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Ajay Rai calls Gyanesh Kumar corrupt, demands repoll of Varanasi LS seat where PM won

Lucknow/Agra(Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai on Saturday demanded the arrest of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) row, calling him a "corrupt and dishonest person". He also sought the cancellation of the 2024 Lok Sabha election in Varanasi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi won, and demanded that the poll be held again.

Rai alleged that Kumar helped rig the election to ensure the BJP's victory. His remarks came amid Opposition criticism after a news report claimed that Kumar ignored objections raised by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi on 14 occasions in 10 months over decisions and orders linked to the SIR exercise. Speaking to reporters in Agra, Rai said, "Gyanesh Kumar is a corrupt officer and a dishonest person. He is the one who orchestrated a fraudulent election victory. He ensured (PM) Modi's win by rigging the election across the entire state, and he continues to aid the BJP and PM Modi. The person who helped form the (BJP) government did so by stealing our votes, by resorting to dishonesty."

He added, "He should be arrested, and the (2024 Lok Sabha) election in Varanasi must be cancelled. A re-election should be held.

DMK MP seeks EC action against Vijay, TVK minister over Pocco case remarks

Bengaluru. (Agency)

DMK Rajya Sabha MP J Constandine Ravindran has filed a complaint with the Election Commission, accusing Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and sports minister Aadhav Arjuna of violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and a Madras High Court order by referring to an ongoing Pocco case ahead of the Madurantakam Assembly bypoll.

The parliamentarian alleged that the two TVK leaders repeatedly made mention of the sensitive case, which involves granite baron R Veeramani, in "complete disregard" of the court's order during an election rally.

"The speeches were made in Tamil before large public gatherings. They were telecast by television channels and have been circulated widely on social media," Ravindran wrote in his complaint.

He said the High Court had categorically asked TVK representatives to refrain from speaking in any manner that linked the Pocco case against Veeramani to the DMK, its leaders or functionaries.

The direction was issued on Friday, September 25, during the hearing on a defamation suit filed by DMK general secretary Duraimuguan against Arjuna, his fellow minister CTR Nirmal Kumar, and the IT wing of the TVK.

In his complaint, Ravindran also asserted that the remarks made in Madurantakam were also in violation of the MCC, which stipulates that criticism of other parties should remain confined only to their policies, programmes, past record and work.

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov backs India's permanent UN Security Council seat, opposes more Western expansion

New Delhi(Agency)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has backed India's candidacy for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), while cautioning against increasing Western representation as part of any reform of the powerful UN body.Addressing world leaders at the UN General Assembly, Lavrov said changes to the Security Council must not weaken the prerogatives of the Council or its permanent members. He also made clear Moscow's opposition to allocating additional permanent seats to Western countries.

Russia backs India and Brazil

"UN Security Council reform cannot involve any additional seats being allocated to Western countries, especially to Germany and Japan, who are now on the path to militarism and revanchism," Lavrov stated.

At the same time, Lavrov called for broader representation of the Global South, arguing that the Council's composition should better reflect geographical realities.

"We are in favour of broadening the representation of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We support Brazil's and India's candidatures for a permanent seat," Lavrov said.

He added, "And at the same time, I wish to emphasise this, we must satisfy the interests of the African continent in keeping with the Israeli consensus and the SEAT declaration."

BRICS nations, including Russia, had earlier reiterated their

support for Brazil and India playing a greater role in the UN, including the Security Council, in the New Delhi declaration.

Mauritius endorses India's candidature

The push for Security Council reform was also prominent during the ongoing general debate at the UN headquarters, with several leaders calling for the Council to reflect present-



day geopolitical and economic realities.

Mauritius gave an explicit endorsement of India's bid. Mauritian Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful said, "We support the positions of the G4 and of L69 on Council reform, and we reiterate our support for India's candidature for a permanent seat, commensurate with its constructive role in global affairs."

Mauritius also endorsed the Common African Position,

calling for adequate regional representation, equal rights for new permanent members and dedicated spaces for small island developing states.

Portugal also backed structural reform. Prime Minister Luis Montenegro called for a more representative Security Council with permanent representation for Africa, Brazil and India.

G4 partners press for reform

Support for New Delhi's ambitions also came through the four-nation G4 alliance. Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine said, "The Marshall Islands affirms its longstanding support for Japan and its G4 partners to achieve permanent membership on the UN Security Council."

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi did not name individual G4 candidates in her address, but placed Security Council reform at the centre of her remarks.

Amit Shah said India had not only sustained but accelerated its growth trajectory despite global challenges, reaffirming the government's long-term target of making India the world's leading economy by its 100th year of independence.

Massive Soil and Sand Excavation Raises Questions Over Crores in Royalty Loss, Deep Pits and Public Safety

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Karjan: Serious allegations of large-scale illegal soil and sand mining have surfaced along the Palaj–Nareshwar Road in Karjan taluka, raising questions over alleged royalty evasion, environmental damage, road safety and the functioning of the local administration. Residents and complainants allege that mining activities have been continuing on a large scale by allegedly bypassing applicable rules, permissions and regulatory requirements, resulting in extensive excavation and significant damage to the surrounding area.According to allegations raised by local sources, the alleged illegal mining operations have caused substantial financial losses to the government exchequer through suspected non-payment or evasion of mining royalty. Questions are also being raised over how such large-scale excavation and transportation activities could continue without effective monitoring by the concerned authorities. There are allegations that influential political figures may have provided direct or indirect protection to the activities, while claims have also surfaced regarding the alleged collection of large sums of money from the mining operations. These allegations, however, require independent verification by the competent authorities.The situation has also created serious problems for people trav-

elling on the Palaj–Nareshwar Road. According to residents, hundreds of heavily loaded dumpers transporting soil and sand have been regularly using the road, putting additional pressure on an already vulnerable road network. The movement of overloaded vehicles has allegedly resulted in large potholes and deterioration of the road surface, making travel difficult for motorists, two-wheeler riders and pedestrians. Residents claim that the combination of damaged roads, heavy vehicles and alleged reckless transportation has increased the risk of accidents in the area.Another major concern relates to the scale of excavation. Complaints allege that extensive mining has resulted in extremely deep pits, with some reportedly reaching around 200 feet. Such large-scale excavation has raised concerns regarding soil stability, groundwater conditions, agricultural land and the overall environmental balance of the region. Farmers and villagers have questioned whether all required permissions, mining approvals and environmental conditions were followed before such excavation was carried out.Residents have further expressed concern that while local communities continue to face difficulties related to water availability, uncontrolled excavation could potentially affect natural drainage patterns and groundwater resources. They are demanding that the authori-

ties conduct a detailed scientific assessment of the affected areas and determine whether the excavation has caused any measurable environmental or hydrological damage.The allegations have also raised questions about the role of the Mines and Minerals Department and the local administration. Residents claim that complaints regarding alleged illegal mining and transportation have been made repeatedly, but effective and sustained enforcement action has not been visible. If the allegations are found to be correct, questions would arise regarding how mining operations of such a large scale were able to continue and whether regulatory inspections were carried out at regular intervals.The political angle has further intensified the controversy. Some complainants have alleged that local leaders associated with the ruling BJP may have exercised influence to protect the alleged mining operations and that money collected through the activity may have reached influential circles beyond the local level. At present, these claims remain allegations and there is no established evidence presented here proving the involvement of any particular political leader or government official.The matter therefore requires verification through official records, including mining permissions, royalty payment details, vehicle permits, excavation measurements, land records,



environmental approvals and inspection reports. A physical survey of the mining locations could also establish the actual depth and extent of excavation and determine whether the activities were being conducted within the legally permitted limits.Local residents are now demanding a transparent and time-bound investigation into the alleged illegal mining activities. They have called for strict action against individuals or companies found violating mining laws, recovery of government revenue if royalty evasion is established, and appropriate action against officials found to have neglected their regulatory responsibilities.

2016 surgical strikes set new benchmark in India's anti-terror policy: PM

NEW DELHI(Agency).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the 2016 surgical strikes were India's decisive response to the pain caused by terror attacks and had set a new example of the country's counter-terrorism policy.In his monthly Mann Ki Baat broadcast, he said India follows a policy of zero tolerance against terrorism and has made it clear that terror will be dealt with strongly and decisively.PM Modi said that over the past decade, from the Balakot air strike to Operation Sindoor, India has repeatedly sent a clear message that any attempt by terrorists to target the country would invite a befitting response.

Referring to the surgical strikes, PM Modi said, "A major historic achievement of India is set to mark its 10th anniversary in just a day - this achievement is the surgical strikes. Ten years ago, on September 28-29, 2016, the Indian Army carried out surgical strikes on terrorist hideouts in Pakistan." The strikes were carried out across the Line of Control after terrorists attacked an army camp at Uri in Jammu and Kashmir, killing 18 soldiers.In the same address, he also spoke

about the fight against drugs, paid tribute to Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal, referred to the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, and highlighted cleanliness drives being led by young people across



the country.

He also mentioned that the world was astonished by the way Indian soldiers crossed the LoC to act against terrorism. "The surgical strike boldly demonstrated to the entire world a new example of India's counter-terrorism policy," he said.

UM Shivakumar seeks scrapping of SIR, Siddaramaiah wants Gyanesh Kumar dismissed

Shivakumar urged the president to intervene and dissolve the Election Commission and demanded that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls be scrapped and undertaken afresh.

NEW DELHI(Agency).

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday accused the Election Commission of India of being a "partner in vote theft" and demanded its dissolution, while former chief minister Siddaramaiah sought President Droupadi Murmu's intervention and the dismissal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging that the poll panel's functioning and autonomy has come under serious question.

Addressing a Congress protest at Freedom Park against the CEC, Shivakumar accused the Election Commission of functioning as a "puppet of the BJP". "The Election Commission is a puppet of the BJP. The names of poor voters and those who criticise the administration are being targeted. They have become partners in vote theft along with the BJP," he said. Shivakumar urged the president to intervene and dissolve the Election Commission and demanded that the ongoing Special Intensive

Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls be scrapped and undertaken afresh.

"The president should intervene and dissolve the Election Commission. The chief election commissioner should be arrested and elections that were conducted illegally should be cancelled," he said.



Referring to Article 324, Siddaramaiah said the CEC enjoyed special protection from removal and could be removed only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge.

In his Mann Ki Baat programme, PM Modi said the 2016 surgical strikes marked a decisive turn in India's response to terrorism.

Woman found dead in Gurgaon PG, kin accuse live-in partner of murder

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 23-year-old woman was found dead at a paying guest accommodation in Islampur where she lived with her partner on Friday. Her family suspects that her live-in partner had killed her and hanged her body. Police, however, have questioned the man and are investigating the circumstances surrounding the death, which looks like a suicide. The woman was a native of Etah district in Uttar Pradesh and had been in a relationship with her partner, who also belongs to Etah, for several years. They had been living together at the PG, but she did not tell her family about it. Her sister, who also lives in the city, occasionally visited her but was unaware of the relationship. She told police that she had spoken to the woman on Thursday night and had no indication that anything was wrong. Police said her partner, who also works for a private company, left for work on Friday afternoon. He told investigators they did not quarrel. He said she had called him while he was at work, but he could not answer. When he called her back, she did not respond. He made several more calls, but there was no response. Worried, he contacted a neighbour and asked him to check on her. The neighbour then looked through the window and found her hanging, following which he informed the police. She was taken to a hospital, where she was declared dead. Her body was kept in the local mortuary for autopsy. Her mother has accused her live-in partner of killing her daughter and then hanging her body. The family has submitted a complaint to police, but no case has been registered so far.

Teen who won golds in rope skipping last week falls to death from Ghaziabad condo

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 14-year-old girl died after falling from the 12th floor of her Raj Nagar Extension flat on Friday night, just days after returning from Shirdi with two gold medals at a national-level rope-skipping event. Prachi, police said, had gone to the balcony to collect clothes put out to dry when she fell. The Class 9 student of Dehradun Public School in Sanjay Nagar was at home with her parents, younger sister and grandparents when the incident occurred around 9pm in Tower G of Rajnagar Residency. Her father told police she had gone to bring in the clothes. The exact circumstances of the fall are being examined. Residents and security personnel rushed to the spot after hearing a loud thud. Prachi was taken to Yashoda Hospital in Sanjay Nagar, where doctors declared her dead on arrival. Police and a forensic field unit inspected the society after receiving the emergency call and collected evidence. The body was sent for an autopsy. CCTV footage is also being examined to establish what happened before the fall. ACP Ziauddin Ahmed said police were speaking to family members and examining the circumstances. "Further legal proceedings will be taken on the basis of the autopsy report and statements recorded during the inquiry," he said. The tragedy came days after Prachi's sporting achievement. She had returned from Shirdi, where she won gold in the Double Dutch pair freestyle and Double Dutch single freestyle categories at the CBSE Rope Skipping National Championship. Her victories had brought celebrations at home. Her father, Suresh Chand, works as a software engineer with a multinational company. Police said preliminary inquiry had not indicated any other cause behind the incident. The fall is the latest in a series of high-rise deaths in NCR. Last month, a 24-year-old DU PhD scholar died after falling from the 27th floor of a Ghaziabad highrise. In March, a three-year-old boy died after falling from a 12th-floor balcony in Greater Noida West.

Dowry case against husband, in-laws after woman, 3-year-old daughter found dead in Khoda home

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

An FIR has been registered against a man and his family members after his 30-year-old wife Preeti Singh and three-year-old daughter were found dead inside their rented flat in Khoda's Bharat Vihar on Friday evening. The FIR names Preeti's husband Anirudh alias Sonu, mother-in-law Raj Rani and sister-in-law Rinki Singh. Police have also detained Anirudh for questioning as part of the investigation. Preeti's family has alleged that she was being harassed by her husband and in-laws over dowry and that Anirudh had been demanding money from her. The family further alleged that Anirudh was unhappy with the motorcycle given at the time of their marriage in June 2021 and wanted a car instead. Sources said Preeti had also suspected her husband of having an extramarital affair, which has not been independently established by police. Preeti, a homemaker, and Anirudh had been married for around four years and had been living on rent on the second floor of a two-storey house in Bharat Vihar. Their three-year-old daughter also lived with them. Anirudh, a native of Hardoi, works as a lab technician at a private hospital in Kaushambi, while Preeti was originally from Unnao. According to police and neighbours, no major dispute between the couple had come to light publicly before the incident. Anirudh's sister Rinki, who lives with her family on rent on the ground floor of the same building, also told police that she had not noticed any serious dispute between the couple. Police said Anirudh was unwell on Friday and had not gone to work. At around 5:30 pm, he reportedly left the house to purchase medicines. Shortly afterwards, Rinki's 10-year-old daughter Ananya went upstairs to Preeti's flat.

Service-Oriented Commitment to Spreading the Light of Education Receives Recognition: Bhachau CRC Coordinator Kuldeepsinh Jadeja Honoured

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Author: Rupesh Solanki, Bhachau, KutchBhachau:

Under the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan', organised by the Education Department of the Government of Gujarat and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (Kutch), Bhachau's CRC Coordinator, Mr. Kuldeepsinh Jadeja, was felicitated for his outstanding performance under the 'Back to School Campaign – Phase 2'. On this occasion, Kutch District Education Officer Mr. Sanjay Parmar pre-

sented a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Kuldeepsinh Jadeja. His efforts to bring children who had been deprived of education and those who were out of school back into the mainstream of education, as well as to encourage dropout students to return to school, have been noteworthy. Along with this, his dedicated efforts to create awareness among parents about the importance of education, explain the significance of children's education, and ensure the reach of edu-



cation to remote and underserved

areas have conveyed a positive message in the field of education. The idea that every child should return to school and build a brighter future through education reflects a noble vision. Such sincere and dedicated efforts to turn this vision into reality continue to serve as an inspiration for society. Heartiest congratulations to Mr. Kuldeepsinh Jadeja on this proud achievement, along with best wishes for his continued and greater contribution to the field of education in the future.

