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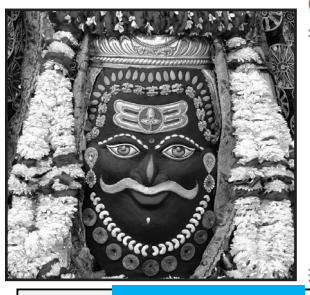
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Bihar suspends top officer over deaths of 14 children in Vaishali boat tragedy

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Bihar government on Friday suspended Raghopur Circle Officer Deepak Kumar from his post following the deaths of 14 children in a boat capsize in the Ganga river in Vaishali district on October 13.

The action was ordered by Vaishali District Magistrate Varsha Singh on October 15, after the administration had earlier withheld the salaries of Kumar and the local station house officer (SHO) and sought explanations from both officials in connection with the tragedy. Following Kumar's removal, Patepur Circle Officer Prabhat Kumar has been given additional charge of the Raghopur circle to ensure that administrative work continues without disruption.

The tragedy occurred around 8.30 pm when the victims, all below 15 years of age and 13 of them belonging to the same family, were crossing the river with other residents to attend a feast in a village on the opposite bank. According to officials, the boat was carrying around 15 to 20 people, although the exact number of passengers was not immediately known. Rescue operations were launched with local divers and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

"Taken Up In Strongest Terms": Omar Abdullah On IAS Officer Abuse Case

Jammu. (Agency)

Taking serious note of a senior IAS officer allegedly using abusive language against his junior woman colleague during an official meeting, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has written to the Chief Secretary, directing him to ensure that no retributive action is taken against the JKAS officer. "I have seen the video of the online government meeting that is circulating on social media. Prima facie, the conduct of the senior officer was not in keeping with the standards expected of a senior IAS officer and the subsequent threats issued to a junior JKAS officer only make matters worse," Omar Abdullah wrote in a post on X. Abdullah said he has taken up the matter with the Chief Secretary in the strongest possible terms. In a subsequent post, raking up the issue of statehood, he said had J&K been a full-fledged state, the IAS officer would have been attached to the General Administration Department pending an inquiry into his conduct. "As a UT, we expect the authorities with control over the IAS officers to set the right example and ensure abusive, threatening behaviour is not brushed under the carpet," he posted. Meanwhile, sources said Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has already sought a report from Chief Secretary Atul Dulloo in this regard.

According to sources, the incident took place during a review meeting of Mission YUVA, convened to assess progress of the flagship National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) scheme on October 14.

Delhi Police at Abhijeet Dipke's home ahead of CJP's Tiranga march

Over a dozen Delhi Police personnel showed up at Abhijeet Dipke's Jhandewalan residence ahead of the CJP's 'Lehra Do Tiranga' march.

New Delhi(Agency).

Hours ago, Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke predicted that he might be detained ahead of the outfit's 'Lehra Do Tiranga' march in central Delhi. On Friday afternoon, Delhi Police personnel showed up at the residence where Dipke was staying in Jhandewalan. While the reason is not known, it marks the latest confrontation between the CJP and Delhi Police amid the outfit's protest against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) over alleged SIR irregularities. Visuals showed a dozen Delhi Police officers, including a substantial number of women cops, arriving at the residence in West Delhi. Dipke is seen sitting at his residence with a Tricolour draped around his shoulders, being seen as a form of silent protest. A police officer is seen sitting beside him. There has been no official statement from Delhi Police on whether Dipke has been detained or put under house arrest.



The development comes a day after Dipke called on people to assemble at Central Park in Delhi's Connaught Place - one of the biggest shopping hubs - at 5 pm carrying the national flag. The appeal followed the arrest of CJP leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka earlier this week for trespassing into Jantar Mantar, which has been denotified as a protest site.

Das and Ranka sneaked through the tight security cordon and unfurled the Tricolour near Jantar Mantar. They were sent to five days of judicial custody on Wednesday. Dipke, who arrived in Delhi from Mumbai on Thursday, told the media in a late-night press conference that vehicles without number plates were following him and Intelligence Bureau (IB) personnel were monitoring his residence.

The CJP founder emphasised that he was prepared to go to jail for waving the national flag, challenging the cops to treat the act as a crime.

13 Stab Wounds in Just 23 Seconds: Brutal Daylight Murder Shocks Gujarat, CCTV Footage Reportedly Captures the Horrifying Attack and Triggers Serious Law and Order Concerns

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Gujarat: A shocking and gruesome murder incident in Gujarat has reportedly sent shockwaves through the local community, raising serious concerns about public safety and law and order. In a horrifying attack, a person was allegedly assaulted with a sharp-edged weapon, sustaining approximately 13 blows in just 23 seconds. The extremely brief but violent sequence has left residents alarmed, while the circumstances surrounding the incident have become a matter of serious concern.According to the information available, the attack took place in a public area during daylight hours. The assailant allegedly approached or intercepted the victim and launched a sudden assault with a sharp weapon. The victim reportedly had little opportunity to defend himself before the attacker continued striking him repeatedly. The incident is said to have unfolded so quickly that people nearby may have had very little time to react.The incident has once again drawn attention to the need for effective policing, prompt investigation and stronger public safety measures. However, the precise location, the identity of the victim and the complete sequence of events require official confirmation.Planned Attack or Personal Vendetta? Investigators Face Key QuestionsOne of the most important questions surrounding the incident is whether the murder was the result of a long-standing personal rivalry or a sudden dispute that escalated into extreme violence. The available account suggests that the attack may have been deliberate, but the motive has not yet been independently established.Investigators will need to determine whether the accused and the victim knew each other, whether there had been previous disagreements between them and whether any threats or confrontations had occurred before the incident.A financial dispute, an old personal rivalry or an argument over a relatively minor matter are among the possible explanations mentioned in the preliminary account. However, these remain possibilities rather than confirmed findings. The actual motive can only be established after the police examine the available evidence and record statements from relevant individuals.If investigators establish that the attack was premeditated, details regarding the alleged planning, the movements of the accused before the incident and the circumstances in which the victim was intercepted could become important parts of the case.CCTV Footage Reportedly Records the Entire AttackThe reported availability of CCTV footage could

prove significant in reconstructing the sequence of events. According to the supplied information, the camera recording captures the assault, which allegedly lasted approximately 23 seconds and involved around 13 blows with a sharp-edged weapon.Investigators can examine the footage to establish the timing of the attack, the movements of the individuals involved and the direction in which the suspect may have fled. If the recording is clear enough, it may also help investigators establish the suspect's appearance and identify potential witnesses who were present in the vicinity.CCTV recordings can play an important role in criminal investigations, particularly when they help corroborate eyewitness accounts and other physical evidence. Investigators must also verify the original recording, its timestamp and its continuity before drawing conclusions from clips circulating on social media.The reported duration of 23 seconds and the number of blows should therefore be treated as preliminary details until confirmed by the investigating authorities.Victim Reportedly Dies at the SceneThe attack is reported to have left the victim with multiple serious injuries. According to the available account, the victim succumbed at the scene following the assault.The body was reportedly taken into police custody for the required legal formalities and post-mortem examination at a government hospital. The post-mortem report may help establish the nature and extent of the injuries, the probable cause of death and other medically relevant findings.The findings of the medical examination, along with forensic evidence and witness statements, will be important in establishing the facts of the case. The victim's identity, the precise time of death and other details should be confirmed through official records before being treated as established facts.Police and Forensic Teams Reportedly Begin InvestigationFollowing information about the incident, police personnel, including senior officers, reportedly reached the location. Forensic Science Laboratory experts and a dog squad were also reportedly called to assist with the investigation. Multiple teams have reportedly been deployed, with search operations underway.

'Gandhis have lost right to use Gandhi's name': Rajnath Singh on EC stir

New Delhi(Agency).

Accusing the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of doing "politics of disruption" in the name of protecting the democracy, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday suggested the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha to respect the janmat (mandate) and do an introspection of his own political role. Addressing the media persons at UP BJP headquarters in Lucknow, Singh today attacked Congress for "political opportunism" even as he slammed the recent protests in Delhi, saying it was inspired from the Bangladesh protest.



Singh said that the ongoing protest in Delhi was not against the Chief Election Commissioner, or the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), but it was the effort to turn the country's youths into pawns for "political conflicts and politics of anarchy".."Regime change is being pursued on the lines of Bangladesh… They openly said in a press conference that they took inspiration from Bangladesh for regime change. Another speaks of bringing down the government. This makes it clear that their sole agenda is to destroy democratic institutions and create unrest in the country," the minister said. Singh said that use of words like "regime change" make it clear that their fight is not for the electoral reforms, SIR or Gyanesh Kumar, not for the bright future of youths, but this is a conspiracy to get power by creating anarchy in the country.

From medals to govt jobs, Yogi Adityanath highlights UP's push for women athletes

Yogi Adityanath said Uttar Pradesh medal winners are being offered direct recruitment under the Padak Lao, Pad Pao scheme. He linked expanded sports infrastructure and cash rewards with greater support for women athletes.

New Delhi(Agency).

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has highlighted the state government's initiatives to promote women in sports, saying athletes who win medals at major competitions are being offered direct recruitment under the 'Padak Lao, Pad Pao' scheme.



Extending Navratri greetings, Adityanath invoked Maa Katyayani as a symbol of courage, determination and valour. He said Uttar Pradesh had seen a transformation in sports infrastructure and opportunities since 2017, with greater support for athletes. In a post on X, the chief minister alleged that before 2017, women faced an atmosphere of fear and lawlessness, while inadequate opportunities restricted their sporting ambitions. He also claimed that sports grounds were under the influence of mafias and that young women lacked the support needed to pursue their goals. Adityanath said sports infrastructure had expanded over the past nine and a half years, from village playgrounds and block-level mini stadiums to district stadiums, divisional sports colleges and the Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Meerut.

He added that medal winners at the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games were being given cash rewards worth lakhs and crores of rupees, along with direct recruitment opportunities under the 'Padak Lao, Pad Pao' initiative.

The Chief Minister cited several women athletes from Uttar Pradesh who have made their mark at national and international competitions.

CAQM team finds broken footpaths, waste piles on 52 roads

Gurgaon.(Ajency)

Accumulated road dust and construction waste, damaged footpaths and potholes exposed gaps in Gurgaon's road cleaning and maintenance during a CAQM inspection on Wednesday. The commission recorded 258 violations across 52 road stretches spanning around 104km.Of these, 174 violations were found on roads under MCG and 84 on stretches under GMDA, according to CAQM. Four flying squads covered about 56km of MCG roads and 48km of GMDA roads.Conducted under Operation Clean Air, the drive aimed to assess visible road dust and the effectiveness of cleaning and sweeping operations. The inspection covered major stretches including Palam Vihar, Pace City-I and II, sectors 10, 21, 22 and 23, Sikanderpur, sectors 53, 56, 27, 43, 26, 42 and 54, Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road, Dwarka Expressway, Daultabad Road and Dharampur Road, among others under the two agencies."These contribute to dust generation and its resuspension due to vehicular movement. This can worsen ambient air quality, making regular and effective road cleaning critical to dust control," a CAQM official said.

15mm rain turns 15-minute drive into an hour-long crawl in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Ajency)

A 15mm spell of rain brought traffic to a crawl on Thursday, turning routine 15-minute journeys into hour-long ordeals. IFFCO Chowk, Rajiv Chowk, Hero Honda Chowk, Sector 31, Huda City Centre metro station and Udyog Vihar were among the worst-affected stretches, leaving commuters battling long delays even as the maximum temperature plunged.

"Traffic was moving slowly around IFFCO Chowk after the rain. Vehicles were piling up, and it took more than an hour to reach Udyog Vihar from IFFCO Chowk, a journey that normally takes barely 15 minutes. This was around 12.30pm," said Abhinash Kapoor, a commuter.

"Rajiv Chowk was severely affected by traffic congestion after rain. It was difficult to get through the junction at all. Vehicles were not moving for 15 minutes or more. Once I was on the highway, it was even worse," said another commuter, Geeta Mehra.

MCG sets Oct 25 deadline to remove all 31 ready-mix concrete plants

Gurgaon.(Ajency)

MCG has set an Oct 25 deadline to remove all 31 ready-mix concrete (RMC) plants operating within its limits, as the civic body steps up measures to curb air pollution.MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya Thursday directed the concerned joint commissioners to ensure that no RMC plant remains within the municipal limits after the deadline. Dahiya instructed officials to ensure that pollution-control measures are implemented on the ground rather than remaining confined to official records. The process of issuing notices to the plants and completing other formalities has begun, officials said.RMC plants are facilities where cement, sand, aggregates, water and other materials are mixed in precise proportions to produce concrete, which is then taken to construction sites for use.

During the meeting, the commissioner reviewed action being taken against all RMC plants located within the municipal limits. He directed the concerned joint commissioners to complete the removal of relevant plants by Oct 25. He said.

Congress Targets BJP Over ₹500 NPK Fertiliser Price Hike, Warns of Rising Debt Burden on Gujarat Farmers

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Gandhinagar: More than 5.8 million farmers in Gujarat are facing fresh concerns following a reported ₹500 increase in the price of NPK fertiliser per bag. The increase, attributed to IFFCO, has added to the financial pressure on farmers already struggling with rising costs of seeds, pesticides, agricultural labour and other essential farming inputs.According to the information cited by the Congress, an NPK fertiliser bag previously priced at ₹1,950 is now reportedly available for ₹2,450, marking an increase of approximately 25.6%. The reported price hike has triggered criticism from the opposition, which has accused the BJP-led government of failing to provide adequate financial relief to the farming community.Dr. Manish Doshi, Media Convener and Spokesperson of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee, strongly criticised the BJP government over the issue. He questioned why the government could not provide comparable relief to farmers while, according to Congress, loans worth ₹16 lakh crore had been waived for major industrialists."Why is the BJP government, which can waive loans worth ₹16 lakh crore for a handful of industrialists, unwilling to waive the debts of farmers who work day and night to feed the nation?" Doshi asked.Farmers Face Double Burden of Rising Costs and Limited IncomeIn a press statement, Doshi expressed concern over the deteriorating financial condition of farmers in Gujarat. He argued that rising agricultural input costs, combined with uncertain returns from crop sales, were placing an increasing burden on farming households.The reported ₹500 increase per bag represents an approximately 25.6% rise from the earlier price of ₹1,950. For farmers purchasing multiple bags during a cropping season, the increase could significantly raise cultivation expenses.Congress alleged that the cost of essential agricultural inputs, including fertilisers, seeds, diesel, pesticides and farming equipment, had continued to put pressure on farmers under BJP rule.The party also highlighted the gap between rising production costs and the prices farmers receive for their produce. According to the Congress, farmers are increasingly caught between higher expenditure on cultivation



and limited growth in agricultural income.The opposition argued that unless adequate support is provided, the rising cost of farming could further affect farmers' profitability and increase their dependence on borrowing.Gujarat Farmers' Agricultural Debt Exceeds ₹74,000 Crore, Congress ClaimsCiting figures attributed to public-sector banks, Doshi claimed that agricultural loans in Gujarat had crossed ₹74,000 crore.

When a Person Leaves, Where Do Their Memories Go?

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Author: Rupesh Solanki, Bhachau, Kutch One of the greatest realities of life is that the person who laughs with us, talks to us, and stands beside us through happiness and sorrow may one day disappear from our sight. Time continues to move forward, days and years pass by, yet their memories remain alive forever in some corner of our hearts. A person leaves, but where do their memories go? Perhaps even time has no answer to this question.The departure of a loved one is not merely the absence of a person; it is the closing of a beautiful chapter of life. The rooms remain the same, the walls remain the same, and the windows remain unchanged, yet something is missing—something whose absence cannot be filled by anything else. When the voice that once brought peace to our hearts survives only in our memories, even the silence of the home can sometimes become unbearable.It is not true that time heals every wound. Yes, time teaches us how to live with sorrow, but some memories grow deeper with the passing years. When an old song reaches our ears, a familiar fragrance surrounds us, or an old photograph catches our attention, our minds return to those moments of the past when everything still seems alive. For a brief moment, we feel as though that person will appear before us and begin talking, but as reality dawns upon us, our eyes fill with tears.Some ordinary moments of life become priceless after someone is gone. A cup of tea shared together, seemingly meaningless conversations, little jokes, and loving exchanges—all these eventually become the most precious treasures of the heart. The moments that once seemed ordinary continue to return to our minds, along with the longing to live them once again.In today's world, people have become so occupied with work and responsibilities that they often forget to make time for their loved ones. We assume that there will always be another opportunity to talk to them and countless occasions to express our love. But life does not always offer us a second chance. Some conversations remain unfinished, some apologies



remain unspoken, and some embraces remain incomplete forever.That is why we should never take the presence of the people who are with us today for granted. We should make time for our parents, sit and talk with our families, and express the love we carry in our hearts while we still can. We should never wait for someone's absence to realize the value of their feelings.The best way to keep the memory of a loved one alive is not merely to preserve their photograph, but to embrace their values, thoughts, and humanity in our own lives.

12 years in jail, man acquitted in murder case in Greater Noida

Noida.(Ajency)

After spending 12 years in jail over the alleged murder of a seven-year-old boy, a Hapur man is set to be released after a sessions court acquitted him of all charges on Oct 13, citing gaps in the prosecution's evidence.Additional sessions judge Somprabha Mishra noted that there was no eyewitness to the murder and said that in a case based on circumstantial evidence, the circumstances must be so strongly linked that they leave no doubt that the crime was committed by the accused and no one else."In the analysis of the evidence, the chain of circumstances presented by the prosecution is not connected, so it cannot be concluded that the accused was guilty by presuming his guilt. Thus, the prosecution's case against the accused is found to be unproven," the court held. It ordered the release of Rajendra Sharma from the district jail on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 30,000 and a surety of the same amount, as required under Section 437A of CrPC.The case is linked to an FIR registered on June 29, 2014, at Bisrakh police station. Habibpur resident Zahiruddin complained that his seven-year-old son, Gyasuddin, had gone out with Sharma, his brother-in-law, the previous evening and had not returned home. According to the complaint, villagers informed him the following morning that the boy's body had been found in a drain near a pond, with injuries on his face and body. He suspected Sharma of killing his son.

