



MAHANAGAR METRO

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Top Court To Hear Plea Against Decisions By Poll Body Chief Gyanesh Kumar Next Week

New Delhi (Agency)

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a petition which raised doubts over the decisions taken by the Election Commission of India led by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The matter was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, who mentioned the matter, told the bench that as per the statutory scheme, decisions of the multi-member Election Commission have to be unanimous or by majority.

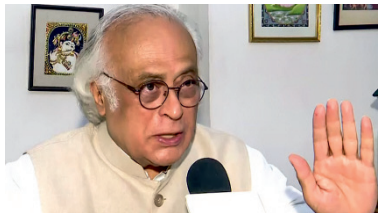
"The way the Election Commission is functioning, there is serious doubt over whether the decisions are unanimous," he submitted. The plea comes in the backdrop of a report in the Indian Express which claimed that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi Sandhu had objected on record at least 14 times over the past 10 months to decisions and orders.

'Patently diabolical agenda': Congress on demography panel 'seeking religion-wise data'

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Congress on Tuesday attacked the Modi government over the Home Ministry-led demography panel reportedly seeking religion-wise data for the past 15 years on birth and vehicle registrations, school enrolment and property transactions, alleging the committee has a "patently diabolical agenda".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a report in The Hindu which claimed that the High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes has sought religion-wise data for the past 15 years



on birth and vehicle registrations, school enrolment and property transactions, as well as district-wise details of religious structures and unusual increases in Aadhaar, voter ID and ration card registrations.

It has also sought intelligence assessments and commission reports on religious conversions among Scheduled Tribe communities, and details of operational detention centres, among other information, according to the media report.

In his post on X, Ramesh said this panel has a "patently diabolical agenda" and has clearly articulated pre-conceived biases.

"Its report has already been prepared no doubt," Ramesh added.

The media report has claimed that state governments are unable to answer most of the queries posed by the high-level committee studying demographic changes, as government departments do not ordinarily maintain much of the information sought by the panel on a religion-wise basis.

Gyanesh Kumar a puppet, must resign: Mallikarjun Kharge's 5 demands for EC

New Delhi(Agency)

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday called Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar a "puppet" of the Narendra Modi government and said he had "no right to remain in office". Kharge's attack came amid a massive row over an Express report highlighting the dissent within the Election Commission (EC) regarding some aspects of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

In his opening remarks while chairing the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Kharge listed out five demands, of which he demanded that data on major changes to voter lists be made public. He also said that deleted voters should be informed and given an opportunity to appeal, and political parties be given timely access to electoral-roll data in a simple format.

"People's names are being removed from voter lists through conspiracy, and the CEC has become a puppet of the Modi government," Kharge said, alleging that the process undermined the protection of eligible voters' rights. He also called for independent, time-bound investigations into serious discrepancies and greater transparency in election-related data and decisions.

Kharge also demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resignation on moral grounds for "pressuring" the CEC. "Under these circumstances, he (Gyanesh Kumar) has no right to remain in office and should be removed immediately. Furthermore, the Prime Minister, under whose pressure he acted in this manner, should himself resign on moral grounds," he said.

Kharge said his demands were aimed at protecting voters' rights and ensuring public confidence in the electoral process. The Congress chief said the poor bear the brunt of all the "flawed policies" of the PM. He said the vote is the most powerful weapon for the poor, Dalits, the underprivileged, and the exploited sections of society.

That is why Modi ji wants to take away this right, but we will not allow that to happen," he stressed.

"History bears witness that ten years ago, this very prime minister devastated India's economy with the decision of 'Notebandi (demonetisation)'. And now, ten years later, he



Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge called Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar a "puppet" of the Modi government at a Congress Working Committee meeting. Kharge listed out five demands, including Kumar's resignation, saying he had "no right to remain in office".

is destroying our robust democracy through a conspiracy of 'Votebandi (voter disenfranchisement)', the Congress chief added.

The CWC meeting is being attended by former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, party general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Jairam Ramesh, KC Venugopal, Sachin Pilot, Mukul Wasnik, and senior leaders P Chidambaram, among others, attended the meeting.

Chief ministers of four Congress-ruled states – DK Shivakumar (Karnataka), VD Sathesaran (Keralam), Revanth Reddy (Telangana) and Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh) – also participated in the meeting.

Kharge said the Congress viewed the SIR issue as a larger democratic battle, rather than merely a contest to win or lose elections.

"Elections come and go, and governments change, but democracy and the Constitution are enduring. This is the foundation of Indian democracy. We must convey to every citizen that in a democracy, the most powerful person is the ordinary voter – not the prime minister, the chief minister or a leader in power," he said. He said the Congress would continue to defend this principle and discharge its democratic responsibility. "This is the spirit of the Constitution; this is the soul of democracy. The Congress will never shy away from this democratic responsibility. We must do whatever it takes – from the streets to Parliament – to ensure this," he said. The Congress chief referred to the explosive Indian Express investigation that reported that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had raised objections on 14 occasions over decisions and processes.

Sambhal violence: Supreme Court sets aside high court order, imposes Rs 10 lakh cost on UP administration

Know how the Supreme Court quashed the NSA detention of Sambhal violence accused Mulla Afroz, penalizing the UP government with a ₹10 lakh fine over custody confessions.

New Delhi(Agency)

The Supreme Court has imposed a ₹10 lakh fine on the Uttar Pradesh Government, holding that any preventive detention cannot be based on alleged confessions obtained in police custody. Justice Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu pronounced the judgment while rejecting an appeal filed by Mulla Afroz, who is accused in the Sambhal Violence Case of 2024.

Challenge to police custody confessions and NSA provision
Mulla Afroz was arrested under Section 3(2) of the National Security Act (NSA) in October 2025 due to the violent clash during the Sambhal Shahi Jama Masjid Survey, where four people were killed. The Uttar Pradesh state officials justified the preventive arrest on grounds that his acts posed a threat to public order and hence required stringent measures to be taken to maintain peace.

The Supreme Court raised doubt over the legality of the very justification being provided by the state in relation to the invocation of preventive detention on grounds of statements given by a person in police custody. Afroz filed a special leave petition challenging the rejection of his bail petition filed in June 2026 by the Allahabad High Court in support of the subjectivity of the District Magistrate in making such orders.

Verdict follows reserved judgment

The apex court concluded proceedings and reserved its judgment on September 8 before issuing the final ruling and financial penalty against the state administration. The ruling sets a strict legal precedent regarding the limits of preventive detention and the inadmissibility of custody-based confessions for restricting personal liberty.



Navapur Under the Shadow of Alleged Illegal Gambling Syndicate

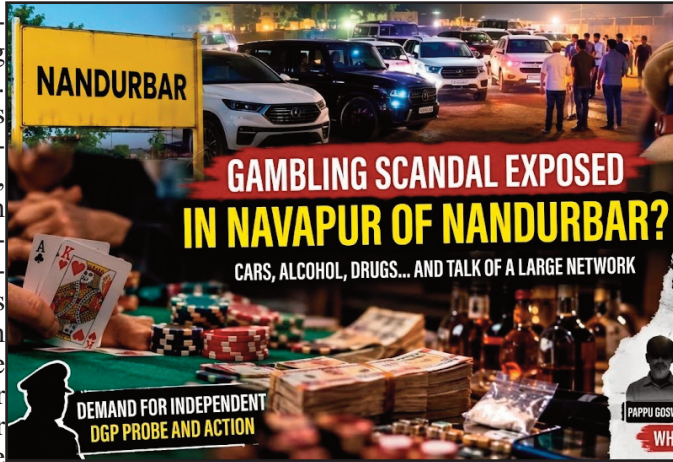
Mahanagar Metro Desk

Nandurbar, Maharashtra: Serious questions are being raised over law and order in Navapur, Nandurbar, following allegations of a large-scale illegal gambling network allegedly operating within the jurisdiction of Navapur Police Station. According to information received by Mahanagar Metro, illegal gambling activities involving games such as "Teen Patti" and "Ghodi" are allegedly being conducted at multiple locations, including a shed near Ekta Hotel, an area near the Jan Talav Hanuman Temple, and bungalows located behind the Jindal petrol pump. Sources claim that the alleged gambling operation attracts players and bookies from Gujarat,

Nashik, Daman and Madhya Pradesh. It is alleged that around 120 to 150 luxury vehicles arrive in the area on some nights, with large amounts of money reportedly being wagered. The allegations further claim that the premises are also being used for the supply of alcohol and drugs, along with other illegal activities. However, these claims require verification by the concerned law-enforcement agencies. The allegations have also raised questions about the functioning of the local police administration. Residents and sources have questioned whether the authorities are aware of the alleged movement of large numbers of vehicles and the reported gambling activities. There are also allegations of a

monthly "hafta" collection involving lakhs of rupees. These allegations have not been independently verified, and no conclusion can be drawn without an official investigation. Questions have also been raised regarding the response of senior police officials after complaints about the alleged activities were reportedly brought to their attention. Claims that complainants or whistleblowers were allegedly threatened also require in-

vestigation. The names of Pappu Goswami, Rais Sheikh and Suraj Jaiswal have been mentioned in connection with the allegations



Rahul Gandhi urges youth to protest against crimes against women, says govt listens only under pressure

Gandhi called for an overhaul of a system that, he alleged, "blames the victim and shields the criminal", arguing that women should not be restricted or punished for crimes committed against them.

New Delhi(Agency).

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday urged young people, particularly women, to step up protests against harassment and rape, alleging that the government responds only when faced with public pressure. In a post on X, Gandhi called for an overhaul of a system that, he alleged, "blames the victim and shields the criminal", arguing that women should not be restricted or punished for crimes committed against them.

"Stop punishing women for the crimes committed against them," he said, asserting that the focus should instead be on making public spaces safer, changing attitudes towards women and ensuring swift punishment for perpetrators. Gandhi referred to recent protests by students

and young people demanding greater safety for women and appealed to more young women, especially those from Gen Z, to join



the demonstrations. "This government is deaf to your pain and will only listen when it's under pressure," he said, adding that peaceful protest was a

democratic right and that he stood with those protesting against such crimes. In an accompanying video, Gandhi said women should not be blamed for or restricted because of attacks against them, stressing that perpetrators, rather than victims, should face punishment. Referring to the rape of a 17-year-old girl in a park in south Delhi, Gandhi criticised suggestions that women should avoid public spaces at night following such incidents.

He also cited reports of sexual violence in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, saying that restricting women's lives was the wrong response and calling instead for changes in the mindset of those who commit or condone such crimes. "Stop harassing women; leave them alone. Start punishing the people who are doing the crime," Gandhi said.

Amit Shah to chair meet on Mahanadi dispute on October 1

The development comes barely 10 days after Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and met his counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi in Bhubaneswar on September 20.

BHUBANESWAR(Agency).

The Centre has stepped in to speed up resolution of the Mahanadi river water sharing dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh, with Union Home minister Amit Shah set to chair a meeting with the chief ministers of both the states on October 1. Advocate general Pitambar Acharya on Monday said the meeting will take forward talks on equitable sharing of Mahanadi water between Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

"The secretary of Central Water Commission has placed details of the last two rounds of talks before the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal as per its direction and the Tribunal has taken it on record. The two chief ministers will now

meet under the chairmanship of the Union Home minister. Odisha has always said the dispute can be settled through mutual understanding," Acharya said. The development comes barely 10 days after Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and met his counterpart Mohan Charan Majhi in Bhubaneswar on September 20.

The two chief ministers held discussions over the matter for more than an hour. After the meeting, Sai had said there was no major problem between the two states over Mahanadi waters and expressed confidence that the issue would be resolved soon. He had also said that the chief ministers and officials of Odisha and Chhattisgarh had earlier held discussions in Delhi and agreed to accept.



Light rain likely in Gurgaon today, dry spell from Wednesday

Gurgaon.(Agency)

After light drizzle in the morning and afternoon on Monday, the city is likely to see isolated light to moderate rain on Tuesday, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The weather is expected to turn dry from Wednesday.

Gurgaon remained partly cloudy on Monday and received light drizzle at intervals. The city recorded a minimum temperature of 21.2°C, 0.7°C lower than the previous day. Gurgaon KVK automatic weather station recorded no rainfall in the 24 hours ending 8:30 am, as the drizzle occurred later in the day.

For Tuesday, IMD has forecast isolated light to moderate rainfall in northern parts of Haryana, but no weather warning has been issued for the state. Gurgaon is not among the districts specifically listed for rainfall in the Tuesday district-wise forecast, which forecasts isolated rain for Chandigarh, Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Kaithal and Karnal. IMD's broader state forecast, however, says isolated rainfall is likely in Haryana on Sept 29, before the weather turns dry thereafter.

The department said the southwest monsoon withdrawal line continues to pass through parts of north India, while a western disturbance is present as a cyclonic circulation over north Pakistan and adjoining Jammu. From Wednesday, dry weather is forecast across Haryana, with the IMD outlook showing dry conditions through Oct 4. Across Haryana, light to moderate rain occurred at isolated places in the 24 hours ending Monday morning. The highest maximum temperature was 34°C at Sirsa, while Bhiwani recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 19.5°C.

Noida sees rise in fever cases amid weather change; 458 H1N1 cases reported

Noida.(Agency)

With changing weather conditions triggering a rise in fever cases, hospitals in Noida are reporting an increase in patients with fever, body ache and respiratory symptoms. The district has recorded 180 dengue cases, 36 malaria cases and 458 H1N1 cases so far, prompting doctors to advise people against ignoring persistent fever and other warning signs.

Doctors said the post-monsoon period, when mosquito breeding continues, has contributed to the sustained burden of dengue, even as H1N1 cases have begun to decline. Hospitals have also reported an increase in patients seeking consultations for fever and related symptoms. Dr Ajay Agarwal, chairperson of internal medicine at Fortis Hospital, Noida, said the hospital had witnessed a notable shift in seasonal infections over the past few weeks. "While probable dengue cases have increased, H1N1 infections are showing a decline. In the hospital, we have been seeing around 50 to 60 probable dengue cases every week across outpatient and inpatient departments. In contrast, H1N1 cases have begun to decline, with around 10 to 15 cases being reported weekly," he said.

Doctors said fever accompanied by severe body aches, chills, persistent nausea or unusual fatigue should not be ignored. "While routine viral fever generally subsides within three to five days, H1N1 is often accompanied by respiratory symptoms such as a dry cough, sore throat and nasal congestion. Dengue, meanwhile, can cause intense muscle and joint pain, pain behind the eyes and, in some cases, skin rashes," said a senior doctor at the Noida district hospital.

3 teens detained for stabbing 17-year-old over 'goons' remark in Ghaziabad

Noida.(Agency)

Three minors have been apprehended for allegedly stabbing a 17-year-old boy to death in Loni Border following an argument over a remark made by his friend on the boys' appearances.

Police said Vinesh, a resident of Loni Border, had gone to the market with his 16-year-old friend on Friday when they passed the three boys in the street. His friend's remark led to an argument between the two groups and it quickly turned into a physical fight. A 17-year-old boy pulled out a knife and stabbed Vinesh in his abdomen thrice. He was rushed to GTB Hospital in Delhi, where he died during treatment. Vinesh's family members suspected that his friend, with whom he went to the market, was responsible for his death. They thought that the friend's family was a bad influence on their son. That evening, they filed a complaint against his friend (16), his mother, uncle and two other unidentified people at the Loni Border police station. A case of murder was registered against them under BNS section 103.DCP (rural) Surendra Nath Tiwari said they looked into the CCTV footage and found that Vinesh and his friend got into a fight with three boys. Through human intelligence and manual inputs, the cops on Sunday traced the boys and took them into custody. Two of the boys were 15 years old, while the third was 17 years old. He said that the teenagers told the cops they were passing by when Vinesh's friend remarked that they looked like goons ("ye log badmash hai"). He added that one of the boys heard the remark, and this led to an argument that soon escalated into a physical fight. "The groups fought for several minutes and one of the three pulled out a knife, stabbed the boy, and then fled," the DCP said.

The DCP also said that the knife used to stab Vinesh was bought by the 17-year-old accused from Haridwar. He had gone there as a kanwar pilgrim and bought the knife, which he kept in his pocket.