Ahmedabad Civil Hospital's Kidney Institute Faces Serious Allegations of Irregular Appointments, Medical Reimbursements and Administrative Violations

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Ahmedabad: A major controversy has emerged at the prestigious Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Center (IKDRC) and the Gujarat University of Transplantation Sciences (GUTS), both located within the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital campus, after a series of complaints alleged irregular appointments, disputed promotions, questionable medical reimbursements and non-compliance with government orders. The allegations have been raised by former employee Rajnikant Makaiwala, who has submitted documents and representations before the Chief Minister's grievance portal, the Gujarat Vigilance Commission and other authorities, seeking an independent inquiry into the matter. According to the complaint, Kamal V. Modi was appointed in 2005 as an ad-hoc accountant on a fixed salary of ₹7,000 for a period of one year. The complainant alleges that he was subsequently made permanent in 2007 without following the prescribed recruitment process, including public advertisement and regular selection procedures. The complaint further claims that Modi was promoted from a Class-3 employee to the post of Assistant Accountant before completing the re-

quired period of regular service prescribed under government norms. Separate allegations have also been made regarding the appointment of his wife, Asha Ben Kamal Modi, as a Laboratory Technician at the institution. The complainant has alleged that these appointments require detailed scrutiny by competent authorities. Another key issue raised in the complaint concerns a medical reimbursement claim. According to the allegations, Kamal Modi had earlier received an advance amount for his mother's treatment, which was reportedly recovered from his salary. However, the complainant alleges that in 2019, an additional reimbursement amounting to ₹3,31,108 was sanctioned against an old medical claim. Questions have been raised regarding the eligibility of the reimbursement and whether applicable rules relating to old claims were followed. The complainant has also alleged that recovery proceedings, if any, remain incomplete. The matter has also drawn attention because of allegations relating to multiple additional responsibilities assigned to Kamal Modi. According to the complainant, despite a government communication issued in 2021 directing that he be reverted to his original Class-3



position, he continued to hold additional charge of senior administrative posts, including Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Accounts Officer and Registrar of GUTS. The complaint further states that when the matter was brought before authorities, IKDRC Director and GUTS Vice-Chancellor Dr Pranjal Modi submitted a written response in March 2025 stating that Kamal Modi was not functioning in three positions simultaneously. However, the complainant has claimed that official orders issued by the institutions present a different picture, and has sought verification of all records by an independent agency. The allegations have not been independently verified, and no official findings establish-

ing wrongdoing have been made public so far. The complainant has demanded a time-bound investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) or under the supervision of a sitting High Court judge, along with appropriate action if any irregularities are established. The developments have generated significant discussion in administrative and health circles, as IKDRC is one of Gujarat's leading institutions in kidney treatment and transplantation. Authorities are yet to publicly clarify the allegations in detail. Any final conclusion regarding responsibility or wrongdoing will depend on the outcome of an official investigation and due legal process.

493 hills, yet Mangar 'agri land' on paper: Decade after NGT sought clarity on status, experts say loophole in records threatens Aravalis

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A decade after National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered Haryana govt to settle the status of land in Mangar, parts of the eco-sensitive Aravali hills were still recorded as agricultural land despite being visibly hilly on the ground. The mismatch threatened to undermine protection of a landscape the tribunal had sought to safeguard. The discrepancy emerged during a recent ground check. It was especially significant because NGT intervened after private companies sought to change parcels in Mangar from gair mumkin pahar (uncultivable hill) to agricultural land. It then ordered a detailed survey of the disputed khasras. The govt survey, involving the forest department, Union environment ministry and Forest Survey of India, used cadastral maps, satellite imagery, digital elevation models and GPS-based ground verification. It found the parcels formed part of the Aravalis - hills, valleys and foothills - despite varying revenue classifications, including gair mumkin pahar and bhood. Of 606 entries examined, 493 were hills, 96 were



natural gullies in hills and 17 were foothills or valleys. "We did a survey and found that Mangar has little plain area and mostly gair mumkin pahar. What has happened over the years is a tendency to change the revenue records. Misrepresentation of the area is wrong. Gair mumkin pahar can't be agriculture," said MD Sinha, former conservator of south Haryana. The survey also recorded substantial vegetation. One 244-hectare tract

comprised vegetated hill slopes typical of the Aravalis, while another 357-hectare area in western Mangar was identified as hilly terrain. Yet, a recent ground check found some existing hills still recorded as agricultural land - a discrepancy that conservationists said could create room for development. "Largely, Mangar hills are non-protected and this loophole facilitates so-called development. For instance, the recent hill cutting. Forest department also fails to do

anything as the land is still magda and not gair mumkin pahar. These create issues for protection and conservation," said ecologist Sunil Harsana. The risk was not merely on paper. Recently, a patch of less than an acre at the foothills was excavated and levelled before police intervened after a complaint. Fresh earth cuts remained visible beside the flattened patch, with the rocky hill rising behind it. Mangar is among NCR's key remaining Aravali stretches and includes Mangar Bani, a dense forest around a sacred grove, besides extensive slopes and valleys. NGT had asked authorities to act against unauthorised tree cutting, breaking of land and non-forest activity in forest areas, including gair mumkin pahar. "Despite clear directions to update the revenue record in Mangar, we still find a few patches which are clearly hilly in nature but are recorded under an agriculture land-use category. There is a need to do a special intensive revision (SIR) of the revenue records to match the entries with the nature of land," said forest analyst Chetan Agarwal.

Territorial Army honours BDA chief Major Manivannan

The latest recognition by the CDS is the second such commendation awarded to Major Manivannan this year.



BENGALURU (Agency).

BENGALURU: Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) Commissioner Major Manivannan was felicitated with a Commendation Card by Chief of Defence Staff General NS Raja Subramani at a ceremony held at the 106 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) PARA in Bengaluru on Saturday. Major Manivannan was commissioned into the 106 Infantry Battalion (TA) PARA on February 8, 2014. He was recognised for his hard work, dedication,

continued collaboration and service in the Territorial Army while also discharging his responsibilities in civil administration.

He was earlier awarded a Commendation Card by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command, in April this year, in recognition of his service and contribution to the Territorial Army. The latest recognition by the CDS is the second such commendation awarded to Major Manivannan this year.

3 political parties ran Rs 1,870 crore donation scam, fought elections in Gujarat

The FIRs also name four persons linked to Bharatiya National Janata Dal (BNJD), three persons associated with Swatantrata Abhivyakti Party and eight persons linked to Garib Kalyan Party, all 3 parties having fought elections in Gujarat since 2017

Vadodara (Agency).

THE GUJARAT Police have registered three cases against Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) on the basis of complaints from the Income Tax (I-T) department, alleging a Rs 560-crore loss to the exchequer through purported bogus donations of nearly Rs 1,870 crore in total. The FIRs name four persons linked to the Bharatiya National Janata Dal (BNJD), three persons associated with the Swatantrata Abhivyakti Party and eight persons linked to the Garib Kalyan Party, in addition to the three political parties themselves as accused.

The largest of the three cases concerns the BNJD, which, as per the specific FIR, received Rs 1,143.85 crore from 56,238 donors, with an alleged tax loss of nearly Rs 343 crore; the Swatantrata Abhivyakti Party (SAP) allegedly received Rs 519 crore, causing a Rs 155-crore loss, while the Garib

Kalyan Party allegedly received Rs 206.76 crore, leading to an alleged loss of around Rs 62 crore. The three RUPPs have been participating in elections in Gujarat since 2017 even though their candidates forfeited



deposits, Election Commission (EC) data shows.

A senior Gujarat Police officer told The Indian Express on Saturday that the FIRs are based on four complaints filed by I-T department officials accusing the parties of

seeking dummy donations from shell firms and cash-backs after deducting commissions to evade tax by submitting fake documents with digital signatures to the EC. The CID Crime, Gandhinagar Zone, registered the

FIRs on Friday (September 25), under multiple provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita dealing with cheating, criminal conspiracy, forgery and use of forged documents. As per the IT-department's complaint – based on scrutiny and investigations that lasted over a year, as per the Gujarat police, the parties are alleged to have rerouted political donations to donors for a 4 to 6 per cent commission and have caused a total estimated loss of more than Rs 560 crore to the exchequer.

The FIR against SAP has named the office-bearers of the party as one Mehul Kumar Kumar Maheshkumar Khatri, Surendrasinh Parshottamdas Tiwari and chartered accountant Mukundbhai Chandansinh Rathod.

'Two girls missing, priest at hostel': Ghost rumours trigger panic at Chitkara University

Chitkara University is located in Rajpura in Patiala district, close to the Patiala-Mohali district boundary.

Patiala (Agency).

Unverified claims about two girls studying in Chitkara University triggered panic and unrest on the campus late Friday night, with hundreds of hostel students gathering and demanding clarification from the university management. The situation remained tense for nearly two hours before being brought under control by the police. Chitkara University is located in Rajpura in Patiala district, close to the Patiala-Mohali district boundary. The unrest began around 10.30 pm on Friday after an unverified message went viral among students. While one version claimed two girls were missing, another said they had died. The conflicting reports sent students rushing to confront university authorities, who were asked to show CCTV footage.

The situation turned tense after a large number of students gathered on the campus amid the rumours. The university called the police to control the situation. During the commotion, two police vehicles were damaged and an inspector, Ajay Kumar, was allegedly manhandled by some students. Additional police force was subsequently called to the campus to

bring the situation under control. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Banur, Sukhdev Singh, said no one who had raised the alarm could identify the girls or confirm whether anyone was actually missing. "We have taken the complaint seriously and will inquire into the matter in detail. We will also check the university



records to ascertain whether any student is actually missing," he said. The DSP said the situation was later brought under control. "I want to tell the parents that things are under control on the campus now and everyone is safe," he said. "The situation is calm. Two police vehicles have been damaged. Considering the students' age, we are not taking action against them and will instead counsel them. Our investigation found nothing

supporting the rumour of suicide or missing girls," SHO (Banur) Gursewak Singh told.

According to sources, an ambulance had arrived at the girls' hostel on Thursday morning, causing confusion among students. Some girls had also been talking about a ghost in the hostel, and a priest had reportedly arrived at the hostel on Thursday afternoon. "Nothing happened on the campus. The rumour travelled among the students. Everything is okay on the campus as of now," University Registrar Col. Rakesh Sharma told media persons. Gursewak Singh on Saturday said the rumours about ghosts and alleged incidents at the hostel had started on September 23 after some girls allegedly played a prank by creating horror sounds using a speaker inside the hostel from some undisclosed location. "Eventually, checking of all rooms was conducted by the hostel warden, but nothing was found. However, the fear continued to grow among the students, with another rumour circulating that a suicide had taken place in the hostel a few years ago and that a spirit was visiting the hostel," the SHO added.

Farmers' column: Widowed 19 years ago, 54-year-old Sukhpal now runs Rs 50-lakh worth enterprise

A resident of Guradi village in Budhlada tehsil, Mansa, Sukhpal has turned dairy farming into more than a means of livelihood.

Jalandhar (Agency).

Nineteen years ago, Sukhpal Kaur, at the age of 35, lost her husband. But she still had two young sons and a family to support. Today, at 54, she has a dairy herd valued at more than Rs 70 lakh, an enterprise that generates over Rs 50 lakh annually, adequate savings, and a livelihood that employs two permanent workers. She has enough to live on and hasn't lost her passion to keep building. A resident of Guradi village in Budhlada tehsil, Mansa, Sukhpal has turned dairy farming into more than a means of livelihood. It has become her business, her financial independence and, even at 54, the work that she still wants to do. With an intermediate education, she has also acquired years of practical experience in managing cattle. She understands their feed requirements, monitors their health and nutritional needs, and keeps track of their disease. At present, her herd has around 40 cattle—26 adult animals and 14 young ones, including Murrah and Neeli Ravi buffaloes, and Punjab and Himachal Jersey cows. For Sukhpal, they are not simply livestock. They are assets that she has built over years of work. Sukhpal said, "I sell 150 to 200 litres of milk

daily currently, which increases to even 300 litres during some months of the year, supplying households as well as village dairy channels. The rate I get is around Rs 80 to 85 per kg." The dairy generates approximately Rs 50 lakh annually from milk sales. After feed, labour, and other expenses, she says she retains around 50 per cent of the sales value.

Two permanent workers assist her with the dairy.

She owns around 12 acres of familial land and keeps only about one acre of her land for green fodder, while purchasing most of the remaining fodder. Feed management remains one of the major costs of the enterprise, she says. Yet she considers the dairy profitable and increasingly valuable for another reason. "The animals themselves have become a substantial asset." Most of her well-maintained adult cattle could fetch Rs 3 to 4



lakh each if sold today.

However, she says she is not looking to cash out.

"My focus now is on retaining animals and expanding the herd. That marks a change from my earlier years, when livestock sales were an important part of my income. I would sell around six animals a year, earning approximately Rs 12 to 13 lakh from livestock sales, apart from milk income."

Ex-principal of Gujarat school held for 'raping' minor student

School trustee, administrator & hostel warden booked for bid to cover up incident: Kutch Police

Ahmedabad (Agency).

THE FORMER principal of a residential school in Gujarat's Kutch district was arrested on Saturday, a day after he was booked for allegedly raping a teenage, minor student of the same school on several occasions. The local police are

the pocket of the school principal, which set off an internal investigation that led them to finding out about the rape. The trustee then dismissed the principal from service. They then informed the parents of the student and sent her home.

The student was not found to be pregnant, police said on Saturday. The Investigation Officer (IO) emphasised that it is incumbent upon authorities of educational institutes to inform the police of any unlawful activities that have taken place on their premises, especially if it has to do with sexual exploitation of minors, said the Investigation Officer (IO). The IO added that the student was allegedly raped multiple times by the accused at an isolated place behind the hostel building. The matter



now on the lookout for a school trustee, its administrator and the hostel warden for allegedly covering up the incident, which came to light only a month later. On Friday, the girl's parents filed a rape complaint. The police inspector investigating the matter told the Indian Express that the accused, who was terminated from service in August after the incident came to light, was nabbed from a town in Anand district on Saturday.

In mid-August, a teacher at the school found a pregnancy test kit lying in the lobby of the institute. The teacher took the test kit to the warden of the hostel, who, in turn, checked CCTV footage. The inspector said, "The warden found that the pregnancy test kit had fallen out of

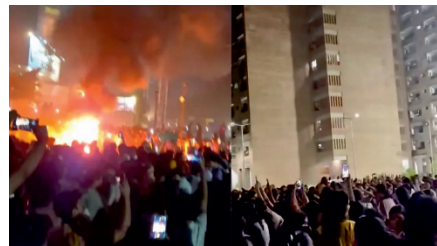
came to light following reports in sections of the media about alleged "shady activities" at the school. When the police began looking into these allegations in a preliminary inquiry, the school authorities submitted an application to the police on September 24, informing them about just the recovery of the kit, with no mention of the sexual assault, said the officer. "We then approached the parents of the girl. They filed a complaint of rape on September 25 that was then converted into an FIR, booking four persons including three men and a woman – respectively the ex-principal, trustee, administrator and hostel warden – under sections of the BNS and POCSO Act," said the SHO of the jurisdictional police station.

Violent protest at LPU over rape claim; police file FIR, university rejects allegation

Students damaged property inside the campus, set some items on fire, and blocked the Jalandhar-Phagwara National Highway outside the university.

Chandigarh (Agency).

A protest by students of Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Punjab's Phagwara over an unverified report of the alleged rape of a female student by an outsider on the university campus turned violent early Sunday morning. The protesters damaged property on the campus and set some objects on fire. They even blocked the Jalandhar-Phagwara National Highway outside the university. Following the protests, police have registered an FIR on charges of rape against unknown suspects based on students' statement. The victim remains unidentified. "We are verifying the facts. Students leaders and LPU management will have a meeting at 12 pm to resolve the issues being raised by



students," DIG Jalandhar range Naveen Singla said. Meanwhile, Lovely Professional University, in a statement to the media, said that "there is no truth in the rumours presently being circulated", and urged students and the public not to amplify them. The unrest, which reportedly began near the

girls' hostel, intensified as students from different hostels joined in. By 2 am, a large number of students had gathered and moved towards the main entrance of the university. Students began sharing videos from inside the campus on social media, prompting the police to reach the spot. Videos circulating from inside the campus also showed protesters moving through the university mall and other areas amid the escalating protest. Some objects were set on fire during the unrest. Outside the campus, students blocked the National Highway around 4 am, disrupting traffic on the busy Jalandhar-Phagwara stretch. Protesters raised slogans of "We want justice," demanding action over the alleged incident.

In most parts of Bengaluru, Cauvery water undrinkable

BENGALURU (Agency). Cauvery river, one of the prime sources of water for southern parts of Karnataka, is extremely polluted. Also called Dakshina Pinakini, the river water was ranked under E category, indicating high levels of pollution, in most parts of Bengaluru.

