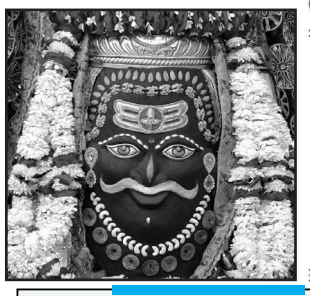
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MK Stalin Backs CJP Protest, Rules Out Working With 'Backstabber' Congress

Chennai. (Agency)

The DMK has thrown its weight behind the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protests against SIR and Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, while also distancing itself from the Congress that has been spearheading the political protest against the poll body.At a meeting of party MPs in Chennai, DMK chief MK Stalin has directed leaders to up the ante against the SIR and support the Cockroach Janta Party agitation, sources have told NDTV. At the same time, Stalin, according to sources, has made it clear that the Dravidian party will not work with the "backstabber" Congress.

The meeting, chaired by former chief minister, was called to discuss the SIR issue.The DMK has also resolved to demand the scrapping of the SIR exercise and return to the ballot paper system, sources have told .The meet decided to work closely with the CJP. The party has accused the Congress of "doublespeak" on the SIR issue.

Notably, Stalin has been very vocal over the last few days on the crackdown on the protesters. On Thursday he spoke strongly against the detention of CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke ahead of the Tiranga march.

Illinois temple shooting plot: India urges US to ensure safety of Indian nationals

New Delhi(Agency).

India on Friday called on the United States to ensure the safety, security and well-being of Indian nationals, describing an alleged plot to carry out a mass shooting at a Hindu temple in Illinois as a matter of "deep concern".

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal made the remarks in response to a query during his bi-weekly media briefing.

A 19-year-old was arrested in Palatine, near Chicago, for allegedly planning a



mass shooting at the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Aurora, Illinois, on Sunday. The plan reportedly failed after the gun he was carrying jammed and could not fire.

The teenager appeared in court on October 14 and was charged with one count of making a terrorist threat and one count of unlawful possession of weapons.India had on Thursday expressed deep concern over reports of the alleged plot, linking the incident to growing concerns over "racist hostility and anti-India hate" in the US.

Several US lawmakers and advocacy groups have also expressed shock over the alleged plot, warning that anti-India hatred was escalating into violence.

Devendra Fadnavis says regime change possible only through elections under constitution

Those eyeing to create a situation similar to that in India's neighbouring countries, should remember that the Constitution guarantees justice to everyone, the CM added.

New Delhi(Agency).

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said that as long as the Constitution remains in force, a change of government can take place only through elections, with decisions being made in Parliament.His remarks came amid a controversy over senior advocate Prashant Bhushan's call for "regime change".

Fadnavis also alleged that attempts were made in recent years to attack the Constitution and the country's democracy.CM Fadnavis and former Chief Justice of India (CJI) B R Gavai released two books as part of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)'s educational initiative to promote constitutional values, fundamental duties and democratic principles among students in its schools.Amid the ongoing protests against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over alleged irregularities in the ongoing SIR, Prashant Bhushan on Thursday called for a "regime change", stressing that it was the democratic right of every citizen.Speaking at the event in central Mumbai's Dadar, Fadnavis said, "I heard some recent statements. Someone just said that the fight will now take place on the streets and not in Parliament, and the regime will change. But I want to tell them that as long as the Constitution of Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar exists, decisions will be taken in Parliament and regime change will happen only through elections."



In recent years, several attempts were made to attack the Constitution and the country's democracy, but India's constitutional framework is so strong that nobody could touch it, he said.

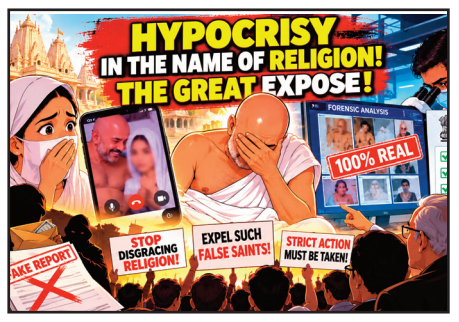
Those eyeing to create a situation similar to that in India's neighbouring countries, should remember that the Constitution guarantees justice to everyone, the CM added.

"I think those who are planning to bring about a situation like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, should remember that this Constitution has given everyone the right to access justice in this country," he said.People should seek justice through constitutional means, he said, adding that the Constitution also provides for dealing with those who act against its provisions.

THE SHOCKING TRUTH BEHIND THE JAIN MONK CONTROVERSY: RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY, FOREN SIC CLAIMS & THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH!

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Gandhinagar/Ahmedabad, Gujarat: A controversy surrounding Jain monk Sagar Chandrasagar has drawn attention following the circulation of allegedly objectionable photographs and screenshots of a purported video call on social media. The matter has raised questions about the authenticity of the circulated material, the claims made in connection with private forensic reports, and the need for a transparent and impartial investigation.The controversy has also prompted discussion among members of the Jain community about religious accountability, the protection of individual dignity, and the responsibility of media organisations when reporting allegations involving religious figures. While the circulation of such material can generate strong public reactions, the central questions remain whether the images are authentic, whether they have been digitally altered, and whether any verifiable evidence supports the allegations being made.Mahanagar Metro has stated that it received documents and private laboratory reports that reportedly claimed the disputed images had been digitally manipulated. According to the account provided by the publication, concerns subsequently raised by members of the Jain community prompted it to pursue further examination of the matter.However, the authenticity of the material, the contents of the laboratory reports, and the status of any official forensic examination must be established through verifiable documentation. Until such evidence is available, the claims should be treated as allegations rather than conclusive findings.Background: How the Controversy Came to Public AttentionThe controversy emerged after photographs and screenshots allegedly depicting a Jain monk in compromising circumstances began circulating on social media. The material reportedly included images claimed to be connected to a purported video call involving a female religious figure.The circulation of alleged intimate material can quickly generate speculation, particularly when the individuals involved are associated with religious institutions and traditions. In such circumstances, questions of authenticity become especially important. A photograph or screenshot circulated online does not, by itself, establish when, where, or under what circumstances it was created.Digital images can be copied, cropped, altered, recombined, or circulated without their original context. Consequently, any responsible assessment must distinguish between the existence of viral material



and the evidence required to establish its authenticity.The controversy involving Sagar Chandrasagar therefore raises several separate issues: the origin of the images, the identity of the individuals depicted, the possibility of digital manipulation, and the accuracy of claims made about the material.Each of these issues requires independent verification rather than conclusions based solely on social media posts or statements from interested parties.Mahanagar Metro's Account of the Documents ReceivedAccording to the information supplied by Mahanagar Metro, documents and private laboratory reports were previously presented to the publication. These documents reportedly claimed that the disputed photographs had been digitally edited or manipulated.The publication says it initially exercised caution while considering the material presented to it. It further states that concerns expressed by members of the Jain community led it to examine the matter more closely.The distinction between a document being presented to a publication and that document being independently authenticated is important. A laboratory report can only support a reliable conclusion if its issuing institution, methodology, findings, and connection to the specific digital files are established.A complete verification process would ordinarily include checking the laboratory's identity, confirming the report number, examining the original document, identifying the digital files analysed, and establishing whether the report was issued by an authorised examiner.Without these checks, neither the claim that the images were manipulated nor the counterclaim that they were entirely authentic can be regarded as conclusively established.Forensic Examination: What Must Be Verified?The supplied account states that the disputed photographs and screenshots were submitted for examination at a government forensic laboratory in Gandhinagar. It further alleges that the examination found no evidence of digital editing or image manipulation.The alleged finding is significant if supported by an authentic, complete forensic report.

BJP Leader LK Advani, 98, Admitted To Delhi Hospital With Chest Infection

New Delhi(Agency).

Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani was admitted to Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in Delhi with a chest infection.His condition is stable, hospital officials said.The 98-year-old leader was brought to the hospital at around 7.30 pm on Friday and admitted to the pulmonary department. He is currently under observation by a team of doctors, while medical tests are underway.



Advani is undergoing treatment at the hospital, and his condition remains stable, according to the officials.This is not the first time the veteran leader has been hospitalised in recent months. He was last admitted to Apollo Hospital in May this year due to age-related health complications. He remained under medical care for a few days before being discharged.Earlier, in December 2024, Advani was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of Indraprastha Apollo Hospital for medical management and investigations. He was treated under the supervision of a neurologist. The hospital then stated that his condition was stable.On December 17, 2024, the hospital reported that Advani had shown gradual improvement and was likely to be shifted out of the ICU within the following one to two days.

Born on November 8, 1927, in Karachi (present-day Pakistan), Advani is one of the most prominent leaders in the history of the BJP. He played a key role in the party's growth from a relatively small political force into a major national political organisation.

Karnataka committed to expanding NLSIU campus, promises land and financial assistance: CM Shivakumar

Assuring the university of government support for its expansion, the Chief Minister said there was no need to worry about the availability of land or financial resources.

Karnataka(Agency).

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday assured the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) of the Karnataka government's full support for expanding its campus, including allotment of land and financial assistance to strengthen infrastructure for legal education.



Shivakumar was speaking after joining Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru in laying the foundation stone for the South Block, auditorium and student centre at the NLSIU campus in Jnanabharathi, Bengaluru.

"I am proud that Karnataka took the lead in establishing the National Law School. When we were student leaders in the state, the establishment of the first National Law School was celebrated with great enthusiasm across the country," he said.

Assuring the university of government support for its expansion, the Chief Minister said there was no need to worry about the availability of land or financial resources.

"Whether it is seven acres or 10 acres, whatever you need, the government is committed to helping you with land grants and financial assistance," he said.

Congratulating Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sudhir Krishnaswamy and his team on the institution's infrastructure expansion, Shivakumar said the government considered it its responsibility to protect and develop the prestigious institution.

In Gurgaon, man returns to find his wife murdered in loo, hands tied

Gurgaon.(Ajency)

A 34-year-old woman was found murdered inside her house in Daulah village in Sohna on Friday, with her hands tied and tape covering her mouth and face.

Her husband discovered her body in the bathroom around 2pm after returning home with their children from school and finding household belongings scattered across the house, police said. The motive for the murder remains unclear. Police said they are investigating all possible angles, including suspected theft, and have yet to identify the suspects.

The deceased, Neetu, was married to Prashant, a teacher at a private school. According to police, Prashant had left home with the children for school on Friday morning. When they returned around 2pm, he found household belongings scattered across the house.Suspecting something was wrong, he searched the premises and found Neetu lying in the bathroom with her hands tied and tape over her mouth and face.

Shocked by the sight, he raised an alarm and rushed her to a private hospital in Sohna, where doctors declared her dead.

Woman crossing road on her way to work run over by crane in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Ajency)

A woman who was travelling to her workplace in Sector 45 was crushed to death by a Hydra crane while she was trying to cross Hero Honda Chowk on Thursday morning.

Police have arrested the driver and seized the vehicle.

The deceased, Mahvash Siddiqui, was employed with SRF Limited, a chemical conglomerate company, which has its office in Sector 45. Her father said that the family lives in Manesar and every day, Mahvash would take a bus to Hero Honda Chowk, cross the road towards Subhash Chowk to reach work. However, on Friday, a crane, allegedly being driven at high speed and negligently, hit her from behind around 8.30am while she was trying to cross the road.

She died on the spot following the collision."After receiving information about the accident, a team from Naharpur Rupa police post reached the spot and arranged for a private ambulance to take Mahvash to Civil Hospital in Sector 10. Doctors declared her brought dead," a police officer said.

Noida man strangles 40-year-old neighbour after spat over parking, loud music

Noida.(Ajency)

A 40-year-old auto driver was allegedly drugged and strangled by his neighbour, a pharmacist, after repeated disputes over parking and loud music in Greater Noida's Kulesara.

The accused allegedly mixed intoxicants into the man's liquor before killing him and dumping his body at an isolated stretch on Lakhnawali Road.

Lalit Kumar Sharma (43) was arrested and the Maruti Suzuki Brezza allegedly used to transfer the body was seized. Pills and the victim's broken mobile phone were also found with him.

The victim, Pawan Sharma, lived in Kulesara and had a longstanding dispute with Lalit over parking his three-wheeler on a narrow street near the latter's house. The two had also quarrelled over music on several occasions, police said.

On Oct 15, Lalit allegedly invited Pawan to a party and took him in his Brezza (UFM/8392). He allegedly mixed the pills into Pawan's liquor.

Dangerous negligence at Kirtidan Gadhvi's 'Parampara Nagari' Garba: Participant injured by exposed nail!

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Ahmedabad: Serious concerns over participant safety have emerged at the 'Parampara Nagari' Garba festival in Ahmedabad, held under the name of renowned Gujarati folk singer Kirtidan Gadhvi. A participant was reportedly injured after coming into contact with a sharp nail protruding from a ramp at the venue, raising questions about the safety arrangements for thousands of people attending the event.Social activist Shubham Thacker has raised questions about the alleged negligence and called on Kirtidan Gadhvi and the organisers to clarify what measures were taken to ensure the safety of participants.According to the information provided, sharp iron nails were reportedly protruding from the ramp and stage area, potentially creating a hazard for people dancing in the crowded venue. The incident has highlighted the importance of inspecting ramps, stage structures, and other installations before opening a large event to the public.Thacker has questioned whether the organisers carried out adequate safety checks and fulfilled their responsibility to provide a safe environment for participants. The reported incident has also raised concerns among Garba enthusiasts and parents about the risks associated with poorly maintained event infrastructure.Large-scale Garba festivals attract thousands of people, making proper crowd management, regular inspections, medical assistance, and the removal of sharp or dangerous objects essential. Even a seemingly minor construction or installation defect can pose a risk when participants are moving and dancing in crowded areas.The incident has prompted questions about the safety inspections conducted before such events receive permission. Apart from fire safety and emergency arrangements, authorities and organisers must also pay attention to the physical condition of the ground, ramps, platforms, and stage surroundings.The organisers are expected to clarify the circumstances surrounding the reported injury and explain whether corrective measures have been taken. The relevant authorities may also examine the allegations and determine whether the venue complied with applicable safety requirements.The incident underlines the need for accountability and preventive action at public celebrations. Ensuring that



all structures are properly installed, inspecting the venue before each event, and promptly addressing reported hazards are important steps in protecting participants.The allegations and circumstances of the reported injury have not been independently verified. The organisers' response and any official findings are awaited. If safety violations are established, appropriate action should be taken in accordance with the law.

A Person Spends Their Entire Life Making Others Happy, but Somewhere Along the Way, Forgets Their Own Happiness...

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Author: Rupesh Solanki, Bhachau, Kutch There is a strange reality about life. From childhood, a person becomes occupied with fulfilling the expectations of one person or another. In childhood, it is the expectations of parents; in youth, the concern of building a career; in married life, the responsibilities of family; and as age advances, the worries about the future of children. Amid all these responsibilities, a person keeps running tirelessly, yet rarely pauses for even a moment to ask themselves, "Am I truly happy?"A person works hard for their family, puts their own wishes aside to fulfil their children's dreams, and often suppresses their emotions to maintain peace in relationships. Someone who appears to be smiling on the outside may be deeply exhausted within, yet even those closest to them may never realise how much they are struggling. We try to understand the difficulties of others. When someone is sad, we offer comfort; when someone feels discouraged, we encourage them; and when someone faces hardship, we stand by their side. However, when pain begins to grow within us, we often choose silence ourselves.Sometimes, we feel that expressing our emotions will make others consider us weak. At other times, we feel that nobody has the time to listen to us. As a result, a person gradually learns to hide their pain behind a smile.But we must remember that expressing sorrow is not a sign of weakness, and appearing strong at all times is not necessary either. Being human means experiencing emotions, feeling tired, pausing when necessary, and finding the strength to rise again. In society, we often give other people's opinions far more importance than they deserve. What will people say? What will our relatives think? Are we falling behind our friends? Questions like these gradually rob us of our peace of mind.When we see others succeeding, our own lives begin to feel incomplete. Someone buys a bigger house, someone purchases a new car, someone moves abroad, while another achieves a prestigious position. We, too, join the same



race, forgetting that every individual has different circumstances, abilities, and paths in life.Life is not a competition in which we can win only by leaving others behind. True success lies in becoming wiser, more compassionate, and more content today than we were yesterday. Taking time for yourself is not selfishness. Reading a favourite book, spending some time in nature, talking to an old friend, or sitting quietly and listening to your own thoughts—such small moments can bring new energy into life.