Supreme Court panel finds sewage from UP biggest contributor to Yamuna pollution

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A high-powered committee appointed by Supreme Court has identified domestic sewage generated in the river's catchment as its biggest polluter. The largest share of untreated sewage flowing into the river, according to the panel, comes from UP. Tasked with drawing up a comprehensive action plan on Yamuna, the committee recently submitted its report to the court and will give a presentation before judges on Oct 7. Headed by the Union home secretary, the six-member committee found that an estimated 7,999 million litres per day (MLD) of domestic sewage is generated in the Yamuna catchment across five states along its course – Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and UP. Of this, 6,243.83 MLD is currently treated, leaving a treatment gap of around 22% (1,756 MLD is untreated).

Across the Yamuna basin, 520 major drains empty into the river. UP's treatment gap for sewage is 34% and for wastewater (non-sanitary effluent) is 63%. "The largest treatment gap exists in UP, followed by Haryana and Delhi. While substantial treatment infrastructure has already been created, many existing sewage treatment plants operate below installed capacity and large volumes of wastewater continue to enter the river through drains without interception or treatment," the committee has pointed out. Supreme Court is hearing a petition filed by environmental activist Abhisht Kusum Gupta, who sought penalties against Noida for discharging untreated sewage into the Kondli drain that eventually meets Yamuna. During the hearing, the court decided to increase the ambit of the oversight and look at the entire stretch of Yamuna. On April 29 this year, it

appointed advocate K Parameshwar as amicus curiae. The committee was formed on May 21.



Industrial pollution remains concentrated in clusters. Around 6,300 water-polluting industries operate in the catchment. "Localised treatment gaps continue to exist, particularly in Haryana. Continuous monitoring systems and geo-tagging mechanisms

have been adopted in most industrial clusters," the committee said. It identified dairy waste as another major polluter of Yamuna. To address the issue, the committee has proposed investments of more than Rs 20,000 crore in sewage treatment infrastructure to reduce pollution loads, improve environmental flow, restore aquatic ecosystems and ultimately rejuvenate the river. "Timely execution of these interventions, supported by robust monitoring and inter-governmental coordination, will be critical to achieving the long-term objective of restoring the Yamuna as a clean, healthy and ecologically sustainable river system. For a focused approach and to avoid duplicity of efforts, it is necessary that all other litigations in the matter abate, and this case remain the sole monitoring mechanism," the committee said.

Supreme Court Takes Serious Note in Sohrabuddin Encounter Case: Concern Over 92 Witnesses Turning Hostile

Mahanagar Metro Desk

New Delhi / Ahmedabad: The long-running and highly controversial Sohrabuddin Sheikh encounter case has once again come into the spotlight after the Supreme Court expressed serious concern over the fact that as many as 92 witnesses had allegedly turned hostile during the trial. The Supreme Court has taken note of the unusually large number of witnesses who changed or retracted their statements during the proceedings and indicated that the issue requires judicial scrutiny. Supreme Court Issues Notice on Plea Challenging Acquittal of 22 Accused According to a PTI report, the Supreme Court has begun hearing a plea challenging the Bombay High Court's decision to acquit 22 accused in the Sohrabuddin Sheikh encounter case. Of the 22 accused, 21 are police personnel. The case has involved serious allegations concerning the conduct of police officials and the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Sohrabuddin Sheikh, his wife Kausar Bi and witness Tulsi Ram Prajapati. Who Filed the Plea? The plea was filed by Naibuddin Sheikh, brother of Sohrabuddin Sheikh, challenging the Bombay High Court's May 7 judgment. He approached the Supreme Court through a Special Leave



Petition (SLP). Bench Hearing the Matter A special bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V. Mohan took up the matter and issued notice. "Was the Process Fair and Just?" — Questions Raised During Hearing According to a Live Law report, Justice Joymalya Bagchi raised concerns over the large number of hostile witnesses during the trial. The court reportedly observed that 92 witnesses turning hostile was a matter of serious concern and indicated that, de-

spite concurrent findings by lower courts, the Supreme Court would examine whether the judicial process had been conducted in a fair and proper manner. The court's observations have once again brought attention to the conduct of the trial, the statements of witnesses and the circumstances under which a large number of witnesses allegedly changed their positions. The Background: The Sohrabuddin Case Sohrabuddin Sheikh Encounter, 2005 In 2005, Gujarat and Rajasthan police carried out

a joint operation in which Sohrabuddin Sheikh was killed in an encounter in Ahmedabad. The circumstances surrounding the encounter subsequently became the subject of a major legal and political controversy. Death of Kausar Bi and Tulsi Ram Prajapati The investigation later focused not only on Sohrabuddin Sheikh's death but also on the death of his wife, Kausar Bi. Tulsi Ram Prajapati, who was considered an important witness in the broader case, was killed in a police encounter in 2006. His death also became part of the subsequent investigation and legal proceedings. Years of Legal Proceedings The case has gone through years of investigation and litigation. Several accused were eventually acquitted by the trial court, with the courts citing deficiencies in the prosecution's evidence and other legal grounds. The Supreme Court's latest intervention has once again brought the case into focus. The proceedings will determine how the court assesses the large number of hostile witnesses and the earlier findings of the lower courts. The case now moves into another significant phase as the Supreme Court examines the legal issues raised in the challenge to the acquittal of the 22 accused.

15-20 overseas gangsters on Haryana Police radar, says DGP

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana DGP Ajay Singhal on Monday said police have identified 15 to 20 gangsters operating from abroad and directing criminal activities in the state remotely. Underscoring the scale of remote-controlled activities of crime syndicates in Haryana, Singhal said these gangsters are using technology and overseas networks to threaten people, run extortion rackets and coordinate crimes without being physically present in the state. "We have just deported the 25th gangster in last two years," Singhal said, adding that the gangster, a resident of Kurukshetra, was brought back from Malaysia two days ago. The DGP made the remarks in th city during the inauguration of new police station building at Sector 17/18.

According to an officer, Gurgaon police has initiated extradition proceedings against gangster Deepak Nandal's wife from Dubai. He said Nandal's wife has been charged in multiple cases in the city for allegedly providing logistics and financial support to gang members to carry out criminal activities in Haryana. Nandal is wanted in several criminal

cases in the state, including murder, extortion, Arms Act violations and attempt to murder. "A Red Corner Notice (RCN) was recently initiated against Nandal's wife by city police and efforts are ongoing to nab her and gangster Nandal from abroad," the officer said.

DGP Singhal said Haryana Police has prepared a detailed standard operating procedure (SOP), created multiple apps and strengthened CCTV monitoring and other security arrangements to counter such threats. Asked whether extortion cases had declined, he said he did not have exact data, but estimated that there had been an increase of only two to four cases. He added that the situation had been controlled to a great extent.

Singhal said an anti-terrorism quad (ATS) has been opened in the city and the state govt has created seven special operation groups too, which will deal with terrorism cases. On the growing challenge of cyber fraud, Singhal said such crime is "borderless" and has emerged as a major concern owing to rapid technological advancement. Police, according to him, has introduced technological measures, including Abhedya app and a dual-OTP system,



besides using the 112 emergency response line and 1930 cybercrime helpline. Citing the recent case of a Karnal jeweller, who lost Rs 1 crore through WhatsApp hacking, Singhal said the victim realised what had happened and contacted 1930 within five minutes. Police were able to save the entire Rs 1 crore, he claimed. On recent road rage incidents in the city, Singhal said such cases have been occurring for several years as the city has developed and road

networks expanded. He said youths are found driving at high speed in groups. The police had controlled such incidents to a great extent, he said, adding that one or two stray cases were reported recently and action was being taken. On narcotics in clubs and bars, Singhal said, "Narcotics have become a very big challenge." He added that Haryana's proximity to Punjab meant the state faced large-scale narcotics smuggling.

He said the anti-narcotic task force, led by an ADGP, had been created to tackle the menace. The police chief also highlighted Haryana Police's 33 women police stations, Durga Shakti Rapid Action Force, emergency assistance app and trip-monitoring services for women travelling alone. Police data showed that crime against women had fallen by at least 20% in the past year, he added. Singhal said the state police force currently has about 26% vacancies. After around 5,500 recruitments last year, appointment of another 5,500 is under way. Around 4,000 more recruitments are expected in Nov, followed by another 5,000 to 6,000 by next March.

27 hours, 140 km apart: Two Punjab universities, two protests, striking similarities

At LPU, the trigger was a social media post claiming 'rape' in a girl's hostel. at Chitkara it was about two girls allegedly missing; police say no evidence yet to substantiate the two claims

Chandigarh (Agency).

Barely 27 hours, and around 140 km apart, two private universities in Punjab witnessed student protests that began with unverified claims involving female students and girls' hostels, spread rapidly through social media networks



and eventually turned violent.

Chitkara University in Patiala's Rajpura saw hundreds of students gather late on September 25 after social media posts alleging that two girl students were missing were circulated among hostel residents. Less than 27 hours later, at around 2 am on September 27, a similar chain of events unfolded at Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Phagwara after a social media message claimed that a female student had been raped by an outsider in a girls' hostel.

The protests at both campuses drew large gatherings, brought police onto the premises and ended in clashes, arson and major damage to property. Both universities subsequently announced a break, with large numbers of students leaving for home. The Punjab Police is now examining the similarities between the two incidents, including the role of "unverified messages" and rumours in triggering the protests.

"Several points are being looked into. There may be similarities, but we are investigating both cases separately," said Praveen Kumar Sinha, DGP (Law and Order). A senior police officer monitoring both cases told The Indian Express that, so far, there was no evidence to substantiate the information being circulated by students at either university. "It seems there were messages, rumours spread by word of mouth and a growing discord between the students and university authorities that resulted in these incidents. Chitkara happened first, which added credibility to such rumours in the LPU case as well. But all these points are being looked into," the officer said.

'I'm now Shivalik 2.0': Former Mumbai Indians cricketer after rape FIR quashed

Vadodara batter spent 20 days in Rajasthan jail after dispute that followed a broken engagement. Through difficult conditions in jail, support from fellow Gujarat cricketers kept him going

Vadodara (Agency).

Before dawn one morning in May last year, Shivalik Sharma's life took a turn he could not have anticipated on a cricket field. A team of the Jodhpur Police arrived to arrest the 27-year-old cricketer based on a complaint of rape filed by his former fiancée after their engagement broke down. Sharma was taken to Rajasthan, where a court sent him to judicial custody. He spent nearly three weeks behind bars.

More than a year later, the Rajasthan High Court has quashed the FIR and all consequential proceedings. The left hand batter from Vadodara who had been bought by Mumbai Indians ahead of the 2024 IPL season, is now trying to look ahead, carrying with him what he says has been a difficult life lesson.

"I was arrested at 4 am (in May 2025) and taken to Jodhpur. I was taken to court and then sent to jail, where I spent 20 days before I was given bail. I was stunned, it had all come as a bolt from the blue, and it took me some time to understand what was happening."



Sharma said. Once he had recovered from the shock, he began to look at his situation as a "test", and turned to his "sportsman mindset", Sharma said. But it was extremely difficult.

'Reeking toilets, bad food'

"The 20 days in prison was a test and a lesson of sorts. Life was challenging. There were no fans, and there were no basic personal hygiene facilities such as the simple washing of hands before a meal... Inmates lived next to toilets, and the drainage was bad," Sharma said. He recalled that it was raining the day he was sent to prison, and there was a reeking toilet close to his cell. "The environment was bad, the meals were bad, you couldn't eat beyond a few morsels... I fell sick, there were no medicines," Sharma said.

Eventually, he found a way to structure his days, Sharma said. "I did feel the [legal] pressure, but when you have to spend time in a place, you need to adjust in some way... So I went to the jail library, and I met a teacher who incidentally was there for a case similar to mine..."

'I do not know who will light my funeral pyre': Drug-hit families share tails of addiction, sorrow

BJP leaders said the brief mask protest was meant to express resentment against what they described as the state government's attitude of discouraging people from questioning it over the drug menace.

Jalandhar (Agency).

"MY TWO sons died because of drugs. My wife has also passed away, and I have lost my eye-sight. There is no one left for me. I spend nights at a gurdwara and I don't even know who will light my funeral pyre."

Ramesh, a resident of Bilga village in Jalandhar district, broke down as he recounted the years in which drug addiction claimed one member of his family after another. His was among more than a dozen accounts shared by families affected by drugs in Jalandhar Monday – stories of deaths, broken homes, lost savings and the struggle to get loved ones into treatment.

The families spoke during the press conference of Punjab BJP president Kewal Singh Dhillion accompanied by state media head Vineet Joshi during the BJP's ongoing Nasha Mukht Punjab Yatra. The four yatras, launched on September 18, will cover all 117 Assembly constituencies and nearly 4,000 km before converging in Jalandhar on September 30. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to address the concluding rally. Before recounting their stories, several families affected by drugabuse wore black masks over their faces, carrying the message on a sticker passed on the mask, "AAP ne lokan Di awaj Nashe De mudde te dabba Ditti" (AAP has Press the voice of people on the issue of drugs)" – alleging that the Punjab government was not allowing them to speak about drugs and "chitta".

They removed the masks after a few minutes and then spoke about the loss and distress they had faced. BJP leaders said the brief mask protest was meant to express resentment against what they described as the state government's attitude of discouraging people from questioning it over the drug menace. Shama, who works in people's homes to make a living, said her son Vansh was addicted to "chitta". Her husband, she said, was an alcoholic and had never worked. "My son used to spend hundreds of rupees every day on drugs. I have approached the police and asked them to pay attention to the problem. We hear that drugs are also being sold by people living in big houses, but action is not taken against them. I only want this menace to end," she said.

In Tilak Nagar, a woman said she had lost both her sons to drugs. After their deaths, she said, their wives and children left, while the family's savings and property were gradually exhausted. Satya Devi, also from Tilak Nagar, said she feared another member of her family could fall into addiction.

"We may go without food, but we want to be free from drugs," she said, urging authorities to stop the supply of drugs. Pushpa said she handed her son over to the police in the hope that he would receive treatment. He is now



admitted to a hospital in Amritsar and has also developed tuberculo-sis, she said. "I do not want property or money. I only want my son to get well." For Gyan Kaur, the loss was both financial and personal.

Her son Ravi Kumar, she said, gradually sold whatever the family had built, while her husband, who was addicted to al-cohol, also died. "Our family has been completely ruined. At least today, someone has raised our voice," she said. Dhillion said the accounts showed the "ground reality" of Punjab's drug problem. He alleged that instead of curbing drugs, attempts were being made to silence

those raising their voice against the menace.

He also said the BJP would seek to eradicate drugs from Punjab within two years if voted to power. The BJP's anti-drug campaign comes ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections and has become part of the wider political contest over the drug crisis in Punjab.

Earlier Monday, Dhillion and other BJP leaders also paid tribute to Shaheed Bhagat Singh at Khatkar Kalan on his birth anniversary. Dhillion said the party's campaign for a drug-free Punjab was in keeping with the ideals of sacrifice and service associated with the revolutionary.

Over 700kg of POP Ganesha idols, festival waste removed from Halanayakanahalli lake

BENGALURU (Agency).

A group of young volunteers have removed over 700 kg of waste from Halanayakanahalli Lake near Sarjapur Road following the Ganesha idol immersions. We Are Aarambh, a zero-waste-conscious startup, led the clean-up drive on Sunday in association with environmental group Team Social Spotlight and other local groups.

Of the total 720 kg of waste pulled out by the volunteers, a whopping 500 kg was Plaster of Paris (POP) Ganesha idols, while the remaining was festival waste. With the help of earthmovers, specialised netting, and manual tools, the group, which included over 50 volunteers, removed the waste. Founder of

Team Social Spotlight, Sonesh K Shet told TNIE, "Despite the ban, POP idols continue to be sold by vendors. People, despite knowing the harmful effects of POP, continue to buy them. They eventually end up in lakes.

The intention of the drive was to remove the festive waste, including flowers, pooja items and plastics and prevent POP idols from remaining in the lake and affecting the water body."

He said the team retrieved more than 15 submerged idols, including a massive 10-foot-tall Ganesha idol, which were handled with due reverence. Shet added that the team was exploring the possibility of converting the retrieved PoP into tables and chairs for school children.



Stone crushers back near Himachal national park months after eco label dropped

In the meantime, the quashing of the notification, which bans certain activities including minina, operations of stone crushers within 10km radius of the national park, has had a direct impact on mining-related activities in the area.

