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BJP's goal not just to erase Nehru, but to destroy...: Sonia Gandhi's rare speech

Sonia Gandhi underscored that while analysis and criticism of Nehru's contributions were welcome, deliberate mischief with what he wrote and said was unacceptable.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Congress MP Sonia Gandhi said the main objective of the ruling party was to "vilify" Jawaharlal Nehru as she tore into the BJP for allegedly attempting to "denigrate, distort, demean, and defame" the first prime minister of India. Speaking at an event to launch the Nehru Centre India at Jawahar Bhawan, Gandhi underscored that while analysis and criticism of Nehru's contributions were welcome, deliberate mischief with what he wrote and said was unacceptable. In a rare public address, Gandhi, however, did not name the BJP or the RSS. But her remarks left nothing to imagination on whom she targeted. "Let there be no doubt whatsoever that the project to vilify Nehru is the main objective of the ruling establishment today. Their goal is not just to erase him; it is actually to destroy the social, political, and economic foundations on which our nation has been founded," the Rajya Sabha MP said.

The former Congress chief's remarks come days after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stirred a row by alleging that Nehru wanted to use public funds to build the Babri Masjid, but the move was blocked by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. A furious

Congress called the claim a lie and accused Rajnath of attempting to fuel polarisation. Since the BJP came to power, Nehru and his policies have been a recurrent theme in its attacks against the Congress, be it in Parliament discussions or political rallies.



'CRITICISE, BUT DON'T DEMOLISH LEGACY'

Sonia Gandhi's outburst comes against this backdrop. At the event, which was held on Friday, Gandhi said the forces behind the "project" against Nehru neither had any role in the freedom

movement, nor in the making of the Constitution. "It is an ideology that long ago fanned an atmosphere of hate that ultimately led to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. His killers today continue to be glorified by their adherents... It is an ideology with a bigoted and viciously communal outlook. Its approach to nationhood is based on stoking prejudices of all kinds," she further said. The former Congress chief emphasised that it was natural that the life of a monumental figure like Nehru would be analysed and critiqued, but a systematic attempt to "demolish his multifaceted legacy" in a "crude" and "self-serving attempt" to rewrite history was unacceptable.

"While we welcome ongoing analysis of his contributions, what is not acceptable is the systematic attempt being made to denigrate, distort, demean and defame him," Gandhi said.

It has become a widespread practice to divorce Nehru from the challenges he faced and view him without a historical context," she further said. Before concluding, Gandhi noted that the road ahead was not easy, but there was no option but to stand up and confront this "project" against India's first prime minister.

Sharad Pawar's Family In Focus As Jay Pawar, Rutuja Patil Set To Marry: Who Are They?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said he will propose reducing the juvenile age under the Juvenile Justice Act 2015, to 14 for prosecution against heinous crimes. He plans to propose it by introducing a Private Member's bill in the Lok Sabha.

He said, "Children up to the age of 17 are considered juveniles, and our law for them is the Juvenile Justice Act 2015. But I am continuously seeing, even in the Nirbhaya's case, and after this case in Lok Sabha and even in other countries, with even one survey that shows that 15 to 17-year-olds are getting involved in heinous crimes. We propose to lower the juvenile age to 14 years because I know of such examples in which a child was responsible for three murders."

He continued, "He went to the correction centre, came back and still murdered. This definitely needs to be taken into consideration. And after a lot of thinking, I am gonna introduce this issue through a Private Member's Bill. I always search for very important issues for my private bills, and this is one of them. We don't want criminals to be able to get away with heinous crimes just because they're fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen years old. So, I am proposing that the age be reduced to fourteen." In November, in Gurugram, a 17-year-old student allegedly shot his schoolmate using his father's licensed pistol. The accused student, along with his friend, both juveniles involved in the attack, were detained by police within hours of the crime.

In October, Delhi Police arrested 3 Juveniles, wanted in an attempted murder case in Delhi's Patel Nagar. The incident took place on October 10, when a local gang member attacked another rival gang member with a knife. Due to this attack, the injured sustained serious injuries, according to an official.

According to the Police, on October 10, information was received at the Police Station, Patel Nagar, regarding an assault incident at Sharda Electrical, Baljeet Nagar. Immediately, the Investigating Officer, along with staff, reached the spot and found that a fight had taken place between a group of boys, during which one person was attacked with a knife. The injured person was shifted to the hospital, where he was declared unfit to make a statement.

"Safest Bet Is Capability": S Jaishankar On Handling An Uncertain Future

New Delhi.(Agency)

For S Jaishankar, the best way to deal with an uncertain future is "capability," and that's the safest bet to have. There will be unforeseen circumstances, but a capable person would be able to handle the contingencies, the foreign minister said while speaking to NDTV's CEO and Editor-In-Chief Rahul Kanwal at the HT Leadership Summit this morning.

"Technology could actually end up as a great fragment. So when you look at many of these issues, I think there are really so many uncertainties out there. The best way of dealing with



tomorrow is capability, capability, and capability. The world will change around us because people often expect clarity. It's like, if you only pleased so-and-so person, if you only did such-and-such a thing; it's so intricate and often so contradictory

that the safest thing to bet on is capability," said Jaishankar.

One who is capable would take care of the unforeseen future, the minister asserted, citing potential threats from AI as an example.

"If you have the capability, you can handle contingencies because there will be contingencies. There will be unforeseen circumstances with growing frequency, rapidity, and seriousness. When I look at tomorrow, at what Artificial Intelligence (AI) threatens to bring or expects to bring, I think we'll be in for a change of a kind that we can't even imagine," the minister added.

There will be unforeseen circumstances, but a capable person would be able to handle the contingencies, said S Jaishankar.

Calling Russia a "crucial relationship" for India, Tharoor said Putin's visit was a "symbol of continuity".

New Delhi .(Agency)

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday asserted that US President Donald Trump "must respect" India's rights to have relations with other countries, as Russian President Vladimir Putin visited India at a time when the US has imposed punitive tariffs on its goods over New Delhi's Russian oil purchases.

"I don't think our relationship should be dependent upon what any other country thinks about it. Because honestly, every country has independent relationships. You know, Trump doesn't care what we think of his relations with China. And he's been tweeting about G2 and so on. I think we have to respect his right to have the kind of relationship he wants. And similarly, he has to respect our right to have relations with the countries that matter to us," Tharoor told CEO and Editor-in-Chief Rahul Kanwal after the state dinner hosted at Rashtrapati Bhavan for Putin. Calling Russia a "crucial relationship" for India, Tharoor said Putin's visit was a "symbol of continuity".

"And at the same time, I think it's an affirmation of our sovereign autonomy in a turbulent and fractured world," he said. Tharoor also recalled with pride how a word he coined 20 years ago on geopolitical alignments has become truer today. "I've written about our sovereign autonomy at some length, and I am proud to have coined the word multi-alignment 20 years ago. It's much truer today.

We are living in a multi-aligned world. We're living in a world where each country has different relationships with different countries. The metaphor of choice is the World Wide Web," he said. Tharoor added, "We have a connection to Russia.

We have a connection for that matter to America. We have a different connection with our problems to China. But I mean, we're not going to suddenly start saying that because of one, the other is not going to work. I think, for example, it's very important for India to develop a good relationship with Europe. And Europe remains a significant pole for us in a multipolar world. So the name of the game is multi-alignment.



Bhupender Dhawan Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Contribution to Iron Sports

**The Sikh Times
Sourabh Sharma**

New Delhi: Special function organized today at THE LEELA PALACE, New Delhi, The Global Strength Sports Celebrities Federation (London, UK) proudly felicitates that Mr. Bhupender Dhawan of India has been conferred with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the field of Iron Games (bodybuilding and powerlifting) over the past 35 years at the international level. This year's award ceremony was held on 22nd November 2025 in London. Due to prior professional commitments, Mr. Dhawan was unable to attend the event. In a special function organized today at THE LEELA PALACE, New Delhi, the award was formally presented to him by the Federation's President Ms. Hanne Bingle MBE, on behalf of the Global Strength Sports Celebrities Federation. The Federation extends its heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Bhupender Dhawan for his lifelong dedication, leadership, and exceptional achievements that have elevated Indian strength sports on the global stage.



The CM said the move will help combat pollution as corporate partners will take responsibility for maintaining the designated stretches.

Delhi government ropes in corporates for upkeep of key roads, flyovers under CSR

New Delhi .(Agency)

The Delhi government has handed over several road stretches and flyovers to major companies such as GMR, IOCL and Vedanta to ensure their upkeep and maintenance. CM Rekha Gupta said on Friday that the move will help combat pollution as corporate partners will take responsibility for maintaining the designated stretches. An MoU between the Delhi government and GMR was signed on Friday, under which the company will maintain, clean and beautify the stretch from Azadpur Market to Inderlok for three years, she said. "Several major companies in Delhi are being roped in as partners through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes," the Chief Minister said. She added that GMR will undertake jet cleaning,

drip irrigation, plantation and greening along with routine upkeep and overall beautification of the corridor.

The project will continue for three years, with GMR undertaking the work at an estimated cost of Rs 6 crore under its CSR initiatives. The work has already started. The announcements were made at the Delhi Secretariat during the signing of an MoU between the Public Works Department (PWD) and the GMR Group.

Additionally, the Delhi government, in collaboration with several corporate partners, will redevelop and beautify many important roads and flyovers across the city through CSR support. These include major corridors such as the Madhuban Chowk-Mukarba Chowk stretch; the Chirag Delhi, Panchsheel



Club and IIT flyovers; the Punjabi Bagh Flyover and Aurobindo Marg; Munirka Flyover; the Punjabi Bagh Flyover (Ram Mandir side) on the Outer Ring Road; Netaji Subhash Place Flyover; the Oberoi-Lodhi Road Flyover; and the Karampura Flyover,

among others.

"Similarly, MoUs have been signed with different companies. Work on the stretch from Madhuban Chowk to Mukarba Chowk has been handed over to IOCL.

We have also handed over works for Chirag Dilli Flyover, Panchsheel Club Flyover, IIT Flyover, Punjabi Bagh and Aurobindo Marg. To IGL, we have handed over the work of Munirka Flyover under CSR.

To Vedanta, we have handed over the work of Punjabi Bagh, Ram Mandir side and Shalimar Bagh side on Outer Ring Road side, new Rao Tula Marg Flyover.

To Godrej, we have given the work of Netaji Subhash Place Flyover. To Dalmia, we have given the work of Oberoi and Lodhi Road, Mangi Flyover.

News box

Pre-SIR exercise under way, BLOs match 79L voters with 2002 rolls

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Booth level officers (BLOs) all over the state have started matching the names of voters with the voters' list of 2002, as a part of the pre-Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. The process is for voters whose names were not listed in the 2002 electoral rolls, but whose parents' or grandparents' names were listed.The BLOs across the state are visiting households door-to-door to collect and verify voter information.So far, about 79 lakh voters from the current voter list have been successfully matched with the 2002 voter list. The state has around 2 crore registered voters.The deputy commissioner of Gurgaon and district election officer, Ajay Kumar, said voters who do not know in which assembly constituency their or their family members' names were registered in the 2002 voter list can obtain information by using the "Search your name in Last SIR" facility available on the Election Commission of India website at www.eci.gov.in.The DC while appealing to all voters of the district, said, "BLOs come to your homes to collect information; therefore, cooperate by providing correct and complete information so that the district's voter list can be made completely error-free."If a voter's name appears in both lists, no additional documents will be required. Both the 2002 and 2024 voter lists are available on the department's website for public access.As part of the process, BLOs will visit every voter's home to collect data for the new voter list. Voters will fill out two copies of an enumeration form—one for themselves and the other for the BLO to prepare the list.

As per ECI guidelines, polling stations will be rationalised based on a maximum of 1,200 voters per station. If a station exceeds this limit, a new polling station will be created.

Gang colludes with builders in this Rs 100 crore housing loan fraud in Noida

Noida.(Agency)

A gang that colluded with builders to take out Rs 100 crore from banks in the form of bogus loans was busted with the arrest of eight members.According to Rajkumar Mishra, additional superintendent of police at Noida STF, the arrests followed a tip-off from an HDFC Bank official who noticed suspicious loan activity. The cops discovered that the gang created fake property documents and forged identities to obtain home and personal loans from various banks. These fictitious profiles were then used to purchase properties to facilitate the loans, with the proceeds laundered through a web of shell companies and accounts.The gang's modus operandi was complex yet effective. Ramkumar, a former loan executive at HDFC and Axis Bank, admitted during questioning that he collaborated with builders — based in Noida, Lucknow, Varanasi, Haridwar, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Gurgaon — to create fake profiles, register companies using fabricated Aadhaar cards and even appoint fictitious directors.

With the help of complicit bank employees, accounts were opened for these bogus individuals, and fake salaries were deposited in them to build credible financial histories. Loans were then secured in the names of these fake individuals, with the money shared among gang members and their builder associates.Other members, including Mohd Wasi and Shamshad Alam, targeted migrant workers from Bihar employed in Gulf countries. They enticed these workers with cash incentives, using their identities to secure loans and purchase properties, often without the real person's knowledge. In one instance, the gang used the identity of a deceased woman, Ratna Vasudeva, to transfer her Delhi property to an associate, Sanaullah Ansari, and secure a loan of nearly Rs 5 crore. The probe also revealed that members like Ashok Kumar, Nitin Jain, and Indrakumar Karmakar set up over 20 shell companies to launder the stolen funds. The banks, unable to trace the accused behind the fake profiles, found themselves in a tight spot to recover the disbursed loans and approached police.

How green is Agra master plan Architecture school set to study

Noida.(Agency)

Yamuna Expressway Authority has engaged the School of Planning and Architecture to ensure the Agra master plan complies with Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) regulations.pread over 10,000 - 12,000 hectares, the new urban centre will be one of YEDIA's largest planned developments and will be built in four phases up to 2041. The Authority said SPA will review the plan for gaps, suggest corrections and improvements and return it within a month until the final framework can be completed without regulatory or environmental shortcomings.According to the officials, the Agra urban centre is important because of its proximity to the Taj Mahal and other heritage monuments. The master plan area falls within the Taj Trapezium Zone, a 10,400 sq km environmentally sensitive region created by Supreme Court directions in 1996 to protect the Taj Mahal and surrounding monuments from air pollution, industrial emissions and ecological degradation.

"The master plan has been sent to the School of Planning and Architecture for vetting. Once their report comes, further action will be taken. The plan is expected back within a month," said Shaliendra Bhatia, OSD, Yamuna Authority.Planned as one of the four major urban nodes under the YEIDA Phase II master plan, the Agra Urban Centre is envisioned as a tourism-driven, heritage-integrated city. The blueprint proposes expansive green spaces, a dedicated tourism district, riverfront development and residential, commercial, industrial and institutional zones — located about 16 km from the Taj Mahal.The township is located between NH-93 (Agra-Aligarh Road), NH-2 (Delhi-Kanpur highway) and the Yamuna Expressway with strong connectivity to the eastern dedicated freight corridor via Tundla station, about 12 km away.Proposed tourism-oriented components include hospitality clusters, cultural centres, convention and exhibition facilities, and recreation zones aimed at increasing the duration and quality of tourist stays.

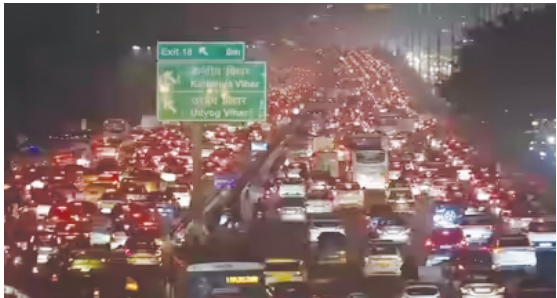
2km in 2 hours: Why traffic was tied into knots on Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway

Gurgaon.(Agency)

IndiGo fliers weren't the only ones stranded in airports across the country through Thursday. Commuters on Gurgaon-Delhi Expressway weren't any better off.

A flurry of weddings in hotels and farmhouses off the expressway had turned the arterial stretch into a virtual parking lot, bringing traffic to a grinding halt. So severe was the snarl that it took commuters nearly two hours to traverse just 2km from the Ambience Mall-Sirhaul border to Rajokri in Delhi — an ordeal that rivalled the plight of air travellers stuck in terminals.The gridlock began around midnight as cars of wedding guests around a popular star hotel spilled onto service roads, blocking the main carriageway. With not a single traffic cop in sight — on either the Gurgaon or Delhi side — frustration mounted among those trapped in the jam.The situation was baffling given the capital's heightened security, just hours after Russian President Vladimir Putin had landed at IGI Airport for a high-profile visit.Calls

to the traffic helpline proved futile for many."I left my office in Udyog Vihar at 9.45pm and the moment I turned onto the expressway, I saw a huge traffic on the Shankar Chowk flyover as well as surface road. While snarls in the city are not entirely new, such tailback at that hour was definitely unusual. There was bumper-to-bumper traffic. It moved at a snail's pace till the toll plaza, but literally came to a standstill after that. While there was some movement on the Rajokri flyover, commuters using the service lane towards Delhi were stranded at the same spot for long. They had no option but to switch off their engines and wait inside. Some simply moved out of their cars and started walking," recalled a commuter.The sense of helplessness was palpable. "Since there was not a single cop around, I dialled 112 multiple times. But the calls either went unanswered or simply did not connect. It took me almost 10 attempts to get through to the control room. After



waiting for several minutes, a cop on the other side told me the traffic jam was due to a wedding at a luxury hotel nearby. Guests at the wedding had parked their vehicles on the main highway. It was complete chaos from the Delhi-Gurgaon border till this hotel, even around midnight," the commuter added.Police eventually promised action. "We will tow away the cars that are parked outside this hotel and impound them," a police officer assured the commuter.However, the hotel in question — The Umaro — denied responsibility. "There were several

weddings that took place on Thursday night in the vicinity. These cars belonged to guests from other venues," a hotel official told TOI.The chaos was not confined to Thursday night. On Friday too, the expressway continued to crawl, with traffic moving at a glacial pace well into the night. Traffic officials in the city attributed the congestion to ongoing work by NHAI on the Delhi side.Satyapal Yadav, ACP (traffic, highways) in Gurgaon, said, "The snarls on Friday were mainly due to some ongoing work of NHAI on the Delhi side of the expressway. We received many calls from commuters, following which our senior officers were on their toes to clear the traffic. We even contacted the Dwarka traffic inspector and NHAI officials and requested them to not continue the work during peak traffic hours."The knock-on effects were felt within the city as well. "I was coming back from Delhi and found a traffic pileup near Udyog Vihar.