As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), E category refers to the quality of water which can be used only for irrigation, industrial cooling and controlled waste disposal. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) Water Quality Classification of Polluted River Stretches

in Karnataka for August 2026 stated that Cauvery water fell under E category in Sarjapur and Mahadevapura. In Chamarajanagar, Mandya and Ramanagara, it is under C and D categories, respectively. As per CPCB, if the water quality is C, it can be used for drinking with conventional treatment followed by disinfection and if listed under D, it can be used for propagation of wildlife and fisheries. The KSPCB report for April-July 2026 too showed water quality of Cauvery to be poor. The river samples at five locations in Kodagu showed it to be in the B

Category, which is fit for outdoor bathing (organised). 'Most water bodies are D category in K'taka' A senior KSPCB official, seeking anonymity, said, "Nearly all water bodies (lakes and rivers) in Karnataka fall under D category. That is water not fit for consumption without proper treatment.

It is a sad state of affairs. If all the installed sewage treatment plants at all water bodies work at full capacity and if the polluting sources are shut down, even then, it will take a long time to revive and fully improve their water quality."

Working the government with borrowed eyes

Every morning, before I leave for work, I ask a machine whether my shirt matches my trousers. It is not a question I could once answer for myself. For a person blind since birth, the small rituals that sighted people perform without a thought—checking that a collar is clean, that the colours do not quarrel, that no stain is announcing itself ahead of a review meeting—have always meant borrowing someone else's eyes: a parent's, a spouse's, a colleague's, a kind stranger's. You learn to live with the borrowing. You also learn what it costs, in small surrenders of privacy, to need another person simply in order to know how you look. Now an application on my phone tells me, in its level voice, that the blue shirt does not agree with the green trousers, and that I would do well not to step out dressed like Dobby the house-elf in Harry Potter's world. The relief is out of proportion to the task. It is the relief of deciding something about myself, by myself. This is the part of the artificial intelligence story that the productivity debates keep missing. For most people, these tools are a faster horse—they do a little more quickly what could already be done. For a blind person, they are often the difference between doing a thing oneself and not doing it at all. A machine that can look at a photograph and describe it does not so much save me time as hand back a small piece of the world that was previously shut. The examples multiply once you begin to notice them. A blind student can now have the diagram in her textbook described to her—the graph, the labelled figure, the illustration that carried half the lesson and none of the words, and that students before her, myself included, simply had to do without. She can be in on the meme her classmates are laughing at, fluent at last in a visual language everyone else speaks without effort—which is less about information than about belonging. None of this shows up in any measure of efficiency. All of it decides, quietly, whether a person is folded into the ordinary life around her or left a little to one side of it. I meet the same capability at my own desk, at a larger scale. Governments run on things a screen reader was never able to read: scanned files, photographed documents, hand-drawn maps, a junior officer's picture of a half-built road sent up from the field. For much of my career, these were sealed to me unless someone read them aloud. Now I can ask a machine to describe the worksite in the photograph, or to boil a two-hundred-page project report down to the parts that deserve a closer look. It is the same trick that sorts my wardrobe—sight, briefly, on loan—turned to the work of governance instead of the work of a morning. I try not to mistake the gift for a miracle. The machine is confident even when it is wrong, and I cannot glance at the original to catch it out; the duty of verification that everyone now carries sits a little heavier on someone who cannot see the thing being described. With a shirt, the stakes are low and the bargain is plainly worth it—the worst case is a small sartorial crime. With a confidential file, I am not permitted to feed into a public tool in the first place, or a Tamil document the model only half-follows, the sum comes out differently. And the tools that promise access are themselves, often enough, delivered through apps and pages a blind user can barely move through—an irony one learns to curse under one's breath. This is exactly where the State should come in, for none of this ought to depend on the luck of which application a person can afford or reach. Accessibility already sits in our law—the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, the guidelines for government websites—and is honoured largely in the breach. As governments now hurry to buy and build AI, the moment is unusually good to insist that access be a condition of purchase rather than a patch applied afterwards; that public-facing systems work with a screen reader from the first line of code.

Why it's getting harder to end wars

Conflicts are increasingly viewed through the implications for the wider balance of power

NEARLY 2.5 lakh people were killed in armed conflicts in 2025. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program recorded 65 armed conflicts involving states, the highest number since the Second World War. More than four years after Russia's full-scale invasion, the war in Ukraine grinds on without a political settlement. In Gaza, three years of fighting have left over 73,000 dead. A ceasefire has not resolved the underlying political and security questions, and violence continues. The war launched by the US and Israel on Iran has passed the six-month mark and spread across the region. In 1971, Fred Iklé published *Every War Must End*, a book in which he observed that war termination was a neglected element in strategic thought. Governments, he argued, devoted considerable attention to the preparation for and conduct of wars, but far less thinking to the political and military conditions necessary to bring them to an end. He attributed this difficulty to the disconnect between military action and political purpose, shifting aims as conflict progressed, and the weight of sacrifices already made, which made compromise increasingly difficult. None of the difficulties described by Iklé has disappeared, but the problem today may extend beyond the failure of governments to think strategically about how wars should end. Three contemporary developments deserve particular attention. Taken together, they raise the possibility that the conditions necessary to terminate wars have become more difficult to establish. The first is a sharpening of geopolitical power competition as the American unipolar moment recedes. Conflicts are increasingly viewed not merely through the objectives of the belligerents, but through the implications for the wider balance of power. A rival's war can become an opportunity to weaken it, even when negotiations are possible. The Western support for Ukraine serves both as a defence against Russian aggression and the wider strategic objective of constraining Russia. China and Russia have an interest in propping up Iran so that the US cannot achieve a quick victory. The institutions entrusted with maintaining international peace and security have fallen prey to the same geopolitical divisions. When permanent members of the Security Council are themselves belligerents or have a strategic interest in the outcome of the war, they have little incentive to come together to halt aggression. Other multilateral forums like the SCO, BRICS and G20 offer few alternatives and have struggled to develop a common approach to ending ongoing conflicts. War termination thus becomes hostage

to the competing interests of the very powers whose cooperation has often been essential to bringing conflicts to an end. The second development is that decisive victory, the oldest way to end a war, has become increasingly difficult against a serious opponent. The proliferation of relatively inexpensive and widely distributed military capabilities has given weaker adversaries greater means to resist superior forces. Drones have enabled Ukraine to take the war deep into Russian territory, even as thousands of them saturate the frontlines, rendering traditional set-piece attacks to



capture territory extremely hazardous.

On paper, the US and Israel possess an overwhelming military advantage over Iran, but that has not stopped Iran from widening the conflict with missile attacks across the region. The ability to inflict enormous military damage does not necessarily translate into the ability to compel an adversary to accept defeat.

Nuclear weapons introduce another paradox. They are the ultimate instrument of force, yet their possession can make a decisive victory against a nuclear-armed adversary exceptionally difficult. Russia's nuclear arsenal constrains the extent of Western military support, while the fear of escalation keeps the conflict limited below the threshold that could invite a nuclear response.

Where both adversaries are nuclear-armed, nuclear weapons can help bring an immediate confrontation to a halt without resolving its underlying causes. The fighting

ends, but the conditions that gave rise to it remain.

The third development is a changing information environment that has narrowed the political space for compromise. Leaders mobilise public support for war by promising ambitious objectives and demonising the adversary. Social media amplifies these messages, and they become entrenched in public memory.

Any tentative concession by the government is portrayed by the domestic Opposition as a surrender or betrayal. Even when the two sides recognise the need for compromise, leaders find themselves constrained by the high expectations they have created among their populations. The proliferation of fake news and AI-generated photos and videos has further complicated matters. Both sides can selectively present battlefield success, exaggerate enemy losses and even manufacture evidence of victory. These competing narratives can sustain public expectations of victory even when the military situation offers no such justification. Leaders find it difficult to acknowledge setbacks that contradict their own claims of success. The battle to control perceptions has thus become an obstacle to ending the war itself. These three developments reinforce each other. When decisive military victory becomes elusive, a negotiated settlement assumes greater importance. However, geopolitical competition makes such settlements difficult to achieve, while competing narratives leave leaders with little space for compromise. As fighting continues, external interests become entrenched and public expectations harden. What begins as a conflict with clear objectives can develop into one in which neither side can secure victory, yet neither can easily accept peace.

Iklé's warning thus acquires renewed significance for contemporary strategic thinking. Governments must clearly define what they seek to achieve through the use of military force, but also retain the flexibility to reassess political objectives based on military realities. Ultimately, wars are a two-sided contest, and their termination cannot be based on one side's objectives alone. The adversary has his own interests and calculations about the costs of continued fighting. Ending a war requires understanding what could persuade the enemy that stopping the fighting is the preferred outcome. A strategy that leaves the opponent with no acceptable way out gives him every reason to keep fighting.

Apart from culprits, act against assault videos shared online

Policymakers must also examine if the existing laws suffice to target the evolving methods of sexual violence in the digital sphere, especially if visuals are shared in the seedier sections of mainstream platforms for profit

Women and girls are accustomed to having their movements restricted in the name of safety. If they venture out alone and face violence, society often turns the accusatory lens on them to police their behaviour, rather than the perpetrator. Taking a male relative or friend along is thought to protect them. Yet, recent incidents in a New Delhi park and two Bihar districts have shown that even such a safeguard can be meaningless. On the contrary, the presence of a boy with a young girl is easily weaponised against her on the euphemism of 'moral policing'. In reality, this behaviour that is often exercised by men—and validated by other men—is another way in which patriarchal values are reinforced by clamping down on women's rights and freedoms. In the Delhi case, three men are accused of sexually assaulting a 17-year-old girl, who was accompanied by a male friend, by posing as police personnel. In Bihar's Jamui, the violence that a girl and her teenage classmates faced after sundown was filmed. Just



days later, another video from Samastipur was shared in which a group rounds up on a young couple in broad daylight. Following these incidents, women students of the renowned Lady Shri Ram College in Delhi, that is located near the park, raised concerns for their own safety. Meanwhile, Bihar police initiated action to take down videos of the underage girls' molestation from social

media accounts. Three aspects deserve particular attention. First, almost 14 years after the Delhi rape protests, it is unconscionable that public spaces in the capital and elsewhere remain utterly unsafe for women. The 'smartness' of India's cities is meaningless if they cannot, at the very least, be well-lit and adequately policed. Second, filming of sexual violence by perpetrators has become a dangerous norm. In such cases, the police must also invoke the relevant laws to crack down on the additional digital violence that re-victimises the survivor for as long as the material is online. Policymakers must also examine if the existing laws suffice to target the evolving methods of sexual violence in the digital sphere, especially if visuals are shared in the seedier sections of mainstream platforms for profit. Third, as experts and this publication continue to contend, it is the certainty of punishment that reduces crime, not the severity.

What Gandhi's experiments with food can teach us

As a nationwide nutrition campaign plays out, it would be instructive to look at the Mahatma's inquiries about diet. Despite being a vegetarian, he believed food choices should never be forced

Anyone who reads Mahatma Gandhi's primary writings, like his 96-volume collected works, will be startled by the sheer amount written on nutrition. "My experiments on dietetics are dear to me as my researches on ahimsa. They give me recreation and joy," he wrote in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. He constantly experimented with his diet, trying new foods or regimens. Gandhi also happily advised others on what they to eat, and ended letters to family members with a description of his current diet and an exhortation for them to tell him what they were eating. He tried to keep up with dietary writings, like the works of the American dietician J H Kellogg, whose magnum opus, *The New Dietetics: A Guide to Scientific Feeding in Health and Disease*, he received in 1927. "It is enough to make one giddy even to contemplate reading that volume," he wrote to his American correspondent R B Gregg. Which is why, among the myriad ways modern India might disappoint Gandhi, our continued failures on nutrition might be what hurts him most personally. What is the value of our technological leaps and massive infrastructure development when you know that lakhs of children remain hungry or are eating food of such poor quality that their lives are stunted from the start? Yes, this is simplistic, and arguments about how development at all levels raises the economy in general may be true. But can you honestly say you haven't felt that sickening feeling sometimes, as you speed by to another restaurant, that India still has people whose daily nutritional intake is less than what was probably wasted in preparing your meal? The tourism ministry recently announced a deal to get Michelin's restaurant guide to India. Would Gandhi have felt this was

an achievement? What is particularly odd is that this nutritional deficiency exists at a time when more nutritional advice comes at us than ever before. Companies push products on us. Social media influencers attack companies for doing that, and make their own suggestions. Politicians and pundits offer advice on how we can improve our life by changing our diets. And the algorithms are always telling us to take a supplement, stop eating this, start eating that and find the food hack that will deliver us true health. Yet, the lecturing doesn't seem to be accompanied by listening. When it comes to nutrition, there seems to be gap in understanding why people make their food choices. What you eat has become a way to label and then judge you, rather than a way to understand you. A good example is the government's millets campaign, which never seems to end—as was evident with the millet pulao served at the BRICs banquet. But where are all the people willingly eating snacks, main meals and banquets made of millets?

The campaign never stopped to ask why Indians stopped eating millets. Traditional consumption of millets started dropping from the late 19th century, as maize in particular substituted it, along with increased availability of rice and wheat. Indians didn't forget that millets were healthy, but just didn't like eating them as much as these other grains. Millets are, as their name indicates, mostly grains so small that their husk can't be removed, so they must be consumed whole. This is what makes millets more nutritious rather than the starch-heavy milled wheat and rice, but also makes them stodgy when cooked. The millet campaign might have had more

success if it started by working for solutions people would accept. This might have included focusing on ragi, the one millet that's easy to eat, or advocating easier-to-eat mixes of millets and starchy grains. It might even have



concluded that most people would not eat millets, but they could still be grown to ferment into ethanol or as a substitute for sugarcane, as one variety of sorghum (jowar) can be grown.

But this would have meant really engaging, without judgement, with what people ate and didn't. It was easier just to tell them that they should eat instead, and then jump on this badgering bandwagon with books, articles and events—which people would consume and then go back to eating rice and wheat. This is a recent example, but this tendency to find magic solutions and then lecture Indians

on why they should follow them goes back decades—to the lean years after independence and famines of the 1960s. Gandhi's long engagement with diets suggests a slightly different approach. He was ready to give advice, but also listen to it—hence his regular requests for correspondents to tell him what they were eating. He experimented with many different diets—salt-free, fruitarian, raw food—but ultimately concluded that there was no one solution, just constant listening to one's body and experimenting with what works. He was always interested in the potential of new foods—for example, discussing the potential of avocados with Paramahansa Yogananda, the California-based guru, or the soy-based experiments of Narahari Rao, Vinoba Bhave's father. Gandhi was a committed vegetarian, but he was never dogmatic about it, nor did he believe that it automatically made you better or even healthier. From his early years as a student in London, where his political awakening happened while working with the Vegetarian Society, he was aware of how painfully dogmatic and divisive vegetarians could be and how, crucially, this was counter-productive to their cause. When a correspondent raised a hypothetical question about whether a husband who had become a vegetarian could compel his wife to do the same, Gandhi replied that, on the contrary, it was his duty to keep buying her meat while still trying to persuade her to switch from true conviction. He believed that real change could not be achieved through forcing a choice, but from genuinely convincing people why a certain way was best.

How to do up your Staircase



Make your staircase look as interesting as the rest of your house. Here's how...

When it comes to home decor, staircases can sometimes become one of the most neglected areas because we tend to underestimate it. Actually,

staircases can, if done up well, add a certain charm to your interiors. For row houses, bungalows, penthouses and duplex flats, the staircase forms an integral part of the structure and is often located in the living room or in an important part of your home. You should make sure that they are nicely done up.

Wall of fame Mandira Bedi's bungalow in Bandra has a beautifully done up staircase. She says, "Since it is an integral part of my home, I have taken special care to do it up. The decor at my home includes this area of the house and I like it that way. There are pictures of family and friends,

vases of flowers, lights etc on my staircase."

Living room walls are not really ideal for putting up a lot of pictures of family and friends but the walls of your staircase can be like a gallery where you can display all your favourite pictures and get away with it! Since the stairways often lead upstairs to

the private area of the house, keeping these personal images here will help them from being too much in the public view.

Light it up You can go as

creative as you want here. Overhead spotlights will make the stairs well-lit and safe. You can also use lights on the steps for effect. Gouri and Yash Tonkk have beautiful and very

contemporary chandeliers on the landings of their staircase in their duplex apartment. "I liked these trendy chandeliers. They light up the stairway very nice and look very elegant and chic," says Gouri.