Shimla (Agency).

Nearly five months after the Himachal Pradesh High Court quashed the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) notification around the Col Sher Jung National Park Simbalbara in Sirmaur citing 'procedural lapses' and 'lack of consultations' with local residents, the state government is yet to take a final decision on whether to challenge the judgment or initiate the process for notifying a fresh ESZ around the protected area.

In the meantime, the quashing of the



notification, which bans certain activities including mining, operations of stone crushers within 10km radius of the national park, has had a direct impact on mining-related activities in the area. At least two stone crushers that had stopped functioning after the declaration of the ESZ in 2022 have resumed operations, The Indian Express has learnt.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had issued the notification declaring an area of 31.24 sq km, encompassing 19 villages across three Gram Panchayats, Bhatanwali, Patalia, and Behral as ESZ of the national

park on January 13, 2022 on the recommendation of the state government. One stone crusher out of two is located around 50 metres from the bank of the Batta river, a tributary of the Yamuna, at village Surajpur in the Paonta Sahib area. A visit by The Indian Express found the unit operating, with tractor-trolleys and trucks transporting material to and from the site. A temporary kutcha road has also been created close to the riverbank to facilitate the movement of heavy vehicles towards the crusher. Another stone crusher, which also resumed functioning, is near village Sattipur and in the vicinity of river Yamuna. Both the stone crushers – falling within the ESZ area – had stopped functioning and their permits were withdrawn till the further orders following the notification of ESZ

Officials in the Mining Department, however, said the resumption of the units followed the legal position arising from the quashing of the ESZ notification. A senior mining officer said there were "technicalities" involved in permitting the stone crushers to resume operations. "These stone crushers existed much before the declaration of the Eco-Sensitive Zone of the national park in January 2022. The ESZ was notified in 2022, following which the Forest Department imposed restrictions on mining activities and the functioning of stone crushers falling within its limits in 2023," the officer said.

'Please help...': After Surat woman's viral video, stranded Kedarnath pilgrims airlifted

Surat (Agency).

A group of pilgrims including 14 people from Gujarat, who were left stranded on the Kedarnath hills for two days due to heavy rainfall and landslides, have been rescued purportedly after a 52-year-old Surat woman posted an emotional video on social media appealing for help.

In the video, Ranjanben Panchal appealed to Gujarat authorities to help her and others trapped in Kedarnath. After the video went viral on social media, the authorities in Uttarakhand airlifted the trapped pilgrims using a helicopter, ending their two-day ordeal amid tough mountain conditions and rain. "I am Ranjan Panchal... We came to Kedarnath the day before yesterday. We are stranded here because of the continuous rain. I appeal to the Gujarat government to help us reach our destination safely from here. There

are many people in our group as well. Please help us..." she said in the video. As soon as Panchal said this, tears started streaming from her eyes. At the end of the video, Panchal turns the camera to show the plight of



other pilgrims stranded in the surrounding area – people taking shelter in tents under the open sky and the foggy conditions enveloping the mountains.

'Clearly a love affair, but...': Gujarat man gets 20 years in jail in POCSO case

Vadodara (Agency). A special POCSO Court in Vadodara described the relationship between a young man and a teenage, minor girl as "clearly a 'love affair' and 'consensual relationship'", but held that her being a minor left the court "with no alternative" but to punish him under the POCSO Act, sentencing him to 20 years in prison.

The court made the observation while dealing with the circumstances of the relationship and the question of victim compensation. "This case is clearly a 'love affair' and 'consensual relationship'," the



court observed, but added that as the girl was below 18, the accused therefore had to be punished under the law. The Special Fast Track Court under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, presided by the 2nd Additional Sessions

Judge, on Monday convicted the man under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the POCSO Act for the rape of the victim, who was aged below 18 at the time of the incident. The court noted the nature of the relationship while considering the circumstances of the case and the question of compensation and said, "This case is clearly a 'love affair' and 'consensual relationship' but the victim was minor... below 18 years at the time of incident, thus, as accused has committed offence, he is required to be punished accordingly."

Maybe we should ban men after 7 pm

NO woman would be molested on a dark road. No girl would be followed home. No woman would be assaulted outside a railway station. No teenager would have to clutch her phone, pretend to call her father and speed-walk home because there are men hanging around the corner.

And best of all, we could finally stop giving women safety instructions. Don't go out late. Don't walk alone. Don't take that road. Don't wear that dress. Don't get into that cab. Don't drink. Don't trust strangers. Carry pepper spray. Share your location. Call me when you reach. Basically, don't live.

Because apparently the easiest way to deal with male violence is to make women's lives smaller. And the latest horror from Jamui, Bihar, tells us exactly how grotesque this logic has become. Two Class 10 students were returning after coaching when they were surrounded and assaulted by a group of boys. Videos show the girl being manhandled and sexually harassed while the boy accompanying her is attacked, as he tries to intervene. Police have registered a POCSO case, identified the perpetrators and arrested some, with an SIT investigating the matter. Read that again. Class 10. Returning from coaching. Children. Not women sneaking out of a nightclub at midnight. Not some imaginary "modern girl" invented by moral policemen to explain away sexual violence. And yet, when something like this happens, our national reflex is to ask: Why were they there? What were they doing alone? Why didn't they take another route? But nobody is asking the more important question. Why did these boys think they could do this? Why did they think there would be no consequences?

That is the question India needs to sit with. Because sexual violence isn't an act of nature. It isn't a storm that suddenly arrives. It is a human being making a decision to violate another human being.

And every time we respond by restricting the victim instead of confronting the perpetrator, we teach the next predator exactly what he needs to know: that the woman will carry the burden of his crime. She will change her clothes, her route, her timings. She will carry pepper spray, learn self-defence. She will stop travelling alone, stop going to parties. She will stop trusting men. She will stop living. And he? He will continue walking around thinking women's bodies are his to molest, tease, hit, rape and murder. There is something deeply corrosive about the almost coronation of men accused or convicted of serious crimes, while survivors are expected to disappear quietly into their homes. The Jamui video is shocking because we can see the violence. But what about the girl who has no video? What about the child whose attacker threatens her into silence? What about the woman whose family tells her not to complain because "log kya kahenge"? What about the survivor whose case gets buried under adjournments, intimidation and social shame? A viral video should not be the admission ticket to justice. And this is why POCSO has to mean something beyond an acronym we remember whenever a particularly horrific video goes viral. When the victim is a child, the state has an especially serious obligation to investigate swiftly, protect the survivor and prosecute the accused. Because an arrest is not justice. An FIR is not justice. A press conference is not justice. Justice is when the system makes it clear that a child cannot be sexually assaulted without consequences. For law doesn't only punish, it sends messages. And the message cannot be that some people are so powerful, popular or politically significant that consequences become strangely elastic.

We keep telling women to be afraid. Maybe we should start teaching predators to be afraid. And yes, I know: "Ban men after 7 pm" is absurd. Exactly. That is the point.

Imagine telling every man in India: Sorry, you can't go outside after 7 pm. It's for your own safety. Too many men commit crimes at night.

How loopholes are converting a state into real estate

Himachal Pradesh cannot be allowed to become one huge resort or cluster of condos

In response to a recent blog of mine about unregulated constructions in Himachal Pradesh, a discerning reader commented that he had done an online search for available properties in the state, and to his horror, found that 23,450 properties were advertised for sale/rent/lease between just Shimla and Narkanda, a stretch of 65 km or so. Even allowing for double counting, these figures tell a tale which our policymakers would do well to listen to. For what they tell us is that faulty policies and lack of vision or understanding of economics are making Himachal prime real estate up for grabs for whoever has the money and connections to exploit the system. But some background first. Land is a precious commodity in Himachal, as the utilisable land is less than 15 per cent of its geographical area — 8 lakh hectares against a total of 55.67 lakh hectares, the rest being forests and 'gair mumkin' or areas above the tree line where nothing grows. The actual area under agriculture is even less — just about 5.25 lakh hectares. Farming is almost at subsistence level. The average landholding is 0.94 hectares (in Punjab, it is 3.64 ha); small and marginal farmers hold 89 per cent of the arable land. Industry is almost non-existent and the state has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. For all these reasons, as Nirmanyu Chauhan and Divyanshu Thakur put it so eloquently in *The Wire*, land in this state is not just a commodity; it is a source of dignity, livelihood, autonomy, and security.

Himachal's first Chief Minister, YS Parmar, had the vision to realise this and therefore took steps to ensure that Himachalis were not deprived of their lands by rich and exploitative outside elements. He brought in the Tenancy and Land Reforms Act in 1974, Section 118 of which imposes restrictions on non-Himachalis from buying land in the state. They can do so only after obtaining prior approval of the government. Subsequent Chief Ministers, sadly, have lacked the same foresight and have introduced so many exemptions and loopholes in the law that now any smart lawyer or purchaser can buy any extent of land in the state. And this is happening on a colossal scale, as the Shimla-Narkanda figure proves. In just the last three years, 1,494 approvals have been granted, but this is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

The actual transfer of lands to, and purchase by, outsiders would be many times the number of approvals officially cited. This is because of the many exemptions provided to the operation of Section 118: no approval is required for a society consisting of agriculturists, flats built in urban areas, houses/flats taken on lease, RERA-approved builder developments. These exemptions are actually



loopholes and have thrown up the whole of Himachal to land sharks and builders. As living conditions in North Indian cities and metros steadily worsen, more and more people are now investing in second homes in places like Uttarakhand and Himachal, especially post-Covid. The threat now is to rural Himachal and its original residents.

Land prices have skyrocketed, and the Himachali landowner, unable to resist the lure of quick money, is being dispossessed of his ancestral lands on an ever-increasing scale by hotels, homestays, builder developments, resorts. This is changing the very architecture of the mountains, replacing green cover with concrete, affecting the demographics (as in the "ghost" villages of Uttarakhand), distorting local cultures. At risk is not only the geology, but the very identity of the state.

The state's policymakers must look at the long-term implications of such land transfers; it is time to review Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act to make it more restrictive. No approval should be given under this section for construction of hotels and resorts in rural areas — they are ruining the hinterlands (just as they have the cities). One has only to visit Tirthan valley, Jalori Pass to Jibhi stretch, Barog, or the Mashobra-Naldehra section to see for oneself how the pastoral character and architecture of rural Himachal are being converted into a concrete mess. There should be a complete ban on Section

118 approvals for real estate developments, housing societies, multi-storey apartments or villas. All the exemptions/loopholes in the Act need to be reviewed, especially the ones pertaining to RERA projects, purchase of flats, and leases. Some new curbs need to be introduced in the law; for example, a ban on purchase of lands belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and BPL families (as in Uttarakhand) to prevent their exploitation by deep-pocket outsiders and land sharks.

Except for specific projects approved by the government, non-Himachalis who wish to purchase land in the state should be required to establish some connection to the state, whether by way of service, business or family for a minimum number of years, to qualify.

There would, of course, be legal considerations involved in adopting this course of action. There is bound to be resistance from some panchayats as land values will drop; from politicians egged on by land dealers and real estate companies; from the builder and property dealer lobbies; from influential people in the metros looking for a piece of the mountains as their own premium condos are engulfed by pollution and civic collapse. The government should realise, however, that this is a matter of survival of the mountains and the people to whom they belong. The state cannot be allowed to become one huge resort or cluster of condominiums.

MLA disqualification puts glare on other defectors

The political fallout of the top court's ruling cannot be exaggerated. A bypoll, that too in Hyderabad, will be an acid test for the Congress with the BRS and BJP trying their best to deliver a blow

Telangana is headed for yet another bypoll with the Supreme Court on Thursday upholding the high court order disqualifying former MLA Danam Nagender under the anti-defection law. The ruling has once again brought to the fore the vexed question of defection and the Speaker's role in deciding its consequence. Nagender won at the last Assembly elections on a BRS ticket and soon walked over to the ruling Congress. He then contested the Lok Sabha polls on a Congress ticket. Apart from him, nine others had also defected to the Congress from the BRS. After repeated raps from the judiciary for delays, Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar dismissed disqualification pleas against all of them, reasoning there was no substantive evidence against the legislators. However, the high court found the Speaker's decision on Nagender to be in violation of Article 191(2) and the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution. The Supreme Court rightly upheld the verdict, for it is obvious that by contesting on a Congress



ticket, Nagender had given up his membership of the opposition party. The development forces us to seriously reconsider whether to let the Speaker function as a quasi-judicial tribunal or have a separate impartial body to adjudicate on defections. Parliament must deliberate on

this crucial issue because defections are rising every year, repeatedly betraying the people's mandate. It is nothing short of a mockery of democracy. It must be noted that almost all political parties—including the BRS—are guilty of poaching legislators and undermining the anti-defection law. In the Telangana case, the defecting legislators did take part in Congress activities one way or another. But as their numbers fall well short of two-thirds of the BRS legislature party, they attract the anti-defection law. Since the Speaker has dismissed pleas against them, the ball is in the court. The question now is whether the other turncoats, too, will face disqualification. The political fallout of the top court's ruling cannot be exaggerated. A bypoll, that too in Hyderabad, will be an acid test for the Congress with the BRS and BJP trying their best to deliver a blow. With the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections also due, the Congress can ill afford to lose.

Churning and change

The Great Game: Amarinder Singh's angst is matched by Cockroach Janta Party's outburst

THE old order is constantly a-changing, yielding place to the new, but in the last 24 hours it has seemed as if both the old and young are expressing their frustration with the powers-that-be. The first, the patriarch of Punjab politics, 84-year-old former chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh, told *The Tribune* that as CM from 2017-2021, he brought up the matter of cross-border drones bringing in drugs with both PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah; that when his pleas went unheard, he concluded that "Delhi doesn't understand Punjab." Singh went on to add that the BJP had never consulted him on matters of both policy and politics in the state and that he had gained nothing by joining it. The senior politician's angst is matched by the young Cockroach Janta Party's angry outburst at its press conference in Delhi on Thursday, demanding the scalp of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar ("Gyanesh, it's done bro!"), within 48 hours, in the wake of revelations in the *Indian Express* that the CEC did nothing about the exclusion of voters on EC software despite being allegedly aware.

The key question that arises from both sets of remarks is about the limits to political ambition — and whether age should have anything to do with it. Can you, for example, disregard the roar of an ageing lion to your peril, knowing he may still have one last shikar up his sleeve? Should the BJP be more considerate of Amarinder's criticism of his own party and thereby his capacity to damage it in Punjab, in the run-up to this important Assembly polls, or have they already consigned him to the King Lear line-up? Equally, can you ignore the prattling of an outfit that's-not-even-a-political party, keenly aware that the last time you came down heavily on the CJP protest you had to pay with the head of your own Education Minister?

It's important to separate the noise from the silence that

has followed the *Indian Express* story, although it's clear the state is gathering itself in. As the 48-hour CJP deadline for the resignation of the CEC approaches, the barricades are back at Jantar Mantar. Gyanesh Kumar has cancelled his visits to Meerut and Varanasi. Not just the Opposition, even BJP allies like Chirag Paswan and Upendra Kushwaha are now beginning to push back and demand the CEC "dispel the misgivings in the minds of the people." Remember that Paswan had asked questions about Amit Shah's decision to impose the uniform civil code in all BJP-run states, and had demurred over Bihar. Certainly, the country is divided down the middle. The CJP has been carefully expanding its ambit since the July protest in Delhi — we can't seem to take our eyes off CJP videos exposing the decay in government schools in their #SchoolThikKaro campaign, while Abhijit Dipke, himself a Dalit, seeks to place the national attention on mental health issues after the death of a student in IIT Bombay, across caste, class and gender.

