,224. Hussain said he filed complaints in July 2018 to the principal, BEO, DEO and the education directorate in Panchkula, but action was initiated only after the SP office intervened.

## Horticulture waste, blocked drains, illegal vendors: What ails Noida's Alpha 1



### Noida.(Agency)

Residents of Alpha 1 in Greater Noida have raised concerns over the neglect of horticulture and sanitation works in the area. They alleged waste from pruned trees have been lying for 10 days, and also complained about sewer and sanitation problems, security concerns, and unauthorised street vendors. The sector RWA has written to the CEO of Greater Noida Authority, highlighting these unresolved issues.

Sher Singh Bhati, RWA president of Alpha 1, said that the horticulture department began pruning the trees approximately 10 days ago. However, the remains of dry leaves and branch cuttings remain uncollected, creating an unsightly and hazardous environment. The contractor responsible for these tasks has left the job incomplete due to the expiration of his contract six months ago, Bhati claimed, adding, "The parks are in poor condition, water is not being supplied, and trees and plants have dried up." He demanded immediate action in the absence of a response from officials. Additionally, residents expressed dissatisfaction with sanitation services in the sector. Gajendra Dutt Sharma, a resident, pointed out that the cleanliness of certain areas, specifically around house A-201, has not been maintained. "Cleaning should be done regularly, which was skipped even on holidays like Diwali," he said, adding that cleaning had become sporadic and inadequate.

## Key Gurgaon roads turn dust bowls,

## 20 teams to conduct inspections

### Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Haryana Pollution Control Board (HPCB) on Sunday deployed 20 teams across the city for a full-day sector-by-sector dust inspection. Seventy officers from across Haryana have been assigned zones covering all major sectors. This comes after Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) asked HPCB for an immediate field audit after widespread deposits were found along key stretches this week. Each team must document dust loads, construction debris, untreated patches and roadside dumping and send photo and video reports to the board by Dec 1. CAQM wants a clear, ground-level picture of how dust-control norms are actually being enforced — regular sprinkling, covering loose soil, managing construction material and prompt debris removal.

A letter from HSPCB member secretary Pradeep Kumar said, "Teams have been allowed to hire taxis or jeeps if official vehicles aren't available, suggesting the inspection will run across multiple hours and dispersed sites. The

board will compile the zone-wise findings in a day and submit them to the CAQM for further action." An official who is part of the inspection said, "Fresh checks flagged excessive dust on arterial roads, including stretches where construction work and soil movement have been frequent." These dust-covered roads are what set off the CAQM order for a rapid assessment.

Road dust remains one of Gurgaon's most stubborn pollution sources, often pushing up PM10 levels even on days when other sectors show improvement. The HSPCB's deployment plan divides the city into 20 zones. Sectors 3 to 10 will be covered by a team from Karnal. Sectors 11 to 23 have officers from Faridabad and Bhiwani. The central belt from Sectors 31 to 70 has teams from Mahendragarh, Rewari, Rohtak and Sonepat. Outer sectors and the IMT-Manesar cluster will be inspected by officers from Ballabgarh, Nuh, Kaithal,



Hisar, and Gurugram (North and South). Winter's stagnant conditions make unmanaged dust far more visible and harmful and Gurgaon has been stuck in the very poor bracket for much of the week. TOI reported several times that Gurgaon is mostly covered with a cloud of dust and the phenomenon is exacerbated by the low-lying soil and the strong wind effect in the Indo-Gangetic plain. The problem is compounded by dry winters and summers. Also, the resuspension of road dust because of

vehicular traffic is of particular concern as unpaved roads were cratered and cracked at certain points but still saw heavy traffic during peak hours, with thousands of cars and bikes kicking up a dust storm. Though it has been recommended to use dust suppressants to mitigate pollution from dust, the civic authorities like GMDA and MCG hardly use any such spray on roads; it keeps the dust down for longer. Also, the majority of Gurgaon is still under manual sweeping, and as a result, the dust does not get disseminated from the area. Most areas are either missing green belts or there are hardly any trees on the side of the roads. Every year, the city gets an urban target of plantation, but hardly any drive is carried out in the city.

For instance, last year GMDA had a target of 1,050,000 saplings, of which it has so far planted 167,000. This means just 16% of its target has been achieved. Similarly, MCG had a target of 525,000 saplings, out of which it has achieved 12%.

## Season's tally 659, farm fire count hits 6year low in Haryana

### Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Haryana has concluded its stubble-burning season with a reduction in farm fires, recording just 659 incidents between Sept 15 and Nov 29, the lowest in six years. This marks an 85% decrease from the peak of 6,969 fires in 2021. The state reported 4,185 cases in 2020, while the count was 3,647 in 2022, 2,296 in 2023, and 1,389 in 2024. A district-wise analysis reveals steady improvements. Ambala, which witnessed 97 fires last year, recorded only 7 this season. It reported 346 in 2020, 307 in 2021, 224 in 2022, and 195 in 2023. Kaithal saw a reduction from 194 last year to 67 this year. The district recorded 840 incidents in 2020, 1,155 in 2021, 641 in 2022, and 262 in 2023. Likewise, Karnal, which logged 955 fires in 2021, ended with just 23 this year. Kurukshetra, which recorded 132 last season, reported only 11 this year. In 2020, the district reported 406 fires, while the tally was 538 in 2021, 301 in 2022 and 132 in 2023. Fatehabad and Jind, historically the largest contributors, have shown consistent declines in farm fire tally. Fatehabad reduced its fires from 1,477 in 2021 to 88 this season, while Jind's count decreased from 915 in 2021 to 180 now. Sirsa, another major contributor, dropped from 549 fires in 2021 to 37 this year. Some districts experienced a slight increase in total farm fires, such as Hisar, where the number rose to 70 this year from 47 in 2024, and Rohtak, which saw an increase in incidents from 23 in 2024 to 53 this year. Sonipat remained nearly unchanged at 67. However, these increases are minor compared to the overall decline.

Conversely, several other districts reported minimal or no fires. Gurgaon, Rewari and Mahendragarh recorded zero incidents, while Mewat had just one. Panchkula, which reported 19 fires last year, ended with only one this season. Panipat, Yamunanagar, Palwal, Jhajjar, Bhiwani, Dadri, and Charkhi Dadri reported single or low double-digit figures, an improvement from their early-2020s records.

## PC Meena returns as GMDA CEO in Haryana bureaucratic reshuffle

### Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana govt on Sunday appointed 2004-batch IAS officer PC Meena as the new GMDA CEO. His appointment, after a month-long uncertainty, came as part of the latest bureaucratic reshuffle in which 20 IAS officers were transferred. This will be Meena's second stint as the GMDA CEO. He earlier served as the authority's CEO between April 2023 and Jan 2024.

The govt has assigned him the post in addition to his current responsibilities as commissioner & secretary to the govt in the human resources department and the general administration department.

The appointment brings closure to the top-level paralysis that had left the authority without an administrative head — the first such instance since GMDA was formed in 2017. Meena's return is significant not only because of the ongoing infrastructure work across the

city but also because he is a familiar name in Gurgaon's administrative circle.

Over the past decade, he held some of the most critical positions in the city — deputy commissioner in 2011, MCG commissioner in 2013 and again in 2023, HUDA (now HSVP) administrator in 2014 and managing director of DHBVN in 2021 and again in 2024.

His experience with multiple agencies that now interface with GMDA is likely to streamline inter-departmental decision-making. Several names, including Yashpal Yadav, Shekhar Vidyarthi and A Sreenivas, were doing rounds for the post of GMDA CEO. With Meena finally stepping in to lead GMDA, it is expected that pending clearances, inter-agency coordination and project monitoring will gain pace. The CEO post at GMDA remained in limbo since Oct 28, when 2006-batch IAS officer J Ganeshan was

appointed but he never assumed charge. On Nov 18, the govt assigned MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiyा additional responsibility as GMDA chief, but he also did not take over due to procedural gaps. TOI reported last Thursday that the metropolitan authority had been functioning without a CEO for the first time this long, raising concerns over key projects and approvals already moving at a sluggish pace.

Pradeep Singh appointed MCM chief. The latest reshuffle also led to two other key changes affecting the city. Pradeep Singh, a 2020-batch IAS officer, has been appointed the MCM commissioner, replacing Ayush Sinha, who has been transferred as deputy commissioner of Faridabad. Meanwhile, 2014-batch IAS officer Vikram, previously deputy commissioner of Faridabad, has been posted as managing director of DHBVN.

## Gurgaon Sector 40 residents seek urgent repairs of damaged roads



### Gurgaon.(Agency)

Internal roads in Sector 40 have become difficult to use for both motorists and pedestrians. The 18-metre-wide main road, about 1km long, which links the sector's main market to the Sector 45 junction, along with the adjoining internal lanes, is marked by potholes, uneven surfaces and loose gravel. Residents said the roads were built around eight years ago and have steadily deteriorated since then. Patch repairs carried out over the years have not improved the situation, as the work was done unevenly and the surface

remains unsafe. Despite sending written complaints and making several phone calls to MCG, residents say there has been no substantial response. "We have raised grievances many times, but we only receive acknowledgements. Patch repairs have made the road more uneven. The absence of stormwater drains is also weakening the surface and reducing its life," said Abhimanyu Yadav, RWA president of Sector 40. Moreover, the damaged surface has added to dust pollution in the neighbourhood. Passing vehicles kick up clouds of loose soil into

the air, forcing local residents to keep doors and windows shut for most of the day. Motorists using the stretch daily face delays, with two-wheeler riders slowing down frequently to avoid deeper patches. Pedestrians are also affected, as broken edges on both sides of the road make walking unsafe. Residents have now demanded immediate repaving of the entire stretch, saying the current condition poses a daily hazard. They have also highlighted poor construction of 10m-wide internal roads and the lack of proper monitoring by MCG. "It has become unsafe, and we have had to spend our own money to fill potholes. Even newly surfaced lanes are breaking apart. As this is an 18-metre road, it carries heavy traffic. MCG should prioritise its repair along with proper drainage planning," said Yogesh Jain, a resident. Raveen Raghav, executive engineer, MCG, said a consultant is being appointed to prepare detailed project reports. "Sector-wise reports will be prepared, and any issues will be addressed once the report is submitted," he said.

## Bhangal elevated corridor done, now Noida turns to Dadri road under it



### Noida.(Agency)

For thousands of commuters in the city, relief is finally in sight. After five years of dodging potholes and enduring daily traffic jams, the battered road under the newly opened Bhangal elevated corridor is set to be rebuilt — this time by Noida Authority itself. The move comes after a prolonged standoff with the project's construction agency, UP State Bridge Corporation Ltd (UPSBCL), which has refused to take up the work citing unpaid dues of nearly Rs 150 crore. The surface road, stretching 5.5km under the flyover, has been in a state of disrepair since construction began on the elevated corridor. "This road is critical for several sectors along the Bhangal corridor. We have received communication from UPSBCL stating their inability to proceed with it. If they are unwilling, we will seek the Board's approval to execute repair work ourselves," said Authority CEO Lokesh M. The urgency is evident for

anyone who travels through Barola, Bhangal and the surrounding sectors. Years of heavy machinery, diverted traffic and neglect have left the road riddled with potholes and uneven surfaces, making it a daily ordeal for motorists and local residents alike. It's not just an inconvenience, but a safety hazard. School buses and ambulances get stuck in snarls here almost every day," said a resident of Sector 110. The deadlock is mostly because of a financial dispute between UPSBCL and the Authority. Although the six-lane elevated road was officially handed over in Aug, UPSBCL claimed it is yet to be paid a significant amount, including for price escalation, GST differences and interest on delayed payments. The outstanding amount, according to the corporation, stands at about Rs 150 crore. Despite multiple reminders, the Authority has not cleared these dues, prompting UPSBCL to approach the Allahabad high court last Sept.

seeking the appointment of an arbitrator. As a result, UPSBCL has argued that without any further payment, it cannot be expected to complete ancillary work such as service roads and drainage channels — features vital for smooth traffic flow and flood prevention. The corporation has formally requested either to be released from these obligations or to be sanctioned an additional Rs 25 crore to finish them. Authority officials, however, insisted that UPSBCL must fulfil all aspects of the original contract. "UPSBCL cannot walk away from its contractual responsibilities. Construction of service roads and drains is part of the agreement. They are bound to finish it," said a senior official.

With no resolution in sight, the Authority is now considering taking over the road repairs directly. "If we proceed, we will invoke contractual provisions to recover costs from UPSBCL, including seizing their

performance guarantee," said Vijay Rawal, DGM (civil).

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Editor-in-Chief

Gurcharan Singh Babbar  
Mob: 9654077232, 9971359517

Website : www.thesikhtimes.in

Email : sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

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# Drug cartel busted, three foreigners among 10 held

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: The Delhi Police, in collaboration with the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau, claimed to have busted a drug syndicate and arrested 10 peddlers, including three foreign nationals, supplying narcotics through courier service, officials said on Friday. The police also claimed to have recovered narcotics worth Rs 12 crore from their possession. According to the police, the transnational drug cartel run predominantly by African nationals would conceal contraband in the collar of the shirts they couriered. Three months ago, the Telangana Police busted a drug supply module in Hyderabad, uncovering a network that used courier services to transport narcotics, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Surender Kumar said. "During investigation, it was found that the drugs were being sourced from Delhi and supplied to Telangana. Multiple raids were carried out across Delhi-NCR, leading to the arrest of the 10 accused," Kumar said. Delhi and Telangana Police teams, formed after days of technical and manual surveil-

lance, carried out raids at several locations, including Mehrauli, Sant Garh, Niloti, Pratap Enclave, Greater Noida, Munirka and Uttam Nagar. During a raid in the Mohan Garden



area, a Ugandan national, Zainab Kyutungu, alias Pamela (35), was arrested with 195 grams of cocaine, 24 grams of MDMA and Rs 40,500. A case was registered against him under

the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, officials said. A Nigerian national, Bekki, alias Beeke (49), was arrested in another raid at Sant Garh in Tilak Nagar. The police

ed in Chander Vihar with 60 MD pills, the police added. The arrest of Jean Ahmad, alias Godwin, who was wanted by the Telangana Police, led to the recovery of 106.38 grams of cocaine and 107.83 grams of heroin from his locked house. Separate FIRs were registered in connection with these seizures. The joint teams also arrested several Indian nationals who allegedly acted as key facilitators, managing finances, providing SIM cards and supporting logistics for the cartel. Those arrested include Badruddin and his wife, Sama Umar, residents of Greater Noida, and Zafar from Mehrauli, who allegedly handled drug money. Titing Guite, S Joshua Guite and Lal Khosei Selien, residents of Delhi, were arrested for procuring and supplying SIM cards using fraudulent credentials to enable anonymous communication for peddlers, the police said. During the raids, 30 foreign nationals, including 12 women, were found overstaying without valid documents. They were residing in rental accommodations. The men were shifted to deportation facility, while process to shift the women was underway, the officials added.

## SCERT launches three-day training for NEP nodal teachers

New Delhi: The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Delhi, has announced a three-day training programme for NEP Nodal Teachers from the Directorate of Education (DoE). The initiative aims to strengthen the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 across Delhi government schools. The objective of the programme is to build a comprehensive understanding of the key elements and vision of NEP 2020, particularly in the context of school education. It is designed to equip Nodal Teachers with essential facilitation and pedagogical skills to mentor and train educators across Delhi's government school network. According to a circular issued by SCERT, the training would be conducted from December 3 to December 5, between 10.30 am and 4.30 pm. The programme would run under Cycle I and the list of participating teachers has been made available through an online link. SCERT has directed authorities concerned to ensure mandatory attendance of all nominated participants.

## Gurugram police issue over 21,900 fines for riding without helmets

Gurugram: The special campaign, conducted between November 1 and 27, targeted riders flouting helmet regulations. A senior traffic police official emphasised the dangers of riding without a helmet. "Driving a two-wheeler without a helmet significantly increases the risk of severe head injuries in the event of an accident, which could result in brain damage, skull fractures or even death," he said. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, riding without a helmet is a traffic violation, punishable with a Rs 1,000 fine and potential three-month licence suspension. Dr Rajesh Mohan, DCP (Traffic), said: "The aim of Gurugram police is to prevent road accidents and make our roads safe."

## Delhi-NCR air pollution: SC to hear plea on stubble burning

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday a plea related to stubble burning that has been further worsening the air quality levels in Delhi-NCR. The

steps it has taken so far to prevent the air pollution situation in Delhi-NCR from deteriorating further. The Bench was hearing the M C Mehta case and had said that the

tioning continuously on the day of Diwali," she said. However, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati assured the Bench that the agencies concerned will file the required report. On October 15, the CJI-led Bench permitted the sale and bursting of green firecrackers in Delhi-NCR during Diwali with conditions aimed at balancing tradition with environmental and health concerns. The court had made it clear that the use of green crackers will be confined to specific hours on Diwali and the day before. The sale of green crackers was permitted from October 18 to 20. It had also made clear that the relaxation was only on a "test case basis" and it shall be only for the period specified".