Take it to the next level You can use wood, stone, carpeting on the stairs and you can make it look interesting with a nice handrail, a variety of which is available readily.

The perfect landing The way you do up your landing can make or break the entire decor of the stairway. You can place a large vase or a pot of indoor plant or a tall floor lamp in the corner. Place interesting things but make sure that you do not clutter the stairway space.



Make your kitchen a sleek and stylish space

Your kitchen should be a sleek and stylish space. Here are some simple tips you need to keep in mind when you are choosing a modular kitchen.



yet stylish - that is what modular kitchens are all about. These kitchens not only make cooking convenient and efficient, they also make your kitchen look like a happier and fun place to be in. Modern modular kitchen furniture include various units of cabinets, each designed for a unique purpose, so it increases your efficiency. Pick one that has the most appropriate design to suit your particular needs.

Here are some simple tips you need to keep in mind when you are choosing a modular kitchen...

Know your Budget

With the variety available these days, you could easily tend to overspend. So, it is best to decide on a budget before you go out shopping for your modular kitchen. There are small-budget kitchens also available that do not compromise on functionality. And of course, there are very high-budget kitchens that are glamorous.

You need to plan well

Measure the exact area and also keep in mind the layout and kind of space you have in your kitchen before you go out

An important thing that you need to bear in mind is what your specific needs are — do you need a built-in hob, or would just a simple oven work? Do you need a microwave oven or grill? What kind of chimney do you want and how much space are you allocating for it? Would you opt for an L-shaped kitchen counter or would you need a kitchen island?

Wood you?

What would you choose — there is a variety of designs and materials available right from the more contemporary steel and glass, to the classic wood and stone. It would be wise to choose something that

not just looks nice but is also sturdy and long-lasting. Another thing you need to keep in mind is that it should be easy to clean.

Size it up

Keep comfort in mind when you are selecting your modular kitchen. The cabinets that you get installed in your kitchen should be within your reach. You should be able to use them without straining yourself unnecessarily.

Flashy or functional

When you are selecting decorations and fixtures for your kitchen, you should ideally look for designs that are functional. The decorations should not obstruct your free movement in the kitchen.

Does it Cater to your needs?

Your modular kitchen should have cabinets and drawers that cater to your daily and specific cooking needs in the kitchen. Ideally, separate racks and storage units for your cutlery should be built. You should have your ovens and other electrical appliances fitted in according to your needs.

Light right

When you are getting your kitchen installed, make sure you know where you want the lights. If you have a large window in the kitchen, you should install your kitchen in a way that it does not get blocked — a dark kitchen area can hinder energies. It is a good idea to use accent lights, wherever needed. Under-cabinet lighting is also essential for your work area.



The lowdown on buying Rugs

Square or oval? Patterned or plain? Brightly hues, subdued or somewhere in between?

The myriad choices in pattern, style, colour, fabric and size, not to mention price, can make buying an area rug rather anxiety provoking. Thankfully, there are a few guidelines that will take some of the confusing guesswork out of choosing a rug, and put some fun into shopping for one.

Getting started

City slick, traditional or countrified? Decide on the mood you want to create in the room where you're putting the rug. That will narrow down the options while still allowing you to play with pattern and colour. Will the rug be purely decorative or will you be lounging or even dancing on it? Your answer will determine whether you should get a flat weave or knotted pile.

Size wise

Decide on the size of rug required. A large one can create a cosy, intimate feel in a room. As a rule of thumb, leave at least one foot around the perimeter of the room to create contrast between the floor and the rug. You can also use rugs to carve a large space into distinct areas, making it more dynamic. The size of the room is less important than the grouping of the room's furnishings. First, decide on the configuration of your furniture and then on the number and size of rugs required.

Settle on a budget

Dealers at most specialty rug stores can show you a range of rugs at various price points. Picking a wool/polyester blend over silk or even wool will mitigate costs without sabotaging style. Or consider a machine-made rug while you save up for

Style solutions

To decide on a style, start by examining your existing furnishings. Feel free to mix it up a bit—modern pieces with a traditional Turkish rug or '30s furniture on a contemporary geometric. But



do choose a rug that incorporates one of the neutral colours on the walls or in the upholstery so that it blends with the room's colour scheme.

And whether you love geometric, oriental or floral patterns the trick is to create contrast. If your sofa has a small floral, go for a larger patterned rug." Or if draperies and furnishings boast a large pattern, choose a smaller, more intricate motif. Pros mix up to five patterns, but novices should stick with about two per room.

If you haven't decided on furnishings, let the rug lead the way. A rug is a great place to begin a decorative scheme. A really beautiful one makes everything that sits on it look great.



Doing up your Study your way

For many, reading is recreational. Given a choice, everyone would want to have that little space in the house to do what you like the most without any speck of distraction. Having a study at homes and apartments is a rare luxury, thanks to space constraints. However, it is not impossible. "A study or an office space in home should be a cosy corner that is relatively tucked away from the on-goings in the house especially away from the television," says Shweta Kaushik, a multi-disciplinary design consultant based in Mumbai.

There are unmet things that go into planning and decorating a study room - from the colour and kind of furniture to the allotment of space and so on. Below are a

corner with a laid-back and relaxed theme in mind. Throw a few bean bags, cushions and sitting mats on the floor. Get a low, wooden coffee table where you can place your computer or laptop. A bright coloured rug will help add more drama to the already informal setting. For newspapers and magazines, pick multi-coloured book holders that will further



few ideas that you may implement while doing up your own study at home:

Decor

Ambience is the foremost important thing to be taken care of while decorating your study. The comfort level of the room rests in your hands.

Casual setting: Do up your reading

take away the seriousness of a conventional study room. Not to mention, pick a contemporary design for the bookshelf and stack all your favourite books.

Formal setting: Serious work needs serious atmosphere. A large bookshelf is a must for such setting, especially the one that has glass doors. Place your books neatly on the shelf to give it an organised look. A smaller bookshelf can be placed beside it to store all your

stationery. A dark wooden table and a chair to go along with it will complete the look. Ensure that the table has sufficient drawers where you can store important documents. Also, arrangement of equipments

like printers and routers can be neatly done up using wire managers that help reduce clutter.

Lighting

The role of lights while you read or work is vital. You don't want your study to be too bright or too dim therefore choosing the apt lighting can be tricky. If there are windows in the room, try using drapes or blinds to keep the glaring sunshine out. Study rooms should have recessed lights as it helps in overall illumination spread evenly across the whole room. Pendant fixtures are a good option if you need light at only one particular spot.

Colours

Your study should be an extension of your personality, a place where you can be at ease. Choosing the

colours, therefore, is a tricky task. Wall colours that best complement a study room are cheerful greens, sunny yellows and soothing creams. You may also go for soft, floral prints done up on neutral shades of ivory and beige. Add gravity to the decor by opting for blinds instead of curtains.

Furniture

There are a few must-have furnishings in a study room - a table, a bookshelf, and a chair. And usually, a study room is devoid of clutter and no nonsense furniture. "One should keep the ergonomics in mind like proper seating, table heights and foot rests. The idea is to be as comfortable as possible to be able to create a productive work space," adds Shweta. You may include a few more things to add to the spirit of the room such as carpets, rugs, cushions, and a mini refrigerator for drinks and snacks.

Now that you have all the ideas in place, go ahead, clean that unused corner in your house and set up a cool study much to the envy of your friends!



Add personality to your home decor



A home is your most most prized and intimate space. But does it reflect the person you are?

Are you wasting your time and energy in having a decor just because it is in vogue or you just want it to be appreciated by your friends? Is it possible that a person who doesn't really know you walks into your home and get a feel of who exactly you are as an individual and what are your tastes? It's time to bring that touch of your personality to your decor.

There's a thumb rule:

Just like your wardrobe, your decor should reflect personal style. So, if you are a cinephile, then you can source those lovely film posters to add a unique decor to your home. Similarly if you are a person who loves entertaining friends and having a party in a relaxed way then your home should reflect this. In that case, you can have informal entertainment zone where people can put their feet up and soak in the warmth of your home.

Think what are your preferences and add pieces that reflect it. So, add rugs, floor cushions, table lamps to add your unique touch to the decor.

While buying items for your home, ask yourself, "Does this define my personality?" If it doesn't, then don't buy one. Your home is not something to flaunt, it is a just reflection of who you are as a person.

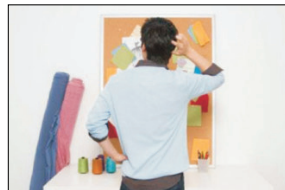
How to add Life

Be a little creative and add more colour and vibrancy to your wall

Walls with a dash of colour and imagination can change the look of your room. And there are simple not so expensive ways to add more life to your walls. Just let your creative juices flow. And then see the change.

Art power: Nothing brightens up the wall like a canvas. So, if you have an artwork then display it. Choose the perfect place to showcase it so that it becomes the centre of attraction. And if you don't have the money to buy original art, don't lose heart. You can always buy a print and with a stylish frame, it can change the look.

Colours of life: Interestingly, fabrics add much colour to a wall. India is a country of great textile heritage. So, you can choose from the ikkats to mangalagiris for adding a completely different, vibrant look to your wall. If you have seen the Calico Textile Museum in Ahmedabad, you will definitely know the power of textile in adding a warm rich look. Learn to use saris, dupattas, rugs in adding more colour and texture to your decor.



Stringing memory: Memories are great to have as company in your intimate space. Dig into your album for your favourite family photos and then arrange it to bring in a sense of personal touch to your space. How about being a little different and creative? Write your favourite poem on a nice handmade paper and then frame it. You can also make a collage out of your kids' paintings and then frame it to hang on the wall.

Shelve it: Do you think shelves are boring? Well, you couldn't be more wrong. These days there are many colourful shelves in different shapes available in the market. Even you have an ordinary shelf, paint it in warm colours with different motifs and see the result yourself. Arrange your favourite books, DVDs and knickknacks on the shelf and see the transformation.

It is easy to fall in love with sparkling silverware, well-polished and winking in delight at its own splendour. But maintaining the pristine glow is a herculean task, especially in Mumbai where humidity levels are usually high.

Experts from Episode Silver give you some damage control tips to maintain your silverware this monsoon...

Tarnish

Silver tarnishes when in contact with atmospheric sulphur. Therefore use your silver regularly as usage breaks the sulphur sulphide film that causes tarnish.

For food products, be sure to wipe dry after washing. Use of soft cloth.

For decorative products, wipe daily during the daily house dusting process. This delays tarnishing.

Cleaning Silver

Heavily tarnished pieces can be cleaned with :- Foam, Sprays or liquid paste silver polishes.

Both Indian and imported polishes are easily available in the market. Use a soft chamois cloth.

Silver dips are also very effective. Use a weak solution of washing soda and water to clean heavily stained Tea or Coffee pots.

Pierced work should not be cleaned with a cloth as it may get stuck on the edges. Use a soft brush.

Silver can be washed in dishwashers, but avoid contact with stainless steel as a reaction can occur.



Best kept silver cleaning secrets

India's Ayush sector may grow from \$36.9 billion to \$318 billion by 2047: Study

A RIS study has pegged India's Ayush services sector at USD 36.92 billion in 2024-25. It says stronger quality, digital and global outreach could lift it to USD 216-318 billion by 2047.

Delhi. (Agency)

India's Ayush services sector has emerged as one of the country's fastest-growing service segments, with its economic contribution estimated at USD 36.92 billion in 2024-25 and projected to grow to USD 216-318 billion by 2047, according to a study by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

The study said the sector has recorded a compound annual growth rate of 16.91 per cent since 2022-23, directly supported 1.76 million livelihoods, and generated an estimated USD 1.77 billion in Medical Value Travel revenue in 2024-25. The report was released during the 11th Ayurveda Day celebrations in Nagpur on September 23.

Union Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav said the findings underlined the sector's growing economic potential.

"The findings of this landmark study affirm

that Ayush is not merely a cultural inheritance but a dynamic and high-growth engine of India's economy. The Ayush sector is poised to play an increasingly important role in healthcare, wellness, employment and global economic engagement, while contributing to our vision of a healthy and self-reliant India," he said.

Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said the study created an evidence base for future policy and investment.

"For the first time, the economic contribution of the Ayush services sector has been measured through a nationally scaled, establishment-level survey covering all major Ayush systems. The report provides a robust evidence base to guide future investment, policy planning and reforms," he said.

RIS Director General Professor Sachin Kumar Sharma said the study was based on a survey of 15,914 establishments across all six Ayush systems.

"This study marks an important step in building an evidence-based understanding of India's Ayush services economy. Based on a nationally scaled survey of 15,914 establishments across



all six Ayush systems, the findings show that an economy of USD 36.92 billion, growing at close to 17 per cent annually and supporting 1.76 million livelihoods, is no longer a peripheral sector but a dynamic, knowledge-

based service economy," he said.

According to the study, clinics and day-care centres accounted for more than 71 per cent of the sector's total revenue. Standalone clinics generated an estimated USD 16.21 billion, while day-care centres contributed USD 10.13 billion. Ayurveda was the largest individual system, accounting for USD 17.73 billion, or nearly 48 per cent of the sector's total revenue.

The Ayush-based wellness segment, including yoga centres, spas and resorts, recorded a CAGR of 21.29 per cent. Yoga centres alone saw about 75 per cent growth in revenue over two years, the study said.

The sector directly supported 1.76 million livelihoods, with more than one million jobs concentrated in local and standalone clinics. Women accounted for 43 per cent of the overall workforce, and their participation was more than 50 per cent in several organised segments.

Delhi Cop Thrashed With Baseball Bat After Argument, Gets 5 Stiches Near Eye

Delhi. (Agency)

A Delhi Police head constable has been allegedly assaulted while he was returning home after work following an argument with some men at a shop in the Mangolpuri area.

The cop, Krishna, said the incident took place around 12:15 AM on September 23. He said that his wife was unwell and had asked him to pick up a cold drink on his way back home. Krishna, who is posted at the Aman Vihar police station, said that while he was buying a cold drink from a shop near a petrol pump in Mangolpuri, some boys misbehaved with him.

"I scolded them and chased them away. As I left with the cold drink, 7-8 boys came and thrashed me with baseball bat," he said in a video.



The attack was also caught on a CCTV.

He also said that his gold chain is missing after the attack. "Maybe they snatched it," Krishna said. "They also snatched my phone. But the police later recovered it," he added. He also claimed that he later went to a police station in Vijay Vihar to get the first information report (FIR) filed, but they "refused" to do register it. "They told me that the area where the fight took place does not come under Vijay Vihar police station. They are saying it comes under Mangolpuri police station," Krishna said. He also alleged that the police officers there didn't lend him a mobile to make a call to his family. "A head constable later gave me his phone to call my family," he said. Krishna said that he has received five stitches.

Weather Update: Delhi-NCR, Uttarakhand, UP brace for heavy rain as IMD issues warnings

Delhi. (Agency)

North India's spell of heavy rain shows no sign of easing, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall on Sunday, September 27, along with isolated extremely heavy showers over Uttarakhand. The weather system driving this spell is losing strength as it tracks north-northwestwards, but forecasters say its effects will keep large parts of central and northern India soaked for now. Thunderstorms and gusty winds are also expected to sweep through several states. Uttarakhand looks set for the heaviest rain on Sunday, with the IMD warning of heavy to very heavy showers and isolated extremely heavy rainfall in places. This follows an already intense spell in the hill state, with similar warnings issued for September 26. Himachal Pradesh and western Uttar Pradesh are also likely to see heavy to very heavy rain in isolated pockets, while eastern Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh could witness isolated heavy showers.

Thunderstorms with lightning and winds of 40-50 kmph are forecast in parts of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and western UP. Eastern UP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Telangana may see thunderstorms with slightly gentler winds of 30-40 kmph.

Why the rain persists as monsoon retreats

The wet spell is being fuelled by a depression that formed over northeast Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring north Chhattisgarh, which was tracking north-northwestwards on Saturday. It's expected to move into southeast Uttar Pradesh and gradually weaken into a well-marked low-pressure area.

A low-pressure area forms where air pressure dips below that of its surroundings, drawing in moisture and setting off rain. Even as this system loses steam, its lingering moisture and circulation can keep triggering showers further north.

A western disturbance, a weather system travelling eastwards through the upper atmosphere, is adding to the mix over northern India.