Certainly, the rise and rise of the CJP has forced the media to do its job, both in quizzing the ruling party and the Opposition. The question that asks itself is why haven't any of the traditional political parties — except for AAP, which has put a lot of effort into its Schools of Eminence project in Punjab, not with unmixed results, but at least it has tried — bothered to pay attention to the all-important subject of education, except when they were setting up private universities and colluding with the political elite to transfer resources at cheap rates to those universities? If you were going to shed crocodile tears for the young, at least pretend that their future affects you too. The CJP is not a political party and doesn't pretend to call itself one, but it's showing the mirror to us all. Look this is

happening in your own backyard, how come you haven't noticed before? The truth is that we have noticed, but that we are either far too complicit, or too cynical or simply don't care enough. Still, the impact of the alleged dysfunction at the heart of the Election Commission is bound to have repercussions as elections near — besides Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Goa and Uttarakhand are



going to the polls in February. Tiny Goa has been in the eye of the storm in the *Indian Express* leaks, which detailed how 97 voters could not get themselves on the rolls despite official attempts being made to do so. There are two views how this is going to unfold. The more charitable one gives credit to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, arguing that his "vote chori" campaign has led the argument for some time, and that if distrust in the neutrality of the Election Commission creeps in, his party will be the primary beneficiary. The second view hints at

the tides swirling within the BJP and the RSS and how the Election Commission revelations will impact the positions of top party leaders. Certainly if the BJP juggernaut is dented in any of the states going to the polls, it will affect the fortunes of those jockeying for the affections of those at the top. According to the latter view, Rahul Gandhi can hold as many rallies as he wants in cities like Indore, but when change comes, it

will come from within the BJP. Not that the BJP can insulate itself from tremors from the ground — who, for example, ordered the use of pellet guns on unarmed students during the CJP protest in July? We don't know the answer to that, but when it comes, it is certain to trigger an avalanche that will disturb the party's power structure. For the time being, the party's power structure seems pretty strong and confident. In the last Assembly election cycle, it spent Rs 529 crore, outspending every other party — Rs 286.99 crore in West Bengal alone — while the Congress spent Rs 42.08 crore. The BJP's continuing access to funds remains remarkable. Question is, if this incredible strength will also give its leadership the wisdom to listen to dissenting voices within, like that of Amarinder Singh of Punjab, or would they rather consign him to the Margdarshak Mandal already stacked with senior BJP folks. Problem is, even the Mandal isn't safe from the prying eyes of the outside world anymore — none other than former deputy PM and architect of the Ram Mandir LK Advani has himself received a letter from the venerable Election Commission asking him to prove his credentials in the ongoing special intensive revision exercise.

5-minute quick Hair Fixes



Start by creating a high ponytail and place a hair doughnut at the base of the ponytail to give the bun a nice shape, recommends the hair genius. Cover the bun with your hair and secure it with a hair band leaving the hair hanging around the bun. Divide the extra hair in two sections and braid each one of them. Finish by carefully wrapping the braids around the bun and secure with bobby pins.

The Bubble Ponytail: Fun, quick and chic this hairdo is ideal for a post-beach makeover, says Asgar. Apply a smoothening balm to your tresses and gather your hair in a high ponytail. Tease the ponytail to get a nice volume and add a texturising spray. Take clear elastic bands and place them along the ponytail in equidistant intervals. Finish with a light-hold hair spray to keep it in place. **The Messy Side Braid:** This bohemian-chic hairdo is ideal for a summer bonfire party and the perfect accessory for a long flowy dress. French braid the back strands of your hair from back to side and create a side

ponytail, explains Asgar. Using a paddle brush, tease the ponytail to add volume. Braid the teased hair into a regular braid and pull it to the side to create that nice messy-chic texture. **The Loose Bun and Headpiece:** This is the perfect style to showcase a beautiful headpiece, says Asgar. The style is simple and understated, and can easily be done in less than five minutes. To create this look, pull your hair into a low loose ponytail and secure it with an elastic band. Carefully twist the ponytail and wrap it around the base. Finish by securing it with bobby pins. **The Front Side Braid:** A playful feminine hairdo, the front side braid is perfect for a summer evening out. Start by applying sea salt spray to get lovely tousled waves. Part your hair to the side and French braid the front section of your hair and pin it at the side, leaving the rest of your tresses loose. Use bobby pins to hold it in place.



Apply beetroot: Crush or mash a beetroot and extract its juice. Apply some of it regularly, preferably in the morning. Beetroot is extremely rich in iron and hence, you may also drink a glass of juice everyday to get a natural blush on your cheeks. **Gramflour face pack:** Make a face pack by mixing one tablespoon of gram flour, one tablespoon of curd, one tablespoon of cream and a pinch of turmeric powder. Apply this pack on your face and leave it to dry. This pack is especially beneficial in removing a tan and making the cheeks glow. **Rose petal face mask:** Crush some rose petals and grind some almonds in a blender. Add some teaspoons of mint juice and honey to it. Apply this liberally for at least a week to get best results. Your face will look pink and healthy. **Cider Vinegar:** Vinegar is a detoxifying agent.

How to get a natural Blush

It makes your skin fresh and dewy. Moreover, it also helps in restoring blood circulation and in turn makes the skin blush.

Beauty benefits of Curd

Known to cure any kind of skin or hair-related problems, curd has a number of beauty benefits. The wonders of curd are not just restricted to soothing your system and help digest food. Curd also works as a marvelous beauty recipe and is used by many women to treat various skin and hair problems at home.



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Cider Vinegar:

Vinegar is a detoxifying agent. It makes your skin fresh and dewy. Moreover, it also helps in restoring blood circulation and in turn makes the skin blush.

These moves will keep you looking vibrant



From lifting eyebrows to slimming down the double chin can make you look beautiful and 10 years younger to your real age. Experts of different cosmetic brand share tips to look younger all the time, reports huggingtonpost.com.

Lift your brows:

High, full brows look youthful and help define all your features. Use a brow powder or pencil a shade lighter than your hair color to fill in sparse areas, then sweep a fine line right above the top of the arch.

Camouflage Crow's feet:

Nix heavy cover-up, which makes lines more obvious. Instead, brighten the area with concealer under the outer third of your lower lashes and a creamy highlighter just below any lines.

Reduce Parentheses:

To diminish the lines that run from your nose to your mouth, apply concealer one shade lighter than your skin over the shadow below the fold only, not over the entire crease. This pro trick reduces the appearance of a defined edge.

Pep up your pout:

The sides of the mouth tend to droop with age. To lessen the effect, brush highlighter on the corners and concealer just below the outer edges of your lower lip to minimize shadows.

Slim double chin:

Apply a light layer of foundation or matte bronzer two shades darker than your skin under your chin, shading over any jawline.

Face cream

ingredient may help slow down ageing

Using complex genetic data analysis and testing, scientists have shown for the first time that allantoin, which is found in botanical extracts of the comfrey plant and is an ingredient of many anti-ageing creams, can mimic the effect of calorie restriction and increase lifespan in worms by more

than 20 percent.

Calorie restriction -- a reduction in calorie intake without malnutrition, has been found to slow down the ageing process in several animal models from worms to mammals, and developing drugs that can reproduce this effect, without the side effects, could have widespread human applications.

"Calorie restriction has been shown to have health benefits in humans and, while more work is necessary, our findings could potentially result in human therapies for age-related diseases," said study lead author Joao Pedro de Magalhaes from University of Liverpool in Britain.

To identify potential calorie restriction mimetic compounds, the team made use of existing molecular signatures from human cells and

A commonly used skin care ingredient is one of several newly identified compounds that can mimic the life-extending effect of a starvation diet, a new study has found.

treated with a variety of small-molecule drugs.

The researchers found that worms treated with allantoin, rapamycin, trichostatin A and LY-294002 not only lived longer, but also stayed healthier.

Molecular analysis of allantoin suggests it acts by a different mechanism from rapamycin, a well-known longevity drug.

"Testing anti-aging interventions in humans is not practical, so developing computational methods to predict longevity drugs is of great use," Shaun Calvert from University of Liverpool noted.

Go from drab to fab in just a few minutes

With the party season in full swing, you need to make sure that you are equipped to change from a work-dreary daytime look to a festive-cheery party look in a jiffy, despite that demanding job and a host of household chores.

Since you are getting dolled up within the office itself, the look should be one that uses only enough products that can fit into your tiny makeup pouch. One of the tips to keep in mind is not to experiment with makeup when you are in a hurry, rather stick to the tried and tested techniques. This step-by-step guide can help you transform in a matter of minutes.

Wash off the day's grime with a scrub
Begin on a clean canvas. After working the whole day, your face needs a good wash, so use a gentle face scrub to clean it up and remove all remnants of makeup.

Use a light-reflecting moisturiser and

under your eye with the base of your triangle, parallel to your lower eyelid. Then blend it gently with a brush or fingers.

Define your eyes

Use a black kohl or an eyeliner in some cool colour to line your upper lashes. Or try your favourite tried-and-tested (avoid experimenting with eyeliner if you are in a hurry) cat-eye look with a black gel liner. Then use an eyelash curler and once curled, apply a few coats of mascara to open up your eyes. Let dry between coats to avoid clumpy lashes.

Sculpt your face



primer

A generous application of a light-reflecting moisturiser will soften your skin. Priming your face is the next important step before you apply a foundation.

Choose a good base

Apply a light foundation with your brush if your skin is blemish-free. If not, then choose one that gives good coverage. Brushes are quick and give an even finish much faster than when you apply by hand.

Cover up with concealer

Use a mineral concealer with light reflecting properties to disguise under-eye dark circles. Apply this in a triangular patch

Opt for a quick blow-dried look

Brush and spritz some spray to plump up your hair. Use a paddle brush to lift your hair and backcomb a few sections to get extra volume.

Say hello to bouncy hair with these tips



Want big bouncy hair? Follow these tips for volume that stays...

A layered haircut gives a more voluminous look

When your hair is cut in layers, it does not take a lot of weight on the strands on top and that is the reason they do not look flat and weighed down. And this kind of a haircut also helps to retain the shape given to thick hair at

the time of cutting, for a much longer time.

Stay clean and clear

Product residue can weigh down your hair and make it look limp. Make sure that you are thorough with your cleansing.

Mix and match hair products

After a wash, use a leave-in conditioner, then apply a serum. If you are blow-drying, then spritzing on a heat-protect serum makes

sense. If you want to boost roots then spray some thickening product with the ends coated with a little shine serum.

Sleep your way to voluminous hair

This is the easiest way to have big hair — shampoo and condition your hair. Let dry naturally. Before you hit the sack, twist the entire length of your hair and then roll it up into a bun. If your hair is too short for one bun, make sections of it and tie them up in soft scrunchies. You could make little braids too. The morning will see you with stunning, wavy hair.

Blow-dry the right way

Blow-dry your hair upside down with the dryer directed at the roots. After most of it is dry, flip your head upright. Now, pick up sections with a paddle brush and dry again. You could also use a root-boosting product.

Curls can add volume

Whether you have thin or thick hair, curls and waves can get you that instant volume you want.

Home remedies for hair fall in winter season

Using curd and lemon, or getting a hot oil massage during winter months, can prevent hair fall and dandruff, says an expert.

Rahul Agarwal, CEO, Organic Harvest, has shared home remedies:

- Curd and lemon: This combination helps you to reduce hair fall and acts as a natural conditioner during the winter season. It cures dryness of the scalp and reduces dandruff. Squeeze a few drops of lemon in curd and apply on your hair as a mask. Let it dry and then rinse.

- Hot oil massage: To regain strength and shine of your hair, massage your scalp with hot oil. It nourishes the hair skin and helps your scalp against winter winds.



- Oil and camphor: To keep your head and hair cool, mix small amount of camphor and oil and apply it on your scalp. It reduces dandruff and the itchiness on the scalp.

- Steam: This helps you regain the moisture

content and strengthens your hair. It opens the follicles of hair so that they can absorb more nutrients. Above all, steam helps in healthy hair growth, reduces hair fall and makes them shine.

- Neem and coconut oil: It acts as antifungal oil against the fungus that affects scalp, which makes it red and extremely itchy. Neem and coconut oil together becomes an antiseptic against dandruff and scalp irritation.

- Neem paste and curd: A mix of neem leaf paste with curd, when applied on the scalp reduces hair fall, prevents the greying and boosts up hair growth.

‘Gen Z not here to make reels’: DU students’ women’s safety protest intensifies

The protest was open “strictly for women and queer participants”, according to organisers.

Delhi. (Agency)

Rain, loud sloganeering, placards with messages for authorities, and drenched students trying to “force a change”: these were the scenes that unfolded as hundreds of Delhi University (DU) students gathered at the Faculty of Arts on Monday evening for the third and the largest such demonstration in a week, demanding better safety measures for women. The protest was open “strictly for women and queer participants”, according to organisers. Last week, similar marches took place near Lady Shri Ram College and Gargi College and Kamala Nehru College after a 17-year-old girl was allegedly gangraped at Aastha Kunj Park in South Delhi.

Giving examples of incidents from Punjab and Bihar, protesters on Monday said that women were not better off even in the Capital as they recounted the challenges they face daily during commute and restrictions they face from families. Varsha, a second-year student at Shri

Ram College of Commerce, kept track of time during the demonstration. “My father tracks my location continuously. He keeps a check ...

does not want me to be out once the darkness falls. It’s deeply frustrating... Had I been a son, such severe restrictions would never have existed.” Clashes at Lovely Professional University (LPU) about 350 km away in Punjab early Sunday, which allegedly prompted an exodus of panicked women hostellers, found resonance at the march on Monday. “It was only a few days ago that we met over 20 students from LPU at an event in Gurugram... many became friends. When you hear women terrified of stepping out of their hostels there, it feels very personal. If it can happen to them, who guarantees we aren’t next?” said Sunishka, a second-year student at Daulat Ram

College. Holding placards with slogans such as “Pinjra todna nahi chhodenge (We won’t stop breaking the cage),” “Darr ke aage azaadi



(freedom beyond fear),” and “We should not need a protest to feel safe”, students drew a line at being locked indoors. A third-year student at Daulat Ram College, hailing from Uttar

Pradesh and living in a PG accommodation, said, “The problem is that our classes were shifted online, but what is the solution to all the crimes? If this massive democracy cannot control its men, what is the solution... confining us to our rooms?” She added, “Even if I step out at 7 pm to go to a nearby shop, it becomes an issue with parents constantly asking for photos and live locations. It feels like I am the problem. We are not the ones committing the crimes. The administration needs to increase security, fix broken street lights, and educate sons early on.” Manshi, a Master’s student at Jesus and Mary College (JMC), recalled the daily commuting hazards. “During my undergraduate days at Bhagini Nivedita College in South Delhi, stepping out always felt unsafe... There were no streetlights on the approach stretches,” she said. The double standards for men and women begin at home, Manshi said.

MCD lacks data on revenue loss from unallotted ad sites

Delhi. (Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has no records of estimated revenue losses from unallotted or inactive unipole advertising sites across its 12 zones or of action taken against officials for alleged negligence in tendering, allotment or revenue oversight, according to an official response from the civic body.

The response was submitted by the MCD’s advertising department to a short-notice question raised by BJP councillor and Standing Committee member Hemchand Goyal at a panel meeting on September 24. According to data submitted by the department, the civic body has identified 1,235 unipole sites across its 12 zones. Of these, 750 are running and 485 are unsold.

The Karol Bagh zone has the highest number of identified sites at 190, including 102 running and 88 unsold sites. It is followed by Shahdara South with 180 sites, of which 118 are running and 62 are unsold. Keshav Puram has 159 sites, including 83 running and 76 unsold.

The department said tenders for unallotted sites are invited periodically and allotments are made over time. Since all sites cannot be allotted simultaneously, “no estimate of revenue loss can be made in this regard”, it said, adding that no such details were available with the department. Regarding vacant sites and revenue from allotted sites, the department said it was not concerned with whether an allotted site remained vacant or displayed an advertisement, as it collected a monthly fee after allotment.

Asked whether any locations had remained unallotted despite being available and whether action had been taken against officials for lapses in tendering, allotment or revenue.

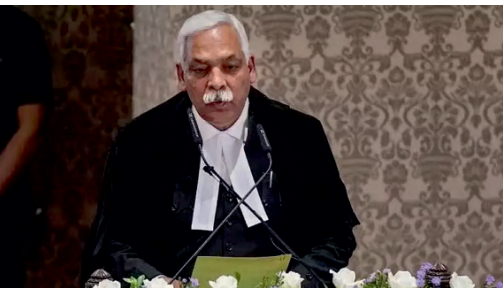
Collegium picks HC Chief Justice Upadhyaya as SC judge

Delhi. (Agency)

The Supreme Court collegium on Monday recommended elevation of Delhi High Court Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya as a judge of the apex court.