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### NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as MD CHAND S/O MOH. YAMEEN R/O h/o 1-D/322, street no-5, 15, ashok nagar delhi north east delhi, delhi-110093 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MOHD MUEEN.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. Sanjeev Kumar in respect of Built-up Plot Land area measuring 40 Sq. yards, out of Khasra no. 136/17, with roof rights, situated in the area of Village Dallan, Abadi Known as A-1, Block: Sant Nagar, Delhi claiming to have undisputed ownership. Now my client intends to sell the property in which SMFG India Home Finance Company Limited will provide the financial assistance if any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property may please contact us within Seven days from the date of this notice on the number & address mentioned herein below, failing which my client(s) shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever.

Khatan & Khatan  
A-38 Kalash Colony,  
New Delhi-110048.  
Ph. No: 011-49774545

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. Puran Chand in respect of Entire First Floor without roof rights, Built up on Property Bearing No. 156/1, area measuring 50 Sq. Yds., Carved out of Khasra No. 166, Situated in the revenue estate of Village Mirzapur, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi-110045 claiming to have undisputed ownership. Now my client intends to sell the property in which Piramal Finance Limited will provide the financial assistance if any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property may please contact us within Seven days from the date of this notice on the number & address mentioned herein below, failing which my client(s) shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever

Khatan & Khatan  
A-38 Kalash Colony,  
New Delhi-110048.  
Ph. No: 011-49774545

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. Baleshwar Devi in respect of Residential Plot of land admeasuring 220 sq. yds. out of Khasra No. 9, Situated at Village Roopwas, Pragoda and Tehsil Dardali, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. claiming to have undisputed ownership. Now my client intends to sell the property in which Piramal Finance Limited will provide the financial assistance if any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property may please contact us within Seven days from the date of this notice on the number & address mentioned herein below, failing which my client(s) shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever

Khatan & Khatan  
A-38 Kalash Colony,  
New Delhi-110048.  
Ph. No: 011-49774545

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. Smt. Radha Devi, W/o Smt. Kanhaiyalal, both are Resident of F-50, PHASE-2, VIJAY VIHAR, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, HAVE SEVERAL ALL RELATIONS WITH THEIR SON NAMELY MR. SHIVAM AND HIS WIFE NAMELY MRS. KOMAL, DUE TO THEIR DISRESPECTFUL CONDUCTS TOWARDS MY CLIENTS, FURTHERMORE, MY BOTH CLIENTS HAVE ALSO DISOWNED AND DEBARRED THE ABOVE-MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FROM ANY CLAIM OVER THEIR MOBILE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES. THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY CAUTIONED THAT ANYONE DEALING WITH MR. SHIVAM AND MRS. KOMAL SHALL DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY, MY CLIENTS SHALL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY ACTS, DEEDS, OR TRANSACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THEM.

HIMANSHI NAUTIYAL, ADVOCATE

DELHI HIGH COURT

M.No: 9999010820

### PUBLIC NOTICE

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN  
THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT MY CLIENTS S/H. KANHAYA LAL, S/O SH. RAM NATH AND SMT. RADHA DEVI, W/O SH. KANHAYALAL BOTH ARE RESIDENT OF F-50, PHASE-2, VIJAY VIHAR, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, HAVE SEVERAL ALL RELATIONS WITH THEIR SON NAMELY MR. SHIVAM AND HIS WIFE NAMELY MRS. KOMAL, DUE TO THEIR DISRESPECTFUL CONDUCTS TOWARDS MY CLIENTS, FURTHERMORE, MY BOTH CLIENTS HAVE ALSO DISOWNED AND DEBARRED THE ABOVE-MENTIONED INDIVIDUALS FROM ANY CLAIM OVER THEIR MOBILE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES. THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY CAUTIONED THAT ANYONE DEALING WITH MR. SHIVAM AND MRS. KOMAL SHALL DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY, MY CLIENTS SHALL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY ACTS, DEEDS, OR TRANSACTIONS CARRIED OUT BY THEM.

HIMANSHI NAUTIYAL, ADVOCATE

DELHI HIGH COURT

M.No: 9999010820

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. VIKAS KUMAR S/O SATPAL SINGH R/O H.NO-176, E-18, SECTOR-3, ROHINI, RAJA PUR KALAN, NORTH WEST DELHI-110085 declare that name of my minor daughter has been wrongly written as YAAKSHI in my minor daughter namely YAAKSHI KALIRAMMA aged 10 years in her school record and birth certificate No. 000008675. The actual name of my minor daughter is YAAKSHI KALIRAMMA which may be amended accordingly.

VIKAS KUMAR S/O SATPAL SINGH

R/O H.NO-176, E-18, SECTOR-3,

ROHINI, RAJA PUR KALAN,

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. TULSHA BAI is a real Mother of No. 1611516X Rank NK Name VINOD KUMAR presently residing HOUSE NO.180, VILL- JATWA , PO-GADAGHAT, SUB DISTRICT-PATAN, DISTRICT-JABALPUR (MADHYA PRADESH)-483113 has changed my name from NONI LAL to NONE LAL for all Future Purposes. Vide Affidavit Dated 01/12/2025 before Notary Public New Delhi.

TULSHA BAI

PO-GADAGHAT, SUB DISTRICT-

PATAN, DISTRICT-JABALPUR (MADHYA PRADESH)-483113

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. ADESH DEEP SINGH BHATIA S/o BHUPINDER SINGH R/o C-193, WEST PATEL NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008, have changed my name from ADESH DEEP SINGH BHATIA to ADESDEEP for all future purposes.

ADESH DEEP SINGH BHATIA

S/o BHUPINDER SINGH R/o C-193,

WEST PATEL NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. JADEEP SINGH BHATIA S/o BHUPINDER SINGH R/o C-193, WEST PATEL NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008, have changed my name from JADEEP SINGH BHATIA to JYOTIRADITYA BHATIA.

JADEEP SINGH BHATIA

S/o BHUPINDER SINGH R/o C-193,

WEST PATEL NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110008

### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large on behalf of my client Mr. KAMALAMANI UPADHYAYA is a real Mother of No. 15890645 Rank HAVI Name RAGHUNATH UPADHYAYA presently residing VILL-CHHABATIA, DISTRICT-BALESHWAR, (ORISSA)-756042 have changed my name from KAMALAMANI UPADHYAYA to KAMALA UPADHYAYA for all Future Purposes. Vide Affidavit Dated 01/12/2025 before Notary Public New Delhi.

KAMALAMANI UPADHYAYA

is a real Mother of No. 15890645 Rank

HAVI Name RAGHUNATH UPADHYAYA

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KAMALAMANI UPADHYAYA

is a real Mother of No. 15890645 Rank

HAVI Name RAGHUNATH UPADHYAYA

## NEWS BOX

## Indonesia floods, landslides leave 303 dead, 279 missing; Sumatra hardest hit

WORLD. (Agency)

A total of 303 people died and 279 remain missing after flash floods and landslides struck three provinces in Indonesia's Sumatra region, the country's National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) said on Saturday. Heavy monsoon rains have submerged entire communities, forcing tens of thousands to evacuate and leaving residents stranded as access to many areas remains cut off.

BNPB Chief Suharyanto told a press conference that North Sumatra suffered the highest number of casualties, with 166 deaths and 143 people still unaccounted for. In West Sumatra, 90 people were confirmed dead and 85 missing, while in Aceh, 47 fatalities were recorded and 51 people remained missing. He chaired a coordination meeting with BNPB units deployed in the three hardest-hit provinces, emphasising that operations must be intensified as weather conditions in the affected areas



begin to improve. He noted that the agency is prioritising three urgent tasks: conducting search and rescue operations for those still missing, restoring disrupted communication access, and ensuring the swift delivery of logistics to affected residents.

## Former Bangladesh PM Khaleda Zia's health condition critical: Senior party leader

DHAKA. (Agency)

The health condition of Bangladesh's critically ill former premier Khaleda Zia is "still unchanged", a senior leader of her party has said.

Zia, the 80-year-old Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson, was admitted to a private hospital on November 23 when she developed a chest infection that affected both her heart and lungs. Four days later, the three-time prime minister was shifted to the coronary care unit after several of her health complications worsened.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi on Sunday said Zia's physical condition remained unchanged. "From the doctors, we heard that her condition has not deteriorated. We also did not get any news that her physical condition has improved much," he was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper. Rizvi said there has not been any advice yet about taking Zia abroad for treatment. On Saturday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that physicians said she may require treatment abroad, but her current physical condition does not permit overseas travel.

The BNP had on Friday said her condition is very critical and sought people to keep her in their prayers. Zia, the wife of slain Bangladesh president Ziaur Rahman, has been suffering from multiple other health complications, including liver and kidney issues, diabetes, arthritis, and eye-related illnesses. Earlier in the year, Zia returned to the country from London on May 6 after spending four months for advanced medical treatment.

## Kazakhstan condemns Ukraine for attacking assets that handle over 1% of global oil

World. (Agency)

Kazakhstan on Sunday told Ukraine to immediately stop drone strikes on the Caspian Pipeline Consortium's (CPC) Black Sea terminal, warning that repeated attacks on the critical oil facility had disrupted global supplies.

The appeal came after a major Ukrainian naval drone attack forced the CPC to suspend operations at its Novorossiysk terminal, which handles more than 1 per cent of the world's oil. The CPC -- whose shareholders include Russia, Kazakhstan, Chevron, Lukoil and ExxonMobil -- said a key loading buoy was "significantly damaged" in a November 29 strike, forcing the withdrawal of tankers and a halt in all loading operations. The pipeline system exports roughly 80 per cent of Kazakhstan's oil and carried 68.6 million tonnes last year, making it one of the most important arteries of energy supply in the region.

## KAZAKHSTAN PROTESTS DELIBERATE ATTACK

Kazakhstan's foreign ministry condemned the strike, calling it the third series of attacks this year on what it described as "an exclusively civilian facility whose operation is safeguarded by norms of international law." Kazakhstan expresses its protest over yet another deliberate attack on the critical infrastructure of the international Caspian Pipeline Consortium in the waters of the Port of Novorossiysk, the ministry said. We view what has occurred as an action harming the bilateral relations of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and we expect the Ukrainian side to take effective measures to prevent similar incidents in the future," it added. The CPC said the damaged Single-Point Mooring 2 -- a floating terminal used to load oil onto tankers -- could not continue functioning. "Further operation of Single Point Mooring 2 is not possible," the operator said, confirming a complete suspension of loading.

Pakistan's Pathan-dominated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa erupted in outrage over the trade closure, with manufacturers and traders demanding the immediate lifting of the ban. Just last week, a group of Pakistani businessmen rushed to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, pleading with him to intervene and help restore trade with Afghanistan. They said they had already lost trillions of rupees because of the 45-day closure of the Durand Line crossings, reported the Kabul-based Ariana News Network. A Pakistan-based journalist, writing for Japan's Nikkei Asia, reported that Pakistan's trade war with Afghanistan has now "boomeranged" back onto its own economy.

The standoff hasn't just frozen two-way trade. It has triggered shortages, price spikes, and production disruptions for Pakistani industries across major ones that depend on

Afghanistan for both imports and exports. Not just on the ground, even online, social media is flooded with debates and verbal spats among citizens, civil society



members, and other stakeholders. Some Afghans are sharing videos of Pakistani mandis, showing piles of produce lying unsold with no buyers in sight. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said that the United Nations has urged Islamabad to

reconsider its decision to close trade routes with Afghanistan, reported Tolo News. Dar added that he would discuss the matter with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir. Notably, Afghanistan ranks among the world's poorest countries, with a projected GDP per capita of just \$434, which is lower than many African nations such as Burundi and Somalia. According to the United Nations Development Programme's 2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, more than 64% of Afghanistan's population lives in poverty. Afghanistan's economy is in shambles, but the Taliban regime is attempting to rebuild it by diversifying trade. This effort was evident in two back-to-back Afghan delegations that visited India recently, including Afghanistan's Minister of Industry and Commerce, Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi. The Taliban regime is also working to open trade channels with Turkey.

## How trade war with poor Afghanistan is bleeding Pakistan

WORLD. (Agency)

Pakistan's DG ISPR, Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry's statement warning Afghanistan—"blood and business cannot go together"—now seems to have backfired and is hurting Islamabad itself. With bilateral relations between the two neighbours sinking to their lowest point, following the brief border clash and the mass expulsion of Afghan nationals during harsh winter months, the trade war between Pakistan and Afghanistan has erupted, and its effects are falling disproportionately on Pakistan. Since the closure of border trade points on October 11, Afghanistan has quickly adapted by redirecting commerce through Iran, India, and the Central Asian republics. Pakistan, however, has taken a severe hit. The halt in cross-border trade is dealing a heavy blow to Pakistan's already fragile economy. It is undermining its trade, manufacturing, and export sectors, according to several reports, including one in Dawn, the Karachi-based English daily.

## Mild earthquake of magnitude 3.3 strikes Tibet

TIBET. (Agency)

An earthquake of magnitude 3.3 struck Tibet in the early hours of Monday, as reported by the National Centre for Seismology (NCS). The 3.3 magnitude earthquake struck Tibet at a depth of 50 kilometres. In a post on the NCS said, "EQ of M: 3.3, On: 01/12/2025 03:52:31 IST, Lat: 29.77 N, Long: 89.32 E, Depth: 50 Km, Location: Tibet." An earthquake of magnitude 3.0 struck Tibet in the early hours of Sunday. Earlier in November, an earthquake of magnitude 3.8 struck Tibet. Sharing the details in a post on X, the NCS said, "EQ of M: 3.8, On: 11/11/2025 04:14:18 IST, Lat: 28.55 N, Long: 86.90 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Tibet." Shallow earthquakes are generally more dangerous than deep earthquakes. This is because the seismic waves from shallow earthquakes have a shorter distance to travel to the surface, resulting in stronger ground shaking and potentially more damage to structures and greater casualties.

The Tibetan Plateau is known for its seismic activity due to tectonic plate collisions. Tibet and Nepal lie on a major geological fault line where the Indian tectonic plate pushes up into the

the plateau is associated with strike-slip and normal mechanisms. The plateau extends east-west, as evidenced by north-south-striking grabens, strike-slip faulting, and GPS data. In the northern region, strike-slip faulting constitutes the dominant style of tectonics, while in the south, the dominant tectonic domain is east-west extension on north-south trending normal faults. Seven north-south trending rifts and normal faults were first discovered in southern Tibet during the late 1970s and early 1980s using satellite imagery. They began formation when extension occurred some 4 to 8 million years ago. The largest earthquakes in Tibet, with magnitudes of 8.0 or similar, occur along strike-slip faults. Normal faulting earthquakes are smaller in magnitude; in 2008, five normal faulting earthquakes with magnitudes of 5.9 to 7.1 occurred in various locations across the plateau.

Eurasian plate, and earthquakes are a regular occurrence as a result of it. The region is seismically active due to tectonic uplifts that can grow strong enough to change the heights of the Himalayas' peaks. The Tibetan Plateau attains its high elevation due to crustal thickening caused by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates, which created the Himalayas. Faulting within

## Zelensky meets Macron to shore up support for Ukraine as Trump optimistic

The diplomatic flurry after nearly four years of conflict comes as Kyiv battles military pressure and reels from a domestic corruption scandal that forced Zelensky to remove his close aide and top negotiator.

PARIS. (Agency)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky meets French counterpart Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Monday, seeking to shore up European support as US President Donald Trump expressed optimism of a deal to end Russia's war in Ukraine.

US and Ukrainian negotiators held hours of what both sides called "productive" talks in Florida on Sunday on a plan Washington wants to form the basis of

a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine. The diplomatic flurry after nearly four years of conflict comes as Kyiv battles military pressure and reels from a domestic corruption scandal that forced Zelensky to remove his close aide and top negotiator. The Ukrainian leader has been a regular visitor to Paris since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said in comments to the La Tribune Dimanche newspaper on Sunday that the meeting aimed "to move the negotiations forward".

"Peace is within reach, if (Russian President) Vladimir Putin abandons his delusional hope of reconstituting the Soviet empire by first subjugating Ukraine," he added. Washington put forward an initial 28-point proposal to halt the war, drafted without input from Ukraine's European allies and regarded as too close a reflection of Moscow's maximalist demands on

Ukrainian territory. It would have seen Kyiv withdraw from its eastern Donetsk region and the United States de facto recognise the Donetsk, Crimea and Lugansk regions as Russian. After talks in Geneva just over a week ago, the United States updated the original blueprint following criticism from Kyiv and Europe, but the current contents remain unclear.

**Ukraine's sovereignty'**

Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff is due in Moscow for follow-up talks and is expected to discuss Ukraine with Putin on Tuesday. The Florida talk were described by both Ukrainian and American negotiators as "productive," but US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said more work was required and a source in Kyiv's delegation called the talks "not easy." Trump was optimistic, however, telling reporters aboard Air Force One: "I think that there's a good chance we can make a deal."