No trouble from stubble this time Just eight farm fires in Haryana so far

Gurgaon.(Ajency)

Haryana recorded just eight incidents of stubble burning between Sept 15 and Oct 15 this year, an almost 99% plunge from 702 during the same period in 2020. But there's a catch.According to officials, dense cloud cover and wet spells may have affected satellite detection, making the sharp decline encouraging but not conclusive as Delhi-NCR enters its peak pollution season.The paddy harvesting season runs from Sept 15 to Nov 30. Damp straw is harder to burn, but incidents could rise once conditions turn dry. The latest tally was also 68% lower than the 25 fires recorded during the corresponding period last year.Several traditional hotspots recorded no fires. Kaithal registered zero against 115 in 2020, Karnal none against 214, and Kurukshetra none against 151. Jind, which reported 20 incidents in 2020 and nine last year, also recorded none. Gurgaon had no detected fires.The eight incidents were reported in Palwal (2), Sonipat (2), Faridabad (1), Hansi (1), Panchkula (1) and Sirsa (1).Anumita Roychowdhury of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) attributed the decline to govt-backed methods of managing crop residue, along with better monitoring and compliance.

"Both in-situ and ex-situ strategies supported by govt are now beginning to take root. The scope of implementation has expanded, bringing a lot more farmers within their ambit. More importantly, compliance and monitoring have also improved over the last couple of years," she said.

Roychowdhury said the trend showed that stubble burning could be curbed through sustained implementation. "If we have been able to achieve such a drastic reduction, this shows that the problem is solvable. We can actually eliminate it if implementation remains very stringent and reaches all farmers across the region," she said. "We really need to ramp up further so that we are able to eliminate the problem."The year-wise figures underline how sharply the numbers have fluctuated.

240 litres of ghee, 18kg chilli powder seized in Navratri crackdown in Dadri

Noida.(Ajency)

A team of the food safety and drug administration department on Friday seized approximately 240 litres of ghee and 18 kg of chilli powder over labelling violations from a warehouse of City Mall, an online grocery retail platform, in Dadri.

The raid was conducted on the directions of the district magistrate and was led by chief food safety officer Virendra Dwivedi. Assistant commissioner of food, grade II, Sarvesh



Mishra said that the department had stepped up inspections to ensure food safety standards were being complied with during the Sharadiya Navratri festive season, when demand for certain food items increases.He said the ghee was confiscated after officials found claims on the packaging about the presence of vitamins and minerals in the product, which they considered potentially misleading. He said the chilli powder did not have essential information on its packaging, including the packing date and the batch number. The product was suspected to be misbranded, he said."Apart from the seizures, officials also collected six food samples for laboratory testing. These included Avatar brand ghee, Avatar brand cow ghee, chilli powder, makhana (fox nuts), mustard oil and buckwheat flour, commonly known as kuttu atta. The samples will be examined to determine whether the products meet the prescribed quality and safety standards," Mishra said.Laboratory findings will help determine whether further action is required against the products that were tested.

The department also issued instructions to food business operators to ensure that products are procured only from licensed or registered suppliers. They were directed to maintain purchase bills and verify manufacturing dates, batch numbers and other mandatory labelling details before purchasing, storing or selling food items.Mishra said inspections and sample collection would continue under the district magistrate's directions to safeguard public health and ensure food products meet the prescribed standards.

Power supply to condo snapped over dues, 6th time in a year

Noida.(Ajency)

Noida Power Company Ltd (NPCL) disconnected electricity supply to Mahagun Mywoods in Greater Noida West at 9am on Friday over unpaid dues. It was the sixth such disruption since Nov 2025. The supply was restored around 5.30pm."The society had outstanding dues of Rs 1,78,01,835 against its Sept 2026 electricity bill. Between Oct 5 and 14, it paid only Rs 1,07,50,646, leaving Rs 70,51,189 unpaid. The connection was therefore liable for disconnection on this amount," NPCL said. On Friday, the society paid a further Rs 48 lakh and submitted an undertaking to clear the remaining Rs 22 lakh on Saturday.

The condominium, which has 6,158 flats housing approximately 5,000 families, runs on a single-point electricity connection. It had been on power backup for over eight hours.NPCL said the builder's maintenance team had not cleared the dues despite repeated warnings and notices. "Mahagun Mywoods Society has a history of delayed payments, compelling us to take disconnection action on several occasions. We have issued multiple notices and granted opportunities for this society to clear its outstanding dues. Timely payment is essential, and repeated failures can lead to such actions as per our procedures, in which we give a prior one-week notice before the disconnection action," said an NPCL spokesperson.

According to the discom, the society has



faced disconnections on five earlier occasions: on Nov 21, 2025, with outstanding dues of Rs 85.4 lakh; Dec 15, 2025 (Rs 68 lakh); March 16, 2026 (Rs 71.4 lakh); April 14, 2026 (Rs 46.7 lakh); and Sept 17, 2026 (Rs 51.5 lakh).

The recurring cuts have angered residents. In a letter written to the district magistrate and the chief executive officer of GNIDA on Friday, the apartment owners association (AOA) sought transfer of common area maintenance from Mahagun Group to the AOA. The letter alleges mismanagement and irregularities by the builder.The letter lists several grievances. Frequent power cuts force residents to rely on diesel generator (DG) sets, for which the builder levies extra charges, even as they continue to pay maintenance and electricity costs. Non-payment to the maintenance agency has led to a sharp drop in security cover as well, with personnel on strike. "This absence of proper security has resulted in incidents of theft and vandalism within the premises," said Anil Verma, AOA president.

Diganta Borah appointed new director of Biju Patnaik International Airport

BHUBANESWAR.(Ajency)

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has appointed Diganta Borah as the new director of Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA).

Borah will succeed incumbent director Prasanna Pradhan, who has been transferred and posted as the director of Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi.

A native of Assam, Borah holds extensive experience in air traffic control (ATC) and aviation infrastructure management. He served for several years as the director of Rajkot International Airport (Hirasar) overseeing its transition to a greenfield facility, expansion efforts and the launch of cargo infrastructure.

Borah will likely assume charge next week at a time when the number of both domestic and international flights have reduced from BPIA. Within days of his assuming charge, a team of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is likely to visit BPIA for three days to inspect the airport's various operational parameters.

Friction between police and protesters in anti-SIR protest in Thiruvananthapuram

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM .(Ajency)

Unlike previous protests seen at the Manaveeyam Veedhi in Thiruvananthapuram, the anti-SIR protest on Friday saw friction between police officers and event organisers. Officers said the organisers had not availed clearance to use microphones for the event and could have caused traffic disruption.

However, organisers told TNIE that the authorities with the BJP-led city corporation tried to prevent their protests from taking place, having done so even in the past. "The protesters hadn't availed proper clearance from the corporation to host the event and to use microphones.

The protest would have also caused a traffic block on the road, which is why police officers were deployed there throughout the event," an officer with the Museum Police said. However, the event began after the officers made a note of the names of the organisers. Stating that the corporation officials put forward technical and procedural reasons to not let them protest in July, condemning the police action on protesters at Jantar Mantar, the organisers alleged that the officials' claims were proved to be wrong in the days that followed. They also added that corporation representatives arrived at the venue less than an hour before their protest, to stop them from hosting the event. "The fundamental question of 'getting permission to protest' in itself is problematic; and a protest is not something planned long back.

Unauthorised private dog shelter in Thiruvananthapuram served stop memo

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. (Ajency)

A reportedly unauthorised private dog shelter in Kuttichal panchayat that has been at the centre of the city corporation's controversial stray-dog management programme has been served a stop memo, with the operator given seven days to relocate the animals. An inspection carried out by panchayat authorities found that between 125 and 150 dogs are being illegally housed at the facility without the permission or knowledge of the panchayat.

"The individual obtained a permit and pollution clearance under the pretext of starting a pet-breeding and bird-rearing facility around four months back. However, instead of pet animals, stray dogs were secretly transported and housed here without our permission.

There are no proper waste pits or basic infrastructure at the facility. Local residents reported seeing vehicles secretly bringing in dogs late at night between 2 am and 4 am," said president Radha Jayan, Kuttichal grama panchayat.

She said the corporation has not approached it or informed it about any proposal to establish a dog shelter in its jurisdiction.

4 Gujarat farmers 'tied with ropes, paraded'; High Court sends notice to government

Vadodara.(Ajency)



The Gujarat High Court on Friday issued notice to the State government while hearing a contempt petition alleging that Dhandhuka police personnel assaulted four farmers, tied them with ropes and paraded them in public, in violation of Supreme Court guidelines against custodial torture.

The High Court also directed the preservation of CCTV footage of the October 8 incident and granted the petitioners liberty to approach the court again if they faced further "pressure".

The Division Bench of Justice N S Sanjay Gowda and Justice J L Odedra passed the directions on Friday based on the submissions of Senior Advocate I H Syed, appearing for the petitioners, informing the court that the petitioners were facing "pressure" since Thursday from the police officers. The court directed the police to preserve the CCTV footage of the incident and permitted the petitioners to bring any further complaints to its notice. The petition, filed by Husenbhai alias Lalabhai Usmanbhai Malvat and three others under Section 12 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, alleges wilful disobedience of the High Court's May 7, 2019 order concerning compliance with the arrest safeguards laid down by the Supreme Court in the case of DK Basu vs State of West Bengal. The allegations stem from an alleged incident on October 8, when a dispute reportedly broke out over the removal of fodder from agricultural land in the Bid area of Dhandhuka. According to the petition, the farmers had opposed unauthorised entry into the agricultural land and sought police protection. Following a confrontation with a group of people, the farmers approached the Dhandhuka police station, where they allege they were subjected to custodial violence and public humiliation.

The petition states that police personnel, including Police Inspector B T Gohil, tied the farmers with ropes around their hands and waists, beat them with sticks and paraded them along a public road. They were allegedly made to move on their knees in public view. The plea further alleges that one petitioner was detained for about 29 hours and the other three for approximately 25 hours, without being produced before a magistrate within the prescribed period. The petitioners contend that the alleged conduct violated the safeguards reiterated in a circular of the Director General of Police, Gujarat, dated May 12, 2026, which prohibits degrading treatment, including forcing an accused to walk on their knees or subjecting them to public humiliation. Citing the CCTV footage, phone recordings and photographs, the plea raises concerns over injuries allegedly sustained by the farmers and the non-supply of medical records despite their requests. Among the reliefs sought were preservation and production of CCTV footage from the Dhandhuka police station, including the lock-up, and cameras along the route of the alleged public parade. They also sought production of station diary entries, lock-up registers and other police records, along with their medico-legal papers and injury certificates. Compensation was sought for the alleged torture by police.

Gujarat AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava gets one-day bail after half-brother's suicide bid

State opposed Vasava's plea saying his presence is 'not indispensable' stating that relatives, including two other biological brothers of the patient are there to look after the latter.

Vadodara.(Ajency)

The Gujarat High Court on Friday granted one-day temporary bail to jailed Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Chaitar Vasava to visit his critically-ill half-brother, who allegedly attempted suicide by consuming poison and is on a life-support at the Surat Civil Hospital.

Justice Vimal K Vyas partly allowed Vasava's application, permitting his release from 7 am to 7 pm on the day of his actual release, subject to a personal bond of Rs 10,000 and police escort at the state's expense. The court directed the Dediapada MLA to surrender before the jail authorities immediately after the temporary bail period expires.



Vasava had initially sought 30 days of temporary bail, from October 17 to November 17, to appear for the first-semester examinations of a Master of Social Work (MSW) course he enrolled in on October 5, four months after his conviction in June. However, during Friday's hearing, his counsel, Senior Advocate I H Syed, did not press the examination-related ground and instead sought temporary release on humanitarian grounds, citing the critical condition of Vasava's half-brother, Shantilal. The court noted that medical papers showed Shantilal was admitted to the Civil Hospital in Surat and was on life support. "Considering the fact that the brother of the present applicant-convict is in a critical condition, this court is of the considered opinion that if the applicant-convict is permitted to visit the hospital for a day to look after his brother, the ends of justice would be met," the HC order, made available on Friday, said. Syed told the court that Vasava needed to visit his brother to look after him and arrange funds and other requirements, including the possibility of shifting him to a better-equipped hospital. He said Vasava was the only person taking care of the family and was its sole earning member although there are five brothers among other siblings from their father's two marriages — the ground on which the state had objected to the release earlier in the day. Opposing the application, public prosecutor Hardik Dave argued that Vasava's presence was not indispensable because other relatives, including two other biological brothers of Shantilal, were available to look after the patient. Citing a police report, the state submitted that the MLA had other siblings and half-siblings who could provide assistance. The court, however, permitted the one-day visit, with police personnel escorting Vasava.

Scrutiny over exam demand

The examination-related plea had faced scrutiny from the state over the circumstances and timing of his admission to the MSW course at Balhans College of Social Work in Thava, Netrang taluka, Bharuch district, affiliated with Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat.

Dave submitted that Vasava had completed his bachelor's degree in June 2009 and had applied for admission to the MSW course after a gap of 17 years, raising questions on why he had not pursued further studies earlier and argued that the plea appeared to be an afterthought following the rejection of his application for suspension of sentence.

The High Court also questioned how Vasava could appear for examinations, including a rural fieldwork viva voce, without fulfilling the course's attendance and fieldwork requirements. Syed eventually did not press the request for temporary bail on the examination ground.

Executive committee meeting BJP looks to deepen SC outreach ahead of 2027 Punjab elections

Patiala.(Ajency)

The BJP is looking to deepen its outreach among Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Punjab ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, with a day-long meeting of its state executive committee in Sangrur focusing on creating awareness about the central government's welfare schemes and ensuring that beneficiaries avail them. Accusing the AAP government of failing on multiple fronts, the party prepared a chargesheet against it over issues ranging from drug abuse to gangsterism. Chaired by Kewal Singh Dhillon, it was the first state executive committee meeting since he took charge as the Punjab BJP president, which focused on strengthening the organisation, finalising its future political strategy and intensifying its campaign against the "failures of the AAP government". The meeting also sought to put the AAP government on the defensive over pending SC scholarship funds, the backlog of government jobs under the SC/ST category and the allotment of panchayati land on lease to Dalits.



Speaking about Sangrur, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's home district, for the meeting instead of Chandigarh, the party's state headquarters, a senior BJP leader said the party intended to take its organisational activities beyond Chandigarh as it prepared for the Assembly elections. With 31.94 per cent of the population, according to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Castes significantly dominate the state's electoral landscape. BJP leaders discussed ways to make the community aware of the central government schemes, including the Post-Matric Scholarship for SC students, National Fellowship for SC students and the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY). The discussions also covered Stand-Up India, Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana and Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, which are open to eligible beneficiaries across communities, including SCs.

In view of Mansa shooting, rampage, Punjab chemists' body: Will only back those who are genuine

Ludhiana.(Ajency)

In view of the recent shooting and rampage in Mansa, Punjab's chemist body has warned store owners, retailers and wholesalers to strictly follow the rules under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and not to sell NRx medicines without a prescription. The general secretary of the Punjab Chemists Association, G S Chawla, said that over 27,000 retail and wholesale chemist shops were registered across the state. Chawla, who is also the district president of Ludhiana, said, "We have issued clear guidelines that they have to follow the rules and medicines having narcotic and psychotropic substances (labelled as NRx) should not be sold without a qualified doctor's prescription at any cost." On October 13, following the murder of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota in Mansa, tension prevailed after a mob vandalised and set ablaze the shop of the accused chemist, Ashwani Kumar. Jhota had accused Ashwani of selling pharmaceutical intoxicants and drugs in the area. On Thursday, a chemist shop on Karabara Road in Ludhiana was also vandalised after a family alleged that their 27-year-old son died after getting intoxicant capsules from the shop. Police have arrested the chemists in both cases.



Ropar illegal sand mining: Channi hides in tipper truck for raids

Chandigarh.(Ajency)

The former Punjab chief minister and Congress MP from Jalandhar, Charanjit Singh Channi, carried out a late-night surprise 'raid' on an illegal mining site near Anandpur Sahib in Ropar, on the intervening night of October 15 and 16. Channi had alleged large-scale illegal extraction of sand and gravel along the Sutlej riverbed. The Congress leader from Ropar, Barinder Singh Dhillon, and other party workers also accompanied Channi.

Channi reached the site near Saidpur and Beihera villages, close to midnight, hiding in the back of a tipper truck. In the videos shot during the raid, he said that smugglers were armed with weapons and had made tight security arrangements, due to which no car or two-wheeler could reach the mining locations. Channi also said, "This is the Ropar district near the Satluj River…. We have been here since 11:00 or 11:30 PM. Illegal mining is taking place throughout the river at night. We have intercepted numerous machines; thousands of tipper trucks were fleeing the area, loaded with gravel and sand."