An FIR was regstered under sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence) of IPC. After investigation, police filed a chargesheet, and the case was committed to the sessions court on Sept 8 that year. Charges were framed on Oct 13, which Sharma denied. He sought a trial.The prosecution examined eight witnesses, including Zahiruddin and an eyewitness, Rizwan. However, Rizwan told the court that he had not been present at the scene and had learnt about the incident on the phone. The prosecution subsequently declared him hostile. Zahiruddin also acknowledged that he had named Sharma on suspicion.

The defence argued that Sharma had been falsely implicated following a family dispute. It said that Sharma's brother, Dharmendra, had eloped with and

Camps to enrol voters in Ghaziabad, which saw 20% deletion in SIR

Ghaziabad.(Ajency)

Camps will be set up in the city, which saw a 20% downsizing of the electorate in the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls earlier this year, to register voters who did not make it to the final roll as well as first-time voters. The camps will be held on Oct 17 and



24. DM Ravindra Kumar Mandar said the regular Form 6 will be used during the exercise, with no declaration of parents' details required. Carrying EPIC, he said, was optional as it helped keep families under one booth.

Ghaziabad saw the second-highest deletions in the final rolls, published on April 10, in the state in percentage terms after capital Lucknow (22.9%). While 5.7 lakh names were removed from Ghaziabad's list, Lucknow saw 9.1 lakh deletions. UP's electorate was itself downsized by a little over 2 crore voters — a shade less than the population of Sri Lanka.Sahibabad, the state's largest constituency by population, saw 30.4% deletions that shaved off 3.2 lakh names, the highest for an assembly segment in the state. Noida followed with 23.9% (1.8 lakh) deletions. Across Gautam Budh Nagar, 3.6 lakh names were removed from the final rolls.The camps are being organised following directions from the Election Commission of India amid a raging row over deletions from electoral rolls during SIR, which have led to calls for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar by the Opposition as well as Cockroach Janta Party (CJP).Mandar, who is also the district election officer, said BLOs would be available at every polling station from 10 am to 4 pm on both days. Help desks will also be set up at the polling stations to assist applicants in filling out Form 6, which is used for registering new voters.

Anjani Kumar Singh, additional district magistrate (finance and revenue) and deputy district election officer, said residents seeking to enrol their names need self-attested photocopies of their photograph, proof of date of birth and residence-related documents. If available, they should also carry the Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) number of a family member to facilitate the application process.We will be using the Form 6 used during the non-SIR period for the special camps. There will be no declaration form required where voters need to provide details of their parents or grandparents," Mandar told TOI. Form 6 is prescribed under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, which have been framed under Section 28 of the RPA, 1950.

Mature neem trees cut to clear ad pole view, say residents of Noida Sector 100

Noida.(Ajency)

Residents of Century Apartment in Sector 100 have claimed that several mature neem trees have been cut down without permission — some as recently as Wednesday — to clear the view for an advertising unipole on the 75-metre road in front of the housing complex.Pawan Yadav, a resident of the sector, said around seven trees, aged 10-12 years, were felled in the past two years and some were damaged while they were being trimmed. He said the locals, who had been nurturing the trees for years, demanded an investigation into the matter, especially since laws regulate the cutting of trees in the state.Under Uttar Pradesh Protection of Trees Act, 1976, felling or removing regulated timber or fruit trees in the state, including in regions like Noida, requires prior written permission from the competent forest authority. Unauthorised tree felling can lead to imprisonment of up to six months, fines of up to Rs 1,000 (or higher penalties/compensatory actions ordered under specific judicial or zonal rules like the Taj Trapezium Zone), alongside the seizure of timber and equipment.Yet, Yadav said, trees had been cut in Sector 100 in an apparent violation of the law."The destruction of these trees that took years to grow represents a grave act of environmental negligence," Yadav, who is also the treasurer of Federation of Noida Residents Welfare Associations, said. He demanded the identification of those responsible for this damage and



legal action against the guilty parties.

He added that the tree felling showed an apparent contradiction in govt policies. "While on one hand, Noida Authority is promoting planting of trees, on the other, mature trees are being cut down for commercial purposes," he said.

Meanwhile, director of Noida Authority's horticulture department Anand Mohan Singh said they have taken note of the matter and an investigation into it would start soon. He confirmed that no permission was sought from the department to cut down the trees.

When contacted, district forest officer Rajnikant Mittal told TOI that they have been informed of the issue and action will be taken against those found guilty. "A case has been filed by the forest department and due action will be taken as per the rules under the tree protection Act," he said.

4 workers killed in blast at dye manufacturing unit in Gujarat's Gandhinagar

Vadodara.(Ajency)

Four migrant workers, at least three hailing from Jharkhand, were killed in an explosion at a dye manufacturing facility in Kalol taluka of Gujarat's Gandhinagar district Thursday. The blast occurred between 12.30 pm and 1 pm at Kovika Dyes and Intermediates, a chemical manufacturing plant in Phase-4 of Chhatral Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC), while workers were pumping chemicals into a pressure vessel, the police said.

After receiving information, teams from the local police and fire services rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations. The dead and the injured were shifted to a hospital. Explaining the preliminary findings of the blast, Inspector J J Gadhvi of the Kalol taluka police station said that the main pressure vessel and boiler remained intact. "Two workers were fitting a pipe into a hot pressure vessel holding chemicals when the explosion took place.

Don't panic if your name not in voter list, says GBA chief Maheshwar Rao

BENGALURU.(Ajency)

There is no need for people to panic if their name is not in the voter list, said Bengaluru District Election Officer and Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao.

"The Election Commission will take steps to organise a special campaign to include eligible voters in the list," he told reporters on Thursday regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls. He said steps are being taken to organise a special campaign to include new names in the voter list as per the directions of the Election Commission of India (ECI). He said those eligible to include their names in the voter list can apply through Form 6. He added that there are 56,99,660 voters in the draft voter list. Due to non-recognition of names in the 2002 voter list and other discrepancies, 24,06,044 people were being served notices and questioned. "Most of these inquiries have already been completed. Instead of conducting inquiries, the ECI has directed the booth level officers (BLOs) to visit their homes directly and conduct verification, and necessary action is being taken accordingly," he said.

In Bengaluru Urban district, 2.19 lakh people have submitted Form 6 to get their names added to the voter list. After the disposal and verification of various applications, including Form 7 and Form 8, around 2 lakh voters are expected to be added. In this context, the total number of voters in the city is expected to reach about 59 lakh, he said.

Marshals get 10 days to resolve 1k AI-detected garbage issues in Bengaluru

BENGALURU.(Ajency)

With many complaints of garbage black spots still pending despite their detection through AI technology, Bengaluru South City Corporation Commissioner KN Ramesh has set a 10-day deadline to resolve 1,000 such complaints in 10 days. The corporation had roped in Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technology on a pilot basis to escalate and resolve various public grievances within Bengaluru South City Corporation limits, including black spots, potholes, streetlights, unauthorised hoardings, and other issues by reaching the officials concerned.

An extensive survey was conducted covering 150km of 311km of roads using a vehicle equipped with an AI camera. Travelling along the roads, this vehicle automatically identified potholes, footpath encroachments, construction waste, unauthorised optical fibre cables and garbage black spots, generating problem ticket numbers. During the campaign, 2,000 such tickets (black spot issues) were raised and based on this, marshals were given a 10-day deadline to attend to and close 1,000 such complaints, said an official.

Why police think Gujarat mom killed her daughter

- Rajkot woman arrested for allegedly throwing 2-year-old daughter off the fifth floor. She is separated from her husband; police say she has claimed she was 'confused' at the time



Lucknow.(Ajency)

Police in Rajkot have booked a woman for allegedly throwing her two-year-old daughter off the ledge of a stairwell from the fifth floor of the building in which she lives with her parents. What was initially believed to be a tragic accident was suspected to be murder after investigators applied common sense to the circumstances of the death of the child – including her height and the manner in which she fell. The woman has confessed to the crime, police have said. According to police, she has claimed that she was in a "confused mental state".Police came into the picture on October 12 after officers from the 'B Division' reached a private hospital to find the child, Snehal alias Tingu Sakariya, dead from grievous head injuries seemingly caused by a fall. A case of Accidental Death (AD) was registered. However, three days later, on Thursday (October 15), they had registered an FIR against the child's mother, identified as Poonam, daughter of one Jagdish Parsoda. The woman was accused of murder, based on a complaint filed by Sanjay Sakariya, the father of the deceased child. Police Inspector G R Chauhan told The Indian Express that an assessment of the circumstances surrounding the death of Snehal had led them to question the possibility of her falling off the stairwell ledge on her own. "The initial report we received from the mother was that the two-year-old child had fallen off from the fifth floor ledge of the stairwell of an apartment complex at Uddham Singh Township on Kuvadwa road. However, many things did not add up," Inspector Chauhan said. There were three main reasons for the police's suspicion.

"First", Chauhan said, "if the child had lost her balance at the top of the stairs, she would have tumbled down them, and not gone over the ledge. "Second, the child was only three feet tall, and the stairwell railing is four and a half-foot high, so she couldn't have reached up there.

""And third, if she had fallen by accident, she would have dropped straight down; however, she fell at some distance from the building." This third point, Chauhan said, led police to suspect that "force had been used to throw the child down". The officer said that the parents of the child, Sanjay Sakariya and Poonam, had been separated for about eight months, and that the woman had been staying with her parents. Sanjay Sakariya was informed of the death of the child by police, Chauhan said.But why would the woman do this to her daughter? Inspector Chauhan said they had asked her about the motive behind the alleged killing, and she had claimed that she was in a confused state of mind at the time of the incident.

9 from UP, jewellery firm employee held in Rajkot loot and murder

They were caught from Rajasthan and Morbi district of Gujarat within 10 hours of the crime, police say.



Lucknow.(Ajency)

The Rajkot city police have apprehended 10 persons for allegedly killing an employee of a branded jewellery manufacturing and export firm and looting around 900 grams of gold and 3 kgs of silver valued at Rs1.53 crore from him, officials said on Thursday. Lalji Sardhara, the employee of Tanvi Export India Ltd, was shot dead outside the company's factory at Aji Industrial Estate in Rajkot on Wednesday.

Police said the accused had fired at least three rounds from close range at Sardhara, 51, as he was leaving the factory around 7.55 pm. The accused were apprehended from Sirohi and Udaipur districts of Rajasthan as well as Morbi district of Gujarat, said DCP (Crime) Jagdish Bangarwa. One of the accused is an employee of the jewellery firm, who had allegedly helped the rest of the accused get leads on the movements of Sardhara, police said.

The accused have been identified as Vishal Singh Vinod Singh Rajput, Shivam Girish Chand Gupta, Anurag Singh Om Prakash Singh Rajput, Avinash Singh alias Lankesh, Ajit Ramraj Pandey, Shivam Ashok Pandey, Aman Ramakant Pandey, Pavan Shivprasad Chaubey, Niraj alias Arvind Harishankar Tiwari, and Shailesh Kumar Karmveer Kherwa, the accused employee of the jewellery firm. All the accused, except Kherwa, are from Uttar Pradesh, police said.

Citing preliminary investigation, Bangarwa said it was Anurag Singh who opened the fire. Purported CCTV footage of the incident shows the victim trying to put up a fight and falling to the ground as some men fled in a car. The plan was allegedly formulated by Avinash Singh alias Lankesh with the help of Kherwa. Witnesses said they heard at least three gunshots being fired, saw their colleagues slumping to the ground and the four men looting the precious metals and fleeing the scene. Sardhara was taken to the nearby Madhuram Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment. The Rajkot Crime Branch found that there was more than one car when the loot had taken place. Following the trail of these vehicles, the police managed to track all 10 accused within 12 hours of the commission of the crime, officials said. An FIR was registered at Thorala police station in Rajkot and the accused were being brought to the city on transit warrants.

3 injured after blast rips apart house in Varanasi, 2 cops suspended

Lucknow.(Ajency)

A woman and her children were injured after a powerful explosion ripped apart their three-storey house in the Sarnath area of Varanasi on Thursday. The house was allegedly used to illegally store and manufacture firecrackers. The woman, identified as 40-year-old Chandni, is said to be critical, while the condition of her 15-year-old son and nine-year-old daughter is stable.

"No one is trapped in the debris. All three injured are admitted to a hospital," Varanasi Police Commissioner Mohit Agarwal told the Indian Express, adding that the cause behind the blast is being probed. "Remains of firecrackers have been found in the debris of the building, which has been completely reduced to rubble. A police team reached the spot around 5 pm after they were informed about the explosion," a police



spokesperson said, adding that the owner of the house, Raju Khan, and his mother were not present in the house when the explosion occurred. Teams from NDRF and SDRF were also deployed to search for trapped persons, if any. Both the agencies said that they did not find anyone under the rubble, the PRO said.

While the police are yet to register a case in the incident, two policemen, including the local outpost in-charge and a constable, were suspended for alleged dereliction of duty. According to police sources, the two policemen were suspended "as they ignored the illegal manufacturing and storage of firecrackers in the house".

AAP Gujarat MLA Chaitar Vasava seeks bail, cites exam, brother's ill health



Vadodara.(Ajency)

Jailed Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Chaitar Vasava has approached the Gujarat High Court seeking 30 days' temporary bail, citing the first-semester examinations of a Master of Social Work (MSW) course he has enrolled in following his June conviction. Vasava also informed the court about his brother's ill health due to "ingesting poison", with the state government telling the court it wants to verify both grounds before responding to the plea.

The court has granted time to the state until Friday to verify the grounds cited by the MLA.

Vasava is serving a seven-year sentence at Vadodara Central Jail for threatening and assaulting forest officials after the department removed crops allegedly cultivated on encroached government forest land.

Justice Vimal K Vyas heard Vasava's plea on Wednesday as his lawyer, Senior Advocate I H Syed, informed the court that the MLA's brother had also "ingested poison". The lawyer submitted that both the examination schedule and his brother's condition were grounds for seeking temporary release.

Sukhna Lake gets Ramsar tag, puts Chandigarh on global wetland map

Chandigarh.(Ajency)



The Ramsar Convention on Thursday announced that Chandigarh's Sukhna Wetland had been added to its list, placing the city's prized water body on the global map of wetlands and bringing renewed focus on the conservation of its ecosystem.

Sukhna has been assigned Site Number 2602 on the Ramsar List. Ramsar sites are also called Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, an environmental treaty established in 1971. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav posted on X, "India's Ramsar site tally reaches 103. India continues to strengthen its commitment to wetland conservation, with Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh and Sauj Jheel in Uttar Pradesh becoming the latest additions to the list of Ramsar Sites." "I congratulate Uttar Pradesh and Chandigarh for this feat," he said. "Dear travellers, do visit Sukhna and Sauj next time you have a couple of days at hand."The UT Chandigarh Administrator and Punjab Governor, Gulab Chand Kataria, hailed it as a historic milestone for environmental conservation and sustainable ecosystem management. Kataria congratulated the people of Chandigarh, conservationists, experts, the Forest and Wildlife Department, and all concerned for their unrelenting dedication toward protecting this iconic natural ecosystem.

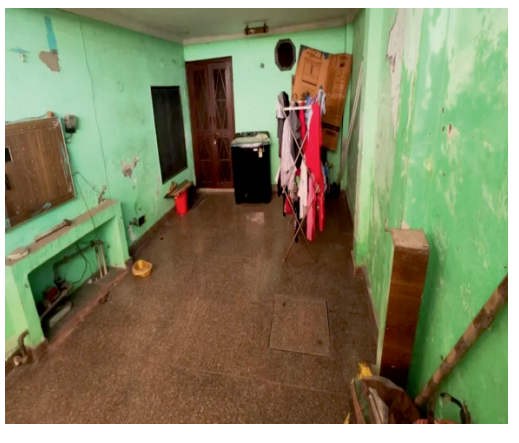
Skipped dinner, plead to meet daughter: Meerut 'blue drum murder' convicts' first 'restless' night in jail after death verdict

Lodged at Meerut's Chaudhary Charan Singh District Jail, the two reportedly skipped dinner and spent the night uneasy and sleepless. It was only on Thursday morning, after counselling by the jail doctor and pharmacists, that they agreed to eat.

Lucknow.(Ajency)

A night of restless quiet followed for convicts Muskan Rastogi and Sahil Shukla in jail on Wednesday, after a Meerut court sentenced them to death for murdering the woman's husband, Saurabh Rajput. Lodged at Meerut's Chaudhary Charan Singh District Jail, the two reportedly skipped dinner and spent the night uneasy and sleepless. It was only on Thursday morning, after counselling by the jail doctor and pharmacists, that they agreed to eat. On Thursday, Sahil was shifted to the barrack housing male convicts, while Muskan continued to remain in the barrack designated for mothers living in prison with their children. Muskan has been staying here with her nine-month-old daughter, who was born inside the jail. A jail official said the arrangement was in accordance with the rules requiring mothers accompanied by their children to be housed together. District Jail Senior Superintendent Viresh Raj Sharma said counselling sessions were held for the prisoners and both Sahil and Muskan were counselled on Thursday. "Their health is also being monitored regularly," he said. Sharma added that Sahil and Muskan had expressed their intention to challenge their conviction before a higher court.

Plea to meet daughter



For Muskan, however, her days behind bars are consumed not just with her legal battle, but also a plea to see her elder daughter. She has approached jail officials with a plea to be allowed to see her eight-year-old daughter, whom she has not met since being imprisoned. The child is currently living with Muskan's parents in Meerut.