Streets to sewers: MCG launches survey to map gaps in civic infra in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

MCG is set to create the city's most detailed infrastructure and public services database to date.The baseline survey — covering sectors 1-57 — which the civic body initiated on Friday will guide long-term planning and "help plug chronic service gaps", an MCG official told TOI.

The survey spans nearly every aspect of civic functioning: roads, sewage, drainage, water supply networks, parks, markets, institutions, street vendors and land-use patterns.The data will be fully geo-referenced and backed by field observations. The exercise, which will continue till Dec 25, is being conducted under a newly issued standard operating procedure.The exercise has been divided into three phases. All final survey sheets for the three phases must be submitted by Dec 25, officials said.Phase-1 (Dec 5-12) will focus on basic infrastructure including roads, sewage/drainage, water supply and streetlights. Phase-2 (Dec 13-19) will document parks, markets, community toilets, public toilets and institutions. Phase-3 (Dec 20-25) will capture details of street vendors, unauthorised activities, land identification and lists of NGOs,



volunteers and RWAs.Survey teams have been instructed to capture on-ground realities through standardised data sheets and geotagged photographs, which is an attempt to "reduce the inaccuracies and outdated records that have long plagued the city's planning processes".

Roles and responsibilities for the survey have been clearly defined.Joint commissioners will supervise overall execution within their respective zones, coordinate with departments — such as GMDA, HSVP and HSIIDC — and

conduct weekly progress reviews. Assistant sanitary inspectors (ASIs) have been tasked with the most demanding role: visiting each location in their assigned sectors, verifying infrastructure status and updating data daily. They will act as lead surveyors for their allotted sectors, conducting physical verification and daily data entry.Senior sanitary inspectors will guide ASIs, provide technical verification and carry out random field visits.Junior engineers will provide departmental data on roads, drainage systems, water supply, parks, rainwater harvesting structures and streetlighting, while zonal tax officers will contribute property and land-use information."Data accuracy is a key focus of the survey. Field staff are required to ensure each entry is geo-referenced and supported by geotagged photos wherever applicable such as damaged roads, non-functional streetlights or overflowing drains. Verification will occur at three levels: full first-level verification by ASIs, 20-30% sample verification by SSIs and final approval by joint commissioners," the official added.Monitoring will occur through daily reporting by ASIs.

Behind DLF-2 hit & run, a speeding 22-year-old driver without a licence

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The car involved in the hit-and-run accident that killed a 58-year-old cyclist on Akashneem Marg at DLF-2 earlier this week was being driven by a man who didn't have a driving licence.Amitabh Jain, husband of a Parliament museum official, was cycling on one side of the empty internal road around 7am on Wednesday when the Santro hit him from behind as CCTV footage later showed, despite the road having adequate space for the car to pass at a safe distance from Jain.

Sahil, the driver of the car, was arrested late on Thursday night. Police said Sahil is a housekeeping staffer at MGF Mall and took a bounce's car for a spin. The 22-year-old from Jharkhand convinced the bounce, who is also employed at MGF

Mall and living in Fatehpur Beri, to let him use his car when he was asked to fetch a pack of cigarettes,a police officer said.

After buying the cigarettes, Sahil took a detour and entered DLF-2 assuming the lanes would be empty at that early hour. While speeding along Akashneem Marg, Sahil failed to slow down near a speed breaker, striking Jain from behind and dragging him several meters before fleeing the spot. CCTV footage showed the Santro fleeing the area after the incident.Jain, a resident of Bougainvillea Marg and a former chemist shop owner in Delhi's Malka Ganj, was rushed to Max Hospital by passersby with severe internal injuries soon after the accident. He succumbed to his injuries around 9am. His wife is a senior conservator at Parliament

Museum, and their children work in London and Bengaluru. Relatives said Jain cycled every morning and had recently returned from a bike trip to Jaipur.Upon returning to the mall, Sahil lied when the bounce quizzed him about the dent in the car, saying a cyclist had brushed against the vehicle and nothing else had happened. Sahil is living in a rented flat in Faridabad.His claim began to unravel once police analysed CCTV footage from multiple cameras across DLF-2, tracking the car's movements before and after the incident. A police team visited the bounce's home in Fatehpur Beri on Thursday afternoon, but he was not there. Cops then went to MGF Mall where he works to interrogate him.

Helplessness is not acceptable': HC pulls up govts on lack of monkey plan

Noida.(Agency)

Allahabad high court criticised both the Centre and UP govt for failing to present a concrete action plan to address the escalating conflict between humans and monkeys.In an order passed on Wednesday, Chief Justice Arun Bhansali and Justice Kshitij Shailendra made it clear that the "helplessness, as expressed, cannot be accepted," and gave the govt one more opportunity to comply with its previous orders. The bench set Jan 13 as the next date of hearing.The court was hearing a public interest litigation filed by Ghaziabad residents Vineet Sharma and Prajcta Singhal, who highlighted not only the growing danger to residents but also the suffering of monkeys because of hunger and inadequate living conditions. During an earlier hearing on Oct 31, the court had refused to grant the state govt two months' time to formulate a policy, allowing only four weeks to submit an action plan.This Wednesday, the additional advocate general



produced a letter from the special secretary of UP that stated that the National Board of Wildlife, in its standing committee meeting, had recommended including the Rhesus Macaque under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, and asked UP govt to prepare detailed, site-specific mitigation plans for conflict areas.The bench, however, was unimpressed. "What is this? How does it help the common man? How will it bring down attacks on people?

The whole state is suffering, and you are saying you are helpless. We cannot accept this," the court remarked,expressing frustration with the lack of progress.The govt lawyer further explained that a baseline study had been planned across states, and scientific management measures would be developed based on research by the Wildlife Institute of India. He also mentioned recommendations for rescue centres and the involvement of local urban bodies as part of the

plan. Despite these assurances, the court remained unconvinced. It reiterated that little or no action had been taken since its previous orders."From the submissions, a sort of helplessness is sought to be projected that as now a proposal has been made, apparently, the respondents are unable to take any action. The submissions made cannot be accepted at face value. Willingness to tackle the problem is clearly absent as though only a proposal has been given by the National Board of Wildlife, the same is sought to be utilised for the purpose of continuing with the inaction," it said.Akash Vashishtha, counsel for the petitioners, pointed out that the Rhesus Macaque had always been found in the wild and should be included as a scheduled animal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. He also insisted on the statutory duties of municipalities and forest departments to abate

nuisances and protect public safety, lamenting the lack of coordination between.

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Police arrest teenage realtor for gunning down gardener over closed gate in south Delhi

New Delhi: Santlal, who also worked as a caretaker of the property, was shot in the chest. Police have arrested 19-year-old Piyush Yadav, a local real estate agent, for gunning down the older man. They said the incident took place around 2 am near the Shamshan Ghat in Dera village. "A police team rushed to the spot after receiving information that women were crying loudly in the neighbourhood. Upon reaching, it was found that a man had been shot and was lying motionless near the cremation ground," an officer said. An empty cartridge was recovered from the spot, he said. "During the investigation, it was revealed that the accused had a verbal altercation with the victim over the closing of a gate of the property. The altercation escalated, and in a fit of rage, Piyush allegedly shot Santlal and fled the spot," the officer said. When questioned, Piyush confessed to the crime and led the police to the gun he had hidden in his house. Police said Santlal took care of several properties in the vicinity, while Piyush Yadav ran his real estate business from Chhatarpur Phase 2. Santlal's body was taken to Safdarjung Hospital for a post-mortem.

Delhi University rolls out 'zero tolerance' policy for campus defacement

New Delhi: With the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections for fast approaching, the university administration has announced a stringent "zero tolerance" policy against defacement, under the banner of its "Green Election, Clean Election" initiative. The announcement was made following a meeting on Tuesday, attended by the Chief Election Officer, members of the Proctorial Board, Maurice Nagar SHO, DUSU office bearers and student representatives. An official statement from the DU Election Committee said, "The committee also apprised the representative that there would be zero tolerance for defacement during the current DUSU elections." All candidates have been directed to use only handmade posters and to strictly adhere to specified campaign expenditure limits. The university's crackdown follows complaints from past years, when graffiti, unauthorised banners and posters covered walls, flyovers, and metro pillars across both North and South campuses. This year, authorities say, enforcement would be much more vigilant.

Panipat man charred to death, another injured as car catches fire after accident in Delhi

New Delhi: A 40-year-old man was charred to death while another was injured after their car caught fire following an accident in outer north Delhi's Hulambi Khurd area in the early hours of Sunday, an official said. The incident occurred around 2 am near Jhanda Chowk on Urban Extension Road II, under the jurisdiction of Narela Industrial Area police station, the official added. According to the police, a PCR call was received and a team rushed to the spot where they found a white Ertiga in a burnt condition. The driver was found dead, while another was rescued from the adjacent seat. He was injured. The driver was identified as Vipender and the injured as Jagbir, both residents of Haryana's Panipat, police added. Jagbir was immediately shifted to the SRHC Hospital in Narela, while the dead body was moved to the BJRM Hospital, a police officer said. Initial investigation suggests that the Haryana-registered SUV might have lost control and crashed before catching fire, though the exact cause is still under investigation, the officer said. A case has been registered, and further investigation is under way to ascertain the cause of the fire and the circumstances surrounding the accident, the officer added.

3 held for performing car stunts on road

New Delhi: The police have arrested three individuals for performing dangerous car stunts on a public road, after a video of the incident went viral on social media. Three vehicles used during the stunts have also been seized. According to the police, the video, which circulated widely online, captured the suspects engaging in risky behaviour near the Shobha City traffic signal in Sector 108, under the jurisdiction of Rajendra Park police station. In the footage, three young men were seen standing atop a moving car. Behind them, several others were spotted in 8 to 10 vehicles, with sunroofs open and some individuals emerging from windows while filming the stunt and performing hazardous manoeuvres. The arrested accused has been identified as Himanshu (22), a resident of Khaika village near Sohna, Sagar (24) and Kaushal (24), residents of Peeragarhi in Delhi. "The accused not only endangered their own lives but also put the safety of others at risk by performing these stunts on public roads," said a police spokesperson. "We have recovered three vehicles used in the act — two Mahindra Thars and one Toyota Fortuner. A further investigation is under way, and more arrests are expected soon."

22-week-old premature baby survives miraculously, discharged home safely

New Delhi: A baby girl weighing 525 gm at birth at a private hospital in the national capital has now been discharged in good health with a weight of

ney. Dr Kishore said, "This survival is a testament to medical precision, team dedication, and the parents' unshakeable faith. Extreme prematurity is a



2,010 kg — said to be a rare survival feat, not just for the Delhi NCR region but for the entire country. Dr Jay Kishore, Senior Neonatologist at Cloudnine Hospital, Patparganj, led his team to script medical history — successfully discharged the baby born at a gestational age of just 22 weeks and 5 days, after a remarkable 105-day NICU jour-

major challenge, but when science and compassion work together, miracles happen." The parents, who had long battled infertility and suffered a miscarriage after their first IVF attempt, conceived again through IVF. However, their joy turned into anxiety when premature labour began at just 22 weeks and 5 days — a perivable stage where survival rates are exceed-

DFS to deploy 24 quick response vehicles in city

New Delhi: The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) will deploy 24 newly procured quick response vehicles (QRVs) across the city from September 17 to strengthen emergency response in fire-prone and congested areas, government officials said. The compact vehicles, equipped with advanced ultra high-pressure pump extinguishing systems, are mounted on XL6 vehicles and designed to swiftly navigate through narrow lanes and heavy traffic. According to officials, the initiative, costing Rs 8.61 crore, is being implemented in three phases. In the first phase, 24 QRVs have been procured and will be deployed at high-risk locations, including Janakpuri, Najafgarh, Vasant Kunj, Rohini, Jahangirpuri, Lajpat Nagar, Paharganj, Geeta

Colony, Dwarka and Alipur. Tenders for an additional 26 vehicles have already been floated under Phase II, while pro-

posals for 50 more QRVs are in place for Phase I. Officials said the innovation was aimed at preventing small fires from turning into major blazes by enabling quicker arrival and immediate suppression. Each vehicle carries a 100-litre water tank and operates at just 21 litres per minute, using water mist for cooling, foam for oxy-

gen cut-off and jet systems to handle different types of fires efficiently. Initially, these QRVs will be operated by existing



DFS personnel, while plans are underway to outsource manpower in subsequent phases.

"This strategic deployment will significantly improve our ability to respond rapidly to emergencies in high-density and hard-to-reach areas, protecting both lives and property," officials added.

7-day-old baby sold for Rs 1.5 lakh, 2 arrested

Gurugram: The police arrested a eunuch and her partner for attempting to sell a seven-day-old baby boy for Rs 1.5 lakh in Sector 57. The accused who sold the child had lodged a complaint of kidnapping to mislead the police, but they were arrested and the child was rescued. According to the police, a eunuch residing in a slum near Saraswati Kunj had lodged a complaint claiming that she had adopted a newborn baby boy from her neighbour Phulo Devi on August 18. She alleged that on August 24, she handed the baby over to her neighbour, Kajal, before leaving him. Upon her return, Kajal claimed the infant had been kidnapped by an unknown person and that her mobile phone had also been stolen. The police swung into action and arrested two accused from Wazirbad's Dhani within just nine hours. The police recovered the newborn baby and the stolen mobile from the possession of the accused. The accused were identified as Layak Sheikh (28), a native of west Bengal and eunuch Kajal, a native of Bihar. During interrogation, it was revealed that the alleged kidnapping was, in fact, a pre-planned conspiracy. Investigators found that Sheikh, who has been living in the area for five years, was desperate for a child. He had struck a deal with Kajal, offering between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 1.5 lakh in exchange for a baby. Kajal then took advantage of the situation by handing over the newborn that had been adopted by her fellow eunuch. Sheikh reportedly wrapped the infant in a blanket and took him away. "A swift operation by the police foiled the conspiracy. Both accused were arrested, the child was safely recovered, and handed back to the complainant," a Gurugram Police spokesperson said.

NGT seeks states' response on tree protection framework

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed states and Union Territories to review and submit their responses within four weeks to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) final report on strengthening tree protection and conservation frameworks. The CPCB, in its final report dated May 21, recommended that states and Union Territories without a legal framework for tree protection should establish one, while those with existing laws should align them with the objectives of the National Forest Policy, 1988. The report emphasised the need for robust enforcement mechanisms, the use of modern technologies for monitoring, and adequate staffing and resources for effective implementation. According to the report, "States and UTs not having a legal framework at

present for promoting the growth of trees and enabling protection should take up the process of establishing the required legal frame-

ment in non-forest areas should be governed by clear guidelines, including authorization for felling, preservation of heritage trees, and preparation of



work." It further suggested that, "States/UTs with the existing legal framework may align with the broader objectives of national forest conservation efforts by integrating applicable advisories into their existing frameworks." The CPCB also advised that tree manage-

plantation augmentation plans. It proposed that Tree Authorities should include representatives from government departments, urban planners, ecologists, arborists, legal experts, NGOs, and community members for "a holistic approach to tree management." The

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

New Delhi: In a significant breakthrough, researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (IIT-Delhi) have developed a method to recycle denim waste into knitted garments without compromising on quality. Led by Prof Abhijit Majumdar and Prof BS Butola of the Department of Textile and Fibre Engineering, the team successfully converted waste denim into yarn with minimal damage to fibre properties by optimising process conditions. The recycled yarn is then blended into knitted fabric using seamless whole-garment technology, resulting in garments containing 25 per cent to 75 per cent recycled yarn. The team found that up to 50 per cent recycled yarn content could be used in knitted clothing without affecting the feel of the fabric. "To reduce the roughness of recycled

yarns, a softening treatment is applied, ensuring the final product feels just like one made from virgin materials," said Prof Majumdar. He added that while the study focused on denim waste, the method could be extended to other types of textile waste. The research, published in the Journal of Cleaner Production, also included a life cycle assessment a softening treatment is applied, ensuring the final product feels just like one made from virgin materials," said Prof Majumdar. He added that while (LCA) to quantify environmental benefits in the Indian context. PhD scholar Satya Karmakar collected energy and material data from the Panipat textile recycling cluster. The LCA showed that recycling could mitigate 30-40 per cent of environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas

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

Woman's headless body: Cops yet to make any breakthrough

New Delhi: A day after a headless body of a woman with severed palms was found in a drain near the Sector 82 Cut in Noida, the police on Friday intensified their search to identify the deceased. They are also resorting to forensic examination and scanning CCTV footages to get lead in the case. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP) Sumit Shukla said three teams had been formed to identify the woman. They were awaiting the post-mortem report to determine the exact cause of death. Another official said it seems the woman was murdered around 24-30 hours ago and her body was dumped in the drain. The official said her palms might have been severed to hide her identification mark such as tattoos. However, the motive behind beheading her could only be established after a thorough investigation. A passer-by contacted the emergency helpline after spotting the body in an eight-foot-deep drain in a remote location near a high-rise residential building and Sector 108 park. As per the preliminary investigation, the woman appears to be around 30 years old and is married. Data from nearby police stations regarding missing complaints is being analysed and her photographs have also been circulated to get any clue about her identity, the police official added. The official said all possible angles, including personal enmity, sexual assault, illicit affair, honor killing, were being examined. However, the exact motive could only be ascertained after the completion of investigation.

Massive fire breaks out in Delhi slum near Rithala metro station; 1 dead

New Delhi: Police personnel and others gather as firemen try to douse a fire breaking out in a cluster of huts near Rithala metro station at Rohini area in New Delhi early Saturday. A man died and another sustained burn injuries after a massive fire broke out spreading to around 500 shanties near Rithala metro station in Delhi's Rohini, the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said. Police said several LPG cylinders were said to have exploded late Friday evening, intensifying the blaze and triggering panic among residents. Thick plumes of smoke were seen rising from the area even as locals scrambled to save their belongings and move to safer places. Preliminary information suggests that 400 to 500 huts have been gutted, fire officials said.

The DFS said it received a call regarding the blaze at 10.56 pm, following which multiple fire tenders and firefighting robots were rushed to the spot. Police cordoned off the area and additional fire tenders were kept on standby to prevent the fire from spreading further. The fire was brought under control by early morning, a DFS official said. Munna died in the fire while Rajesh was injured in the incident.