Upadhyaya enrolled as an advocate on May 11, 1991, and joined the chambers of his father, R A Upadhyaya. He later served as Chief Standing Counsel for the State of Uttar Pradesh from May 2007 until his elevation as a judge of the Allahabad High Court on November 21, 2011.

He took oath as a permanent judge of the court on August 6, 2013, and became Senior Judge of its Lucknow Bench on March 28, 2023. He was appointed Chief Justice of the High Court of



Bombay on July 29, 2023, and was later transferred as Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court on January 21, 2025.

During his tenure at the Delhi High Court, a bench headed by him heard pleas related to the Satya Niketan building collapse, allegations of violence and violation of the Lyngdoh Committee recommendations and judicial orders during the DUSU polls, and protests by the CJP and several other organisations at Jantar Mantar.

During the Satya Niketan matter, he said the dreams and hopes of young students who lost their lives in the recent Satya Niketan PG collapse had been “shattered” by the “callous and criminal” conduct of the authorities. While hearing the DUSU matter, he said, “We are more than conscious that we are a democratic society, but we are also conscious that this democracy can’t be converted into a criminal society.”

Delhi’s Barapullah Phase III opens today: What changes for commuters

Delhi. (Agency)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the Barapullah Phase III elevated corridor on Tuesday, providing a signal-free commute between East Delhi’s Mayur Vihar and Southeast Delhi’s Sarai Kale Khan, the government said. The 3.5-km-long, three-lane flyover has been under construction since 2015. It has eight loops, four each at Sarai Kale Khan and Mayur Vihar.

How will it benefit commuters?

The opening will ease the commute for people travelling from Noida and East Delhi to South Delhi. It is expected to reduce the average travel time from East Delhi and Noida to AIIMS from 35-40 minutes to 15 minutes, according to the government. The

corridor is also expected to decongest traffic along National Highway-24, the Delhi Noida Direct (DND) Flyway and Ring Road, officials said.



Delays and cost

Barapullah Phase III has seen several cost escalations and missed deadlines due to technical, environmental and procedural challenges. Initially estimated at Rs 1,260.63 crore, the project had already seen expenditure of Rs 1,238.68 crore by May and is expected to cost more than Rs 1,500 crore by the time work was completed.

It became one of Delhi’s most delayed infrastructure projects. The setbacks ranged from a seven-year land acquisition dispute and environmental approvals to technical challenges in building a bridge across the Yamuna floodplain. After the BJP came to power in Delhi last year, the government got clearance from the Centre to transplant trees from the site, overcoming one of the key environmental hurdles.

DDA tightens park safety, says no change in timings for visitors

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has strengthened security arrangements at its parks, while clarifying that there has been no change in park timings. Visitors may continue to use the parks during the previously applicable hours, according to an official release.

A safety and security audit of DDA parks will be completed this week, while audits of 300 parks have already been completed.

The audit will examine guard deployment, patrolling, CCTV coverage, lighting, access control and

the condition of fencing and boundary walls. DDA will address gaps and take further measures wherever necessary, the release said.



In consultation with law enforcement agencies, the DDA has increased security deployment and intensified

patrolling where required. Additional guards have been deployed during night shift, while bike patrols equipped with torches and safety equipment are being conducted and senior officers are carrying out surprise night inspections.

Additional lighting is being provided at dark spots, plants around light poles have been pruned, and gaps in fencing and boundary walls are being addressed. CCTV coverage and entry and exit arrangements are also being strengthened, as per the release. Signage boards advise visitors to use well-lit main routes after sunset and report any suspicious activity to park security or the police.

‘Not one rupee traced to me’: Health services ex-chief seeks bail in Rs 700-crore fraud

Delhi. (Agency)

The money trail in the Rs 700-crore medical supplies fraud case has not been traced to former Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) chief Dr Vatsala Aggarwal, her lawyer submitted before a Delhi court on Monday, citing the chargesheet. The submission came as the former DGHS chief sought regular bail in the matter.

“The chargesheet traces the payments made by the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) to the bank accounts of the five supplier firms and records that bank records have been obtained to identify the ‘ultimate beneficiaries’ yet it does not identify a single rupee reaching the Applicant or any account connected with her,” read her bail plea before Special Judge Vidya Prakash of the Rouse Avenue Court.

The CPA is the nodal agency that supplies medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to Delhi government hospitals and healthcare



facilities. Procurement operations, bid formations, evaluations, and tender portal management fell under the exclusive domain of the CPA, and Dr Aggarwal never had access to the tender portal, the bail plea claimed, adding that the physical custody of the procurement files rested with the CPA.

The Delhi government’s Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB), which is investigating the case, filed the chargesheet in the case on September 16. It named three public servants Dr Vinod Kumar Ranga, Head of Office (HOO) of the CPA, Dr Aggarwal; and former Deputy Controller of Accounts, CPA along with two private entities, M/s F-Med Devices and M/s M Sahib and Sons Pvt. Ltd. Last week, the alleged mastermind of the fraud, Rajiv Rangila, a pharmaceutical trader, surrendered before the ACB after remaining absconding for more than two months.

‘Don’t know when they’ll shoot me’: 3 South Delhi families caught in deadly feud

Three men have been killed in a year. Their families now live under round-the-clock police security. What triggered the dispute?

Delhi. (Agency)

In the narrow lanes of Aya Nagar, the Lohia family home is hard to miss. Two Delhi Police constables are posted outside the three-storey house round the clock, while four CCTV cameras cover its gate and the lane around it.

Deepika, 27, her mother and her sister-in-law live in this house. There is no man left — two have been killed and another is in jail. She does not believe the police presence can protect her.

“Delhi Police wale subah aate hain aur shaam ko chale jaate hain. Kabhi rehte hain, kabhi nahi. Lekin unki zaroorat nahi hai, kyunki unke rehne ka koi fayda nahi hai. Shooters ko jab marna hoga, tab woh kisi ko bhi maar sakte hain (The

Delhi Police personnel come in the morning and leave in the evening. Sometimes they stay, and sometimes they don’t. But there is no need for them to be there, because their presence serves no purpose. If the shooters intend to kill someone, they can kill anyone).”

“I don’t know when they will shoot me as well,” she added.

On November 30 last year, Deepika’s father, dairy businessman Ratan Lohia, 55, was killed — he was shot 70 times — near the house while on his way to open his milk dairy shop. On September 13 this year, her cousin Vijay was shot dead outside the gym he ran about a kilometre away. Two shooters

arrived on a motorcycle, fired 11 bullets at him and fled. Police suspect the killings are linked to a feud between two families — Ratan and Rambir — in the



urban village on the Delhi-Gurgaon border.

The trigger: a dispute over garbage collection

It began after Deepika’s brother Deepak was allegedly assaulted by Arun, Rambir’s son, over a dispute related to the locality’s garbage-collection business. According to residents, the narrow lanes in the interiors of the village are too small for garbage-collection vans to enter. Contractors therefore collect garbage door-to-door, earning lakhs of rupees every month.

“Arun beat up my brother following their financial dispute. Deepak remained in hospital for six months. When he recovered, he wanted an apology from Arun, but Arun never apologised. Arun and his family, however, offered him Rs 20 lakh, but my brother refused to take the money,”

Airtel closes in on Jio ahead of mega IPO, market-share gap narrows to 1.3 percentage points

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Ahead of its proposed mega IPO, Reliance Jio is facing intensifying competition from rival Bharti Airtel, which has steadily narrowed the gap in India's mobile market. The difference between the two companies' market shares fell to just 1.30 percentage points in August 2026, according to data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). Airtel's gains, however, may have come partly at the expense of Vodafone Idea and BSNL rather than entirely from Jio.

Jio held a 39.31% share of the mobile market in August, while Airtel's share stood at 38.01%. The latest figures mark a significant shift from five years ago, when Jio had a 37.40% share against Airtel's 29.85% in August 2021. Vodafone Idea had a 22.84% share at the time. Airtel has steadily narrowed the gap with Jio over the next five years. In August 2022, Airtel's market share rose to 31.66%, while Jio's stood at 36.48%. In August 2023, Airtel's share was 32.78%, compared with Jio's 38.81%. The gap widened again in 2024 and 2025 as Jio expanded its market share. In August 2024, Airtel had a 33.07% share, while Jio held 40.53%. By August 2025, Airtel's share had risen to 33.59%, while Jio's had crossed 41%. The trajectory changed sharply towards the end of 2025. Airtel's market share jumped to 37.24% in December 2025, while Jio's fell to 39.31%. Airtel continues to gain ground in 2026

Crude prices surge to 108\$ as Iran-US talks hit roadblock

New Delhi. (Agency)

Global crude oil prices surged on Monday amid renewed uncertainty over Iran-US peace talks, with Brent crude rising as much as 3.6% to \$108.10 a barrel before paring some gains. Brent was later trading at \$106.50 a barrel, up 2.05% at 19.50 PM IST, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was at \$94.14, up 1.87%. Oil prices have remained highly sensitive to developments in West Asia amid uncertainty over the progress of peace negotiations. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Thursday that his country was prepared for a "doomsday war" after the Trump administration rejected Iran's proposal on the Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said India had so far successfully navigated disruptions to crude oil and natural gas supplies caused by the West Asia crisis and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, but acknowledged that the global energy situation remained challenging. "So far we have navigated that uncertainty. In fact, I would say we have insulated ourselves from the turbulence," Puri said at an event organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry here. "Going forward, it constitutes a challenge. But I can assure you, we won't let things get out of control," he added. Puri said India had reduced its dependence on individual regions by expanding its crude sourcing network to 41 countries from 27 earlier. He said Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, three major energy suppliers to India, are located in or around the conflict zone linked to the war on Iran.

Runaway electricity bills? Listen to this expert on how to reduce power consumption

Kolkata. (Agency)

Power bills are turning out to be a recurrent drain on the budget of an average Indian household. Central Electricity Authority (CEA) data show that annual tariffs rise by about 3.5% to 5.5% and the cumulative domestic rise of has been about 65-66% in 10 years. This happens despite the wide variance of tariffs between Indian states. With rising power consumption and warming of the atmosphere, bills are rising in most households. ACs have not only become almost a necessity for households in large parts of the country but also they are running for longer and longer hours. Moreover, families are constantly adding the number of electricity-run gadgets to the house. Bharat Bhushan, executive director of Radius Synergies International and power sector expert says that one could trim one's power bills by adhering to a few simple steps. Let's have a look at some of these.

Switch off when not in use

Many of us keep electric devices running when we move out of the room. These can happen to fans, lights, TV sets and even AC machines. Switching them off when not in use means saving money each time you do so. Most people are not aware that switching off an AC with only the remote and not through the power switch keeps it on standby and, draining some power. Over long periods of time, these can add up to quite an amount and it happens every month.

AC should run between 25 and 27 degrees

ACs are power guzzlers, almost like SUVs inside the room. With almost every room being fitted with ACs, they account for a significant portion of the power bill every month. If you run AC between 18 to 20 degrees Celsius, you end up consuming a lot of power. Bhushan recommends that the AC should be set between 25 and 27 degrees Celsius. This can have a double benefit.

Gold slips towards Rs 1.46 lakh: Will the fall continue from here?

Gold has slipped towards Rs 1.46 lakh, with higher US yields and a firm dollar putting pressure on the precious metal. Will the yellow metal see more downside?

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Gold prices are under pressure, and investors are once again watching the yellow metal closely. A stronger US dollar, rising bond yields and uncertainty over interest rates are weighing on gold, even as tensions in the Middle East continue to keep markets on edge. At the time of writing, around 12.47 pm, MCX gold was trading at Rs 1,46,580, down 0.15%. International gold prices have also remained under pressure, with

investors waiting for a fresh batch of US economic data that could influence the Federal Reserve's interest rate outlook. So, is this just a temporary dip, or could gold prices fall further from here?

WHY ARE GOLD PRICES UNDER PRESSURE?

Gold tends to come under pressure when US bond yields and the dollar rise, as the precious metal becomes less attractive compared with interest-bearing assets. Dr Renisha Chainani, Chief Research Officer (CRO) at Augmont, said the market has been assessing the impact of the Federal Reserve's rate decision, while movements in crude oil and geopolitical tensions have added to inflation concerns. "The Fed lifted rates to 3.75%-4.00% on 16 September, its first hike in three years,

and markets spent the whole week digesting it," Chainani said. She added that the US-Iran standoff around the Strait of Hormuz has also remained a key factor

higher oil prices and inflation concerns could keep yields elevated, which may put further pressure on gold.

US DATA COULD DECIDE THE NEXT MOVE

The focus is now shifting to a series of important US economic data releases.

These include job openings, the ADP employment report, the PCE price index and non-farm payrolls. The numbers will give investors more clues about the strength of the US economy and the likely direction of interest rates. "Stronger-than-expected readings could keep yields under

upward pressure and weigh further on gold," Chainani said. She added that the near-term direction of gold would also depend on US inflation data, comments from Fed officials and developments in the Iran talks.



Crude oil shock spares fuel pumps, hits Dalal Street portfolios

New Delhi. (Agency)

The increase in the wage ceiling for mandatory coverage under the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 a month is a welcome development. As per the estimate of the Central Government, the revision, effective from September 17, 2026, is expected to bring more than 51 lakh additional employees within mandatory EPF coverage — a significant step towards extending social-security protection to a wider section of the workforce. All the more welcome when read alongside the new definition of wages.

The change is significant not merely because Rs 25,000 is a larger figure. It has to be understood together with another major development that preceded it: the introduction of a

common statutory definition of "wages" under the new labour codes.

The four labour codes, including the Code on Social Security, 2020, came into force on November 21, 2025. The new framework introduced a broadly uniform concept of wages for soci excluded. But there is an important qualification: where the specified components exceed 50% of total remuneration, the excess is added back to wages for statutory purposes. Around 10:00 am, the Sensex tumbled over 600 points, while the Nifty struggled to stay above 22,500. The markets later reversed their initial losses and showed signs of recovery, but the rebound lacked meaningful momentum. That's not particularly reassuring for investors who have already seen their portfolios slide sharply this year, with both indices

now trading around There are several reasons behind the latest bout of selling. Foreign portfolio investors have been pulling money out, US bond yields remain elevated and geopolitical uncertainty continues to weigh on sentiment. But there is another problem that has been hanging over Dalal Street for some time now — crude oil prices have stayed above \$100 a barrel, and oil marketing companies (OMCs) are increasingly feeling the heat. d six-month lows.

OIL SHOCK RATTLES D-STREET INVESTORS

Brent crude was around \$107 a barrel on Tuesday, extending its recent gains amid concerns over oil supplies from West Asia. For India, one of the world's biggest crude importers, this is particularly uncomfortable.

AI speeds up vulnerability discovery, but enterprises struggle to fix risks: Cognizant

Kolkata. (Agency)

Artificial intelligence is allowing enterprises to identify cyber vulnerabilities at machine speed, but organisations are struggling to fix them at the same pace, causing risks to accumulate faster than they can be removed, Cognizant's global cybersecurity head Vishal Salvi told TNIE. "Many organisations are accumulating risk faster than they can remove it. The challenge is not visibility. It is execution," Salvi said.

He said AI had made vulnerability discovery faster, while remediation continued to be limited by business processes, testing cycles and operational considerations. This had created a gap between how quickly organisations could identify risks and how quickly they could address them. "I often describe this as 'machine-speed offence versus calendar-speed defence.' That gap is becoming one of the defining cyber challenges of the AI era," he said. Salvi said AI had also become a new attack surface, with risks emerging around models, prompts, agents and autonomous actions. At the same time, organisations

faced gaps in managing non-human identities, agent behaviour and accountability.

He said years of technology debt and security debt had left some organisations with environments where vulnerabilities reflected deeper architectural problems.

AI was exposing those weaknesses and strengthening the case for modernisation.

"The next major shift will be applying AI to remediation itself, helping organisations prioritise, validate and resolve vulnerabilities faster," Salvi said. He said AI was already being used for vulnerability discovery, threat detection and investigation, helping security teams correlate signals, reduce noise and analyse

incidents. However, he said business-critical decisions still required human judgement and accountability. "The future is not fully autonomous cybersecurity. It is human-led, AI-accelerated cybersecurity, where AI handles scale and analysis while people remain accountable for decisions and governance," Salvi said. The role of AI in cybersecurity was also changing how enterprises managed exposure.



Hotmail's Sabeer Bhatia wants 55% inheritance tax in India: What happens to your wealth?