The crucial voter tech we aren't scrutinising

The world over, elections have tended to tread familiar conservative paths with some circumspection, if not reluctance, in turning to technology. By and large, conventional methods seem to be the comfort zone for election managers and stakeholders. Even tech leaders such as South Korea, Japan, Israel, Sweden, and most European and North American countries still use paper and pen for voting in national elections, not to mention many other Asian countries. The Netherlands, Italy, Ireland and a few others contemplated electronic voting machines in the first decade of this century and even tried them out, but they later abandoned the idea on grounds of high cost or lack of broad public and political support. Electronic machine-voting was briefly attempted in Germany before being struck down by the country's Constitutional Court. Quite a few countries have machine-based elections at the provincial or local levels. A few use technology for biometric voter registration and for vote counting. Among the countries that do employ electronic voting, Estonia has gone a step further with the added option of internet voting.India was one of the early birds in adopting technology for elections. The idea of a voting machine was mooted by the Election Commission as early as in 1977, and a prototype of what later evolved into the present electronic voting machine (EVM) was first presented in 1979. We introduced EVM on a pilot basis in 50 polling stations of an Assembly constituency in Keralam in 1982. Electoral roll, the base document for elections, were computerised by the end of the last century. The focus here is not on technology per se, but on its role-limitation in the Indian election law framework.Our EVM was designed as a direct-recording, standalone machine, an electronic mirror image of ballot voting, retaining all checks and balances of paper ballot including secrecy of ballot and post-election auditability of vote, should a court require it in an election-related litigation. The paper trail of vote was later added to aid physical verification by the voter.

It is a different matter that a number of opposition parties still do not seem to be convinced about electronic voting and the demand for returning to paper ballot is almost an ongoing campaign. It's interesting to recall in this context that a current leader of the ruling BJP who was also a member of Parliament had, in 2010, authored a book titled Democracy at Risk: Can we trust our Electronic Voting Machines, with a foreword by a founder-leader of the party.

While the voting machine has always been a punching bag and continues to be so, the technology used for electoral rolls has not attracted any noticeable dissent. The recent controversy surrounding the special intensive revisions and the resultant scrutiny from various quarters have put the IT component of electoral roll management under the spotlight along with several other issues.

The Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 constitute the legal architecture for preparation and revision of electoral rolls. The Supreme Court held in a 1971 judgement that the 1950 Act and the amplitude of its provisions show that the entries made in an electoral roll can only be challenged in accordance with the machinery provided in the Act, and not in any other manner or before any other forum unless question of violation of prvisions of Constitution is involved. When the SIR operations in West Bengal last year were spiralling out of control and threatening to create chaos, by an extraordinary direction of the Supreme Court, judicial officers and tribunals were entrusted with the job of deciding claims and objections and appeals in the exercise. They temporarily replaced the regular civilian officers appointed for this purpose in terms of the 1950 Act and the 1960 Rules. Except for this unusual arrangement, it is well recognised that the Act and the Rules govern the ecosystem of electoral rolls.Reference in the Act and Rules to the use of IT in electoral roll is primarily for the limited purpose of enabling filing of claim and objection applications electronically to the electoral registration officer (ERO) whose exclusive domain is to decide the applications in accordance with the law and to reflect the decision in the electoral roll with suitable addition, deletion or correction in the roll.

Chinese duplicity to the fore

It's an irony that Beijing has opposed India's move to standardise names of 28 places in Ladakh



INDIA's move to standardise the names of 28 places in Ladakh by identifying and marking them on an official map drew a quick and somewhat petulant response from China. The spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on October 13 that China "firmly opposes the so-called standardised names publicised by India," adding that this move was illegal and void.The fact that China has been doing this long before India resorted to a tit-for-tat exercise appears to have been totally ignored by Beijing. This is its standard playbook. What China does is right; when others do the same thing, they are wrong.It appears that the Indian manoeuvre has got under China's skin — hence its immediate and strong riposte. In its hubris over how powerful China has become, Beijing ignores the simple fact that two can play the same game. India is only catching up with what China originally started.The mandarins in Beijing should expect more such "standardised names" — a term used by the Chinese themselves — from New Delhi in the coming months and years. Please don't forget that a similar exercise was done in Arunachal Pradesh a few months ago. India had assigned standardised names to 27 places and geographical features in Arunachal in August. The Ministry of Home Affairs had announced that the exercise was carried out in consultation with the state government.There are other aspects of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement that also need deeper analysis. It said, "China has never recognised the so-called 'Union Territory of Ladakh' unilaterally and illegally established by IndiaThe immediate questions that arise from this comment are: Does Beijing have a say in any reconfiguration of the administrative set-up of India? Isn't that a matter for India alone to decide? Did Beijing object when the state of Telangana was created from the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh in 2014? Clearly not. Then how come Beijing feels it had a say when India created the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh in 2019? How can China object to the abrogation of Article 370, which was a domestic administrative arrangement of India?

When Article 370 was abrogated, Delhi had very clearly conveyed to Beijing that this development was India's internal matter with no implications for the India-China boundary question. Disputes about the boundary would need to be discussed and negotiated between the two countries. Even then, possibly at Pakistan's prodding, Beijing had taken exception to the creation of the two Union Territories. China has never conveyed to India why it is opposed to the termination of the special arrangement under Article 370. Perhaps it is time for Beijing to be upfront about this matter and tell India what its objections are. It is likely that the Chinese don't want to do so as their position on what is a domestic Indian matter may get exposed.Of course, we must keep in mind that when India converted Arunachal Pradesh from a Union Territory into a state in 1987, China had objected to that move also. Even today, Beijing strenuously objects whenever Indian leaders pay visits to that state of India. It is clear that those objections emanate from the fact that China lays claim to the entire state, whereas the reality is that India has actual control of almost the whole territory — in most places right up to the McMahon Line.Is it this principle that is being applied to Ladakh? Is China arguing that until the boundary is delineated and demarcated, it will have a veto over what India does in what is ostensibly its own territory and which is not even being disputed by China? This is a far-fetched argument, and even Beijing must see how hollow it rings.This brings us to the third aspect of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement, which states, "… does not change the fact that the western sector of the India-China boundary belongs to China." This is exactly the point. India disputes what China believes is its territory. Conversely, China disagrees with what India thinks is its own territory. That is why there is a boundary question or a boundary dispute.Now, China appears to be unilaterally saying that what the two countries have broadly defined as the western sector of the boundary is Chinese territory. This may be a methodology to reiterate one's position on the issue, but it is rather childish.The way to proceed on these issues is o sit across the table and have a frank talk about them. However, since China made its military moves in eastern Ladakh in 2020, even such talking has become very difficult, time-consuming and protracted.Beijing will be a real superpower in the making if it were to practically, realistically and candidly discuss such issues with India rather than indulging in name-calling, innuendo and diplomatese. Rather than flexing its muscles and attempting to exhibit its comprehensive national power, China should adopt a practical, solution-finding approach.This may not lead to a resolution of the boundary dispute between India and China, but it may lay the foundation for a more straightforward, direct and simpler relationship between the two neighbours.

Protest is a right, don't relegate it to event management

The denotification of Jantar Mantar is not a mere symbolic shift. Along with large-scale detentions and internet shutdowns, it reinforces the sense that the space for democratic dissent is being stifled and invisibilised



There was a particular poignancy to the status of Jantar Mantar as the national capital's designated protest site. It is at one end of Sansad Marg, whose other end leads to the old Parliament House. So the people could air their grievances at a walking distance from where the people's representatives convened to legislate. The earlier protest site at the Boat Club Lawns along Kartavya Path was also a shouting distance from the House of the People. The proximity remained intact even when parliament was shifted in 2023 to the new premises. But now the denotification of Jantar Mantar as a protest site severs that vital democratic link for the first time.Let's consider the three alternative sites notified by Delhi Police. Ramlila Maidan, which is a bit over 6 km to the north of the new Parliament House, offers for free only a small space that can hold a few hundred people; the main ground, which can accommodate more than 50,000, needs to be booked well in advance with a daily fee and a security deposit that add up to more than `1 lakh. It seems there are only three days near the end of December that are open for booking this year. Those who want to exercise their democratic right to protest peacefully will also have to compete with fairs, weddings and religious events to book Burari Ground near the city's northern fringes or CBD Ground across the Yamuna to the east. So the idea of a thriving democracy—Ram Manohar Lohia's "zinda qaum" or alive nation, which does not wait for five years to demand its rights—will now be subservient to commercial priorities of event management.It's not a mere symbolic shift. Along with large-scale detentions and internet shutdowns, it reinforces the sense that the space for democratic dissent is being stifled and invisibilised. London has Parliament Square adjacent to Westminster Abbey and Washington has Union Square at the foot of Capitol Hill. As courts hear challenges to Jantar Mantar's denotification and Cockroach Janta Party leaders are remanded to judicial custody for protesting it at the site, surely the "mother of democracy" feels the need to pass the 'town square test', which measures freedom by the citizenry's ability to openly express views close to the seat of power.

Missing in India: The aesthetics of beautiful minds

If India wants to excel in science again, it should remember the stalwarts who treated the subject as a celebration and tolerated each other's eccentricities

This column is full of stories. Many people today may think of anecdotes as part of an obsolescent past. Stories, however, can be life-giving and form a fruitful pedagogy. This article is an attempt to use stories to create a new sociology of science. I want to illustrate that stories are not just imbued with an aesthetic value; they add to our sense of knowledge, too.Between the 1960s and 1990s, science in India had a certain charm, a sense of magic, and a certain sense of aesthetic. One of the best examples I can think of is the work of scientists in the Raman group. One thinks in particular of K S Krishnan. Here are two stories I found while working on my book on the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research's National Physical Laboratory.The first one occurred in the early 1950s. Krishnan, NPL's first director, is driving into office one morning in his old Studebaker car. He suddenly stops and jumps out excitedly as he sees a bunch of men cutting a tree in the NPL campus. He rushes towards them and asks, "Why are you cutting it?" They say, "The contractor and the architect asked us to, as the tree is asymmetrical."

Shocked with the reply, Krishnan stood still for a while before replying, "I, too, have studied symmetry. You create symmetry not by cutting down a tree, but by planting a third one." Krishnan celebrated this sense of aesthetic that dominated science.

I still remember Jawaharlal Nehru rushing from Parliament to the NPL office to gossip with Krishnan, with Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar following close behind. They were among the scientists of that era who gave science a sense of celebration, a sense of eccentricity.At that time, ecology almost served as science. And aesthetics almost served as a part of the ecology of justice.

One of the best stories I can think of in this context is one my father told me. We were sitting one evening out in the garden in Jamshedpur when the Tata Steel plant started pouring out slag, the molten-red by-product. A few minutes later, the nearby forest went up in flames as the tribals, while doing shifting cultivation, had set it on fire. My father watched the two phenomena—the forest fire and the molten steel—and suddenly said, "Each needs to respect the other—both need to survive, to talk to each other."He pointed out that if the tribal didn't survive along with Tata's tale, a deep sense of ecological defeat and injustice would be created. It must be noted that Tata Steel, in its early years, had a department of 'tribal metallurgy' that could polish steel in an exceptional, age-old way.This sense of aesthetic and eccentricity dominated science in that era. It was not regimented. And in this context, I want to bring up a third series of idiosyncratic narratives.One of the first stories is from a time I was sitting with my uncles—astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar and meteorologist C Ramaswamy—and my father C Visvanathan, the metallurgist.All of them were busy talking away till they suddenly pounced on the archaeological nature of the Indus Valley problem. They kept talking about it for hours. My aunt, who was sitting quietly listening to them for long, finally turned to me and said, "Look at these boys. They're like voracious sparrows pouncing on data. They seem utterly happy. The only intrusion they seem to allow is the cup of coffee." Indeed, for them, science was a source of happiness, a celebration.The same kind of story comes up when we talk about the extraordinary scientist that was Satish Dhawan. Once, physicist G N Ramchandran came to meet Satish and made outrageous demands, yelling for an hour. Satish listened patiently and agreed to most of it. One of the younger scientists asked Satish, "Why are you tolerating him?" Satish smiled and said that his work and his tantrum offered a similar order of resilience. "When your tantrum reaches the quality of his science, I'll tolerate you too."



Another story is about Amulya Reddy, one of the great authorities on intermediate technology and an innovator of biogas. I once met Amulya outside my sister's sari shop. He was delighted with the saris he had bought and proceeded to talk at length about their aesthetics. For him, expounding on a sari or on science was an aesthetic exercise. Science, in a deep way, was a kind of aesthetic responsibility to such people. When you think of each of their stories, you realise the depth in a fundamental way. Science in India in that era might have been slightly disorganised. But it was deeply free, deeply independent and deeply aesthetic. It was a science that flourished with storytelling.And storytelling became a part of what we would call science politics today. One of my friends recently told me we don't do science anymore—we do science policy. Caught in the statement was not only the reality of compulsion, of relevance; there was also a sense that the eccentric nature of science had somehow diminished, that it had become a different kind of imagination.I want to emphasise that it was not just the availability of eccentricity; it was the possibility of dissent that made science fascinating. But one has realised that, for all its aesthetics, science in India was also a failure at a moral level.Two events marked this failure. One was Bhopal, the other was nuclear energy. I remember Praful Bidwai, the scientist and journalist, wrote a fascinating article how villagers were used to clean up nuclear waste and then sent off to anonymity.Raja Ramanna accused Praful of being antinational when, in fact, he was being scientific to the core. This failure to respond to the dangers of nuclear energy and the failure to respond to the impending threat of Bhopal constituted two tragedies of the Indian scientific imagination.One needs memory, one needs morality, one needs storytelling to capture the power of a science that, at the same time, is an ethical statement of reality.

That's why we need storytelling and a science that goes beyond policy to fables, morals and parables—each of which would illustrate the power of an individual scientist to stand up to the indifference of policy as a statement of morality.



Austin at a Glance

If you've never been before, these Austin neighbourhoods will acquaint you with the city and its layout and make your maiden visit easy. Labelled as one of the most quirky and alternative cities in the world, Austin—even despite its recent transition from a small idyllic town to a thriving Texas hub—is one of those places you'll never be able to forget. Whether it's because of the city's laidback vibe, its unfettered idealism or its complete lack of judgement; you'll come away with memories that will last you a lifetime.

University of Texas

Youthful energy, high-brow culture, and cheap food and drinks keep the UT area buzzing day and night.

The 50,000-student University of Texas is like a small town within a mid-sized city. And it's not all about higher learning: the 350-acre campus offers numerous cultural amenities for non-students, including seven museums, the Bass Concert Hall, and the Cactus Cafe, an intimate live music venue.

Guadalupe Street is the dividing line between UT and the West Campus neighborhood. Also known as 'The Drag', it's home to budget-friendly sandwich shops, pizza joints, bookstores and clothing boutiques. At the Hole in the Wall, a dive bar that's been around since 1974, you can always find cheap beer and loud, up-and-coming Austin bands.

The West Campus neighborhood - tucked in-between The Drag and Lamar Boulevard - is a densely packed mash-up of upscale condos, low-rent apartments, beautiful old houses, restaurants and bars. The strong drinks at Cain & Abel's on Rio Grande have been fueling poor judgment since 1991.

South Congress Avenue

The mix of funky clothing boutiques, food trailers, and fine dining establishments attracts all manner of Austinites and sets the scene for excellent people-watching.

Back in the 1980s, this was the seedy part of town, largely populated by hookers instead of hipsters. These days, movie stars visiting Austin for a shoot often stay at the Hotel San Jose, catch a band at the Continental Club, and get their Tex-Mex fix at Guero's.

The area is known for its varied dining options, including a parking lot near Monroe and South Congress where more than a dozen food trailers sell everything from cupcakes to chicken in a cone. Italian food fans flock to the upscale Vespaio, while seafood lovers rave about Perla's.

If you look closely, you can still see evidence of the avenue's rich past, such as the fading letters on the Guero's building that reads 'Feed Store' and the lighted sign near the Continental Club that advertises 'Guns'. The historic Travis Heights neighborhood, with beautifully restored turn-of-the-century houses, borders South Congress to the east.

East Austin

Small galleries, coffee shops and cafes create an artsy enclave within a neighborhood that still feels homey and unpretentious.

Historically, I-35 served as Austin's racial dividing line, with whites on the west side and blacks and Hispanics on the east side. While that boundary is still discernible in northeast and southeast Austin, the area east of downtown is now home to a vibrant mix of young professionals and artists.

The gentrification has been gradual enough to allow East Austin to retain much of its original character. Shiny new art studios stand next to decades-old Mexican restaurants and barbecue joints. Along Manor Road's restaurant row, you can enjoy an organic salad from Eastside Cafe, Tex-Mex fare at Vivo's, or soul food at Hoover's Cooking.

Within walking distance of the restaurants, many of the area's modest homes have been transformed into artists' studios. The artists produce everything from paintings to jewelry, and are often available to chat about their work - or the human condition - over a beer or two.

6th Street

Sixth Street is Austin's perpetual pub crawl - seven blocks packed with shot bars, daiquiri bars, sports bars, hookup bars, and hookah bars.

Word to the wise: All of Austin's east-west streets downtown were originally named after trees - 6th was called Pecan Street.

This bustling strip has been a major business district since the mid-1800s, when local farmers brought their goods to market via horse and buggy. Many of the two- and three-story buildings that housed feed stores and blacksmith shops are still in use today, earning 6th Street a spot in the National Register of Historic Places.

The historical significance of the area may be lost on the drunken frat boys who meander along 6th Street on weekend nights, however. Loud music blasts from every doorway, but it's mostly cover songs. Austin's serious musicians generally perform on 6th Street to make money - and play their original tunes elsewhere.

The fickleness of the 6th Street crowd means that few bars survive for the long haul. Maggie Mae's, however, has been thriving since 1978. Lovejoy's, another long-term survivor, is one of the few mellow bars in the area.

Ideal winter holiday destinations in India

The onset of winter is marked by poetic misty mornings, a crisp breeze, and nights when all you want to do is snuggle into a quilt and read a book. But the winter months are also a fantastic time to discover a completely new side of some of India's popular travel destinations. Immerse in the snow-laden beauty of Gulmarg, set up a tent amidst sand dunes of Jaisalmer, or warm up to a steaming cup of tea in Munnar's expansive tea plantations—there are many wintry experiences to choose from, once you don the layers and buttress yourself against the cold. From the Himalayan peaks blanketed in glistening snow to verdant hill towns down south, here are some of the best escapes in India that are ideal for your winter vacation.