Students protest over iron gates near V-C office at Ambedkar varsity

New Delhi: Ambedkar University turned into a site of spirited protest on Tuesday, as students rallied against the administration's move to install permanent iron gates around key campus areas, including the Vice-Chancellor's office, the museum, the IT lab and the canteen. The demonstration, organised by the All India Students' Association (AISA), began near the university library, where students gathered under the "protest tree", raising slogans and singing protest songs. Marching towards the main gate, they called for an immediate halt to the construction and demanded the reopening of spaces they claim are being unfairly restricted. "Today a protest is being organised in Ambedkar University, Delhi, opposing the installation of iron gates that is being done to syphon off the administration area and the VC Office at the Kashmere Gate campus," students said. The dispute dates back to April, when temporary barricades were erected following the suspension of a student who had criticised the Vice-Chancellor's Republic Day speech. Since then, the university's main gate has remained closed, forcing students to use a back route that they describe as unsafe due to poor lighting and reported incidents of harassment. "A large part of an already small campus has remained inaccessible to the students, wherein the student-facing offices have been shifted so that the rest of the administration can be distanced from the students. This barricading has also led to a longer route to the canteen, meaning students have no access to the VC Office and administration area," said Prerna, AISA president at Ambedkar University. Students say they noticed construction work beginning on Monday and allege that the university is now installing iron gates to permanently block access to these areas, with the work expected to be completed within days. Prerna (PhD, women's and gender studies) and Aameen (PhD, urban studies) met with the university Proctor to press their demands. However, the Proctor reportedly told them the installation of the gates was "non-negotiable." Students say they remain determined to continue their protests until the campus is "open and accessible once again."

3 militants arrested in Manipur's Imphal; firearm, cash recovered

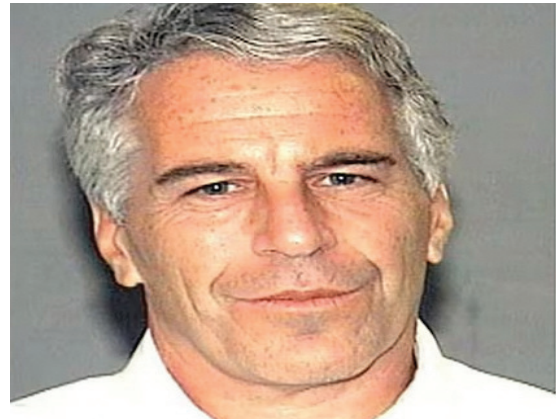
Imphal: Two active members of the banned People's Liberation Army were arrested from Khurai Lamlong and Porompat areas on Thursday, he said. A firearm, ammunition and unaccounted cash of Rs 60,300 were recovered from their possession. They were accused of being involved in extortion from schools, brick-making units, hospitals and pharmacies in Imphal East, police said. SC doesn't interfere in policy matters of economic considerations: CJI BR Gavai' Security forces have been conducting search operations in Manipur since ethnic violence broke out two years ago. More than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023. The Centre had imposed the President's rule in Manipur after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned. The state Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation.

NEWS BOX

Jair Bolsonaro Backs Eldest Son For Next Year's Brazil Presidential Run

WORLD. (Agency)
Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has signaled he intends to support his eldest son, Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, as a presidential candidate in the 2026 election, his political party said on Friday, weighing on local financial markets.The head of Bolsonaro's right-wing Liberal Party, Valdemar Costa Neto, told Reuters he had heard from the senator that the former president had "ratified his candidacy."CNN Brasil reported, citing unnamed sources, that the right-wing leader offered his support to his eldest son during a visit to the federal police offices in Brasilia where he is serving his sentence for plotting a coup.
News of Bolsonaro's plans hit Brazilian markets on Friday, with the country's currency weakening around 2% against the U.S. dollar and the benchmark stock index Bovespa down 3%.Some investors had been betting on Bolsonaro backing a market-friendly name with executive experience, such as Sao Paulo Governor Tarcisio de Freitas, his former minister, to challenge leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva next year. The market sees Flavio as a weaker candidate than Tarcisio in a race against Lula," said Lais Costa, an analyst at Empiricus Research.
Bolsonaro has been barred from running for office since June 2023, when Brazil's federal electoral court (TSE) condemned the right-wing leader for his conduct during the 2022 election.In September, the former president was sentenced to 27 years and three months in prison for plotting a coup after losing the 2022 presidential election to Lula.

US Court Clears Justice Department To Release Epstein Grand Jury Transcripts



WORLD . (Agency)
A Florida federal judge on Friday cleared the Justice Department to release grand jury transcripts from its sex trafficking case against Jeffrey Epstein, which could shed light on the deceased financier's ties to rich and powerful people including President Donald Trump.
The Justice Department asked US District Judge Rodney Smith to unseal the records after the Republican-controlled Congress passed a bill requiring the Attorney General to release all unclassified files related to its investigations of Epstein and his associate Ghislaine Maxwell, who is in prison for sex trafficking.
Trump, who said he ended his friendship with Epstein long before the financier's 2019 arrest, had opposed the release of the files but reversed course shortly before lawmakers voted on the bill, which he signed on November 19.
The files are eagerly sought by both Trump's political opponents and members of his own base who have pressed for greater transparency in the case.Many Trump voters believe his administration has covered up Epstein's ties to powerful figures and obscured details surrounding his death, which was ruled a suicide, in a Manhattan jail in 2019 as he faced federal sex trafficking charges.

Pak, Afghanistan Exchange Heavy Fire Along Border Amid Heightened Tensions

WORLD. (Agency)
Pakistan and Afghanistan exchanged heavy fire along their border late on Friday, officials from both countries said, amid heightened tensions following failed peace talks earlier this week.
There were no immediate reports of casualties.
Afghan Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said



Pakistani forces launched attacks in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province. A spokesman for Pakistan's Prime Minister accused Afghan forces of "unprovoked firing" along the Chaman border.
"Pakistan remains fully alert and committed to ensuring its territorial integrity and the safety of our citizens," spokesman Mosharraf Zaidi said in a statement.The exchange came two days after a new round of peace talks between the South Asian neighbours ended without a breakthrough, though both sides agreed to continue their fragile ceasefire.
The talks in Saudi Arabia last weekend were the latest in a series of meetings hosted by Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia aimed at cooling tensions following deadly border clashes in October.

Pakistan, Afghan forces trade fire along Chaman border: Report

Three injured in late-night skirmish along Balochistan-Kandahar frontier amid rising tensions and disputed ceasefire agreements

ISLAMABAD . (Agency)
A heavy exchange of fire between Pakistani and Afghan forces was reported from the key Chaman border, according to a media report on Saturday.Injuries were reported from the district hospital, but no fatalities occurred, the Dawn newspaper reported.
Officials from both sides accused each other of instigating the flare-up late on Friday night across the border in the Balochistan province.While Pakistani officials said that Afghan forces had fired mortar shells on the Badani area, Afghan Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid claimed it was Pakistan that launched an attack on



Spin Boldak, alleging that their forces were responding.Pakistan's official sources told Dawn that Pakistani forces retaliated against the Afghan aggression and returned

fire.There were also reports of fighting on the Chaman-Kandahar highway, but these could not be immediately verified.A senior official in Quetta confirmed on condition

of anonymity that the exchange of fire started around 10 pm and continued until late at night. The medical superintendent of Chaman district hospital said that three injured, including a woman, were brought to the medical facility.There was neither any official word from the Inter-Services Public Relations -- Pakistan Army's media wing -- nor from the Foreign Office.
The Chaman border crossing, also known as Friendship Gate, connects Balochistan province to Afghanistan's Kandahar.Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have deteriorated amidst regular allegations by Pakistan regarding the failure of the Afghan regime to deny safe havens to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan terrorists.The two countries had agreed on a ceasefire following tensions last month, but the Foreign Office said last month that technically there was no truce as it was contingent on the Afghan Taliban stopping terrorist attacks in Pakistan, which they had failed to do.

"Attack On US Firms": JD Vance, Marco Rubio On EU Slapping X With Huge Fine

Belgium . (Agency)
The European Union hit Elon Musk's X with a 120-million-euro (\$140-million) fine Friday for breaking its digital rules, sparking an angry reaction from Washington.The high-profile probe into the social media platform was seen as a test of the EU's resolve to police Big Tech. Even before the penalty was made public, US Vice President JD Vance warned against "attacking" US firms through "censorship".Hours after Brussels announced the fine, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio joined the attack.
"The European Commission's \$140 million fine isn't just an attack on X, it's an attack on all American tech platforms and the American people by foreign governments," Rubio posted on X."The days of censoring Americans online are over."This was the first fine imposed by the European Commission under its Digital Services Act (DSA) on content.X was guilty of

breaching the DSA's transparency obligation, said a Commission statement.The breaches include the deceptive design of its "blue checkmark" for supposedly verified accounts, and its failure to provide access to public data for researchers, it added."This decision is about the transparency of X" and "nothing to do with censorship," the bloc's technology commissioner Henna Virkkunen told reporters -- pushing back against Washington's line of attack.Posting on X on Thursday, Vance had told the EU it "should be supporting free speech not attacking American companies over garbage" -- to which Musk replied "Much appreciated".Deception'Musk's platform -- targeted by the EU's first formal DSA investigation in December 2023 -- was found to have breached its rules on several counts in July 2024.The EU found that changes made to the platform's checkmark system

after Musk took over in 2022 meant that "anyone can pay" to obtain a badge of authenticity -- without X "meaningfully verifying who is behind the account".This deception exposes users to scams, including impersonation frauds, as well as other forms of manipulation by malicious actors," said the Commission statement.X had also failed to be sufficiently transparent about its advertising and to give researchers access to public data in line with DSA rules, it added.X remains under investigation over tackling the spread of illegal content and information manipulation.
The first part of the X probe had appeared to stall since last year -- with no movement on imposing a fine.Weighing on the EU's mind was the picture in the United States -- starkly different from 2023 -- after Trump returned as president this year with Musk by his side.

Pro-Khalistan Terrorist Group, Sikh Businessman Sanctioned In UK

London.(Agency)
The UK government has announced sanctions against a British Sikh businessman and a group associated with him in the first use of the country's 'Domestic Counter-Terrorism Regime' to disrupt funding for the pro-Khalistan terrorist group Babbar Khalsa.Gurpreet Singh Rehal, linked with the Panjab Warriors sports investment firm, faces an asset freeze and director disqualification as he is suspected of belonging to organisations involved in terrorism in India, the UK's Treasury department said on Thursday.Alongside, it also announced an asset freeze against "Babbar Akali Lehar" for promoting and supporting the same terrorist group."We will not stand by while terrorists exploit Britain's financial system," said Lucy Rigby, Economic Secretary to the Treasury."This landmark action shows we are prepared to use every tool at our disposal to choke off funding for terrorism -- wherever it occurs and whoever is responsible. The UK stands



firmly with peaceful communities against those who promote violence and hatred," she said.His Majesty's (HM) Treasury said it assesses Rehal to be involved in Babbar Khalsa and Babbar Akali Lehar's terrorist activities, including promoting and encouraging, carrying out recruitment activities for, providing financial services to, as well as supporting and assisting those organisations, including through purchasing weapons and other military material.
"HM Treasury also assesses that Babbar Akali Lehar is associated with, and involved in, Babbar Khalsa's terrorist activities by promoting and encouraging and carrying out

recruitment activities for the group and itself," the department states.
Under this week's crackdown, all funds and economic resources in the UK owned, held or controlled by Rehal or Babbar Akali Lehar are now subject to an asset freeze. These designations will prevent all UK persons and entities from dealing with any funds or economic resources owned, held or controlled by either Rehal or Babbar Akali Lehar; or making funds, economic resources and financial services available to or for their benefit. This includes any of the entities they own or control, without a licence from HM Treasury or an applicable exception.Rehal is also subject to director disqualification sanctions which prohibit him from acting as a director of a company or directly or indirectly taking part in or being concerned in the promotion, formation or management of a company," the Treasury said.This week's action is said to be the result of close collaboration between the Treasury and policing partners.

US Lawmakers Press Google, Apple To Remove Apps Tracking Immigration Agents

DALLAS. (Agency)
The House Committee on Homeland Security has asked Google and Apple to detail what steps they are taking to remove mobile applications that allow users to track federal immigration officers.
In letters sent on Friday to Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Apple head Tim Cook, committee leaders singled out ICEBlock, an app previously used to monitor U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, saying apps hosted on their app stores risk "jeopardizing the safety of DHS personnel." Lawmakers requested a



briefing by December 12.The letters urged Google and Apple to ensure these apps cannot be used to target officers or obstruct lawful immigration enforcement.
The committee noted that while free speech is protected, it does not extend to advocacy that incites imminent lawless action, referencing a landmark Supreme Court ruling.Google and Apple did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.The letters follow concerns that these tools allow users to anonymously report and track the movements of federal agents, including those from ICE and Customs and Border Protection.
In October, Google said that ICEBlock was never available on Google's Play Store and added it had removed similar apps due to policy violations.
Apple also removed ICEBlock and other tracking apps from its App Store at the time.Attorney General Pam Bondi said the apps "put ICE agents at risk just for doing their jobs," while Apple cited violations of its policies against content that could harm individuals or groups. The removals followed a surge in downloads of ICEBlock, which had more than a million users before being pulled.

What to know as lawmakers disclose vivid new details of US boat strikes

HONG KONG. (Agency)
WASHINGTON: The U.S. military opened fire on two people clinging to the wreckage of a boat allegedly carrying drugs, congressional lawmakers learned this week as they seek more answers about the attack and the legal underpinnings of President Donald Trump's military campaign in international waters near Venezuela.The Sept. 2 strikes on an alleged drug boat were the first foray by the U.S. military into blowing up vessels allegedly carrying drugs. But this particular attack and the broader military campaign, which so far has destroyed more than 20 boats and killed more than 80 people, is now under intense scrutiny. Lawmakers who oversee national security committees heard this past week from the Navy admiral who ordered the initial strikes, including the follow-up that killed the two survivors.
While Adm. Frank "Mitch" Bradley stated clearly that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth did not issue a "kill them all" order

on the survivors, Democratic lawmakers say the scope of the mission was clear -- to destroy the drugs and kill the 11 people on board. It's a deadly new tactic the Trump administration says is intended to deter the flow of drugs to the U.S. The lawmakers and military experts say the sequence of events is alarming, potentially violating the laws of armed conflict that safeguard human rights and protect American troops.
Late Friday, the AP confirmed that lawmakers were told the boat was headed to link up with another vessel bound for Suriname, according to a person familiar with the situation who agreed to discuss it on the condition of anonymity. The information was first reported by CNN. Another person said it was heading south when it was struck.What lawmakers learn in the weeks

ahead, and how far they are willing to press the administration for answers, presents a defining moment for the U.S. military



under Trump's second-term command. It is testing the scope of laws that have long governed soldiers on the battlefield and will almost certainly influence the course of the tense standoff between Trump's

White House and the government of Venezuela.Here's what's known about the boat strikes and what other information lawmakers are still pursuing.
What lawmakers have learned
Bradley told lawmakers that he ordered a second attack on the wreckage of a boat that was carrying cocaine because it was believed that bales of the drug were still in the hull of the boat, according to a person with knowledge of the briefing who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it.
For several minutes, two people, shirtless and at one point waving, had climbed on the piece of the boat that was still floating.
They were "drifting in the water -- until the missiles come and kill them," said Rep. Adam Smith, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, adding that their slaying was "deeply concerning."

NEWS BOX

Andhra Pradesh HC questions long-term postings at same place, seeks clarity on spouse exemptions

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)
The Andhra Pradesh High Court questioned the long-term posting of government employees in the same location, especially in cases where husband and wife are serving at the same station for several years on Friday. The bench observed that such practices deny opportunities to other employees who wish to work in those locations and that exemptions granted to spouses and office-bearers of employees’ unions need closer scrutiny. The court directed the State government to clarify how long an employee can be allowed to continue in the same posting, to submit details of the existing rules, transfer guidelines, and the rationale behind such exemptions. The matter was posted to the first week of January for further hearing. The observations came in connection with the case relating to the transfer of Vijayanagaram District Sainik Welfare Officer Majji Krishna Rao to Kakinada and the appointment of KVS Prasada Rao in his place. Despite the transfer orders, Krishna Rao reportedly continued to work in Vijayanagaram without joining Kakinada. The collector stated in a counter that this amounted to a violation of disciplinary norms and pointed out that Krishna Rao has been serving in Vijayanagaram for the past 24 years.

Andhra Pradesh HC stays SVU recruitment of academic consultant

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)
The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday stayed the implementation of a notification issued by Sri Venkateswara University (SVU) seeking to appoint Academic Consultants on a temporary basis for the 2025-26 academic year.The division bench comprising Justice Battu Devanand and Justice A Hariharanatha Sharma questioned the university on which statutory provision the post of ‘Academic Consultant’ exists and took serious exception to the non-implementation of the rule of reservations in the recruitment process. The case arose from a petition filed by K Kishore Kumar Reddy, S Sivashankar, and private employee Reddivari Arjun Reddy, who challenged the SVU Registrar’s notification dated October 31, claiming it violated the rule of reservations, Supreme Court directions, and constitutional provisions. After a single judge declined to grant relief, the petitioners approached the division bench in appeal. During the hearing, the court expressed strong concern over the growing practice of engaging teaching staff through contractual, outsourcing, and temporary methods instead of regular recruitment, noting that such policies exploit and disempower educated youth.The bench warned the state government that it would not remain a silent spectator if steps were taken to weaken or destroy the university system.It observed, “Education is a constitutional right of students,” and alleged that irresponsible and illogical decisions by officials were adversely impacting the quality of education and turning academic institutions into centres of casual labour.

New data law turns consent into currency, strict corporate discipline needed, say experts at -NFSU’s Hacked 2.0 session hosted by JITO at GCCI

Ahmedabad .(Agency)
A few rupees' worth of stolen personal data is all cybercriminals need to build a digital clone of you. At TOI-NFSU's Hacked 2.0 session hosted by Jain International Trade Organisation (JITO) at GCCI on Thursday, experts warned that leaked names, mobile numbers, birthdates, and email IDs are now raw fuel for artificial intelligence (AI) systems that produce frighteningly real deepfakes. "Cybercriminals get your basic personal information for a pittance on the grey market. They use it to build deepfake clones that use that video or audio to bypass authentication checks or trick your staff. A few rupees' worth of stolen data can end up causing losses worth thousands or millions," said Kritarth Jhala, senior scientific officer at NFSU's Centre of Excellence in Digital Forensics. During the session titled 'Navigating Digital Personal Data Protection Act Compliance and Deepfake Phishing', Jhala along with Rajdeep Ghosh, assistant professor of law (forensic justice & policy) at NFSU outlined an unnerving chain of consequences triggered by small leaks of personal data. The experts said that many leaks occur when companies store unnecessary data, fail to encrypt it, or ignore regular security audits. As a result, they inadvertently create vulnerabilities that cybercriminals exploit to craft deepfakes and fraud. "Only strict compliance with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023 and the rules notified in Nov 2025 can minimize the threat. Non-compliance can invite fines of up to Rs 250 crore," warned Ghosh.