During a press conference on Friday at the Punjab Congress office, Channi claimed that at approximately 1 am, multiple Poclain excavators were actively digging sand and long queues of tipper trucks were waiting to be loaded.



Ahmedabad man arrested in US for 'claiming citizenship to vote in 2024 presidential polls'

Mukeshkumar Somabhai Chaudhari, an Indian national, is accused of falsely affirming his US citizenship on a voter certificate in Minnesota on November 5, 2024, when the country elected Donald Trump its president.

Vadodara.(Ajency)

An Ahmedabad man has been arrested in the United States for allegedly posing as an American citizen to vote in the 2024 presidential election. He could be sentenced to a decade in prison if convicted. Mukeshkumar Somabhai Chaudhari, an Indian national, is accused of falsely affirming his US citizenship on a voter certificate in Minnesota on November 5, 2024, when the country elected Donald Trump its president.



In a release on Friday, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) arrested Chaudhari in connection with the case. A federal grand jury in the District of Minnesota returned a two-count indictment against him on September 10, accusing him of knowingly making a false claim of US citizenship to vote.

According to the indictment, Chaudhari signed a voter signature certificate required under the Minnesota law on election day. The document required voters to swear or affirm that they were US citizens. Prosecutors allege that Chaudhari was not a US citizen but knowingly made the declaration to cast his ballot. The charges are one count of providing false information in voting and another of making a false claim of citizenship to register to vote or vote. Each carries a maximum prison sentence of five years, taking the potential maximum imprisonment to 10 years if he is convicted on both counts. Any sentence would be determined by a federal judge after considering applicable sentencing guidelines and statutory factors.

DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin issued a stern warning against non-citizens attempting to vote in American elections. "Our message to aliens who vote in American elections is clear: we will find you, arrest you, and you will face the consequences, including criminal charges and deportation," he said in the Homeland Security release. "Under President Trump's leadership, this administration will never allow the votes of American citizens to be cancelled out by non-citizens illegally voting in our elections. Only American citizens should be electing American leaders," he added.

Pincer move needed for atmanirbharta in atmaraksha

In 1775, the East India Company set up a Board of Ordnance in Fort William, Kolkata. In 1787, a gunpowder factory was established at Ishapore (Ichhapur), followed by a Gun Carriage Agency at Cossipore (Kashipur), which began production in 1802. By 1947 there were 18 such ordnance factories, and by the time they were corporatised in 2021, there were 41.Remarkably, the economic structure of the system barely changed after independence, and weapons production remained entirely State-run and State-owned. The factories came under the ministry of defence in 1948, and a department of defence production was set up in 1962. The Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951 brought arms and ammunition under industrial licensing. Even the 1991 reforms kept all types of defence equipment reserved for the public sector. Only in May 2001 were Indian private firms let in.

A defence market has one buyer: the armed forces. When that buyer faces a single State-owned seller, neither side has much incentive to economise. In the absence of competition, the ordnance factories had no incentive to cut costs or invest in efficiency. It was estimated that Indian-built aircraft such as the MiG-21 and the Gnat cost 150-190 percent of what it would have cost to import them.

Therefore, dependence on imports followed from the public sector's inability to supply what the armed forces needed at a competitive price. India was the world's largest arms importer in 2018-22 and the second-largest in 2021-25. The price of this dependence was paid in crises. In every urgent purchase during the Kargil war, recalled the then Army chief General V P Malik, suppliers "exploited us as much as they could". One country, asked for a few guns, "supplied refurbished old weapons" from another—"we were given 1970-vintage ammunition".Over the past decade, the government has chipped away at this from two directions: making the incumbents behave like companies, and letting in challengers. The first was the corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board. Committees headed by T K A Nair, Vijay Kelkar and Raman Puri had all recommended it. Yet only on October 1, 2021 did the management, control, operations and maintenance of the 41 factories pass to seven wholly-government-owned companies.

As companies, they now enjoy more operational freedom and flexibility. The units had run up losses over three years preceding corporatisation. In their first six months as companies, six of the seven reported profits. Exports by the new companies went from ₹82 crore in 2022-23 to ₹1,977 crore in 2023-24.The second was making it easier to do business. An industrial licence for defence items used to be valid for seven years. Since 2015, the validity is for 15, extendable to 18. Arms Act licences are now valid for the company's lifetime, provided it sets up its plant and meets other conditions within seven years. No licence is required for manufacture of any parts or accessories in the defence sector, unless the items are specifically listed.Although defence is still one of four industries under compulsory licensing, the number of defence licences has more than tripled from 258 in 2015 to 834 by March 2026. The ceiling on foreign direct investment, set at 26 percent in 2001, now allows 74 percent through the automatic route and up to 100 percent with government approval.

The latest steps go further. On August 25, the MoD approved the transfer of technology of conventional missile systems developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation to Indian industry. Seventeen firms, public and private, have been identified through an open expression of interest.

Missiles are not an isolated case. Private firms can now participate in the development of the fifth-generation advanced medium combat aircraft. The government is now moving from a traditional sub-contracting model to genuine co-development and risk-sharing. The effect of the reforms is palpable. Defence production rose from ₹46,429 crore in 2014-15 to ₹84,643 crore in 2020-21 and ₹1.78 lakh crore in 2025-26, with the private sector's share at an all-time high of 24 percent

Afghan route to China faces hurdles

Efforts to promote Pak-proof gateway via Wakhan Corridor beset by Beijing's security concerns

EARLIER this month, Afghanistan's de facto authorities inaugurated a 121-km unpaved transit route connecting Badakhshan with China's Xinjiang via Sarhad-i-Broghil to the Wakhjir Pass (its zero point), then to Kashgar through Tashkurgan. The Pass is at an elevation of over 16,000 feet. It has remained closed to commerce and civilian access since the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. Afghans have long aspired to connect with China through an all-weather road, or even railways, from Wakhan to the Karakoram Highway.The Wakhan Corridor evokes historical memory beyond its original purpose of separating the expanding British and Russian empires. It was delineated following the 1895 Pamir Boundary Commission protocols and the 1893 Durand Line Agreement. It abutted Gorno-Badakhshan to the north and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan to the south. The British-led Gilgit Scouts' action in October 1947 led to Pakistan acquiring Gilgit-Baltistan, depriving India of a connection to the Corridor. To the east, it touches China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.The Corridor straddles the Pamir plateau, where the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush and the Karakoram meet. In the 7th century, Chinese Buddhist monk Hsuan Tsang travelled through it, returning to China from India; in the 13th century, the Venetian traveller Marco Polo traversed it on his way to Kublai Khan's court; and in the 16th century, the Chagatai Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat, Babur's cousin, crossed the Pamir while proceeding from trans-Oxiana to Badakhshan.Afghanistan prioritised the project and funded it domestically at a cost equivalent to $5.6 million. It did so in the hope of establishing a direct land link to China without transiting the Pakistani transit routes of Torkham and Chaman, which Af-Pak disputes across the Durand Line often disrupt. It also hopes to encourage China to increase its investments in Afghanistan.

This dirt-and-gravel, seasonal route will be open less than six months a year. For the new route to attract commercial traffic and become a trade and transport corridor, Afghanistan would have to pave the road and, along with China, build reciprocal infrastructure, such as customs terminals and border management facilities.For this, China would have to overcome its fear that an open, accessible corridor might be used by members of the Turkistan Islamic Party or the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) to enter Xinjiang. In January, the ISKP killed seven people, including a Chinese national, in a suicide bombing at a Chinese-run restaurant in Kabul. In February, the Taliban intercepted about 525 weapons and 27,000 rounds of ammunition concealed in trucks at Torkham, on the way for eventual use allegedly in Wakhan. In Badakhshan, a new group, the Sepahiyan-e Mihan, attacked a district centre in July, and the Afghanistan Freedom Front took credit for an attack in another district, both close to Wakhan. Earlier this year, China established a new administrative unit, 'Xinling', near Kashgar, nestling the Karakoram mountain range to increase security along the Corridor and curb Uyghur militant infiltration.The fraught security situation in Badakhshan reinforces China's fears. A local Badakhshani Tajik Taliban commander, Juma Khan Fateh, was recently arrested for disaffection and dismissed from his district governorship.



While the Taliban have beefed up security in the Corridor to reassure China of its intent to protect the route, which loops westward to Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif and southward to Kabul, Beijing does not seem enthusiastic about developing the transit corridor. So far, China has kept the Wakhjir Pass border crossing closed to commercial cargo and passenger transit.

I visited Wakhan in October 2008. Since the Afghan government's control of the route through Feyzabad (Badakhshan) was uncertain, I went via Tajikistan. Reaching Ishkashim, at the neck of the Corridor, required a flight from Kabul to Dushanbe and then a helicopter ride to Khorug.I was happy to find the 15-kilowatt solar PV array funded by India to light up the classrooms and men's and women's hostels of the Teachers Training College, Sheghnan, set up by India's Central Electronics Limited in perfect working condition, besides the 933 solar panels supplied to households in the Wakhan district under the Afghan National Solidarity Programme.

Tajik-speaking population, mostly Ismailis, lives on both sides of the river. Yet, people on the two shores of the Panj, as the upper Oxus is known, lead entirely different lives. A metalled road runs on the Tajik side. Tajiks are more educated. Women go about their daily business confidently, alone, their faces uncovered and their hair tied in bright scarves.In contrast, infrastructure is non-existent on the Afghan side. The road up to Ishkashim is a muddy track. Tajiks have electricity, while Afghans now have only some solar power. Women are not visible in the Afghan area. In the bi-weekly border market, I saw Afghan men buying Tajik bread and cakes, and Tajik women showing interest in and buying sewing machines, which, incidentally, were made in India.As a history student, I was excited to be in Wakhan. In places, it is no more than 15 km wide. The Tajiks call it Bom-i-Dunya, the roof of the world. While crossing from the Tajik side to Afghanistan across the narrow Panj, we gained an hour. The time change when crossing into China from Afghanistan is even more dramatic: with a single step over the border, you cross seven time zones and lose three and a half hours (Afghanistan is GMT +4:30 and China, GMT +8).It is difficult to imagine the Pamir and Wakhan resuming their roles as regional thoroughfares. However, the Taliban have kept alive the abiding aspiration of all previous Afghan governments — that of turning Afghanistan into the crossroads between Iran and Central Asia, and China and South Asia, thereby converting the country into a regional trade, transport, minerals and energy hub.

By preventing overland transit for Afghan third-country goods, Pakistan has thwarted Afghan aspirations. That explains why Afghanistan is keen to promote the alternative Pakistan-proof transit routes through the Chabahar Port and the Wakhan Corridor.

Keep up disinvestment momentum provided by IDBI bank stake sale

IDBI Bank's turnaround has been substantial. The challenge is to sustain this progress under private ownership while preserving depositor confidence

With Canada-based Fairfax Financial Holdings, founded by Indian-origin billionaire Prem Watsa, receiving Cabinet approval to acquire a controlling stake in IDBI Bank, the government has brought a long-pending strategic disinvestment process closer to completion. Initiated in 2022, the transaction signals that the government has not abandoned its disinvestment agenda despite delays in completing major sales. Valued at ₹52,878 crore, the deal involves the combined 60.72 percent stake held by the government and LIC. Following the sale, the government and LIC will retain stakes of 15 percent and 19 percent, respectively. The transaction remains subject to regulatory clearances.This is a major strategic sale under the Modi government, following Air India and Neelachal Ispat Nigam, both acquired by Tata Group companies. The IDBI Bank transaction marks a change of control at an institution that had once teetered on the brink of collapse. Fairfax's existing investments in India, including Bengaluru airport, CSB Bank and IIFL Capital Services, make it a significant choice of buyer. Its experience in the Indian financial sector could help steer the bank through its next phase of growth, though sustaining its recovery will be the real test.IDBI Bank's turnaround has been substantial. Government capital support of about ₹25,000 crore between 2010 and 2020 helped stabilise its finances. Its gross non-performing asset ratio fell from 31.78 percent in September 2018 to 2.32 percent in March 2026, while its capital adequacy ratio rose from 6.22 percent to 26.65 percent. The bank reported a record net profit of ₹9,513 crore in 2025-26. Its total business stood at ₹6.27 lakh crore on September 30, 2026, registering year-on-year growth of 18 percent. The challenge is to sustain this progress under private ownership while preserving depositor confidence.The transaction should provide fresh momentum to the government's disinvestment drive. Its 30.48 percent stake is expected to fetch about ₹26,540 crore, taking disinvestment and asset monetisation receipts beyond the Budget target of ₹80,000 crore for 2026-27, once the proceeds are realised. With nearly half the financial year still ahead, the total could exceed ₹1 lakh crore. But one large transaction cannot substitute for a consistent disinvestment policy. The government must advance other pending strategic sales and deploy public capital more efficiently. The IDBI Bank sale is a welcome boost; sustaining the momentum will be the real test.



How a murderer revealed the open veins of Punjab

Punjab's furious reaction to anti-drugs activist Parvinder Singh Jhota's brazen killing shows the depth of the state's troubles. The increasing deaths and arrest of policemen indicate the embedded networks that are refusing to let this menace subside despite efforts. The pressure to address it is peaking as the state Assembly polls near

The near-unanimous support for a call to shut down a state spoke volumes of the raw sentiments festering behind the immediate cause. A number of political parties, farmer organisations and religious bodies joined the call for a Punjab bandh on Thursday following the killing of anti-drugs activist Parvinder Singh Jhota on Tuesday. Jhota's family had called for the bandh after he was allegedly killed by a pharmacist selling substances used by abusers in Mansa, a town close to the Rajasthan border. Jhota, which translates to 'bull', had been added as a title to his name by the popular activist who had cured himself of addiction and had become a dedicated crusader against drugs. His modus operandi in this mission was to record the illegal sale of drugs on his mobile and share it on Facebook Live. Ironically and shockingly, his own killing, too, was recorded during one such session. A wave of protests followed in this southern Punjab district. Mobs set the accused person's shop on fire. The district authorities demolished a portion of his house while purportedly searching for shop owner Ashwani Kumar, who belonged to Rajasthan and was eventually arrested there. Jhota's father indignantly refused to cremate his son's body while calling for a state-wide bandh, which the Congress, BJP, Shiromani Akali Dal, BJP and Waris Punjab De supported. The event added fuel to a long-burning fire ahead of the state Assembly polls early next year. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann vowed strict punishment for the accused as opposition leaders accused the ruling party for a breakdown of law and order in the state. A meeting has been scheduled for Friday to review the implementation of the states various anti-narcotic drives.Punjab Congress president Pargat Singh stepped up his criticism of the Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party administration in a sharp statement that the state seems to be without "political leadership as well as a lack of will among the police". Recent times have also seen killing of policemen with two assistant sub-inspectors shot down in the span of two weeks in Tarn Taran and Amritsar districts. The latest victim, who was returning home on a motorcycle Sunday evening, was the fifth policeman to be shot dead this year.Amid all this, local newspapers reported another telling story on page one—of a Punjab police constable, Karandeep Singh, being arrested with a large amount of heroin allegedly smuggled from across the Pakistan border at Tarn Taran. It underlines the depth of the rot Punjab faces today.



The blame-game has become personal, too. Although accused of being addicted to liquor himself, Mann has often pointed fingers at well-known political families and police officials in the ongoing narcotics' crisis through satirical phrases consisting of words like 'chitta', synonymous with 'white', indicating heroin and cocaine.

The truth is that the state's drug mafia continues to flourish no matter which government is in power. Illegal smuggling has been a constant feature in this border state not far from the Golden Crescent area near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border notorious for large-scale production. And with job opportunities few and far between, the state's younger generations often fall prey to the menace.

The drug war is at its peak in Punjab at a time job opportunities are stifled and the only choice available to youths is to migrate abroad by hook or crook as their own land has little to offer. Tilling the fertile fields of Punjab is a new generation of migrant labourers from Bihar, while local residents exclaim in distress, "What will they do here, apart from falling prey to drugs?"

A study conducted by Chandigarh's Institute of Development and Communication on a sample of 1,527 respondents from the border districts had revealed that as much as 70 percent of drug abusers in the state in the age group of 15-35 years had a rural background and mostly were hooked to drugs and opium that they procured from village chemists.This is the crisis Jhota tried to address. His tragic death—allegedly in the hands of a peddler who is reported to have cried out, "He is creating a lot of mess here"—is a sad reflection of the story of Udta Punjab, the 2016 film. One hopes that the state, which has seen much violence over decades, would not return to the 'Chitta-ve' days when heroin and cocaine became a regular habit for younger generations. It's no wonder that parents remain eager to send their children abroad at any cost for survival, as their own land seems lost.The Punjab election will surely add to Mann's challenges in the months to come. The AAP administration has a two-pronged plan to curb supplies and reduce demand through greater de-addiction efforts. But it has failed a series of deadlines to make the state drug-free that party leaders themselves set time and again.