Manali

Manali gets its first snowfall around mid December, when it transforms into a winter wonderland replete with snow-covered peaks, and a blanket of pristine white draped all across the hill station. With the stunning backdrop of the Himalayas, it offers the perfect balance between tranquility and adventure, making it one of the most popular hill destinations in northern India. Fringed by thick pine trees and the Beas river gurgling along, you can decide to spend your holiday doing nothing at all or pack in your itinerary with interesting activities.

Approached by road from Chandigarh, which is about 300 kilometres away, there are a number of Himachal Tourism buses that run from Delhi and Chandigarh at frequent intervals, though the distance from Delhi is best undertaken in one of the comfortable overnight buses. For those who wish to partake in adventurous activities, there's fishing, white water rafting, paragliding, skiing, mountaineering, and hiking in and around Manali. If you're looking to go off the beaten path, try one of the packages organised by Trans Himalayan Adventures, which focus on healing and rejuvenation. Solang Valley is a good option for the kids, offering a bunch of fun winter sports including skiing.

Gulmarg

If you're looking for a destination which is as breathtakingly beautiful as it is adventurous, then look no further than Kashmir. The Kashmir valley is considered heaven on earth, and when it's blanketed in snow, it exudes a charm few other places do. The tiny and isolated hill village of Gulmarg is situated at the western extremity of the Himalayas in a subsidiary range called the Pir Panjals. Lying about 50 kilometres from Srinagar, it can be easily accessed by tourist buses, taxis and even by air. Owing to its location, Gulmarg gets some of the heaviest snowfalls in the Himalayas and has earned the distinction of being the best ski resort in the country. So once you've feasted your eyes on all the beauty, immerse yourself in some activity by hitting the slopes. Catering to both beginners and pros, skiing here can be one of the most powerful experiences. For the more mild adventure enthusiasts, there's the option of sledging, cable-car rides and snow boarding. Ski season starts mid December and lasts till the beginning of April. As for accommodation, there are various options. From state-owned huts and cottages, and beautifully appointed mid-range hotels like Nedous Hotel, to luxury accommodation at Hotel Highlands Park, there's something to suit every budget.

In addition, Gulmarg offers several other sites of interest for tourists. It has the highest golf course in the world, the frozen Alpine lake of Alpather, the Baba Reshi shrine and the Gulmarg Biosphere Reserves.

Jaisalmer

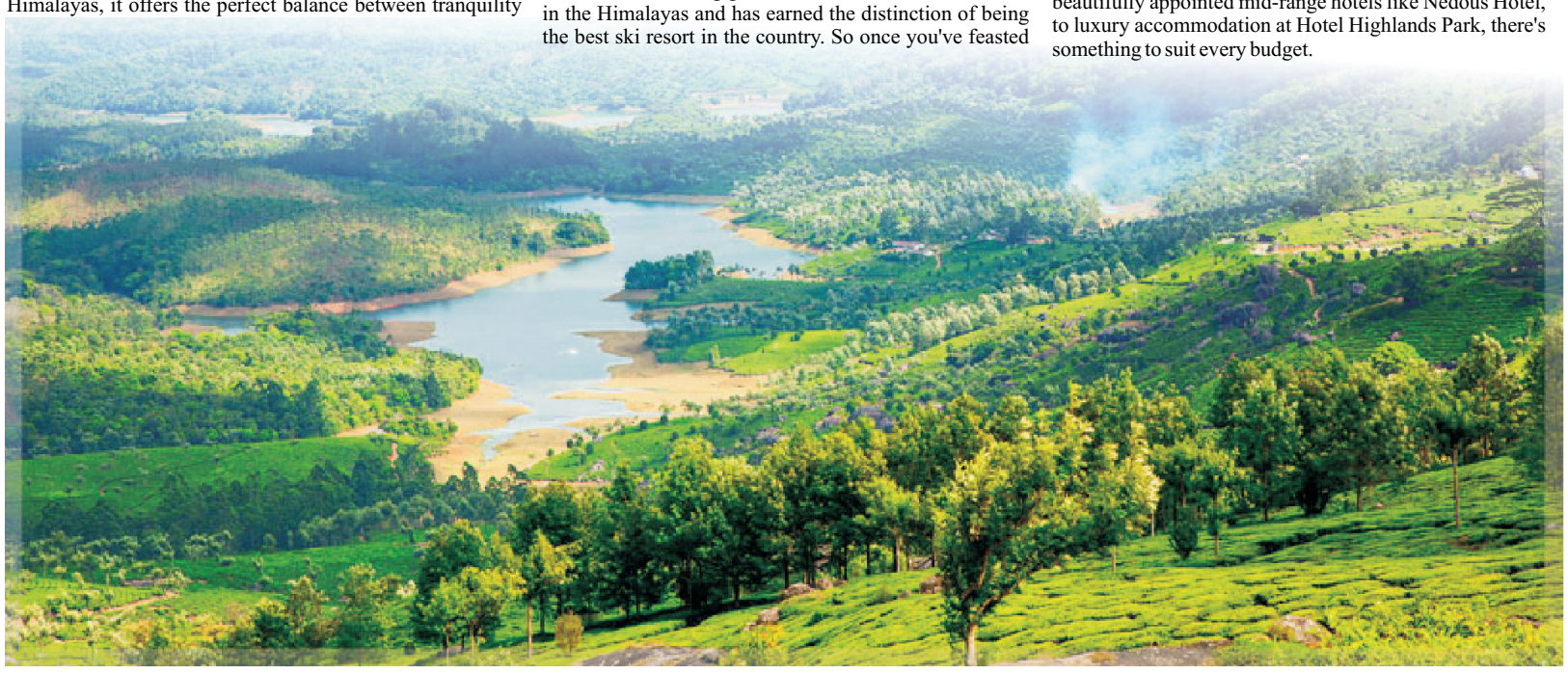
A magnificent fort looming over the city, picture-postcard vistas of sand dunes and an array of illuminated sandstone buildings—Jaisalmer is nothing short of a scene straight out of Arabian Nights. Once a sleepy desert city, Jaisalmer now attracts many couples, honeymooners and families by dint of its erstwhile royal splendour. The Jaisalmer Fort (also known as the Golden Fort of Rajasthan) is the most splendid attraction of the city, perched on an elevated patch looking over the city. Surrounded by numerous golden-hued shrines, the Gadsisar Lake is ideal for an evening picnic or a short paddleboat ride. The city's most popular activity is taking a camel ride over the desert sands; best enjoyed at sunrise and sunset, the ride gives an insight into Rajasthan's rural life and stunning vistas of the horizon. Jaisalmer's winding alleys are home to vibrant markets from where you can pick up quintessential Rajasthani souvenirs. Rajasthani cuisine, famous for its spicy veg curries, mouth-watering meat dishes and delectable sweets is the icing on the cake.

Munnar

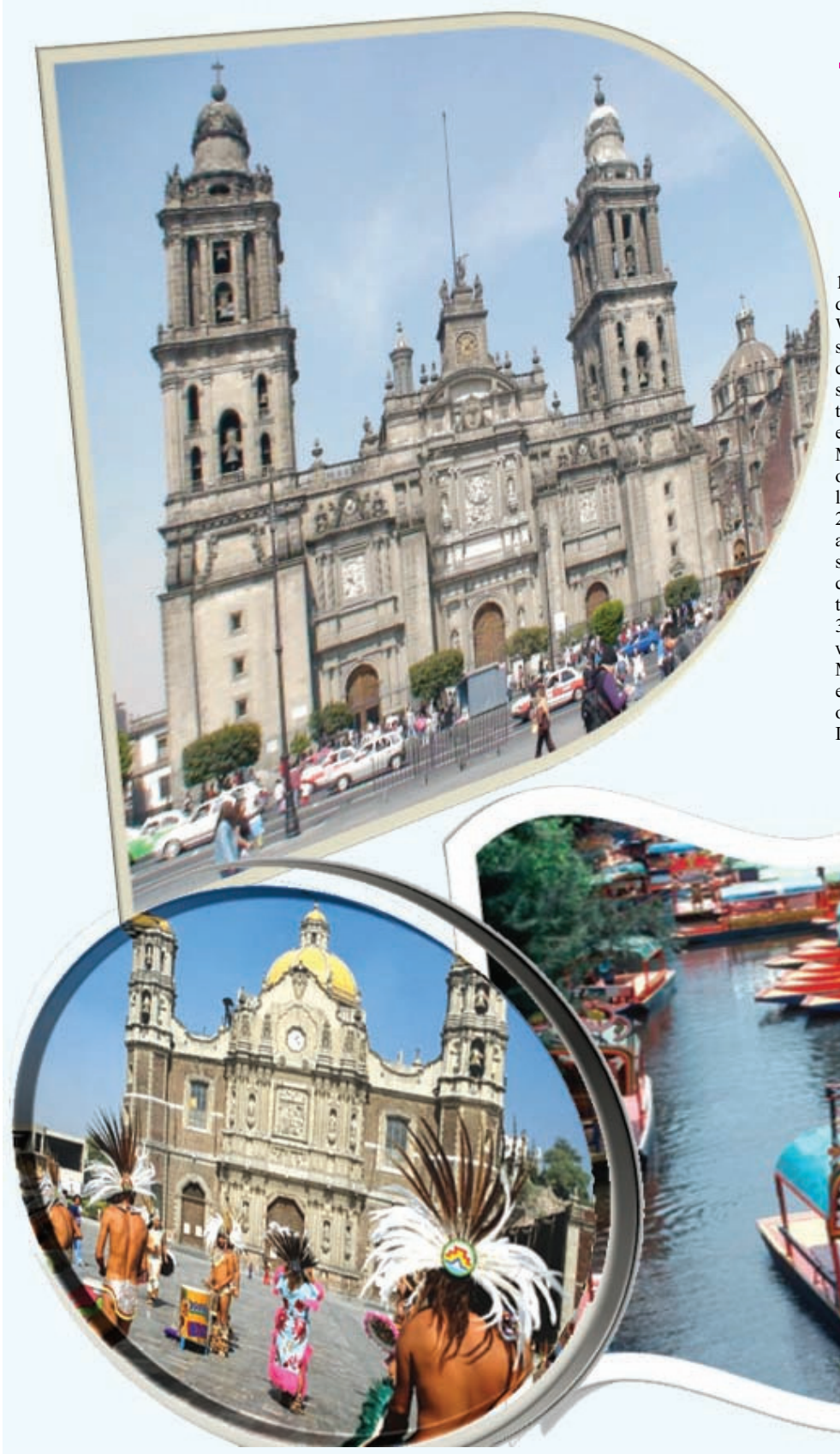
Pluck tea leaves while you explore Munnar's dense tea plantations; prance about in gurgling brooks while hiking on cloud-covered slopes; or wander through the hill town's winding lanes—Munnar is an idyllic escape into the natural wonders of God's own country, Kerala. Perched at the confluence of three mountain streams—Madhurapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundaly—the charming hill town lies about 130 km east of Kochi and 100 km north of the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady. A haven for bird-watchers, photographers and wildlife-enthusiasts, the Eravikulam National Park is just a short drive away from the hill town. Thrill-seekers can go hiking to the highest peak in the Western Ghats in India—Anamudi—located about 13 km away from Munnar. At an altitude of 1600 m, Munnar is a delight for adventure-enthusiasts, honeymooners and families.

Wayanad

Located between the Kannur and Kozhikode districts in Kerala, Wayanad is a sparkling green emerald sprawled across the slopes of the Western Ghats. The monsoons persevere here—the rainy season starts in June and lasts all the way till mid November—during which the already lush landscape takes on an even more vibrant shade of green, and everything is washed squeaky clean. The most enjoyable way to experience it is by checking into a jungle resort—even better if it has a treehouse. During the occasional dry spells in between, venture out and enjoy everything else the region has to offer. Wayanad ploughs tourists with some interesting prehistoric archaeological sites, tea plantations and thick forests, and is home to some of the oldest (and most insulated) tribes in India.



10 signs you've never been to Mexico City



1. You imagine it to be all dirt tracks and donkeys...
Whenever Hollywood portrays Mexico it seems to show dusty roads with beat-up cars and the occasional donkey. It's not surprising, then, that if you've never been to Mexico's capital, you might be expecting something similar. However, Mexico City is a bustling urban centre with over 20 million inhabitants, real roads, and lots of new cars.
2. ...or an urban jungle. Mexico City is big and urban, but there are so many green spaces and huge parks in all different corners of the city. In addition, beautiful, tree-filled plazas are everywhere.
3. You think Mexico City is poor and third world.
Mexico City is one of the most important economic centres of the Americas and one of the top 25 urban economies in the world. In fact, the country of Mexico is the world's 14th-largest economy. Like in many large cities, there are very rich residents and very poor residents, but head to Polanco, Pedregal, and Lomas de Chapultepec and you might be very surprised by the extraordinary wealth in those parts of the city.
4. You think it's really dangerous and that you'll get kidnapped.
Mexico City got a nasty reputation in the '90s for being dangerous and a hot spot for kidnappings. However, a lot's changed since then, and most tourists are surprised by just how safe they feel. Of course, crimes do occur—it's a big city—but it's not the crime-infested place many seem to believe.
5. You get confused when people in Mexico simply call Mexico City "Mexico."
For new travelers to Mexico (the country), this can be a confusing one. Are people saying they're from Mexico the city or Mexico the country? You can imagine some of the interesting (read: ridiculously confusing) conversations that can result from this. Note: You may also hear Mexico City referred to as D.F., Mexico D.F., the Federal District of Mexico, Chilangolandia, El Defectuoso, or La Capirucha. Now "Mexico" seems much better, right?
6. You don't know it's built on a lake and is in fact sinking.
When the Spanish arrived in Mexico, they found the huge, important city of the Aztecs, Tenochtitlan, built on an island on Lake Texcoco. The Spaniards constructed Mexico City over Tenochtitlan, draining the water off the lake to extend the city. Imagine, a city of 20 million built on a lake. No wonder it's sinking at a rate of between 6-35 cm per year.
7. You're unaware of its elevation.
Many people arrive in Mexico City wondering why they run out of breath so quickly or sometimes feel slightly light-headed for a day or two. The reason is that Mexico's capital is 7,350 ft (2,240 m) above sea level, making it the eighth-highest capital city in the world and the highest in North America. Oh, and that's another thing: Mexico is part of North America, not South America or Central America as many people think.
8. You haven't heard of the floating gardens of the Aztecs.
South of Mexico City there are canals in an area called Xochimilco. Here, the Aztecs built fertile banks on the lake, in which they grew one-third of the produce needed to feed the city. These canals stood the test of time and still exist today. Nowadays, you can rent a colourful boat called a trajinera and float down the canal with friends, enjoying the music of mariachis and a cold beer or two.
9. You're unaware that it's the city with the most museums in the world.
According to the National Council for Culture and Arts, Mexico's capital has more museums than any other city. Whatever your interest, be it archaeology, art, toys, or even chocolate, you'll find a museum or two or three for you.
10. You didn't know there's an Aztec pyramid right in the heart of the city.
Right in the main square next to the cathedral is the Templo Mayor—huei teocalli in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs (or Mexica, as they were known). The Spanish built their cathedral on top of the temple, but years later, parts of the temple were excavated by archaeologists. Still, much of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan remains buried, often discovered as new metro lines are built underground.

Istanbul
the city that lies on two continents



Istanbul, the largest city in Turkey and the fifth-largest city in the world by population, is considered European, yet it occupies two different continents. One part of Istanbul lies in Europe and the other part lies in Asia. Istanbul's European part is separated from its Asian part by the Bosphorus strait, a 31-km-long waterway that connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, and forms a natural boundary between the two continents. Two suspension bridges across the Bosphorus—the Bosphorus Bridge and the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge, also called Bosphorus Bridge II—connect the two sides, yet many tourists prefer to visit the European side of Istanbul because of its historical significance. The European side is also the city's commercial center with banks, stores and corporations and two-third of its population. The Asian side feels more relaxed, with wide boulevards, residential neighbourhoods and fewer hotels and tourist attractions.
Istanbul is one of the few cities in the world to be shared by two continents. Examples of other cities that are half-European and half-Asian include the Russian cities of Orenburg and Magnitogorsk, and Atyrau, a city in western Kazakhstan. Similarly, Suez, an Egyptian city straddling the Suez Canal, belongs to both Africa and Asia. But Istanbul is by far the largest, and the only metropolis in the world to do so.
Being the only water route between the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, the Bosphorus has been the site of significant settlements and cities for a long time. Of particular importance is the Golden Horn, an estuary that joins Bosphorus Strait at the immediate point where the strait meets the Sea of Marmara, and forms a large, sheltered harbour. It was here, on the European side of the Bosphorus, that the city of Byzantium (which later became Istanbul) was founded by ancient Greeks around 660 BCE.
When Constantine the Great became the Roman emperor, the city was renamed Constantinople in 330 AD. For the next sixteen centuries, Constantinople served as the capital of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Latin Empire and the Ottoman Empire. During this period, over 120 emperors and sultans ruled over this land. Istanbul was a Christian city during Roman and Byzantine times, before the Ottomans conquered the city in 1453 and transformed it into an Islamic stronghold and the seat of the last caliphate. After the Turkish War of Independence, the modern Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, and although Ankara was chosen as its capital, the city did not lose its significance. Many palaces and imperial mosques still line Istanbul's hills as visible reminders of the city's previous central role. Today, Istanbul is a huge metropolis connecting continents, cultures, and religions. Home to 15 million people, it is one of the greatest business and cultural centers of the region.

The queen of hills Darjeeling

Surrounded by infinite slopes of bright green tea plantations and set against a backdrop of jagged white Himalayan peaks, Darjeeling is nestled in the northern regions of West Bengal.