DDA seeks inputs from private developers for JJ cluster dwellers' rehab

The Master Plan for Delhi-2047 envisages in-situ rehabilitation of approximately 17 lakh JJ cluster dwellers.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Development Authority has started consultations with private developers to take forward its in-situ slum rehabilitation programme, with an investors' meet held on September 25 to seek industry inputs on the proposed framework for redevelopment projects across the city.

Following directions from L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the meeting brought together developers and other stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges involved in implementing large-scale rehabilitation projects. The Master Plan for Delhi-2047 envisages in-situ rehabilitation of approximately 17

lakh JJ cluster dwellers. According to the DDA, the programme aims to improve housing and living conditions of eligible residents at their existing locations while facilitating integrated



neighbourhood development, improved urban infrastructure and more efficient land use.

During the investors' meet, developers

shared their views on several aspects of the proposed programme, including project structure, implementation mechanisms, allocation of risks, financing requirements and approval processes. The DDA said that the feedback would help refine the framework for private-sector participation and make it more transparent, predictable and responsive to market conditions. While addressing the gathering, the DDA vice chairman highlighted the role of private developers in meeting the scale of rehabilitation and redevelopment required in the national capital. The authority said the proposed model seeks to combine safe and dignified housing.

Gujral's murals at Shastri Bhawan to get new life; NGMA-led team to remove, relocate artworks

Delhi. (Agency)

With the landmark Shastri Bhawan set to be demolished soon, two giant murals created by Satish Gujral in 1968 adorning its facade may get a second life, as an NGMA-led team of experts has drawn up a blueprint to "carefully remove and relocate" the prized artworks to a site within Lutyens' Delhi.

The team, helmed by the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in Delhi, consists of NGMA's artists, art and architectural conservation experts, and the celebrated artist's family members through the Gujral Foundation, a top official said. "Satish Gujral was one of the most eminent artists of our country, and last year, we celebrated his birth centenary at the NGMA. As the building is set to be

demolished, we have been assigned the responsibility to carefully remove and relocate his iconic murals of Shastri Bhawan. We will also document the entire process," NGMA



Director General Sanjeev Kishor Goutam told PTL.

He said work has begun to find a suitable site for relocation, but "we wish to keep it within Lutyens' Delhi".

A lead investigator of this "challenging project" from the NGMA side said, "We have already communicated with the NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Council), as well as the art and culture department of the city government to suggest possible places for the relocation of the murals."

The team recently zeroed in on the campus of the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) near the ITO, but it was found that the massive murals would need a much taller building for relocation, and therefore the hunt for a suitable new address is still underway. Built in the heart of Delhi in the initial decades after Independence to house offices of several ministries, Shastri Bhawan was named after the second prime minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri. It is a 'G+7' structure.

Police posts at subways, flyovers to boost women safety

Delhi. (Agency)

In the wake of recent incidents of violence against women, the Delhi government has expedited plans to establish police posts at pedestrian subways, areas beneath flyovers and near foot overbridges. Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh on Saturday directed officials to complete formalities in coordination with Delhi Police and ensure the project is implemented at the earliest.

"With the Delhi Police and the PWD completing formalities, directions have been given to issue tenders and start work on the ground. In the initial phase, we plan to set up police posts at around 50 locations. The government will set them up from its own budget, while the Delhi Police must provide



manpower and manage the area.

Tenders for the project will be floated soon," Singh said. The government aims to improve safety and utilisation of public infrastructure through the project, he added. The PWD, which maintains around 106 flyovers, 115 foot overbridges and nearly 70 subways, will construct the proposed police posts.

Officials said the government received an initial proposal from Delhi Police to set up about 50 posts, which was found feasible. "While we have approved that proposal, in future, we plan to cover all road assets such as flyovers, pedestrian subways and foot overbridges. Approximately 300 police posts will be set up," they said. The PWD is considering allowing commercial establishments inside pedestrian subways in a later phase, though the proposal is yet to be approved, they said. The objective is to provide a sense of security to subway users, they added.

The move comes days after a 17-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped at Astha Kunj Park by three men who posed as policemen. Delhi Police has since arrested them.

After Op Sindoor, India's Defence Push Faces A New Test. What Experts Said

Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. The attack, attributed to Pakistan-based terror groups, killed 26 people, including one Nepali national, and injured many others.

Delhi. (Agency)

Operation Sindoor has provided India with important lessons about the country's defence capabilities, particularly the need to build greater self-reliance in emerging technologies, manufacture drones and missiles at scale, and develop the ability to rapidly adapt when adversaries devise countermeasures -- a view shared by defence industry experts who spoke about it at length at NDTV's Defence Summit on Sunday.

Dr Samir V Kamat, former DRDO chairman and former Secretary, Department of Defence R&D said the Operation Sindoor, viewed alongside the wars currently being fought elsewhere, had underlined the need for

an "Atmanirbhar" defence capability. "I think Op Sindoor was a good learning experience for all of us. Though it was a very short conflict, this conflict, along with the current ongoing wars -- the Russia-Ukraine war or the US-Iran war -- has taught us that we need to have 'atmanirbharta' capabilities. And they have to be in the emerging domains of cyber security, information warfare, space situational awareness, space-based capabilities for ISR, it has to be in the ability to manufacture drones and missiles in numbers but also the ability to innovate and modify when an opponent comes up with a counter to whatever you have developed."

Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's

Pahalgam. The attack, attributed to Pakistan-based terror groups, killed 26 people, including one Nepali national, and injured many others.



The missile strikes targeted facilities in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Rawalakot, Chakswari, Bhimber, Neelum Valley, Jhelum and Chakwal. These areas had long been suspected by intelligence agencies of harbouring terrorist camps.

The sites were believed to be affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), two terror groups responsible for multiple attacks in India over the years.

Five of the nine locations struck were in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, while four were in mainland Pakistan. Dr Kamat said developing these capabilities could not be the responsibility of a single organisation but there should be a "whole of nation approach", bringing together industry, academia, MSMEs and start-ups. "And this can only happen if we work or approach a 'whole of nation' approach. One organisation cannot deliver the capabilities the country needs. We have to look at how we can synergise the capabilities that exist in our industries."

Geopolitical developments, crude oil likely to steer stock market this week

New Delhi. (Agency)

Investors will focus on geopolitical developments, crude oil prices, bond yields and macroeconomic data announcements to determine market trends during the holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said. According to experts, the US-Iran diplomatic talks and crude oil prices will drive global market sentiment. Moreover, the market is likely to remain cautious as crude oil prices, geopolitical developments and global bond yields continue to influence near-term direction, they said. Equity markets would remain closed on Friday for Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti. "Globally, developments around US-Iran diplomacy and crude oil prices will remain critical. Any progress on a framework for reopening the Strait of Hormuz could ease energy prices and provide some relief to India's import bill and the rupee, while renewed geopolitical tensions could keep volatility elevated," Ajit Mishra, SVP Research, Religare Broking, said. On the domestic front, industrial production data for August and the HSBC manufacturing PMI reading will be released during the week, he added. Additionally, market participants will closely monitor foreign institutional investor (FII) activity and the upcoming monthly auto sales figures. "Global bond yields will also remain important following the Federal Reserve's September policy decision. Further increases in yields and the dollar could weigh on emerging-market capital flows, while a moderation in yields could provide some relief." The rupee will remain another important factor to watch, with persistent oil-related demand for dollars and continued FII outflows potentially keeping the currency under pressure, although RBI intervention has helped contain excessive volatility," Ponnudi R, CEO - Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Sebi settlement overhaul may improve recovery in fund-diversion cases

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India's (Sebi's) overhaul of settlement norms could help improve recovery of diverted funds and protect shareholders in cases involving financial misrepresentation and siphoning of funds, according to Sebi officials and legal experts, as the regulator seeks to resolve such matters without prolonged litigation. The market regulator approved the Sebi (Settlement of Administrative and Civil Proceedings) Regulations, 2026, in its board meeting last week, with key changes on calculation of settlement amount, separate treatment of wrongful gains, fast-track settlements in certain cases, and wider access to settlement. The norms are yet to be notified and will be brought into effect 30 days after notification of the regulations. Following the board meeting, Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said investor protection in such cases would involve not just the settlement amount but also disgorgement and Remedial and Regulatory Terms (RRT), where applicable. "Shareholders' interest can be protected in a variety of ways. One of the sure ways is that if there is a siphoning of money, it should come back first. That is non-negotiable. We have to understand that settlement is not only in terms of settlement amount, but it involves disgorgement and RRT, where applicable," Pandey said.

Tata Motors PV eyes 15% market share soon, targets 20% by FY31: MD

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles expects to cross 15 per cent domestic market share "very soon" and is working towards its previously stated target of 20 per cent by FY31, as the nearly year-old standalone business looks to drive significant growth through investments in new product categories, faster product interventions and powertrain expansion, its Managing Director and CEO Shailesh Chandra said. nge will be doing that," Injeti said. agencies In an interview with PTI, Chandra said the passenger vehicle business, which became a standalone entity following the demerger effective October 1 last year, has grown nearly 40 per cent over the past year and is exiting September with electric vehicles accounting for more than 25 per cent of its total sales. "Our focus is going to be, of course, to drive significant growth, double-digit growth. At the same time, we want to be leading the charge as far as the sustainable or zero-emission powertrains and emission-friendly powertrains are concerned, and at the same time, we have to continue to invest more aggressively, not only into new product categories, creating white spaces, but also in terms of faster change of interventions of the product to keep it relevant, to keep it competitive, to continuously keep it exciting for the customers," the Tata Motors MD & CEO said. Elaborating on the company's performance during the last one year, Chandra observed, "You are already seeing, in the last one year, the number of refreshes, facelifts and new launches that we have been bringing. I'm sure that when we end this month, which will be the completion of one year, we would have sold nearly 7,50,000 (vehicles). So the business would have come to that level, and we have grown in the last one year, by nearly 40 per cent.

UPI: Can you spilt up a bigger amount into tranches of Rs 2,000 to avoid MDR

New Delhi. (Agency)

October 15 is the date from which MDR or merchant discount rate will come into effect. It will require the merchant to pay a 0.4% fee for payments received above Rs 2,000. The point to remember is that this rate will be effective on person-to-merchant transaction and not on any other type of transaction. The question now on many lips is whether one could split up a bigger amount into tranches of Rs 2,000 and pay the merchant. However, the new system will discourage such tactics and the bank's fraud monitoring system may consider this pattern unusual if you repeatedly send the same amount to the same merchant within a short period of time. Can a bill of ₹8,000 be divided into four bills of ₹2,000 each? The MDR calculation will vary on a transaction-by-transaction basis.

Therefore, four separate payments of ₹2,000 for a ₹8,000 bill will fall within the prescribed limit each time. Conversely, if the entire ₹8,000 is paid in a single transaction, the MDR will come into effect. However, this doesn't mean that customers should consider splitting payments completely risk-free. Banks to monitor payments to the same shopkeeper As of now, there is no official daily limit on the distribution of such payments under the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) guidelines. However, banks constantly monitor customer transaction patterns as part of their fraud prevention systems. If a customer repeatedly sends the same amount to the same merchant within a short period of time, this pattern may appear unusual to the bank's system. In such cases, the bank's automated security systems may

initiate additional checks. In some several large bills into smaller ₹2,000 circumstances, transactions may be payments, their account's daily temporarily blocked or the UPI service transaction limit could be reached quickly. Even if each small payment is individually within the limit, making too many payments could expose the customer to other bank limits. Merchant's requirements There is also the issue of the merchant demanding a single payment for a single bill. There could be reasons such as accounting, bill reconciliation, refunds or fraud prevention. Payment methods should be based on the actual purchase and transaction volume, rather than based on MDR limits. Therefore, if the bill is for ₹8,000, then technically the customer can pay ₹2,000 four times, but it is not mandatory for the shopkeeper to accept payment in this manner.



India targets USD 100 billion gems & jewellery export goal

Experts predict that over the next 5 to 7 years, approximately 20 to 25% of India's gold consumption could come from domestic mines, with jewellery exports targeted to reach USD 100 billion.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The central government has set a target to export gems and jewellery worth up to USD 100 billion by 2040. This ambition aims to recognise and upskill lakhs of artisans, making them globally competitive in craftsmanship. During the 14th edition of the Delhi Jewellery & Gem Fair (DJGF) in 2026, Praveen Khandelwal, Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, stated, "To achieve our export ambitions, the industry must strengthen its journey from 'Vocal for Local' to 'Local to Global' through investment, skill development, and greater value addition." Currently, India's gems and jewellery sector exports

approximately ₹2.5 lakh crore worth of goods, while imports stand at around ₹1.65 lakh crore. This reflects a strong export orientation



and significant contributions to the country's trade. Khandelwal also emphasized the importance of recognizing and upskilling local artisans, whose craftsmanship directly impacts product quality and global competitiveness. "Building

their capabilities will help Indian jewellery become more competitive and enhance its presence in international markets," he remarked. Experts predict that over the next 5 to 7 years, approximately 20 to 25% of India's gold consumption could come from domestic mines, with jewellery exports targeted to reach USD 100 billion. Pramod Derawala, Chairman of the National Jewellery and Gemstone Council of India (NJGCI), highlighted the growth opportunities in India's jewellery sector and the necessity to strengthen the value chain. He noted that the sector has significant growth potential in both manufacturing and exports, supported by government initiatives and increased market access through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

Debt-to-income ratio: How it affects your loan approval and how to calculate it

Kolkata. (Agency)

While applying for a loan, it is common to check the credit score to gauge the chances of getting it approved. However, credit score is not the only metric to understand one's capacity for loan payment. The lender may also look into the borrower's debt-to-income ratio. Debt-to-income ratio assesses how much of an individual's monthly income is dedicated to debt repayment. It is the percentage of debt to be paid by a person against the money earned in a month. Credit score helps lenders understand the borrower's financial behaviour and stability based on factors such as loan repayment capacity, long credit history, and lower card utilisation ratio. Through this, the bank may understand the person's financial management habits. Meanwhile, the debt-to-income ratio is a real-time window into the person's current financial situation by giving them a look into the repayment capacity. How much of the person's monthly income is already



committed to debt payments helps the lender understand whether the loan has to be approved or not. How to calculate DTI? Debt-to-income ratio is calculated by dividing the total monthly debt payment by the total monthly income and multiplying by 100. For example, a person has a monthly income of Rs 50,000 and has to: -- pay Rs 10,000 towards home loan -- pay Rs 3,000 towards credit card -- pay Rs 7,000 towards phone's EMI This makes a person's total debt obligation Rs 20,000. The debt-to-income ratio of the person stands at 40 per cent. Higher DTI indicates that a higher portion of your earnings is dedicated towards debt payment, which may negatively impact your loan application. Though there is no fixed minimum limit that a lender considers for DTI and it may vary across banks, a DTI below 30 per cent is generally considered good.

AC, TV, appliance prices may rise up to 8% from Oct 1 ahead of festivals

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ahead of the peak festival season, leading appliances and consumer electronics makers are going to increase prices of air conditioners, LED TVs, washing machines and other products by 5 per cent to 8 per cent effective from October 1, passing on the rise in inputs of soaring metals such as copper, steel, crude derivatives as well as currency exchange volatility due to the ongoing West Asia crisis. Aspiration with functionality and affordability. This will be the industry's third round of price hikes in 2026, with manufacturers saying sustained inflation in key inputs such as copper, aluminium, steel, and crude oil derivatives, coupled with higher freight costs, has made further price revisions unavoidable.

Air-conditioner prices are set to rise 5-8 per cent; some players are also increasing prices of washing machines, refrigerators and LED TVs by 3-4 per cent, industry executives said, while others are still evaluating the impact. While some companies fear the hike could affect festive demand, others believe the impact will be limited, as dealers and distributors have already stocked inventory bought at older prices through pre-buying schemes in August and September. Companies like Blue Star, Godrej Appliance, Haier, Daikin, and Super Plastronics have already announced or confirmed price hikes ranging from 4-10 per cent across categories, while Panasonic said it was still evaluating the situation before deciding on any increase. According to sources, LG and Bosch Home Comfort, which owns Hitachi-branded air-conditioners, have also increased AC prices by around 5 per cent. Blue Star Managing Director B Thiagarajan said prices of ACs and deep freezers have already increased by 5-8 per cent due to higher commodity costs.