What happens when the wealth you inherit becomes taxable? Sabeer Bhatia's 55% inheritance tax proposal has brought the question into focus, particularly for families passing on homes, savings and businesses.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Hotmail co-founder Sabeer Bhatia has suggested that India should consider a 55% inheritance tax if it wants to become a more competitive nation. In a recent post on X, Bhatia wrote, "If India wants to become a truly competitive nation, it should consider a 55% inheritance tax. Opportunity should come from what you build—not simply from what you inherit." In the same thread, Bhatia also said, "You don't make your kids weak by building for them. You give them the tools to succeed, like education and good values. You don't give them wealth. You weaken them when you give them wealth." But what would a 55%

inheritance tax actually mean for Indian families? To understand whether such a tax could work in India and how it might affect the common man and the middle class, India Today.in spoke to Abhishek Kumar, Sebi-registered investment adviser and founder of Sahaj Money, and Nishant Shanker, Tax Controversy and Dispute Resolution, Navraj Global Advisors.

WHAT COULD AN INHERITANCE TAX ACHIEVE?

An inheritance tax is charged on wealth or assets passed on to heirs after a person's death. Supporters of such a tax argue that it could help reduce the concentration of wealth among a small number of families. Kumar said an inheritance tax could, at least in theory, help address the growing gap between those who inherit large fortunes and those who do not.

"On paper, inheritance tax could help in curbing extreme wealth concentration and promoting a more equitable distribution of resources by preventing inherited dynastic fortunes from widening the economic divide," he said.

He added that the tax could also create an additional source of revenue for the government, which could be used for public infrastructure, healthcare, education and welfare programmes. Shanker also said a well-designed inheritance tax could help reduce the concentration of wealth across



generations. "It could also promote greater equality of opportunity by ensuring that very large inherited fortunes are taxed when they pass from one generation to another," he said.

WOULD THE MIDDLE CLASS BE AFFECTED?

This is perhaps the biggest concern for ordinary families. If India were to

introduce an inheritance tax, the threshold at which it kicks in would determine how many people actually fall under it. Kumar said a high exemption threshold would be important to ensure that families passing on modest savings or a primary home are not burdened.

"Protecting the middle class would require a high initial exemption threshold that would shield families with modest estates, modest savings and primary family residences from taxation," he said. He added that these limits should also be linked to inflation and property prices. "This would ensure that average families passing down a single home or ordinary savings are not forced into distressed liquidation to pay for inheritance tax," Kumar said.

Shanker also favoured a sufficiently high threshold. "The tax should ideally apply only above a sufficiently high threshold, so ordinary inheritances are not affected. A reasonable exemption for a family home and modest financial assets could protect middle-class families," he said.



"We could see 96.50 in the coming days, and a clear break above 96.50 would open the door towards 98. Major support is now at 95.50." The domestic picture remains a source of strength — industrial output grew 8 per cent in August — and the Reserve Bank has completed a large programme of bond sales this month with strong demand, which keeps the adjustment orderly," said Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research, Kotak Securities. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.23, higher by 0.04 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 1.51 per cent at USD 106.87 per barrel in futures trade amid concerns over disruptions to crude supplies through the Strait of Hormuz.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex tanked 503 points to 72,260.09 in early trade, while the Nifty dropped 151 points to 22,626.50.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,353.22 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

NEWS BOX

Man dies by suicide in Laggere, kin say murder

BENGALURU(Agency).

A 46-year-old man ended his life after his wife allegedly attacked him at Laggere in Nandini Layout police limits on Saturday. The deceased has been identified as Naveen, who hailed from Hassan. He lived with his wife Kavitha in a rented house in Laggere. Before taking the extreme step, Naveen called his mother and complained that he was allegedly assaulted by his wife. Meanwhile, noticing the injury marks on his body, Naveen's family members told the police that he was murdered by Kavitha. A case of unnatural death has been registered. According to police, Naveen married Kavitha 15 years ago and moved to Bengaluru around eight years ago in search of work. Naveen worked as a driver. Kavitha reportedly told the police that Naveen frequently returned home drunk and quarrelled with her, often accusing her of having an illicit relationship. Their relationship strained after the birth of their child. On Saturday night, Naveen returned home drunk and picked a quarrel with Kavitha. When he attempted to assault Kavitha, she retaliated, causing him a head injury. Kavitha then locked the house and left.

Chennai Corporation helps 1,015 kids get back to education

CHENNAI(Agency).

For nearly a year, 12-year-old Shakthi (name changed) had not attended school, whiling away time by watching cartoons on TV and playing mobile games. It took repeated visits and counselling by community organiser Kalaivani M (31), who is part of the Greater Chennai Corporation's (GCC) exercise to trace out-of-school children, to get him back into Class 8. Shakthi said he had studied well until Class 5, but began missing classes after teachers at his new school scolded him using abusive language. A subsequent transfer to a corporation school did not restore his interest. Now, he said, his teachers have helped him make friends, and he has attended school regularly for a month. His mother said Kalaivani continues to call to check his attendance. Shakthi is among 1,015 children brought back into education through the door-to-door exercise launched on August 21. School education department data identified 7,302 out-of-school children in Chennai: 4,308 boys and 2,994 girls. In the first phase, GCC verified addresses and contact details of 2,106 children. Of these, 619 were enrolled in schools and 396 in ITIs, diploma, polytechnic, hotel management, vocational training and other programmes, a senior corporation official said. Teams of Block Resource Teacher Educators and community organisers from the Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation visited families, with GCC departments coordinating the work.

Complaints of 'commission' mar gold-ring launch at government hospital in Chennai

CHENNAI(Agency).

The 'Thaimaman Thanga Mothiram Thittam' launch at the Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (CEmONC) centre in Government RSRM Lying In Hospital in Royapuram was marred by complaints of commission demand by the staff.

The patients and their attenders raised the issue with the media when Finance Minister N Marie Wilson and Royapuram MLA K Vijay Thamu reached the hospital. The patients told the hospital staff, including housekeeping staff, have been demanding money for every service they offer. They also have been demanding money for telling the gender of the newborns to the anxious family waiting outside the labour room, the patients alleged. A new mother claimed even for changing sanitary pads, the staff are demanding money. She also alleged the staff are using the same shaving blade on every patient. M Lakshmi, an attendant of a patient said, "Depending on the service, the charges differs. When we sought a wheelchair for a new mother, the staff demanded Rs 500."

M Usha, another attendant said after her daughter delivered a baby boy, the staff demanded Rs 1,000 just to inform her about the safe delivery "as it's a baby boy". She also claimed the rate the staff charge depends on the gender of the baby.

Dr Shanthi K Elango, superintendent, Government RSRM Lying In Hospital, said, "Whenever we receive complaints we have been taking action. Even we have removed a few staff."

Mumbai's 122-year-old Irani cafe Kyani shut after FDA finds 'large amount of blood in fridge'

Inspectors also found blood collected in a fridge and an open sewage manhole at the Irani cafe. Royal China and a Subway outlet are among 12 other Mumbai eateries hit in the FDA's festive-season crackdown.

Mumbai(Agency).

The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) suspended licences of 13 food establishments in Mumbai, including South Bombay's 122-year-old Irani eatery Kyani & Co, the two-decade-old upscale Cantonese restaurant Royal China, and a Subway outlet at Phoenix Mills. The action is part of a statewide festive-season drive carried out between September 23 and 27. In all, 30 food licences were suspended across the state: 13 in Mumbai, six in Konkan Division, eight in Pune Division and three in Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar Division.

According to an FDA press note shared on Monday, officials inspected the cafe Dhobi Talao's Kyani & Co, one of the oldest Irani cafes, on Sunday. The officials found cats, rat droppings, live flies and dead cockroaches in the food preparation and storage area, the note said. A large amount of blood had collected in the refrigerator, and an open sewage manhole was found in the processing section. "Serious deficiencies were

also found, such as food kept on the floor, raw dough covered with printed newspaper, staff not maintaining required hygiene or using PPE, and improper segregation of raw and ready-to-eat food," read the press note. While the press note did not say much about FDA's



findings at Royal China (Astra Corporation), an FDA official shared that during their inspection on Saturday, they found "visible widespread fungal and mould infestation on stored vegetables, raw ingredients and food preparation surfaces". FDA also found cockroaches in primary storage area, no

segregation of veg and non-veg food preparation, cooking oil in fryers that had turned dark brown because of multiple reuse, among others.

The other establishments are Colaba Sweet Mart, Arun Vilas Farsan in Dharavi, Ruchi Veg Restaurant in Parel, Daffodils Fast Food Inn in Vile Parle (E), Tiffin in Bandra (W), QSR Brands India Pvt Ltd in Andheri (E), United Bakery & Stores in Santacruz (W), Hotel Purandar Vilas in Khar (W), Shree Padmavati Enterprises in Jogeshwari (W) and S.S. Caterers in Chembur. S.S. Caterers was found operating without a licence and has been ordered to shut down immediately.

The inspection at the Subway outlet in the Phoenix Mills compound, operated by EverSub India Pvt Ltd, followed a complaint on the FDA's portal. A food safety officer, who visited the premises on September 26, found a faulty refrigerator that kept defrosting while storing frozen food, with a mould-like layer inside, a foul smell and live cockroaches.

SIR notices leave Pune voters confused, some rush to centres even as ECI says hearing not required

In the ongoing SIR, notices are being served to people who have filled the enumeration forms with 'no mapping' to the 2002 voter list or 'logical discrepancies' in their details.

Pune(Agency).

Confusion prevailed amongst many residents in Pune who have been served notices for the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls. Many are not clear as to why they have been served notices even after filling enumeration forms, don't have clarity over documents to be submitted now, and have gotten contradictory instructions by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

In the ongoing SIR, notices are being served to people who have filled the enumeration forms with 'no mapping' to the 2002 voter list or 'logical discrepancies' in their details. Even as the Election Commission of India (ECI) declared on September 26 that BLOs should collect documents from those citizen's houses

who have been served notices and not call them for physical hearings unless exceptional circumstances, some residents in Pune were asked to submit their documents at centres. During the enumeration phase, BLOs had time and again complained that it was not physically possible to visit every voter's home.

Khurshheed Zakharia, a school teacher residing in the Pune Cantonment assembly constituency, has got a no-mapping notice. She spoke to her BLO on call on September 27, who told her that someone would be visiting her house to collect

her documents on September 28. "However when I called her to remind her this morning, she said she is not sure if someone can come home. She asked me to go to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Memorial Hall and gave me contact of someone I had to meet there. On calling him, he too asked me to come within 15 minutes. I said I teach in a school and it's very difficult to just leave and come suddenly, to which he said he'll send somebody home. I was not really convinced if someone would actually come. I took leave from school, came home, collected my documents and went there," Zakharia said.



17.1 mm of rain in Pune, the first double-digit rainfall reading since August 2

Shivajinagar has witnessed long stretches of single-digit rain in many years but this was the second longest since 2014.

Pune(Agency).

Shivajinagar received 17.1 mm of rain on Monday evening, the first time in 58 days that Pune's main weather office has crossed the double-digit mark. The last time was August 1, when Shivajinagar had recorded a 24 hour rainfall reading of 30.3 mm. The very next day, however, the rainfall reading fell to 1.5 mm. Shivajinagar has witnessed long stretches of single-digit rain in many years but this was the second longest since 2014. "The longest was in 2018 when the weather station had gone 64 consecutive days without double-digit rainfall," says an expert of the weather organisation, Vagaries of the Weather.

When the skies opened up on Monday evening, NDA recorded 15 mm of rainfall while Pashan received 2 mm and Hadapsar 1

mm. The rain clouds did not reach many parts of the city. Chinchwad, Lavale, Magarpatta and Koregaon Park did not receive any rain while only traces of rain fell in Lohegaon.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast similar weather for the next three days, with a yellow alert issued for thunderstorm, lightning, gusty winds and light to moderate rain in Pune and the Ghats of Pune, among others, on September 29. Though thunderstorms are localised and isolated events caused by convective heating, Dr Anupam Kashyapi, former head of weather forecasting at IMD, says that these showers are indicative that the withdrawal of the monsoon is close. "Monsoon withdrawal is likely from Mumbai and Pune by early



October and from the entire Maharashtra by the middle of October," he adds. Maharashtra, which has declared drought in 75 per cent of the state, is experiencing a 19 per cent deficit in cumulative rainfall as of

September 28. The country, as a whole, has a 12 per cent deficit. According to IMD, Pune district still has a 14 per cent surplus in cumulative seasonal rainfall.

Monday evening's rain did not cause an appreciable change in the temperature. Shivajinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 33.4 degree C, while Pashan, Lohegaon, Chinchwad and Koregaon Park were almost as warm. The minimum temperature in the city ranged from 18.4 degree C in Pashan to 22.5 degree C in Koregaon Park. According to the weather office, the maximum and minimum temperature in different parts of the city is likely to remain the same for the next few days.

This drought-hit taluka in Maharashtra experienced monsoon. Then the rains stopped

Mumbai(Agency).

For farmers in Sakri taluka of Dhule district, this year's drought is not a story of the monsoon failing to arrive. It is about the rains arriving, raising hopes, and then disappearing when the crops needed them the most.

Sakri is among the 265 talukas declared drought-affected by the Maharashtra government last week; the state has a total of 358 talukas. While the drought-hit areas cover 32 of the total 36 districts, all the four talukas in Dhule district are among the affected areas. The state recorded a rainfall deficit of 18% this year, with 798.2 mm of rainfall between June 1 and September 26, against a normal of 970.9 mm. But in Sakri, where the seasonal



rainfall was around the expected level, it was the prolonged dry spell that destroyed crops. According to official data, in the 102 days between June 1 and September 11, Sakri did not receive any rainfall for 67 days, including a dry spell of 22 consecutive days.

According to an official of the agriculture department, Sakri taluka, comprising 227 villages, received only 50 per cent of its average rainfall in August and September. "The rains in this region were scanty as most of the rainfall was over the Western Ghats. Moreover, the rains came before the sowing season," the official said.

Farmers across Sakri and parts of neighbouring Jalgaon said the dry spell has left the kharif crops stunted, and fields without enough moisture to sow the rabi crops. Some of the older farmers compared it to the 1972 drought in Maharashtra, adding that the current crisis was particularly painful because the season had initially appeared promising.

Traffic chaos in South Mumbai, Metro Cinema Road shut after thousands of SC quota protesters gather near CSMT

The protesters had permission to gather at Azad Maidan, but they started to spill onto the roads around CSMT, disrupting traffic to South Mumbai.

Mumbai(Agency).

Traffic movement in parts of South Mumbai was severely affected on Tuesday after thousands of members of Sakal Matang Samaj gathered near Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to press for sub-categorisation of the Scheduled Caste reservation. The protesters had permission to gather at Azad Maidan, but they started to spill onto the roads around CSMT, disrupting traffic to South Mumbai.

"Constant announcements have been made, and we are requesting the people to gather at the protest site," a police official said. South Mumbai traffic affected Traffic moving towards South Mumbai has been diverted due to the protests. "We are monitoring the situation. The traffic has been diverted from the CP office, and the only road near Metro Cinema has been shut," another police official said.



The protest was organised over the demand to divide the 13 per cent Scheduled Caste reservation into four categories — A, B, C and D. The demand for sub-categorisation

remains pending, prompting the Matang community members to organise a large-scale mobilisation in Mumbai.

On Tuesday, around five lakh Sakal Matang Samaj members from across Maharashtra were expected to converge in the city for a demonstration. According to police, protesters have indicated that they would not leave Mumbai until the government issues a Government Resolution (GR) on the demand. "The protesters have said that they will not move outside of the city till a government resolution is passed. We are monitoring the situation," the police said. Senior police officials have been deployed at the protest sites to manage the gathering and regulate traffic. "Adequate police are present at the spot. We are monitoring the situation, and there is no law and order situation near CSMT and the BMC office," the police added.

NEWS BOX

ICC ODI World Cup 2027 schedule set to be announced in Cape Town on October 1



New Delhi. (Agency)

he International Cricket Council (ICC) and Cricket South Africa (CSA) will announce the schedule for the 2027 World Cup in Cape Town on Thursday (October 1). The event will mark the one-year countdown to the tournament and will also include the release of tickets for the games. According to a Cricbuzz report, the World Cup will begin on October 2, coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti, and will run until November 21, 2027.