Stroll through tea plantations

Tea was first introduced in Darjeeling in the mid-19th century by the British, and the sprawling tea estates, clubs and bungalows are reminiscent of that grand era. Stroll through miles of rolling tea gardens, strike up a conversation with the garden

Stop at Happy Valley Tea Estate

Wandering through the tea gardens settled on the gentle hill slopes of Darjeeling is the perfect way to start your day at the Happy Valley Tea Estate. With plantations as old as 150 years and picture-perfect stretches of lush green tea bushes beckoning you, this

Book a ride on the toy train

A journey on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway fondly known as the toy train is a great way to explore and soak in the magnificent surroundings of this hill station. Staring out of the window at an endless expanse of tea plantations is an experience

Take the Darjeeling ropeway

Gliding over manicured tea bushes and dense forests, the Darjeeling-Rangeet Valley ropeway offers unmatched views and awe-inspiring experiences. The 20-minute ride takes you down to the Takvar tea estate where you can explore the village,

Drive up to Tiger Hill

Catch the first rays of the sun up at Tiger Hill, and if you're lucky and the day is clear, you might even see the Everest at a distance. Located just above Ghum at the highest point in Darjeeling, Tiger Hill is best known for its dazzling view of the

Darjeeling Zoological Park

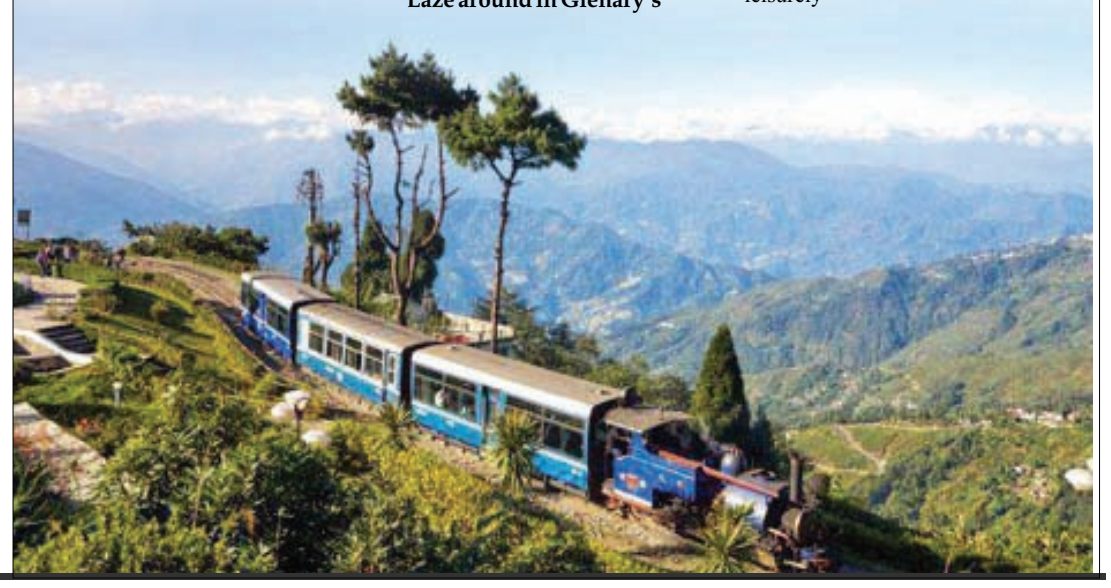
Catch a glimpse of rare Himalayan fauna such as snow leopards, red pandas, Tibetan wolves and Himalayan bears at the Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park.

Laze around in Glenary's

Pull up a chair at Glenary's bakery and café and take in the sprawling mountain views from its massive windows. Order your tea, select a cake, grab your favourite book and sink into the wicker chair for a relaxing afternoon.

The queen of hills: Darjeeling

Overlooking the mighty Kanchenjunga, Darjeeling and its tea estates offer some of India's most idyllic scenery. The perfect Darjeeling getaway is all about scuttling between numerous tea gardens, enjoying the picturesque train ride and taking leisurely



JNU sexual harassment complaint: Congress MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam appears before police

Delhi.(Ajency)

Congress MP Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, who was dismissed as a professor from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) following an internal enquiry into allegations of sexual harassment, on Thursday appeared investigators at Vasant Kunj police station.

The Delhi Police had served him a notice on Wednesday, summoning him to join the investigation. According to senior police officers, Akoijam was questioned for about two hours. After arriving at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport from Manipur Thursday, Akoijam said: "I came to co-operate…" He added that the case is a political one. Akoijam, a former professor at JNU's Centre for the Study of Social Systems under the School of Social Sciences, was dismissed on October 9. However, earlier this week, Akoijam accused JNU Vice-Chancellor Santishree D Pandit of lying about the internal inquiry against him. Officials had said that around 10-12 students from the Centre for Study of Social Systems had filed a sexual harassment complaint against Akoijam.

The FIR, dated October 11, was registered at Vasant Kunj North police station under charges of sexual harassment, making sexually coloured remarks, and word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman, based on a complaint by the Chief Security Officer at JNU. It followed a communication from the JNU's Chief Security Officer to the Station House Officer of the Vasant Kunj North police station that included documents submitted by the university's Internal Committee and sought legal action.

As per the FIR, the university's Internal Committee assessed the allegations of sexual harassment after examining the complainants' accounts, witness statements, defence witnesses and other materials on record. The letter from the JNU official flagged the committee's cumulative assessment, which stated that it does not consider the above incident in isolation, but "a recurring pattern of inappropriate personal interaction, sexually suggestive conduct, and unwelcome physical contact".

Rain brings Delhi traffic to a crawl

Delhi.(Ajency)

Rain and gusty winds swept across the national capital early Thursday, bringing the maximum temperature at Safdarjung down to 28.3 degrees Celsius, the lowest recorded so far this month. The heavy showers disrupted morning commutes, with waterlogging and massive traffic jams reported across several stretches of the city. Intermittent rain coincided with peak school and office hours, delaying school buses and leaving commuters stranded in long queues. From India Gate and ITO to Mandi House and south Delhi, commuters reported long queues of cars, buses and three-wheelers, with little to no movement on several stretches. Complaints poured in on social media, with motorists seeking traffic police intervention as rainfall worsened congestion on already busy roads.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature was 4.9 degrees Celsius below normal, while the minimum settled at 23.3 degrees Celsius, 3.7 degrees above normal. Dark clouds hovered over the city through much of the day, with spells of rain bringing a noticeable dip in temperatures. The weather office issued orange and red alerts for rain, thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds until 3 pm, warning of moderate to intense rainfall in parts of the capital.

The change in weather was attributed to a western disturbance and an active cyclonic circulation affecting the region. The western disturbance, earlier positioned over Jammu and Kashmir and adjoining north Pakistan, had moved over north Punjab and neighbouring areas. The associated system, along with a trough in the middle and upper tropospheric westerlies, was influencing weather conditions.

The unsettled weather is likely to continue on Friday, with cloudy skies and very light rain forecast at many places, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning from early morning until noon. Conditions are expected to turn drier over the weekend.

Cockroach effigy alongside Ravan at Delhi Ramlila, organiser says 'symbolises filth'



- The organising body behind the annual event said the decision was not politically motivated, adding that the insect represented "filth and dirt".

Delhi.(Ajency)

Ravan, Kumbhkaran and Meghnad will have an unusual companion going up in flames at a Ramlila in Delhi this year: a 30-foot-tall cockroach.

The organising body behind the annual event, the Shree Keshav Ram Leela Committee, said the decision was not politically motivated, adding that the insect represented "filth and dirt". The committee said the initiative is part of the Swachh Bharat and Swachh Delhi campaigns. "Burning the cockroach effigy is meant to reinforce the message of the victory of good over evil and cleanliness," Ashok Goel, the committee president and a BJP MLA, told . He added that the "cockroach" will also feature among the 'asuras' in Ravan's army. The event will be held in Delhi's Pitampura. The Ramlila event in Pitampura comes in the wake of the wake of the ongoing Cockroach Janata Party's (CJP) protests in Delhi over the resignation demand of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The BJP MLA said that the committee has burnt effigies on Naxalism and terrorism in the past. "We have also, in the past, burned effigies representing various afflictions plaguing our nation, such as Naxalism or terrorism. This year, our committee has decided to burn an effigy of a cockroach, a symbol of filth, at the Keshav Ramlila Committee grounds (NSP). Our goal is to eliminate filth from three areas: our homes, our immediate surroundings, and society at large," he told .

As the traditional effigies are set ablaze on the occasion of Dusshera, the cockroach will join the ritual as a message indicating the importance of cleanliness. Burning the cockroach effigy is meant to reinforce the message of the victory of good over evil and cleanliness, Ashok Goel said.

Opposition parties and student organisations are on roads protesting over alleged irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

Rides of joy and freedom: 130 girl students receive bicycles

Delhi.(Ajency)

Class 9 student Sonam is thrilled she would no longer have to depend on anyone to take her to the market. Rizwana is looking forward to reaching school in five minutes, a third of the time it takes her to walk there now. And Sweety's shiny new bicycle is the first that anyone has owned in her family. On Thursday, Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood distributed bicycles to 130 girl students of a school in Janakpuri under the Delhi government's Vidya Vahini Yojana launched in July this year. The bicycles are being distributed in phases to eligible girl students of Class 9 in government schools. Around 1.4 lakh girls are eligible to benefit from the scheme. "Going to school has



become easier for me now. I am so happy. I will no longer have to depend on anyone to go to the market either," Sonam said. "I was accompanied by my mother and I returned home on my new bicycle," she said. Sonam, the daughter of a tailor, lives with her parents in the Posangipur area of West Delhi and studies in a CM Shri School. Another student of the school, Rizwana, said: "It takes me around 15 minutes to walk to school every day. But it will now take me just five minutes. I have been asking my parents to buy me a bicycle." Rizwana's father runs a salon, and her mother is a housekeeper in a private hospital. "We are four siblings, and none of us had a bicycle. But my brother knows how to ride, and he will teach me," she said. Sweety Kumari's mother Vibha said her daughter's new bicycle is the first two-wheeler in the family. "I have three daughters and a son," Vibha said. "My husband is a labourer, and we live in a one-room house 2-3 km from my daughter's school.

Women's safety, Rs 100-crore savings in focus, Delhi to install 1 lakh smart street lights

- The project follows concerns raised by women students during Gupta's recent interaction at Delhi University, where they highlighted inadequate street lighting and dark spots in several parts of the city.



Delhi.(Ajency)

With an aim to cover dark spots, improve women's safety in the Capital and reduce energy consumption, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday launched a project to install one lakh smart LED street lights across the city under the government's Seva Sankalp Abhiyan to mark 25 years of public service by PM Narendra Modi.

The project follows concerns raised by women students during Gupta's recent interaction at Delhi University, where they highlighted inadequate street lighting and dark spots in several parts of the city. Under the initiative, which has been initiated from Andrews Ganj bus stop in South Delhi, around one lakh street lights will be replaced with smart LED lights, including approximately 45,000 high-pressure sodium vapour lamps. The system will feature smart feeder pillars and individual monitoring to improve efficiency and maintenance. The Public Works Department (PWD) will monitor the lights through a central command centre, which will receive real-time information on their operational status. The project targets 99% functionality, with faulty lights required to be repaired within 48 hours of a complaint. Agencies failing to meet the deadline will face a penalty of Rs 2,000 per light per day. Each light will carry a QR code that citizens can scan to access information and register complaints. Smart scheduling will automatically increase illumination in the evening and reduce it in the morning to save electricity.

The government projects savings of around Rs 100 crore over five years. The project also aims to maintain average illumination levels of 35 lux on main roads and 25 lux on service roads for seven years. The lights will have a colour temperature of 3,000 kelvin and a minimum luminous efficacy of 150 lumens per watt.(One lux is the standard International System of Units measure of illuminance, defined as one lumen of luminous flux evenly spread across an area of one square meter).

Gupta said the initiative was a step towards a safer Delhi in line with PM Modi's vision of a developed India. She said the government was committed to improving public services through technology, transparency and accountability. PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said the project would improve visibility on roads and public spaces, making night-time travel safer. He added that monitoring and timely repairs would be key to maintaining the system.

'Rs 60 lakh for foreign citizenship': German woman, 64, arrested for fraud in Delhi

Delhi.(Ajency)

Nearly a year after the Delhi Police lodged an FIR against a 64-year-old German woman, claiming to be the daughter of a former Madhya Pradesh law secretary, for allegedly luring a Delhi man into paying Rs 60 lakh under the false pretext of facilitating German citizenship, the woman was arrested earlier this week.

On Wednesday, Patiala House Court Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Animesh Kumar remanded the woman to two days of police custody.The Magistrate Court reasoned that "detailed investigation is also required



regarding money trail, to verify the involvement of other accused persons in the conspiracy" and to recover electronic devices with incriminating evidence.

According to the police, the efforts to trace the accused, identified as Poonam Jezzler, and her husband in India had earlier failed as she is a German citizen living in Switzerland. Police had then subsequently opened a lookout circular (LOC) notice, and her Indian bank account was frozen. She was detained at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) when she landed in India this week, and was arrested on October 13. Poonam Jezzler's counsels had opposed her police remand as well as filed for a bail application on Wednesday, which they later withdrew. In her bail plea, which was also opposed by the complainant's advocate Gagan Bhatnagar, Poonam had stated that she was unaware of the complaint or the LOC against her, and that she comes from a respectable "family background", her father being a law secretary in Madhya Pradesh government, who has now passed away. She had also pointed out that she is a German national and is entitled to protection under the Vienna Convention. How the alleged fraud unfolded

The complainant, Pranzal Kumar, last October, had approached the Vasant Kunj police station in Delhi, based on which an FIR was filed without naming any accused. The FIR was lodged for the offences of breach of trust, cheating and conspiracy. According to Kumar, he met the accused, Poonam Jezzler, and her husband first in 2021 in Switzerland while he was pursuing an MBA from the city of Lucerne. The Jezzlers, he claimed, told him that they were running an immigration consultancy business service for worldwide immigration, and that Poonam had experience in facilitating citizenship of various countries.

Kumar alleged that the Jezzlers encouraged him to settle abroad, and though he expressed willingness to obtain a US citizenship, the Jezzlers allegedly urged him that they can "easily" get him a German citizenship in exchange of Rs 1.10 crore in six months. The FIR notes Kumar's claims that the Jezzlers in September 2024 raised an invoice to Kumar's father for CHF 50,000 (nearly Rs 50 lakh) along with details of a bank account. Kumar claims that his father, "in blind trust", transferred Rs 50 lakh to the account.

CJP plans Tricolour event; Delhi shuts Connaught Place Central Park, readies 25,000 personnel

Delhi.(Ajency)

New CCTV cameras at Central Park of Connaught Place and Rajiv Chowk Metro Station, deployment of more than 25,000 police and paramilitary personnel in New Delhi and nearby areas, and prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in force — these are among the security measures that have been taken in view of Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) 'Lehra Do Tiranga' march on Friday.



The CJP, which has been demanding Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation over alleged irregularities in Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls, has given yet another protest call, this time against the arrests of its leaders Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka earlier this week. With Jantar Mantar de-notified as a protest site, the group has called for a protest at Central Park where All India Students' Association's Neha Bora and the Aam Aadmi Party will also mark its presence. On the eve of the fresh stir, the Delhi Police sent out an appeal to people to not assemble at the Central Park. In a notice, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) said that the Central Park will remain shut to the public on Friday and Saturday "due to administrative reasons" in the wake of the CJP march. Ahead of the protest, a high-level meeting chaired by Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar with all senior police officers, including the Joint CP and DCP of the New Delhi area took place on Thursday. A senior police officer said that closing Metros is not an option as of now, and has been reserved as a last-ditch option.

DCP (PRO) Neha Yadav said in a statement issued to the media on Thursday evening that prohibitory orders were already in force in Connaught Place and adjoining areas to "maintain peace and protect lives and public and private property". However, the police said they could facilitate a selected group of people to carry the national flag and sing the national anthem at a suitable place.

Even as Central Park never had CCTVs, installations were in progress on Thursday at its gate. At Rajiv Chowk Metro station, more CCTV cameras were being installed at gate number 1 and 3.

Govt hikes petrol export duty to Rs 2.5 per litre, cuts diesel duty to Rs 8.5

New Delhi.(Ajency)

The government has raised the windfall tax on petrol exports to Rs 2.5 per litre from Rs 0.5 per litre, while cutting the duty on diesel exports to Rs 8.5 per litre from Rs 16 per litre, according to a government order issued late Thursday.The revised duties will take effect from October 16, the order said.The increase in petrol export duty and reduction in diesel duty come as the government continues to adjust taxes on fuel exports in response to changes in international crude oil and petroleum product prices.Under the revised rates, the duty on petrol exports has been increased fivefold, while the duty on diesel exports has been reduced by Rs 7.5 per litre.India first introduced windfall taxes on fuel exports in July 2022, when elevated international energy prices created the potential for refiners to earn higher margins by selling petroleum products overseas. The government withdrew the taxes two years later but reintroduced them in March 2026 after crude oil prices surged during the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Stock markets trade lower during early session amid profit-taking

MUMBAI.(Ajency)

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty drifted lower in early trade on Friday amid profit-taking, a day after recording a sharp rally. Relentless foreign und outflows and a decline in blue-chip Reliance Industries after a 4 per cent rally in the previous trade added to the overall bearish trend in equities during the initial trading session.However, strong buying in IT stocks cushioned the fall to a great extent in the market. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 113 points to 74,187 in early trade.The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 27.20 points to 22,967.15.From the 30 Sensex firms, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finserv, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro, Asian Paints and State Bank of India were among the biggest laggards.Tech Mahindra surged 5 per cent after the IT services firm reported a 32.74 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,585.6 crore for the July-September quarter of FY27 as strong volume growth, cost savings and rupee depreciation lifted operating profit.

HDFC, ICICI Pru, Tata Mutual Fund halt investment in Gold ETF FoFs: What is barred

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Investment in gold often rises during the festive. But just when the festive season is beginning, three prominent mutual fund houses of the country Tata Mutual Fund, HDFC Mutual Fund , and ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company took a major step. On Thursday, they issued notices prohibiting new investments in their gold fund-of-funds (FoFs). The notices did not provide a reason for the ban, but investors can continue to redeem their existing investments, according to the notices.