"All the commodity prices have been going up because of the war. Copper, steel and plastics have all become costlier," he said, adding that this is the third price increase undertaken by the company this year. Comparing prices with last year's festive season, Thiagarajan said costs have risen around 15 per cent, but with GST benefits of about 10 per cent now available to consumers, the net impact for buyers would work out to roughly 5 per cent more. Kamal Nandi, Business Head and Executive Vice President, Appliances Business, Godrej Enterprises Group, said another industry-wide round of price increases has become 'inevitable' after commodity prices rose 8-10 per cent since the last revision. "Price hikes of 5-7 per cent across categories will happen. The timing may differ from brand to brand, with some implementing it from October and others from November, but it has to happen," he said.

Buying an old house or flat These documents must be verified before you take a home loan

If you are planning to buy an older home and intend to take a home loan for it, focusing solely on the property price and EMI is not enough. It is crucial to examine the property's condition, title, documentation, registration, construction approvals, and legal status. Also, factor in repair and renovation costs when calculating the total expense.

Kolkata. (Agency)

While scouting for a house or flat, many consider older homes too. And it can be done various reasons such as location, build, architecture etc. Older homes are often located in established neighborhoods that offer better infrastructure and connectivity. Additionally, the price of an older home in such a location may be lower than that of a new project. However, if you plan to finance the purchase through a home loan, looking only at the price and EMI is insufficient. Banks require clarity

regarding the title, documentation, construction details, and legal status of the property being offered as security for the loan. When buying an older property, the decision should not be based solely on its age. A 15-year-old house differs from a 40-year-old one, yet a property cannot be evaluated based on age alone. A buyer should examine the property's structural condition, past alterations, maintenance history, and anticipated repair or renovation costs. If the house is quite old or has undergone major modifications, obtaining a structural stability assessment can also be beneficial.

Consider costs of repair

If a home loan applicant has Rs 15 lakh set aside for the down payment and other upfront costs, the additional expense for repairs and renovations could alter their financing requirements. In other words, home loan planning should not be based solely on the property price. Buyers should formulate a comprehensive financial plan that accounts for EMIs, the down payment, repairs, renovations,

maintenance, and other costs associated with ownership.

Verification is essential

When purchasing an older property, the registration process does not mark the end of due diligence. Buyers should



verify the title, ownership history, encumbrance status, property tax records, and other critical documents. Additionally, it is crucial to check whether the property's current construction aligns with the sanctioned plan and applicable approvals. Older homes often feature modifications made after the original construction,

such as additional floors, extensions, or enclosed balconies. If documentation for these changes is unavailable or if the documents do not match the property's actual structure, securing home loan financing could become problematic.

Consequently, buyers should thoroughly verify all property documentation before committing to a loan.

Banks too scrutinize property

In the case of a home loan, banks do not look solely at the borrower's income and repayment capacity; the property itself is a crucial part of the loan process. According to sources, under the RBI's housing finance framework, a borrower purchasing a constructed property must declare that the property has been built in accordance with the sanctioned plan and/or building bylaws. Wherever possible, a completion certificate should also be available. Additionally, before loan disbursement, the bank is required to obtain a compliance certificate from an architect.

NEWS BOX

Six decades, 88 deaths:
The dangers that come
with a police uniform**Mumbai (Agency).**

The death of 56-year-old Police Sub-Inspector Kisan Kamlakar Bhoir after he was allegedly attacked with a cement brick during a night patrol has added another name to a long roll of policemen who have lost their lives while performing their duties across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Bhoir's death takes the number of police personnel from the Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai commissionerates listed in the police memorial records examined for this story to at least 88. The records include 76 personnel from the Mumbai Police commissionerate, six from Thane police units and five from the Navi Mumbai commissionerate over the last six decades. Bhoir is the latest addition to the list.

But the numbers tell only part of the story. The circumstances in which these policemen died have changed dramatically over the decades — from communal violence and encounters with armed criminals to terrorism, crowd-control operations, rescue missions, traffic enforcement and, in Bhoir's case, an apparently routine intervention during Ganpati security duty.

As festivities end, Mumbai's
discarded footwear gets a
second life**BENGALURU (Agency).**

When Mumbai's Ganeshotsav crowds disperse, they leave behind an unusual part of the festival's aftermath: footwear abandoned around pandals and along crowded procession routes. This year, BMC's waste management and sanitation teams collected nearly eight tonnes of shoes, sandals and slippers across the festival, including nearly four tonnes from Ganesh idol arrival processions on August 29. Instead of being sent to landfills, the footwear is being sent to GreenSole Foundation for upcycling and distribution to children in BMC schools and the tribal belt across Maharashtra.

The collection followed concerns within the civic administration over the quantity of footwear left behind during the festival each year. "Much of this footwear is eventually dumped in landfills. Through this initiative, it can instead be upcycled and distributed to the underprivileged, while reducing waste," said Vrushali Ingule, Assistant Municipal Commissioner of BMC's F South ward.

The first major collection was carried out after the Chinchpokli Cha Chintamani Ganpati aagman procession on August 29. BMC sanitation workers collected footwear from areas including Bharatmata Junction, Jijabai Lane and the stretch near Chinchpokli railway station. The material was initially stored at a vacant plot at Saibaba Municipal School in Parel before being sent for processing. At GreenSole's Bhiwandi facility, the footwear is manually sorted, washed and sanitised before being dismantled. Uppers, soles, laces and other components are separated and assessed for reuse.

Chennai Mayor hits back
at trolls mocking her new
haircut**CHENNAI (Agency).**

"If I eat a burger, it's an issue. If I cut my hair, it's an issue," Chennai Mayor R Priya wrote on X after she was mocked on social media over her new haircut. Questioning why her personal choices were repeatedly turned into controversies, she asked whether she was being singled out because she is a woman or because of the community she belongs to.

A video of Priya entering the council hall for Friday's meeting went viral, with some users, including TVK supporters, circulating edited versions mocking her appearance. Priya also asked why those who advocate women's rights were silent when she faced such attacks. "When it comes to me, I have no idea where the feminists and those who claim to stand up for women disappear," she said.

"Being a woman in public life does not give anyone the right to judge her based on her appearance, lifestyle, or personal choices," she wrote, adding that every woman was entitled to dignity, self-respect and a life on her own terms. DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi condemned the attacks and asked why Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay had not stopped his supporters from targeting Priya. "While the CM says he 'won't let anyone speak wrongly about any woman,' why then has he allowed these attacks on Mayor Priya by his fans and cadre?" she asked. Former MLA TRB Rajaa said TVK resorted to vulgar abuse whenever it could not answer political criticism. He accused its supporters of trying to silence women through personal attacks.

Why BJP govt in UP is giving fillip to
Yadav warrior's folklore in poll seasonMinister says Lorik's story part of UP cultural inheritance,
BJP says projects not linked to caste or election**Lucknow (Agency).**

A folklore hero of the Yadav-Ahir community, known for his valour and fight against caste oppression, is the new icon to be celebrated by the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh as the state gears up for the Assembly elections early next year. Officials said the facility is intended to host theatre, folk music, storytelling and other cultural performances, taking Lorikayan from an oral tradition to a contemporary performance space and making the story accessible to younger audiences. Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh has described Lorik's story as part of Uttar Pradesh's cultural inheritance, highlighting its themes of courage, bravery and resistance to injustice.

Political significance of the project

The project is significant in a district where Lorik's story has deep roots in the Yadav-Ahir folk tradition. Ballia already has Veer Lorik Akhara, a statue, and the Veer Lorik Sports Stadium. "Not just in Ballia, Lorikayan is a recognisable folk tale in the entire Bhojpur region. There is an actual Lorik Pathar in Robertsganj in Sonbhadra district, which is

believed to have been cut in half by Veer Lorik to prove his love for Manjari," said an official. The state's Culture Department is constructing a 350-seat auditorium and a library in the honour of Veer Lorik at Hasanpura village in Bansdih tehsil of Ballia district, associated with the legend. The government is planning to



promote the legend of Veer Lorik, popular in the Bhojpur region as Lorikayan, across the state. Sources said the idea for constructing an auditorium after Veer Lorik in Ballia district was proposed by BJP MLA from Bansdih, Ketki Singh. "The proposal has received administrative and financial approval of around Rs 4.97 crore. The first instalment of

Rs 1.36 crore has been released, and the foundation work has begun," said an official of the Culture Department. According to the government's project document, the 350-seat auditorium will have sound reinforcement, HD cinematic projection, intelligent LED stage lighting, motorised curtains and acoustic and interior works.

For a folk hero whose story has survived through generations of oral history, the BJP government's decision to greenlight the project represents a shift: A Yadav warrior is being given a permanent stage in Ballia at a time when political parties are preparing for the Assembly election in the state. The Yadav community is among the politically significant OBC groups in Uttar Pradesh and has traditionally been strongly associated with the Samajwadi Party. Ballia, which borders Bihar, has seven Assembly constituencies. In the 2022 Assembly polls, three were won by the Samajwadi Party (SP), two by the BJP and one each by BJP ally Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party and the BSP. With the death of Uma Shankar Singh, the BSP's lone MLA from Rasra, the BJP is eyeing to win his constituency as well.

Two men die after suspected gas
leak near public toilet in Mumbai

Police suspect the men were exposed to gas emitted by a small-scale industrial unit near the toilet.

Mumbai (Agency).

Two men died after allegedly being exposed to a strong chemical smell inside a public toilet in Mumbai's eastern suburbs in the early hours of Sunday. According to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials, the incident occurred near the Parsi Panchayat Gate, close to Mrunalta Bridge in Ram Mandir (East). BMC officials identified the men as Prabhakar Dhanivar, 24, and Bhavin Desai, 18. Both men were taken to Trauma Care Hospital around midnight and declared dead at 3.49 am, according to doctors there. Locals alerted the authorities after noticing a strong chemical odour coming from the public toilet



and reported that two people had suffered suffocation. The Vanrai police have registered an accidental death report and await the post-mortem analysis to establish the exact cause of

death. "Prima facie, it looks like gas emitted by a small-scale industrial unit near the toilet might have come in contact with the two individuals," a police officer said. BMC officials said the incident was reported to the authorities at around 8.30 am, following which teams from the fire brigade, police, 108 ambulance services, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, and the BMC ward staff were mobilised and sent to the spot.

Officials were also expected to examine the toilet premises and ascertain the source of the smell. A detailed inquiry is likely to establish the sequence of events and the cause of death.

Ex-trustees Champat Rai, Anil Mishra named
witnesses in Ram Temple donation 'theft' chargesheet

Rai and Mishra resigned as Trust office-bearers after allegations surfaced

Lucknow (Agency).

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, has listed 133 witnesses — including former office-bearers of the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, Champat Rai and Anil Mishra — in its chargesheet against the eight accused. Rai served as the Trust's general secretary and Anil Mishra as a member. They resigned after the allegations of the donation theft surfaced. Other witnesses named by the SIT include Krishna Mohan, a Trust member who filed the original complaint; Gopal M Nagarkatte, also known as Gopal Rao, who was frequently invited as a special invitee to Trust meetings; along with several local residents and police personnel.

The chargesheet, running to approximately 74,000 pages, was filed before a local court in Ayodhya on Wednesday. It is learnt that

the SIT, in its chargesheet, stated that allegations of donation theft first came to light when a video and a written message were sent to Champat Rai while he was travelling by train from Delhi to Ayodhya on June 4. He was informed about the cash found in the bathroom of the counting room. The video showed bundles of currency notes lying inside a bathroom. Later, after reaching Ayodhya, Rai was shown several videos, learnt to be mentioned in the chargesheet, in which the counting staff could allegedly be seen removing donation money while it was being counted.

The eight accused — Avinash Shukla, Lavkush Mishra, Anukalp Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey, Ramshankar Mishra, Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav and Subhash Srivastav — face charges of criminal breach of trust, criminal conspiracy, and offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act. All are in



judicial custody. The documents accompanying the chargesheet include supporting materials, annexures, exhibits, and other evidence. During the probe, police recovered Rs 79.8 lakh from seven of the eight arrested men, sources said. No cash

or valuables were recovered from Subhash Srivastav. The chargesheet details the specific occasions on which each accused was caught removing the donation money, as well as instances of assisting others in doing so, sources said.

UP man got first government teaching job at
59. Road there took 26 attempts

The applicant, a Class 12 student who was 17 years and eight months old at the time of the February 5 incident, claimed he had no intention of hitting the couple's bike.

Lucknow (Agency).

At 59 years and seven months old, Baghat resident Vijay Kumar Sharma will embark on a new chapter of his life from Monday — stepping in as an assistant teacher at a government-aided school after spending nearly four decades teaching in private schools. Sharma cleared the Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT) examination this year and will now join Inter College Ailum, a government-aided higher secondary school in Shamli district, located 15 km from his residence at Barawad village in Baghat district. He will teach Sanskrit to students up to Class X. "It was always my dream to get a government job as a teacher, and I made several attempts over the last 27 years. I kept giving the exams, and now, at the age of 59, my dream has finally come true," said Sharma, a father of five, including

three daughters, after clearing the exam conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Education Service Selection Commission (UPSSC). Kumar graduated in 1987, followed by dual postgraduate degrees in Hindi and Sanskrit, and completed his BEd in 2003. Recounting his selection, Sharma said a vacancy opened this year for 292 posts of Sanskrit teachers. "I had cleared the written examination several times but repeatedly failed to clear the interview stage. There were times I felt that the selection process itself was flawed, but I never let that hurdle make me feel hopeless — I kept trying... This time, there was no interview, and I believe that gave candidates like me an equal opportunity to prove ourselves," he said as he thanked the government for eliminating the

interview round in the selection. According to him, he will get about two years and a few months to teach in government schools, since the retirement



age is 62. "I was born in February 1967. I will serve just over two years, but even that is deeply satisfying — it was my dream to teach at a government school," he said, adding that Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath personally handed him his appointment letter in Lucknow last Tuesday. Vijay's two sons serve in the UP Police, while his wife, Kaushal Sharma, is a homemaker. Of his five children, four are married. Vijay's eldest daughter, Mamta Sharma, who also appeared four times for the government teacher exam, said her father is a huge inspiration for young people who give up on life over failures. "My father failed 26 times, but I never once saw any helplessness or self-doubt in him. After our brothers were selected into the UP Police, we asked him not to take the exam anymore, but he never listened to us and kept trying," she said. Speaking about her early days, the daughter said, "We faced financial difficulties in the early days, since my father was the sole earning member of the house."

Woman ends her
life over sexual
harassment in
Bengaluru

Asha's husband died a few weeks ago. She lived with her children and worked at a garment factory. Sarajapur police have registered a case.

**BENGALURU (Agency).**

A 30-year-old woman died by suicide on Wednesday after she was allegedly subjected to mental and sexual harassment by a couple.

The victim has been identified as Asha of Sarajapur. Her mother Lakshamma from Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu filed a police complaint on Thursday against Somesh and his wife.

Somesh, a driver, who knew that Asha was a widow, was allegedly pressuring her to have an illicit relationship with him, while his wife allegedly accused Asha of having a relationship with her husband.

Unable to bear the harassment, Asha swallowed pills to end her life on Wednesday and later died at a hospital. A case of abetment to suicide under Section 108 of BNS is registered against the couple, the police said. Asha reportedly told her mother over phone on September 23 that the couple had been harassing her and she no longer wanted to live.

Asha said she had consumed tablets to end her life and asked her mother to take care of her children. Lakshamma, her mother, immediately alerted her son Shivakumar, who took Asha to a nearby hospital. She was subsequently shifted to a hospital in Basavanagudi, where she died.

Asha's husband died a few weeks ago. She lived with her children and worked at a garment factory. Sarajapur police have registered a case.

NEWS BOX

Ravindra Jadeja 'obviously in the mix' for 2027 ODI World Cup, says Team India coach



New Delhi. (Agency)

India will start their 2027 ODI World Cup preparations with the three-match series against West Indies, beginning on September 27. The Men in Blue came close to lifting the title in 2023, but suffered a heartbreaking defeat to Australia in Ahmedabad. The focus in this series will be on three veterans: Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja. Kohli and Rohit have been a regular part of the ODI setup, but Jadeja is back in the 50-over setup after eight months. He last featured in an ODI in January, but India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak believes that the allrounder is in contention for next year's World Cup. I think he is obviously in the mix. I am not part of the selection [committee], so I don't know what their thinking is. I just think whoever is coming and playing for India, they are obviously part of the 20-25 players who possibly can be in the team," Kotak said. He further said that Jadeja is a brilliant all-rounder and that anyone can check his records. Kotak added that the team combination will depend on the captain and coach, and there is still time to decide that. However, for him, Jadeja is also one of the best fielders in the world. "He bowls, he bats and the experience he has, and I actually firmly believe that experience is something you cannot beat. So like we see Rohit, we see Virat, [the same way] we see Jadeja. And that brings a lot to the team. Jadeja is obviously a very useful member of the team," he added. Jadeja has played 210 ODI matches for India and scored 2905 runs at an average of 32.28, while also taking 232 wickets at an economy of 4.89.