Irreversible damage in delayed proceedings of free speech cases, process becomes punishment: Ex-CJI B R Gavai

Mumbai. (Agency)
Recently retired Chief Justice of India (CJI) Bhushan R Gavai, said on Friday that “process itself becomes punishment” when cases related to freedom of speech remain pending for years and “delay may inflict irreversible damage on liberty” of the accused despite whether he or she gets acquitted in due course.Justice Gavai said, “increasingly, the Supreme Court has been required to confront situations where the initiation of criminal proceedings, denial of bail, prolonged incarceration, or systemic delays have a direct bearing on a citizen’s expressive freedom.”He added, “In such cases, the procedural and constitutional law intersect. The criminal process becomes not merely a tool for adjudicating guilt, but a space where fundamental freedoms can be imperilled or protected.” Justice Gavai emphasised, “When cases involving speech offences remain pending for years, whether at the stage of investigation, trial, or appeal, the process itself becomes a punishment. Even if the accused ultimately



secures acquittal, the delay may have already inflicted irreversible damage on their liberty, reputation, and expressive agency. We have to be conscious of such realities.” The former CJI was speaking on the topic “Freedom of speech and expression: Its scope and limitation under the constitution” at the Justice KT Desai Memorial lecture on Friday evening at Central Court (room number 46) in the Bombay High Court building.Refering to past landmark judgements, he said that over the last 75 years, the Supreme Court has “steadily shaped and reshaped the contours of the freedom of speech and expression under

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, while simultaneously defining the permissible limits under Article 19(2).” He also referred to the Electoral Bonds judgement by the Constitutional bench of the Supreme Court which he was part of. Justice Gavai said, in the said case, the contest was between voter’s right to know under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution and donor’s claim to privacy under Articles 19 and 21. “Applying proportionality, the Court struck down the scheme, holding that anonymity in political funding undermined democratic transparency. The voter’s right to make an informed electoral choice, central to free speech and democratic participation, was held to outweigh donors’ interest in confidentiality,” he said.Justice Gavai said in the last ten years, the Supreme Court and other courts had addressed “intersection of technology, free speech and the internet” and that the “SC had to navigate complexities of digital communication, its unprecedented reach, its potential for misuse, and its fundamental role in shaping public discourse”.

Fast-Track to CWG 2030: Gujarat races clock with big push for metro expansion

Gandhinagar . (Agency)
With Ahmedabad having bagged the bid to host the Commonwealth Games in 2030 and Sanand emerging as a semiconductor hub, the Gujarat govt has decided to fast-track the proposed metro rail expansion to the ambitious sports complex SWASA (South West Ahmedabad Sports Arena) and Sanand, among other routes. SWASA is one of the four major complexes being readied apart from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave, Naranpura Sports Complex and Police Academy Sports Hub, Karai, where events will be held during the CWG. With plans to complete the proposed expansion of the metro rail service by 2029, the Gujarat govt has approached the Union railway ministry and has also drawn up plans to commence land acquisition for the

approximately Rs 25,000 crore expansion plan of the Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar metro.Apart from the proposed Thaltej Gam to SWASA and SWASA to Sanand metro extension, the proposed Rs 25,746 crore metro rail expansion plan includes the GIFT City extension, airport metro connectivity, Thaltej Gam to Sanathal route, RTO-Jivraj-Narol-Naroda route and the Paldi-Apparel Park route.While the state govt plans to make a budgetary allocation of Rs 700 crore in the 2026-27 budget, it has sent a proposal for Central govt funding of the metro rail expansion project."The share of the Union govt in such projects is 15%. If necessary, the state govt will also approach financial institutions and secure soft loans to ensure that the proposed expansion is completed well before the CWG games," top sources in the govt said."A high-level meeting was held

earlier this week to conduct a review of the various preparations for the CWG games and Gujarat's aim of hosting the 2036 Olympics. It has been decided to fast-track the city's metro expansion, as it will be a vital transportation mode when the city hosts the CWG games. Also, this proposed expansion will further bolster Sanand's standing as a semiconductor cluster," said top sources close to the development.Govt sources said that land acquisition for the proposed expansion will be taken up on a mission mode. The state govt will conduct regular follow-ups with govt of India departments like the railways for speedy approvals. "The state govt has resolved to expand Ahmedabad's metro rail by over 82km in the next three years. This proposed expansion will be monitored very closely to ensure its timely completion," sources said.

Remove illegal berm structure in 15 days: GMADA to residents

Mohali .(Agency)
In a fresh notice to all urban allottees, GMADA on Friday issued strict orders against illegal construction on road berms and corner areas in Mohali and New Chandigarh, following the Municipal Corporation’s recent anti-encroachment drives. GMADA has directed that concrete structures and tiles around trees and plants without approval must be removed within 15 days failing which the authority will undertake demolition on its own. The state development authority, in its notice, said that residents have cemented the area around plants on road berms, leaving the roots completely covered at multiple locations. This is a “clear violation of National Green Tribunal (NGT) guidelines”, the notice read. The

NGT states that all one metre of open soil must be left around every tree to ensure proper air and water supply to the roots.Many people, they said, install tiles or concrete for aesthetics and convenience. Such practices stunt tree growth and worsen waterlogging during the monsoon, which results in stagnant water in many places. It has begun to damage roads which is also causing inconvenience to commuters. GMADA in its warning has said that failure to remove the illegal construction within the stipulated period will lead to demolition“without any further notice”. The operation cost will be recovered from the allottees concerned, and any damage caused during the removal will also be the responsibility of the violators, the body said.

Thane’s Ghodbunder Road to undergo repairs tomorrow; no entry for heavy vehicles

In light of the 24-hour repair work on Ghodbunder Road on Sunday, local residents and daily commuters have been advised to use alternate routes.

Mumbai. (Agency)
Traffic snarls are likely on Thane’s Ghodbunder Road, which links the Eastern Express Highway to the Western Express Highway in Mumbai, on Sunday, as the Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation has announced road repair work between Fountain Hotel and Kajupada.The Thane Traffic Police have announced that the work will last 24 hours, and heavy vehicles will not be allowed on this stretch. Light vehicles will be permitted to pass, but will have to use the opposite lane to bypass the repair site safely. To avoid the likely heavy traffic issues, authorities have urged commuters to plan their journeys, allow extra travel time, and, if

possible, avoid peak hours. Local residents and daily commuters have also been advised to use alternate routes wherever possible. Vehicles coming from Mumbai and



Thane towards Ghodbunder will face entry restrictions at Majivada VY Junction and Kapurbawdi Chowk. These vehicles will be diverted along alternative routes via Kharegaon

Token shortage leaves Bargarh farmers in limbo

SAMBALPUR .(Agency)
A week after procurement mandis opened in Bargarh district, paddy lifting has barely progressed. The initial delay caused by pending agreements with millers has now been compounded by an acute shortage of procurement tokens, triggering concerns among farmers. Farmer leader and Sanjukta Krushak Sangathan (SKS) advisor Ramesh Mahapatra said only about 30 per cent of registered farmers have received tokens so far. “Even those who received tokens have been allotted dates post-December 15, and the approved quantity is much lower than their harvested stock,” he said. Farmers who have already deposited their paddy bags at mandis are now uncertain about when procurement will begin. Mandis in Attabira, Kalapani and Godbhaga reportedly have more than 50,000 bags lying under the open sky, worsening farmers’ concerns. Although the government has fixed procurement at 19 quintals per acre, farmers allege that the tokens issued do not match this scale. As a result, freshly harvested paddy continues to lie in the open, heightening fears of a distress sale. Mahapatra said, “The token verification is progressing at a snail’s pace, further slowing down procurement. Moreover, the technical glitches in the P-PAS system also remain unresolved.”The crisis is acute in Padmapur subdivision, where 54 of the 92 mandis have yet to receive paddy due to delayed token issuance. Official estimates indicate that 53,543 bags of paddy are currently lying unattended across 38 mandis in the subdivision.Farmers say the absence of tokens has forced them into repeated visits to Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS), only to return without answers. Calls to the state Agriculture helpline have also failed to provide clarity, fuelling resentment on the ground.

Targeted killings accused Jaggi Johal’s belongings including gold chain untraceable from custody of Punjab Police

Bathinda. (Agency)
Advocate Jaspal Singh Manjhpur, the counsel of Jagtar Singh @ Jaggi Johal, a British national and accused of targeted killings in Punjab, have decided to approach the Punjab and Haryana high court to reclaim the belongings of Johal from Baghapurana police in district Moga. The decision has been taken in the light of Johal’ gold chain, a ring and cash worth Rs 5000 not traceable from the custody of the Punjab Police. Only a mobile phone of Johal was received by the counsel on Thursday. The belongings gone missing came to light after Johal was acquitted in a terror funding case in March this year, and a petition was filed for the release of Johal’s articles, which were confiscated by the Moga police when he was arrested in 2017 in a case registered under various charges including

unlawful activities (prevention) act at Baghapurana police station on December 17, 2016. Johal was arrested on November 4, 2017, Johal, in terror funding case registered at Baghapurana Police Station on December 17, 2016. He was acquitted in the case in March this year. Apart from this case, Johal faces eight cases mainly targeted killings in 2016-17 and the cases are being investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Johal presently is lodged in jail at Delhi. Speaking to TOI over phone, Manjhpur said yesterday the mobile phone was received but the gold chain, which had an emotional attachment for Johal as it was provided by his late mother, the ring and the cash are still missing from the Baghapurana police station and the police had submitted in the court that these articles are untraceable and matter



is under investigation. “Now that we have failed to get the articles except Samsung mobile, we will move the Punjab and Haryana High Court if the police fail to return the gold chain and ring. We have also submitted the pics of Johal wearing that chain before his arrest,” said Manjhpur.

Baghjapurana SHO Inspector Jatinder Singh when contacted said that “mobile was handed over on Thursday and a special investigations team (SIT) headed by a SP level officer is investigating the matter pertaining to other missing articles”. After Johal was acquitted in one out of the eight cases, Manjhpur approached the court of Moga additional sessions judge Bishan Saroop for release of his belongings.About it, Baghapurana police station SHO Jatinder Singh on October 14, 2025, submitted before the court that mobile is available but other articles are not traceable and senior officials have been informed about it and a separate report is being sent to officials.The court in its order on October 28, 2025, mentioned that report received as per which mobile in question is lying in the Malkhana and the police have no

objection in releasing the same to the applicant whereas the other articles ie currency notes of Rs. 5000, one gold ring and one gold chain were not handed over to the present MHC while handing over the charge and matter was reported to the senior officer in this regard. Moreover, it has also been mentioned that ASI Tarsem Singh has expired now and he had not been handed over the charge to his next MHC. Hence, in these circumstances, the mobile in question is ordered to be released in favour of the applicant through counsel Jaspal Singh Manjhpur against proper receipt after due verification and proper identification. The application is disposed off with a direction to the SHO concerned to report the further proceedings carried out as well as outcome of the proceedings in the matter by their Senior officers to the Court.

DPDP rules: Handing citizens’ digital soul to the State

In the grand architectural blueprint of digital governance, India’s digital personal data protection (DPDP) framework, comprising the DPDP Act of 2023 and its accompanying rules of 2025, present themselves as a fortress preserving and protecting individual privacy. Yet, it has a critical design flaw: its most formidable defences are oriented exclusively outwards, towards private entities, while leaving the rear gate not merely unguarded, but actively propped open for the Orwellian State.

The framework creates a perilous artificial dichotomy, imposing a rigorous, if imperfect, regime upon corporations while anointing the State as the unassailable and primary aggressor against the very civil right it purports to protect. It is a fundamental reorientation of the social contract in the digital age, one that places the citizen’s most intimate digital self at the mercy of the sovereign, devoid of the procedural safeguards that are the bedrock of a constitutional democracy.

The constitutional spirit, invigorated by the K S Puttaswamy (2018) case, recognised privacy as an intrinsic component of Article 21. This right ought not to be deprived except by a procedure established by law—a procedure that must be fair, just, and reasonable, as laid down in the Maneka Gandhi (1978) case. The entire DPDP framework creates the mirage of a substantive right for the individual while simultaneously constructing vast, nebulous exclusion zones for the State. The exemptions culminate in the chilling expanse of the Seventh Schedule of the DPDP rules.

Purpose 2 of the rules allows the use of personal data for the “performance of any function under any law for the time being in force”. This is not a targeted exception for national security, safeguarded by judicial oversight; it is a bottomless pit of authority. A municipal corporation clearing garbage, a transport department issuing a bus pass, or a ministry formulating a new scheme—all can invoke this provision to access, process, and share the most intimate details of a citizen’s life. The privileged sanctity of attorney-client communications, the confidential dialogue between doctor and patient, the private correspondence between spouses—all can be vacuumed into the State’s digital repository, not pursuant to a judicial warrant based on probable cause, but on the mere assertion of a statutory function. When this is read in conjunction with Section 15(c) of the Act, which imposes a duty on the individual not to suppress material information for State-issued documents, the framework effectively compels self-incrimination, turning the citizen into a compelled witness against themselves in the State’s digital ledger.

It grants the State and its instrumentalities a carte blanche to process personal data for the provision of any “subsidy, benefit, service, certificate, license or permit”. The definitions provided in rule 5(2) are so breathtakingly expansive that they cover virtually every interaction an individual has with the State. “Under law” is construed as any function performed under “any law... in force”, while “under policy” and “using public funds” create parallel, non-statutory universes of data collection power. This means that applying for a driver’s licence, a passport, a university seat, or a ration card becomes a tacit and coerced surrender of personal data, with the State empowered to do virtually anything with it under the vague and overarching “specified purpose”

Poll games & gains in Maharashtra

Mahayuti has the edge as Opposition cries foul over withdrawal of candidates in local body elections

SUPRIYA Sule, working president of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP, Sharad Pawar faction), has accused the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra of using unfair means in the ongoing local body elections. Led by the BJP, the Mahayuti includes the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena and the Ajit Pawar faction of the NCP. Sule has alleged that the BJP and its allies are exerting pressure on Opposition candidates through the police and other means. As a result, many of these candidates have withdrawn from the contest, allowing Mahayuti nominees to win unopposed. Sule has appealed to the state Election Commissioner to ensure that the elections are held in a free and fair manner. She has also flagged large-scale distribution of money during the polls. Making opponents withdraw from the contest through monetary or other inducements has been an old practice in Maharashtra. Leading political families with vast landholdings (despite the land ceiling laws) have always taken pride in their ability to wield unbridled power. Rumours and reports of pressure tactics have multiplied in the past decade. Monetary inducement used to be the most common currency of surrender; now, candidates are intimidated with threats that law enforcement agencies will be unleashed on them if they don’t relent. Over the years, the use of the police machinery to soften up political opponents has been honed to perfection. Roping in the police to win elections was virtually unknown in the decades after Independence. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s dictum that the police should never involve themselves in the tussle between political parties was strictly observed. But just when it was expected that those who had installed Patel’s tallest statue on the banks of the Sabarmati would be true to his teachings, the police leadership finds itself adrift on the same count. There is a feeling among the members of the police fraternity that those who connive with the rulers and help them in their quest to remain in power indefinitely will prosper and thrive. Such wicked thoughts did occupy scheming minds earlier also and stray instances were talked about, but the proliferation of such “anti-Patel” tendencies was fortunately checked by the fear of exposure. When, how

and why fear has been shown the doo should be a matter of research and study. A time will come when such a study will be ordered, as was done after the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi was lifted. Patel’s principles, enunciated in his speeches in the Constituent Assembly, where he strongly supported the establishment of an apolitical Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service, can be easily accessed. Our current rulers, who swear by Patel’s principles, should read his speeches and put them into practice. That would be the greatest tribute they can pay



to that great man. Powerful Maratha families have always dominated Maharashtra’s politics. It is not a new phenomenon that Sule has described in her letter to the State Election Commissioner when she alleged that as many as a hundred nominees have withdrawn their candidature under pressure. The figure may be exaggerated, but there are quite a few cases that can be cited. Many of those who could exert undue pressure were aligned to her father’s party, the original NCP. They have shifted their allegiance to Ajit Pawar’s breakaway faction of the NCP or the BJP.

he BJP’s rise in the state’s political arena has been phenomenal. Its committed grassroots workers trained by the RSS, its organisational strength, its hunger to win every election it fights – all add up to ultimate success. I remember my journey by car from Bombay (now Mumbai) to Kolhapur in July 1955 to take charge of Gadhinglaj, my first subdivisional posting, after the completion of my training. All along the road that passed

through the Maratha strongholds of Sangli and Satara, I saw numerous houses burnt down and lying unrepaired. The houses belonged to Brahmins who were targeted after Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination. Things have changed over the years. The BJP, which had followers confined to the upper castes at the turn of the century, is now the leading player in Maharashtra politics. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is a Brahmin, a very capable one at that. Unfortunately, the methods adopted by him to attain power are not kosher. The BJP leadership has engineered splits in leading regional parties, the Shiv Sena and the NCP, and governs today with the help of these splinter groups. It is rumoured that the Shiv Sena (Shinde) is in danger of losing 30 of its MLAs to the BJP, which they believe is a safer bet for their political careers. Poaching legislators from the Opposition is fairly common, but doing it from the ranks of coalition partners is unheard of. The BJP and Shinde’s Shiv Sena have given tickets to five or six members of the same family to fight the local body elections. The father, mother, sons, daughters or daughters-in-law have been favoured and attempts are being made to get such candidates elected unopposed. This amounts to taking the concept of ‘Opposition-free’ governance to a ridiculous extreme. And while doing so, another concept, that of dynasty-free governance, is also being given short shrift. The intelligentsia in Mumbai has now realised that what our popular Prime Minister says day in and day out is to be taken with large pinches of salt. But the PM can afford to ignore those who can mould public opinion. Most of those who come out to vote, particularly in the local body elections, are not bothered about lofty concepts. Their interest lies in freebies and other personal benefits. A lot of money changes hands during parliamentary, Assembly or municipal elections. Even panchayat polls are not exempt. The economically weaker sections look forward to these elections to tide them over a month or two of malnourishment. The current local body elections in Maharashtra have evoked greater interest and excitement than experienced before. Adding to the drama, the State Election Commission (SEC) has postponed voting in 24 of the 288 local bodies, forcing even the CM to protest!

Another interesting feature of these elections is the friction between the Shiv Sena (Shinde) and the BJP. Flying squads of the SEC have raided offices and houses of some Sena leaders, much to the chagrin of the BJP’s principal ally in the state.