## Trump defends asylum freeze, claims Biden and Harris screwed US

TEGUCIGALPA. (Agency)

After ordering a sweeping freeze on asylum processing, US President Donald Trump on Sunday defended the move after the arrest of an Afghan immigrant accused of killing a National Guard member near the White House, saying the United States "has enough problems" and may bar asylum for some nations "for a long time". The president's comments marks latest escalation in his immigration stance following Wednesday's attack that killed Specialist Sarah Beckstrom and critically wounded Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe -- an incident now driving one of the



most aggressive tightening of vetting rules since Trump returned to office. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump signalled that more restrictions are coming. "No time limit, but it could be a long time," he said, when asked how long the United States might pause asylum admissions for certain nations.

"We have enough problems. We don't want those people," he added. The administration has also suspended all asylum processing in the aftermath of the shooting.

TRUMP SAYS BIDEN, HARRIS SCREWED US

Amid the ongoing crackdown, Trump renewed his attack on the previous Joe Biden administration. "Crooked Joe Biden, Mayorkas, and so-called 'Border Czar' Kamala Harris really screwed our Country by letting anyone and everyone come in totally unchecked and unvetted," he wrote on Truth Social. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) supported Trump's remarks, calling Biden-era vetting practices "an act of national self-sabotage" and saying the suspect "should never have been in this country." DHS has frozen all immigration requests from Afghan nationals "indefinitely" pending a full review of vetting protocols.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem also blamed the prior administration. "This individual's application to be in this country started under the Joe Biden administration," Noem said.

## Can anti-India lawmaker Ilhan Omar be deported from US amid fraud claims

World. (Agency)

Allegations that Somalia-born US Representative Ilhan Omar, Democratic congresswoman from Minnesota, committed marriage and immigration fraud to secure American citizenship have resurfaced, and this time, the MAGA crowd is calling for her denaturalisation and deportation. The claims, which first emerged in 2016, revolve around her marriage in 2009 to Ahmed Nur Said Elmi, who critics allege is her brother. The allegations were back in the spotlight days after US President Donald Trump raked up Omar's immigration background last week. Trump also alleged that Ilhan Omar came to America illegally by marrying her brother. The US President floated the conspiracy theory as he renewed his hardline immigration rhetoric after an Afghan national shot two National Guard soldiers near the White House. The allegations went viral with images of Omar's marriage records being circulated on X, and called for immediate action by

the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Notably, Omar has faced criticism for her anti-India foreign policy stance in the past. In 2022, she visited Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir and met local leaders. New Delhi condemned her four-day visit to POK, during which she had accused India of human rights violations in Kashmir and co-sponsored resolutions critical of the Indian government towards religious minorities. Now, as the row over her marriage escalates, the question is, can an elected representative, and a naturalised citizen, be deported from the US?

**MAGA ACCOUNTS ARE POSTING 'EVIDENCE' OF FRAUD**

Dozens of people shared "evidence" on social media, alleging that Omar has committed fraud. A post by @Chicago1Ray, which was reposted over 12,000 times and garnered over 3.46 lakh views, said, "Evidence shows Ilhan Omar married her brother - Ahmed Nur Said Elmi she helped him gain citizenship, that's a

crime." Another user, @SaltyGoat17, whose post was also widely shared, said, "Ilhan Omar DID marry her brother. Should



she be de-naturalised and deported back to Somalia? Similar posts by many such users got hundreds of thousands of engagements, with many quoting Elon Musk's recent statement that any violation of the citizenship oath should lead to deportation. The allegations date back to an anonymous 2016 post on a Somali-American forum and were amplified during Omar's 2018

congressional campaign. Investigations by the Minnesota Star Tribune newspaper, Alpha News, and others did point to her overlapping marriages but produced no definitive proof of fraud or familial relations. The FBI reviewed tips in 2019-2020, and the House Ethics Committee examined the matter in 2020; and both processes closed without charges against Ilhan Omar. Omar has, over the years, described the claims as baseless, Islamophobic, and politically motivated. CAN ILHAN OMAR, A NATURALISED US CITIZEN, BE DEPORTED?

Under US law, naturalised citizens can lose citizenship through denaturalisation if it is proven they procured it by concealment of a material fact or willful misrepresentation. Proceedings are civil, initiated by the Department of Justice in federal court, and require clear, unequivocal, and convincing evidence.

## NEWS BOX

Gujarat confidential: GARC  
Report on recruitment



## Ahmedabad . (Agency)

Days after the state government's 'Chintan Shibir', the Gujarat Administrative Reforms Commission (GARC) is all set to release a new report, its sixth, which will focus on recruitment processes and mechanism for filling of vacant government positions across departments.

The report is coming at a time when the government, last week, handed out appointment letters to over 4,000 candidates for Class 3 positions and is planning to hire over 12,000 in the police force.

Expected this week, the GARC, established under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister's Principal Advisor Hasmukh Adhia, has already released five reports since February with several recommendations ranging from establishing a public feedback system for 'Ease of Doing Governance', prioritise time management, single sign on for citizens for a single digital identity, meeting management protocol in the weekly review meetings, website upgradations and strengthening of e-gram and panchayat Jan Seva Kendras.

## Woman dies after falling on tracks while alighting from train



## Mumbai . (Agency)

A 58-YEAR-OLD woman from Andhra Pradesh who had come to the city to meet relatives died after she fell off while alighting from a long-distance train on Thursday at Dadar. The woman wanted to use the washroom on the train as she could not spot one on the platform.

However, when the train started moving, she tried to alight quickly and fell off on the tracks. The railway police have taken an accidental death report in the matter.

As per police, the deceased woman (will update her name later) wanted to go to Ambernath to meet her relatives and was accompanied by her son. Her husband works as a cook at a shipping company in London.

As per railway police, the incident took place around 2pm on Thursday when the woman was standing on platform number 10 at Dadar railway station. She realised that she needed to relieve herself but could not spot a washroom around.

Seeing a mail train there, the woman climbed onto the train to use the washroom. After relieving herself, as she came towards the door, the train began moving. "In an attempt to alight the train, she jumped but ended up falling in the gap between the platform and the tracks resulting in getting crushed by the train," said Anil Kadam, senior police inspector of Dadar GRP.

Kadam said that the woman's son then raised an alarm alerting the GRP and other passengers who rushed the woman to the hospital where she succumbed to her injuries after two hours. "We have registered a case of accidental death (ADR) and are investigating further," said Kadam.

## HC seeks panel report on plea seeking human trials for cancer vaccine

## Mumbai . (Agency)

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) informed the Bombay High Court earlier this month that it has appointed an Expert Committee to examine grievances raised in a plea by Nashik-based Datar Cancer Genetics Pvt Ltd. The company sought approval for phase I human trials of its cancer immunotherapy drug, Per-C-Vax. The court directed the committee to examine the submissions and submit a report within three months.

short article insertA bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Sandesh D Patil on November 21 heard a plea by Nashik-based Datar Cancer Genetics Pvt Ltd aggrieved by the "arbitrary" rejection of its plea by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) to conduct phase I human trials for its indigenous vaccine to treat solid organ cancers. The petitioner claimed that the application was made in August 2023 under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials (NDCT) Rules, 2019 and CDSCO's did not comply with the rule mandating its response within 30 days. On the other hand, it insisted upon pre-clinical animal study data despite the petitioner having stated that the same was scientifically impossible considering the nature of the vaccine. Aggrieved by the April 22 decision of the Drugs Controller General of India, the petitioners approached HC alleging the 'mala fide' action by the authority defeated the legislative safeguard built through the new rules.

## Tech-driven SWM framework in the works

Govt to form high-level committee to implement end-to-end solid waste management system for city

## BENGALURU. (Agency)

Following directions from the Karnataka high court, the state government has mandated the constitution of a seven-member Nodal Oversight and Implementation Committee to roll out a technology-driven solid waste management (SWM) framework for the city.

Acting on the court's orders, the government, in its order dated November 28, said it will establish a 'One City, One Platform' digital system integrating dashboards, mobile apps, GPS tracking, weighbridges and CCTV surveillance for end-to-end SWM operations. The court had stressed that these components must function as a single ecosystem, where CCTV data, citizen reports and enforcement actions flow seamlessly through one platform.

The committee will be headed by the additional chief secretary, urban development department, with the chief commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority as vice-

president. Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) will be the

the high court's mandated timeline. It may be recalled that the BSWML has been taking a slew of measures to improve solid waste management in the city, as Bengaluru's image has taken a beating by the rising number of garbage blackspots on its streets and poor waste management.

To discourage the public from dumping waste on roads and in open spaces, the authorities launched initiatives such as 'Kasa Suriyava Habba' (garbage dumping festival), under which many of those found disposing waste in non-designated areas had a load of garbage dumped right in front of their home.

The BSWML also introduced a special drive offering a reward of Rs 250 to citizens who submit videos of litterbugs through a dedicated WhatsApp number or official social media handles.

Additionally, the organisation is set to establish over 70 kasa (garbage) kiosks to enable people to dispose waste at designated spots without waiting for collection vehicles.



member-secretary and the five municipal corporation commissioners will serve as members. The panel must oversee implementation and ensure compliance with

## Cyclone Ditwah: Chennai gets moderate rainfall in last 24 hours; special medical camps arranged

**The city did not witness any significant rainfall during the day on Sunday either, as the cyclone weakened into a depression in the evening.**

**CHENNAI.** Parts of Chennai recorded light to moderate rainfall in the 24 hours between Saturday and Sunday morning, according to data from the Greater Chennai Corporation's (GCC) Integrated Command and Control Centre. The city received an average of 3cm rainfall during this period.

Ennore recorded the highest rainfall at 5.58cm, followed by Madhavaram (4.92cm) and Medavakkam Junction (4.4cm). Northern zones — including Thiruvottiyur, Manali and Madhavaram — received between 2cm and 5cm, while southern neighbourhoods such as Adyar, Velachery, Pallikaranai and Sholinganallur logged around 3-3.7cm.

The city did not witness any significant rainfall during the day on Sunday either, as the cyclone weakened into a depression in the evening.



A resident of Velachery said that while people here were fearful of Cyclone Ditwah, it did not bring the expected rainfall on Sunday.

To prevent the spread of monsoon-related

diseases, 20 special medical camps were conducted on Sunday. Seven uprooted trees were cleared on priority basis. To ensure the swift removal of fallen trees during the cyclone, GCC had kept 457 tree-pruning machines on standby.

A release by GCC noted that 32,500 food packets were distributed to the public, most of them in the southern parts of the city, particularly in Adyar and Sholinganallur zones.

The stagnant water on Thiruvottiyur High Road was pumped out using high-capacity motors, followed by desilting of silt catchpits, the release added. A total of 22,000 officials, engineers, workers, and sanitary workers were engaged in round-the-clock operations, the release said.

## From JEE prep to President's Medal, Siddhi's win marks another milestone in NDA history

**As the 329 cadets of the 149th course passed out from the hallowed portals of the NDA on Sunday, they included 15 cadets from the second batch of women at the tri-services academy.**

## Pune. (Agency)

Before Siddhi Jain was selected for the 149th course of the National Defence Academy (NDA) as part of the second batch of female cadets, she was preparing for the IIT-JEE in Kota. On Sunday, when Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi pinned the prestigious President's Bronze Medal on her uniform, she became the first female cadet to be awarded the President's Medal for overall order of merit.

As the 329 cadets of the 149th course passed out from the hallowed portals of the NDA on Sunday, they included 15 cadets from the second batch of women at the tri-services academy.

While two female cadets have topped the academic stream so far, one in the 148th course and another in the 149th, Siddhi is the first to win a



medal in the overall order of merit. The overall merit list is drawn from performance in academics, outdoor training, joint training, officer-like qualities and specialised service subjects. This year, the President's

One more sanitary staff on indefinite hunger strike admitted to government hospital in Chennai



## CHENNAI.(Agency)

Bharathi, one of the four sanitary workers on an indefinite hunger strike demanding reinstatement of their jobs under the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), was admitted to Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGHH) on Sunday after her health deteriorated. She had been fasting for 14 days.

Earlier, Jenova, another protester, was admitted to Kilpauk Medical College (KMC) Hospital on Saturday and remains under observation.

Speaking to TNIE, LTUC state secretary K Suresh said, "The workers have been fasting for the last 14 days, but not a single corporation official has met them or responded to their demands. Bharathi allegedly had a thyroid condition and had been fasting without informing the association. She had not taken sufficient medical supplements, which led to giddiness and severe stomach pain. She was first taken to KMC on Sunday morning and later shifted to RGHH, considering her condition." Two other workers - Vasanthi and Geetha - continue their fast. With Vasanthi's health also worsening, the association said it is considering replacing the current group of protesters with four other workers by Monday. The workers urged the CM, to intervene immediately.

## Colleagues at Ruby Hall Clinic found dead at 2 spots

## Pune. (Agency)

Two lab technicians working at the Ruby Hall Clinic in Pune were found dead at different locations, with body of one of them found at the other person's residence, police said. Police have identified the deceased as Ganesh Kale (21), resident of Sangamwadi and Divya Nighote (20) of Wadgaonsheri area in Pune city.

According to police, Ganesh Kale, a native of Beed district, was found dead at the railway track in Talegaon Dabhade on Friday.

Divya Nighote was found dead at Kale's residence in Sangamwadi on Saturday. Police said that after she went for work at the hospital, she did not return home. Her family filed a missing report at the Koregaon Park police station.

"We launched a search for Divya. We traced her last location through a technical probe.

Our team found her dead at a house in Sangamwadi area. Further investigation is being done by the Yerwada police station team,"

senior police inspector Sangita Jadhav.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (zone 4) Somay Munde said "Divya's body was found at Ganesh Kale's residence on Saturday afternoon. Divya was missing since Friday night... Some external injuries are there on her body. Cause of death will be revealed after post mortem. Both deceased were working at Ruby Hall. Further investigation is on." Police have informed family members of both. A probe is on to confirm the cause of their deaths, police said.

In an official statement issued Sunday evening, Manjusha Kulkarni, Legal Advisor, Ruby Hall Clinic said that they regretted the unfortunate incident.

"The matter is currently under police investigation and we are fully cooperating with the authorities in all necessary procedures. Our prayers are with the families in such difficult times," Kulkarni added.

## Pune: Drunk IT professional rams car into pub's parking, valet attendant dead

**The deceased, identified as Satyendra Mandal, was in his 30s and a native of Bihar. Police said the process of registering an FIR was underway at the Yerwada police station.**

## Pune. (Agency)

A valet attendant was crushed to death by a Volkswagen car at Toit Pub and Restaurant in Pune's upscale Kalyani Nagar area on Sunday afternoon. Police have detained the driver, identified as Pratapsinh Daingade (49), an IT professional residing in Dhanori, and confirmed that he had consumed liquor when the incident occurred. The deceased, identified as Satyendra Mandal, was in his 30s and a native of Bihar. Police said the process of registering an FIR was underway at the Yerwada police station.

Senior police inspector Ajum Bagwan of Yerwada police station said the incident took place around 2.30 pm. "The car driver is from Atlanta Society, Nerul in the Navi

Mumbai area. He works at the Commerzence IT Park in Pune and is currently residing in Dhanori," Bagwan said.

"A prima facie probe has revealed that he came to the Toit pub in the afternoon. As he was drunk, the pub staffers said they would book a cab for him. But he got into his car and while driving it out of the pub premises, he lost control, due to which the car went on to hit the counter in the valet parking area. A valet attendant was crushed between the wall behind him and the counter, in the incident. The injured worker was taken to a hospital, but he died. We have detained the car driver, who was found to be under the influence of alcohol when the incident took place. Further investigation is on,"

Bagwan added.

Toit pub issued a statement, "We are extremely sad to report that there was an incident outside our restaurant this afternoon around 3 PM, resulting in the loss of life of one of our colleagues, Satyendra Mandal. A driver rammed his car into Mandal, who worked as a valet attendant. An FIR has been registered with the Yerwada Police Station and the authorities are investigating the incident. We are extending our complete cooperation with the police to help bring justice to the victim. The entire team at Toit deeply mourns this incident and we request that our privacy be respected during this difficult time." Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 4) Somay Munde said the accused

driver has been taken into custody. "His medical examination is on. An offence of culpable homicide not amounting to murder will be registered against the accused,"



Munde said.

The incident comes months after residents of Kalyani Nagar raised concerns about the rising number of pubs, bars and restaurants in the neighbourhood. In July this year,

they held a public interaction to highlight issues related to noise, traffic and late-night disturbances. Following this, in August, Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar constituted a joint committee with senior police officials, representatives of the Pune Municipal Corporation, the District Collector, the State Excise Department and a reputed citizen from the area to address the concerns.

Earlier, Pune police had intensified action against "disorderly conduct" at and outside pubs after a 17-year-old boy, allegedly under the influence of alcohol consumed at two hotels, rammed a Porsche into a motorcycle at Kalyani Nagar junction on May 19, 2024, killing two IT engineers.