Ten of the 14 teams taking part in the World Cup will be confirmed by September 30, which is the qualification cut-off date. Hosts South Africa and Zimbabwe, along with eight top teams in the ICC ODI rankings, will automatically qualify for the World Cup. The remaining four teams will come through qualifiers and will be listed in the schedule as Qualifier 1, 2, 3 and 4. Apart from South Africa and Zimbabwe, Namibia is also a host country, but their qualification is not yet assured. As per current rankings, India (No. 1), New Zealand (No. 2), Pakistan (No. 4), Australia (No. 5), England (No. 6), Sri Lanka (No. 7), Afghanistan (No. 8) and Bangladesh (No. 9) are set to qualify for the tournament. Bangladesh, despite being ninth in the rankings, will advance as South Africa, which is the third-ranked side, earn their spot as hosts. West Indies will have a chance to advance through the qualifiers, which are scheduled to be held early next year. The ICC will also open the World Cup ticket ballot on Thursday. Although fans will not be able to buy tickets immediately, they can register for the ballot from October 1.

ODI World Cup 2027 format

According to an ICC release, the 2027 ODI World Cup will feature three rounds before the semi-finals and the final. The tournament will start with a Super Series featuring the three lowest-ranked teams of the 14 qualified sides in a round-robin format. The team finishing top will qualify for the next stage. 12 teams will play 30 matches in the second round, which will be divided into two groups of six teams each in a round-robin format.

More sixes, no less Virat: Is the 37-year-old Kohli better than his best?



NAGOYA. (Agency)

In the 38th over of India's chase of 296, Virat Kohli was batting on 94 off 73 balls. India had raced past 240 with eight wickets in hand. The chase was well under control. An earlier version of Kohli might have looked for a gap against left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie, worked the ball into the leg side and sprinted back for two. The hundred would have come soon enough. On Sunday, Kohli chose another route.

He danced down the track to Motie and lofted him over his head and into the stands at the Greenfield International Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram. It was his 55th ODI hundred. Kohli finished unbeaten on 139 off 88 balls, with 10 fours and nine sixes, as India chased down 296 in 41.4 overs. He had reached his fifty with a six, his hundred with a six and ended the match with another. The nine sixes were the most he had hit in an ODI innings. The hundred came off 74 balls, his third-fastest in the format. The six to get to three figures was the shot that best captured the change. Kohli did not need to hit it. He chose to.

KOHLI HITS DIFFERENT

For much of his career, that was not how he built his ODI innings. His great strength was control: finding gaps, running hard, rotating the strike and waiting for the right moment to accelerate. Between 2017 and 2019, the three-year period that produced the most extraordinary sustained numbers of his career, Kohli scored 4,039 runs at 79.19, with 17 hundreds. He hit 43 sixes in 65 innings, an average of 0.66 per innings. Rohit Sharma, the benchmark for six-hitting in ODI cricket and the format's record-holder with 363 sixes, hit 121 in 67 innings during the same period: 1.81 per innings.

Inspired by cousin, Army shooter Neeru wins historic Asian Games gold

Asian Games 2026: Neeru Dhanda took up shooting after watching her cousin Lakshay Sheoran win an Asian Games medal in 2018. On Tuesday in Aichi-Nagoya, the 26-year-old from Jind became the first Indian woman to win gold in the women's trap event at the Asian Games.

New Delhi. (Agency)

It was not one of the celebrated rifle or pistol events, but shotgun gave India its first individual gold medal at the Asian Games, ending an agonising 10-day wait. Army shooter Neeru Dhanda, 26, won gold in the women's trap event, setting a new Asian record in the process. The wait was frustrating, but the gold arrived in style. Neeru braved the rain at the Aichi Pref. General Shooting Gallery on Tuesday,

dominating the women's trap final. Months after becoming the first Indian woman to win a World Cup gold in women's individual trap, she has finished on the top step of the podium at the Asian Games. It was also India's first-ever individual gold in the women's trap event at the Asian Games. Neeru's gold came after she had earlier led the Indian women's team to silver. She topped the individual qualification with 118 out of 125, having maintained remarkable consistency across the three-day qualification process, which tests shooters over five rounds in challenging conditions.

Neeru shot 28 out of 30, bettering the previous Asian record by four shots. China's Sun Yunong won silver with 26 out of 30, while Kuwait's Hajar Abdulmalik took bronze with 21 out of 25.

Neeru had a healthy two-point lead going into the final series. But pressure has, so often in the past, done strange things to

Indian shooters at major competitions. Neeru, however, was a picture of poise and concentration. The rain was coming down hard, but she kept her eyes on the target. She shot a perfect series of five when it mattered most, keeping Sun Yunong at bay.



INSPIRATION FROM COUSIN LAKSHAY

Neeru Dhanda was not someone who had grown up dreaming of becoming a shooter. Her introduction to the sport came through her cousin Lakshay Sheoran, who won a

silver medal in trap at the 2018 Asian Games. Watching him compete sparked an interest in Neeru, and what began as curiosity soon became a serious pursuit.

The family connection went beyond inspiration. Lakshay helped Neeru in her early days, with Neeru initially training alongside him and using a gun he lent her. Before that, she had practised with her family's double-barrel gun, shooting at tin cans as her father helped her get accustomed to the recoil. She eventually joined the Madhya Pradesh Shooting Academy in 2019, beginning the journey that would take her to the international stage. Neeru, who hails from Jind in Haryana, has since built herself into one of India's leading trap shooters.

She made her World Championship debut at Osijek in 2022 and won her maiden Asian Championship gold in 2025. In 2026, she became the first Indian woman to win an individual ISSF World Cup gold in women's trap, at Lonato, Italy.

Asian Games cricket: India to face Sri Lanka in semis after all QFs washed out

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Indian men's cricket team will face Sri Lanka in the semi-final of the Asian Games after the island nation's quarter-final against Nepal was abandoned due to rain in Nagoya on Tuesday. The match at the Korogi Sports Park was called off without a toss, with persistent rain making any play impossible. Sri Lanka advanced to the last four by virtue of their higher ICC T20I ranking, with the island nation placed ninth and Nepal 14th. The result means all four men's quarter-finals at the Asian Games have been washed out due to the weather. India had already secured their place in the semi-finals after their quarter-final against Afghanistan was abandoned on Monday. The defending champions are ranked No. 1 in the ICC T20I rankings, while Afghanistan are 10th. Bangladesh also reached the semi-



finals after their quarter-final against Malaysia was washed out due to rain in Nagoya. Pakistan had earlier advanced after their quarter-final against Hong

Kong was abandoned, with the higher-ranked side progressing. Pakistan will face Bangladesh in the other semi-final, while both last-four matches are scheduled to be played on Thursday. Rain has been a constant problem in Nagoya over the past few days. Nepal's final group-stage match against Japan on

Saturday was also affected by the weather. The game was reduced to 15 overs, with Nepal scoring 149 for four before rain returned and prevented Japan from starting their chase. Nepal had earlier opened their campaign with a five-wicket win over Afghanistan. India, meanwhile, are yet to play a match in the Asian Games. Shreyas Iyer is leading the side, with VVS Laxman taking over as coach in the absence of Gautam Gambhir, who is with the ODI team for India's ongoing home series against the West Indies. The squad features senior players such as Jasprit Bumrah, along with 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. After India's quarter-final was washed out, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi said the players were hoping to get an opportunity to play in the coming matches. "Hopefully, in the upcoming games, we will get the opportunity to play some good cricket and show our game to the people in Japan," Bishnoi said.

Premier League set for long wait as Manchester City face prospect of sanctions

New Delhi. (Agency)

Manchester City may face sanctions ranging from fines and a points deduction to relegation after being found guilty of 114 breaches of Premier League financial rules but the road to any enforcement remains long, with the club expected to appeal. A soccer source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed Friday's media reports that the independent panel found City guilty on all but one of the charges and told Reuters on Monday that the process was expected to "drag on. City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak responded to reports of a guilty verdict with an open letter to fans, saying the club, who have always denied wrongdoing after the charges were announced in February 2023, remain confident of proving their case.

"The Premier League process still has a

long way to run, and our confidence and intent in proving the club's innocence is just as strong as when a three-person board would hear the case if Manchester City



appealed after the guilty ruling by the independent judicial panel.

They cannot go to sport's highest court, the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which overturned City's two-year Champions

League ban, imposed by European soccer's governing UEFA for overstating sponsorship revenue between 2012 and 2016. But the appeal process may be a long way off given the number of charges, covering nine seasons from 2009 to 2018, which required a four-year investigation before charges were announced. "This began," he wrote on Saturday.

ALONG TIME IN LIMBO

It is possible that the current Premier League season, in which City lead the table after five straight wins, may end without an official verdict and punishments being announced, leaving the world's richest soccer league in limbo.

Even if the verdict and punishments are announced, the appeal process may delay the imposition of any sanctions while the season continues or even concludes.

Asian Games: India women win trap silver, men finish 6th; Neeru, Shapath reach final



New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian women shooters bagged a silver medal in the trap team event, while the men finished sixth at the Asian Games in Japan on Tuesday. The trio of Neeru Dhanda, Aashima Ahlawat and Manisha Keer finished with a combined score of 328 to take second place behind China, which won the gold medal with 346 points. Kuwait claimed the bronze with 325 points. Neeru led India's challenge with a score of 118 out of a possible 125. She finished joint-top alongside Qatar's Ray Bassil in the individual qualification and set a Games qualification record.

Neeru also qualified for the eight-shooter individual final, which will be held later on Tuesday. Aashima scored 106, while Manisha contributed 104. The two finished 16th and 23rd respectively in the individual qualification. The Chinese team that won gold comprised Liu Shanshan, Sun Yunong, and Zhu Jingyu. Kuwait's bronze-medal-winning trio was Alhawal Shahad, Abdulmalik Hajar and Alhawal Sarah.

India finished three points ahead of Kuwait to secure the silver medal.

SHAPATH MAKES MEN'S TRAP FINAL

The Indian men's trap team finished sixth among 10 teams, with Shapath Bharadwaj, Kynan Chenai and Ahvar Rizvi combining for 339 points. Kuwait won the gold medal with 355 points, while Qatar took silver with 349 and Kazakhstan secured bronze with 348. Shapath, however, secured a place in the individual final after finishing eighth in qualification. The 24-year-old from Meerut had to go through a shoot-off for the final two qualification spots. He edged out Mohammed Al-Rumaithi to claim the eighth and final berth. Shapath will now compete in the individual final later on Tuesday. India's sixth-place finish in the team event was a setback after the country had won gold in the men's trap team event at the previous Asian Games in China.

A nudge from Neeraj: How the missing javelin star inspired Yashvir's Asian Games silver

New Delhi. (Agency)

Yashvir Singh was not even supposed to be here. The 24-year-old from Jaipur was not part of India's original Asian Games javelin squad. Then Neeraj Chopra withdrew because of injury, a door opened and Yashvir was brought into the team. On Monday, he made sure he was ready when the opportunity arrived. Yashvir won silver in the men's javelin throw in Aichi-Nagoya, setting a new personal best of 85.72m, while compatriot Rohit Yadav won bronze with 84.35m. It was another step in the rapid rise of a thrower who is beginning to make himself impossible to overlook. Yashvir had started brilliantly, taking the lead with his first throw of 83.56m. Reigning world champion Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage eventually moved ahead with 88.55m, while Rohit briefly pushed Yashvir down to

bronze with his fourth-round effort of 84.35m. Yashvir's response was immediate. He sent the javelin out to 85.72m, a new personal best, to reclaim silver. The conditions made the performance even more impressive. Rain had made the runway slippery and grip was an issue, but Yashvir produced six valid throws, all around the 82m mark or better. "I am feeling very good. This is my second international tournament. The first was the Commonwealth Games, I won a bronze there. I registered a PB there. Now, in the Asian Games, it's a silver. I have registered another PB here," he told Sony LIV. This time, Chopra's words came before the Asian Games.

"After Glasgow, I played in the Continental Tour. He messaged me after that saying he had to withdraw because of an injury, but he told me I might be included in the squad and

wished me luck. He motivated me to do well. He told me to go for the medal," Yashvir said. "There was a bit of trouble



because of the rain. The grip was an issue. But, I was able to get my PB." For someone whose rise began with a bamboo javelin, the progression has been swift. Yashvir initially took up basketball to get fit before switching

to javelin during his school days. His father, Rai Singh, a former national-level javelin thrower, guided him through the early years and kept the focus on hard work and avoiding the mistakes he had made himself as an athlete. Yashvir first made headlines by breaking Chopra's meet record at the Indian U20 Federation Cup. In 2022, he became one of the select Indian throwers to cross 80m. He qualified for last year's World Championships but could not make the final. Then came his breakthrough bronze at the Commonwealth Games. Now there is an Asian Games silver and another personal best. This is the biggest achievement of my life," Yashvir said. He may have entered the Asian Games squad because Chopra had to pull out. He leaves Nagoya with a medal that belongs entirely to him.



Taapsee Pannu

On Keeping Wedding To Mathias Boe Private: 'Why Should I Have A Public Announcement?'

Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu recently spoke about her decision to keep her wedding to former Danish badminton player Mathias Boe away from the public eye. She said that she saw no reason to make a formal announcement about the wedding or release photos and videos from the celebrations. She also added that she does not want to subject her husband, Mathias Boe, to public scrutiny.

For the unversed, Taapsee Pannu and Mathias Boe had a court marriage in December 2023. They later celebrated their wedding with an intimate ceremony in Udaipur in March 2024, attended by close friends and family members. The couple chose to keep the celebrations private and did not release an official set of wedding photographs.

'Why Should I Have A Public Announcement?'

In an interaction with Nayandeep Rakshit on his YouTube channel, Taapsee addressed the decision to keep the wedding private. She explained that she has always preferred to maintain a distinction between her professional career and personal life.

"Why should I have a public announcement? I've always kept my personal and professional lives apart. Not that I want to hide them, am scared or embarrassed of them. But I've refrained from making announcements. I think it's personal, and I'd want to keep it like that. It feels very weird to put out a press note or a deck of photos and videos," she said.

Taapsee Pannu On Leaked Wedding Video

Despite the couple's efforts to keep the celebrations private, a video clip from the wedding eventually surfaced online in April 2024. A video circulating on social media showed Taapsee's bridal entry and parts of the varmala ceremony. In the clip, she was seen wearing a traditional red outfit, while Mathias wore an ivory sherwani. Speaking about the video clip getting leaked, Taapsee said, "That was very embarrassing. But that happens with people who're not invited by you, but by your family. Your family wants them to be there, but you maybe don't know them enough. Some of them didn't understand the basic brief given to them."

She added that she did not want to take away the guests' phones as she believes it is very childish. "I would want to believe that those people will value it when I'm cordially telling them that even if you click pictures, please don't post them. Almost everybody was clicking videos... When you see a picture or a video, it's not just about me. It's about a lot of other people, including my husband, who's not the kind of public figure I am. He's a sports star, but people are not that crazy about the personal life of the person, especially in this part of the world and the kind of a sport he's in. So, he's open to the kind of scrutiny I'm used to," she said.



9 Years After Dangal, Aamir Khan To Return To Japanese Cinema In 2027 With THIS Film



Aamir Khan, who last had his film in Japanese cinemas in 2018, is all set to return to Japan after nearly a decade. Khan's 2025 film Sitaare Zameen Par is all set to release in Japan in spring 2027, nearly a decade after Dangal was released there in 2018. The announcement about the same was made by Japanese distributor Geek Pictures on September 25, 2026.

In a tweet, the production house wrote, "Distributed by Geek Pictures Indian Film 'Sitaare! The Miracle Team of Stardust' ★

Set for Spring 2027 Release ★ Starring #AamirKhan from '3 Idiots'! A heartwarming ode to life filled with laughter and tears ★ ."

Aamir Khan's Sitaare Zameen Par

Directed by RS Prasanna, Sitaare Zameen Par tells the heartwarming story of Gulshan Arora (played by Aamir Khan), a hot-headed basketball coach assigned to train a team of adults with intellectual disabilities. What starts as a punishment soon transforms into a journey of acceptance, growth, and inclusion. The film is a spiritual sequel to 2007's Taare Zameen Par and is an official Hindi adaptation of the Spanish hit Campeones.