Municipal expansion must deliver for all Hyderabadis

The credibility test lies in whether the enlarged GHMC can deliver equitable, effective governance to a megapolis that has long outgrown its institutional capacity

The Telangana government’s decision to fold 20 municipalities and seven municipal corporations into the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), expanding its jurisdiction from 625 sq km to nearly 2,000 sq km, represents a significant recasting of urban governance. The GHMC is now the country’s largest municipality by area. The real question is whether this restructuring can correct Hyderabad’s persistent problems of uneven development, regulatory inconsistency, and overstretched civic services that have long undermined the city’s growth. For years, the fragmented jurisdictions surrounding the Outer Ring Road have struggled with potholed roads, unreliable water supply, sanitation gaps, congestion, and mounting environmental stress. These shortcomings have been particularly acute for peri-urban residents who have remained underserved despite rapid population growth. A single, enlarged GHMC offers the possibility of coherent master planning, better transport networks, stronger pollution control mechanisms, and more rational resource mobilisation. The civic body’s ₹8,440-crore budget for 2025-26 will need to cross



₹10,000 crore next year to serve an expanded population of about 1.6 crore. The additional fiscal heft could accelerate the 23 priority projects under the Hyderabad City Innovative and Transformative Infrastructure initiative and advance the broader Telangana Core Urban Region vision extending across Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri, and Sangareddy districts. Execution, however, will determine whether the merger

fulfils its promise. Centralisation has always had its sceptics. Some argue that a larger, more distant civic authority could marginalise residents living far from the urban core and even heighten corruption in a more sprawling bureaucracy. Others maintain that only a consolidated institution can attract investment, deploy resources efficiently, and balance development across an expanding metropolis. With the merger now a fait accompli, the immediate tasks are evident: fair ward delimitation, a tax framework that does not place disproportionate burdens on any region, and a substantial augmentation of GHMC’s administrative and technical staff. Predictably, the political dimension has surfaced quickly. The BJP has accused the Congress government of pursuing the merger with electoral calculations in mind, hoping to gain ground before the GHMC elections next year. Such allegations will continue. Ultimately, the credibility test lies in whether the enlarged GHMC can deliver equitable, effective governance to a megapolis that has long outgrown its institutional capacity.

Human side of online learning

Virtual learning works well when digital modules are designed to foster team cohesion and interaction. If we want to expand the reach of higher education, we have to embrace online learning.

Teachers, peer connection, informal conversations, and campus life are essential to a student. However, when we think of online higher education, it is not uncommon to face one pertinent question: do online students miss out on experiences that campus environments provide? Critics of digital education warn that students may become disconnected from peers and become isolated learners in virtual classrooms. Are these apprehensions valid, or is there a more hopeful way of addressing such doubts? Cognitive research suggests that group cohesion—the sense of belonging within a learning community—remains intact when classrooms transition to virtual learning. Carefully designed digital programmes can create new kinds of bonds. Researchers at the University of Hong Kong found that students in online collaborative projects exhibited levels of trust and participation comparable to, and in some cases even stronger than, those in physical classrooms. Psychologists refer to this as ‘group efficacy’. Team-building activities play a central role in technology-enabled programmes. Debates, solving problems together, or making shared notes are easy to integrate into the online activities. These help students feel connected, more confident, and responsible for their part in the group. Studies in Taiwan have shown that when students work closely in such structured online groups, each person’s performance improves. A sense of “we can succeed together” often translates into the personal belief of “I can succeed too”. This belief is

particularly relevant to India today. According to the latest All India Survey on Higher Education, gross enrolment in post-secondary education has reached 28.4 percent. The National Education Policy, 2020 aims to push this to 50 percent by 2035. Traditional campuses cannot carry this load alone. Expanding access to half of India’s youth would be challenging without virtual platforms. Globally, interest in online programmes is increasing. A Unesco study predicts that cross-border student mobility will increase by a factor of two by 2030. Not all students can travel abroad. Online degrees with global recognition are the next frontier. In India, the University Grants Commission has already approved over 100 universities to offer fully online degrees with the same status as offline ones. The Swayam platform has registered more than 3.5 crore learners. With quality design support, India can attract thousands of learners from developing nations, too.

However, concerns about losing social and intellectual growth in online settings linger. In physical classrooms, students can lead discussions and work in teams. Can we ensure that these exposures can be replicated in virtual classrooms? Recent research says yes. Students do not feel isolated when universities invest in virtual mentorship circles, breakout discussions, and interactive projects. On the contrary, they can feel more exposed to diversity. A learner in Kerala can team up with another in Punjab, moderated by a

teacher in Delhi, while contributing to a project with a student joining in from Singapore. Advertisement India is uniquely placed to lead this change. Our digital public infrastructure has already transformed how we perceive identity and finance. Teachers are accessing high-quality resources on platforms like Diksha or Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing. The same approach can shape online higher education. AI-



adaptive tools can track a student's performance real-time. It can then adjust the level of complexity. This moderation is impossible in a lecture hall with a large number of students. Intelligent systems also support group projects. AI can ensure balanced teams by pairing students with complementary strengths in virtual platforms. None of this means virtual classrooms do not have hurdles. Universities need to design online courses that are engaging. The responsibility is clear: online

learners should not be treated as passive participants. Course instructors must build virtual communities where students become engaged through shared learning. Teachers should know how to manage online discussions and encourage student participation. Assessments must include collaborative exercises. Otherwise, students may log in, watch a lecture, but not learn much. Take an example from IIT Madras. In 2021, it launched an online BSc course in data science, the first fully-online degree programme offered by an IIT. Many thought such a step might dilute the prestige of the IIT brand. The opposite happened. Within two years, more than 17,000 students had enrolled, including those from metros as well as towns and villages. Some were working professionals, some school-leavers, and others mid-career learners seeking to upskill.

What is the larger implication for India? Expanding access to tertiary education is about creating citizens who can think critically, debate respectfully, and collaborate effectively in both physical and digital worlds. We can use virtual classrooms to prepare our youth for an increasingly complex world. Do students lose a lot when they enrol for online programmes? Academic findings and experiments suggest otherwise. With group cohesion, team-building, and the intelligent use of AI, online learning can build confident, thoughtful, and networked students. It’s not an inferior path. It’s a different path that defines the future of Indian higher education.

NEWS BOX

Andhra's KMC set for December 11 mayoral poll amid YSRCP factional tussle

KADAPA. (Agency)

The atmosphere in the Kadapa Municipal Corporation (KMC) has become politically charged with the Election Commission ordering the election of a new Mayor on December 11. The post has remained vacant since September 23, 2025 when former Mayor K Suresh Babu was removed following a Vigilance inquiry into allegations that his family members had taken up civil contracts in the municipal corporation, violating rules.

Deputy Mayor Mumtaz Begum has been handling Mayoral responsibilities since then. Although the YSRCP holds a clear majority in the KMC, internal squabbles among corporators have complicated the election process.

The Mayoral post, reserved for the BC general category, will be filled through a special council meeting. The Election Commission has directed that notices be issued to all corporators and ex officio members, with voting scheduled at 11 am on December 11. In the 2021 municipal elections, the YSRCP won 48 of 50 divisions, while one independent and one TDP candidate were elected. Following the death of two corporators, the strength of elected members now stands at 48.

Including ex officio members — TDP MLAs R Madhavi Reddy (Kadapa), P Chaitanya Reddy (Kamalapuram), and YSRCP MLC Ramachandra Reddy — the total voting strength is 51. The TDP commands 11 votes, while the YSRCP holds 40. Despite this numerical strength, the YSRCP faces factionalism, with three groups lobbying for the Mayoral post. Aspirants are pressing their claims before senior leaders, including former Deputy CM and YSRCP city president SB Amzath Basha, former mayor K Suresh Babu, district president P Ravindranath Reddy, and MP YS Avinash Reddy.

Andhra Civil Supplies Minister urges students to innovate, adapt to future jobs at Mega PTM in Tenali

GUNTUR. (Agency)

Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar urged students to set clear goals and prepare to compete globally at the Mega PTM 3.0 held at Zilla Parishad High School (ZPHS), Angalakuduru, Tenali mandal, on Friday.

He praised Education Minister Nara Lokesh for initiating the Mega PTM programme and urged students to use technology for progress. He urged them to observe their surroundings, adopt ideas benefiting society, and think about contributing to their villages.

Manohar commended teachers who enrol their own children in government schools and praised students who spoke confidently at the meeting. He called for collective efforts in school development and lauded Nestle for donating 20 bio-toilets, urging more donors to come forward. He stressed the importance of sanitation, safe drinking water, and ensuring no child is deprived of education. The Minister noted that the State is spending Rs 46,000 crore on education.

Manohar cautioned that jobs available today may not exist tomorrow, and new opportunities will emerge. He urged students to anticipate future employment trends, pointing out that Indians excel in mathematics and science, which has enabled many to lead global companies as CEOs. He emphasised innovative thinking, digital transformation in education, respect for teachers, and warned children to avoid drugs and child marriages.

After six months halt, aircraft takes flight from Rourkela

ROURKELA. (Agency)

Rourkela's commercial air connectivity was restored on Friday after six months of disruption, with the launch of a nine-seater aircraft on the Rourkela-Bhubaneswar route.

The service has been introduced as a compensatory measure, supported by the state government. IndiaOne Air, a regional airline focused on connecting Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities with metropolitan hubs under the UDAN scheme, operated its maiden flight from Rourkela on Friday afternoon. IndiaOne Air chief executive officer Prem Kumar Garg said the airline, now three years old, operates around three to four small aircraft from Bhubaneswar covering intra and inter-state routes of up to 500 km. He added that the state government is currently providing financial support for the Rourkela-Bhubaneswar service and that the airline is willing to begin flights on the Rourkela-Kolkata route, if requested by the government.

The airline is deploying a nine-seater Cessna 208 Caravan that already connects Bhubaneswar, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Cooch Behar, Jaypure, Uttkela, Raipur and Visakhapatnam. Alliance Air, which previously operated an ATR-72 aircraft on the Rourkela-Bhubaneswar and Rourkela-Kolkata routes, had abruptly suspended services in mid-July due to internal operational issues. In October, the state government wrote to the Civil Aviation ministry, seeking a complete takeover of the Rourkela Airport from SAIL, by the Airports Authority of India. During his visit to Rourkela on November 19, Union Steel minister HD Kumaraswamy stated he had directed the SAIL chairman to coordinate with the Civil Aviation ministry, adding that the ministry was interested in operating the airport for public use.

Virar building collapse: Crime branch arrests assistant commissioner of VVCMC

A crime branch official said that in 2025, when Gonsalves took over as assistant municipal commissioner, a structural audit was conducted and it was found that the building was not in good condition and dangerous.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Crime Branch of the Mira Bhayander Vasai Virar police on Friday arrested assistant municipal commissioner Gilson Gonsalves of the Vasai-Virar City Municipal Corporation (VVCMC) in connection with the Ramabai Apartment collapse in Virar on August 26 that claimed 17 lives. Gonsalves was produced in court on Friday afternoon and remanded in police custody till December 10 for further investigation.

In the Ramabai Apartment collapse case, police said they added section 59 (Public servant concealing design to commit offence) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) on Thursday before arresting Gonsalves. A crime branch official said that in 2025, when Gonsalves took over as assistant municipal commissioner, a structural audit was conducted and it was found that the building was not in good condition and dangerous. He subsequently issued notices to the landowners and developer Nital Sane (currently in jail), asking them to carry out repairs.

However, the landowners' relatives have denied receiving the notices, claiming that Sane had

received them. While outward numbers were mentioned in municipal records, there was no information on who had actually received the notices, said assistant police inspector Suhas Kamble, who is part of the investigation. Police said Gonsalves was aware of the



building's condition but failed to act. "If he had taken action and the building was demolished, the people would not have died," an official said. Former assistant municipal commissioner Subhash Jadhav was also aware the entire building was unauthorised. Although he issued notices to the landowners and contractor, he did

not take any legal action or register a case. Despite knowing the building was illegal, officials provided a water connection and collected property taxes between 2009 and 2024.

Both Jadhav and Gonsalves were named as accused in the chargesheet filed last month. They were summoned earlier and their statements were recorded. The police said they found their alleged involvement in the case. A 4,000-page chargesheet was filed in the Vasai magistrate's court containing several pieces of evidence and statements of 115 people, including residents of the Ramabai Apartment, injured individuals, officials from various departments such as the police and VVCMC, and doctors. The FIR was registered, based on Gonsalves's statement in his capacity as municipal commissioner, against eight people, including three landowners and the contractor Nital Sane. The landowners Parshuram Dalvi, his son Sadashiv Dalvi, and his wife, died before the incident. Police arrested five people Sadashiv's two daughters, their husbands, and Nital Sane. While Sane is still in jail, the four others were granted bail.

Haryana Assistant Professor Exam: Aspirants file RTI, stage protest; education minister: HPSC looking into it

In their RTI applications, candidates have sought details of question-wise marks awarded in the subject knowledge test, a copy of the model answer key used for evaluation, and the procedure adopted for determining cut-off marks and assessing answer sheets.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Unsuccessful aspirants of Haryana Public Service Commission's (HPSC) assistant professor (English) post Friday filed an RTI application seeking copies of their answer sheets. They also staged a silent protest outside the HPSC office in Panchkula Friday.

Only 151 candidates had cleared the subject knowledge test against the 613 assistant professor (English) vacancies in Haryana colleges.

One of the unsuccessful candidates told The Indian Express that so far 23 aspirants have submitted RTI applications to the HPSC to obtain their answer sheets. A senior HPSC official reiterated that the answer sheets could only be shown once the recruitment process is complete, adding that "our exam system is completely foolproof."

Haryana education minister Mahipal Dhanda confirmed that some candidates had



approached him regarding the issue. "We have recommended to the HPSC that this matter be resolved. The Commission is looking into it," he said. The education minister also stated that the HPSC is reviewing the matter. However, a senior HPSC officer told The Indian Express that the evaluation process had already been reviewed following candidates'

representations, and no shortcomings were found.

In their RTI applications, candidates have sought details of question-wise marks awarded in the subject knowledge test, a copy of the model answer key used for evaluation, and the procedure adopted for determining cut-off marks and assessing answer sheets. The unsuccessful candidates have described the result as "extremely disproportionate."

They argued that the evaluation pattern had indirectly nullified reservations, pointing out that only 17 candidates from all reserved categories combined qualified against 301 reserved posts, while 134 candidates from the General category qualified against 312 posts.

The aspirants warned that with such a result, hundreds of teaching positions would remain vacant (Express Photo).

MP Manish Tewari moves Bill seeking directly elected Mayor with 5-year tenure for Chandigarh

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Chandigarh Member of Parliament Manish Tewari Friday introduced a comprehensive amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha seeking to give Chandigarh a directly elected Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor with a fixed five-year tenure — ending the city's unique and controversial system of electing its civic leadership for just one year. The bill brings a restructuring of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation where he sought that the role of elected representatives in the civic body be strengthened. He tabled the amendment Bill in the anti defection law.

A Mayor in Chandigarh is elected from amongst the elected councillors for a one-year term. Every year in January, the Mayor elections take place in 'City Beautiful'.

All these years it is the Punjab Municipal Corporation Act 1976 that is extended to Chandigarh and governs all the civic body in Chandigarh. However certain laws of the Punjab MC act have also been diluted that are extended in Chandigarh. In Panchkula, the Mayor is elected directly from amongst the public and for a period of five years.

In Chandigarh, all executive powers rest with the Commissioner of the civic body, while the Mayor has none. The Mayor has just one power, which is to convene a House meeting or any meeting or just decide on which all agendas to bring in the General House meeting. All the previous Mayors have been complaining that despite them and the councillors

being the only elected representative in the Union Territory (UT), they have no powers to get residents' works done. A councillor or a Mayor has to request the administration officials and ensure a good bond to see that work is done. In case if there is a Mayor in council as well with a five year term, the Mayor and committee chairpersons will have powers at par with that of the Minister of State. The Mayor and chairpersons will have a say in every policy matter — a decision which at present is with the bureaucrats.

What the Bill states

The Mayor, the Senior Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Mayor would be removed only by motion supported by a two-third majority of the elected Councillors present and voting. The Mayor, the Senior Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Mayor shall function as Mayor in Council. All decisions of the Council shall be taken by consensus. If a consensus is not achieved, the decision will be made by a 2:1 majority and the decision shall be put into an agenda item for the consideration of the full house of the Municipal Corporation which shall be decided only by the elected members of the Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh through a simple majority of those present and voting. The provisions of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution of India, regarding anti-defection law, as applicable to the Members of the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies, shall apply to the elected representatives of the Municipal Corporation.

Cong worker throws shoe at AAP MLA Gopal Italia in Jamnagar, beaten up

Surat. (Agency)

A Congress worker allegedly threw a shoe at Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Gopal Italia from Visavadar when the latter was addressing a public meeting in Jamnagar on Friday afternoon. Congress councillors from Ward no. 12 of the Jamnagar Municipal Corporation, Femidaben Juneja, Aslam Khilji, and Advocate Jenabben Khafi, along with their supporters, joined the AAP at the function held at the Town Hall and Italia welcomed them to the party.

When Italia was delivering his speech, a man sitting on the ground close to the stage stood up and hurled a shoe at him. Italia protected himself and escaped unhurt. The AAP leaders who were on stage caught hold of him and started beating him. The police present on the spot caught the man and took him to the government hospital.

Later, the person involved in the act was identified as Chhatrapalsinh Jadeja, a Congress worker from Jamnagar town.

In a special media post later, Italia said he did not want to lodge a complaint on the incident. "I simply forgive the one who did this act — praying that

God keeps this person and his family happy," he wrote.

Taking to X, AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal said that the growing popularity of AAP in Gujarat has shattered both BJP and Congress. "We have been consistently raising questions about the BJP's failures, but why is Congress pained... Why? A Congress worker hurled a shoe at AAP MLA Gopal Italia during a public meeting in Jamnagar. This shows that in Gujarat, the BJP and Congress are jointly fighting against the AAP," Kejriwal wrote on X. The AAP leaders are not afraid of such incidents. The public of Gujarat has now decided on change and is coming towards AAP, and for that, both these political parties are afraid," the AAP chief said. Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee President Amit Chavda condemned the incident and said that the Congress has no role in it. "We condemn the shoe-throwing incident at AAP MLA Gopal Italia. One can oppose differently, but doing such an act is not good. The Congress party is not behind the incident. In 2017, it was Gopal Italia who hurled a shoe at the then-home minister.