## Avoiding adverse association

Good association that takes our mind to the Truth is called satsang. Etymologically, 'sat' means 'truth', while 'sang' means 'to associate'. Satsang includes holy congregations where devotional topics are discussed. Conversely, kusang is bad association that pulls our mind into worldly contemplation.

Narad refers to it as dusang. Just as weeds choke a plant, bad association chokes the sapling of bhakti in our heart. Thus, evading kusang is extremely important.

Kusang tempts us towards worthless pursuits. It presents us with easy opportunities for gratification. These come in myriad forms, including social media, video games, and movies. To protect one's devotion, it is best to minimise exposure to low-value delights. Unfortunately, our material mind finds kusang very relishable.

Suppose one is bitten by a snake. What is the way to know if the venom has spread through the body? Here is a simple test for it. Offer bitter neem leaves to the person and ask how they taste. If the person finds them sweet, you can conclude that the poison has entered the blood.

Similarly, our mind and senses are made from maya. They are naturally drawn to worldly indulgences and entertainment. Hence, kusang tempts us to drop our guard. The intellect says, 'What is the harm in looking? It will give me a quick short break for a few moments.' Then the intellect yields further and thinks, 'What is the harm in indulging a little more?' And before we know it, kusang sways the mind beyond our control. We must therefore cautiously avoid adverse association, just as we avoid keeping garbage inside our home.

If we repeatedly succumb to savouring a lower pleasure, we risk falling into the grip of a pernicious habit. Then, to reverse the harmful tendency becomes a challenge.

The Mahabharata states: A small sapling can be chopped off easily, but cutting a fully grown tree takes a lot of effort. Thus, in matters of kusang, precaution is the better part of valour. Narad advises us to 'stay away from adverse association by all means'. In the next sutra, he ups the ante on the dangers of kusang. Narad points out that kusang unleashes a chain of events. The Bhagavad Gita details the downward spiral of kusang: While contemplating on the objects of the senses, one develops attachment to them. Attachment leads to desire, and from desire arises anger. Anger leads to clouding of judgment, which results in bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, the intellect gets destroyed; and when the intellect is destroyed, one is ruined. (verses 2.62-63) The buddhi is the most important faculty we possess in our mind-body mechanism. The convictions we harbour in our intellect become the 'beliefs' we live by. These are the lenses through which we see the world. If the buddhi is ruined through kusang, then our beliefs get warped. Every so often, parents approach me, 'Swamiji, my teenage son has gone astray. He has fallen into an awful chemical addiction. What should I do?' I respond to them, 'Check his friends circle. If his close acquaintances are derelict, his beliefs have been adversely impacted. In association with drug addicts, he has become convinced that skirting responsibility and experiencing the euphoric high from drugs is the definition of a good life. His defective belief is destroying him.' So powerful is the impact of association upon our convictions! Hence, Ram explained to Vibheeshan: 'It is preferable to live in hell than to do sang of terrible people.'

## Punjab's special needs and the solution to Chandigarh's shared status

### Red Fort blast and Tejas crash underscore India's security and strategic challenges

The BJP-ruled Centre has been forced to withdraw one notification after another in quick succession regarding Punjab—one related to key changes in the governance of Panjab University and another, a Bill proposing changes in the governance of Chandigarh itself. The backlash over the PU notification and Chandigarh Bill forced the Centre to fall in line. The interesting thing is that PM Modi understands that with only 13 seats in the Lok Sabha, Punjab doesn't carry the electoral weight that large states like Bihar or Bengal do. Punjab has special needs and it is the Centre's duty to understand them — whether or not Punjabis vote the party into power or not, writes

Editor-in-Chief Jyoti Malhotra in her weekly column *The Great Game* Two reversals and a missed opportunity. The healing touch that Punjab so desperately needs from the Centre is missing, she writes.

Going into the background as to why Chandigarh is still elusive to Punjab or Haryana, in July 1985, the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab had become certain with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signing an accord with Akali Dal president Harchand Singh Longowal that Chandigarh would be transferred to Punjab on Republic Day, i.e. January 26, 1986, but the promise was not honoured.

In his article *Why Chandigarh still eludes Punjab*, GNDU's Professor Kuldip Singh writes that the official excuse given by the Centre was that the Matthew Commission had failed to identify the areas to be given to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh. However, the real reason was the fear of the loss of Hindu votes in the upcoming Haryana Assembly elections, he writes. In his article *A feasible solution to the imbroglio*, former Punjab Chief Principal Secretary Suresh Kumar writes that the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, does not include any provision to assign Chandigarh to Haryana nor does it establish any concept of shared ownership. Haryana's claim to Chandigarh is devoid of constitutional foundation and territorial rationale, he avers. Chandigarh was constructed on land acquired, planned and developed by Punjab. The most pragmatic and forward-looking solution is that Haryana should build a new Centrally assisted capital; Punjab should be relieved of the full fiscal burden of Chandigarh and UT Chandigarh should remain a UT serving as the capital of Punjab, he suggests. Another important milestone the Central Government is boasting of is the saffron flag, now flying atop the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, which marks the culmination of the monumental complex. It will serve as a reminder of three things, writes former Rajya Sabha MP Vinay

Sahasrabuddhe in his Op-Ed article *Why the Dharma Dhwaja matters*.

First, it demolishes the argument that the caste-ridden Hindu society cannot come together. Second, it tells us about the art of mobilising public opinion and building a popular movement. Third, it underscores the dharmic character of Indians, for whom shraddha is an elixir.

With the Tejas aircraft coming under scrutiny after the mishap at the Dubai airshow resulting in the death of its pilot Wing Commander Namansh Syal, there is a need to differentiate between the aircraft's capability and HAL's production capacity, writes Air Vice Marshal Anil Golani (retd) in his Op-Ed article *Tejas crash raises tough questions for HAL*. The need to campaign for export



orders is questionable under the circumstances. The HAL and the aerospace manufacturing ecosystem in the country are, thus, at an inflection point wherein all hands on deck will be required to redeem its reputation of being a dependable defence public sector undertaking, he writes. Revisiting the Red Fort car blast case, Delhi was not just a blast site. It was a psychological battlefield — and India won the first encounter by disrupting the attack, writes Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd), Ex-GoC, 15 Corps, Srinagar, in his Op-Ed article *Red Fort blast was a psychological battlefield*. The geography of terror has changed. It is not just seeking territory; it is seeking minds. How do we fight this form of white-collar terrorism? Radicalism must be confronted in chat rooms, clinics, campuses and cafeterias by an empowered set of people who understand Islam well and can explain its powerful message of peace. Technology can intercept plots. But only social cohesion can prevent them, he writes. The constitutional guarantees to the nation's

minorities remain India's most important weapon against radical agendas, writes independent journalist Nirupama Subramanian in her Edit piece *Lessons from the Red Fort blast*. This is the reason Pakistan's ISI or purveyors of global jihad such as ISIS or al-Qaeda failed to find more than a handful of converts to their agendas or ideologies in Kashmir or elsewhere among the nation's two hundred million Muslims. Meanwhile, after a special tribunal sentenced former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina to death on the charges of "crimes against humanity", the Ministry of External Affairs has stated that India is examining the request for Hasina's extradition. India should be well prepared to engage with an elected government in Dhaka, writes The Tribune Deputy Editor Vikramdeep Johal in his

Edit piece *Bangladesh awaits a democratic dawn*. 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. On the other hand, Dhaka needs to be convinced that allying with a stable India is a much wiser option than siding with an unstable Pakistan, he writes. Despite October's shocking trade performance, India's showing in the first seven months was not that bad. The nation's path will remain unsteady unless it undertakes key reforms, writes former finance secretary Subhash Chandra Garg in his Edit article *India remains on trade-turning pitch*. We need to conclude long-pending foreign trade and investment agreements/treaties with the US, EU and also China to make India a production and export powerhouse for new industrial products (including automobiles). We need to open up education, health, accounting, legal and personal services and thoroughly overhaul travel and transport infrastructure and services to build new services-export growth engines, he writes.

How the framers of the Constitution created the Election Commission of India (ECI) two months before the rest of the Constitution commenced on January 26, 1950, is an eye-opener for the people, the government and the Election Commission of India. This sequencing was not a technicality; it was a profound constitutional choice, says SY Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, in his Edit piece *Why EC was born before the Republic*. The framers knew that once the Constitution began to operate, India would require a government elected under its authority. The ECI, thus, had to be constituted before the Republic was born, so that the first government would derive its legitimacy not from an executive but from a constitutionally independent referee.

## CDP growth more broad-based, but dark cloud fill silver lining

### Rising consumption should lead to more investment, but the global headwinds may hold back its growth

Between July and September this year, India's GDP expanded at the sharpest clip in seven quarters. The latest quarterly growth of 8.2 percent beat RBI's estimate of 7 percent and surpassed consensus projections that had tempered expectations citing American tariffs. The performance reaffirmed India's strong underlying economic momentum amid global uncertainties. Though India is the only major economy yet to strike a trade deal with the US, it retained the tag of being the fastest-growing major economy notwithstanding the steep levies, which have compelled foreign investors to pull out a record \$16 billion from Indian equities so far in 2025. The most comforting data point from Friday's numbers is that with consumption, investments, and manufacturing witnessing a revival, India's growth engines are now more broad-based. Until now, one component or another was pulling in less than the desired output; but the second quarter saw a much-needed departure.

The 9.1 percent uptick in manufacturing, followed by financial and professional services at 10.2 percent, and construction at 7.4 percent were the key growth drivers.



However, government spending contracted, while rural demand retained its level. Higher agricultural output, steady farm incomes, and improving rural labour conditions further strengthened private consumption to 7.9 percent. Higher consumption is a sign of healthy

aggregate demand and reinforces confidence that India is firmly on a high-growth trajectory. While private consumption is likely to turn in a good performance in the third quarter too, there is uncertainty regarding investment, which rose 7.3 percent in Q2. Rising consumption should lead to more investment, but the global headwinds may hold back its growth. That's why the growth projections for the next two quarters are pegged below 7 percent each. However, if consumption and investment hold on to the rates seen in Q2, GDP growth for the full fiscal will see a notable upside. That's not enough to power India's ambitious target of being a \$5-trillion economy by 2027-28. As the IMF noted, it will take longer due to slower nominal GDP growth and sharper rupee depreciation. The currency has fallen 4.26 percent against the US dollar so far this year, while lower inflation has slowed nominal GDP growth. However, the economy will likely cross the \$4-trillion mark this year and overtake Japan as the fourth-largest economy.

## Not at home at home, abroad when abroad

### The immigrant experience is no longer a single story, it has splintered into multiple strands

David Szalay, this year's Booker Prize winner, is an unusual immigrant. Born to a Hungarian father and Canadian mother, and having lived in several countries, including the UK, Canada and Lebanon, he is today, ironically, an immigrant in his native country, Hungary. In an interview with BBC Radio, the writer said, "Even though my father is Hungarian, I never felt entirely at home in Hungary. I suppose I'm always a bit of an outsider there, and living away from the UK and London for so many years, I also had a similar feeling about London." Szalay's life traces a familiar but often overlooked trajectory — the circular migrant, someone who migrates not once, but repeatedly, acquiring new layers of estrangement in each move. Szalay's Booker-winning novel 'Flesh' follows the arc of Istvan, from his quiet housing complex in a Hungarian town, then as a struggling immigrant in London, and finally into a rarefied world of affluence. The book captures what it means to be untethered — never quite at home in the place one leaves, nor in the place one reaches. This is the friction Szalay says he wanted to explore: "a book that stretched between Hungary and London and involved a character who was not quite at home in either place." This tension of in-betweenness echoed throughout the Booker shortlist. Most of the writers who made it to the shortlist were immigrant or post-immigrant. Three of the six shortlisted books, including 'Flesh', Kiran Desai's 'The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny', and Susan Choi's 'Flashlight', lay bare the complexities of immigrant life. The Booker website notes how

these protagonists are "often caught between nations, finding it hard to fit in, and struggling with loneliness or isolation". This captures the central paradox of the immigrant narrative: the dual identity, the simultaneous insider-outsider status, standing at the threshold of two countries yet belonging fully to neither.

Jhumpa Lahiri describes this poignantly. "A lot of my upbringing was about denying or fretting or evading," she once said, acknowledging how the immigrant household is often built on anxieties that stretch across continents. Her debut novel 'The Namesake' embodies this duality. As Ashoke and Ashima attempt to re-root themselves in Massachusetts, the novel contrasts their experience with that of their children, who inhabit a hybrid terrain. The children are second-generation immigrants living between the inherited world of their parents and the American world that surrounds them. Yet Ashima, the first-generation immigrant, also comes to realise that Calcutta — "the city that was once home" — has become foreign in its own way. Vikram Seth, too, captures this dislocation in his poem 'Diwali', describing those "who are not at home at home/and are abroad abroad". Earlier, much immigrant fiction followed a familiar track: the journey outward, the departure from a known setting — home, language, family, and perhaps a sense of self — into a new world where survival hinges on adapting to unfamiliar norms. But the reality is far more complex. In her memoir 'They Called Us Exceptional', Indian-

American writer Prachi Gupta describes the suffocating weight of the "model minority" expectation. Coming from a family that is educated, affluent and driven, she reflects on the unspoken demands of chasing the American Dream and how the immigrant minority is expected to



speak and behave in a way acceptable to the West. Gupta reveals the emotional and cultural labour required to fit into what she calls a "hypercapitalist culture that only values us for what we can produce". Her poignant address to her mother underscores this complexity: "I never asked you what hopes and dreams buoyed you amid the all-consuming loneliness and grief of leaving your family and your country behind."

The immigrant experience is, therefore, no longer a

single story. It has splintered into multiple strands. Benjamin's Malayalam novel 'Aadujeevitham' (Goat Days) and Sunjeev Sahota's 'The Year of the Runaways' reveal the precarity and social invisibility that define the lives of undocumented migrants. The refugee narrative, by contrast, emerges in works such as Mohsin Hamid's 'Exit West' and Khaled Hosseini's 'And The Mountains Echoed', where displacement is abrupt, violent, and often irreversible. In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'Americanah', migration becomes a series of crossings rather than a single departure.

Diaspora writing, in essence, shows identity evolving across cultural, racial, linguistic and political boundaries. Return, too, is central to immigrant literature. The journey back — literal or symbolic — asks who one becomes after crossing borders and whether "home" remains a fixed, meaningful space. Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat offers an evocative view: "The idea of this great anguish of living between two worlds has diminished somewhat for many immigrant people.... I would like us to move beyond these tropes of being only between two worlds. We are at the same time speaking to no one and everyone." It is a reminder that immigrant narratives now encompass the multi-layered identities of a world where movement is constant, and where belonging can be multiple, partial or one driven by choice and circumstance.

## NEWS BOX

**Ex-CM raises alarm over rising drug overdose deaths**

Shimla. (Agency)

Expressing grave concern over the increasing number of drug overdose deaths in Himachal Pradesh, former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur urged the state government to take immediate and stringent measures to curb the menace. He said that frequent reportage in the media about youths dying due to overdose of chhatta and other narcotics reflects a deeply disturbing trend.

Referring to the recent death of a 15-year-old boy in Rohru, Thakur said it was heartbreaking to see young children losing their lives at such regular intervals while the government "fails to control a menace that is eating into the vitals of society."

He remarked that drug abuse was spreading "like an epidemic" across the state, yet the government appeared more preoccupied with events and publicity than with combating the crisis.

The former Chief Minister criticised the lack of state-run rehabilitation facilities, stating that families were forced to spend their savings on private centres where, instead of treatment, cases of violence and abuse were often reported. "There is no government-supported rehabilitation centre. People are compelled to approach private facilities, and many of them face mistreatment in the name of de-addiction," he said.

Thakur added that over 30 drug-related deaths had been reported this year, though the actual figure could be far higher, he warned. Emphasising that there was "no place for drugs in Devbhoomi", he called for the strictest possible action to save the youth.

He asserted that the BJP would support the government in every step taken to curb narcotics and prevent further loss of young lives.

**UP govt approves Rs 1 cr for amenities at Lucknow's Digambar Jain Temple**

Lucknow. (Agency)

The UP government has approved Rs 1 crore for the development of amenities at Digambar Jain Temple in Indranagar area of Lucknow. Officials said it was a part of an attempt to strengthen "Jain Heritage" in the state capital, while special infrastructural development would be undertaken around the Digambar Jain Temple.

"The project has been cleared under the Chief Minister's Tourism Development Scheme," said an official, adding that the aim is to provide an experience to thousands of devotees who visit these centers of Jain faith.

Officials said that while the Jain temple in the Ashiyana area of Lucknow houses about a thousand-year-old idol of Lord Mahavir, the Indra Nagar temple houses an about 800-year-old handwritten Jain manuscript.

As part of the project, the area surrounding the temple would be redesigned with wider roads, new lighting, proper sanitation, drinking water facilities, clear signage, as well as seating areas, parking arrangements, and would also have a dedicated information kiosk.