6 fat facts you must know

That red meat, junk fare, and foods are rich sources of saturated fatty acids are associated with cardiovascular disorders are well-documented. However, studies also suggest that nuts, oily fish and dairy products, which are again high in saturated fats, are associated with lower risk of cardiac problems. Every now and then, we stumble upon a new study - one that is constantly evolving -which throws light on a different theory concerning fats.

Science essentially recognises four main types of fats in our foods: polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, saurated and transfats. Each has different chemical and physical properties, and therefore, a different role to play in the body. Vegetable spreads and cooking oils mainly rapeseed, sunflower, soybean and olive mostly contain the first two and small amounts of saturated fat.

Palm oil, on the other hand, which has a higher melting point and is now used in many products, is highly saturated. Nutrition studies have moved on from obvious facts that we should eat less saturated fat, salt and sugar, to emphasis on eating a healthy portion of fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy food, wholegrains, poultry, fish and nuts, and consuming less red meat, sweets and sugar-containing beverages. But what fat should be consumed and what shouldn't still remains a confusing puzzle. Here are six things you would like to know.



Mass storage:

Where will the fat eventually in the body? This is the one fact, everybody, especially women, worry about (read: obsess over). Women have more subcutaneous fat stores than men, so men store this visceral fat around the mesenteric blood vessel in the abdomen. When energy stored in fat cells is released, the fat mobilisation process leads to fatty acids entering the bloodstream. Visceral fat is more rapidly mobilised than subcutaneous fat and can accumulate in the liver. Fat also accumulates in the liver if the intake of alcohol or sugar is high. Excess accumulation of body fat is harmful if it is in the abdominal cavity or liver. It is often linked to developing type 2 diabetes.



Women must consume fat:

Body fat plays an important role in fertility. Between 20-30 per cent of a healthy woman's body weight is fat (this makes it twice as much as men). If the level drops below 18 per cent, for instance, ovulation stops.

Likewise, high levels typically about 50 per cent of her weight can also pose problems of infertility. Here's why: A hormone called leptin is secreted by adipose (fat) tissue into the blood in proportion to the amount of fat it stores. The brain detects the blood leptin signal and this promotes ovulation when the level is high enough.

An energy food:

Most of the energy in our diet comes from carbohydrates. But fats provide your body with energy as well as provide storage spots for energy in the body. Fat supplies between a quarter and two-fifths of an adult's energy intake and half for a newborn. So, adding fat to food can double the energy content.

Saturated fact: The cholesterol raising effects in saturated fats are confined to lauric, myristic and palmitic acids (found in palm oil). These raise low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) in decreasing order of potency compared to carbohydrates (including all types of starches and sugars) or unsaturated fatty acids. One can lower cholesterol by replacing saturated fatty acids with oils rich in monounsaturated (olive, rapeseed) or polyunsaturated fatty acids (soybean, sunflower oil) than lowering carbohydrates. For example, replacing butter with olive oil as your main source of fat can lower LDL-C by about 10 per cent.



Fats are important:

Fats are essential. We need certain polyunsaturated fatty acids, aptly named essential fatty acids (linoleic and linolenic acids), in our diet for healthy skin and hair. We get these from vegetable oils, nuts and oily fish. These also contribute to cardiovascular health as well as brain and visual function. Fat also provides insulation for body temperature regulation by filling up your body's adipose tissue. And while fat is an important part of a healthy diet, it's as important not to get too much as it is not to get too little.

Eating too much can lead to weight gain and high cholesterol.

Fats for vitamins:

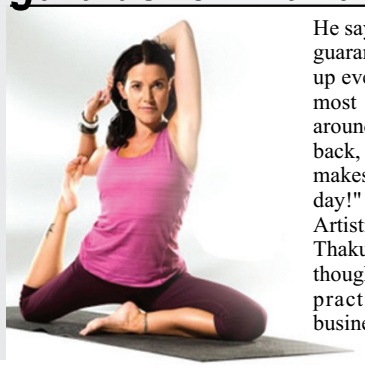
Medical experts say about 30g of fat is required every day to promote the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. Vegetable oils, for instance, are an important source of vitamin E and oily fish is the best dietary source of vitamin D that has become an urban epidemic of some sorts. Provitamins are substances that can be converted within the body into vitamins.

So the next time, if your mummy adds a little oil to your platter of green veggies and carrots, don't fret.

This actually improves the absorption of carotene (pro-vitamin A).

Why men should take up Yoga

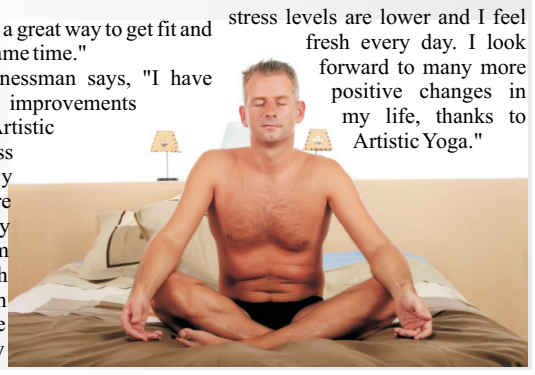
"I wish more men would try out a class of yoga. There is a misconception that yoga cannot build strength and endurance," says Yoga guru ashok mundetiya.



He says that an Artistic Yoga session is guaranteed to make you sweat and build up every muscle in your body. "It's the most effective way to lose weight around the stomach, strengthen your back, unwind and also re-energise. It makes you more productive during the day!"

Artistic Yoga, was developed by Bharat Thakur 12 years ago, when yoga was thought of as a boring and difficult practice. "Some of the biggest businessman and CEOs are practicing yoga today as it's a great way to get fit and de-stress at the same time."

Hussain, a businessman says, "I have noticed massive improvements after starting Artistic Yoga. I need less sleep and my energy levels are higher. My friends say I am looking much better as I am toned and have lost weight. My stress levels are lower and I feel fresh every day. I look forward to many more positive changes in my life, thanks to Artistic Yoga."



Why obesity runs in Families

That parental obesity affects the likelihood of children to over-eat and develop obesity is known, but researchers have now identified the genetic link behind the mechanism.



Being over-weight and obese has a direct impact on the genes which signal when it is time to stop eating, the findings showed.

Blocked expression of a gene called POMC, which manages a discrete area of the brain that controls feeding behaviour could provide the missing link between a mother's diet and an offspring's risk of future obesity.

Excess methylation (an important component in cellular processes) on the DNA sequence blocks the ability to express this gene, leading to a late satiety response, increased food intake and eventual obesity.

"We observed a clear correspondence between a specific genetic mechanism and weight gain, potentially allowing for early detection and prevention of obesity," said Asaf Marco, a researcher involved in the work from Bar Ilan University in Ramat-Gan, Israel.

For the study, the researchers fed female rats a high-fat diet and a standard diet from post-weaning to adulthood and in a separate group through pregnancy and lactation.

All offspring, including those of the high-fat treated rats, received standard food after weaning until adulthood.

Blood was analysed for hormone levels and brain sections for genetic modification on the specific DNA sequence of interest.

The researchers found that genetic malprogramming induced by maternal high-fat diet had a long-term effect on the offspring's vulnerability to development of obesity.

The five-a-day weight-loss diet plan

To meticulously stick to your body's requirement of five fruit-veggie portions every day, it is important that you know all about the programme.

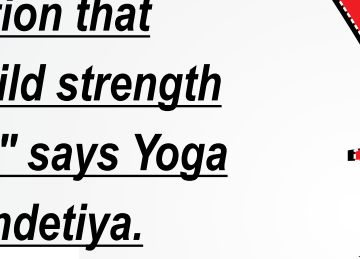
The five-a-day plan — long hailed as the cornerstone of great health — stresses on the health benefits of eating five portions of fruits and vegetables every day.

As most fruit and vegetables are low in fat and calories but high in fibre, they help in filling us up without piling on the pounds and keeping our hearts healthy. The fibre they contain keeps our digestive system healthy, preventing problems such as constipation, piles and bowel cancer. For instance, their soluble fibre helps lower cholesterol, thereby reducing the risk of heart disease.

Fruits and veggies also boost vitamin and mineral intake, including folate for a healthy nervous system and vitamin C for strong immunity and healthy skin and hair. They also provide potassium, which helps lower blood pressure and many antioxidants that help guard against problems such as heart disease, strokes, cancer, dementia, arthritis and even wrinkles.

Do fruit juices matter?

No matter how much fresh fruit juice you drink in a day, it is counted as only one portion. That is because



juices don't contain fibre (unlike a whole piece of fruit) and the juicing squeezes out the natural sugars found between the fruit cells, making them more harmful to teeth. As for juice drinks, they usually contain little juice, lots of sugar and hence don't count for much. Smoothies may count as two portions, but not more. If you're making your own smoothie, it needs to contain two pieces of fruit such as a banana and a pear, or one portion of fruit and a small glass of pure fruit juice.

Must fruits and veggies be eaten on their own to count?

No. The fruits and veggies you add to dishes such as stir-fries, curries, stews, soups, pizzas, pasta, rice dishes, sauces and desserts all count towards your tally. As for baked beans, kidney beans, chick peas and lentils, they count as only one portion, even if you eat a lot of them. That is because nutritionally they are more similar to meat, poultry, fish and eggs rather than fruits-veggies.

What exactly is a portion?

A portion of fresh fruits or veggies is 80 grams. The World Health Organisation recommends at least 400 grams of fruits and vegetables daily to prevent obesity, heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes. So breaking this 400 into five servings means each serving should be around 80 grams.

Shouldn't we eat more than five portions? Studies show our health may benefit even more with greater intakes of fruits-veggies. The World Cancer Research Fund recommends that, in future, we should aim for at least 600g of fruits and veggies daily; equivalent to six portions. Meanwhile, a study published earlier this year in the European Heart Journal found people who ate eight portions of fruits and veggies each day had a 22 per cent lower chance of dying from heart disease than those who ate three portions. For each extra portion added, the risk was lowered by 4 per cent.

Should we eat different fruits and veggies? To get the most health benefits, it's best to vary your choices as different fruits and veggies contain different combinations of fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Aim to eat five differently-coloured fruits and veggies each day.

How can we get kids to eat five-a-day? Don't be tempted to hide fruits and veggies in dishes as it would only keep them away. Children need to learn that fruits and veggies are tasty as well as beneficial for them, so get them involved in helping prepare meals and snacks that contain fruits and veggies.

Other ways to five-a-day

Add raisins to cereal. Make shakes and smoothies with fresh berries and bananas. Top pizzas with sweet corn, peppers and tomatoes. Make fruit skewers with chunks of pineapple, mango and melon. Serve meals with baked beans or corn on the cob. Mash potatoes with an equal amount of carrot.

Top 5 myths about Weight Loss

Nowadays, we are constantly bombarded by myths about food, sex, exercise, nutrition and pretty much everything else. Tim Crowe - Nutrition Academic at Deakin University and freelance writer at Thinking Nutrition helps us bust some of these myths.



According to Tim, some common nutrition and exercise myths are...

Myth 1: Exercise makes you eat more and gain weight

We think that all our hard work at the gym will sabotage our weight loss efforts, as we end up eating more after we exercise. Tim says, 'every little bit of exercise can help in shifting unwanted flab.' According to various researches, exercise is the best way to reduce body fat. The mantra is, the more you move, the more you lose.

Myth 2: 'Negative calorie foods' like celery burn up more energy

There is actually no such thing as 'negative calorie food'. Tim says, 'Even the humble stick of celery, while being about 95% water, still contains a small amount of kilojoules from carbohydrate (65 kJ to be exact).' He further explains, 'There certainly is an energy cost to our body in digesting food, but that equates to about 10% of the energy in the food. So even celery adds some kilojoules to our diet, and while it's a small number, it's definitely not a negative number.'

Myth 3: A slow metabolism is to blame for most people's weight gain

People, who try to lose weight, always blame it on metabolism for their failure or slow down. According to some research, resting metabolism, which is the number of kilojoules used by the body at rest, increase



s rather than decreasing as people gain more weight. As someone gains more weight from storing fat, the body needs to support that extra weight so more muscle is added. So, the conclusion is, the more muscle you have, the higher your metabolic rate tends to be even at rest.

Myth 4: You need to exercise in the 'fat burning zone'

Tim says, 'the truth is, you need to exercise at a low-to-moderate level of intensity to burn fat. Yes, it is true that the body burns the greatest percentage of fat at lower intensities of aerobic exercise, but at higher intensities you burn way more total kilojoules - and more fat kilojoules overall. If you do low intensity workouts, it will help promote weight and fat loss; but you need to do them for a longer period.

Myth 5: You gain weight when you stop smoking

The truth is, when you check over a long period of time, smokers do not control their weight any better than non-smokers. In fact, according to studies, very heavy smokers gain more weight than light smokers. Tim says, the 'thin smoker' image arises because thin people are more likely to take up the habit in the first place. Once they start smoking, they gain just as much, and sometimes even more, weight as the rest of the non-smoking populati on.'

To control cholesterol, turn to pistachios

Simple dietary changes like adding pistachio nuts to the diet can lead to multiple health benefits -- diabetes could be controlled, and the propensity for heart disease may be reduced in Indians, a new study has found.



The study, the first of its kind with a trial period of six months, was carried out by the Diabetes Foundation of India (DFI) and the National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholesterol Foundation.

The results of the study were released Monday, even as the prevalence of obesity and diabetes are rapidly rising in India.

Nuts (mainly pistachios, almonds and walnuts) have been shown to have beneficial effects on glycemic and lipid parameters.

Pistachios have a low glycemic index, are naturally cholesterol free, and are source of protein, fibre and antioxidants, the study found.

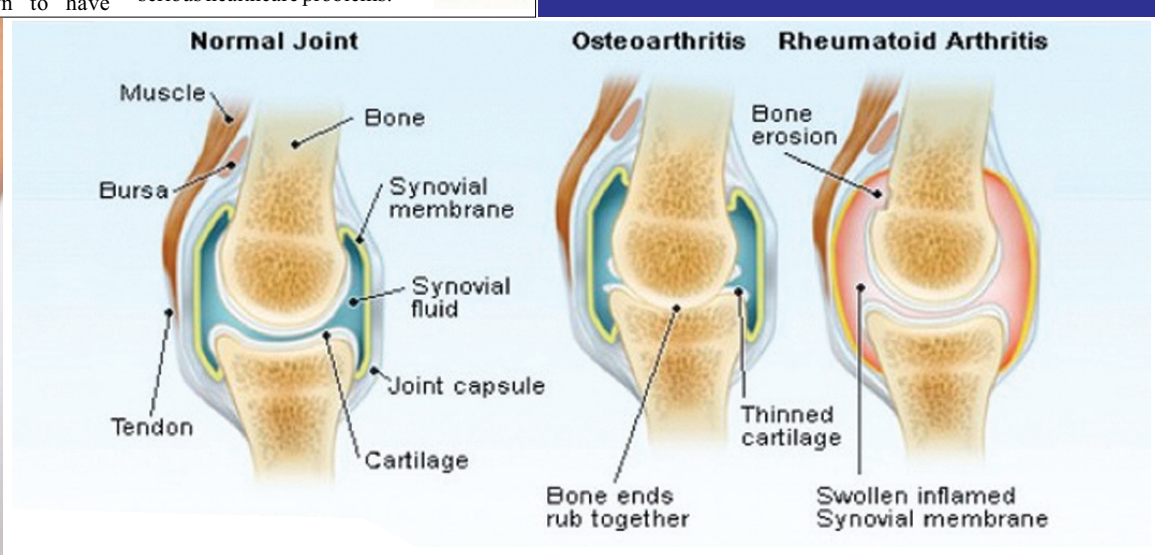
These properties make consumption of pistachios potentially useful for those at risk for obesity and heart disease.

"Pistachios are part of the traditional Indian diet. However, the health effects have not been clearly understood. This study shows multifaceted beneficial effects of pistachios suitable for the Indian body type, for the alleviation of multiple risk factors," said Anoop Mishra, chairman, Fortis Centre of Excellence for Diabetes Metabolic Diseases and Endocrinology (CDOC).

Seema Gulati, research head at the National Diabetes, Obesity and Cholestrol Foundation, said: "Based on this study, we can say that pistachios provide an excellent snack option, especially for those at risk of metabolic problems and diabetes. They provide a beneficial effect in two ways: One, by displacing energy from other unhealthy sources, and second, due to their own intrinsic nutritional properties".