Temporary halt to investments

Tata Mutual Fund said that new and additional lump sum investments, switch-ins, top-ups, and new Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) and Systematic Transfer Plan (STP) registrations in the Tata Gold ETF FoF will be temporarily suspended from October 16. “Furthermore, instalments under existing SIP/STP registrations (which were made before the effective date) will continue and will be processed at the applicable NAV,” the fund house said.

Mutual funds suspend bulk subscriptions to gold ETFs ahead of festive season

- Major mutual funds have suspended bulk subscriptions to gold ETFs while keeping redemptions open. The move precedes festive demand and follows reported discussions with

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Several large Indian mutual funds have suspended bulk subscriptions to gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) ahead of the festive season, when demand for the precious metal typically rises. Redemptions from these funds remain open, reported news agency Reuters.Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund, UTI Mutual Fund and HDFC Mutual Fund were among the fund houses that issued public notices late Thursday announcing the suspension. The notices did not specify a reason for the decision.The move followed a nudge from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), according to a mutual fund executive familiar with the discussions. Two bullion industry officials also told Reuters that the halt followed discussions with the market regulator. Sebi had not responded to a request for comment at the time of publication.The suspension comes ahead of Dussehra and Diwali, when buying gold is considered auspicious and demand for jewellery and investment products typically rises. Investors can still redeem their existing gold ETF holdings, and the notices do not indicate a blanket ban on retail investors buying gold.



WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR GOLD ETF INVESTORS?

Gold ETFs allow investors to gain exposure to gold through units traded on the stock exchange, without having to buy and store jewellery or coins themselves. These funds are backed by physical gold held by the fund.Bulk subscriptions refer to large investments into these schemes. Suspending such subscriptions can limit fresh money entering the affected funds through that route, although the precise scope of the restrictions will depend on the terms set out by each fund house.The notices do not state that existing investors must sell their units. Redemptions remain available, meaning investors can continue to withdraw from their holdings, subject to the applicable scheme terms.

The move comes at a time when gold prices have fallen in recent sessions. The indicative domestic price of 24-carat gold was around Rs 1.48 lakh per 10 grams on October 15, down from around Rs 1.50 lakh on October 13, according to published price data. Prices can vary across cities and jewellers.

GOLD IMPORTS FALL, BUT TRADE DEFICIT REMAINS A CONCERN

The suspension also comes amid concerns over India's import bill and the pressure on the rupee.India's merchandise exports rose 23% year-on-year to $44.4 billion in September, while imports increased 8% to $74.61 billion. The merchandise trade deficit stood at $30.21 billion, wider than the $26.86 billion recorded in August, according to trade data released on Thursday.

Sitharaman hopes India-US trade deal will be concluded soon, flags China's non-tariff barriers

Mumbai.(Ajency)

- On BRICS, Sitharaman said the grouping should be viewed as a partnership aimed at improving the welfare of its people rather than as a platform to counter any country or bloc.Sebi.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday expressed hope that the India-US trade agreement would be concluded at the earliest, in the interests of global trade and bilateral economic ties between the two countries."I think recently the Indian Commerce Minister has also spoken that they expect and wish to have the agreement signed soon. Negotiations have been going on. I hope, in the interest of global trade and in the interest of trade between the two partners, India and US, the trade agreement gets concluded at the earliest," she said.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday that the first phase of the India-US trade pact had been finalised and was undergoing legal drafting.On trade with China, Sitharaman said the growing trade imbalance and persistent restrictions on market access for Indian products remained major concerns despite years of engagement with Beijing.

India had consistently sought market access in China for products such as generic medicines, bovine meat, vegetables and other perishable goods, but had made little progress despite years of engagement, Sitharaman said during an interaction with the Atlantic Council on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank annual meetings in Bangkok, Thailand."Non-tariff barriers are the biggest hurdle in the trade between India and China," she said, adding that China had used phytosanitary measures and other non-tariff restrictions despite the potential for discussions and investigations to resolve such issues.

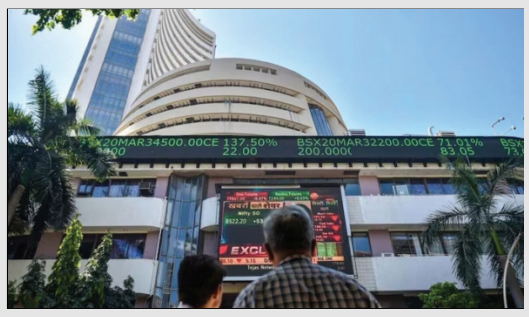


She said India had not adopted the approach of imposing punitive tariffs on trading partners to correct large trade imbalances, preferring instead to pursue negotiations even if the process was time-consuming.On BRICS, Sitharaman said the grouping should be viewed as a partnership aimed at improving the welfare of its people rather than as a platform to counter any country or bloc."I don't think BRICS's intention is to counter others. It is more to strengthen the partnership through the BRICS," she added.She noted that BRICS represented nearly 40 per cent of the world's population and said cooperation among member countries could boost trade, foster mutual understanding and expand economic opportunities.With new members joining the grouping, 11 to 12 countries were actively engaging with one another, collectively accounting for around 45 per cent of global trade, she said.

On India's economic growth, Sitharaman said the country had sustained strong growth despite global disruptions and had been the world's fastest-growing major economy over the past four to five years, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic.She attributed India's performance to inclusive growth, wider access to resources, skill development for young people, fiscal prudence and higher public capital expenditure.

The finance minister said public investment in infrastructure had generated a stronger multiplier effect than transferring equivalent amounts of money directly to people, while also creating jobs and supporting economic activity.Public spending on infrastructure helped channel money to people through economic activity without putting the same pressure on the fiscal deficit as some alternative forms of expenditure, she said.

Sensex, Nifty erase early losses as IT stocks rally on Q2 results



New Delhi.(Ajency)

Stock markets recovered from early losses on Friday, October 16, as gains in information technology stocks helped benchmark indices turn positive, even as selling pressure persisted across several sectors. Tech Mahindra, Infosys and TCS led the IT rally after better-than-expected quarterly results from technology companies lifted sentiment.At around 10:04 am, the BSE Sensex was trading at 74,470.20, up 154.59 points or 0.21%. The index had opened at 74,341.08 and slipped to an intraday low of 74,012.99 before recovering. The NSE Nifty 50 was at 23,054.55, up 57.20 points or 0.25%, after opening at 23,065.10.

At Thursday's intraday price of Rs 84.97, the stock was trading about 4.9% above the transaction price.The recovery followed a strong rally in the previous session, when the Sensex surged more than 1,500 points and the Nifty gained 1.66%. However, Friday's gains remained concentrated in select heavyweight stocks, with several sectors and broader-market segments trading lower.

IT STOCKS LEAD GAINS

Technology stocks were the biggest support for the benchmarks in early trade. Tech Mahindra surged 7.11%, while Infosys rose 3.71% and TCS gained 3.19%. Bharti Airtel advanced 1.83%, while HCLTech was up 0.88%.The Nifty IT index gained 2.89%, with buying extending across several technology stocks. Wipro rose 4.68%, Infosys gained 3.87% and TCS advanced 3.45%, according to the latest sectoral data available at around 10:05 am.

Yes Bank shares slide 3% after verdict on AT-1 bonds: Will it impact investors

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Yes Bank shares fell on Friday, extending losses after the Supreme Court upheld a ruling against the lender's decision to write off Rs 8,415 crore worth of Additional Tier-1 (AT-1) bonds during its 2020 rescue. The verdict has raised concerns about the bank's earnings and capital position, although S&P Global Ratings does not expect it to affect the lender's credit ratings.Yes Bank shares were trading at Rs 17.71, down 2.42%, around 11 am on Friday. The stock had plunged 14.43% to close at Rs 18.15 on Thursday after the Supreme Court delivered its verdict.The ruling is a setback for the bank because the Rs 8,415-crore bond write-off had helped strengthen its capital during the 2020 reconstruction. Reversing that decision creates a financial burden for Yes Bank, even as the reinstatement of the bonds could partly offset the hit to common equity.



WHAT DID THE SUPREME COURT RULE?

On October 15, the Supreme Court dismissed appeals filed by Yes Bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Union government against a Bombay High Court judgment that had set aside the bank's decision to write off the bonds.The dispute dates back to March 2020, when Yes Bank was facing a severe financial crisis and was placed under a moratorium. The RBI subsequently put in place a reconstruction scheme, with State Bank of India and other lenders participating in the rescue.As part of the process, Yes Bank wrote down two tranches of AT-1 bonds issued in 2016 and 2017, worth a combined Rs 8,415 crore, to zero on March 14, 2020. Investors who held these bonds lost their investments.The legal question was whether the bank's administrator had the authority to write off the bonds after the final reconstruction scheme had come into force. The Supreme Court upheld the Bombay High Court's January 20, 2023 judgment, which had set aside the write-off.

The court found that the final reconstruction scheme did not authorise the administrator to take this step. The clause permitting the write-down had been omitted from the final scheme, meaning the administrator could not exercise a power that the approved plan did not provide.

The verdict does not amount to a finding that every sale of these bonds was mis-sold. The court's central decision concerned the legality of the write-off and the administrator's authority. Allegations that the bonds had been mis-sold to retail investors were a separate, though closely related, part of the dispute.

Centre hikes windfall tax on petrol exports, cuts levy on diesel amid West Asia tensions



MUMBAI.(Ajency)

The Union government on Friday raised the windfall tax on petrol exports and cut the levy on diesel exports for the fortnight beginning October 16.The Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED), along with the road and infrastructure cess, on diesel exports has been reduced to Rs 8.5 per litre from Rs 16 per litre. The duty on petrol exports has been increased to Rs 2.5 per litre from Rs 0.5 per litre. The duty on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) exports has been retained at Rs 10.5 per litre for the fortnight.In a notification, the Finance Ministry said the revised duty rates would take effect from October 16.

Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, the government imposed export duties on diesel and ATF on March 27, revising the rates every fortnight. The levy on petrol exports was introduced from May 16.

The ministry also said there was no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

The windfall tax was introduced to improve domestic fuel availability amid the war in West Asia and prevent exporters from taking undue advantage of price differences as global crude oil prices rose after the conflict began.

The levy was also intended to discourage exports and ensure adequate domestic supplies of petroleum products amid the crisis in West Asia.

Bengaluru: Rs 5.5 crore to transform quarry from heat island to climate-resilient park

BENGALURU.(Ajency)

The abandoned stone quarry at Hennur Bande in HBR Layout is set to be developed into a 'heat-resilient park' as Bengaluru looks for ways to counter rising temperatures and tackle the urban heat island effect.

The Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) plans to transform a 10-acre flat, under-utilised land parcel, surrounded by a 20-acre buffer zone into a climate-responsive public space, at an estimated cost of Rs 5.5 crore, a BNCC official said. The corporation has invited tenders for the redevelopment of the site. "Hennur Bande has been identified as one of Bengaluru's urban heat hotspots. The stone quarry traps the heat during the day and releases it at night. Temperatures here are higher than in other areas," the official said. The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), during the launch of the heat-health protocol for the city in September, said, "Bengaluru's heat risk is rising rapidly. The city's mean air temperature has increased by nearly 0.5°C over the past ten years, with parts of the city recording temperatures near 40°C in April 2024."

18-month-old girl 'pushed' into duct in Mumbai, dies

Mumbai.(Ajency)

An 18-month-old girl died after she was allegedly pushed into an open duct from the sixth floor of a Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) building by her 10-year-old neighbour in Goregaon (East) on Wednesday night, police said. The Dindoshi police are investigating the incident, which came to light after the building's CCTV footage was examined.

"An accidental death report has been registered. The girl was produced before the CWC," said a senior inspector of the Dindoshi police station. The Child Welfare Committee will conduct an inquiry and decide on the further course of action.

According to the police, the incident occurred around 9.30 pm. The toddler was playing on the sixth floor. The 10-year-old girl allegedly pushed the toddler into an open duct there, causing her to fall to the ground floor.

Uniform guidelines for government medical college hostels in Andhra Pradesh

VIJAYAWADA.(Ajency)

In a major administrative initiative aimed at ensuring safety, financial transparency, and strict discipline across government medical institutions, the Directorate of Medical Education (DME) has issued comprehensive model guidelines for the operation and management of student hostels attached to government medical colleges and teaching hospitals statewide.

Formulated for the first time by the DME Dr Vishnu Vardhan in the wake of recent administrative and campus developments, the directive mandates standardised operational protocols for all medical college principals and hospital superintendents.

Under the new regulations, hostellers and administrative authorities must adhere strictly to established guidelines governing financial discipline, student safety, anti-ragging measures, sanitation, and dispute resolution.

To enforce strict fiscal accountability, the DME has mandated separate accounting streams for non-refundable admission deposits and monthly student maintenance fees.

Revenue collected from deposits must be exclusively utilised for creating permanent infrastructure, including study facilities, sports equipment, furniture, drinking water systems, and sanitation upgrades.

Anti-drug activist's murder: Mansa SHO suspended, wife of accused booked, kin refuse cremation

- The agitation, which began after Jhota was shot dead inside a medical store on Tuesday, widened beyond the killing to questions over the police and administration's handling of complaints against the accused.

Amritsar.(Ajency)

Mansa continued to simmer on Thursday, three days after anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota was shot dead allegedly by a chemist, as thousands of protesters gathered at two sites in the city and his family refused to allow his cremation until justice was delivered. The authorities suspended a woman SHO of City-2 police station and booked two more persons, including the accused's wife, in connection with the case, but the action failed to cool the frayed tempers. The agitation, which began after Jhota was shot dead inside a medical store on Tuesday, widened beyond the killing to questions over the police and administration's handling of complaints against the accused, Ashwani Kumar, the store owner. At the centre of the standoff is Jhota's father, Bhim Singh, an ex-serviceman, who, along with a newly formed action committee, has ruled out the cremation until its demands are met. The protesters are demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe resignations of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav. The family has said it will not accept compensation or a government job, insisting that justice, not financial assistance, is its priority. It has left decisions on the agitation's next course to the committee coordinating the protest.

The scale of the mobilisation has posed a challenge for the district administration and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Thousands have gathered along the Mansa-Sirsa Road highway and at the Civil Hospital, where Jhota's body is being kept. The two sites, around three kilometres apart, have become venues for speeches attacking the state government and demanding action against officials alleged to have failed to act against those involved in the drug trade.

The action committee brings together people from different backgrounds, including communists, Sikh leaders, political representatives and members of civil society. Speakers have accused the authorities of failing to protect an activist who had repeatedly raised his voice against drug abuse and the alleged sale of addictive substances at chemist shops. Videos of Jhota's earlier confrontations with police personnel and medical store owners have resurfaced on social media, adding to public anger. The backlash also reached local AAP leaders. Mansa MLA Vijay Singla and local party leader Chuspinder Singh Chahal came under criticism at the gatherings, with speakers alleging that people targeting activists had enjoyed administrative protection. Posters bearing the AAP's name and imagery have been turned over in parts of the town. Protesters have arrived from Assembly segments that are also AAP strongholds.



Horticulturist Harvinder Singh Dhaliwal takes charge as Punjab Agricultural University V-C

An accomplished researcher, academician, and administrator with deep roots in Punjab's farming community, Dhaliwal brings a wealth of experience spanning agricultural research, education, and extension to the office.

Ludhiana .(Ajency)

Agricultural scientist and distinguished horticulturist Harvinder Singh Dhaliwal assumed charge as the 12th Vice-Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, Thursday.



An accomplished researcher, academician, and administrator with deep roots in Punjab's farming community, Dhaliwal brings a wealth of experience spanning agricultural research, education, and extension to the office. His appointment marks a significant development for the University as Punjab's agriculture seeks sustainable solutions to challenges in crop diversification. Born and raised in a rural family in Mansa district, Dhaliwal has remained closely connected to farmers and rural communities throughout his career. A horticulture specialist, particularly in fruit science, he has contributed extensively to crop improvement and promoted horticultural diversification in Punjab.

With nearly 31 years of experience as an agricultural scientist, Dhaliwal has served in leadership positions across all three core functions of PAU—teaching, research, and extension. He served as Dean, College of Agriculture, from 2013 to 2017, and also held the positions of Additional Director of Research (Horticulture) and Director of Extension Education. His experience across these domains gives him a comprehensive understanding of the University's academic responsibilities, research priorities, and engagement with the farming community.

His international research experience includes advanced work on citrus improvement at the University of Florida, USA. He also fostered research collaborations with the University of Florida, Curtin University of Technology, Australia, and the University of Maine, USA. He contributed to important academic initiatives of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), including its Fifth Deans' Committee and the formulation of minimum standards for higher agricultural education. Dhaliwal's scientific contributions include 28 recommendations incorporated into PAU's Package of Practices, including introducing banana and amla and developing 11 fruit varieties, including the low-seeded PAU Kinnow-1. He has led six research projects as Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator and has 189 publications, including 81 research papers in reputed national and international journals. His initiatives also led to the establishment of a state-of-the-art Leaf Analysis Laboratory and a nationally accredited virus-free nursery at PAU.

No loo at govt-built home in Chennai's Tiruttani, deaf boy out to relieve self hit by train

CHENNAI.(Ajency)

A 13-year-old deaf boy crossing the railway tracks near his house at Mathur Colony near Tiruttani was killed by an oncoming train on Thursday morning. The boy had gone out to relieve himself in the open because there was no toilet in the government-built house his family was living in. Police sources said he may not have heard the approaching train due to a hearing impairment he had had since birth. The deceased was identified as K Surya Prakash, a Class 8 student at the Government Middle School in Mathur Panchayat. His father, T Kalidasan, is a daily-wage worker and his mother is a homemaker. He also has an elder sister.