Officials said that the latest plan is in line with the government's efforts to develop locations within the Jain tourism circuit. "The idea is to ensure that the project also supports local employment, encourages small businesses near the temple area, and turns it into a significant place for religious tourism," said an official.

**'Pressure, no support pushed him into stress': Another BLO dies by suicide in UP over 'SIR' work'**

Kochi. (Agency)

A 42-year-old headmaster of a primary school, who was working as a Booth Level Officer (BLO) for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, allegedly died by suicide at his residence in the Baheri area of Moradabad. Police said a purported suicide note of Sarvesh Singh stated that he was under stress for "not being able to meet the SIR-related targets on time due to lack of proper guidance".

"Despite working hard and barely sleeping two hours a night, he felt extremely troubled. He also mentioned that his mental health was deteriorating and that two of his four daughters were unwell, adding to his distress," a police officer said, quoting the purported suicide note. He did not hold anyone responsible for his death, the officer added.

According to police, Singh's family found him hanging in his room on Sunday morning. "When the police arrived, the body was found lying on the floor. The family members told us that they had found him hanging and, with the help of neighbours, had taken the body down," said Additional Superintendent of Police (Moradabad) Kunwar Akash Singh.

Moradabad District Magistrate Anuj Singh, in a video statement, said Singh had been carrying out his responsibilities "effectively", and had already completed digitisation of nearly 67 per cent of the required SIR enumeration forms and was close to finishing the remaining work.

"Sarvesh Singh's immediate supervisor — who is also a relative — was in regular contact with him to oversee the progress, and an anganwadi worker had also been assigned to support him in completing the BLO duties," said the DM.

**Gurdaspur MP writes to Shah, seeks meeting of central, state agencies on Punjab's law and order**

**In his letter to Amit Shah, the MP has asked for a meeting of IB, R&AW, NIA, BSF, Punjab Police, and Punjab Home Department officials so that a coherent and effective national security strategy can be put in place in Punjab without delay.**

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Senior Congress leader and Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has written to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the escalated targeted killings, extortions and transnational gangster activities in Punjab and sought an urgent high-level meeting of central and state agencies. The MPs letter to the Home Minister comes on the heels of a demerit official letter written to the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla where he highlighted the deteriorating law and order situation in Punjab.

In his letter to Amit Shah, the MP has asked for a meeting of IB, R&AW, NIA, BSF, Punjab Police, and Punjab Home Department officials so that a coherent and effective national security strategy can be put in place in Punjab without delay.

"I have remained calm in public life, but the events unfolding around us compel me to speak with firmness and a heavy heart. Punjab, particularly in the current calendar year 2025, has witnessed a deeply disturbing rise in

targeted killings, assassination attempts, extortion-related murders, gangster warfare, and grenade-type attacks," wrote Randhawa.

The MP has told the Home Minister that this

acknowledge the nature of the threat is itself becoming a threat multiplier. The Punjab Government today, I regret to say, is sleeping like Kumbhkar," he said.

Randhawa said that despite several sincere officers, the Punjab Police appears either incapable or unwilling to deal with the scale and sophistication of the challenge. Even the Border Security Force, whose jurisdiction now extends up to 50 kilometres from the international border, has not been able to stem the flow of arms, drones, narcotics, and money, he said, adding that cross-border corridors remain active and, in many cases, hyperactive.

"A clearer pattern is emerging: international forces are acting in close coordination...the border belt of Punjab has historically borne the maximum brunt of the Indo-Pak wars, and later, the deep wounds of terrorism in the 1980s and early 1990s. Entire families were wiped out; villages lived under constant siege. We cannot allow this cycle to repeat itself," he said.



violence is not sporadic—it is systematic, coordinated, and emboldened. "Most recently, we saw an incident that every local eyewitness and security observer recognises as a grenade attack, yet the Punjab Police has inexplicably and blatantly denied this reality. This refusal to

**"Gangland": Punjab reels as gun violence spreads from streets to wedding hall**

Ludhiana. (Agency)

Marriage palaces to streets, cities to villages, a spate of shootouts and killings in Punjab have left the common people in state of shock, with the Opposition parties slamming the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who also holds the home portfolio, for turning "Punjab into a gangland."

The latest incident occurred Saturday night at Ludhiana's Bath Castle resort, where gangs led by Shubham Mota and his rival Ankur exchanged heavy gunfire during a wedding. Two guests were killed in the crossfire. Over 20 rounds were fired at the high-profile wedding of contractor Varinder Kapoor, which was attended by politicians, MLAs, and bureaucrats. At least 15 major killings linked to gun violence have occurred in recent months. Victims have ranged from an RSS leader's son and a kabaddi player to a grocery shop owner and a transport company employee. Police, in several encounters, have also "opened fire in self-defence," killing suspects, while many

other cases involve extortion attempts or intimidation shootings outside homes and shops.

Even leaders of the ruling party have been targeted. On November 27, unidentified bike-



borne assailants fired nearly 20 rounds at the house of AAP leader Daljit Raju Darvesh in Phagwara, leaving extortion notes signed by the Raja Kala gang demanding Rs 5 crore. Earlier, on September 20, five assailants fired outside

AAP leader Sukhwinder Singh Shinda's house in Ludhiana's Lehra village, set his car on fire, and scaled boundary walls.

On November 19, a jail guard shot dead his wife and mother-in-law with his government rifle before killing himself. A day earlier, on November 18, the manager of Kahlon Transport Company, Makhan Singh, was shot dead at Amritsar's ISBT terminal, causing panic among commuters. That same day, Shiv Sena (Bal Thackeray) Punjab vice-president Inderjit Karwal and his son Jimmy were assaulted by a group in Phagwara. On November 17, 22-year-old Rimple was killed and four friends injured in Banga, Nawanshahr district, when gunmen opened fire at their SUV near the bus stand, barely 100 metres from the local police station. CCTV footage showed pedestrians running for their lives. A day earlier, 65-year-old grocery shop owner Manjit Singh was shot dead in Dholka village, Amritsar district, after refusing to pay a Rs 50 lakh ransom. Police said the main accused, Raja Singh alias Billa, was later killed in an encounter.

**2022 protests against Agnipath scheme : 'Joining Army is not a person's dream, but a family's... One case shouldn't destroy a future'**

Lucknow. (Agency)

Mathura native Deepak, 25, had spent nearly four years preparing, with a single-minded focus to join the Army. But the dream collapsed in an instant when he was arrested in 2022, for allegedly taking part in a protest against the then newly introduced Agnipath defence recruitment scheme.

A resident of Nagla Jheenga village in Mathura, Deepak, who doesn't use a second name like many in his Jat community, says: "It was my last attempt to join the Army as a jawan... With that, all the dreams I had, all the hopes my family had pinned on me, came crashing down."

Because of the criminal charges, it was unlikely he could secure a government job. With his family unable to afford further studies or coaching, Deepak gave up the idea. A few months ago, he took up a private job, where he has 12-hours workdays.

During the 2022 protests against the Agnipath scheme, 51 cases were filed in 15 districts across Uttar Pradesh, with youths accused of damaging



trains and vehicles and setting them on fire at several places. Several private and government properties were damaged in stone-pelting. The anger was about the Agnipath scheme under which youths were to be henceforth hired for a four-year short-term contract, with only around 25% from each batch to be retained at the end of four years. It was seen as a curtailment of the only avenue available to many for a secure and stable government job.

There is a ray of hope now for Deepak and others. As reported by The Indian Express, the Uttar Pradesh government has initiated a review, writing to district police heads and district magistrates where the cases are registered. "Once the report is finalised, it will be forwarded to the government without delay," said a senior government official.

Many of the youths whom The Indian Express spoke to, who are in the same shoes as Deepak, say they were falsely implicated, and were either not present at the protests or had only gone there to see what was happening when police picked them up.

**Gujarat biotech varsity's research on Heavy Menstrual Bleeding gets financial aid from Gates Foundation**

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

A team of researchers led by Prof Rohini Nair, assistant professor at Gujarat Biotechnology University, Gandhinagar, will be working on affordable, scalable and minimally invasive RNA-based diagnostic and therapeutic tools for Heavy Menstrual Bleeding (HMB) as part of funding by Gates Foundation.

With the target to enable earlier detection, personalised treatment and improved menstrual health management, particularly for women in underserved regions, the project has been accepted under the Gates Foundation Grand Challenges Support with a financial support of around Rs 1.3 crore.

The Gates Foundation launched its "Grand Challenges" funding call in February 2025, inviting innovative approaches to address Heavy Menstrual Bleeding (HMB) — a critical yet often overlooked women's health concern. The Foundation follows a two-step evaluation process, beginning with a Concept Note or Letter of Inquiry (LOI), followed by a full proposal from shortlisted candidates to ensure alignment with global health priorities and scientific rigour. Our proposal was approved for

the support last month and the official letter is expected to be issued on December 2," Prof Rohini Nair told. The study will be carried out in collaboration with Dr Rohina Aggarwal, Dean and Head, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Centre (IKDRC), Ahmedabad.



As part of the research, Dr Aggarwal will play a key role in patient identification and clinical evaluation while Prof Nair's laboratory will focus on women's health research, including Repeated Implantation Failure and Endometriosis, and is actively developing Ribonucleic acid (RNA)-based affordable, scalable and minimally invasive RNA-based diagnostic and therapeutic tools for HMB.

**Mumbai Imposes GRAP-4 Pollution Curbs As Severe Smog Pushes City Into Emergency Mode**

**Areas like Mazgaon, Deonar, Malad, Borivali East, Andheri East (Chakala), Navy Nagar, Powai and Mulund have been among the worst affected**

Mumbai. (Agency)

Mumbai woke up under a dense haze this week as air quality plunged to "severe" levels across several neighbourhoods, forcing India's financial capital to join the likes of Delhi and activate its toughest pollution-control measures under GRAP-4.

According to, over the past few days, air-quality monitors have registered "very poor" to "severe" pollution levels, prompting alarm across the city. Areas like Mazgaon, Deonar, Malad, Borivali East, Andheri East (Chakala), Navy Nagar, Powai and Mulund have been among the worst affected, with residents

complaining of breathing discomfort, reduced visibility and irritation in eyes.

Under GRAP-4, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has imposed a range of emergency measures aimed at curbing further pollution. These include a ban or strict regulation on dust-producing construction and demolition activity; strict enforcement against garbage and waste-burning in landfills or open spaces; tightening of vehicle emissions, with intensified checks for pollution certificates (PUC) and attempts to reduce traffic-related emissions; frequent water-sprinkling and mechanised road-sweeping to

suppress dust from roads and open grounds.

BMC has also launched a citywide road-cleaning and dust-control drive from November 28 to 30 with focus particularly on long, busy corridors and sites where construction activity and vehicular movement contribute to dust build-up. The civic body has already issued "stop-work" orders to dozens of construction sites found to be contributing to the pollution surge, apart from reactivating ward-level teams and deploying "flying squads" to monitor compliance. The pollution crisis has also turned into a political flashpoint. The

city's Congress unit has unveiled the 'Mumbai Clean Air Action Plan', which calls for recognising

standards for vehicles, construction sites, and industries. In a post on X, former Maharashtra minister and Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad accused the state government of failing to protect the environment. She argued that unchecked construction activity and policies favouring contractors have contributed to the city's worsening pollution. Gaikwad said Mumbai is "choking under smog and the BJP's contractor raj", adding that every resident has a fundamental right to breathe clean air.

# Delhi's air quality worsens as AQI nears very poor category after brief respite

**Delhi's air quality worsened again on Monday, with the AQI at 298, just a few notches from the 'very poor' range. This follows a short-lived improvement in air quality to the 'poor' category due to strong winds.**

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi's air quality worsened on Monday as the AQI inched closer to the 'very poor' category, just a day after strong winds briefly improved the air quality from 'very poor' to 'poor' for the first time in 16 days. At 7 am, the AQI stood at 298 - still in the 'poor' category - as a layer of fog and smoke blanketed the capital, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). A brief respite in air quality was observed on Sunday, when the AQI dropped to 279, marking the second-lowest reading for November following a value of 202 on November 5, data from the CPCB-developed Sameer app showed. At least 22 of the city's 39 monitoring stations reported

readings in the 'very poor' category. According to CPCB standards, an AQI between 0-50 is 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor' and 401-500 'severe'.

Nehru Nagar in south Delhi recorded the highest pollution levels among city neighborhoods, with an AQI of 351, classified as 'very poor.' In contrast, NSIT Dwarka in the southwest part of the city with an AQI of 195, which falls under the 'moderate' category.

Several well-known pollution hotspots, including Anand Vihar (323), Bawana (337), Burari Crossing (304), Jahangirpuri (319), Mundka (330), Punjabi Bagh (326),

Shadipur (325), and Wazirpur (321), registered AQI readings in the 'very poor' category.

In the National Capital Region, Noida was the most polluted city on Monday, with an AQI of 316, also in the 'very poor' range. Faridabad, meanwhile, was the least polluted among nearby cities, with an AQI of 208, which falls in the 'poor' category. Greater Noida and Ghaziabad reported AQI levels of 288 and 291, respectively, both within the 'poor' range. DELHI'S JAN-NOV AVERAQE AQI LOWEST SINCE 2018

Meanwhile, the national



capital recorded its lowest January-November average air quality index (AQI)

since 2018, barring the Covid-induced lockdown year of 2020, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) said on Sunday.

The average AQI for the period this year was 187, compared to 201 in 2024, 190 in 2023, 199 in 2022, 197 in 2021, 172 in 2020, 203 in 2019 and 213 in 2018, the CAQM said in a statement.

Only three days saw the daily average AQI exceed 400 (severe category) between January and November this year. There were 11 such days in 2024, 12 in 2023, four in 2022, 17 in 2021, 11 in 2020, 16 in 2019 and 12 in 2018.

## Delhi horror: Teenager shot dead after minor scuffle in bazaar; CISF man held

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Police has arrested a CISF head constable for allegedly shooting a 17-year-old boy during a wedding procession in Shahdara's Mansarovar Park on Saturday evening. What began as a minor scuffle, allegedly while money was being showered in the procession, ended in the death of a teen whose family migrated from Jharkhand as labourers.

Police were alerted by a passer-by who reported that a child had been shot near the Community Centre in the DDA Market. When police arrived, they found the boy with a gunshot wound amid the commotion of a bazaar moving through the lane.

He was taken to hospital and declared brought dead. The accused officer, identified as Madan Gopal Tiwari, is posted in Kanpur and was in Delhi on leave to attend the wedding of his cousin, the groom. He was arrested from his hometown Etawah.

Police said the dispute began when a group of children tried to enter the wedding procession, where the groom was on horseback and kin were celebrating. When kin asked the kids to move aside, they reportedly refused, triggering a quarrel. The CISF head constable, who was in Delhi to attend wedding, allegedly shot child in a fit of rage and left for Etawah, police said.

The child's father told that his son was back from a shop his son came across the wedding procession and stopped since money was being thrown. "He was collecting some thrown money, which some people there did not like. They beat him up after that. When he did not leave, the man, who was intoxicated, shot him," he said.

The child's brother was present at the spot and ran back home to inform the kin. A source said, "When he gets bail, CISF will initiate an inquiry as per the law. If a person is detained for more than 48 hours, the person is deemed to be suspended."

## 3 arrested from Shahzad Bhatti-led Pak terror module: Key suspects in Gurdaspur grenade attack, say Delhi Police

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has dismantled a Pakistan-backed terror module allegedly controlled by gangster-turned-terrorist Shahzad Bhatti, who is currently believed to be operating from Pakistan, officers said Sunday. The group was allegedly involved in the November 25 grenade attack outside the City Police Station in Punjab's Gurdaspur.

Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said three operatives associated with the module have been arrested from Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Those arrested have been identified as Vikas Prajapati alias Betu (19), a resident of Datia in Madhya Pradesh; Hargunpreet Singh alias Gurkaranpreet Singh (19) from Firozpur in Punjab; and Asif alias Arish (22) from Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh.

Police have recovered a semi-automatic pistol, 10 live cartridges and mobile phones containing incriminating chats, as well as reconnaissance videos.

The Gurdaspur attack was allegedly executed on Bhatti's directions, who has been coordinating terror operations using encrypted communication platforms and social media channels. The breakthrough came after investigators began monitoring Bhatti's digital footprints and communication networks. Police found that Prajapati, already wanted in an arms-smuggling case, was in frequent contact with Bhatti. His movement between Delhi and Gurdaspur and Bhatti's repeated instructions to switch off his phone triggered deeper surveillance. Prajapati was arrested after a two-day chase in Madhya Pradesh. During questioning, Prajapati gave details of the module's operations to police, said officers.

Police said Bhatti and his handlers in Pakistan scanned social media profiles to target vulnerable and impressionable youth, luring them with promises of quick money and cult-like gangster glamour.

The recruits were trained remotely, used for reconnaissance missions and deployed as disposable assets for terror strikes. Payments were made digitally to avoid detection.

## Apex Court must revisit rulings on environment laws

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

Last week, a Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, sitting with Justice Joymala Bagchi, delivered a reminder that the Court does not have a "magic wand" to clear Delhi's air.