Diabetes has taken epidemic proportions in India, and emerged as one of the most serious healthcare problems.





Top 20 tips to prevent Arthritis

Arthritis in different forms affects a large number of people all over the world.

There can be primary and secondary causes of arthritis, the most common being a degenerative form of arthritis, which can be due to the ageing process. There is also wear and tear of the cartilage between the two articulating bones, which forms the joint and in some cases, due to osteoporosis bones are already weaker and softer and susceptible to deformation. Dr. Rajesh Badiyani, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Sai Snehdeep Hospital, Navi Mumbai lists out the 20 ways to prevent arthritis in men and women.

Physical activity like choose stairs instead of lifts, walk 500 metres before getting into the car.

- Start mild to moderate exercises and weight management.
- Indulge in distressing activities like meditation.
- Protect your joints from fresh injury as well as the existing injuries.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Increase your calcium intake.
- Increase your vitamin intake.
- Treat injuries.
- Reduce repetitive motion in your daily life.
- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid alcohol consumption as it weakens bone health and structure.
- Try taking glucosamine and chondroitin.

Drink milk regularly, and in case you are lactose intolerant than switch to calcium and broccoli for calcium intake.

For a post menopausal woman, hormone replacement therapy and additional calcium and vitamin D are important.

Practice yoga or simple stretching.

- Use of good body mechanics.
- Make are that your shoes are the right size and make sure that they are padded.
- Avoid inflammatory foods

Often chronic inflammation is associated with a host of diseases, some of which are even life threatening like cancer and heart disease. You will be surprised to find that most of the internal inflammatory conditions occur due to the increased consumption of certain foods such as: salt, sugar, sweeteners, alcohol, caffeine, injected meat, common cooking oil, trans fats and red meat.

Home remedies for arthritis

- One teaspoon of honey and apple cider vinegar each with a cup of warm water
- Ginger
- Mustard oil
- Turmeric
- Epsom salt
- Cinnamon
- Fish oil
- Alfalfa
- Cherries
- Borage

Vegetable markets to be revamped in Delhi

Delhi.(Ajency)

The Delhi government has approved four projects for the modernisation of agricultural markets across the city, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Friday. The projects include road repair, a slow-speed weigh-in-motion system at the Azadpur market, temporary sheds at the Narela market and other projects related to drainage improvements.

"The government is working to develop new markets and improve internal roads, sewerage and pipeline networks, drainage systems and waste disposal facilities, while also preventing stray animals from entering market premises," Gupta said.

At the Keshopur Fruit and Vegetable Market, internal roads that are more than 20 years old will be rebuilt at a cost of `9.48 crore, facilitating smooth movement of vehicles, traders and agricultural produce.

Further, two temporary sheds will be constructed at Narela's New Grain Market, which is spread across approximately 33 acres. The sheds will provide covered space for storing grain and help reduce the risk of damage during rain and adverse weather conditions.

At the Azadpur New Vegetable Market, problems associated with nearly 30-year-old sewerage and drainage lines in Blocks B and C will be addressed. Measures to tackle sinking, damaged & blocked pipelines and water leakage will help reduce waterlogging, maintain cleanliness and improve market operations.A modern slow-speed weigh-in-motion system will also be installed at the entry and exit gates of Azadpur Fruit and Vegetable Market. The system will allow commercial vehicles to be weighed without bringing them to a complete stop. Electronic records of vehicle weights will improve transparency in the weighing process and strengthen accountability in market operations.

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CJP's Abhijeet Dipke Under Preventive Arrest, AISA Chief Neha Bora Released Over Protests In Delhi

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The Delhi Police has put Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke under preventive arrest and released All India Students' Association (AISA) chief Neha Bora early Saturday morning after taking them into preventive custody ahead of the 'Lehra Do Tiranga' protest march at Delhi's Connaught Place on Friday.

Dipke was arrested following action under Sections 126 and 170 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in connection with the apprehension of a breach of peace. He will be produced before the Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) court later in the day.

Bora was released after completing formalities related to her detention under Section 65 of the Delhi Police Act.CJP legal head Ratna Singh alleged that Dipke's location is "unknown" and claimed that lawyers haven't met him.

Abhijeet is arrested & will be produced before SEM court. His location still unknown, lawyers haven't met," Singh wrote on X.In another post, Singh said that Dipke would be produced before the court at 12:00 pm today.The CJP, Opposition parties, student groups and civil society organisations have staged protests in several parts of India demanding Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation over alleged irregularities in electoral rolls and the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

'Illegal Detentions Being Used To Instil Fear'

After being released from detention, Neha Bora alleged that protesters were being detained without valid reasons and kept in custody for hours, saying such actions were being used to instil fear among ordinary citizens. She said, "For a very long time in this country, it has been the case that people are detained without any valid reason and made to sit [in custody] for hours.

Who came out to protest in Delhi as CJP leadership went missing?

Delhi.(Ajency)

At around 4 pm, the protest announced by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in central Delhi was a collection of small groups, with five or six people gathered here and a dozen there. By 5 pm, some of these clusters had grown into larger groups, raising slogans against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the government. As evening set in, the groups began merging, drawing hundreds of people into the inner circle of Connaught Place. Thousands of security personnel deployed across Connaught Place suggested that Delhi was bracing for a major confrontation. But the protest site offered a different picture.Small groups of students, Left activists and ordinary citizens turned up, but there was no clear meeting point, no visible chain of command, and no leader directing the crowd.

I interacted with dozens of people, young and old. My sample size might have been small, but so was the crowd, relatively speaking, at a protest that followed a Congress march just a week earlier, and compared with the CJP's July demonstration.My interactions with the crowd suggested a mixed gathering. There were committed protesters who believed in the cause, but also onlookers who appeared to have turned up out of curiosity. It is difficult to quantify the split, but roughly one in four people I spoke to seemed more interested in seeing what was unfolding than in the protest rather than participating directly. Some even told me they had plans to head to Connaught Place's pubs and clubs, which remained open on Friday.

By evening, the crowd in the heart of the capital looked like it had crossed the 1,000-mark. Yet the crowd never quite became a unified march. By the time I left around 8 pm, hundreds had been detained, yet small clusters continued to march sporadically across Connaught Place.

The situation captured the central problem confronting the CJP-led protests. There was a turnout, and many people were willing to assemble despite the heavy security presence. But the CJP appeared unable to turn that participation into a coordinated demonstration, particularly after its three main leaders were detained or arrested.

A CROWD WITHOUT A CJP COMMAND CENTRE

The Tiranga March had been called by CJP leader Abhijeet Dipke, who was detained just before the protest could begin on Friday. He had been served



notice by the Delhi Police asking him not to proceed with the march. His counterparts, CJP leaders Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das, were already under arrest.With Dipke detained, there was no prominent CJP leader visibly directing the protest. Nor was there an apparent alternative "plan B" to bring the groups together or decide what they should do next. More than two hours after Dipke's detention, no CJP functionary was visibly leading the gathering.The result was a protest that grew through individual groups converging rather than through an identifiable mobilisation effort.

- Students, Left activists and ordinary citizens gathered in Connaught Place for CJP's Tricolour march, even as its leadership was detained and no clear plan emerged. The crowd grew through the evening, but remained scattered, with no single leader visibly directing the protest.

Around 5.25 pm came the first sign of a march, when approximately 100 protesters carrying the Tricolour made a circuit of Connaught Place's inner circle, starting at Palika Market's Gate No. 1.Around the same time, around 100-120 Students' Federation of India (SFI) members gathered near Tolstoy Marg, close to Jantar Mantar.Activists associated with the All India Students' Association (AISA) also joined the demonstration, although AISA leader Neha Bora was detained.

100 petitioners knock HC door over DU's 1-yr postgraduate programme

Delhi.(Ajency)

The University of Delhi's (DU) newly introduced one-year postgraduate (PG) programme, which has been mired in controversy since its inception, has now come under the scanner of the Delhi High Court.

After raising concerns over admission priorities, transparency and seat allocation with the vice-chancellor, several students have approached the court, challenging the university's admission policy for the 2026-27 academic session.Around 100 petitioners have challenged the preference given to graduates with four-year honours degrees over those who completed general or programme undergraduate courses. The petitions have questioned the eligibility criteria and the programme-specific eligibility (PSE) priority system adopted by the University for Admissions to its one-year master's programmes.Under the PSE framework, candidates are categorised into P1, P2, P3 and P4 priority levels. P1 candidates whose undergraduate qualifications are considered directly relevant to the master's programme receive the first preference. P2 candidates, including those from other eligible undergraduate backgrounds, are considered subsequently, subject to seat availability.

The policy has drawn criticism from students who argue that the priority-based selection process disadvantages certain eligible applicants and leaves them uncertain about their admission prospects.One of the petitions was filed on September 16 by a student regarding the lack of seats being filled in the university due to the honours degree preferential requisites. The Grievance Redressal Committee had been asked to examine the concern over the DU's honours priority.

Before approaching the court, students had written to the vice-chancellor about the lack of clarity in merit lists, limited seat availability and delayed updates on admission dashboards. Applicants have questioned the absence of clear information on vacant seats and the number of admission rounds remaining.

"There is no transparency on how many seats are left or how many more rounds will happen for the one-year PG programme. Without a spot round, many seats may go vacant," an applicant said, adding that students who pursued four-year undergraduate degrees could find their efforts wasted if they fail to secure admission.

Women's groups march to Delhi Police HQ over alleged sexual violence during SIR protest

- A young woman journalist had also alleged that an assistant commissioner of police-rank officer grabbed her breasts.

Delhi.(Ajency)

Women's groups and activists on Saturday marched to the Delhi Police Headquarters, demanding prosecution of police personnel accused of sexually assaulting and harassing women and transgender protesters during the demonstrations against the Election Commission of India (ECI).Carrying placards and banners, the Left-wing women's groups raised slogans against the alleged sexual and gender-based violence by police personnel and demanded Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation over alleged electoral irregularities.

The protesters gathered near Gurudwara Bangla Sahib and marched towards the headquarters to submit a memorandum demanding accountability for alleged sexualised and gendered violence against demonstrators.

"Those found guilty must be held accountable and punished under the law," the organisations said in their appeal, calling for strict disciplinary and legal action against personnel accused of the alleged assaults.

In an official statement, the groups said videos, photographs and personal accounts had documented instances of alleged



sexual harassment and physical violence against women, transgender and non-binary protesters during police action since July 20, with reports intensifying from October 2.

They cited footage purportedly showing male police personnel assaulting women protesters and alleged that incidents of sexual violence had also occurred inside detention buses and detention centres.A young woman journalist had also alleged that an assistant commissioner of police-rank officer grabbed her breasts.In their statement, the organisations further claimed that when she attempted to file a complaint, she was detained and an FIR was registered against her and others."

These deliberate actions by the authorities are nothing but misogynistic attempts to silence women's voices and reveal a larger intent to push us out of politics and public life," the statement said.

The groups also alleged that protesters had faced casteist, communal and gendered abuse, and accused the authorities of failing to prevent or act against such misconduct.The memorandum called for action against officials found responsible and an end to impunity for sexual assault, while stressing the right of women and gender-diverse people to participate in public and political life without fear.The protest was organised by several women's and students' organisations, including the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA), All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS), Collective, All India Feminist Alliance (ALIFA), All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (AICCWW), Pragatisheel Mahila Sangathan.

Delhi HC lets 2020 riots accused Narwal travel abroad

Delhi.(Ajency)

The Delhi High Court on Friday permitted activist Natasha Narwal, who is out on bail in cases arising from the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, to travel to the United Kingdom (UK) for academic purposes.

Justice Amit Bansal directed the trial court to release Narwal's passport and clarified that any pending look out circular (LOC) against her would be suspended for her travel.

Narwal, a PhD scholar, said she intended to travel to the UK for an academic conference between November 2 and December 1. Granting her relief, Justice Bansal asked Narwal and her brother to give a written undertaking that she would return to the country and not seek asylum in the UK. The court also asked her to execute a personal bond of Rs 50,000 each in relation to two riots-related cases against her.

"The court is inclined to permit the petitioner to travel to the UK with suitable safeguards. The petitioner would be permitted to travel to the UK from November 2 to December 1. "The trial court is directed to release the passport of the petitioner," the court ordered.

The court said Narwal would surrender her passport within 48 hours of her return and not make any statement on the merits of the cases pending against her. In its order, the court noted that Narwal, who is pursuing a PhD from a university in the UK, was required to be there to present her research work.

The Delhi Police, represented by Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, opposed her plea, apprehending that she might not return to India. On October 6, the trial court had refused to permit Narwal to travel to the UK in view of the seriousness of the case against her and the stage of proceedings.

Narwal was named as an accused by the Delhi Police in three FIRs registered in connection with the protest during the violence in northeast Delhi in 2020, including the 'larger conspiracy'



case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Communal clashes broke out in northeast Delhi on February 24, 2020, after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 700 injured.

Narwal, Sharjeel Imam, Khalid Saifi, Umar Khalid and others have been accused of being the "masterminds" behind the violence that took place at a time when US President Donald Trump—then in his first term—and other dignitaries were in the national capital.

Delhi HC asks Mirzapur makers to donate Rs 50,000 over Shoorveer song

Delhi.(Ajency)

The Delhi High Court has asked the makers of "Mirzapur: The Movie" to donate Rs 50,000 to the Army Welfare Fund over the alleged misuse of a song paying tribute to Maharana Pratap, news agency Press Trust of India reported.

The song, "Shoorveer", was used as the background score for a fight sequence. The court closed proceedings on a public interest litigation challenging its use after the song was replaced, but said it would reconsider the issue of costs if the donation was not made within the stipulated period.

According to PTI, a bench of Acting Chief Justice Nitin Wasudeo Sambre and Justice Sanjay Sharma noted in its October 13 order that the song had been removed and had not been played in the movie since September 17.

"Counsel for the respondent no. 3 (Excel Entertainment Pvt Ltd) states that in view of the conduct of the respondents, an amount of Rs 50,000 shall be voluntarily donated to the Army Welfare Fund within a period of one week from today and the acknowledgement to that effect shall be produced on record," the order stated.The court added, "In case there is a failure to produce the acknowledgement as claimed above, within a period of two weeks from today, the matter shall be listed for re-consideration before the Court only on the limited aspect of cost to be paid by the respondent no. 3."

On September 17, the high court had said that using "Shoorveer" as the background score for a fight sequence in the movie was "not in good taste", PTI reported.

After the Central Board of Film Certification's counsel told the court that the film's producer had voluntarily approached the board to make changes to the scene, the court asked the board to



decide on the proposal within a week. The producer's counsel said the song had been used only to "embellish" the climax, in which the protagonists fight goons.The petition, filed by Prashant Kumar Singh, alleged that using "Shoorveer", a tribute to Maharana Pratap, in the sequence created an "undesirable association" between the warrior's revered ideals and the violent and unlawful conduct shown in the film.The plea said the movie was set against the backdrop of organised crime, gang rivalry and violent criminal activities.

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notice by the Delhi Police asking him not to proceed with the march. His counterparts, CJP leaders Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das, were already under arrest.With Dipke detained, there was no prominent CJP leader visibly directing the protest. Nor was there an apparent alternative "plan B" to bring the groups together or decide what they should do next. More than two hours after Dipke's detention, no CJP functionary was visibly leading the gathering.The result was a protest that grew through individual groups converging rather than through an identifiable mobilisation effort.

- Students, Left activists and ordinary citizens gathered in Connaught Place for CJP's Tricolour march, even as its leadership was detained and no clear plan emerged. The crowd grew through the evening, but remained scattered, with no single leader visibly directing the protest.

Around 5.25 pm came the first sign of a march, when approximately 100 protesters carrying the Tricolour made a circuit of Connaught Place's inner circle, starting at Palika Market's Gate No. 1.Around the same time, around 100-120 Students' Federation of India (SFI) members gathered near Tolstoy Marg, close to Jantar Mantar.Activists associated with the All India Students' Association (AISA) also joined the demonstration, although AISA leader Neha Bora was detained.

100 petitioners knock HC door over DU's 1-yr postgraduate programme

Delhi.(Ajency)

The University of Delhi's (DU) newly introduced one-year postgraduate (PG) programme, which has been mired in controversy since its inception, has now come under the scanner of the Delhi High Court.