Shubman Gill fit to play 1st ODI

India ODI captain Shubman Gill took a blow in the nets, but coach Kotak confirmed his availability, saying the batter was "Good to go." This means that Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is also a part of the squad, might have to sit out. The left-handed batter smashed a century in his last ODI match against Afghanistan, but hasn't featured in the playing XI since.

India Storm into Archery semifinals at Asian Games 2026, South Korea await - Details



New Delhi. (Agency)

India's compound women's and men's teams have made it to the semifinals after beating Kazakhstan and Bhutan, respectively, here at Okazaki Chuo Sogo Park Multipurpose Square on Sunday. The women's team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Chikitha Taniparthi and Prithika Pradeep defeated Kazakhstan's Roxana Yunussova, Viktoriya Lyan and Adel Zhexenbinova 233-230 in the quarterfinals. The Indian team, who placed second in the qualification, started off with a win over Mongolia 238-223 in the Round of 16 before edging Kazakhstan in the quarter-finals. The men's team of Kushal Dalal, Sahil Jadhav and Ganesh Mani Ratnam beat Bhutan's Kezang Norbu, Tshetum Gaytshey and Tandin Dorji 235-232 in the quarterfinals.

The Indian men finished third in the qualification and defeated the UAE 235-215 in the Round of 16 before eliminating Bhutan in the quarter-finals.

Both teams will face South Korea in the semi-finals, with the medal rounds scheduled for September 30. The compound mixed team competition will also carry significance. With the discipline set to make its historic Olympic debut at LA28, one quota place is available at the Asian Games, adding another layer of intrigue to the battle for continental honours. Overall, eight quota places for the LA28 Olympic Games are up for grabs at the Asian Games. Two quota places each are on offer in the recurve men's and women's individual events, while the recurve mixed team and compound mixed team champions will each earn one men's and one women's quota place. India enjoyed its most successful Asian Games archery campaign in Hangzhou 2023, winning a record nine medals - five gold, two silver and two bronze. The compound archers swept all five gold medals on offer, while the recurve teams contributed a silver and a bronze.

In a battle with destiny: At 33, fate beats Karthik Unnikrishnan at Asian Games

New Delhi. (Agency)

The rain had made the runway at the Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium difficult to negotiate. It was coming down steadily as Karthik Unnikrishnan prepared for the biggest competition of his life, at an age when most triple jumpers would be thinking about the end of their careers rather than the beginning of their international ones. Karthik was 33 and making his Asian Games debut. He had waited years for this opportunity. He had also spent years wondering whether it would ever come. There was more bad news waiting for him on the runway. Praveen Chithravel, India's 2022 Asian Games bronze medallist, pulled a muscle in the opening round and was ruled out without completing a jump. The responsibility of carrying India's challenge in the event was suddenly on Karthik, who had already arrived in Nagoya knowing that this could be the only major continental Games of his career...It was hardly the debut he had imagined. But then, very little about Karthik's career has gone according to plan.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN KERALA

Karthik was born in 1993 and has been part of India's triple jump scene since 2015. He is not a late starter in athletics; what slowed him down was everything around the sport. His parents ran a tea shop in Ooty, while Karthik grew up at his maternal grandparents' home in Kerala. He was not particularly good at studies, and when his family saw a six-foot boy who needed direction, sport became the obvious option. At Parali High School in Palakkad, he was initially put into the hurdles, where he struggled. For a child living away from his parents and finding success in neither studies nor sport, failure quickly hardened into self-doubt. He cried. He felt lonely. When he was eventually moved to the triple jump, success came only in small bursts before stalling again at the state level.

So he made the dream smaller. He stopped measuring himself against national standards and focused on the only thing he thought was within reach: he just wanted to wear the Kerala state jersey.

THE ACCIDENTAL BREAKTHROUGH

Karthik's trajectory shifted when he was

called up as an injury replacement for a national meet and unexpectedly finished second. That medal caught the eye of coach P.G. Manoj, who gave him practical advice: secure a job first, then figure out the rest.



That security came through the sports quota in the Indian Air Force. It was a massive moment for a family that initially, and hilariously, thought getting an Air Force job meant he would be flying planes.

Instead, the Air Force gave Karthik something he had never known: an environment where a domestic medal was just the starting point. Surrounded by jumpers looking far beyond state lines, his

internal target steadily moved from 15 metres to 16, and then to 17. The Asian Games and the Olympics were no longer distant abstractions.

CARRYING THE BAGGAGE

The problem with allowing yourself to dream bigger is that failure stops being a vague feeling and starts taking very specific shapes. Over the next few years, circumstance kept pulling the rug out. COVID-19 lockdowns trapped him in Patiala, far from his support system. Post-COVID recovery and the absence of his coach cost him at the Tokyo Olympic trials. An ankle injury at the Commonwealth Games trials sidelined him just after he had joined the elite club of Indians to breach the 17-metre barrier.

By 2023, a severe tendon injury disrupted his muscle coordination so completely that he and his physio, Garima, now his wife, had to strip his technique down and teach him how to jump all over again. In isolation, each setback had a logical explanation: a bad infection, a torn tendon, bad timing. But stacked together, they became a psychological weight. Each major trial was no longer just a fresh runway.

Anahat Singh, Abhay Singh Chase Asian Games Gold With LA 2028 Spot At Stake

New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian squash stars Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh will be on the verge of making history on Sunday when they take on Malaysian opponents in the women's and men's singles gold-medal matches at the Asian Games, with victory also bringing an Olympic qualification spot for the Los Angeles 2028 Games.

Anahat will face Malaysia's Sivasangari Subramaniam in the women's singles final at 1:30 pm IST, while Abhay will take on Malaysia's Ng Eain Yow in the men's singles gold-medal match at 12:30 pm. The two finals offer India the chance to claim its first individual Asian Games gold medal in squash while also securing a place at the sport's Olympic debut at LA 2028. At just 18, Anahat has already established herself as one of India's leading squash players. She announced herself on the senior international stage even earlier, becoming the youngest member of India's contingent at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Anahat also registered a win on her CWG debut, defeating Jada Ross of St Vincent and the Grenadines in the women's singles Round of 64. Her latest Asian Games run has underlined her ability to perform



under pressure. In the semifinal, Anahat fought back from two games down to defeat Japan's world No. 6 Satomi Watanabe 9-11, 11-13, 12-10, 11-6, 11-3. She was also forced to receive medical attention after a collision with Watanabe but returned to complete one of the biggest comebacks of her young career. Standing alongside her in Sunday's

historic double bid is 28-year-old Abhay, India's highest-ranked male professional squash player. Born in Chennai, Abhay reached a career-high PSA ranking of No. 22 in April 2026 and is currently ranked

No. 26. An Arjuna Award recipient in 2024, he has emerged as a key member of India's national squad.

Abhay booked his place in the Asian Games final with a convincing 11-3, 12-10, 11-6 win over Pakistan's Muhammad Irfan in the semifinals. He became only the second Indian man after Saurav Ghosal to reach the Asian Games men's singles final.

His recent record has also included significant success, with Abhay helping India win the 2025 SDAT Squash World Cup in Chennai and claiming the Indian Open in Mumbai and his third Tuanku Muhriz Trophy title in Malaysia in 2026.

India already has a squash medal from the Games, with Joshua Chinappa and Velavan Senthilkumar securing bronze in mixed doubles.

IND vs WI: Virat Kohli 59 runs away from breaking Sachin Tendulkar's historic ODI record

New Delhi. (Agency)

Star batter Virat Kohli is on the verge of breaking another historic ODI record held by Sachin Tendulkar during the three-match series against the West Indies, which begins on Sunday, September 27. Kohli needs just 59 runs in the first ODI in Thiruvananthapuram to become only the second batter in men's ODI history to complete 15,000 runs, joining Tendulkar in the elite list. Kohli has scored 14,941 runs in 302 ODI innings at an average of 58.59, with 54 centuries and 79 fifties. While Tendulkar is the ODI's highest run-scorer with 18,426 runs, Kohli has several other milestones within his reach in the upcoming series. If the veteran batter scores 59 runs against West Indies, he will complete 15,000 ODI runs in his 303rd innings, making him the fastest batter to



the landmark by a big margin. Tendulkar reached the landmark in his 377th ODI innings in 2007, meaning Kohli would get there 74 innings earlier than his illustrious predecessor. Earlier, Kohli became the fastest batter to 13,000 ODI runs, reaching

the feat in 267 innings in 2023, breaking Tendulkar's previous record of 321 innings.

Tendulkar's home record also in Kohli's sights

Kohli will also aim to break another of Tendulkar's records, which is the most ODI runs scored at home. Tendulkar amassed 6,976 ODI runs in India, while Kohli currently has 6,867, leaving him just 110 runs short of surpassing the former India opener. Kohli's record at home underlines his consistency. He has smashed those 6,867 runs in 127 innings, averaging 62.42, with 27 hundreds and 36 fifties. At home, Kohli has hit 41 international centuries, while Tendulkar's record stands at 42. He needs two more centuries in India to overtake his former teammate and India's batting legend in that list.

Ro-Ko return as India enter final stretch of World Cup preparations with WI ODIs



New Delhi. (Agency)

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are back in action, and with the 2027 ODI World Cup now just over a year away, India's three-match series against West Indies comes at a time when their World Cup plans need to start taking shape. There is still plenty to sort out, and every ODI between now and next October will give India a chance to settle combinations, look at their options and work out who fits where. Eventually settled for bronze. The first ODI of the three-match series will be played on Sunday, September 27, with the toss scheduled for 1:30 PM IST. Live streaming of the India vs West Indies ODI series will be available on the JioHotstar app and website, while the matches will be telecast live on the Star Sports Network in India. West Indies arrive with a very different set of priorities. Their hopes of direct qualification for the 2027 World Cup are over and they will have to go through the Qualifier for the third successive time to make it to the ICC event. The India tour is therefore an important test for Daren Sammy's side, both in terms of seeing how they measure up against a strong opponent and identifying what needs to improve before the qualifier, which is five months away. India have played three ODI series this year and lost two of them. Injuries, along with the focus on the T20 World Cup, which India won, have meant they have struggled to put their strongest side on the field consistently. They will again be without Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah for this series, leaving two significant holes to fill. Pandya gives India the all-round balance that can change the make-up of the XI, while Bumrah remains the leader of their pace attack and one of their most important white-ball players. If both are fit and available when India travel to Southern Africa for the World Cup, they will be central to the team's plans.

Panama coach blames Bengaluru traffic, poor logistics for 1-1 draw against India

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Panama coach Thomas Christiansen did not want to call it an excuse, but after watching his side surrender the lead and settle for a 1-1 draw against India in Bengaluru, he had little hesitation in pointing towards the circumstances around the team's preparation. Speaking at the post-match press conference at Sree Kanteerava Stadium, Christiansen said Panama had not had enough time to train together because of travel and logistics, while the team's journey to the stadium on matchday took around two hours in Bengaluru traffic. He also took responsibility for the result, with five players making their first starts for the senior national team as Panama begin a generational transition. "A generational change is not easy. Five players got their first start today. The result is my fault. We didn't have time to work, to train, because



of the travel and logistics. But I'm happy to see them start with five debutants. We have to learn from this experience." "I don't want this to sound like an excuse, but it is not easy to be in a bus for two hours in traffic to get to

the stadium. The logistics and the travel here were also complicated. We have to be smarter when we sign these agreements again. I don't want this to sound like an excuse, but we have to be careful with how

we handle things inside and outside the pitch because our players deserve better." The five debutants were Marcos De Leon, Jair Modelo, Joseph Jones, Daivis Murillo and Mijahir Jimenez. Panama had also brought substantial World Cup experience to Bengaluru, with 14 players from their 2026 World Cup squad included in the group for the India friendly, although the side Christiansen fielded was clearly one being used to begin the next phase. Panama were based at the Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, while their training sessions were held at the Centre for Sports Excellence Phase 3 in Bettahalasuru, up in North Bengaluru. Their final pre-match session was on September 24, so the squad had already made that trip across the city and back before matchday even arrived. Getting to Kanteerava on September 25 was a much shorter journey on paper.

Richa Chadha

Recalls Being Told Ali Fazal 'Won't Amount To Anything': 'Iss Ladke Ka Kuch Nahi Hoga'

Ali Fazal has come a long way in his career. From struggling to find his place in the industry to working on big Bollywood and Hollywood projects, the actor has seen plenty of ups and downs. Richa Chadha has been around for a big part of that journey, first as a friend and later as his partner.

In a recent interaction with SCREEN, Richa spoke about what it feels like to see Ali getting the recognition he has worked towards for years. She said that while supporting a partner can be complicated at times, this year has simply made her happy. "Of course, it's more complex than just being supportive, but not this year. We've been together for a long time. We've been married for six years. When I see the culmination of all the hard work he's done over the years in 2026, there's no complexity. There's just pure happiness." Richa has also seen Ali during the days when things were far from easy. Remembering that phase of his life, she said she has watched him go from having very little to building a successful career.

"I've seen him at the time when he lived in a shanty and owned a bicycle. He's not only my partner, but also my friend. To see him overcome everything is just a very different feeling. I feel like maine iss din ke liye isko



paal pos ke bada kiya hai (I feel like I've nurtured and raised it for this very day)."

Richa also recalled how some people reacted when they found out that she was dating Ali. According to

her, two people from the film industry actually called her and warned her that his career would not go very far. She remembered them telling her, "Iss ladke ka kuchh nahi hoga (This boy won't result in anything)." But Ali eventually proved that there was more to his career than those early doubts. Richa recalled how people were surprised when he landed the 2017 Hollywood film Victoria & Abdul, which starred Judi Dench. She also praised Ali for holding his own opposite the veteran actor, saying that it was no easy task. Ali is currently having a busy year. He was seen in Mirzapur: The Movie and also featured in Prime Video India's crime series Raakh. He was also part of Shakun Batra's segment in Lust Stories 3.

Richa and Ali first met while shooting for Fukrey in 2012. They started out as friends before eventually falling in love. The couple made their relationship public in 2017. They legally married in 2020 under the Special Marriage Act.

Taapsee Pannu

Recalls Being Removed From Film Because Hero's Wife Didn't Like Her: 'The Worst Reason'

Taapsee Pannu is known for never mincing her words and being candid about her journey in Bollywood. In a recent chat, the actress opened up about how she was dropped from a film at the hero's demand, without being given a reason. She also recalled another incident where she was replaced because the hero's wife didn't like her.

"I have been told that I was replaced by the hero of the film. God knows the reason. I keep imagining the



reasons. I can imagine the insecurity; I can imagine that he wanted someone else whom he was closer to. I can imagine various reasons, but I wasn't given any solid reason. I was just told that he didn't want me in

the film because I kept asking the reason for my removal," Taapsee told Nayandeep Rakshit.

In the same chat, she also recalled the worst reason she was given for being replaced. The actress said, "The worst reason given to me when I was replaced was, 'The hero's wife doesn't like you.' I don't know why she didn't like me." However, Taapsee did not name the actor or his wife.

Recently, Taapsee opened up about how she has started turning down work to avoid being typecast. "Everybody is going into their comfort zone and using tried-and-tested methods. For instance, for glamorous roles, they (industry) have a set of five actresses they can cast, and for hard-hitting, issue-based films, they have another set of five actresses to cast," she told PTI in an interview.

"I've actually started turning down films for this reason, telling makers that the audience will easily guess the ending. So, (I tell them) 'Don't cast me in this; it's bad for your film'.

I've gone and 'de-sold' myself to a few films," she added. Meanwhile, Taapsee was last seen in Gandhari on Netflix.