The Bench underscored that the capital's pollution crisis can be addressed only through scientific identification of each contributing factor, vehicular emissions, industrial activity, construction dust, waste burning, seasonal stubble smoke, and other regional influences. The judges stressed that without a precise identification of sources and a corresponding evidence-based action plan, the annual winter smog will continue unabated. Equally important was the Bench's emphasis on the role of domain experts, scientific bodies, and technical institutions in shaping long-term solutions. The court called for continuous monitoring, coordinated action across jurisdictions, and strict

accountability from implementing agencies. The message was clear that the capital's air emergency requires a governance model that is steady, transparent, and resistant to political or administrative oscillation. It is in



this context that two orders of the Supreme Court earlier this year merit a careful, dispassionate review.

Both the orders were passed in response to petitions, including by the Delhi government and private individuals, seeking relaxations. Both were intended as interim reliefs. And both have had direct implications for the city's pollution profile this winter.

Ahead of Diwali, the court granted conditional relaxation on the sale and use of firecrackers. It attempted to find a middle path, allowing only green crackers, restricting sales to licensed vendors, and limiting bursting hours. On the ground, however, implementation fell short. Unauthorised sales flourished, the composition of crackers remained unverifiable, and bursting continued beyond prescribed hours.

The court's own recent observations highlight why such conditional relaxations require reassessment. When enforcement capacity is weak and compliance unreliable, nuanced permissions can inadvertently lead to broader violations.

The second order concerns old vehicles. The Supreme Court's 2018 directive barring diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years was a cornerstone of Delhi's anti-pollution regime.

## How a girl who watched the Moon became India's Missile Woman: Tessy Thomas honoured with Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios Award

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

Long before India knew her as its 'Missile Woman', a young girl in Kerala's Alappuzha used to gaze at the sky with a quiet fascination. "When I returned home in the evenings, I would look at the Moon and feel happy I brought it back with me," Tessy Thomas, 62, recalls. Often, she would step outside at night just to see if it was still there, a ritual that nurtured her curiosity about the universe. Her interests soon expanded beyond the Moon. "When I was young, I was captivated by science and maths. I used to wonder how contrails coming out of an aircraft made marks in the sky." Simple questions like that formed the basis of an extraordinary career that transformed India's missile and defence landscape.

On Sunday, Thomas was awarded Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios Award 2025 by Wajahat Habibullah, former chief information commissioner of India. Instituted by Sophia Society of the Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Church, the award is given every alternate year in memory of first Metropolitan of Delhi Diocese and noted philosopher Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios.

Thomas is the first woman to lead a missile project in the country and a pioneering engineer in defence tech. She was the first Indian woman to be inducted into Aeronautical Society's Space Pioneer Hall of Fame in 2014 and is a recipient of multiple awards.

On the occasion, Dr Youhanon Mar Demetrios, president of Sophia Society, said, "Thomas has demonstrated to women, men and people of all ages that with determination, one can reach any height."

The event was attended by Catholicos Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews-III, Prof Shyamadas Balakrishna Menon, Rev Fr KM George and Rev Fr Saji Abraham.

Thomas' own leap into advanced science came when she was selected as one of 10 students across India for a specialised missile tech program. "I was fortunate to be guided by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam," she recalls, acknowledging his pivotal role in shaping generations of Indian scientists.

Eventually, she was at the helm of Agni missile program, at a time when the field was heavily dominated by men. Her work was groundbreaking.

## Lost our only breadwinner, says family of 23-year-old killed in Delhi accident

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

The family of Rohit, the 23-year-old restaurant employee who died after being hit by a speeding Mercedes SUV in southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj, said their only hope for a better life is lost. According to family members, Rohit was their sole breadwinner, who was saving up to open his own restaurant one day.

The deceased, a native of Chamoli in Uttarakhand, worked as a chef at a restaurant in Ambience Mall and earned around Rs 15,000 a month.

Rohit was killed while two others were critically injured after a Mercedes SUV allegedly rammed into them near Ambience Mall on Nelson Mandela Marg in Vasant Kunj early

on Sunday.

The three men, who worked in a restaurant inside the mall, were



waiting for a vehicle to return to their rented accommodation in Munirka after finishing their shift when the accident took place.

Rohit's family said he had been

supporting his parents and siblings since the age of 20, sending home most of his earnings every month and saving a little for his dream.

"He was the only one earning. Our whole family depended on him," said Rohit's uncle Balwant Singh, holding back tears.

He said Rohit was a soft-spoken and humble person who never raised his voice at anyone. "Today, (without Rohit), we don't know how to handle anything. He was just standing there waiting for a ride home. The SUV driver destroyed all our dreams," Singh added. Relatives said the news of Rohit's death has left the family, especially his mother, shattered.

## Mission Decongest: NCR highway overhaul to transform mobility

**With the Centre's ongoing and upcoming national highway projects, travel time around the capital is set to drop sharply, easing congestion and improving commuter experience.**

#### New Delhi.(Agency)

Something is changing in and around the capital. It is fast becoming the most dominant flower around which a bouquet of massive, state-of-the-art highways is being created in the NCR.

Once completed, it will turn the city into an island, which is connected to the national grid of roads while maintaining its infrastructural and access autonomy.

At the heart of this transformation lies one of the largest road infrastructure overhauls in the country, which is aimed at easing chronic traffic congestion in and around Delhi. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), as the anchor ministry behind the overhaul, is executing a multilayered strategy involving completed, ongoing, and upcoming national highway projects designed to transform mobility in the

region. It is a massive 2,320 km plan, involving Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir. The MoRTH data shows that it has already achieved 69 per cent completion.

#### A need for scale

The MoRTH ministry says the government has already completed planned road development work spanning 1,578 km, which were delivered at a cost of Rs 63,934 crore, while the projects that have been awarded to implementing agencies and are in various stages of completion cover 594 km, worth Rs 34,589 crore. Moreover, the government is planning to execute projects for another 128 km, which will cost around Rs 23,850 crore. At Delhi Dialogues, Union Minister of State for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Ministry of

Corporate Affairs Harsh Malhotra said that the capital region witnessed unprecedented highway development in the past decade, whose momentum would



and it is being executed accordingly. Lots of projects have been executed over a decade, and many more are in the pipeline. In the near future, the entire region will have an augmented network of road infrastructure, which will help to remove traffic deadlocks."

Malhotra said the success of Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE) among the completed projects at the top of the list. This 135 km project was one of the first completed decongestion plans for the capital. Conceptualised at an investment of Rs 12,000 crore, it keeps around 95,000 passenger cars away from the Delhi borders every day. It picks traffic from key urban nodes in the NCR, like Kundli, Ghaziabad, Dadri, Greater Noida, and Palwal, and connects them to the Delhi-Chandigarh highway away from the national capital in Haryana.

## NEWS BOX

Grew up watching Virat Kohli on TV, bowling to him is fun yet annoying: Marco Jansen

New Delhi. (Agency)

South Africa all-rounder Marco Jansen said that bowling to Virat Kohli is both fun and annoying at the same time, following his match-winning hundred in the first ODI in Ranchi. Kohli produced yet another masterclass innings, scoring a phenomenal 135 off 120 deliveries, including 11 fours and seven sixes. Courtesy of his innings, India posted a mammoth total of 349/8 in their allotted 50 overs. Watching Kohli at his vintage best, Jansen recalled his early days of watching the Indian star play on television. He mentioned that it is both fun and annoying to bowl to the Indian batting stalwart, praising him for his wide array of strokes. "It's nice to watch him play. Growing up watching him on TV, to actually bowling to him now — it's annoying but it's fun at the same time. He drives well, he pulls well, cuts well, plays with his pads well. I don't think much has changed — he's just batting longer and longer," said Jansen in the post-match press conference. Jansen, who first bowled to Kohli as a 17-year-old net bowler during India's 2017-18 tour of South Africa, said that



stopping world-class batters like Kohli becomes almost impossible once they settle in. "When you bowl to world-class players, it's quite difficult to get them out. I always try to get a batter in his first 10 or 15 balls. That's when they're still getting used to the wicket. But once they're in, and they get on a roll, it's very difficult to stop them. Everyone here knows how to play — that's why you go to plan B or C," he added. Jansen continued his rich form from the Test series, as he scalped two wickets and played a sensational innings of 70 off 39 deliveries to keep South Africa in the hunt for chasing down 350. However, they were eventually bundled out for 332, resulting in a 17-run loss. Following their defeat, he said that the Proteas were not too disheartened by going 0-1 down and believed they were "doing the right things" despite India's win. "We didn't bowl too badly. They got early wickets, we were on the back foot, then we pulled it back. It's just about adding the good things on top of each other, like we've been doing in the Test squad," said Jansen.

## Michael Jordan's fight against NASCAR heads to court, could shake up motorsports

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (Agency)

Michael Jordan's bitter fight against NASCAR heads to federal court Monday in a jury trial that could rip apart the top motorsports series in the United States. The antitrust allegations leveled by Jordan-owned 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports has exposed salacious personal communications, NASCAR's finances and a deep contempt between some of the top executives in the sport and its participants.

Three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin, who owns 23XI alongside Jordan and less than a month ago had the Cup Series



championship slip through his fingers, warned this weekend that the gloves will be off during the two-week trial in the Western District of North Carolina. "Our fans have been brainwashed with (NASCAR's) talking points for decades," Hamlin wrote on social media. "Lies are over starting Monday morning. It's time for the truth. It's time for change." NASCAR Commissioner Steve Phelps has said that the series has tried hard to settle the case ahead of Monday's trial.

### What is the lawsuit about?

The lawsuit was filed by 23XI Racing, which is owned by Basketball Hall of Famer Jordan, Hamlin and Jordan's longtime business manager, Curtis Polk. They were joined by Front Row Motorsports, a team owned by entrepreneur Bob Jenkins that won the 2021 Daytona 500. The two were the only teams out of 15 to refuse to sign renewals on the charter agreements NASCAR presented to them in late 2024.

All 15 teams had been fighting for more favorable terms in the charter agreements over more than two years of negotiations, and the final terms fell short of what the teams had been seeking. 23XI and Front Row accused NASCAR of being a monopoly and sued under antitrust grounds..

LUSAIL, Qatar. (Agency)

Former cricketer Mohammed Kaif has claimed that India would have lost the Ranchi ODI if it wasn't for the heroics of

# If not for Harshit Rana's early wickets, SA would've easily chased 350: Sitanshu Kotak

**Harshit Rana's early wickets helped India defend 349 against South Africa in Ranchi. He finished the match with figures of 3/65 in ten overs helping India register a 17-run victory.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian batting coach Sitanshu Kotak credited fast bowler Harshit Rana for his game-changing spell with the new ball during the first ODI against South Africa on Sunday, November 30 at JSCA International Stadium Complex, Ranchi. Rana was phenomenal with the new ball as he dismissed Ryan Bresnan (0 off 1) and Quinton de Kock (0 off 2) in his very first over itself. He further got the crucial wicket of Dewald Brevis (37 off 28) and eventually finished with figures of 3/65 in ten overs. Following Rana's remarkable performance, Sitanshu Kotak praised the young speedster, saying that if not for his early wickets, India would've had a



hard time defending their score of 349.

"I think 350 on the same surface, if they were batting, then 350 would definitely be enough. But after so much dew, the bowler can't even hold the ball properly. The ball is skidding off the wicket and coming straight onto the bat. I

think a lot of credit goes to Harshit as well for taking those early wickets, because otherwise it would have been quite easy for them to score runs in such heavy dew," said Kotak in the post-match presentation. He also credited Rana for making the new ball talk and making the most of the swinging conditions. "So, after losing the toss and still winning this game, I think it's very creditable. I think he was moving the ball well, he was hitting the right areas in the early innings because a Kookaburra ball probably swings for two, four, maybe five overs. So, I think he made the most of it," he added. Apart from Rana, Arshdeep Singh also started well with the new ball for India, dismissing Aiden Markram (7 off 15). However, crucial innings from Matthew Breetzke (72 off 80), Marco Jansen (70 off 39), Tony de Zorzi (39 off 35), Dewald Brevis (37 off 28) and Corbin Bosch (67 off 51) brought South Africa back in the game. However, Kuldeep Yadav's (4/68) timely strikes in the middle overs ensured the Proteas didn't run away with the game. India eventually won the match by 17 runs, bundling out South Africa for 332 and took a 1-0 lead in the series. Virat Kohli was adjudged Player of the Match for scoring his 52nd ODI century. He scored a remarkable 135 (120) with the help of 11 fours and seven sixes.

**Don't judge Ruturaj Gaikwad for low scores until you make him open: Aakash Chopra**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India cricketer-turned-commentator Aakash Chopra has said that the team management must give Ruturaj Gaikwad a chance at the top of the order before judging him on his failures. Gaikwad failed on his return to the Indian team after 16 months, getting dismissed for 8 runs off 14 balls in the first ODI against South Africa in Ranchi. Gaikwad's stay at the crease was cut short by a stunning catch from his Chennai Super Kings (CSK) teammate Dewald Brevis. Following his failure, Aakash Chopra criticised the India management for sending him at number four, as Gaikwad is predominantly a top-order batter. He urged the team management to give him a proper run and not to discard him if he fails, as he is primarily accustomed to opening. "I really



don't understand what is going on. Ruturaj Gaikwad has never batted at No. 4 in ODIs. You sent him to that position, and he got out due to a stunning catch by Dewald Brevis. When he got dismissed, I urged, with folded hands, that please give him three full chances. Even if he fails, don't discard him immediately. Don't judge him on these three performances. His main job is to open the batting. Until you can give him that position, you don't have any right to pass a verdict on his ODI career," said Chopra on his YouTube channel. Chopra also criticised the decision to bench Rishabh Pant and instead play Washington Sundar in the middle order. "And now Rishabh Pant — when will you play him? He is a pure middle-order batter, performs best at 4 or 5, and yet you don't pick him even when there is space in the middle order. Instead, you send two players who have never batted at those positions," he added.

Rishabh Pant last played ODIs for India in August 2024 in Sri Lanka. He was part of the victorious Champions Trophy 2025 campaign but did not get a chance in the playing XI, with KL Rahul keeping wickets.

## Premier League: 10-man Chelsea frustrate Arsenal, Liverpool end rot vs West Ham

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Chelsea and Arsenal played out a 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge, with the home side finishing with ten men and denying Arsenal a victory in a crucial London derby. The result keeps Arsenal five points clear at the top of the Premier League standings with 30 points, while Chelsea remain in third on 24. In another fixture on Sunday, Liverpool recorded a 2-0 away win over West Ham, snapping a poor run in which they had lost nine of their previous twelve matches. The clash between Chelsea and Arsenal was shaped by Moises Caicedo's red card, given after a VAR review in the 38th minute. Despite being a player down, Chelsea took the lead early in the second half when Trevoh Chalobah headed in from a Reece James corner in the 48th minute. Arsenal equalised eleven minutes later, with Mikel Merino converting a Bukayo Saka cross. The final half-hour saw Arsenal push hard for a winner, with Martin Odegaard and Merino both coming close,

but Chelsea held firm to secure the draw. Arsenal's attempts to break down Chelsea's defence in the closing stages were met with disciplined resistance from the



home side. The point earned means Arsenal maintain their position at the summit.

### ISAK SCORES AS LIVERPOOL WIN

At the London Stadium, Liverpool ended their recent slump by defeating West Ham 2-0. Alexander Isak scored his first Premier

League goal for the club after joining for a record fee, finishing a Cody Gakpo pull-back on the hour mark. This breakthrough gave Liverpool a crucial lead as they sought to recover from a disappointing run of form.

Liverpool made a notable change with Mohamed Salah dropped from the Premier League starting eleven for the first time under manager Arne Slot. His replacement, Florian Wirtz, looked lively and created opportunities but was unable to convert a significant chance. Liverpool's second goal came through Gakpo, who sealed the result.

West Ham's frustrations grew when Lucas Paqueta received two bookings for dissent in the space of 60 seconds, leaving the home side with ten men for the closing stages. Liverpool maintained control after the dismissal and secured all three points.

## Max Verstappen wins Qatar Grand Prix to set up final race title showdown

**The Dutchman now goes into the season-closer next weekend only 12 points behind Norris with Piastri 16 points behind his teammate.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

DOHA: Max Verstappen won the Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday to set up a final race title showdown with McLaren duo Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri. The Red Bull driver kept the wheels on his quest for a fifth successive crown after pole-sitter Piastri finished second and standings leader Norris came only fourth. Verstappen's remarkable late season surge has lifted him past Piastri and into second in the championship. The Dutchman now goes into the season-



closer next weekend only 12 points behind Norris with Piastri 16 points behind his teammate. Verstappen has fond memories of the last time the title went down to the wire when he beat Lewis Hamilton on the last lap of the last race in Abu Dhabi in 2021.