After raising concerns over admission priorities, transparency and seat allocation with the vice-chancellor, several students have approached the court, challenging the university's admission policy for the 2026-27 academic session.Around 100 petitioners have challenged the preference given to graduates with four-year honours degrees over those who completed general or programme undergraduate courses. The petitions have questioned the eligibility criteria and the programme-specific eligibility (PSE) priority system adopted by the University for Admissions to its one-year master's programmes.Under the PSE framework, candidates are categorised into P1, P2, P3 and P4 priority levels. P1 candidates whose undergraduate qualifications are considered directly relevant to the master's programme receive the first preference. P2 candidates, including those from other eligible undergraduate backgrounds, are considered subsequently, subject to seat availability.

The policy has drawn criticism from students who argue that the priority-based selection process disadvantages certain eligible applicants and leaves them uncertain about their admission prospects.One of the petitions was filed on September 16 by a student regarding the lack of seats being filled in the university due to the honours degree preferential requisites. The Grievance Redressal Committee had been asked to examine the concern over the DU's honours priority.

Before approaching the court, students had written to the vice-chancellor about the lack of clarity in merit lists, limited seat availability and delayed updates on admission dashboards. Applicants have questioned the absence of clear information on vacant seats and the number of admission rounds remaining.

"There is no transparency on how many seats are left or how many more rounds will happen for the one-year PG programme. Without a spot round, many seats may go vacant," an applicant said, adding that students who pursued four-year undergraduate degrees could find their efforts wasted if they fail to secure admission.

Women's groups march to Delhi Police HQ over alleged sexual violence during SIR protest

- A young woman journalist had also alleged that an assistant commissioner of police-rank officer grabbed her breasts.

Delhi.(Ajency)

Women's groups and activists on Saturday marched to the Delhi Police Headquarters, demanding prosecution of police personnel accused of sexually assaulting and harassing women and transgender protesters during the demonstrations against the Election Commission of India (ECI).Carrying placards and banners, the Left-wing women's groups raised slogans against the alleged sexual and gender-based violence by police personnel and demanded Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation over alleged electoral irregularities.

The protesters gathered near Gurudwara Bangla Sahib and marched towards the headquarters to submit a memorandum demanding accountability for alleged sexualised and gendered violence against demonstrators.

"Those found guilty must be held accountable and punished under the law," the organisations said in their appeal, calling for strict disciplinary and legal action against personnel accused of the alleged assaults.

In an official statement, the groups said videos, photographs and personal accounts had documented instances of alleged



sexual harassment and physical violence against women, transgender and non-binary protesters during police action since July 20, with reports intensifying from October 2.

They cited footage purportedly showing male police personnel assaulting women protesters and alleged that incidents of sexual violence had also occurred inside detention buses and detention centres.A young woman journalist had also alleged that an assistant commissioner of police-rank officer grabbed her breasts.In their statement, the organisations further claimed that when she attempted to file a complaint, she was detained and an FIR was registered against her and others."

These deliberate actions by the authorities are nothing but misogynistic attempts to silence women's voices and reveal a larger intent to push us out of politics and public life," the statement said.

The groups also alleged that protesters had faced casteist, communal and gendered abuse, and accused the authorities of failing to prevent or act against such misconduct.The memorandum called for action against officials found responsible and an end to impunity for sexual assault, while stressing the right of women and gender-diverse people to participate in public and political life without fear.The protest was organised by several women's and students' organisations, including the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA), All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS), Collective, All India Feminist Alliance (ALIFA), All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (AICCWW), Pragatisheel Mahila Sangathan.

Delhi HC lets 2020 riots accused Narwal travel abroad

Delhi.(Ajency)

The Delhi High Court on Friday permitted activist Natasha Narwal, who is out on bail in cases arising from the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, to travel to the United Kingdom (UK) for academic purposes.

Justice Amit Bansal directed the trial court to release Narwal's passport and clarified that any pending look out circular (LOC) against her would be suspended for her travel.

Narwal, a PhD scholar, said she intended to travel to the UK for an academic conference between November 2 and December 1. Granting her relief, Justice Bansal asked Narwal and her brother to give a written undertaking that she would return to the country and not seek asylum in the UK. The court also asked her to execute a personal bond of Rs 50,000 each in relation to two riots-related cases against her.

"The court is inclined to permit the petitioner to travel to the UK with suitable safeguards. The petitioner would be permitted to travel to the UK from November 2 to December 1. "The trial court is directed to release the passport of the petitioner," the court ordered.

The court said Narwal would surrender her passport within 48 hours of her return and not make any statement on the merits of the cases pending against her. In its order, the court noted that Narwal, who is pursuing a PhD from a university in the UK, was required to be there to present her research work.

The Delhi Police, represented by Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, opposed her plea, apprehending that she might not return to India. On October 6, the trial court had refused to permit Narwal to travel to the UK in view of the seriousness of the case against her and the stage of proceedings.

Narwal was named as an accused by the Delhi Police in three FIRs registered in connection with the protest during the violence in northeast Delhi in 2020, including the 'larger conspiracy'



case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Communal clashes broke out in northeast Delhi on February 24, 2020, after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 700 injured.

Narwal, Sharjeel Imam, Khalid Saifi, Umar Khalid and others have been accused of being the "masterminds" behind the violence that took place at a time when US President Donald Trump—then in his first term—and other dignitaries were in the national capital.

Delhi HC asks Mirzapur makers to donate Rs 50,000 over Shoorveer song

Delhi.(Ajency)

The Delhi High Court has asked the makers of "Mirzapur: The Movie" to donate Rs 50,000 to the Army Welfare Fund over the alleged misuse of a song paying tribute to Maharana Pratap, news agency Press Trust of India reported.

The song, "Shoorveer", was used as the background score for a fight sequence. The court closed proceedings on a public interest litigation challenging its use after the song was replaced, but said it would reconsider the issue of costs if the donation was not made within the stipulated period.

According to PTI, a bench of Acting Chief Justice Nitin Wasudeo Sambre and Justice Sanjay Sharma noted in its October 13 order that the song had been removed and had not been played in the movie since September 17.

"Counsel for the respondent no. 3 (Excel Entertainment Pvt Ltd) states that in view of the conduct of the respondents, an amount of Rs 50,000 shall be voluntarily donated to the Army Welfare Fund within a period of one week from today and the acknowledgement to that effect shall be produced on record," the order stated.The court added, "In case there is a failure to produce the acknowledgement as claimed above, within a period of two weeks from today, the matter shall be listed for re-consideration before the Court only on the limited aspect of cost to be paid by the respondent no. 3."

On September 17, the high court had said that using "Shoorveer" as the background score for a fight sequence in the movie was "not in good taste", PTI reported.

After the Central Board of Film Certification's counsel told the court that the film's producer had voluntarily approached the board to make changes to the scene, the court asked the board to



decide on the proposal within a week. The producer's counsel said the song had been used only to "embellish" the climax, in which the protagonists fight goons.The petition, filed by Prashant Kumar Singh, alleged that using "Shoorveer", a tribute to Maharana Pratap, in the sequence created an "undesirable association" between the warrior's revered ideals and the violent and unlawful conduct shown in the film.The plea said the movie was set against the backdrop of organised crime, gang rivalry and violent criminal activities.

Two arrested for killing 18-year-old in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD.(Ajency)

Kothur police on Friday arrested two persons for allegedly murdering an 18-year-old security guard over a Rs 20,000 dispute near Theegapur village in Kothur mandal. The victim, Bodike Prem Kumar, died on October 14. Police said the prime accused, Mohammed Irfan, had demanded repayment of the amount from Prem Kumar. Irfan allegedly invited him to a real estate venture for drinks, where an argument broke out over the loan. During the altercation, Irfan allegedly stabbed Prem Kumar multiple times with a knife, while the second accused, Mohammed Nawazuddin, allegedly restrained him. The victim died at the scene.

Police examined the crime scene, collected evidence and analysed the victim's mobile phone records. The two accused were apprehended during vehicle checking at Thimmapur X Roads on October 15. Police seized a knife, clothes, two mobile phones, a Honda Activa scooter and an autorickshaw.

Telangana: Identify begging hotspots by October 25, civic bodies told

HYDERABAD.(Ajency)

The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) department has set October 25 as the deadline for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC), Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC) and other urban local bodies (ULBs) to implement the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) recommendations on beggary and submit action-taken reports.

The measures focus on identifying begging hotspots, extending welfare benefits, rehabilitating vulnerable people and taking action against organised begging networks and trafficking groups under relevant provisions of the BNS.

The directive follows recommendations adopted by the NHRC after an open house discussion in New Delhi on "Rethinking Beggary: Bridging Gaps between Policy, Practice and Dignity". The Telangana Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (TMEPMA) has instructed civic bodies to implement the recommendations and submit detailed compliance reports.

Operation Kavach: Midnight checks by 3,000 cops in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD.(Ajency)

Hyderabad police deployed 3,000 personnel in 100 teams for a citywide midnight naka-bandi operation under Operation Kavach from 1 am to 3 am on Friday. Police detained 725 vehicles for traffic violations and took 48 suspects into custody.

The operation also resulted in five cases of minor driving, one case involving illegal possession of a weapon, two cannabis-related cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and several other cases.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar inspected vehicle checks at multiple locations across the city. He visited Chandrayangutta and surrounding areas before reviewing checkpoints near Mehfil Hotel in Mailardevpally, Satamrai near Aramghar under the RGIO police station limits, Hyderguda Pillar No. 133 under Attapur police station limits, and areas in Bandlaguda and Rajendranagar. He also provided guidance to officers on duty.

Addressing the media, Sajjanar said some motorists tampered with, obscured or altered registration plates to evade police surveillance. He warned that those deliberately altering number plates would face criminal cases under relevant cheating and forgery provisions.

Cockroaches scurrying, fungus growing: FDA shuts Mumbai's Fortis Hospital kitchen

- Sodexo, which runs the hospital's kitchen, is among 25 food businesses to lose licences in a statewide crackdown.



Amritsar.(Ajency)

The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suspended the food business licence of Sodexo India Services Pvt Ltd, which operates the kitchen at Fortis Hospital in Mulund, after an inspection found cockroaches, food waste in drainage, fungus-infested food transport containers and rusted knives while meals were being prepared for patients. The action was part of a statewide crackdown announced by the FDA on October 16, in which licences of 25 food establishments, including hotels, restaurants, bakeries and canteens, were suspended for violations of food safety regulations. Responding to the action, Fortis said patient safety, quality of care and hygiene were paramount. The hospital said it had taken note of the FDA's communication concerning the on-premise kitchen operated by its third-party dietary service provider, Sodexo India Services Pvt Ltd, which holds the relevant food business licence. "We take the observations raised by the FDA seriously and have directed the service provider to promptly address them and ensure compliance with all applicable food safety requirements," the hospital said, adding that it was reviewing the corrective measures being undertaken. Fortis said alternative arrangements were being made wherever required to ensure the uninterrupted provision of safe, nutritious meals to patients and their attendants. The FDA has also suspended the licence of Sophia College Canteen on Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai, following violations detected during inspections of food establishments. Sophia College for Women principal Anagha Tendulkar Patil said the college had suspended the canteen contractor's services with immediate effect."The college has responded promptly and suspended the services of the canteen's contractor with immediate effect. This took place today and necessary modifications/improvements are being undertaken right away. The college consistently prioritizes the wellbeing of its students above all else," she said. As part of the statewide drive, the FDA suspended licences of 25 food establishments across Maharashtra, including seven in the Mumbai division, two in the Konkan division, eight in Pune and eight in the Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar division. The establishments included six Domino's Pizza outlets in Pune and other food businesses found violating Schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011.

INDIA bloc parties to form coordination committee to intensify SIR stir in Karnataka

The proposed coordination committee will bring together the constituent parties to plan and organise protests and public awareness campaigns across Karnataka.

BENGALURU .(Ajency)

India bloc parties in Karnataka have decided to form a state-level coordination committee to spearhead a statewide agitation against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging that the exercise could disenfranchise eligible voters. The decision was taken at a state-level meeting of INDIA bloc constituents held at the Legislators' House here on Friday. The parties also resolved to participate in a major protest at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on November 1 and intensify their agitation across Karnataka thereafter.

KPCC president B K Hariprasad announced the decisions in a post on X, stating that the parties had agreed to launch a united struggle to protect the Constitution, democracy and voting rights. The meeting was attended by state leaders of the CPM, CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, Samajwadi Party and Forward Bloc, along with Congress representatives. The leaders discussed strategies to mobilise public opinion against the SIR process and coordinate protests across the state.

The INDIA bloc constituents claimed that eligible voters were being excluded from electoral rolls in the guise of SIR and expressed concern that the exercise could undermine citizens' voting rights.

Their key demands include scrapping the SIR process, reinstating eligible voters whose names have been deleted from electoral rolls and the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. "The attempt to take away voting rights in the name of SIR must be resisted collectively. There is no question of tolerating any move to deprive eligible citizens of their right to vote," Hariprasad said.



Rajasthan: Eight killed, 15 injured as bus overturns on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Kota

KOTA (Rajasthan).(Ajency)

Around eight people were killed and 15 others injured -- after a minibus carrying around 23 passengers veered off the road and plunged into a 15-foot-deep drain along the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Rajasthan's Kota district on Saturday morning. The accident occurred near pole number 384 on the Expressway. The bus was carrying passengers from Madhya Pradesh to Khatu Shyam when it overturned. Authorities suspect the driver fell asleep at the wheel or felt drowsy, causing the vehicle to veer off the eight-lane road. Upon information, emergency personnel reached the spot and immediately launched rescue operations.

Around Town: Inside the new Pali Bhavan at Mumbai's iconic Eros building

Mumbai.(Ajency)

For anyone who has been eating at Pali Bhavan since 2012, the name needs no introduction. The Bandra institution kept people coming back for more than the food: it had a lived-in feel, an intimacy, a sense of familiarity. Earlier this year, it moved to the Art Deco Cumbata Building, at a spot that once served as an exit for audiences leaving the now-heritage Eros theatre.

The design language carries over. Tejal Mathur, who designed the Bandra outpost, once described it as a "well-curated nobleman's home, lost in time somewhere in Mumbai". For the new address, founder Mishali Sanghani co-designed the space with Nikita D'Silva and Siddhant Tikkoo of Mumbai-based studio STaND. It is, she says, "the same soul, but in a different body".

Sanghani is a collector, and many of the pieces have travelled with her. Old frames hold group photographs from dental and medical colleges, while antique mirrors and clocks are, in her words, "very trippy". She is particularly excited about the chapel-inspired alfresco dome with stained glass, recreated, arguably, by one of only two hand-blown glass artisans still working in the bar section. Pointing to the wall, she shows us a confession box and a Sacred Heart sourced from a church in Portugal. While Chor Bazaar was once a treasure trove, she now relies on a network of dealers from Ahmedabad to Karaikudi to source such pieces.

In matters of taste

The menu spans achaari paneer tikka, galouti kebab, chicken tikka and seekh kebab to pani puri, mini vada pav, mushroom haleem with truffle naan and avocado quinoa bhel. Mains include Chettinad-style mushroom and chicken, Alleppey fish curry, crab sukka, chole bhature, dal makhani and lasooni palak, alongside breads and neer dosa. Her advice to guests: order just three things, then return for the rest.

The idea, she says, began with Pali Village Cafe, which opened in 2010. She noticed that while people ate food from cafes around the world, Indian food remained an everyday staple at home.

Andhra HC orders CBI probe into Sai Krishna's death

VIJAYAWADA.(Ajency)

The High Court on Friday ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged custodial death of Gade Sai Krishna, holding that the State police could not be trusted to conduct an impartial investigation into the case.

The HC directed the State government to pay Rs 25 lakh compensation to his mother, Vijayalakshmi, within four weeks. A division bench comprising Justice Ravinath Tilhari and Justice Alapati Giridhar passed the 89-page judgment on a petition filed by Vijayalakshmi seeking an independent investigation into her son's death and disappearance of his body.

The bench directed the CBI Director to ensure immediate registration of a case and entrust the investigation to a senior officer. It instructed the Director General of Police (DGP) to hand over all records related to the case to the CBI through a special messenger. The government was also directed to initiate departmental action against the officials responsible, in accordance with service rules.

The HC observed that the material placed before it prima facie established that Sai Krishna had been illegally detained, subjected to custodial torture and died while in police custody. His body or remains have not been traced. According to the judgment, Vijayawada Commissioner's Task Force (CTF) police brought Sai Krishna to Krishna Lanka police station around 7 am on May 6, 2026. Although his detention was initially lawful, police failed to produce him before a magistrate within the prescribed period or release him, violating the law.

Andhra's Tirumala barbers likely to get wage hike

TIRUMALA.(Ajency)

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is seriously contemplating a fresh increase in the salaries and wages of barbers working at the Kalyana Katta in Tirumala very soon.