Speaking to, Kalidasan said the family lived in a government-built house without a toilet and had initially petitioned the government for one but had received no response. The family was left with no choice but to use vacant plots in the surrounding area to relieve themselves. "My son sometimes uses the railway tracks and sometimes other places to relieve himself. It is not just our house, several houses in this panchayat do not have toilets," he said.



When contacted, the block development officer for Mathur Panchayat, Selvi, said toilets were generally constructed for group houses under a government scheme. "I'm not aware of how the toilets were left out in this particular case. I will look into the matter," she said. Police sources said Surya Prakash had gone alone to the railway tracks around 7.50 am to relieve himself and was crossing the single track when the train hit him, killing him on the spot.

Pune Ring Road gets costlier by Rs 10,502 crore as Maharashtra's bills pile up

Mumbai.(Ajency)

With the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) failing to take up a key stretch of the Pune Ring Road on priority, the Maharashtra government has decided to spend an additional Rs 10,502 crore on the project by transferring the package to the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), taking the total project cost to Rs 53,213.39 crore. The revised expenditure comes amid mounting pressure on the state's finances, with its outstanding public debt projected to reach Rs 11.02 lakh crore in 2026-27 and a revenue deficit of Rs 40,552 crore estimated for the year.The Cabinet sub-committee on infrastructure, at its meeting on August 18, 2026, approved a revised administrative sanction of Rs 10,502 crore for civil works and land acquisition. The decision follows the transfer of a package originally assigned to the NHAI to the MSRDC. In 2024, the state Cabinet had approved a cost escalation of Rs 20,375.21 crore, taking the project cost to Rs 42,711.03 crore.

With the latest addition, the total outlay is expected to reach Rs 53,213.39 crore. The government resolution states that the NHAI had not taken up the project on a priority basis. It also notes that the MSRDC is already incurring expenditure on land acquisition for the stretch and that completing the road is necessary to ensure the ring road serves its intended purpose.

VHP tells 'non-Hindus' to leave Ahmedabad garba event; 'not my message', says singer Aditya Gadhvi

BENGALURU.(Ajency)

Popular Gujarati folk singer Aditya Gadhvi has distanced himself from the Vishva Hindu Parishad's announcement asking non-Hindus and Muslims to leave a garba event in Ahmedabad, saying it was not his message.

A video that has gone viral on social media shows anchor and radio jockey Akash Trivedi asking non-Hindus and Muslims to leave the venue from the stage during the 'Rang Morla ft. Aditya Gadhvi' programme, held on Wednesday at Savvana Party Plot on Shela Road in the city. Gadhvi was performing at the event."A humble request to any 'vidharmi' (non-Hindus) and Muslims to leave the ground. The Vishva Hindu Parishad has come here to protect Sanatan Dharma," Trivedi is heard saying in the video. He also announced a helpline number, 8735873595, for reporting such people. "The VHP wants you (garba participants) to look around and report suspicious people to the helpline number," the RJ added. Gujarat VHP spokesperson Hitendrasinh Rajput defended the announcement, saying it was part of a routine exercise carried out by Bajrang Dal volunteers at garba events in the state.

"Usually, Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the VHP, visits garba events in Ahmedabad and meets the organisers, asking them to prevent non-Hindus from entering the venue. Sometimes, they also apply tilak on the foreheads of men attending the events and remove suspicious people from the ground," Rajput told . Following criticism from several social media users, Gadhvi, a well-known Gujarati folk singer, issued a statement on Instagram distancing himself from the announcement.

Mumbai's air is worst in India: What's making it dangerous to breathe

The city recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 152 on Thursday, categorised as unhealthy, with ground-level ozone (O3) identified as the primary pollutant, according to iQAir, a US-based air quality monitoring organisation.

Mumbai.(Ajency)

Mumbai has ranked as the fifth most polluted city in the world and the most polluted in India, according to global air quality assessment platform iQAir, as the city continues to experience unusually hot and humid weather following a rain-deficient monsoon. The city recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 152 on Thursday, categorised as unhealthy, with ground-level ozone (O3) identified as the primary pollutant, according to iQAir, a US-based air quality monitoring organisation.

The reading comes amid a spell of above-normal temperatures following the early withdrawal of the monsoon. Mumbai has recorded its hottest days in at least a decade on three occasions this month, with maximum temperatures hovering 4-5 degrees Celsius above normal on several days.

"This year, Mumbai is experiencing an El-Niño pattern of climate, as a result of which the wind speed has slowed down tremendously while the overall temperature is hot and humid. This factor is preventing air circulation as a result the pollutants are getting settled in the lower atmosphere leading to rise in pollution levels," atmospheric scientist Gufran Beig, chair professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) told .

El Niño is a climate phenomenon associated with the abnormal warming of surface waters in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. Its effects on weather patterns vary across regions.



Ground-level ozone, unlike the protective ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, is a pollutant formed when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react in the presence of sunlight. Its concentrations can rise during hot, sunny conditions. The iQAir list covered 122 cities worldwide. Mumbai was followed by Delhi, ranked sixth with an AQI of 151, while Kolkata was placed tenth with a reading of 124.

Serbian tennis player Stefan Milicevic handed 24-year ban for match-fixing

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Serbian tennis player Stefan Milicevic has been handed a 24-year ban from tennis after being charged with fixing matches and recruiting players into an alleged corrupt network, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) announced on Thursday. The 29-year-old has been suspended until October 2050 and fined $70,000.Milicevic was charged with fixing six matches, including five in which he competed, and attempting to fix six more between 2022 and 2024. The ITIA also accused him of recruiting or attempting to recruit multiple professional players into a network linked to match-fixing during the same period.rs.The Serbian, who competed primarily in lower-tier tournaments, reached a career-high singles ranking of 1,338 in 2014. According to the ITIA, the alleged network resulted in other players fixing matches. However, the agency did not disclose the matches involved or identify the other players accused of participating.



24-YEAR BAN AFTER PROBE

The ITIA said Milicevic did not engage with its investigation or respond to its findings, despite seven separate attempts to contact him. His lack of cooperation was cited as a factor in the severity of the punishment.The ban prevents him from playing, coaching at or attending events organised or sanctioned by the ATP, WTA, Grand Slams, World Tennis or any national tennis association. Milicevic will remain barred from the sport until he is 53.

Lisandro Martinez apologises for post-match outburst after meeting Man Utd leadership



New Delhi.(Ajency)

Manchester United defender Lisandro Martinez has apologised for his post-match comments following the club's 2-0 Champions League defeat to Atletico Madrid, saying his frustration got the better of him and acknowledging that his remarks may not have been appropriate.Martinez, who had publicly called on United's hierarchy to invest more in the squad after Tuesday's defeat, revealed that he had held a positive meeting with the club's leadership and manager to discuss the situation.Today I met with the club's leadership and the manager. It was a very positive conversation, where we were able to exchange views and speak openly about what happened after Tuesday's game," Martinez wrote in a statement shared on social media."Everyone knows that I am a passionate person and that I live football with great intensity. The frustration of the defeat led me to express how I felt at a time and place that perhaps were not the right ones, and for that I want to apologise," he added.The Argentina international also stressed the importance of unity at Old Trafford, admitting that his reaction had not helped the club at a difficult moment.

Who is Kira Chathli Meet England A captain with an Indian family and MI connection

- Kira Chathli is set to lead England A Women on their tour of India, returning to a country with which she shares a special personal connection. The Surrey wicketkeeper-batter has made her mark in domestic cricket, with an £80,000 deal with MI London in The

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Kira Chathli is set to return to India as England A captain, leading the visiting women's team on a tour that promises to be a special occasion for the Surrey wicketkeeper-batter. With Indian roots and a growing reputation in English domestic cricket, Chathli will be returning to a country that holds personal significance for her, making the assignment more than just another cricketing opportunity.ns.The 27-year-old has steadily established herself in England's domestic cricket circuit through her performances for Surrey and various franchises in The Hundred. Known for her wicketkeeping skills and contributions with the bat, she has gained valuable experience across formats while developing her leadership credentials.Chathli will lead England A Women against India A Women in a series featuring three T20 matches, three 50-over games and a four-day match. The tour offers her an opportunity to test her leadership skills against familiar opposition while continuing to make a case for greater recognition in English cricket.

KIRA CHATHLI'S INDIAN CONNECTION

Chathli grew up in a multicultural environment in Southwark, London, and was introduced to cricket largely through her father, Harry, who played club cricket as an all-rounder and wicketkeeper. Some of her



earliest memories of the sport came during family trips to India, where she watched her father play and developed a lasting love for the game.Her Indian connection became even more special when she signed for MI London in The Hundred.

Her father, who grew up in the suburbs of Mumbai and briefly served as Yorkshire's chair in 2023-24, is a lifelong Mumbai Indians supporter. Chathli spoke about how excited he was to see her join a franchise connected to his favourite team, creating a full-circle moment for the family.She has also expressed pride in seeing Indian investment contribute to the growth of women's domestic cricket in England."Obviously cricket is massive in India, and to make that translate here through Indian investment is a really cool thing," Chathli told Cricinfo last year.

MI LONDON AND SURREY: HOW CHATHLI HAS PERFORMED

Chathli's career has developed through consistent involvement in England's domestic cricket structure. She made her county debut for Surrey against Essex in 2013, aged just 14, and has since gained experience with teams including South East Stars, Trent Rockets, London Spirit and Oval Invincibles. She was part of the Oval Invincibles side that won The Hundred in 2022 and also helped South East Stars lift the Charlotte Edwards Cup in 2021.Her performances in The Hundred have demonstrated her ability to contribute in the fast-paced format.

A players' captain: Inside Smriti Mandhana's vision as India skipper

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Smriti Mandhana has one simple mantra as India's newly appointed captain: "I am a player's captain." Having taken over from Harmanpreet Kaur, Mandhana will be under the spotlight as she begins her full-time leadership journey in the T20I series against Zimbabwe. She has led India before, but only as a stand-in whenever Harmanpreet was unavailable.The first T20I is scheduled to take place in Raipur on Friday. Beyond the result, the focus will be on how Mandhana sets the tone at the start of her captaincy. Being a leader may place you at the top of the hierarchy, but it also means putting yourself last and prioritising the needs of your team and players. Mandhana understands that responsibility.

"As a leader, even though you're first on the list, in a way, you're always last. Whatever the people or players need, you're the one who's always there to help them out, make those calls on the field and be there for everyone," Mandhana said in a video on BCCI Women.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PLAYERS

It has been 13 years since Mandhana made her India debut. Over time, she has matured as both a person and a cricketer, with her success reflecting that growth. She believes giving players the freedom to make mistakes and grow in their roles not only helps them perform better but also benefits the team as a whole."I understand the players a lot better now than I did some years ago. Earlier, I used to think that everyone approached the game and thought about it the same way I did. Of course, you eventually realise that everyone has a different intent and a different way of doing things.

"You have to let them grow in their own roles, make their own mistakes and understand how and where to get the best out of the team, as well as when and what to say. All of these things have definitely changed me a lot," Mandhana said.



HOW WPL HELPED MANDHANA GROW

Mandhana also credited the Women's Premier League (WPL) with helping her develop as a captain. In the inaugural season in 2023, Royal Challengers Bengaluru endured a disastrous start, losing their first five matches before crashing out of the tournament. Mandhana struggled with the bat as well, scoring just 149 runs at an average of around 18.

Fit-again Mukesh Choudhary is back, bowling faster and wiser after Dhoni's lessons

New Delhi.(Ajency)

In Palam, Mukesh Choudhary did not have much bowling to do. In a Ranji Trophy Elite match earlier this week, Services had spent 80 overs at the crease in their first innings, showing grit without always making the scoreboard move. Maharashtra needed a breakthrough, and as the afternoon wore on, Mukesh felt the new ball might offer one. to climb at the Etihad Stadium.Stationed at cover, the left-arm seamer called out to captain Prithvi Shaw, who was at the slips, asking whether they could take the new ball. Shaw agreed. Mukesh got an over, but the captain soon returned to his spinners. It was a brief intervention, but one that showed Mukesh was thinking beyond his own workload, reading the conditions and looking for a way to shift the game. Maharashtra eventually bowled Services out and sealed a 106-run first-innings lead.Mukesh had bowled 13 overs and taken one wicket in the first innings. He did not bowl in the second. Yet, watching him at Palam, there was something reassuring about the way he carried himself. Fit, strong and actively involved in the contest, he looked every bit the left-arm fast bowler who can make people sit up and watch. For a player whose career has been repeatedly interrupted by injury, the small signs mattered.Since making his first-class debut in 2017, Mukesh has played only 24 matches in the format, alongside 26 List A games and 44 T20s. Injuries have repeatedly interrupted his progress, keeping him away from the game for long stretches just as he looked ready to move forward.But, Mukesh has begun the 2026-27 season with a five-



wicket haul for Rest of India against Jammu and Kashmir in the Irani Cup and was now preparing to travel to New Zealand with India A for the multi-day matches. After years of stop-start progress, he was back in the selectors' field of vision."Feeling great. A good start to the season in Irani. Now, I will head to New Zealand. I am fully fit and mentally clear. No doubts," Mukesh tells IndiaToday.in.The confidence is not difficult to understand. The Irani Cup performance was a reminder of what he can do when fit, but it also offered something more important: proof to himself that he belongs at that level.

How old is ISL's youngest footballer SC Delhi coach dismisses age controversy

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Sporting Club Delhi head coach Tomasz Tchorz has sought to keep the focus on football amid the controversy surrounding defender Diamond Singh's age, insisting that selection should depend on performance rather than a player's date of birth.His remarks come ahead of SC Delhi's Indian Super





League (ISL) clash against Mohun Bagan Super Giant, with questions circulating online over the teenager's officially listed age. Speaking at the pre-match press conference on Thursday, Tchorz said the controversy would not influence his team's tactics or approach against Mohun Bagan. final innings to seal the 214-run win."In general, I am a person who does not really read what is written online or follow it closely. Obviously, you can see that I am visible online because I share a lot of content. This is part of the game and also part of our profession. Regardless, what people say does not bother me much because I have my own evaluation and professional people around me who help me assess things," Tchorz said.

"If you are talking about this particular topic, it does not really influence the game against Mohun Bagan. It is not related to the tactics, strategy or approach for the match, so I would rather avoid speaking about anything that is not important for that particular game," he added.

AGE IS NOT A FACTOR, SAYS TCHORZ

The SC Delhi coach was equally clear on whether age influences his selection decisions, insisting that a player's ability would always take precedence."To reiterate, for me, age is just a number, and it will never be the factor that determines who plays and who does not. We can have a player who is 16, 26 or 46. If he is good, he will play. If he is not good, he will not play. From my perspective as a coach, it really does not matter," Tchorz said.But the coach's responsewas not limited to selection. With a young player at the centre of a public debate, he also pointed to the responsibility that comes with scrutinising emerging footballers, particularly when questions around them risk overshadowing their development."However, if anything can influence a player's performance, everyone looking closely at the matter should also understand how to protect the player and help young Indian players improve. We are all working not just for our clubs, but for the entire ecosystem," he added.

WHY DIAMOND SINGH'S AGE IS UNDER SCRUTINY

Diamond made his ISL debut against Bengaluru FC on October 10, coming on as a substitute in the 74th minute. His officially registered date of birth, June 13, 2010, would make him 16 and place him ahead of Punjab FC's Pramveer Singh as the league's youngest player.However, questions emerged after an older video on the Sudeva Sports YouTube channel reportedly listed his date of birth as March 6, 2007. If accurate, that would make him 19 rather than 16. Other claims concerning earlier database listings and academy records have added to the scrutiny.

IS AGE MANIPULATION AN OLD PROBLEM IN INDIAN FOOTBALL?

The reason Diamond Singh's age has become such a talking point is that Indian football has been here before. Questions over players' ages have surfaced at various levels of the game, and some of those cases have ended with suspensions or teams being thrown out of competitions.

International body suspends Equestrian Federation of India over governance crisis

IOWA CITY.(Ajency)

The International Equestrian Federation (FEI) has decided to suspend the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) from December 1 over a prolonged governance crisis, a move that bars Indian riders, officials, trainers and horses from participating in international competitions during the period of suspension.



In a letter dated October 15 addressed to members of EFI's ad hoc committee, Lt Col (retd) Sandeep Dewan and advocate Vidushpat Singhania, the FEI said its board had taken the decision at an online meeting on October 13."Further to the FEI Board online meeting of 13 October 2026, please kindly note that the FEI Board decided to suspend the Equestrian Federation of India, with the suspension taking effect on 1 December 2026," the letter, a copy of which is in the possession of , stated.Explaining the reasons for the decision, the FEI said the dissolution of EFI's executive committee by the Delhi High Court in February, combined with the absence of fresh elections, had resulted in a prolonged governance crisis."However, the dissolution by the High Court of Delhi in February 2026 of the Executive Committee of Equestrian Federation of India, whose elected tenure had expired in September 2023, coupled with the absence of elections to date to elect a new Executive Committee, has resulted in a prolonged governance and leadership irregularitThe FEI acknowledged the explanation submitted by the ad hoc committee on September 27 and said .



Deepika Padukone's

8-Hour Shift Is Not Unreasonable, Ishita Dutta Backs Actress After Spirit Exit

When Deepika Padukone was ousted from two big projects, Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit and Nag Ashwin's Kalki 2898 AD sequel, it was reported that the decision was taken due to her alleged eight-hour shifts demand. Since then, long working hours in Bollywood, especially for working mothers, have become a topic of discussion. Recently, Drishyam 3 actress Ishita Dutta, who is also a mother of two kids, backed Deepika's demands and called them 'not unreasonable'.



Ishita was speaking to the Free Press Journal when she said, "I'm saying giving it or not (8 hour shift) is your personal choice, so production can say no but making a big deal about it and trying to not justify it that is where the problem lies. There are a lot of actors who you can take, who are willing to work for 12-15 hours. But you can not belittle the other person by saying that this is unreasonable ask."'"You need to have a baby to realise how much of it goes.

If you have the place where you can demand, I would also probably demand. I don't think I'm there yet," the actress added.