Interestingly, during the film's theatrical release, Aamir had initially stated that it would not arrive on OTT platforms. Instead, the movie was later made available on YouTube through a pay-per-view model for audiences in India and several international markets, but nine months after its release, the movie premiered on SonyLiv.

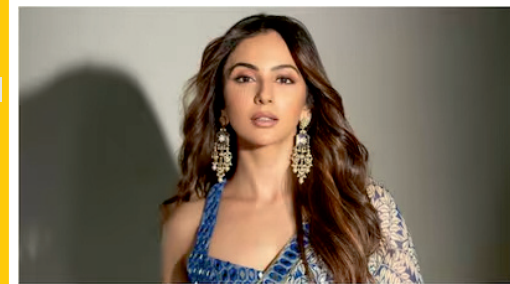
The film also features performances by Genelia Deshmukh, Ashish Pandse, Aroush Datta, Aayush Bhansali, Rishi Shahani, Gopikrishnan K Varma, Rishabh Jain, Vedant Sharma, Simran Mangeshkar, Samvit Desai and Naman Misra.

The project is produced by Aamir Khan Productions along with Aparna Purohit, while B. Shrinivas Rao and Ravi Bhagchandka also serve as producers. The screenplay is written by Divy Nidhi Sharma.

Aamir Khan On Work Front

Aamir Khan is reportedly preparing for another major physical transformation, this time for Ashutosh Gowariker's upcoming sports drama Lalkaara.

Income Tax Department Raids Locations Linked To Rakul Preet Singh, Vashu Bhagnani And Panorama Studios



The Income Tax Department has launched searches at multiple locations linked to Bollywood actor Rakul Preet Singh, her father-in-law and film producer Vashu Bhagnani, and Panorama Studios in Mumbai. The searches are part of an investigation into suspected fund irregularities, with officials examining alleged overseas movement of money linked to film financing.

According to a report in , the Mumbai Income Tax Department is carrying out searches at 12 locations. Investigators are checking financial records, documents and details of transactions that allegedly involved funds being routed abroad under the guise of financing film projects.

Income Tax Searches In Mumbai

Multiple teams from the Mumbai Income Tax Department are carrying out the searches and checking documents and financial records. Officials are also looking into alleged overseas transactions linked to film projects. The searches are being conducted at locations linked to Rakul Preet Singh, Vashu Bhagnani and Panorama Studios. Further details about the transactions have not been revealed yet. The department is currently examining the records as part of its probe into the suspected irregularities.

Rakul Preet Singh's Family Had Faced Drug Case Probe

The Income Tax searches come after another case involving Rakul Preet Singh's family last year. In December 2025, Mumbai Police launched a hunt for her brother Aman Preet Singh in connection with a drug case. The action followed an operation conducted by the Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE) Force and West Zone police on December 19, 2025. Two businessmen were arrested for allegedly peddling drugs during the operation.

Deepika Padukone

Working On Motherhood-Focused Initiative After Welcoming Second Child? What We Know

Deepika Padukone has embraced motherhood for the second time. The actor and husband Ranveer Singh welcomed their second daughter on September 19, nearly two years after the birth of their first daughter, Dua. The couple announced the news through a simple Instagram post that read, "Welcome baby girl! 19/9/2026 Dua. Deepika & Ranveer."

Motherhood, however, may soon become more than a personal chapter for Deepika. We hear the actor is quietly working on a new initiative that puts the early years of motherhood at its centre. Details are still being kept under wraps, but the project is said to be closely connected to her own experience of becoming a mother of two.

The idea seems to be taking shape with Savika Patni, a management professional who has worked across the US and India. Her professional background includes healthcare and consumer businesses, and her recent work has also focused on women's health and mum-and-baby health.

Deepika has spoken about balancing motherhood and her career before and her own work schedule has continued alongside her growing family. Earlier this year, she was working on major projects even during her second pregnancy. She also featured in a maternity shoot with Ranveer and Dua in September, shortly before the birth of their second daughter.

Deepika Padukone has also been closely associated with mental health awareness through The Live Love Laugh Foundation, which she founded in 2015 after speaking publicly about her own experience with depression and anxiety. The foundation works to create awareness around mental health, reduce stigma and improve access to support.



Deepika Padukone's Films

Despite entering another phase of motherhood, Deepika continues to have major films lined up. She is set to star opposite Shah Rukh Khan in King, which is slated for release later this year. She is also part of Atlee's Raaka, starring Allu Arjun.

The film has already made headlines for its use of motion-capture technology, with the makers setting a Guinness World Record after capturing 37 performers simultaneously in real time using 92 cameras.



NEWS BOX

‘Largest in American history’: Trump announces India-based Essar Group's new steel plant in Iowa

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

US President Donald Trump on Monday announced that India-based Essar Group will build a USD 15 billion steel plant in Iowa, describing it as the "largest steel plant" in American history. Trump made the announcement at the Oval Office alongside Essar Group co-founder Ravi Ruia and his son Rewant Ruia, chairman of the group's US-based subsidiary Mesabi Metallics.

"Today, we're thrilled to announce that Mesabi Metallics will be building the largest steel plant in American history in the great state of Iowa," Trump said. Mesabi Metallics, a Minnesota-based company owned by Essar Group, is expected to begin production at the plant in 2030. The facility is projected to produce about 10 million tonnes of steel annually and create up to 1,750 permanent jobs in Iowa, according to the White House. The project will be supplied with iron ore from a new USD 2.5 billion mine developed by Mesabi Metallics in Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range. The mine is expected to produce around 7.5 million tonnes of iron ore annually and create about 350 jobs. The White House said the mine would be the first new iron mine in the United States in 50 years. The Mesabi Iron Range, which stretches for about 80 to 100 miles, accounted for around 60 per cent of total US iron ore production during the 20th century. Rewant Ruia thanked Trump "for bringing back the importance of building things in America", saying the plant would use the latest technology and compete with steel plants globally on size, quality and cost.

"This plant will use the latest technology and will compete head-to-head with any steel plant in the world on size, quality and on cost," Ruia said.

FBI adds Goldy Brar to ten most wanted fugitives list, announces \$1 million reward

TRENTON.(Agency)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has added Indian-origin gangster Satinderjeet Singh, alias Goldy Brar, who hails from Punjab and is accused of ordering the assassination of Khalistan separatist Harjit Singh Nijjar in Canada, to the US federal agency's list of Ten Most Wanted Fugitives. The FBI has also announced a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading to his arrest.

According to the FBI, Singh is wanted for his alleged involvement in the Lawrence Bishnoi Organised Crime Group, which authorities allege is responsible for violent criminal activities in Southern California and across the United States and Canada. "Satinderjeet Singh is wanted for his alleged involvement in the Lawrence Bishnoi Organised Crime Group, which is allegedly engaged in a variety of violent acts in Southern California and across the United States and Canada. A reward of up to USD 1,000,000 is offered for information leading to his arrest," the FBI said in a statement.

"Satinderjeet Singh, also known as Goldy Brar, is a dangerous individual, and the FBI and our partners have made it our priority to apprehend him, which is why we're adding him to the FBI's list of Top Ten fugitives and offering a reward of up to \$1 million for his capture," said Patrick Grandy, assistant director in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office.

He added, "The amount of attention this list will bring to his face and description cannot be overstated. His photo will be found on every FBI-affiliated website and social media platform and will be publicized on every phone around the world until he is caught." According to the FBI, one of the indictments focuses on the Bishnoi enterprise, with Brar allegedly serving as one of its leaders.

News organizations ask court to bar White House enforcement of access ban until case is resolved

A two-week temporary restraining order on Trump's ban of the three organizations, issued by U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly last week, restored the outlets' White House access, but expires Oct. 8.

LONDON.(Agency)

Three news outlets that President Donald Trump abruptly banished from White House grounds this month asked a federal court to block the ban until the case is resolved, saying the administration has

"persisted in unpredictably and inconsistently implementing its ban" despite a judge's restraining order -- including selectively barring CNN from White House pool duties. "The White House's words and actions leave little doubt that it will immediately reinstitute a complete ban of CNN, MS NOW, and POLITICO if allowed the opportunity," lawyers for CNN, MS NOW and Politico wrote in a filing late Monday. "Because the ban is an unlawful assault on the most fundamental First Amendment freedoms and will inflict irreparable harm on Plaintiffs and the public if not restrained, this Court should preliminarily enjoin its enforcement pending the resolution of this case," the filing said. It was the latest development in the back-and-forth saga of the Trump administration and the news media during the second term of his presidency. It has been a contentious relationship that has raised multiple First Amendment questions, produced

sanctions and restrictions on White House and Pentagon reporters and led to several lawsuits that are winding their ways through the federal court system. A two-week temporary restraining order on



Trump's ban of the three organizations, issued by U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly last week, restored the outlets' White House access, but expires Oct. 8. The preliminary injunction requested in Monday's filing would extend the White House access until the case is finally

resolved. In a statement emailed to The Associated Press immediately after the filing, the lead attorney for the three news outlets called the ban "a blatant violation of the First Amendment and due process."

"The president and his administration have continued to make clear that this ban has only one purpose: to punish reporting he doesn't like," said the lawyer, Theodore J. Boutrous Jr. "That's retaliation and viewpoint discrimination, pure and simple," Boutrous said. "With the district court's temporary restraining order expiring this week, it is critical to ensure that the White House continues to be prevented from implementing this unconstitutional ban on the free press."

The White House still says access is a privilege, not a right

The filing came a day after the Trump administration made clear it was not backing down from its contention that the sudden ban, which began Sept. 19, was justified.

New York Times executive shot dead amid family legal battle and LGBTQ+ allegations

DUBLIN, Calif. (Agency)

A couple in their late 70s gunned down their son-in-law in a California city park over the weekend, authorities said, and court documents showed the victim had been in a bitter custody dispute with their daughter. Jonathan McKinsey, a 40-year-old gaming engineer for The New York Times, was shot to death Saturday afternoon in the parking lot of a sports complex in Dublin, east of San Francisco. A police sergeant was driving nearby and saw him on the ground as witnesses began calling 911 and pointing out the couple, who were still near the scene, Dublin Police Services said in a news release. Authorities arrested Shouyong Zhang and Shili Chen,

both 76 and from Dublin, on suspicion of murder and other charges. They were due to appear in court Wednesday morning. It was not immediately clear if either had



obtained a lawyer, and phone numbers listed for their daughter, Candice Jang, were disconnected. The killing occurred a week before a hearing was scheduled

in McKinsey and Jang's divorce case.

The couple had been married since about 2012 and had three young children, court records show. Court records show that Jang reported McKinsey to police in 2023, accusing him of shoving one of their children and using rough physical discipline with them generally. Last October, she obtained a domestic violence protection order against McKinsey after he was arrested and charged with misdemeanor child abuse in another case. Police said he acknowledged having slapped one child and also charged him with endangering another. At the time of his killing, he was out on bail and had been trying to enter a mental health diversion program, the San Jose Mercury News reported.

Contradicting Trump, Pope Leo says artificial intelligence safety concerns not 'fake news'

Leo noted that ever since he published his encyclical in May, the Vatican has received comments from people interested in being part of a broader conversation about AI.

ABOARD.(Agency)

THE PAPAL PLANE: Pope Leo XIV said Monday that concerns about artificial intelligence going rogue are not "fake news" and should be taken seriously, insisting that safety issues raised by AI experts should be discussed and acted on. Leo, who dedicated his first encyclical to AI and protecting humanity in its wake, was asked during a press conference about what the United States and China especially should be doing to

prevent AI from posing catastrophic risks to humanity. U.S. President Donald Trump has called concerns about AI going rogue a "hoax." "This is a problem that, I think, we need to



sit down and talk about," the American pope told reporters returning home from France. "We can't just sit back and pretend nothing is going to happen." Trump has been a champion of AI, often warning that the United States must remain ahead of China in the technological arms race. He has said efforts to limit the technology were part of a "conspiracy" by his political

opponents. Several AI giants, including Anthropic, have called for a slowdown in development to give safety measures time to catch up to the fast-moving technology. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, for example, has warned that within six to 12 months, AI could be capable of leading a swarm of agents that could take over the entire internet.

Trump had a late-night dinner with Amodei on Sunday, during which they discussed Americans' concerns about the technology and how to keep America dominant, the White House said. "If someone were to ask me 'Am I in panic mode?' No I'm not. I sleep at night," Leo said. "I do think that the concerns raised by many of the experts, specialists in AI should be taken seriously." "I don't think that that is 'fake news' as some have said to try and cause whether financial or other some other kind of benefit," Leo said.

Jaishankar flags US lack of understanding on cross-border terror concerns, says it impacts bilateral ties

world.(Agency)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that a lack of understanding among India's partners about its concerns over cross-border terrorism can affect bilateral ties, in an apparent reference to the United States' renewed engagement with Pakistan. Speaking at a conversation hosted by the Asia Society in New York after the UN General Assembly's high-level week, Jaishankar said terrorism emanating from a neighbouring country remains one of India's primary security concerns. The interaction was moderated by Daniel Russel, a former US diplomat and distinguished fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute. Asked about the state of India-US relations and what could put the partnership on a "better track" amid differences over trade and tariffs, Jaishankar said the relationship had faced several challenges. "One of the issues pertains to the sensitivities of each country," he said. "For us in India, what is particularly

important is the issue of terrorism," Jaishankar said, noting that India had faced terrorism from a neighbour as part of what he described as a deliberate policy over several decades.

"If something which matters so deeply to us, there isn't enough understanding or appreciation or empathy of that, I think that creates a problem too," he said.

"If one of my primary concerns is not fully appreciated by my partner, then clearly there is an impact of that on the relationship," he added, referring to India-US ties. His remarks come amid closer US-Pakistan engagement under President Donald Trump, even as New Delhi and Washington have been working through differences over tariffs, trade and India's purchase of Russian energy. Jaishankar said India wanted its relationship with the US to move "on an upward trajectory", but acknowledged that differences would have to be addressed. "We would certainly hope for and expect the relationship to move on an upward trajectory."

From motorcycles to booze, US ban on \$1 billion worth of Canadian imports goes into effect

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

US -Canada relations, already tense, are likely to deteriorate further after the United States went ahead early Tuesday with a decision to ban nearly \$1 billion worth of Canadian imports, including alcoholic beverages, dairy products and motorcycles.

The ban amounts to barely a ripple in \$880 billion worth of a two-way annual trade between the two northern neighbors. But it marks another ratcheting up of President Donald Trump's second-term trade war with America's longtime ally and trading partner.

The import ban "certainly won't do anything to help the trade tensions between the United States and Canada," said trade attorney Patrick Childress, a partner at Holland & Knight and a former U.S. trade official.

The latest sparring began over the summer when Trump reached back to a Great Depression law to impose 50% tariffs on about \$20 billion worth of Canadian imports, charging that Canada discriminates against U.S. dairy, auto and alcoholic beverage

producers. Canada promptly counterpunched with tariffs of 15%, 25% or 50%, matching U.S. imports dollar for dollar. To punish Canada for retaliating against his tariffs, Trump decided to ban a list of Canadian



products, effective 12:01 a.m. Eastern time Tuesday. The economic impact is likely to be minimal. Childress noted that the products on the banned list were already facing Trump's tariffs. "For a lot of these goods, the 50% was already acting as a de facto ban by making importation from Canada into the United States uneconomical," he said. Jacob Jensen, director of trade policy at the center-right

American Action Forum think tank, calculates that the ban would cover \$967 million worth of Canadian imports, based on 2025 numbers. Of that, 87% would be alcoholic beverages that the U.S. targeted because of some Canadian provinces responding to Trump's provocations by banning U.S. booze from store shelves.

Also banned are some dairy products — including the milk byproduct whey. The two countries have long clashed over Canada's attempts to protect its dairy industry from foreign competition by imposing hefty tariffs once dairy imports have exceeded a quota.

The ban also covers motorcycles. Bombardier Recreational Products (BRP) in Quebec confirmed that its three-wheel Can-Am Spyder and Canyon motorcycles "will be excluded from importation into the U.S." But BRP said the impact likely won't be felt until next year because it has completed most production and shipments for the current season. "This marks yet another escalation in the trade war that may result in further retaliation on the Canadian side," Jensen said.