This was a race McLaren should have won, with Piastri heading the grid and Norris

alongside him on the front row, only to be overtaken by Verstappen at the start. Red Bull pitted Verstappen under a safety car, unlike McLaren who kept their two drivers out on the track. "Clearly we did not get it right tonight," conceded Piastri.

"I drove as fast as I could but it wasn't to be. In hindsight it is pretty obvious what we should have done, but we'll discuss that as a team. (It's) a little bit tough to swallow at the moment," the Australian added. Verstappen said: "An incredible race for us, we made the right call to box under that safety car. A strong race for us on a weekend that was tough." Carlos Sainz of Williams completed the podium under floodlights at the Lusail International Circuit in the Doha desert.

## Without Kohli and Rohit, India had no chance vs South Africa in Ranchi: Mohammed Kaif

**Mohammed Kaif has claimed that without the heroics from Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, India would have lost the Ranchi ODI against South Africa. Kohli scored a hundred and Rohit hit a fifty as India won the match by 17 runs.**

LUSAIL, Qatar. (Agency)

Former cricketer Mohammed Kaif has claimed that India would have lost the Ranchi ODI if it wasn't for the heroics of



make two hundred. So, in the end, you had to go back to Kohli and Rohit to save you," said Kaif.

### 'OUR OLD IS STILL GOLD'

While the partnership was aggressive, there were so many parallels between the stand in Ranchi and the one Kohli and Rohit put together in Sydney against Australia a month ago. Kaif said that the duo did the same work they did in that game in Ranchi and showed that they still hold value in Indian cricket. "Virat Kohli hit a century and the straight connection of this win is the runs coming from his bat. He hit seven sixes and Rohit Sharma got three. They made a partnership, the same work they did in Sydney before this series. And the condition of the Indian team was very bad. After losing the Test series you got a breath of relief. Our old is still gold. They are getting old; Kohli is 37, Rohit is 38. Their need was there in this match. If they hadn't scored runs, South Africa would have won this match very easily," said Kaif.

## Sensex, Nifty scale fresh peaks as Q2 GDP surprise lifts market mood

### New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened Monday's session on a strong note as upbeat Q2 GDP numbers lifted sentiment across Dalal Street. Both the S&P BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty50 touched fresh all-time highs in early trade. By 9:24 am, the Sensex was up 309.06 points at 86,015.73, while the Nifty50 rose 84.50 points to 26,287.45.

Broader market indices also edged higher, aided by a sharp drop in volatility—a positive signal for investors tracking near-term stability. JSW Steel, Adani Ports, SBI, TMPV and ONGC were among the top gainers on the Nifty50, while ITC, IndiGo, Tata Consumer Products, Bajaj Finance, Nestle India and Titan were the biggest laggards. Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said the ongoing rally tells an unusual story beneath the headline numbers. "New record at the index level but no celebration in the market is the unique feature of the ongoing rally. For most retail investors, their portfolio values are lower than those at the previous peak of September 2024," he said.

He explained that the disconnect stems from the narrow nature of the rally. "Eight stocks—HDFC Bank, RIL, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, L&T, ITC, Infy and SBI—have 50% weighting in Nifty. So when 5 or 6 of these heavyweights move up, the index rises. But 330 stocks in NSE 500 are below their September 2024 peak, and those dominate most retail portfolios." On the macro front, Vijayakumar said the Q2 GDP growth of 8.2%, driven by manufacturing, services and consumption, has the potential to take the market higher. But he flagged concerns as well.

"The modest nominal growth at 8.7 percent due to low GDP deflator is disappointing from the market perspective. A rate cut from the MPC may also not materialise on Friday since the economy doesn't need a monetary stimulus when it is firing on all cylinders." Anand James, chief market strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said the Nifty's chart setup still supports further upside. He noted that despite two consecutive red candles, oscillators have not flagged Wednesday's surge as an anomaly. He expects dips early in the week but believes they are unlikely to sustain.

## FM rolls out new tobacco cess to back health and security funding

### CHENNAI.(Agency)

Nifty and the Sensex began the new month on a strong footing, but away from markets, Parliament saw a major fiscal policy shift aimed at reshaping tobacco taxation. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman formally introduced the Health Security and National Security Cess Bill, 2025, a legislative proposal that will replace the soon-to-expire GST compensation cess currently levied on tobacco products such as cigarettes, pan masala and gutkha. The GST compensation cess regime, which was introduced as a temporary measure to protect state revenues after the rollout of GST, is approaching its sunset as the borrowed funds used for compensation are close to being fully repaid.

The new cess marks a structural shift. Instead of channeling a uniform surcharge through the GST system, the government now intends to collect a dedicated cess under a separate statute. The stated purpose is to create a protected revenue stream specifically earmarked for public health programmes and national security initiatives, signaling a policy intent that goes beyond closing a fiscal gap. By linking the cess to health and security objectives, the government is framing tobacco taxation as a tool that serves both consumption deterrence and long-term national priorities.

## Rupee hits 89.73, spotlight shifts to RBI as pressure mounts

### CHENNAI.(Agency)

The rupee sank to an all-time low of Rs 89.73 per US dollar in early trade on Monday, slipping past the previous records near Rs 89.49. The slide comes despite India's recent strong economic growth numbers: the upbeat macroeconomic backdrop failed to offset pressures from weak capital inflows and shaky trade-deal prospects. The principal drivers behind the rupee's sharp drop include persistent foreign outflows—across both equity and debt investments—and disappointing flows into the country's foreign-exchange (FX) system. At the same time, the long-mooted trade agreement between India and the United States remains elusive, dousing hopes that a deal might galvanize dollar-inflows or improve sentiment for the rupee. Importers' dollar demand is also strong amid a widening trade deficit and hefty foreign-exchange needs, especially for crude oil, raw materials and other imports. This elevated demand for dollars, unbalanced by adequate dollar supply via inflows or export receipts, has exacerbated downward pressure on the rupee. Adding to the strain, hedging activity in the non-deliverable forward (NDF) market has increased, as importers and corporates lock in dollar exposure ahead of uncertainty—amplifying broader dollar demand. Even though the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has intervened—including occasional dollar sales—the intervention has been insufficient to arrest the slide, and the currency continues to weaken under structural pressures. The implications of this depreciation are mixed. For exporters, a weaker rupee makes Indian goods more competitive abroad, potentially boosting export volumes. Remittances from abroad also convert into more rupees, offering some benefit to households earning in foreign currency. On the flip side, imports—especially of crude oil and other essentials—become more expensive. That raises costs for businesses reliant on imported inputs and pushes inflation up, which could weigh on consumption and production costs across sectors.

# Silver hits record high as gold shines. What's the latest bullion rally

### The precious metals market is buzzing again as silver hits a fresh record high and gold continues its steady climb. What's fuelling this powerful bullion rally

### New Delhi.(Agency)

The bullion continues to shine. In fact, it is shining more brightly than ever. Gold prices have risen once again, while silver, in particular, surged to a fresh all-time high, lifting overall sentiment in the precious metals market.

### GOLD STEADY, SILVER HITS NEW PEAK

Both precious metals traded firm after a sharp rise on Monday. At the time of

writing, gold was priced at Rs 1,30,631 per 10 grams, up 0.87%, while silver stood at Rs 1,77,647 per kg, rising 1.52% on MCX. Analysts say the gains reflect a mix of global uncertainty and higher domestic appetite, especially during the busy wedding season, when demand for jewellery usually spikes.

### MARKET EXPERTS SEE STRONG MOMENTUM AHEAD

Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Mehta Equities Ltd, said the broader trend remains supportive for precious metals. Gold heads for a fifth straight monthly gain; silver hits a fresh record high amid Fed rate cut expectations and profit-taking in the dollar index," he said. He added that technical indicators have turned favourable for silver. "The technical charts for silver have turned more bullish in the past week or so, and that's inviting chart-based speculators to the long side of the silver market," he noted. Kalantri mentioned that safe-haven buying strengthened after a brief halt in CME trading due to a data centre issue, while the weakening rupee also supported



domestic prices. However, he said optimism around a possible Russia-Ukraine peace deal may limit gains in the coming days.

### SILVER'S STUNNING RISE OUTPACES GOLD IN 2025

Silver has been the standout performer this year. Dr Renisha Chainani, Head of Research at Augmont, said the metal has delivered extraordinary returns. "Silver's price has nearly doubled in just 11 months and risen more than gold, even though gold was the most popular commodity in 2025," she said. She added that silver's surge has clearly outpaced gold this year. "Over the past 12 months,

silver has climbed significantly higher than gold, rising 100% in 2025, whereas gold has only increased by 60%."

### WHAT'S DRIVING THE RALLY?

The sharp rise in gold and silver prices is being driven by a mix of global and domestic factors. Investors are expecting a US interest rate cut later this month, which usually supports precious metals.

At the same time, safe-haven demand has increased because of ongoing global uncertainties. In India, the wedding season has added to the buying momentum, while the weaker rupee has pushed domestic prices even higher. Technical charts, especially for silver, have also turned strongly bullish, drawing more traders into the market. Meanwhile, both metals are expected to remain firm in the near term, with global cues and central bank decisions likely to guide the next major move. While silver continues to lead the rally, analysts believe gold will remain well-supported as long as uncertainty persists.

## From ITR to TDS: 4 key income tax deadlines you can't miss in December

### New Delhi.(Agency)

December is the final and one of the busiest months for taxpayers, with several important income tax deadlines packed into just a few weeks. From filing delayed returns to completing TDS work and paying advance tax, there is a lot that individuals, businesses and government offices must finish before the year closes. Here is a simple, easy-to-follow guide to the major dates you need to keep in mind.

### DECEMBER 10, 2025

The first important date is December 10. This is the extended deadline for all corporate and non-corporate taxpayers whose accounts are audited. Partners of audited firms and spouses covered under Section 5A also fall under this rule. The original due date was October 31, but the government gave taxpayers more time to complete their filings. Anyone who falls in the audit category must ensure their Income Tax Return for Assessment Year 2025-26 is submitted by this date.

### DECEMBER 15, 2025

The middle of the month, December 15, brings several key compliances together. This date is particularly important for those involved in TDS work, advance tax payments and reporting duties. Form 27C for November must be uploaded by this day. Government offices must also submit Form 24G for TDS and TCS paid without a challan. Another major task is the payment of the third instalment of Advance Tax for Assessment Year 2026-27, which applies to both individuals and businesses. TDS certificates for tax deducted in October, under Sections 194-IA, 194-IB, 194M and 194S, must also be issued by this date. Stock exchanges, meanwhile, have to furnish Form 3BB for client code changes made during November.

### DECEMBER 30, 2025

As the month draws to a close, December 30 becomes another significant date. Recognised associations must file their client code modification statement for the month of November. In addition, taxpayers who deducted TDS in November must submit the TDS challan-cum-statement by this day. This ensures that all deductions made during the month are properly reported and accounted for.

### DECEMBER 31, 2025

The year ends with perhaps the most crucial deadline.

### Research shows that portfolios with disciplined liquidity management outperform those with static cash holdings during market stress.

### New Delhi.(Agency)

Liquidity is the ability to convert an asset into cash, without significant loss of time, effort and value. Liquidity becomes paramount for investors, particularly in times of uncertainty. Liquidity not only helps investors to cover for contingencies, but also seize new opportunities. Smart investors ensure liquidity through tactical allocation and flexibility in investment instruments. Portfolio Management Services (PMS) provide a powerful platform for adaptive liquidity management tailored to individual needs.

### WHY LIQUIDITY MATTERS?

Liquidity management is about ensuring that an investment portfolio can meet immediate cash needs without having



to sell long-term holdings and disturbing our financial plan. These cash needs may arise from unexpected events, unforeseen expenses, or unanticipated opportunities arising from market volatility that can help earn higher returns, or any other reason. Holding too much cash can reduce portfolio growth, while too little can force rushed asset sales at unfavourable prices. This trade-off requires a planned, strategic approach.

### TACTICAL ASSET ALLOCATION FOR LIQUIDITY

A key strategy is tactical asset allocation, where portfolio managers adjust the weights of asset classes based on market conditions to optimise returns

and liquidity. For example, during volatile times, managers may increase allocations to highly liquid assets like money market funds, while reducing exposure to equities or alternative investments. This dynamic approach provides cash readiness without a permanent drag on returns. Tactical asset allocation also involves segmenting assets by liquidity profiles so that the portfolio can meet short-term needs from the most liquid buckets while keeping long-term growth assets intact. The order in which assets need to be liquidated based on need is known in advance. Limiting illiquid assets to a desired percentage helps maintain flexibility, enabling better preparedness for stress situations without significant losses.

### INVESTMENT INSTRUMENTS THAT ENSURE LIQUIDITY

Portfolio managers use flexible instruments to manage liquidity efficiently. A reasonable balance in a savings account based on the requirement of cash to meet day-to-day expenses, fixed deposits with an auto reverse facility.

## Lenskart share price jumps 5% after Q2 results. Here's all you need to know

### New Delhi.(Agency)

Lenskart shares jumped over 5% in early trade on Monday after the newly listed eyewear retailer delivered a strong set of numbers for the September quarter. The stock climbed to Rs 428.50 on the Bombay Stock Exchange around 9:37 am, reflecting renewed investor confidence following one of its best quarterly performances since listing.

The company reported a 20% year-on-year rise in net profit to Rs 102.2 crore in Q2 FY26, driven by solid demand across both domestic and international markets. Revenue also grew 21% to Rs 2,096 crore, up from Rs 1,735.7 crore in the same quarter last year. Lenskart's profitability metrics strengthened meaningfully, with Ebitda rising 45% to Rs 414.5 crore and margins

expanding to 19.78%. Growth was broad-based. India remained the core



market, contributing Rs 1,230.6 crore in revenue, higher than both last quarter and the year-ago period.

But the standout story came from overseas operations, where revenue surged to Rs 879.6 crore, up from Rs 736.5 crore in Q1 and Rs 658.3 crore in

Q2 last year. After eliminating inter-segment transactions, total revenue stood at Rs 2,096.1 crore. Expenses rose 18% year-on-year to Rs 1,980.3 crore, but the increase was comfortably absorbed by the strong revenue momentum and expanding margins.

For investors, the takeaway is that Lenskart's growth has been strong in the second quarter. It is also worth noting that the company is expanding aggressively in global markets, deepening its footprint in India, and improving operating efficiency. Whether the momentum continues will depend on how effectively Lenskart sustains its international push and controls costs in an increasingly competitive eyewear market.

## Cancer patients in India face health insurance crisis, finds new study

### Cancer patients are facing a health insurance crisis. A new study finds early detection rising but coverage thinning, leaving households to manage high bills, multiple claims and growing out-of-pocket expenses.

### Kolkata.(Agency)

Cancer patients in India are facing a health insurance crisis, according to a new study by Plum Data Labs of one lakh cancer claims filed between 2023 and 2025. The data shows a country getting better at catching cancer early, yet struggling with a system that cannot financially support patients through modern, multi-stage treatment. India's stage 0, or in situ, cancers have increased sharply. Their share rose from 29% in early 2023 to

nearly 50% through 2024 before settling at 47% in early 2025. The public summary puts the rise in early-stage incidence at about 72% over the three-year window. But catching cancer early has not reduced the financial load on families. If anything, it has stretched the period over which they must engage with insurers. RISING CLAIMS WITH ADVANCED TREATMENT

A typical cancer patient now files close to four claims a year. One in five files more than five. Advanced cancers push this far higher, with patients filing between 11 and 22 claims over several months. Treatment is no longer a single episode. Surgery, multiple rounds of chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy, PET scans, biopsies, radiation sessions and follow-up reviews all fall into separate claims. Each one requires documentation, approval, waiting time and repeated interactions with insurers. This fragmentation creates delays at the worst possible time and leaves families juggling hospital timelines and insurer processes



simultaneously.

### THE COST OF CANCER

The case journeys in the deep-dive dataset show how quickly treatment costs escalate. A 40-year-old man treated for head and neck cancer spent Rs 42,44 lakh in just over two months, mostly due to two high-cost hospitalisations.

A 49-year-old woman with leukemia recorded Rs 40,56 lakh in three and a half months.

The pattern repeats across cancer types. A 76-year-old stomach cancer patient needed seven chemotherapy cycles and three admissions, reaching Rs 33,84 lakh over six and a half months. A 66-year-old

woman with colorectal cancer went through seventeen hospital visits in eight months and ended with a bill of Rs 33,25 lakh. Even early-stage cancer is not spared. A 50-year-old woman with carcinoma in situ stayed in treatment and monitoring for nearly four years and still spent Rs 31,77 lakh. These cases reflect the broader financial map. Colorectal cancer has the highest average cumulative cost at about Rs 5,07 lakh. Brain cancer follows at Rs 4,9 lakh and stomach cancer at Rs 4,53 lakh. Blood and lymph cancers are heavily hospitalisation-driven, with almost 70% of spending occurring inside hospitals. Breast cancer is among the most chemotherapy intensive. Brain cancer has the highest diagnostic burden, with nearly 24% of costs tied to tests before and after treatment. The public-facing dataset adds scale. Across one sample cohort, total cancer treatment costs reached Rs 78.0 crore. Of this, patients paid Rs 23.2 crore out-of-pocket. Even in insured groups, out-of-pocket spending commonly ranges from 20% to 40% of total cost.