When Deepika Padukone Addressed Long Working Hours DebatePreviously, Deepika Padukone spoke exclusively to CNBC-TV18 when she addressed the ongoing debate surrounding working conditions and pay parity in Bollywood.

"I have done this at many levels; this is not new to me. I think, even as far as pay is concerned, I have had to deal with whatever comes with it. I don't even know what to call it, but I am someone who has always fought my battles silently. And for some strange reason, sometimes they become public which is not the way I know and not the way I've been brought up. But yes, to fight my battles silently and in a dignified way is the way I know," she said.



Sahiba Bali

DENIES Rift With Tamannaah Bhatia, Says Viral Screenshot Was 'Fabricated'

Sahiba Bali has dismissed a viral screenshot that appeared to show Tamannaah Bhatia publicly disagreeing with her over a social media post. The actor and content creator said the entire exchange was fabricated and clarified that there was no fallout or disagreement between the two.

The screenshot, which circulated across Reddit and Instagram, purportedly showed Tamannaah objecting to remarks attributed to Sahiba. As the post began gaining traction, Sahiba stepped in to say that neither the original statement attributed to her nor Tamannaah's alleged response was genuine.

ahiba Bali Says Viral Tamannaah Bhatia Screenshot Is Fake



Taking to Instagram Stories on Thursday, Sahiba addressed the controversy directly and said she had woken up to a completely false narrative involving both herself and Tamannaah."Wow, woke up to a fabricated and fully FALSE narrative built around me saying something (which I never have) and a fellow female talent apparently opposing me (which she never did)," she wrote.Sahiba said both women were aware that the supposed exchange had never taken place.

"We both know none of this is true, and it's either AI or edited. Brother, it's too crazy how people will spend so much time to use your face as clickbait? Anyway, don't believe everything you see," she added.

She followed it up with another brief message: "There's a lot more to life than all this."Tamannaah, meanwhile, had not issued any public statement confirming the exchange shown in the viral screenshot.

Vikram Singh Chauhan On His Journey From TV To Films: 'Television Shaped Me As A Performer'



Actor Vikram Singh Chauhan has explored different facets of the entertainment industry over the years, moving from television to OTT projects such as Sena: Guardians of the Nation, Raat Jawaan Hai, Baarish and Rudra: The Edge of Darkness. He is now set to appear as the male lead in Pooja Meri Jaan.With streaming platforms opening up new avenues for storytelling, Chauhan believes that an actor's approach must remain rooted in emotional honesty, irrespective of the medium. In an exclusive interview with CNN-News18 Showsha, the actor reflects on how television shaped his craft, the creative possibilities offered by OTT and the challenges of being typecast in an industry that constantly demands reinvention. He also opens up about the pressure to stay relevant, the growing influence of social media and why meaningful work matters more than simply being visible. Read the full interview here:

For me, the fundamental principle of acting remains the same, irrespective of the format you have to be emotionally truthful to the character you are portraying. However, the process and the demands of each medium can be quite different. Television teaches you discipline, spontaneity, and the ability to sustain a character over an extended period, often under demanding schedules. OTT, on the other hand, allows you to explore narratives with different rhythms, layered character arcs, and sometimes a more restrained style of storytelling. I don't consciously change my approach just because I'm moving from one medium to another. Instead, I try to understand the world my character inhabits, his motivations, his contradictions, and the emotional landscape that shapes him. Every story has its own language, and I believe an actor must be sensitive enough to adapt without losing his authenticity. Ultimately, my responsibility is to serve the story and make the character believable, regardless of where the audience watches it.

Koffee With Karan 9: Karisma Kapoor To Make Surprise Appearance In Salman Khan's Episode?



Karan Johar's last season of Koffee With Karan will air tonight with Salman Khan as the celebrity guest for the first episode. There is much anticipation surrounding the chat show, as it returns for its 9th and final season. While Salman will be a solo guest, reports suggest that Karisma Kapoor will make a surprise appearance.As per Variety India, Karisma Kapoor is also expected to grace the show. However, the duration of her appearance is not known, and the episode is reportedly set around Salman as a solo guest. Koffee With Karan 9 will premiere on October 14, 2026, at 7 PM IST on JioHotstar.Salman Khan's association with the show goes back several seasons. In Season 4, he appeared alongside his father, veteran screenwriter Salim Khan. He later joined his brothers, Arbaaz Khan and Sohail Khan, for the show's landmark 100th episode in Season 5. The first promo, released on October 12, offered a glimpse of Salman's return to Karan's iconic couch.

Another teaser revisited a question that has become synonymous with Salman's appearances on the chat show. Karan asked the actor, "Are you still a virgin?" Salman responded, "Control, bro," offering a glimpse of the cheeky exchanges viewers can expect from the episode. The 60-year-old actor also reportedly admitted that he would like to have children someday.

Meanwhile, Salman's association with Karisma also goes back several years. The actors first appeared together in Jaagruti (1992). They subsequently reunited for Rajkumar Santoshi's Andaz Apna Apna (1994), which also starred Aamir Khan and Raveena Tandon. Their association continued with films such as Jeet (1996), Judwaa (1997), Biwi No. 1 (1999), Hum Saath-Saath Hain (1999), Chal Mere Bhai (2000) and Dulhan Hum Le Jayenge (2000).

Earthquake of 6.9 magnitude hits near Ozernovskiy in Russia

MOSCOW.(Ajency)

An earthquake of 6.9 magnitude struck 76 km northeast of Ozernovskiy in Russia on Friday, the US Geological Survey said.

The epicentre, with a depth of 143.2 km, was initially determined to be at 52.01 degrees north latitude and 157.25 degrees east longitude, it said.A perceptible earthquake with an intensity of up to four magnitude points has been registered in Kamchatka, Russia's state-run TASS news agency reported, citing the Kamchatka branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Geophysical Service.

"Instrumental intensity in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky amounted to up to four points," scientists said.Scientists estimated its magnitude at 6.5 first, but later revised it to 6.9.

It was felt as a magnitude-5 earthquake in the region, it said.

"According to verified information, the magnitude of this seismic event was 6.9. Its epicentre was located on land, 156 km southwest of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, at the depth of 138 km. In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, it was felt as a magnitude-5 earthquake," seismologists said. they said.

'Traditional family model': Right-wing Brazil influencers on 'mission' to seal Bolsonaro win

RIO DE JANEIRO.(Ajency)

Eduarda Campopiano describes herself as "feminists' worst nightmare" and thanks God for the colonization of Brazil by Portugal, which she credits with saving the country from "cannibalism."

The 23-year-old influencer, who was elected to the assembly of Sao Paulo with nearly two million votes on October 4, is one of the new faces of an insurgent ultraconservative movement that aims to get right-winger Flavio Bolsaro over the line in next week's presidential runoff.

The movement is powered by right-wing digital natives like Campopiano, who have racked up huge followings on social media in this ultra-connected country of 214 million inhabitants.Flavio Bolsonaro, the eldest son of former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, edged incumbent left-winger Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in the first round of voting, held on the same day as the general election.

FBI employees fired for roles in Trump classified files probe sue to get their jobs back

WASHINGTON.(Ajency)

FBI employees fired for their roles in the investigation of President Donald Trump's retention of classified documents at his Florida estate sued Thursday to get their jobs back, calling their terminations unlawful acts of "political retribution."The complaint adds to the growing list of legal challenges to the mass terminations by FBI Director Kash Patel of agents who participated in investigations of the Republican president or who were perceived as opposed to Trump administration interests.

The suit was filed in federal court in Washington on behalf of nine agents, intelligence analysts and staff operations specialists who were fired in February following earlier dismissals of agents who had investigated Trump's efforts to overturn his 2020 presidential election loss to Democrat Joe Biden.Patel has said in congressional testimony that the fired employees had "weaponized" the FBI and that terminations at the bureau follow internal investigations.

Drone strikes in the Black Sea raise fears of Russian escalation to test NATO's response

- The attacks in the two countries' exclusive economic zones threaten a global shipping route and have left two people dead, with at least 25 still missing. They also run the risk of drawing other countries directly into the

BULGARIA.(Ajency)

A string of drone attacks on at least seven cargo vessels in the Black Sea this month, off the coasts of NATO members Romania and Bulgaria, has some members of the alliance wondering if Russian President Vladimir Putin is seeking escalation to test their support for Ukraine in its war against Moscow's full-scale invasion.The attacks in the two countries' exclusive economic zones threaten a global shipping route and have left two people dead, with at least 25 still missing. They also run the risk of drawing other countries directly into the war for Ukraine.Throughout the war, Russia has repeatedly bombarded Ukraine's Black Sea and Danube river ports, leaving Kyiv increasingly reliant on alternative routes to get its grain exports to markets in Africa and the Middle East. Russian drones have repeatedly violated Romanian airspace near some of Ukraine's Danube ports.In the latest incidents, fires broke out on two ships struck by drones Wednesday and Thursday, one in Romania's territorial waters.Romanian President Nicusor Dan said Thursday in Brussels that "two drones" had hit the vessels but did not say whose drones they were.



"There will be a reaction from the Romanian state," he warned.Increasingly, the suspicion falls on Russia. "There is no logic in Ukraine attacking its own ships and crews, given that the outcome of all these attacks favors Russia — and indeed, the logic points in that direction," Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev told his country's Parliament."The problem is that we cannot prove it."

Multiple vessels struck by drones in October

The San Marino-flagged Wine Trader, a chemical tanker traveling from Tunisia to Romania, was struck by a drone Thursday and caught fire. Five crew members were rescued but another seven are missing.

On Wednesday, a drone strike and fire were reported on the Comoros-flagged Yara J, a chemical and oil tanker traveling from Turkey to Romania. Romania's acting Defense Minister Radu Miruta said an investigation was underway.On Tuesday, two ships were struck by drones off Bulgaria's coast. Rescuers evacuated all 15 crew members from the Ukraine-operated Chelsea 3, sailing under a Maltese flag, but 11 crew from the Guinea-Bissau-flagged HS Dignity are still missing.The crew of the Chelsea 3 reported the ship's deck and hull were hit by three aerial drones.

Nepal's devastating flood exposes the risks of resettling disaster survivors

KHALTE, Nepal.(Ajency)

When the flood came, Chheku Lama ran uphill, shouting for people to flee. A group followed him, but none survived, he said.Lama's Khalte village in Nepal's Rasuwa district had been set up as a temporary settlement after a 2015 earthquake destroyed nearby villages. But it offered little protection from floods, with homes clustered along the Trishuli River in a narrow valley.



When the floodwaters surged through on Aug. 26, residents had few routes to escape. At least 375 people were reported missing, according to residents. The village was wiped out.

Nepal is still recovering from the devastating floods that killed more than 1,400 people and left thousands missing in its mountainous border region with China. Another flash flood in north-central Nepal last week left at least five people missing.Over the past decade, tens of thousands of people in Nepal have been displaced by earthquakes, landslides and floods, only to face new risks in temporary settlements built in vulnerable areas. Khalte's destruction highlights those dangers. Survivors say the government must go beyond emergency relief and temporary shelter to provide safe, permanent places where displaced people can rebuild their lives.

Khalte's destruction exposes the risks of unsafe resettlement

The 2015 earthquake, which killed nearly 9,000 people nationwide, destroyed villages where many families had lived for generations. Under a government relocation plan, about 257 vulnerable households were moved to Khalte, which geological assessments later classified as a "red zone" because of landslide and avalanche risks.

Bam Bahadur Tamang, a Khalte resident now living in a government relief center, said he and many others had opposed the decision to resettle them there but they were eventually forced to move. He said any new relocation must account for both safety and access to basic services.

"Wherever the government resettles us now, it must first ensure that the place is safe," he said. "We are not cattle to be moved from one place to another."Tamang's worries point to a challenge that extends beyond finding safe ground. Displaced families also need access to schools, healthcare, roads and livelihoods if a temporary settlement is to become a viable home.

Nepal plans a new approach to disaster-hit settlements

Nepal's government says it plans to build a new city for flood victims, with industries, hospitals and schools, and that displaced residents would not be sent back to settlements destroyed by the flood. It is also considering involving private developers in reconstruction, including a model in which they build homes in cooperation with landowners.

Dharam Raj Uprety, chief executive of Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, said the government was identifying land for settlements in safe areas. Experts would assess land use, and flood-prone areas could be declared uninhabitable, he said.

New White House press secretary Katie Zacharia defends her legal background and short first briefing

WASHINGTON.(Ajency)

New White House press secretary Katie Zacharia on Thursday defended her legal background and justified her truncated inaugural briefing as she navigates a rocky first week as the president's chief spokeswoman.

Zacharia sat down for an interviews with conservative media. She told the conservative Human Events outlet that she did not have time to get fully prepared ahead of her first briefing on Tuesday and that it was always the plan to keep it short because President Donald Trump would field questions from journalists later that morning."It was absolutely my goal to keep it short, considering he is his own best spokesperson, and he would love -- and does love -- gaggling with the media as he goes to Marine One," Zacharia said. "So I wanted to give ample deference and not barge into his time."

The initial briefing materials were given to Zacharia on Monday evening, then completed Tuesday at 8 am, less than two hours before she would appear before the White House press corps. She had been up since 3 am preparing, Zacharia said. "I never had a full briefing beforehand, and I went out and I effectuated the briefing," she said.Later, speaking to Fox News commentator Sean Hannity, she said she "probably should have stepped aside" instead of taking questions from the press corps without having time to prepare."I could have just given a brief intro and said, 'I'm only here to introduce myself, and I want to engage with the press corps,'" she said.

Zacharia calls failure to pass bar exam 'inconsequential'

As for her legal background, Zacharia said she was preparing to take the bar exam in California at a time that she had just gotten married and was readying a move to China to join her new husband, who had been working in private equity in Beijing."I was obviously incredibly distracted and overwhelmed and excited for finally being married to someone who I'd been long distance from for at least a year," Zacharia said.She said the results of the bar exam, which she did not pass, were "somewhat inconsequential" because she would not need to be a barred attorney while living in China.

FBI extradites Indian who allegedly defrauded US of $600,000 in SNAP funds

- Manjeet Singh Bedi, who was arrested in India last month, was brought back to the US on Wednesday night, Acting US Attorney Charles Neil Floyd said.

WASHINGTON.(Ajency)

A most-wanted fraudster accused of irregularities in US government schemes has been extradited from India, the Department of Justice said.Manjeet Singh Bedi, who was arrested in India last month, was brought back to the US on Wednesday night, Acting US Attorney Charles Neil Floyd said.Bedi will



appear before the Western District Court of Washington state on Friday."The arrest and return of Manjit Singh Bedi marks yet another significant moment for the historic FBI's Most Wanted Fraudsters program," said FBI Director Kash Patel."Thank you to FBI Seattle, as well as our brilliant law enforcement partners here in the US and in India, for assisting in securing Bedi's return," Patel said.

Neil Floyd said the FBI will ask the court to detain Bedi pending trial because he demonstrated the will and means to flee.

Bedi operated a small grocery store in Tacoma city in Washington state called Asian Grocery Store. He purportedly sold food to SNAP participants using their EBT cards.After being indicted for wire fraud and SNAP benefits fraud, Bedi was allowed to appear in court without being arrested. He was ordered to surrender his passport and remain in Washington state.However, Bedi soon drove across the border to Canada and then fled to India, the FBI said.

"Thanks to the hard work of FBI Seattle investigators and our international law enforcement partners, as well as tips from the public about the subject's whereabouts, Bedi has been returned to the United States to face justice in a Tacoma courtroom," said W. Mike Herrington, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Seattle field office.Patel said Bedi is charged with defrauding the US of at least USD 600,000 in SNAP funds from approximately 2024 to 2025 and will now face justice for his alleged crimes."This is the latest in a tremendously successful run of returning high-value targets to the US by engaging with foreign partners, with over 260 removal actions in just 20 months, up approximately 70 per cent from the previous period," Patel said.

Policing of France's school protests clouds Macron's final months, sparks uproar

PARIS.(Ajency)

On one side, legions of determined teenagers protesting for their future by blockading schools and taking part in marches that have sometimes spiraled into violence.On the other, one of the largest internal security forces in Europe, deployed by the government of an unpopular and outgoing president.

The result, playing out almost daily outside high schools and on the streets of France, is a nationwide storm of unrest. The mayhem of recent weeks — with mass arrests and hundreds of injured — has sparked an uproar in a country steeped in a centuries-old culture of protest. Even some police have turned on the government's handling of the demonstrations.Discontent shrouds Macron's final monthsFor President Emmanuel Macron, who leaves office in May, it's hardly the dream ending to his decade in power. He has faced a succession of protest movements that sapped his popularity and fueled broad criticism of how his ministers use police against demonstrators.With the high schoolers, the outcry has grown particularly loud. That's partly because the vast majority of the 8,000 people arrested in recent weeks are teenagers under 18 and because police riot-control weapons are blamed for life-changing injuries suffered by some young teens.The protesters' push for better-resourced schools, particularly in poorer Paris suburbs and other cities and towns, also has a sympathetic audience as France hurts from record poverty and record public debt.But police complain that they're facing violent rioters who are latching onto the protests and using the crowds as cover to attack officers, pelting them with rocks, fireworks and other projectiles and wreaking havoc with fires, vandalism and other destruction. By the government's count, more than 900 officers and nearly 150 teachers and other school staffers have been wounded.French history partly explains why protests are veering into confrontations between riot police and some demonstrators who come ready to fight in masks and black clothes, says Walid Hrar, a police officer and union representative in the northern suburbs of Paris."This is the country of the French Revolution. Everyone boasts about it, in fact. Some political parties don't hesitate to say that we need to disobey the law. That's what Robespierre and other revolutionaries taught us in 1789," he said.France always tends to react rather than anticipate," he added. "In other words, we're always going to extremes."

Attention focusing on police weaponry

The police have drawn sharp scrutiny for their efforts to control crowds using a variety of so-called non-lethal weaponry, particularly grenades and other projectiles, but also tear gas, water cannons and riot shields equipped with powerful strobe lights.