Speaking to , TTD Executive Officer Muddada Ravi Chandra stated that the administration has taken every aspect—including worker grievances, long-standing suggestions, and the overall State of affairs over the years—into account and will announce a concrete decision shortly. The proposed financial review comes as part of a major administrative overhaul, with the TTD EO identifying four crucial sectors for immediate reform: temple administration, queue line management, food and prasadams, and tonsure operations. Following a comprehensive evaluation of decades of feedback from devotees and workers alike, TTD is putting strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place, with targeted reforms aimed at streamlining operations for the millions of pilgrims who offer their hair at Tirumala. Currently, TTD deploys a workforce of 1,152 active barbers—supported by 20 regular supervisors, 3 assistants, and 46 support staff—operating across one main Kalyana Katta and 11 mini-centres around Tirumala.



Why Mumbai is turning to sound waves as a third of its water goes missing

Engineers now dig up roads on guesswork to find leaks. The BMC wants SONAR to pinpoint them, and plans to replace pipes five times faster from 2027.

Mumbai.(Ajency)

With Mumbai facing a 10 per cent water cut following deficient rainfall, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) plans to step up efforts to plug leakages in its ageing water supply network by using SONAR technology to pinpoint underground leaks and increasing the pace of pipeline replacement up to five-fold.

The civic body estimates that nearly 34 per cent of the water it supplies, or around 1,394 million litres per day (MLD), is lost to leakages and water theft. With a network stretching nearly 6,000 km, much of it decades old, the BMC plans to replace 250-300 km of pipelines annually, against the current 60-70 km.

One of the key interventions under consideration is the use of Sound Navigation and Ranging (SONAR) technology to identify underground leakages. The technology uses sound waves to detect objects and identify changes beneath the surface.

"Whenever there is leakage, water starts gushing out from underneath the ground onto the streets or roads above. Often, after digging the surface, we discover that the source of leakage is not at the spot from where the water comes out. Following this, we need to do our own calculations, narrow down a few suspected points and continue to dig the roads until the leakages are located," Abhijit Bangar, Additional Municipal Commissioner (Projects), told . He said repeated digging damages roads, while the actual source of a leak can remain undetected for some time. SONAR technology is expected to help pinpoint leaks and reduce the need for exploratory digging. The BMC is also looking to accelerate the replacement of its ageing pipeline network. Civic officials said the current pace of replacing 60-70 km of pipelines annually accounts for barely one per cent of the network. The target is to raise this to 250-300 km a year, replacing around 5-6 per cent of the network annually.

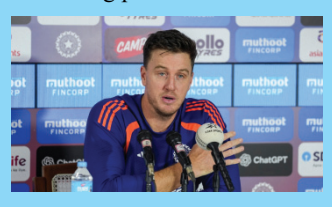


These guys are human: Morne Morkel hits back at critics targeting India bowlers

New Delhi.(Ajency)

India bowling coach Morne Morkel has urged critics to show greater understanding towards the team's bowlers, pointing to the mental fatigue caused by a packed international schedule. With India's attack under scrutiny after some expensive outings against the West Indies, Morkel reminded critics that players cannot be expected to deliver at their best in every game.

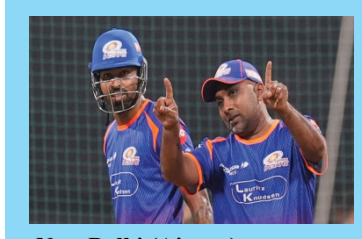
India's busy calendar has seen players move between bilateral cricket, the Asian Games and off-field commitments before returning to international action. Speaking on the eve of the fifth T20I against the West Indies in Bengaluru on Friday, Morkel called for better recovery time and a more measured response to bowling performances."I read



everything that's written on social media. One thing that we sometimes forget is that mental fatigue plays a big part. We have to manage that and you have to be smart with it," Morkel said at the pre-match press conference, pointing out how some players went from the Asian Games straight into the West Indies series before travelling to Delhi for a presentation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and returning for the match.

"And for me, your execution and your skills will be better when you've recovered well, when you've slept well, and once you've mentally refreshed and that is a challenge.

MI begin rebuild with Mahela Jayawardene exit as Rohit Sharma captaincy buzz grows



New Delhi.(Ajency)

Mumbai Indians are heading towards a significant reset ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2027 season, with Mahela Jayawardene and the franchise mutually agreeing to part ways. The development comes at a time when the five-time champions are also facing fresh speculation over their leadership, with Rohit Sharma emerging as a possible candidate to return as captain. Jayawardene's exit marks the end of another chapter in his long association with Mumbai Indians, where he has served in multiple roles over the years. The franchise will now look to chart a new course, while the possibility of Rohit reclaiming the captaincy has added another layer of intrigue to its plans for the next season."Mumbai Indians has been a very special part of my journey for over a decade now. The players, coaching team, the incredible support of the #OneFamily and above all the fans have made this an experience I will always treasure," Mahela said in a statement."Mahela has made a significant contribution to Mumbai Indians over the years. His calm leadership, integrity and deep love for the game have meant so much to us. On behalf of the entire MI family, I want to thank Mahela for his immense contribution and unwavering commitment over the years.

IND vs WI, 5th T20I: Bhuvi back to stop sixes as rain threatens to spoil show

- India vs West Indies, 5th T20I preview: India's bowling woes face another stern test against an explosive West Indies batting line-up in the series decider. Bhuvneshwar Kumar's return offers hope, but rain threatens to play

Bengaluru.(Ajency)

Bengaluru's rain clouds threaten to put a dampener on a series that has had little shortage of fireworks. India and West Indies head into Saturday's fifth and final T20I locked at 2-2, with showers and thunderstorms forecast around the scheduled 7 pm start at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium. If the weather permits a full contest, India will have to find answers to a more immediate problem: how to rein in a West Indies batting line-up that has repeatedly exposed their bowling frailties. With the visitors matching India's firepower and the series on the line, the hosts cannot afford another night of six-hitting at will.India's bowling coach Morne Morkel has defended his attack, pointing to flat pitches, dew and the difficulty of executing plans with a wet ball. He has also urged people to consider the mental fatigue brought on by a packed schedule, with players coming straight from the Asian Games into the West Indies series and travelling to Delhi for the felicitation ceremony before returning to Bengaluru. But the numbers make for uncomfortable reading. Barring Prince Yadav, none of India's frontline pacers has managed an economy rate below 10 runs per over across the series.West Indies chase down a record 250 in the second T20I in Ranchi, they went past 200, but failed to chase 224 in Indore in the third. However, in the fourth T20I in Hyderabad, the West Indies smashed 247/3 in 20 overs and successfully defended it by 24 runs to level the series.In the absence of Jasprit Bumrah,



who was rested for this series, the young crop of Indian fast bowlers, led by Arshdeep Singh, has struggled to contain the West Indies batters on flat surfaces.Bhuvneshwar Kumar's return could offer India some much-needed control. The 36-year-old has been added to the squad after Arshdeep sustained a blow to his bowling shoulder in Hyderabad, and his ability to swing the new ball and deliver variations at the death could be valuable against West Indies' power hitters.

Bhuvneshwar, who last played for India in 2021, was initially in the squad for the New Zealand tour later this month, but the 36-year-old will return early if he gets a spot in the XI.India are also trying to protect a significant home record: no visiting side has won a bilateral T20I series in India since February 2019 - a run of 20 series **without being beaten at home.**

TEAM NEWS: BHUVI IN?

Bhuvneshwar's inclusion is the biggest talking point ahead of the decider. His experience could be particularly useful in the powerplay and at the death, two phases in which India's pace attack has struggled to contain West Indies. Arshdeep's availability is in doubt after his shoulder injury in the fourth T20I, making Bhuvneshwar a strong contender to feature at a venue where he plays for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the IPL.

Punam Raut: The unsung hero who never needed the spotlight

New Delhi.(Ajency)

India will remember 2017 as the year women's cricket began finding its voice. Smriti Mandhana dazzled with her elegance, Harmanpreet Kaur unleashed a breathtaking 171 against Australia, and Mithali Raj hogged the limelight with her batting and the now-famous picture of her reading a book.Amid all the noise, there was Punam Raut. Short in stature, she lacked Mandhana's flamboyance and Harmanpreet's belligerence but possessed a quiet resilience of her own. She was one of a kind, a pocket-sized dynamite, and one of the chief architects of India's memorable run to the final.against Delhi Capitals earlier this year.Punam scored 381 runs in nine matches, including a brilliant 106 against Australia in the league stage. She began the tournament with 86 against England in the opener and then notched another 86 in the final. Those innings helped define India's campaign.Nine years later, Punam has bid farewell to the highest format of the game, having last represented India in their first-ever Day-Night Women's Test in 2021. For a cricketer who gave so much to the sport, walking away was never going to be easy.Her battle with dengue and chikungunya last year took a heavy toll on her health, leaving her struggling with persistent joint pain for months. Eventually, the illness forced her to confront a difficult reality: sometimes, even the desire to keep playing cannot overcome what the body has endured.



"For the last five months, I had been thinking about retirement, but I wasn't completely mentally prepared to make the decision. Last year, I was diagnosed with dengue and later suffered from chikungunya for nearly five months. The illness left me with significant joint pain and other complications," Punam told India Today in an exclusive interview.

"I recovered before the season and played for Mumbai last year. However, I missed the T20 format and played only the one-day matches. The effects were still there and I wasn't able to give my 100 percent consistently. After fielding, I would experience considerable pain and discomfort the following day, which affected my recovery."I I needed to stop playing for some time and see how my body responded. I also wanted a mental break because I felt I had achieved what I wanted to as a player and couldn't see much motivation to continue. I wanted to feel physically better and take time to make the right decision," Punam said."

Kavya Maran, Anirudh to marry in November. PM, Revanth Reddy, Vijay get invite

Bengaluru.(Ajency)



Sunrisers Hyderabad co-owner Kavya Maran and music composer Anirudh Ravichander are set to take their relationship to the next level, with the Telangana Chief Minister's Office confirming their wedding reception plans. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy received a special invitation from Kavya's parents, Sun Group chairman Kalanithi Maran and Kavery Maran, for the reception scheduled in Chennai on November 21.The announcement came through a post on X by the Telangana CMO, which revealed that the Marans met Revanth Reddy at his residence in Jubilee Hills to invite him to the family celebration. While wedding rumours have been doing the rounds for months, the official post has now put the reception details firmly in the public domain."Sun Group Chairman Shri Kalanithi Maran and his wife, Smt. Kavery Maran, met Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy at his residence in Jubilee Hills and invited him to the wedding reception of their daughter, Kavya Maran," The Telangana CMO wrote.

"The wedding reception of Kavya Maran and Anirudh Ravichander is scheduled to be held in Chennai on November 21."The announcement confirms the reception date, although reports claiming that the wedding ceremony will take place in Greece on November 11 remain unverified. For now, Chennai is where the celebrations are officially set to continue, with the Chief Minister among those invited.

ANIRUDH HAD SHUT DOWN RUMOURS

The wedding speculation is not new. Reports linking Kavya and Anirudh romantically have surfaced over the past few years, but the composer had brushed off one round of rumours in June 2025.Reacting to claims that he was set to marry Kavya, Anirudh had taken to X and written, "Marriage ah? lol .. Chill out guys. Please stop spreading rumours."

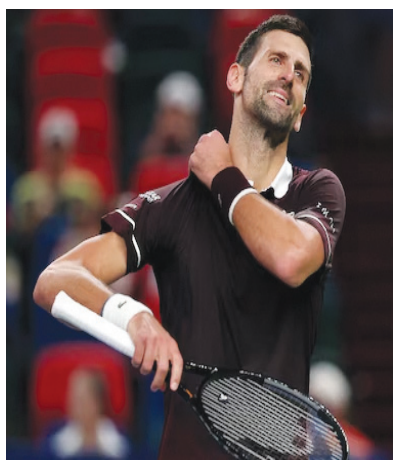
The Telangana CMO's post is the clearest confirmation yet, with the composer and Kavya now named together in the announcement of their November 21 reception.

FROM THE IPL STANDS TO THE SPOTLIGHT

Kavya is the daughter of Kalanithi Maran and heads Sunrisers Hyderabad, the IPL franchise owned by the Sun Group. She has become one of the tournament's most recognisable faces.

Novak Djokovic returns to Basel after 15 years, accepts Swiss indoors wildcard

New Delhi.(Ajency)



Novak Djokovic will return to the Swiss Indoors Basel after accepting a wild-card invitation, giving the 24-time Grand Slam champion another opportunity to add to his remarkable title collection. The Serbian is chasing his 103rd ATP Tour crown at the ATP 500 tournament, scheduled from October 26 to November 1.The tournament announced his participation on Friday, welcoming him back to Basel after three previous appearances in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Djokovic last competed at the event in 2011, making this his first appearance in 15 years.The 39-year-old arrives in Switzerland after a mixed Asian swing. He won the China Open in Beijing earlier this month to claim his 102nd career title, but suffered an early exit at the Shanghai Masters, losing to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in straight sets.Djokovic now has an opportunity to move level with Roger Federer, who finished his career with 103 ATP Tour titles. American Jimmy Connors remains the leader in the Open era with 109 titles.

DJOKOVIC CHASES ATP FINALS SPOT

The Basel appearance could also prove crucial in Djokovic's bid to qualify for the ATP Finals in Turin, scheduled from November 15 to 22. The Serbian has won the season-ending championship a record seven times, but currently sits outside the top eight in the Race to Turin standings.Only Alexander Zverev and Carlos Alcaraz had secured qualification at the time of the announcement. With Jannik Sinner ending his season early because of a knee injury, the race for the remaining places remains open.Djokovic's decision to add Basel to his schedule comes after he indicated following his Shanghai defeat that the Paris Masters would be his only.

ISL's YouTube gamble pays off early, but the bigger test is still to come



New Delhi.(Ajency)

For a league that spent much of the past year worrying about its future, the Indian Super League could do with a week like this. The previous season was shortened amid uncertainty over the competition's commercial structure, leaving clubs facing difficult questions about how Indian football's top division could sustain itself. The opening week of the new season has offered a welcome change of mood, with the ISL finding an audience on YouTube that suggests there is room for Indian football to reach more people.The league recorded 65 million views and a reach of 52 million across its first five matches of the 2026-27 season.

Delhi Capitals sign Sri Lanka great to join Sourav Ganguly and Yuvraj Singh

New Delhi.(Ajency)

Delhi Capitals have added another experienced name to their revamped coaching setup, appointing former Sri Lanka fast bowler Chaminda Vaas as their bowling coach ahead of IPL 2027. The franchise announced the appointment through a social media video featuring Vaas himself, completing another key addition after Sourav Ganguly and Yuvraj Singh.Vaas, one of Sri Lanka's most successful fast bowlers, finished his international career with 355 wickets in 111 Tests and 400 wickets in 322 ODIs. A member of Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup-winning squad, the left-arm pacer was known for his accuracy, ability to swing the new ball and effectiveness across conditions.The 52-year-old also has considerable coaching experience. He has worked with Sri Lanka's senior team and feeder squads, served as a bowling coach with Ireland during the 2016 T20 World Cup, and worked with New Zealand's fast bowlers as a consultant. He has also held coaching roles with Sri Lanka in subsequent years.His appointment marks another step in Delhi's overhaul as the franchise looks to build a stronger support staff for the 2027 season.

GANGULY AND YUVRAJ LEAD REVAMP

Former India captain Ganguly was appointed Delhi Capitals' head coach on October 6, returning to a franchise he has been associated with since 2019.



Nushrratt Bharuccha

Discharged From Hospital After Successful Spine Surgery, Begins Recovery At Home



Nushrratt Bharuccha is back home after successfully undergoing spine surgery following the accident she suffered in Bali earlier this month. The actress' team issued a fresh health update on Thursday, confirming that the procedure went well and that she has now been discharged from the hospital.Nushrratt had sustained a fracture in her spine during her Bali trip and was subsequently airlifted to Mumbai for further treatment. Visuals of the actress arriving in the city on a stretcher had surfaced online at the time.Her latest update brings some relief after nearly two weeks of treatment, although her team has made it clear that a complete recovery will take time.

Nushrratt Bharuccha's Spine Surgery Successful

In an official statement, Nushrratt's team confirmed that the actress has undergone the surgery advised following her spinal injury."After going through a difficult and challenging phase following her unfortunate accident, Nushrratt Bharuccha has successfully undergone spine surgery. We are relieved to share that the surgery went well, and she has now been discharged from the hospital," the statement read.Nushrratt is now recuperating at home rather than remaining under hospital care. Her representatives said she continues to maintain a positive outlook while concentrating on rebuilding her strength."Nushrratt is finally back home, surrounded by care and comfort, as she begins the important journey towards recovery. While the road to complete recovery will take time, she remains positive and is focusing on healing and regaining her strength," her team added.