Mumbai's Byculla Zoo loses two tigers in two months

Officials also maintained that the deaths of the two tigers are absolutely unrelated and that medical records do not indicate that one incident may have triggered the other.

Mumbai. (Agency)

Mumbai's Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udayan, popularly known as Ranibaug or Byculla Zoo, has lost two tigers in the past two months. On November 17, a nine-and-a-half-year-old Royal Bengal tiger, Shakti, died due to respiratory failure following pneumonia. Meanwhile, zoo officials said on Friday that two weeks before Shakti's death, on October 29, a three-year-old tiger cub, Rudra, had died around 10 pm. When contacted, civic officials said the public announcement of Rudra's death was not made as the cub had been under long-term treatment and was not kept on public display at the enclosure.

As per the protocols, the administration had informed the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) as

well as the state government immediately after the incident.

The cub was ill for a prolonged period and we made several attempts to cure him. He was also not available for public viewing at the gallery since he was under treatment, for which we chose not to make a public announcement of the death, unlike how we did in the case of Shakti," the official said.

Officials also maintained that the deaths of the two tigers are absolutely unrelated and that medical records do not indicate that one incident may have triggered the other.

Rudra was born to Shakti and Karishma in November 2022. Civic officials said Rudra's immunity was very weak since birth, to the extent that he had to be hand-held after he was born.

"Rudra's size was smaller and he was also underweight. In comparison, the other three-year-old cub, Jay, was very healthy. Rudra's health parameters remained below the normal level. At the age of three months, Rudra contracted a Trypanosoma infection which led to temporary loss of vision. His vision was restored in less than a month.

Following this, all the four tigers including Rudra, Shakti, Karishma and Jay were inoculated with the Trypanosoma vaccine," said an official. The official said that in the past two years, Rudra contracted infectious diseases twice, and each time his

body became weaker after recovery. Officials added that zoo veterinary staff had hand-raised him as Rudra did not receive



adequate maternal milk due to his frail health. "Since his immunity was low, he contracted infections regularly and the problem of his

blindness also came back. In October, we carried out a blood test that showed that parasitic remains continued to stay in his blood. He

was under veterinary supervision and he died just days before his birthday," the official added. At present, Karishma and Jay are the two surviving tigers in the zoo.

The zoo authorities had brought Karishma and Shakti from the Sambhaji Nagar zoo in Maharashtra under an exchange programme.

At the time, Karishma was three years old and Shakti was four. Two years later, the tiger couple gave birth to two cubs — Jay and Rudra.

Bengal's Murshidabad on alert as sacked MLA pushes ahead with Babri Masjid plan

New Delhi.(Agency)
West Bengal braces for a politically fraught Saturday as suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir pushes ahead with the foundation-laying ceremony for a 'Babri Masjid-style' mosque in Murshidabad, triggering high alert and sharpened political messaging on a date laden with communal sensitivities.The Beldanga site, where Kabir claimed "three lakh people" would assemble, has been sealed into a high-security grid, with deployment of RAF, district police, and central forces on both sides of the National Highway 12, after the Calcutta High Court declined to halt the event but placed full responsibility for public order on the state government. The proposed mosque, which Kabir has repeatedly described as being "modelled on the Babri Masjid", has stirred political unease in a district where symbolism and mobilisation often feed off each other. For the Trinamool Congress (TMC)- which

has distanced itself after suspending Kabir- the optics of the foundation-laying ceremony for the mosque on December 6, the anniversary of Ayodhya's Babri Masjid demolition, carry risks it has sought to pre-empt.The run-up to the proposed event has forced the administration to arrange for expansive security cover. RAF teams arrived in Rejinagar on Friday and were stationed at a local school ahead of deployment, while the district police - acting on a Calcutta High Court directive to ensure law and order - have drawn up a security grid covering Beldanga, Raninagar and all approach roads to NH-12, the state's only north-south arterial highway. A senior officer said nearly 3,000 personnel would be deployed throughout the day, with multiple diversion plans ready if turnout threatens to choke the highway. On Friday, the high court, hearing a petition seeking to halt the event, declined to intervene and placed the onus of

maintaining public order on the state government, a cue that prompted the police to talk with Kabir's team via backchannel on Friday night. Governor C V Ananda Bose, meanwhile, urged citizens not to be swayed by "provocative statements and rumours" and asked the state to ensure there was "no disturbance anywhere".For Kabir, a Congress-BJP-turned-TMC rebel whose political career has oscillated as sharply as the reactions to his announcements, Saturday's event is both a test of his mobilisation prowess and a declaration of defiance after his suspension from the TMC on Thursday for what the party called "communal politics".The MLA, who has often embarrassed the party with remarks that triggered showcase notices, said he would resign as legislator and launch his own

outfit later this month. On Friday, he was seen personally supervising the stage and food arrangements, appearing unfazed by either the political backlash or the administrative glare. The scale of preparations has lent the venue the ambience of a massive public fair. A 150-ft-long, 80-ft-wide dais towers over paddy fields off NH-12, with seating

arranged for 400 guests.Two clerics from Saudi Arabia, organisers claim, will arrive in a special convoy from Kolkata airport. Nearly 3,000 volunteers – 2,000 of whom began work early Friday – have been tasked with regulating access roads, preventing bottlenecks and keeping the national highway running.Seven Murshidabad-based catering agencies have been contracted to prepare shahi biryani, with an estimated 40,000 packets for guests and another 20,000 for residents.A close aide of Kabir estimated food expenses alone at over Rs 30 lakh, with the total venue budget likely to touch Rs 70 lakh.The day's programme, circulated by organisers, lists Quran recitation at 10 am, the foundation ceremony at noon, a community meal at 2 pm, and dispersal by 4 pm as per police instructions.



IndiGo cancels all its 235 domestic flights from Delhi; chaos erupts at IGI airport

New Delhi.(Agency)
Scenes of chaos unfolded across all three terminals of the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) on Friday as IndiGo cancelled all its domestic flights for a 24-hour period. IndiGo, India's largest domestic airline, operates around 235 flights daily from Delhi alone.Of these, nearly 150 flights operate from Terminal 1, about 50 from Terminal 2, and the remaining from Terminal 3. The cancellation came into effect from 12 midnight on Thursday and will remain in force until 11.59 pm on Friday. Chennai airport has also announced the suspension of IndiGo's domestic operations till 6 pm on Friday. Hundreds of passengers were seen agitating near the airline's counters, expressing anger and frustration over the sudden disruption. Many raised slogans against the airline, demanding immediate solutions for their travel plans. "The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which manages airport security, has deployed its entire reserve platoon to control the situation. Leaves of all CISF personnel have also been cancelled," a source said. The airline has been directed to open more counters and deploy additional staff to address passenger grievances. A large number of stranded passengers crowded the counters of Air India, Air India Express and SpiceJet in an attempt to secure alternate flights.However, many travellers wanting to return home were left stuck at the airport due to a huge backlog of cancellations. "Baggage of hundreds of passengers is still stuck and many are trying to collect it before leaving," an airport official said, adding that retrieval was taking place slowly across the belts. Other major airports were also affected, with more than 100 flights cancelled in Bengaluru and over 90 flights cancelled in Hyderabad.

BJP shutting 95 mohalla clinics while opening liquor shops in Delhi: AAP

AAP Delhi unit president Saurabh Bharadwaj questioned where patients who depended on these clinics would now seek treatment and medicines.



New Delhi.(Agency)
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday alleged that the BJP-led Delhi government is set to shut down 95 more mohalla clinics built during the Arvind Kejriwal government, even as premium liquor showrooms are being planned at metro stations and in malls. AAP Delhi unit president Saurabh Bharadwaj questioned where patients who depended on these clinics would now seek treatment and medicines."The government first shut clinics operating in rented premises, then those within a one-km, and later a 1.6-km radius of other health facilities, indicating an intent to eliminate mohalla clinics completely. At the same time, large glamourised liquor showrooms are being promoted in the malls and metro stations," Bharadwaj claimed. He added, "The government is concerned for alcohol drinkers. They want liquor shops and showrooms visible everywhere, including every metro station and malls. Alcohol consumers should face no inconvenience. But the poor and elderly who regularly got medicines for sugar, diabetes, heart ailments and blood pressure from Mohalla Clinics will now have to walk kilometres and go far for medicines. Alcohol, however, must be available right at the metro station. What kind of government is this? Why doesn't it understand its people's pain?"

No new tax proposals in MCD budget; to strengthen existing ones: Commissioner

The highest allocation of Rs 4,795.28 crore has been granted to sanitation, while education received Rs 2,520.34 crore.
New Delhi.(Agency)
Municipal Corporation of Delhi Commissioner Ashwani Kumar on Friday presented the civic body's budget of Rs 16,530.50 crore for 2026-27, with sanitation receiving the highest allocation, Rs 4,795.28 crore, among major sectors.He highlighted that there were no new tax proposals and efforts will be made to strengthen collection of existing taxes, also announcing plans to develop 20 new multi-level parking facilities across the city. The budget also mentioned that the 'Sunioy' property tax settlement scheme has yielded Rs 600 crore and will offer waiver of dues older than 5+1 years if taxpayers clear recent arrears. The highest allocation of Rs 4,795.28 crore has been granted to sanitation, while education received Rs 2,520.34 crore. The budget for public health and medical aid has been pegged at Rs 1,905.60 crore. The commissioner said education has been allocated around 15 per cent of the total budget, making it the second-highest allocation after sanitation, while health stands third with nearly 12 per cent.Public works and street lighting have been allocated Rs 1,884.44 crore to improve road infrastructure and illumination across the capital, while general administration has been allotted Rs 3,549.63 crore. The horticulture department received Rs 397.90 crore, while veterinary services were allocated Rs 131.06 crore. The total budget outlay for 2026-27 stands at Rs 16,530.50 crore, compared to Rs 17,011.91 crore in the previous financial year. After presenting the Revised Budget Estimates for 2025-26 and the Budget Estimates for 2026-27 at a special meeting of the Standing Committee, Kumar told reporters that the main focus would remain on cleanliness. He reiterated that no new taxes are being proposed, and existing tax rates will remain unchanged.



DTC's average monthly income nearly Rs 94 crore for April-October

New Delhi.(Agency)
Pulling out of the losses incurred in previous years and having navigated challenges effectively, the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) has accelerated its income generation and receipts. DTC has recorded an average monthly income of Rs 93.96 crore from April 2025 to October 2025 in the current fiscal year, compared to Rs 68.54 crore during the previous financial year 2024-25, officials said on Friday. Under the category of Ticket Income, DTC registered Rs 220.33 crore between April and October 2025. Under the subsidy against Pink Tickets, the Corporation received Rs 235.56 crore, reflecting the continued success of the Delhi

government's free bus travel scheme for women, aimed at boosting safety, empowerment and access to jobs and education, officials added. In the Special Hire category, DTC generated Rs 63.40 crore, while Sale of Passes contributed Rs 36.38 crore. Notably, DTC recorded Rs 102.04 crore under Miscellaneous Income (sale of scrap, interest earned, advertisement fee, rent receipt, penalty, LFB, others), further strengthening its overall financial performance. Overall, DTC recorded Rs 658 crore in total income from April to October, reflecting steady financial progress, officials said. Delhi Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh said, "These figures show the positive impact of our

No calls, emails after work: Right to Disconnect Bill introduced in Lok Sabha

New Delhi.(Agency)
A private member's bill aimed at allowing employees to refrain from attending to work-related calls and emails outside office hours was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday.Members of both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha can introduce bills on issues they believe require government legislation. However, in most cases, private member bills are withdrawn after the government responds to the proposed law. NCP MP Supriya Sule introduced the "Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025", which seeks to establish an Employees' Welfare Authority. The bill proposes granting every employee the right to disconnect from work-related calls and emails beyond official work hours and on holidays.It further includes provisions allowing employees to refuse to respond to such communications and addresses related matters.Another private member bill, the Menstrual Benefits Bill, 2024, introduced by Congress MP Kadiyam Kavya, aims to provide workplace facilities and support for women during menstruation. The bill seeks to establish a legal framework ensuring specific benefits for female employees during their menstrual period. LJP MP Shambhavi Choudhary also introduced legislation aimed at securing paid menstrual leave for working women and female students, alongside access to menstrual hygiene facilities and other health benefits during menstruation. Congress MP Manickam Tagore introduced a bill to exempt Tamil Nadu from the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate medical admissions.Last month, the Tamil Nadu government approached the Supreme Court after the President refused to grant assent to a law exempting the state from NEET-based admissions. DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi introduced a bill to abolish the death penalty in India. While there have been repeated calls for its abolition, successive central governments have maintained that it is necessary in certain cases as a deterrent. Nearly a decade ago, the Law Commission had recommended phasing out the death penalty, except in terror-related cases, noting that it does not serve a stronger deterrent purpose than life imprisonment. Finally, Independent MP Vishaldada Prakashbapu Patil introduced the Journalist (Prevention of Violence and Protection) Bill, 2024. The bill seeks to prevent violence against journalists and provide protection for journalists and their property, along with related measures.

IndiGo operations 'steadily' resuming, passengers' plight reaches Supreme Court

The Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi issued a passenger advisory, announcing that IndiGo flight operations are gradually returning to normal following the airline's disruption, which resulted in over 1,000 flight cancellations on Friday and over 550 flights on Thursday.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Disruptions from IndiGo's flight cancellations continued into the fifth day on Saturday with multiple flights cancelled across the country. The airline, struggling with widespread operational chaos for the past four days, recorded over 1,000 cancellations on Friday and 550 on Thursday as well.Meanwhile, Delhi Airport issued an advisory stating that operations are gradually returning to normal, while a petition has been filed with the Supreme Court seeking the Chief Justice's intervention over passenger losses caused by the suspension of flights. **OPERATIONS RETURNING TO NORMALCY: DELHI AIRPORT**
Delhi Airport has issued an advisory

stating that flight operations are gradually returning to normal and urged passengers to verify their flight status before heading to the airport. "We are glad to update that Indigo flight operations are now steadily resuming and getting back to normalcy following the brief disruption. Please check the status of your booking and flight before leaving from home," Delhi Airport said in a post on X. On Friday, the airline had cancelled all domestic departures from Delhi airport until midnight. **PETITION FILED IN SUPREME COURT**
A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking Chief Justice of India's



intervention after passengers suffered losses due to IndiGo flight suspensions. The plea urges the Court to take suo motu cognisance, direct the Civil Aviation Ministry and DGCA to submit status reports, and constitute a special bench for immediate hearing.Meanwhile, the DGCA has attributed the disruptions to

IndiGo's "misjudgment and gap in planning" in implementing new pilot duty-hour regulations. **INDIGO CEO PETER ELBERS APOLOGISES**
The airline's CEO Peter Elbers firmly indicated that normal operations are expected to resume sometime between 10 and 15 December. "December 5 was the most severely impacted day, with the number of cancellations well over 1000. I extend our sincerest apologies for the inconvenience it has caused to our customers. It will take some time to return to a full normal situation, which we anticipate between 10 to 15 December," Elbers said in a video message.

NEWS BOX

Laura Wolvaardt smashes record-breaking ton as South Africa crush Ireland by 105 runs

New Delhi. (Agency)

South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt's record-breaking century helped her team crush Ireland by 105 runs in the first T20I on Saturday, December 6 at Newlands, Cape Town. Wolvaardt scored an unbeaten 115* (56) smashing 15 fours and four sixes in her innings to help South Africa post a massive score of 220/2 in their allotted 20 overs — their highest in T20Is. After losing her opening partner Faye Tunncliffe (1) with just four runs on the board, Wolvaardt stitched a massive 176-run stand for the second wicket with Sune Luus (81 off 51) off 96 balls. Wolvaardt brought up her half-century in just 24 balls and took another 28 more deliveries to reach her century off 52 deliveries — the fastest ever by a South Africa woman.

She surpassed compatriot Lizelle Lee's 59-ball century against Thailand at the 2020 T20 World Cup. Wolvaardt also joined an elite group of ten Full Member players with multiple women's T20I hundreds, having earlier scored a century against Sri Lanka in 2024. Meanwhile, in the second innings, Ireland capitulated under the pressure of a huge score and were bundled out for 115 in



18 overs. Leah Paul (34 off 23) and captain Gaby Lewis (30 off 29) were the only two players to cross the 20-run mark for the visitors as Luus also shone with the ball. The off spinner scalped 4/22 in four overs, while Nonkululeko Mlaba (2/9) and Chloe Tryon (2/14) scalped two wickets each. Despite her all round show, Luus couldn't steal Player of the Match award from Wolvaardt for her record-breaking century. After a commanding win in the series opener, the two teams will next take on each other in 2nd T20I on Saturday, December 6 at Boland Park, Paarl.

From Brink to belief: How India's Juniors survived Belgium's vice-grip in an epic shootout

New Delhi. (Agency)

For a while, leave the scorelines, the relief of winning at poker, called The Shoot out, the almost perceptible respite that India crossed the finish line, which at one stage appeared insurmountable as Belgium tightened its vice-like grip, simply by orchestrating the music to their liking till we danced to a tune they wanted — beyond all that, hockey, in its shapes and materials is a constantly shifting, multifaceted sport. To remain in the maelstrom of that fire, singed, burnt to a crisp, yet surviving, you become a part of sporting glory, a story that many would recite, rewrite, rework down the ages. India's 4-3 shoot-out, 2-2 regulation scoreline had every ingredient of a thriller — suspense, tension, anticipation — the stakes



were high and the fans, all packed in, with millions probably watching on television, across the hockey playing fraternity, knew just enough to worry. But not solve the equation. At that level, the match was one of the best this side could have played. And a giant step for a man called P Sreejesh, who as a coach in the first two quarters seemed at sea, then finally, as the dice rolled in his favour, he changed the tune, bringing in a higher degree of control, pressed the jumpy nerves of the Belgians, to carve out a win that would have raised the maturity level of this junior side, giving the word belief a whole new meaning. At the start, Belgium's tactics were spot on. They understood that to give space to India would mean a string of moves that, in the end, this way or the other, would result in a goal. An extremely high degree of control is needed to rein in the opponent that, apart from skill has the pace to stretch the flanks, create mayhem in the circle and, for Belgium, that meant the discipline to rein themselves in. It was almost like a heavyweight fighter falling back on the ropes, taking a series of uppercuts and punches from a faster but lighter opponent. Waiting for that one opening where they could deliver a sucker-punch.

Shree Charani: A star on the rise, mentored by Mithali Raj, inspired by Meg Lanning

✦ In an exclusive chat with India Today Digital, Indian left-arm spinner Charani reflected on her journey in the Women's World Cup, where she delivered some brilliant spells. She also shared her admiration for Ravindra Jadeja and how Mithali Raj played a key role in guiding her along the way.