# Raashii Khanna

## Turns 35: Top 5 Films That Defined The 120 Bahadur Actress' Career

Happy birthday, Raashii Khanna! As she is celebrating her 35th birthday today, on Sunday, November 30, wishes are pouring in from all sides. The actress, who made her acting debut in a supporting role in the Hindi film *Madras Cafe*, has appeared in several Telugu and Tamil films. After Raashii Khanna's debut in 2013, she appeared in the Telugu film *Oohalu Gusagusalade* the following year, which won her the SIIMA Award for Best Female Debut – Telugu. Since then, she has never looked back and already has a huge Instagram fanbase of 11.7 million, among others.

On her birthday, we looked into her top movies and upcoming projects. Raashii Khanna's Top 5 Highest-Grossing Movies

### Jai Lava Kusa (2017)

Directed by Bobby Kolli, the 2-hour 30-minute Telugu movie stars Jr N.T.R., Raashi Khanna and Nivetha Thomas in the lead. Made on a budget of Rs 60 crore, the movie grossed Rs 130.6 crore at the worldwide box office, according to IMDb. The movie was a major commercial success and the diva received widespread praise for her multi-role performance.

### Thiruchitrambalam (2022)

The highly rated Tamil romantic drama received critical acclaim for its simple, relatable characters and its heartwarming story. Directed by Mithran Jawahar, the Tamil movie featuring Prakash Raj, Bharathiraja, Dhanush, Nithya Menen, Raashi Khanna and Priya Bhavani Shankar became a huge blockbuster, earning Rs 112.5 crore worldwide.

### Sardar (2022)

The 2-hour 46-minute story is about a spy who is estranged from his family due to a mission and suddenly meets his police officer son. The Tamil action-packed spy thriller was well received by audiences and critics, earning Rs 94 crore at the global box office.

### Madras Café (2013)

Directed by Shoojit Sircar, the Hindi political thriller was a critical and commercial success, showcasing Khanna's acting prowess in a supporting role. Co-starring John Abraham and Nargis Fakhri, the movie had grossed Rs 67.2 crore worldwide.

### Aranmanai 4 (2024)

Sundar C's directorial is based on a man who decides to discover the hidden truth after his sister's suspicious death. The Tamil movie also stars Tamannaah Bhatia and Raashi Khanna in the lead and grossed Rs 66.1 crore worldwide. Other blockbuster movies in her list include *Venky Mama*, *Prati Roju Pandaage*, *Yodha*, *Tholi Prema*, *Supreme*, *Oohalu Gusagusalade* and others.



'Sukoon After Tough Storm': Ashnoor Kaur Shares FIRST Post After Bigg Boss 19 Eviction, Abhishek Bajaj Reacts



Just one week before the grand finale of Bigg Boss 19, television actress Ashnoor Kaur was evicted from the show for intentionally hitting Tanya Mittal during a task. Host Salman Khan strongly condemned Ashnoor's actions and stated that she showed no remorse for hitting Tanya with a wooden plank. Ashnoor was left in tears when she was asked to exit the BB house. Now, she has shared her first post on Instagram after her eviction. She reunited with her puppy at home, and shared a caption about finding peace after 'tough storms'.

### Ashnoor Kaur's First Post After Bigg Boss 19 Eviction

After her eviction, Ashnoor Kaur took to her Instagram to share a few pictures with her furry friend. The photos show her standing on her balcony, cradling her puppy in her arms. In her caption, she expressed her emotions, and wrote, "Sukoon after the tough storm." Abhishek Bajaj, who shared a good bond with her on the show, commented, "Rabb Rakha," along with a red heart emoji. Ashnoor's friends Awez Darbar and Nagma Mirajkar also showed their support by dropping red heart emojis. Meanwhile, Ashnoor also took to her Instagram stories to share a video of her arriving home, where her puppy was waiting for her. "Back to my baby boo," she wrote. Check out the post, and the video below!

### Why Was Ashnoor Kaur Evicted From Bigg Boss 19?

Ashnoor and Tanya Mittal's altercation happened when the latter spilled the water from Ashnoor's bowl, thus removing her from the Ticket To Finale race. Ashnoor was then seen removing the wooden plank from her shoulders, and hitting Tanya while doing so. While Tanya called out her behaviour and pointed out that she was hurt, Ashnoor questioned why Tanya was standing so close behind her. During Weekend Ka Vaar, Salman Khan slammed Ashnoor, and stated that Tanya was merely standing in front of her as part of the task. He played a video clip clearly showing Ashnoor hitting Tanya, after which all the housemates agreed that she had intentionally hurt Tanya during the task. Salman strongly condemned her actions, and said that this cannot go unpunished. As a result, Ashnoor was evicted from the reality show.

## Juhi Chawla Refused Retake Of Kissing Scene With Sunny Deol: 'As Per Contract, Only One Kiss'



Juhi Chawla may be best remembered for her sparkling chemistry with Aamir Khan in *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, but the early '90s also saw her forming two other major screen pairings — with Shah Rukh Khan and Sunny Deol. In 1993, the year she starred opposite both men in Yash Chopra's iconic *Darr*, Juhi also headlined Dharmesh Darshan's action romance *Lootere* opposite Sunny. For producer Suneel Darshan, *Lootere* remains one of the most defining yet underrated films of her career. "I hold it as one of the most underplayed and important films of Juhi Chawla's career," he said, looking back at the project. "I had distributed both her launch film *Sultanat* (1986) and *QSQT* (1988). Juhi Chawla had great potential. So, we decided to cast her in *Lootere*."

### Juhi's Hesitation: 'There Were Some Reservations'

While she was the natural choice for the makers, Juhi had a few inhibitions — especially about the film's glamorous, Westernised heroine. "There was a beach song in which she had to just wear a shirt and get wet — 'Main Teri Rani Tu Raja,'" Suneel recalled. "So, there were some reservations."

At the same time, rising star Divya Bharti was keen on the film. "Divya wanted to be a part of the movie. But I felt she didn't fit the role," Suneel said. Eventually, Juhi came on board after both he and Dharmesh Darshan agreed she was the perfect fit.

### 'Girl-Next-Door' to Sensual Lead: A Challenging Transition

Suneel admitted that reshaping Juhi's wholesome, girl-next-door image was a challenge. "Juhi was convinced, but also confused," he said. "It feels like *nadaaniyan* today, but there's a very cute instance that happened." The "cute instance" involved a crucial lip-to-lip kissing scene between Juhi and Sunny — something extremely rare in mainstream Bollywood in the early '90s. "When we narrated her the film and signed the contract, there was a key lip-to-lip kissing sequence," he revealed. "We saved it for the end. We'd erected a set outdoors, but realized that day that Juhi was missing."

According to Suneel, Juhi used the shoot of another film in Udaipur as an excuse to skip that day's schedule. But the team insisted on filming it later, as it was crucial to the story.

### 'As Per Contract, I Was Supposed to Do One Kiss'

To ease the process, Suneel suggested shooting the scene with multiple cameras so it could be captured in a single take. Juhi completed the take and immediately grabbed a robe.

# Sophie Choudry

## Hits Back At Claim She Survived Bollywood 'Bina Kaam Ke'

Singer and actor Sophie Choudry, who has built a multifaceted career across music, film and live entertainment, responded sharply to a social media user questioning her relevance in Bollywood. The exchange unfolded shortly after she shared a backstage photograph with Jennifer Lopez from the recent Udaipur wedding of Netra Mantena and Vamsi Gadiraju, where both artists performed.

Choudry posted the picture on X along with a note expressing admiration for Lopez, writing, "Jennifer Lopez... An artist I absolutely adore and am hugely inspired by since more than 2 decades!! Her on stage fire, her discipline, her music videos, her style, so many of her movies... just Iconic!" When a user criticised Lopez's fashion choices at her age, Choudry responded with a video of the singer performing on stage, saying, "Ummm... She looks better than most 20 year old performers! If she can carry it off and her fans don't have a problem with it, what's yours?"

The discussion soon shifted when another user commented under her photo, questioning how she had "survived Bollywood" without regular acting or music roles. The fan wrote, "Yaar Sophie mujhe aaj tak nahi samajh mein aata how have you survived Bollywood bina kaam ke.

No movies, nN web show, not even as songs. We have only seen you in bits & pieces then how have you survived #bollywood?" Choudry responded directly and clarified where her career has thrived in recent years. "Through the live show market. Been one of the busiest live singer performers for 17 years for corporate and wedding shows, am the number 1 female host for live events. Just because you don't see me on screen doesn't mean I haven't made my place elsewhere. In India unless you are in the top 10 actresses you don't make money. I realised that a long long time ago and thank God for that," she wrote.

Sophie Choudry, known for her appearances in films like *Shaadi No. 1*, *Pyaar Ke Side Effects* and *Kidnap*, has also earned recognition as an MTV India host. Alongside her work as a performer and anchor, she is a trained dancer and a prominent social media personality with over two million Instagram followers.



A break-up is never pleasant, especially if the person in question happens to be a colleague. Mithila Mehta tells you how recover from a failed office romance. When an office romance fails, it is bound to create a rather messy situation. It is unlike a regular breakup simply because it is imperative to maintain a cordial relationship with the individual. You will run into each other every day, all the time. You may have to work together and speak to each other as though nothing is wrong. It is extremely hard, but must be done.

The most important thing is to ensure that a failed office relationship does not affect your productivity and performance. Let work be your priority, give it everything you have. Further, break-up histrionics will showcase you in a bad light at the workplace,

affecting your credibility and professional image. For the sake of your career, putting on a brave face is very important. Quitting and moving to a new workplace may seem like a good idea, particularly if it is a painful breakup. Consider the option with a cool head, and avoid taking a hasty decision. Don't jeopardise your career over something as trivial as a failed romance.

#### Talk things out

No matter how badly things end, remember that neither of you would want the break-up to impact your professional lives. In that sense, you are both on the same side. Discuss the implications of ending the relationship in professional terms. Depending on what note you are parting on, try and establish some general ground rules to make things easier for both of you. "I was dating a colleague for



# How to deal with Workplace Break-ups

Breaking down or mud-slinging is a strict no-no. It doesn't matter whether you are unbelievably upset, angry, jilted or heartbroken. Unleash your acting skills — simply smile through it all. A common trap is looking for a rebound relationship at the workplace. Steer clear, as this will only complicate matters further.

#### Maintain a distance

Give each other considerable time and space to recover from the break-up. While it may not be entirely possible to avoid workplace interactions, keep to the basics. Physical distance will dissipate the awkwardness faster. "Every time I saw my ex boyfriend in office, I would feel an overwhelming sense of sadness. I decided to keep out of his way as much as possible—keeping away from his cubicle, avoiding him in the pantry, keeping separate lunch hours. Out of sight really is out of mind," shares Meera. Delete each other from office communicators if necessary.

#### Don't involve others

It is unfair and unprofessional to drag other colleagues into the break-up mess. Let the issues lie between the both of you. "Never stoop down to spreading rumours or nasty stories about your ex to other colleagues. It will simply create a vicious cycle. In fact, try not to speak about the break-up at all. No one needs to know what went wrong, how it happened, or any other such private details," advises Dhaval Mehta, communication manager at a financial institution. Even if other colleagues ask you about the break-up, divulge as little as possible, especially if you don't want your personal life becoming the coffee machine gossip of the day.

An office break-up is sure to be a challenging time — but with a fair amount of tact, discretion and courage, it can be handled successfully. Give yourself some time, and things will fall into place.

almost two years, when things took a terrible turn due to family differences. We had to break up. We mutually decided to keep workplace interactions formal and dignified, and to keep

our office friends out of the mess. Openly discussing these issues and jointly coming to a consensus ensured that the break-up was quiet and smooth," reveals Meera P, FMCG brand manager.

#### Be professional

Try to keep your personal and professional selves separate. Don't let the break-up interfere with professional interactions, especially when working in a team. Give your ex the same respect you would give any other colleague. "Two colleagues in my team, who recently broke up, would unnecessarily bash each other's ideas during brainstorming sessions. Such behaviour is downright immature and should be avoided at all costs," advises Richa Dias, account planner at an advertising agency.

Maintain a dignified, composed front at the workplace.

creativity to bring out the best in employees. Rigid systems and processes, hierarchies, inflexible policies and linear modes of thinking are slowly being phased out to welcome flat organizations, space for innovation, and a focus on collaboration through creative thinking.

Richard Lobo, SVP, Head HR, Infosys Limited says, "It's easy to examine these outward signs and mistake them for a creative culture. There is nothing a creative workspace can do if the underlying structure does not allow free collaboration across teams. Allowing a creative culture to grow involves both a strong foundation of creative values as well as a workspace free of constraints to open the mind." So, how are companies dealing with this? He explains, "At Infosys, we have begun the journey towards greater employee engagement and innovation by fostering creative thinking in the spaces of technology and beyond. In 2014, we launched the first crowdsourcing idea campaign at Infosys called Murmuration. A CEO-driven initiative, employees were encouraged to provide their ideas about our business strategy, and through an inclusive employee-voting mechanism, 10 ideas were shortlisted for consideration from the original pool of 2,650 ideas."

Tech giants such as Facebook and Google are already famous for their hack-a-thons — overnight events where employees are asked to ditch their regular work and concentrate on trying out something else within the

company. According to Lobo, "These events encourage out-of-the-box thinking and inculcate the culture of rapid problem-solving using technology." Similarly, Infosys has its own global Hackathon, which is currently in its second season, to channel creative thinking among employees. Here, people are able to get hands-on experience with open source and proprietary software tools and technologies. It also provides a platform for employees to identify and engage with talented designers and developers. ??To ensure that employees have a

Landmark Group strongly believes in a culture of innovation and over the years has benefitted greatly from employee sourced solutions. He says, "Keeping the creative juices flowing is important for us and we continuously organize activities that encourage out-of-the-box thinking. Play in a Day or Theatre Methodology has been a very successful program for us, where various concepts. Be it business or soft skills, they are explained to employees through theater." He also talks about conducting an interesting engagement activity called Islempix, in which store teams are provided with various Olympic-like tasks and adds, "These activities are not only fun, but also increase employee morale, camaraderie and understanding between team members."

R Mahalakshmi, Director Human Resources, Mondelez India Foods Private Ltd stresses on having a 'thought diverse team' that work on the principle of 'crowdsourcing' to solve key business issues. She talks about putting the power in the hands of employees to create a powerful workplace that welcomes multiple perspectives and enables innovation at work. In a similar way, Yes Bank encourages Owner-Partner-Manager concept, where it empowers employees as owners and partners, who take full responsibility and accountability for self-development and achievement of larger organizational goals.

Deodutta Kurane, Group President, Human Capital Management, Yes Bank also emphasizes the need for organizing various social, cultural and sports events that shape employee experience around recreational programmes, fostering meaningful engagement. He affirms, "DICE (Design Thinking, Innovation and Creativity led Entrepreneurship) is the fundamental building block which defines Yes Bank's DNA and forms its ethos." Creativity has always been a quest, but never a priority. Having the support system to encourage creativity is equally important. The urgency of the situation demands that a leader should engage the entire workforce, at the right time, in creative work. The idea that each employee has something creative to contribute is not a new one, but making it work has required imagination. Freeing up the power of the individual to create is the first step on the creative culture journey.

# Fostering a creative culture in the Workplace

Take a walk around a workspace in a large organization, and the chances are, you will encounter employees gathered around foosball tables, furiously typing away while sitting on beanbags or strategizing business growth over a cup of coffee. These are outward signs of what companies are trying to do — make creativity a part of the organization's culture and generate new

products, ideas or solutions by creating a relaxed atmosphere at the workplace.

The workforce today has evolved over the last decade or so to be more open to creativity. With a large number of millennials joining the employee population, the needs of the employees are drastically different from those of the previous generations. And this has caused a cultural shift within organizations. The new culture is headed towards fostering

holistic professional experience, it is necessary to encourage creativity in leisure spaces as well. With Google being the front runner, companies are now encouraging healthy environment through creatively designed workspaces, world-class sports facilities, recreational rooms, gyms, and even sleep pods for power naps.

The workplace has become all the more dynamic and fast-paced. Invariably because of long shift hours, the office becomes a second home and the colleagues, an extended family. Sabbas Joseph, Director of one of the leading event management companies, Wizcraft shares, "For keeping the dynamism alive, we always host interesting activities that can help the Wizzes (team members) to get to know each other and more importantly, relieve stress. From quizzes to pop up shops, celebrating festivals together to dedicating an entire room with books and a music system for just 'chilling'; I think it's extremely important for companies, especially those that require loads of creativity, to provide an outlet for people to engage and bond with each other as they serve as the best stress antidotes." Companies have realized the importance of innovation and how encouraging creative activities can boost team morale.

Venkatramana B, President, Group HR, Landmark Group India asserts that