Anjali Anand Recalls YRF Casting Director's 'Lose Weight' Remark, Mom's Reaction To Meeting Karan Johar



For Anjali Anand, becoming an actor did not happen as smoothly as one might expect given her family background. Despite having trained in both acting and dance, she found herself struggling to land substantial work. The situation became so difficult that she eventually ran out of savings and began considering a life outside the industry, including moving abroad. However, things changed for her as soon as Anjali bagged a role in a Karan Johar film, which eventually opened the door to her being cast as one of the leads in Dhamaal 4. Speaking about the unexpected turn in her career on Farah Khan's YouTube channel, Anjali recalled how her mother reacted when she told her she was going to meet Karan.

Anjali Anand talks about her initial struggles in the industry

In Farah Khan's recent Vlog, Anjali Anand revealed that her mother was in disbelief when she told her about meeting Karan Johar. According to the actress, her mother responded, "Badi aayi Karan Johar se milne wali." She essayed the role of Ranveer Singh's sister in Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. She said, "I was at the lowest point of my life in 2020. I was considering leaving India and quitting acting altogether. I was not getting any acting offers. The pandemic had happened, all my savings were exhausted, and I was living alone on rent for six months. I remember my friends had dragged me to Goa when I received a message from Shanoo Sharma. She said, 'Babe, call me.'"

Talking about her meeting with YRF's casting director Shanoo Sharma, Anjali said, "Whenever I used to meet her for roles, she would tell me, 'When you lose weight, we will do something.'" Anjali's mother recalled how she would react whenever her daughter headed out for an audition. She admitted that she would often assume Anjali would not get the role, telling herself, "She won't make it this time too." Anjali remembered how her mother reacted when she found out that her daughter was going to meet Karan Johar.

Raghav Chadha On 3rd Wedding Anniversary With Parineeti Chopra: 'Not Sure I've Found The Words To...'



Politician Raghav Chadha marked 3 years of marital bliss with Bollywood actress Parineeti Chopra with an adorable wish on social media. Expressing his gratitude for the life the two of them are building together, Raghav uploaded a video montage of some rare moments of the lovebirds together on IG.

He wrote on the photo-sharing app, "Three years and I'm still not sure if I've found the words to describe how much you mean to me. Which is saying something, because I'm usually not short of them (sic)."

"From that first breakfast together to now, you have somehow made every version of life feel warmer, fuller and more like home. Particularly, this past year has given us so much to hold close, and somehow made me even more grateful for the life we are building together. Happy anniversary @parineetichopra (sic)," he added.

Raghav concluded the post, saying, "I feel incredibly lucky that I get to do life with you." Parineeti's mother and Raghav's mother-in-law, Reena Chopra, wished the couple in the comment section, saying, "Awww !! Love you both! Happy Anniversary".

Parineeti and Raghav tied the knot on September 24, 2023, in a private ceremony in Udaipur. The couple embraced parenthood on October 19, 2025, as they welcomed their son Neer. These two are frequently seen supporting each other on social media.

Most recently, Raghav praised Parineeti ahead of her OTT debut with 'Shaque'. Sharing the recently released trailer of 'Shaque' on his official Instagram handle, Raghav penned, "So proud of you @parineetichopra...I know how much you gave to Shaque, especially through a time that was already very special for us. Having spent some time at the shoot in Shimla, I also got to see the warmth and talent of the team behind it. An exceptionally talented bunch, and clearly one you had a lot of fun working with."

NEWS BOX

Nepal's hydropower ambitions face climate reality check

KINSHASA, Congo.(Agency)

Nepal's hydropower boom has long been touted as a cornerstone of economic growth and renewable energy, but the devastating flood in August exposed its vulnerability. The disaster triggered by a glacial mountain collapse on the China-Nepal border killed more than 1,400 people and left thousands missing - while knocking 410 megawatts (MW), or about 10 percent of the generation capacity, out of Nepal's power system. More than 90 percent of Nepal's electricity comes from hydropower, but extensive damage to its river projects has prompted questions about its energy security as climate and geological risks intensify. "Hydropower has been a major driving force in growth of the country... generating jobs and income," Uttam Bhlon Lama, senior vice president of the Independent Power Producers' Association (IPPAN), told AFP. "It was bringing huge hope and future prospects to the people," he said, adding that the country would now have to rethink its dam-building spree. "We have to prepare... This is our new normal." Over the past decade, the Himalayan nation has increased hydropower output more than fourfold to about 4,120 megawatts, according to government figures, helping connect nearly all its 30 million people to the grid. The country had previously moved to export surplus electricity to neighbouring India and Bangladesh, seeking to turn its glacier-fed rivers into a source of revenue. Authorities suspended electricity exports after the disaster. The major destruction of hydropower infrastructure underscored the risks of that strategy in a region where glaciers are retreating, permafrost is thawing and extreme hazards are becoming harder to predict.

CNN Says White House Didn't Allow It To Board Trump's Air Force One

world.(Agency)

The White House left CNN off Air Force One for President Donald Trump's trip Saturday to a college football game in Tennessee, marking the latest media restriction from the administration in an ongoing dispute with First Amendment implications. CNN, a member of the US network video pool that rotates duties shooting and sharing video coverage of the president, reported it had been scheduled to fly aboard the president's plane Saturday for a visit to a midday game between the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and the University of Texas. But White House guidance issued Friday night instead included Real America's Voice, a conservative outlet. The White House guidance was issued after journalists from CNN, along with MS NOW and Politico, which Trump banned last week from the White House grounds, returned to the executive complex with TV cameras in hand after a judge handed the organisations a reprieve. US District Judge Timothy Kelly temporarily struck down the president's ban in an overnight ruling early Thursday, but his decision dealt with "hard passes" to the White House grounds and didn't directly address pool duties. The judge's temporary order also said nothing directly about Air Force One. The spot meant for CNN on the flight has long been saved for a member of the US network video pool; Real America's Voice is not a part of that group. The White House did not respond to emails from The Associated Press requesting comment about the decision. CNN declined to comment. A written pool report Saturday morning confirmed there was "no TV pool" for the travel, though Real America's Voice celebrated its inclusion in the trip and said it would make feeds available to other news outlets.

Hamas leader says Israel to use Gaza 'blood' in election

The Israeli premier has vowed in the run-up to the vote not to withdraw troops from Gaza and rejected a US-led peace initiative in which Hamas said it would surrender weapons.

DOHA.(Agency)

The leader of Hamas brushed aside the possibility of change from Israel's upcoming election in an interview on Saturday, saying he expected Israelis to campaign off Gaza's "blood". "Whether this or that person comes to power, or this party or another -- our people have suffered at the hands of all Israeli parties," Khalil al-Hayya told the Qatari station Al-Araby. "We absolutely refuse to allow the blood, suffering, and cause of the

Palestinian people to serve as fuel for Israeli elections. What matters to us is that our people achieve their goals, aspirations and legitimate rights." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is locked in a tight contest as he seeks to stay in power in the October 27 elections. The Israeli premier has vowed in the run-up to the vote not to withdraw troops from Gaza and rejected a US-led peace initiative in which Hamas said it would surrender weapons, a promise Israel views with scepticism. The vote is the first since Hamas led the deadliest ever attack against Israel on October 7, 2023, with militants storming into southern Israel and killing 1,221 people and dragging 251 others as hostages to Gaza. Israel's retaliatory offensive has displaced virtually the entire population of Gaza, damaged or destroyed the vast majority of buildings and killed more than 73,900 people, according to the Gaza health ministry, which operates under Hamas and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations. Polls show Netanyahu's

most formidable challenger to be Gadi Eisenkot, a former military chief who served in Netanyahu's war cabinet but has accused him of failing strategically. The

Abbas, 90, has since been ruling by decree, with the legislature not allowed to convene and Hamas seizing control of Gaza. Abbas is based in the West Bank,



Palestinian Authority in turn has scheduled a legislative election for November 28, which would be the first in two decades, although there are widespread doubts about whether it will go ahead. Hamas won the last election, held in 2006, defeating Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah.

where the Palestinian Authority wields limited autonomy. "We are ready to sit down with President Abbas to lay the foundations for a national program and achieve genuine unity," Hayya said. "If the Palestinian elections are postponed, that step must serve as an entry point for putting the Palestinian house in order." Hamas has been working on an alliance with Mohammed Dahlan, a former Fatah figure born in Gaza who has been an interlocutor with the United States on its peace plan. "In the event of a postponement, the alliance will remain intact and open to all, aiming to forge a unified national front," Hayya said. It remains uncertain if Hamas could even run in the election as Abbas has required all candidates to accept the platform of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which has recognised Israel's right to exist since 1993 at the start of the Oslo peace accords.

Oman calls for self-restraint, dialog in Mideast conflict

UNITED STATES.(Agency)

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi called at the UN Saturday for "self-restraint" from all sides in the Middle East war, while stressing that Muscat was ready to mediate.

Earlier on Saturday, President Donald Trump rejected a truce deal proposed by Iran that Tehran said could have reopened the Strait of Hormuz to shipping within a week. The waterway is key to the world's energy supply and is now central to the conflict between the US and Iran, which is at a stalemate after nearly

seven months. "We call upon all parties concerned to settle their outstanding disputes through



pursuing a policy of self-restraint and foresight, and through engaging in

dialog to reach consensual, political solutions and sustainable understandings for the benefit of all," Albusaidi said, addressing world leaders gathered in New York.

"Oman once again reaffirms its steadfast commitment to continuing its efforts aimed at safeguarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz... We also call upon all parties to cooperate with Oman in these efforts." Oman sits across the Strait of Hormuz from Iran, and ships seeking to skirt Tehran's restrictions have recently been taking a route that hugs the Omani coast.

From terrorism to Gulf conflict: Here's what EAM S Jaishankar said at UN | Key Points

In a wide-ranging speech, Jaishankar touched on terrorism, the conflicts in Ukraine and the Gulf, food and energy security, artificial intelligence, development and the need to reform international institutions.

world.(Agency)

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar used India's address to the UN General Assembly to call for peace, defend India's right to act against terrorism and press for a greater voice for developing countries in global decision-making. In a wide-ranging speech, Jaishankar touched on terrorism, the conflicts in Ukraine and the Gulf, food and energy security, artificial intelligence, development and the need to reform international institutions. His strongest warning was directed at an unnamed country, which he described as a "serial practitioner of terrorism". Jaishankar

accused it of misrepresenting facts before the General Assembly and attempting to normalise terrorism and avoid accountability. Yesterday, a serial practitioner of terrorism misrepresented facts before this assembly," Jaishankar told the General Debate. "Our right to defend



ourselves against terrorism will be exercised." He did not identify the country or spell out what action India might take. He said state-sponsored terrorism with a cross-border purpose was a direct challenge to the international order and called for governments involved in such activities to be held accountable. "Friendship and goodwill cannot

coexist with terrorism," he said, while calling for continued zero tolerance towards terrorism and action against terror financing.

India calls for restraint in Gulf, Ukraine Jaishankar also urged an end to hostilities in the Gulf and Ukraine, warning that conflicts were affecting countries far beyond the immediate battlefield. "We remain deeply concerned over continuing hostilities," he said, stressing the need to protect seafarers and keep energy and foodgrain supplies moving. On the Gulf, he called on all sides to exercise restraint and de-escalate tensions.

"India calls upon all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, ensure protection of civilians, and uninterrupted flow of energy and commerce," he said.

On Ukraine, Jaishankar said India supported ongoing efforts to bring peace and recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message to Russian President Vladimir Putin - "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated, endless war must give way now to an end to war." India also reiterated its support for a two-state solution in West Asia, with Israel and Palestine living side by side as sovereign states.

German, Russian foreign ministers have rare meeting at UN

UNITED NATIONS.(Agency)

The German and Russian foreign ministers met Saturday on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, holding what's believed to be the first such tête-à-tête since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The meeting came as tensions between the European Union and Russia rose — and just before Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addressed world leaders. In the encounter, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul called on Russia to abandon its "dangerous path of escalation" toward Germany, Europe and the NATO alliance, a German delegation official said. Ties between Russia and Germany have soured in recent weeks, following an attempted drone attack last month at Leipzig airport — Germany has blamed the incident on Russia — and tit-for-tat responses that followed it.

Wadephul expressed openness to a better relationship but said it required a genuine willingness from Russia's leadership to end the war in Ukraine, according to the official. The German news agency dpa reported that the roughly 20-minute meeting took place in a room provided by the Russian side and ended with both ministers shaking hands.

Later, Lavrov said at a news conference that "nothing new came from" the conversation.

Then, Lavrov denounced the West in his speech. After the meeting, Lavrov went on to take the rostrum at the General Assembly, where he defended his country's war in Ukraine and lobbed barbs at the West — including Germany. He made a point of blasting the notion of Germany or Japan gaining a permanent seat on the powerful U.N. Security Council. The United States has long supported permanent seats for those countries and India. Criticising NATO and the U.S. — though not President Donald Trump by name — Lavrov complained that the West "continues to try to maintain its privileges and to impose its own rules on everyone else" even as the geopolitical ground is shifting. "A fairer, multipolar world order is emerging before our very eyes," said Lavrov, whose country is part of the BRICS group of leading developing nations and other organizations that he portrays as more forward-looking and constructive.

Moscow has repeatedly sought to stress that it maintains a strong position on the global stage despite its 4½-year war on Ukraine and isolation from the West. Writing on her personal Telegram channel, Maria Zakharova, a spokesperson for Russia's Foreign Ministry, said that "tens of diplomats" had come to meet Lavrov to "shake his hand and thank Russia." An overwhelming majority of General Assembly member nations have repeatedly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as Wadephul noted in his own address to the assembly.

Gunmen Open Fire On Ambulance Rescuing Victims Of Pak Suicide Bombing

Dera Ismail Khan.(Agency)

Gunmen opened fire on an ambulance attending the scene of a suicide bomb attack at a roadside police checkpoint in northwestern Pakistan that killed at least 12 people on Saturday and wounded about 35 others, officials said. The attack involving

service. Local police chief Safdar Baloch said most of those killed and wounded were security personnel and passersby. The blast destroyed the sprawling checkpoint, and witnesses said gunshots were also heard after the attack. Faizi said gunmen opened fire on an ambulance as emergency crews transported victims to a nearby hospital, killing a rescue worker and wounding two others. Two women and a child were among those killed in the suicide bombing, he said.

The Pakistani Taliban, formally known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack. Pakistan has experienced a surge in armed group violence in recent years, much of it claimed by the TTP and the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, a separatist group primarily active in neighboring Balochistan province.



an explosives-laden vehicle occurred in Dera Ismail Khan, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said Bilal Faizi, a spokesman for the provincial emergency

PENJWEN.(Agency)

Kurdistan resident Ahmed Faraj was just a child when his city became a battlefield in the Iran-Iraq conflict. Decades later, with the West Asia at war, he fears his home might be drawn in again. For months, drones and missiles have buzzed over his lush green hometown of Penjwen bordering Iran, as the Islamic republic and the United States fight a war that has engulfed most of the region. Iran and its allied Iraqi armed factions have intensified attacks on bases hosting US troops, as well as against Iranian Kurdish opposition groups, whose fighters have long sought refuge in Kurdistan's mountains.

While the initial violence has largely subsided, Faraj worries that if fighting resumes, the conflict could escalate, putting his city at risk because "in war, borders no longer exist." "I clearly remember Penjwen's destruction," the 57-year-old told AFP as he sipped his tea at one of the city's busiest markets. Led by Saddam Hussein,

Iraq attacked neighbouring Iran in September 1980, triggering an eight-year war that is estimated to have killed hundreds of thousands of people on both sides. Faraj said one of his sharpest memories was from a



year later, when Iran attacked his hometown, resulting in "dozens of civilian casualties". Eventually, once Penjwen was deserted, "the Iraqi regime demolished the town itself, flattening all the houses with

TNT and bulldozers so that Iranian forces couldn't enter and establish a base there", he added.

Haunted by a memory

Between 1987 and 1988, Saddam's government carried out the "Anfal Operation" that is thought to have killed around 180,000 Kurds. Following a US-led invasion of Iraq, Saddam was toppled in 2003 and hanged three years later, putting an end to Iraqi proceedings against him on charges of genocide over the Anfal campaign. Former parliamentarian Abdul Rahman Ali Reda was also a child when the war broke out, and one incident still haunts him: when Iraqi forces burned down his family home on a hill in Penjwen. "That sight has never left me," he said, now 53 years old. "Homes, schools, government offices and religious sites were all levelled to the ground, and even after all these years, many houses remain in ruins and have never been rebuilt," Reda told AFP.