New Delhi. (Agency)

On November 20, a bright Thursday morning humming with the music of ordinary life, I dialled Shree Charani's manager—certain that after India's triumphant Women's World Cup win, Charani would finally be resting, wrapped in the warmth of a nation's pride, soaking in the glory she had earned.

But I couldn't have been more wrong. Instead, I learnt that Charani had slipped

straight from celebration into an examination hall—because Semester 5 mathematics waits for no one, not even a newly crowned World Cup hero. In a modest, middle-class home, education is not merely an expectation; it is a pillar, a promise, a sacred responsibility that stands shoulder to shoulder with every dream fulfilled. So while the country still chants her name into the sky, Charani quietly returns to her textbooks, determined to complete her graduation—two years behind her peers, yet never once behind in spirit. And when she finally spoke, her voice carried that unmistakable playfulness, that raw, sunlit energy of a girl who still wakes up eager to race toward a field, a bat in hand, heart first. She told she has no regrets about falling behind academically. How could she? Cricket has always been her heartbeat, her compass star, the wild and wondrous dream she chose again and again. And now, even as a world champion, she holds that dream with the same innocence, the same fire, the same undiluted love. Juggling studies and sport a problem? For Charani, it isn't—it is simply the rhythm of a life lived with purpose, grace,



and unbroken joy. No, nothing like that. My first preference is cricket, so I don't feel that way. I'll continue my studies only if I get the chance. Because of cricket, my degree wasn't completed—it's been pending for two years. All my friends have already graduated, and some are even completing their MBAs now, while I'm still working on my degree," Charani told India Today in an interview.

"I feel life doesn't change that much, but after winning the World Cup, it changed a lot for

me because I became much busier. I had thought that after the World Cup I could be more peaceful, that I could rest or sleep properly, that things would become easier. But nothing like that has happened so far," she said.

ONE SPORT AT A TIME

For Charani, cricket wasn't destiny at first sight. She wandered through many fields, chasing rhythms of other games. Grinding, learning, growing. Only after the stillness of the Covid years did the truth rise clear within her: Cricket was the sport her heart had been quietly calling home. "I always felt I could become a player someday when I played with my friends and family, but I never played professionally until I finished my 10th standard. It was only during my Intermediate studies that I started taking cricket seriously," Charani said.

"I was involved in athletics and kho-kho, and one day I simply asked myself why I couldn't play cricket professionally too. I spoke to my parents, and that's when I began. In fact, I actually started playing cricket seriously only after COVID."

IND vs SA: How can all-rounders like Hardik Pandya avoid constant injuries

New Delhi. (Agency)

India all-rounder Hardik Pandya recently returned from injury. Pandya, who had been out since India's Asia Cup match against Sri Lanka, made a strong comeback in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, where he helped Baroda secure a remarkable win over Abhishek Sharma's Punjab by producing an impactful all-round performance. The Asia Cup was not the first instance of Pandya suffering an injury midway through a major tournament. The all-rounder had taken a nasty tumble in the first half of the ODI World Cup 2023, a setback that ruled him out for the remainder of the competition. His absence was felt acutely in the final in Ahmedabad, where the Indian batters struggled to accelerate against Australia's well-prepared slow-ball tactics, creating a situation in which a player of Pandya's skillset would likely have made a significant difference. Hardik is not the only one dealing with such challenges. In recent times, several all-rounders around the world have faced



recurring injury issues that have disrupted their rhythm. Nitish Kumar Reddy has struggled with persistent groin problems, while Cameron Green and Kyle Jamieson have dealt with back-related setbacks that have limited their availability. Australia captain Mitchell Marsh, in an attempt to extend his career and manage his workload more sensibly, stopped bowling since 5

June 2024 so that he could focus on maintaining his fitness through a more sustainable approach. This raises an important question about the modern game. Is it still viable to perform consistently as an all-rounder in cricket, given the physical demands of batting, bowling and fielding across all three formats? And is there a realistic way for all-rounders to maintain their fitness without compromising their effectiveness or burning out early in their careers?

TRAIN SMART, NOT HARD: KALLIS

Speaking on the sidelines of the SA20, legendary all-rounder Jacques Kallis explained that all-rounders must train intelligently and pay close attention to the smaller aspects of fitness if they wish to remain injury free throughout their playing days. Kallis, who dealt with side strains and back problems in the latter stages of his career, offered this advice with the hope that the next generation would avoid the pitfalls that he himself encountered during his long tenure at the international level.

IND vs SA, 3rd ODI: Do or dew. India fight to keep history alive in Vizag decider

IND v SA, 3rd ODI preview: With dew dictating late-evening contests, India's fate could hinge as much on skill as on luck in Vizag. South Africa smell history, and KL Rahul's young bowling unit must finally deliver under the dripping pressure.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India desperately want one streak to end and a couple of others to stay alive. For 41 years, no visiting side has returned home having beaten India in both Tests and ODIs on the same tour. If that proud record is to hold, India will need more than another Virat Kohli hundred. They may, just may, also need to get it right at the toss when they take



on Temba Bavuma's South Africa in the ODI series decider on Saturday, December 6 in Visakhapatnam.

Sport, they say, is a theatre of uncertainty. Yet India's recent run borders on the uncanny: twenty lost tosses on the trot, a sequence with a probability of roughly 0.000095%. It is remarkable for all the wrong reasons.

True, teams live with variables in this beautiful, unpredictable game. But for India's young bowling unit, still earning its

stripes, the heavy evening dew in day-night ODIs is turning into a genuine Achilles heel.

WHEN AND WHERE TO WATCH

The 3rd ODI between India and South Africa will start at 1:30 pm IST today. Star Sports and JioHotstar will provide TV and live-streaming in India. In Ranchi, India's 349 was just enough — a 17-run win that could have unravelled after South Africa, reduced to 11 for 3, nearly hauled it back. In Raipur on Thursday, even 359 wasn't safe, as South Africa equalled the highest successful chase by a visiting team in India in ODI history. Across formats over the past two months, India have struggled to get a grip on this touring South African side — and, increasingly, in their own conditions. Blanked 0–2 in the Tests, now threatened by defeat in the ODIs, they find themselves wrestling not only with a confident opponent but also with the dew-soaked evenings of their own cities.

start their campaign the following day, taking on Paraguay in Inglewood, California.

Defending champions Argentina commence their title defence in Group J, opening against Algeria. Lionel Messi's side will also face Austria and Jordan in what appears to be a balanced yet competitive group. The draw ceremony at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., unfolded with the flair of a Hollywood production. Sporting icons Tom Brady, Shaquille O'Neal, Aaron Judge and Wayne Gretzky joined the event to reveal the groups, while former England defender Rio Ferdinand guided the proceedings. Adding to the spectacle, the leaders of the three host nations — U.S. President Donald Trump, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, each stepped forward to draw their own national teams' balls on stage. The evening opened with a surprise moment as FIFA presented its inaugural FIFA Peace Prize to Trump, setting a rather unusually political tone before the main draw. With the draw complete, the World Cup narrative begins to take shape.



Discus thrower Seema Punia handed 16-month ban for failing dope test

✦ Former Asian Games gold-medallist Seema Punia has been suspended for 16 months after failing a dope test, with her ban effective from November 10 as per the Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel's decision. The National Anti-Doping Agency has not disclosed the banned substance.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former Asian Games gold-winning discus thrower Seema Punia has been handed a 16-month ban after failing a dope test. The 42-year-old's suspension came into effect on 10 November — the date of the Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel's (ADDP) decision —

according to the updated list of offenders released by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA). However, NADA did not disclose the substance for which she tested positive. This latest violation adds to Punia's chequered doping history, which includes two previous offences, one of them committed at the junior level when she was just 17.

Punia last competed at the Hangzhou Asian Games in October 2023, where she claimed a bronze medal. A four-time Commonwealth Games medallist, she has won three silver medals and has been a consistent presence in major international events. She has not competed since the Hangzhou Games, although she had expressed a desire to retire after the 2024 Paris Olympics, for which she failed to qualify. Over her long career, Punia represented India at four Olympic Games

(2004, 2012, 2016 and 2020) and five Commonwealth Games. Her career, spanning more than two decades, ran parallel



to that of fellow discus thrower and 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Krishna Poonia. Her personal best stands at 64.84m, achieved back in 2004. Punia won medals in each of her first four

Commonwealth Games appearances, though she missed the podium at the 2022 Birmingham edition. Her first and only Asian Games gold came at the 2014 Incheon Games, followed by a bronze in the 2018 edition. At the junior level, she secured a bronze medal at the 2002 World Championships. Earlier this year, she also worked as coach to para javelin thrower Sandeep Chaudhary, who won a silver medal at the World Para Athletics Championships in New Delhi.

Alongside Punia, several other Indian athletes have also been suspended for doping violations. Distance runner Pooja Yadav received a four-year ban, shot putter Manjeet Kumar was suspended for six years, and middle-distance runner Nimesh Dhanraj Rathod was banned for four years. Marathon runner Kuldeep Singh and steeplechaser Chhavi Yadav were also handed four-year suspensions for separate offences.

New LIC Schemes
Announced: Protection Plus
And Bima Kavach Offer
Flexible Coverage & High
Protection— Details Here

New Delhi.(Agency)
Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched two new insurance plans, Protection Plus (Plan 886) and Bima Kavach (Plan 887) designed to offer both security and smart financial planning. Whether you are looking for savings-based coverage or a pure protection plan, these new products aim to meet different needs of policyholders. From eligibility rules and entry age to minimum sum assured, premium details and unique benefits, here’s a simple breakdown of what these plans offer and how they can support your financial future.LIC’s Protection Plus (Plan 886) is a unit-linked, non-participating life insurance plan that offers a combination of life cover and investment opportunities. It ensures financial protection throughout the policy term while giving policyholders the flexibility to choose their preferred investment fund, increase coverage when needed, and even make additional top-up premium payments. After completing five policy years, customers can also make partial withdrawals based on their requirements.In this plan, the policyholder decides how much premium they want to pay, and the basic sum assured is calculated accordingly. The premium can be paid either regularly or for a limited period, depending on one’s convenience.
Key Features of LIC’s Protection Plus
LIC’s Protection Plus comes with flexible entry requirements and payment options to suit different age groups and financial plans. Anyone between 18 and 65 years can apply for this policy.When it comes to premium payments, policyholders can choose from premium paying terms of 5, 7, 10 or 15 years, depending on the selected policy term of 10, 15, 20 or 25 years. While the minimum premium amount varies based on the chosen payment term and mode of payment, there is no upper limit on the maximum premium. However, the maximum premium is subject to LIC’s underwriting rules and approval.

Refund ultimatum:
Government orders IndiGo
to pay back passengers by
Sunday

CHENNAI .(Agency)
IndiGo’s massive operational breakdown, marked by widespread cancellations and delays across major Indian airports, has triggered a strong intervention by the government. In response, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has ordered IndiGo to clear all pending passenger refunds by 8:00 PM on Sunday, December 7, 2025. The directive comes with a stern warning: failure to comply will result in “immediate regulatory action.”
Passengers whose flights were cancelled or disrupted are now guaranteed full refunds automatically to their original mode of payment, and the airline is prohibited from charging any fee for rescheduling. The order aims to protect travellers from being penalised for an operational failure that was entirely out of their control.IndiGo, which has apologised for the chaos, had earlier pledged refunds for all bookings between December 5 and December 15, along with waivers on cancellation or rescheduling, and additional support like accommodation, meals and assistance for stranded passengers. But the government’s fresh order tightens the deadline and sets a hard end date for the refund process, putting the airline’s commitment under close regulatory watch.
For thousands of passengers stranded or left uncertain by the cancellation spree, the government’s move restores a measure of hope and ensures that affected travellers are not left bearing the cost of disruption. The coming days will show whether IndiGo manages to meet the deadline — or faces the consequences of non-compliance.

Three railway-linked stocks
record huge orders; returns
impressive too

Kolkata .(Agency)
The Narendra Modi government has taken up the infrastructure and the railways as one of the focus areas. As a direct outcome of this emphasis, the order books of many railway companies are swelling now a days. These companies linked to the railways include major engineering players as well as specialised niche manufacturing companies. Let's take a closer look at three stocks linked to the railways which have delivered impressive returns and seem to pack in a lot of promise for the future.Bharat Earth Movers Limited, or BEML, holds a special position among railway-related companies. Its market cap stands at about Rs 14,830 crore. The current share price of BEML on Dec 3 is Rs 1,780.80, down Rs 12.20 or 0.68% (around 12:30 pm). It has delivered a negative 15% return in a year. However, in the long term, it has delivered 143% returns in three years and 394% returns in five years.As of September 30, 2025, the company's order book stood at a huge Rs 16,342 crore. However, it was almost at the same level as last year (Rs 16,704 crore). Demand for BEML's products and services remained stable. BEML is a leading PSU that manufactures heavy earthmoving equipment for mining and construction, defense vehicles, and rail coaches such as EMUs and metro cars. Its manufacturing units are located in Karnataka and Kerala.
Jupiter Wagons
Jupiter Wagons has a market cap of about Rs 12,130 crore. Its share price around 12:30 pm on Dec 3 was Rs 279 (down 1.80%). Its performance during the year was also not inspiring. It delivered a negative return of approximately 42%, but a staggering 235% return in three years and 1621% in five years.

Will RBI's liquidity boost help the rupee
bounce back from its record low

Liquidity can calm markets,
not rewrite global conditions.
As the rupee battles external
shocks, will the RBI's latest
push prove enough to anchor
sentiment or simply slow an
inevitable slide

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Reserve Bank of India has stepped in with a fresh liquidity injection just as the rupee slid to a record low last week.A 25 basis point rate cut, Rs 1 lakh crore of open market purchases in December, and a USD 5 billion buy-sell swap are at the heart of its latest move.The package is meant to steady sentiment and cool volatility, but it has also raised the obvious question. Can liquidity support really calm the currency?
DECODING RBI'S LIQUIDITY PUSH

Simone Tata, the quiet force behind
Lakmé and Westside, dies at 95

New Delhi.(Agency)
Simone Tata, who played a central role in transforming Lakme into a leading name in Indian cosmetics and later established the Westside retail chain, died on Friday at Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai after a brief illness. She was 95.Born in Geneva, Switzerland, Simone arrived in India in 1953 as a tourist. She met Naval Tata during this visit, and they married in 1955, with Simone making Mumbai her permanent home.As chairperson of Lakme from the early 1980s, Simone Tata oversaw the brand's development during a crucial period.Under her leadership, Lakme became a household name across India. The Tata Group sold Lakme to



Hindustan Unilever in 1996.After the sale of Lakme, Simone Tata used the proceeds to launch Westside under Trent.
The department store chain became one of India's most successful, further

buying dollars now and promising to sell them back later, the RBI releases rupees into the system without permanently depleting reserves. The swap provides immediate liquidity and gives markets



confidence that the RBI is ready to smooth out sharp moves.Ranen Banerjee of PwC India said the swap “is going to address the rupee volatility” and argued that the macro backdrop allows the central bank to intervene without confusing

policy signals.Ankit Patel of Arunasset Investment Services said inflation has softened enough to give the RBI room to ease. “Price pressures have cooled far more sharply than expected,” he said, adding that reserves near USD 686 billion show that volatility is being managed rather than fought from a position of weakness.
WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE RUPEE
The central bank’s willingness to cut rates even as the rupee hit new lows has surprised some analysts, but others see it as a message. N ArunaGiri of TrustLine Holdings said the stance suggests the recent fall in the rupee “is overdone” and that the currency is “undervalued at current levels.”In his view, the RBI’s language implies confidence that the rupee can stabilise as inflation stays favourable.Liquidity support does not lift the rupee directly. What it can do is prevent a disorderly slide. When funding conditions are smooth and growth is supported, foreign investors are less likely to pull out abruptly. That reduces volatility and steadies expectations.

Repo Rate Cut: Will Your Home
Loan Get Cheaper Check Rates
From ICICI To SBI

MUMBAI. (Agency)
In a move that could bring relief to loan borrowers, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points from 5.5 per cent to 5.25 per cent. This signals banks to cut their lending rates, particularly on long-term loans like home loans. Since home loan interest rates may be linked to the base rate, MCLR (Marginal Cost of Lending Rate), or EBLR (External Benchmark Lending Rate), the most immediate benefit is likely for those whose loans are tied to the external benchmark, which directly follows changes in the repo rate.
While MCLR-linked loans are also expected to move in line with repo rate changes, the adjustments are not always equal. So, even if the RBI cuts the repo rate by 25 basis points, your loan rate may reduce by only around 10 basis points.Here’s a quick look at the current variable home loan interest rates offered by major banks, based on the repo-linked lending rates:Top Private Banks
HDFC Bank:
Currently charges between 7.90 per cent and 13.20 per cent, which includes a markup over the previous repo rate of 5.5 per cent. With the repo cut to 5.25 per cent, the revised rates are expected



to fall to around 7.65 per cent–12.95 per cent.
ICICI Bank:
ICICI Bank’s external benchmark lending rate (EBLR) stood at 9.20 per cent when linked to the 5.5 per cent repo rate. With the new repo rate, it is likely to reduce. Home loan interest rates currently range from 8.75 per cent to 9.8 per cent per annum.
Kotak Mahindra Bank:
Home loan rates linked to the 5.5 per cent repo rate range between 7.99 per cent and 12 per cent for salaried borrowers, and 7.99 per cent to 13.30 per cent for self-employed individuals.
Axis Bank:
For borrowers with a CIBIL score of 751 and above, the rate is 8.35 per cent to 9.10 per cent. For scores below 750, the interest rate ranges from 8.60 per cent to 9.35 per cent, based on the old repo rate.

The report from HSBC Global Investment Research welcomed the RBI's plans to infuse domestic liquidity in December, saying it could infuse about Rs 1.45 trillion of liquidity. The RBI unveiled plans of Rs 1 trillion of open market operations purchases and a 3-year USD/INR buy-sell swap of \$5 billion.

New Delhi.(Agency)
New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) 25 bps repo rate cut and its dovish stance creates scope for further easing in FY27 if growth weakens, while ongoing foreign-exchange depreciation could improve export competitiveness, a report has said.
The report from HSBC Global Investment Research welcomed the RBI's plans to infuse domestic liquidity in December, saying it could infuse about Rs 1.45 trillion of liquidity. The RBI unveiled plans of Rs 1 trillion of open market operations purchases and a 3-year USD/INR buy-sell swap of \$5 billion.HSBC said that its inflation forecasts are about 50 basis points lower than the RBI's — roughly 3.5 per cent for H1FY27. The firm forecasted inflation to remain below 4



per cent in FY26 and FY27. "We believe growth is strong now, but will soften by the March quarter due to fiscal tightening, weaker exports, and

soften, and assured ample liquidity, the report said. The central bank's policy was dovish as it lowered inflation forecasts for FY26 and the first half of FY27 by 60 bps and 50 bps, respectively, and raised its GDP projection for FY26 to 7.3 per cent.
“On liquidity, not only is the RBI providing Rs 1.45 trillion worth of funds in December, the governor mentioned that more could be made available if needed," the report noted. RBI MPC members unanimously decided to reduce the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent from 5.5 per cent earlier to spur growth in the economy.
Analysts said that RBI's decision to cut the repo rate is a move that uses the monetary space created by low inflation to stimulate consumption and strengthen the growth cycle.

Noose tightens around Anil Ambani's
Reliance Power as ED files chargesheet

The money laundering case is
linked to the issuance of an
alleged fake bank guarantee of
Rs 68 crore for securing a Solar
Energy Corporation of India
tender.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet against Anil Ambani's Reliance Power Limited and associated entities in a case involving the submission of fake bank guarantees to the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) for securing a major energy storage project. The SECI is a public sector company under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.The chargesheet stems from ED's probe into FIRs registered by the Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) — one filed by SECI against Reliance NU BESS Limited (a wholly owned

subsidiary of Reliance Power), and another filed by Reliance NU BESS itself against Odisha-based Biswal Tradelink Private Limited and its managing director, Partha Sarathi Biswal.

FAKE GUARANTEES USED TO BID FOR TENDER
According to investigators, Reliance NU BESS submitted a bid for SECI's tender to set up 1000 MW/2000 MWh standalone Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) projects. The bid required a bank guarantee of Rs 68.2 crore. Under tender rules, guarantees issued by foreign banks must be endorsed by their Indian branches or by the State Bank of India (SBI).However, the ED's probe revealed that Reliance Power, "with mala fide intent", hired shell company Biswal Tradelink to procure a fraudulent bank guarantee. The so-called guarantees were allegedly issued by a non-existent FirstRand Bank branch in Manila and by ACE Investment Bank Limited in Malaysia. Endorsements were then forged using a spoofed SBI email ID and fabricated letters. The fraudsters registered a fake domain, s-bi.co.in,

resembling the official sbi.co.in, to carry out the deception.
FUNDS ROUTED THROUGH FAKE WORK ORDERS
To finance the operation, Reliance Power



allegedly routed Rs 6.33 crore from another group company, Rosa Power Supply Company Limited, to Biswal Tradelink under the pretext of transportation services that never took place. Investigators found fake work orders and invoices created by Reliance Group officials in collusion with Biswal. In addition, Reliance Power allegedly paid Rs 5.40 crore as a "fee" to Biswal Tradelink to make the arrangement appear

legitimate.
'RELIANCE KNEW GUARANTEE WAS FAKE'
According to the ED, key officials of Reliance Group were aware that a forged bank guarantee had been submitted to SECI using a spoofed SBI email. When SECI detected the fraud and raised a red flag, Reliance arranged a genuine guarantee from IDBI Bank within 24 hours. But with the deadline having lapsed, SECI refused to accept it.
To salvage the bid, in which Reliance NU BESS had emerged as the L-2 bidder, the company even attempted to obtain a fresh endorsement of the fake foreign guarantee from an SBI branch in Kolkata. In the process, officials allegedly created a dummy agreement and procured a "Certificate of Enlistment" for Reliance NU BESS from the Kolkata Municipal Corporation using bogus address documents.When these attempts also failed, Reliance filed a complaint against Biswal Tradelink and its MD, in what the ED suggests was an attempt to shift blame onto the intermediary.

Rasha Thadani's

Pink Gotta Patti Suit Is Bookmark-Worthy

Rasha Thadani recently turned heads with a soothing series of photos shared on her Instagram feed, where she embraced nature and spirituality — dressed in a pink and green outfit that made her look effortlessly radiant. The images feature Rasha at the Lakshman Temple, located on the banks of the Parameshwar Tal (lake) in Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh. Rasha posted the photos, which show her against verdant natural settings and the temple area, creating a calm, dreamy atmosphere. She used two emoticons of a



peacock and a heart as the caption. The carousel of images begins with Rasha sitting on a hilly staircase, followed by her exploring temples, posing in front of the Lakshman Temple and under a tree. She also shared an image of a Shivaling and more images of her against the backdrop of verdant greenery.

Fans Reactions
Online users immediately flocked to the

comment section to praise Rasha's beauty and grace. One commented, "You look gorgeous and beautiful."

"Wow beauty in nature," a second comment read. "So elegant and religious," another fan commented.

Rasha Thadani's Spiritual Journey

Rasha and her mother, seasoned actress Raveena Tandon, earlier embarked on a broader spiritual journey that aligns with this elegant and tranquil outing. The mother-daughter duo fulfilled a long-standing commitment to visit all 12 holy sites by completing their journey to the 12th and final Nageshwar Jyotirlinga temple in Gujarat.

Rasha said in an interview that the black threads, or kala dhagas, she wears are from the Jyotirlingas she has visited. Rasha also revealed that, at the age of 19, she had already been to 11 Jyotirlingas, or shrines honouring Lord Shiva. She only wanted to visit the 12th one this year. She eventually fulfilled her wish of visiting the 12th Jyotirling, two weeks after her debut film 'Azaad' hit the theatres. "Nageshwar, my 12th Jyotirling, and Dwarkadhish. Feeling blessed and thankful. Har Har Mahadev," Rasha wrote in the caption.

Rasha Thadani on the Work Front

Rasha Thadani made her Bollywood debut as Janaki Bahadur in the 2025 film 'Azaad,' co-starring with Ajay Devgn's nephew Aaman Devgan. where the song "Uyi Amma" won her applause. By choosing a movie with a historical and dramatic plot, she avoided a flashy "glam debut"

and expressed her desire to be acknowledged as an actress rather than as a star-kid.

Beyond acting, Rasha is also cultivating a multi-faceted artistic persona: she's trained in music (through a reputed academy), practices martial arts (holds a black belt in Taekwondo), and pursues wildlife photography — interests that suggest she aims for versatility rather than being pigeonholed as a typical debutante.



Sonakshi Sinha

Reveals She And Zaheer Iqbal Took Couples Therapy: 'We Had To Make It Work'



Bollywood actor Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal may look effortlessly in-sync today, but the couple's eight-year relationship has been anything but picture-perfect. While fans often see their playful Instagram posts and red-carpet chemistry, Sonakshi has now revealed that their journey, too, has weathered storms. In a candid conversation with Soha Ali Khan on her podcast, the actress opened up about navigating a particularly difficult phase with Zaheer — one that ultimately led them to couples therapy.

Sonakshi Sinha says couples therapy saved her relationship with Zaheer Iqbal

Reflecting on their early years of dating, Sonakshi admitted that their relationship hit a rough patch around the three-year mark — a period she humorously referred to as their "three-year itch."

"Just when we were three years into the relationship, we had a phase where we just wanted to pull each other's hair out," she shared. "No matter what we did, we just couldn't understand each other's perspective."

Despite the frustration, the couple knew they wanted to fight for the relationship. That's when Zaheer suggested couples therapy — a decision Sonakshi embraced instantly. "I was open to it, and after two sessions, we were back on track," she said. "It helped so much to understand what the other person thinks, and that what they say is not necessarily what they

mean."

"I love you" in one week — and Zaheer laughed

In the same podcast, Sonakshi also revealed a charming detail about the early days of their romance. She was the first to say "I love you" — within a week of dating. Zaheer's reaction? He laughed, assuming she was joking or simply moving too fast. Sonakshi, however, knew her feelings were real. She recalled that it wasn't



Zaheer's looks that drew her in, but "the way he made her feel," a quality that ultimately anchored their relationship.

A love story that began at a Salman Khan party

Sonakshi and Zaheer's first meeting was quintessentially Bollywood — at a party hosted by Salman Khan. What started as a casual interaction evolved into a close friendship, and eventually, love. For years, the two kept their relationship away from public scrutiny, even as sightings and joint appearances sparked dating rumours.

Laughter Chefs 3: Harpal Singh Sokhi Calls Elvish Yadav 'Peaceful And Hardworking'



Laughter Chef, the popular cooking comedy reality show, has already made its way in the hearts of viewers with its innovative concept and star-studded lineup after two successful seasons. Fans are quite excited as the show has returned with a new season and some new cast members. Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi returned as the judge and, recently in a cooking vlog praised one of the participants on the show.

Harpal Singh Sokhi praised Elvish Yadav's calm and hard-working nature on the show. He said, "Usmein ek bahut zabardast quality hai. He does not react. Koi insaan kuch bhi bole woh react nahi karte bahut silent rehte hai, bahut peaceful rehte hai. Aaram se sochte hai and that is the winning thing that he has got."

Harpal Singh Sokhi On Laughter Chef 3

Earlier, as he prepared for the third season, the celebrity chef offered sincere gratitude to fans, whose unwavering love and support continue to fuel his journey.

He also discussed his popularity, the admiration he receives, and the strong link he has with individuals who have been there for him every step of the way. In an interview with The Times Of India, he shared, "They are an indispensable part of an artist's journey."

When you get the recognition and appreciation of your work, then you work really hard. Those people who become your life-long friends, and you start working harder not only to please yourself but also your fans. Therefore, a lot of love and support is necessary for all of us to live, work hard, and show off our work to the people whom we want to impress."

Laughter Chef 3 New Pairs

The list of pairs in the new season is Aly Goni and Jannat Zubair, Elvish Yadav and Isha Malviya, Karan Kundra and Tejasswi Prakash, Krushna Abhishek and Kashmera Shah, Abhishek Kumar and Samarth Jurel, Gurmeet Choudhary and Debina Bonnerjee and Vivian Dsen and Eisha Singh.

Ashnoor Kaur Reunites With Nagma Mirajkar, Awez Darbar And Abhishek Bajaj



Friendships made inside the Bigg Boss house don't always survive once the cameras stop rolling, but this season's contestants are clearly proving otherwise. A while ago, social media buzzed with a mini reunion of Mridul Tiwari, Awez Darbar, Nagma Mirajkar and Abhishek Bajaj. The four were seen hanging out, sharing laughs, and even dropping a fun reel that instantly went viral among fans. Ever since Ashnoor Kaur's eviction, who was part of the squad inside the show, viewers had been eagerly waiting for her to join the gang and it finally happened. On Thursday night, Ashnoor reunited with the squad and all of them shared glimpses of their wholesome night out. But this time, Mridul Tiwari was missing.

The Much-Awaited Reunion Finally Happened

Nagma Mirajkar shared a story featuring Awez, Abhishek and Ashnoor posing together, with the four of them making a quirky hand gesture. She even asked fans to guess what they were trying to do.

That wasn't all, several more glimpses from their fun night out were shared online. Nagma also shared a story of her hugging Ashnoor Kaur. In another clip, the girls were seen posing with Awez. Ashnoor Kaur also shared a picture from the reunion on her Instagram story and wrote, "Missed you, Mridul." She even posted a fun video of the group enjoying a karaoke night.

Well, the reunion was definitely fun, and hopefully next time we'll get to see the full gang together with Mridul, and finalists Pranit More and Gaurav Khanna joining the celebrations.

Ashnoor And Abhishek Spotted

Paparazzi also spotted besties Abhishek and Ashnoor together. When a media reporter asked Ashnoor how she's feeling after coming out of the house, she said she's still adjusting. She was then asked how much the two of them talk about Bigg Boss now, to which Ashnoor replied that the conversations will continue as long as the show is on.

When asked what surprised her the most after her elimination, Ashnoor shared that her social media dashboard crossing 1 million views truly shocked her and made her happy. The duo then mentioned that they were running late for rehearsals, hinting that something exciting is coming up next. The comments section of the video was filled with fans rooting for 'Abhinoor', and many were thrilled to see them together again. It will be exciting to see whether someone from their gang, Pranit or Gaurav, takes home the trophy, or if the winner ends up being one of the other three finalists: Amaal Mallik, Farrhana Bhatt or Tanya Mittal.



Homes go green with indoor Plants

Rather than putting up modern art paintings in their homes, Faridabad's residents prefer to go green and beautify their homes with house plants instead. While it may seem simple, however, there are a few things you should know before you bring a plant home. Read on to find out what Faridabad's residents say is a must-have for keeping potted plants indoors.

Finding the right place

While everyone knows that plants should be kept in a place with a lot of sunlight, there are some spots in your house that you

should avoid at all costs. Don't keep your plant near a heater, air-conditioner, between curtains or near a window that allows cold drafts to pass through. It's best to keep your plant at a window facing south, as this will get the most sunlight. Windows that face east, west or north always have lesser light. However, some plants need partial shade, so be sure to look up every plant's separate requirements. Debashish Ghose, who is a resident of Sector 21-D, Faridabad, says, "The spaces between your furniture can be used to keep

indoor plants, which add to the 'green look' of your house. Even if you can't put them in a place where they have sunlight constantly, you could always expose them to light for a few hours each day. Every weekend, when I am at home, I clean the leaves of the plants and expose them to the sunlight for at least four-five hours."

Keep your plant healthy

When selecting a plant, you should check for signs of pests or diseases. If you see spots on the leaf or the leaf is a colour it's not supposed to be, then it probably has a disease. This will leave any other plants you have in your home at risk of getting infected as well. You should also do some research on what type of fertilizer your plant requires.

Shailesh Jha, who also lives in Sector 21-D, says, "Initially, when I shifted to my flat, I wanted to have a small garden, but couldn't do that because there was no space. However, I later decided to keep potted plants in the balcony. I called up my gardener and made holders in the balcony's railing to accommodate small pots. The right amount of fertilizer is important for your plants and you can find out which type you'll need by visiting a nearby nursery. The months from January to September are the best time for plants to be fertilized. I usually



call my gardener every week and spend a few hours discussing what fertilizer should be used."

Know how much you should water your plant

Every plant is different and while some need a good amount of water, others need their soil to dry out between watering sessions. A common mistake people make is to water the plant every day, which could inadvertently kill some types of plants.

Drainage

Since you might often give your plant too much water, be sure to create a proper draining system in the pot. The best way to do this is to have a layer of pebbles of around 2.3-four cm at the bottom of the pot. The pebbles will keep the roots of the plant away from any excess water at the bottom of the pot. If the plant is placed in the balcony, you could even buy a pot that has a draining hole.

Dust the leaves

Make sure you don't let dust settle on the plant's leaves because if too much dust gathers, your plant could have difficulty in breathing. You can fix this problem by taking a soft towel or a paintbrush and sponging both sides of the leaf each week.

How to store your boots

Clean them
Give your boots a scrub. If they have stains, use a soft-bristled toothbrush and a solution of water and vinegar to remove them. Use a leather cleaner to clean any remaining spots.

Deep condition
Get your boots conditioned, especially if they are leather boots, immediately after you clean them. Get them repaired
Have them repaired instead of waiting until next winter to fix any damage that they have sustained.

Stuff them
Before putting your boots away, stuff them with either a shoe tree or newspapers so that their shape is maintained. You can also use rolled-up magazines, which will help keep the boot's shaft upright. n

Deodorize
Buy a shoe deodorizing spray, or fill a sachet with baking soda and put it in your boots before storing.

Store them properly
Though storing them upright is ideal, you can also store them in bins. But make sure you put the heaviest ones down first. Lay a cloth or old t-shirt between every pair or use a cloth bag.



Shopping at a hypermarket? Keep these tips in mind

shopping for essentials in a supermarket is now passe. With hypermarkets mushrooming all around the city, the shopping experience has just gotten bigger. Here's how you can make your shopping experience even better. Shop on weekdays: Often, these markets have less crowd on weekdays, so make some time during the week for a has sle-free shopping experience.

Stick to your list

Most of us set out shopping with a specific list of items to buy . The sheer size and the number of items available in a hyper market can be distracting. So make sure, you stick to your list.

Don't fall for cheap buys

Often at the store, one is likely to spot massive offers, which seem too good to be true. Make sure you check the manufacturing date of such products.

Have a stand-in at the billing counter

Have a friend or relative take a spot at the long queue at the billing counter when you are at the end of your shopping, to speed things up.



How to reuse an old toothbrush

An old toothbrush is perfect for cleaning dirty spots around taps. Wet the brush with some vinegar and use the toothbrush to scrub it.

- Remove mud from shoes.
- An old toothbrush is perfect for cleaning computer keyboards.
- You can also clean the bristles of other brushes and combs with a good scrub with an old toothbrush.
- Remove dead skin from



your lips by wetting an old toothbrush and rubbing it across your lips.

- A slightly damp toothbrush is perfect for cleaning delicate jewellery.
- Get the grime between your bathroom or kitchen tiles out with an old toothbrush. Don't scrub too hard on or near the sealant because it could break.
- Keep an old tooth brush at hand for spot cleaning stains and spills on clothes or around the house.

Design ideas to try in your small bathroom

in a city like Mumbai where houses offer minimum space, here are a few ideas that you can incorporate in your bathroom to make it look bigger and better.

Gilded fixtures

Give your outdated bathroom a makeover and get a fresh look by choosing fittings which are gold plated. You can opt for blue and white tiles along with it to lend a nautical look.

Metallic and marble combo

Metallic doors and bathroom fittings along with marble flooring are the best option to make your washrooms look classy and chic. You can choose from a wide variety of bathroom fittings in metallic - shower, taps and the washbasin. But when choose a marble flooring, make sure that the floors are not too slippery.

Pink and monochrome magic

If you want a classy bathroom, it is always great to choose a colour scheme that stands out. It's a great option for the urban couple. While pink will lend a feminine effect to the washroom, the monochrome shade will be a perfect choice for your man. If you are not too keen on going completely pink and monochrome, you can have a pink washroom with a monochrome decal on the main wall.

Antique accessories

Just like any other corner in your house, your bathroom too requires accessories that will make your washroom stand out. A big antique mirror in your bathroom is a good option. You can also have bathroom fittings which are quite vintage in its look and will give a traditional feel to it.



Faux wooden flooring

To make your bathroom look bigger, opt for wooden flooring that will make your bathroom look bigger. Well, actual wooden flooring may get damaged in the long run; thus opt for faux wooden flooring. You can then have tiled bathroom fittings.

Soothing pattern on the walls

When choosing the bathroom tiles on the walls of your bathroom, make sure that you opt for shades and patterns that are soothing to the eyes. Apart from making it look calm, these shades will also maximise the space in your washroom. A classic white and beige combination always works wonders. Apart from this, it also spells elegance.