They also thanked everyone who had reached out while the actress was undergoing treatment. "We sincerely thank everyone for the overwhelming love, concern, prayers and good wishes extended to her during this difficult time."

Actress Was Airlifted To Mumbai After Bali Accident

Nushrratt suffered the spinal fracture while she was in Bali on a work-cum-leisure trip. She was initially admitted to a hospital there before arrangements were made to bring her back to India for specialised treatment.After reaching Mumbai, the actress was seen being transported from an ambulance on a stretcher, with family members and friends accompanying her as she entered the hospital.

Kriti Sanon

Moves Delhi High Court Seeking Protection Of Her Personality Rights



Actor Kriti Sanon has approached the Delhi High Court seeking protection of her personality rights, with the court on Friday calling for a broader examination of the legal principles governing such claims amid a rise in similar cases.Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav asked advocate Pravin Anand, appearing for Sanon, to prepare a comprehensive compilation of judgments and research material on personality rights, including the extent of protection available and the jurisdiction of the High Court's Intellectual Property Division (IPD) to deal with such disputes.Observing that such matters are being brought before the court frequently, the judge said the legal issues required a wider examination beyond the facts of the present case.

The court asked Anand to explain the contours of personality rights, the attributes of an individual that may receive legal protection and whether such disputes fall within the purview of the IPD.

Anand submitted that personality rights could extend to an individual's name, voice, face, image, photographs and videos. He also pointed to the commercial use of a person's identity without their consent or authorisation as an issue arising in such cases.Seeking assistance on the subject, Justice Kaurav asked the counsel to place relevant judicial precedents and research before the court."Can you give me some research paper? Please give a compilation. Give me judgments and your understanding regarding personality rights," the court observed, adding that it would consider passing a comprehensive order after examining the material.

Anand told the court that the compilation would be filed during the day and submitted that no



jurisdictional issue arose in Sanon's case. The matter has been listed for further hearing on October 29.The proceedings come against the backdrop of an increasing number of personality rights petitions filed by actors, sportspersons and other public figures before the Delhi High Court. Such cases commonly involve allegations of unauthorised use of names, photographs, likenesses, voices and other identifiable aspects of a person's identity, particularly for commercial purposes.The court has previously dealt with personality rights claims involving several.

Saba Azad Reacts After Imran Khan Is Asked To Leave India Over CJP Protest: 'This Is Absolute BS'



Saba Azad has reacted sharply after actor Imran Khan was issued a notice asking him to Leave India following his participation in a Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest in Mumbai last week. Sharing a post about the development on social media, Saba made her displeasure clear in a brief but pointed response."What!? This is absolute BS," she wrote while reacting to the news that Imran has been given until October 28 to leave the country.Imran, who holds US citizenship and an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card, had joined the protest in Mumbai along with his partner Lekha Washington and cousin Zayn Marie Khan. The three were among hundreds of protesters detained during the demonstration before being released later that evening.

Saba Azad Reacts To Imran Khan's Exit Notice

Saba's reaction came hours after the notice against Imran surfaced.The actor, known for films including Jaane Tu… Ya Jaane Na, Mere Brother Ki Dulhan and Ek Main Aur Ekk Tu, has been given an October 28 deadline to leave India.

Imran is the nephew of Aamir Khan and has worked extensively in the Hindi film industry despite being a US citizen. He possesses an OCI card, which allows eligible foreign citizens of Indian origin certain rights to live and work in the country, subject to applicable restrictions.Saba did not elaborate further on the notice or its legal implications, limiting her reaction to calling the development "absolute BS".

Imran Khan Was Detained During Mumbai Protest

Imran had participated in the CJP demonstration held in Mumbai last Saturday in support of protests against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.More than 400 demonstrators were detained in the city during the protest, including Imran, Lekha Washington and Zayn Marie Khan. The trio was released the same evening.Imran even shared a selfie from inside the police vehicle after being detained. Keeping his response characteristically dry, he captioned the photograph, "Apparently I'm going for a drive."

Kartik Aaryan, Sreeleela's Untitled Film Gets Release Date; Hrithik Roshan's Cameo In Jailer 2 Goes Viral



Kartik Aaryan and Sreeleela are all set to share screen space in Anurag Basu's upcoming romance film, and fans have been waiting with bated breaths for updates about the movie. While the title of the movie hasn't been announced yet, the makers have shared an update revealing that the film is now scheduled to release on April 30, 2027.

Jailer 2 Hrithik Roshan cameo: Hrithik Roshan's cameo in Rajinikanth's Jailer 2 has sent fans into a frenzy, with a leaked scene showing the actor stepping out of a luxury sports car going viral on social media. Fans are praising his swagger, screen presence and stylish entry, with many saying Bollywood has not fully used his potential in mass-action roles.Actor Imran Khan, nephew of Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan, will move court against the notice directing him to leave India by October 28, following his participation in a protest against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in Mumbai.

Khan, an American citizen and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, has also been named in an FIR registered over the October 10 demonstration.

Bigg Boss 20 witnessed a dramatic turn of events as Nakul Dhull and Kushal Tanwar got into an argument that led to a physical altercation and eventually Nakul's eviction. Now, an update suggests that, keeping in line with this year's theme of the show, Tathastu, the makers have decided to give Nakul another chance, and he has re-entered the Bigg Boss 20 house.

The second trailer of Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana is now out, giving audiences a much broader look at Ranbir Kapoor as Rama, Yash as Ravana and Sai Pallavi as Sita ahead of the film's international release on November 5, 2026.

An American pope brings American-style governance to the Vatican, even in a health crisis

VATICAN CITY.(Ajency)

There's a telling anecdote from St. John Paul II's pontificate that illustrates how Pope Leo XIV and his American style of governing have changed the Vatican and the way it handles papal health crises.

The Polish pope, 84 at the time, was back at Gemelli hospital battling an acute respiratory infection, breathing problems and the worsening effects on his larynx of Parkinson's disease, which had made speaking nearly impossible and breathing difficult.Doctors performed a tracheotomy under anesthesia, an incision in John Paul's windpipe, to help him breathe. And yet the next morning, his spokesman gave reporters a remarkably rosy, seemingly implausible update: John Paul had eaten his regular breakfast of coffee with milk, 10 biscuits and a yoghurt."Something that would suffocate anyone," church historian Alberto Melloni recalled Friday. "But it was normal then that they told lies about the pope. Those were the rules of the game."

Two papacies and twenty years later, Pope Leo XIV has changed the rules of the game.

Bali Hit By Fuel Shortage, Hundreds Protest As Queues Stretch Over Kilometre

world.(Ajency)

Hundreds of people protested a petrol shortage that authorities have blamed on supply disruptions on Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Thursday, as hours-long queues built up at gas stations.Officials urged residents to stay calm this week, noting there was enough fuel to go around on the island that relies on shipped-in gasoline and diesel supplies.

Long lines stretched more than a kilometre (0.6 miles) at several gas stations in the provincial capital of Denpasar on Thursday, according to an AFP reporter, and around 500 people rallied outside the governor's office."This is such a mess... we've been standing in line for four to eight hours. I just hope the government's response will be much better," Adolf Alfino, a 21-year-old university student attending the protest, told AFP.

The supply disruption was due to delays in distribution after a tanker had trouble discharging its cargo, according to state-owned oil and gas firm Pertamina.

Protest vs Counter-Protest In UK Amid Row Over Poll Body Chief Gyanesh Kumar

London.(Ajency)

A large group of demonstrators gathered outside the High Commission of India in London on Friday for a protest organised by the Student Federation of India (SFI) UK.

A smaller group of Indian government supporters convened a counter-protest to the "Stand in Solidarity" student demonstration demanding "accountability and transparency".

The demonstration on Friday followed an "Emergency Protest" earlier this week outside India House in London, called to "amplify" the demands of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) - including the demand for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and the scrapping of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in India.

The two groups were kept apart by several Metropolitan Police officers, as both sides waved the Tricolour with a set of steps separating the two groups.

How slipper-clad Houthis hit Saudi Arabia with Claude AI and China's missile parts

Yemen's Houthis are no longer just ragtag fighters in slippers, armed with Kalashnikovs and riding pickup trucks. Backed by Iranian weapons technology, equipped with Chinese-made missile components and experimenting with Anthropic's Claude AI, the rebels are building a more sophisticated arsenal of

world.(Ajency)

The classic image of Yemen's Houthis is that of slippers wearing Kalashnikov-wielding militants riding their Toyota pickups across vast expanses of desert. They also may or may not be high on the khat leaf. But this image belies the technological capabilities the Zaydi Shia movement has developed, and the military threat it now poses to its biggest regional rival, the oil-rich Gulf Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.Since September, the Iran-backed Houthis have taken over almost all of Yemen's Red Sea coast while shrugging off hundreds of Saudi airstrikes. Although a counteroffensive by forces loyal to the Riyadh-backed Yemeni government has clawed back some ground, including reportedly liberating the vital port city of Mokha, Houthis (who are also known as Ansar Allah) remain a force to be reckoned with.More importantly, the Houthis have also carried out missile and drone strikes targeting Saudi Arabia, hitting, among other things, vital oil extraction and refining infrastructure and King Khalid International Airport in



Riyadh.The battlefield gains of Iran's proxy's cannot be explained by surprise alone. How has a movement operating in one of the world's least economically developed countries acquired and sustained a high-tech but at the same time economical arsenal of missiles and drones capable of threatening a regional power equipped with billions of dollars' worth of advanced military hardware?The answer lies in a combination of Iranian assistance, supplies of Chinese-made components, and lately, American Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms.

THE HOUTHI ARSENAL

Before we go into how the Houthis were able to build up their high-tech arsenal, let us first have a look at the high-tech weapons that are being used by the Ansar Allah.

According to a February 2024 report by the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Houthis, alongside their guns and vehicles, also possess a diverse arsenal of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), many of which bear similarities to Iranian designs.

Iran war votes in Congress become a focal point for campaign ad attacks

WASHINGTON.(Ajency)

In Wisconsin, a narrator complains that "groceries, utilities, everything's getting more expensive and Congressman (Derrick) Van Orden is adding to the list. He voted for the costly Iran war and spiking gas prices."In Nebraska, Democratic candidate Chris Backemeyer says families are drowning. "And Mike Flood opened the gates. Flood voted six times for Trump's tariffs and the Iran war, flooding us with higher prices on groceries, gas, cars and medicine, costing us a thousand dollars more a year."And in Iowa, a group called Vote Vets Action Fund said Republican Senate candidate Ashley Hinson voted five times for the Iran war, "giving us record prices for gas and fertilizer."

Those ads are but a few examples of how Democrats and aligned advocacy groups are using an unpopular war as they challenge Republicans, aiming to win back power in the House and Senate. It's the culmination of a strategy Democrats launched in the spring, when they began to repeatedly bring up war powers resolutions aimed at ending the conflict. The votes had little practical effect, but forced lawmakers to go on record and take a stand.Now those votes are being highlighted in campaign ads across the country, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from AdImpact, which charts media spending.In some cases, the Republicans targeted have never served in Congress before, so they couldn't possibly have voted on the various war powers resolutions. Even then, Democrats are portraying them as destined to be rubber stamps for President Donald Trump when it comes to the war.

Tying the war to the cost of living

The Associated Press analyzed data on broadcast and cable ads aired from Sept. 1 through Oct. 14 in the most competitive midterm races. The analysis focused on House and Senate races rated as either tossups or leaning Democratic



or Republican by the Cook Political Report. A smaller number of streaming ads were also examined.At least half of the 50 races featured Iran-related ads, most of which included household cost-of-living messages. All told, the ads aired on TV more than 43,000 times since Sept. 1, costing an estimated $42 million. The AP used both AdImpact's own issue designations along with additional analysis of the ads' language to identify them.Of the 65 unique Iran-themed ads identified by the AP, 61 of them stressed household cost-of-living messages such as rising prices for fuel and other items.

The Republican playbook

Republicans are largely ignoring the Iran war in their ads. Their best strategy is to go after Democratic weaknesses so voters say "this guy is worse," said Ron Bonjean, a Republican strategist.

"In the end, you're trying to get as many Republicans out to vote for you as possible and bring over some independents," Bonjean said. "And talking about the Iran war is really not a winning message because you're playing on the Democratic turf."The major themes addressed in the Republican advertising since Sept. 1 are taxes and crime, followed by issues tied to character, healthcare and immigration.Some Republicans have sought to distance themselves from the Iran conflict outside the airwaves. In Michigan, Republican Senate candidate Mike Rogers has said the "war with Iran needs to end — and end quickly." His opponent, Democratic nominee Abdul El-Sayed, has run ads saying that a billion dollars a day is going to a war "we have no business fighting" and he was running to "invest our tax dollars here in Michigan."In Maine, Republican Sen. Susan Collins emphasized in a recent debate that she voted nine times to end the conflict, prompting Democratic challenger Troy Jackson to say she voted five times to "make it happen."In all, the Senate has voted 14 times on resolutions seeking to halt or restrict Trump's military action against Iran. The House has held six such votes since the conflict began in late February.

Trump waives Russia-related tariffs, offering India relief on oil imports

World.(Ajency)

US President Donald Trump has issued an executive order waiving key sanctions, trade restrictions and tariff provisions under the recently enacted Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, suspending penalties that could have included tariffs of up to 100% on major buyers of Russian energy.The decision comes just days before the measures were due to take effect and could provide significant economic relief to countries such as India and China, which continue to import Russian crude oil and natural gas.

The legislation, signed into law in mid-September, was designed to increase economic pressure on Russia over its ongoing war in Ukraine. It targeted the largest importers of Russian energy and countries accused of facilitating sanctions evasion.Trump invoked a national interest waiver provision in the law, certifying to Congress that suspending the specified measures was necessary to protect US economic interests.

The waiver comes amid concerns over elevated domestic gasoline and diesel prices ahead of the November midterm elections. According to reports attributed to Bloomberg and Reuters, the administration's decision reflects efforts to ease pressure on energy markets and contain fuel costs.

The move also follows a reported agreement between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin that would allow Moscow to export millions of tons of diesel to international markets to help stabilize supplies.The decision signals a shift in Washington's approach to economic pressure on Moscow, potentially easing restrictions on Russian energy trade even as the war in Ukraine continues.

India and China among potential beneficiaries

India and China, two major buyers of Russian energy, stand to benefit from the suspension of secondary trade penalties. The proposed tariffs threatened to raise the cost of maintaining commercial ties with Moscow and potentially disrupt global energy flows.The waiver could help preserve supplies in international markets and reduce the risk of additional trade costs. However, the administration's decision leaves open the possibility that it could reinstate the restrictions.

Trump's new press secretary Katie Zacharia fired less than a week into the job

Zacharia had got off to a rocky start with her debut press room briefing Tuesday morning.

WASHINGTON.(Ajency)

White House Press Secretary Katie Zacharia was pushed out Friday after less than a week in the high-profile job, following a series of blunders that added to distractions for her embattled boss, President Donald Trump.

"Can confirm," a White House official told AFP, after Fox News reported that Zacharia, 41, was "transitioning out."The writing was on



the wall earlier when Trump made clear he was ready to see his newly minted spokeswoman go amid criticism that she had pretended to be a lawyer and over her one, much-mocked press briefing."I said, 'Katie, is this for you?,'" Trump told reporters. "I said, 'Katie, you don't have to do this'... I said to her, 'Honestly if I were you I'd reconsider.'"Zacharia only began her job ive days ago, taking over from the combative Karoline Leavitt, who helped Trump reshape White House coverage by bringing in more friendly outlets and fiercely attacking critical media.Zacharia had got off to a rocky start with her debut press room briefing Tuesday morning.It lasted less than 15 minutes, beginning with a remarkably slow reading out of what she said were Trump's many accomplishments -- then taking just three questions from journalists.She then was plunged into controversy when it emerged that her previous claims to be a lawyer were not true.The kerfuffle is a distraction for 80-year-old Trump as he flies around the country trying to boost Republican candidates ahead of the November 3 congressional midterm elections, with polls predicting a drubbing.

The Republican leader himself also faces ever-lower polls as Americans sour over the war against Iran, inflation and perceptions of corruption.Zacharia had described herself as a lawyer during television appearances and on social media, and listed herself as general counsel of a California-based conservative nonprofit.While she does have a law degree from a California university, she acknowledged Thursday she had failed the bar exam, a prerequisite for practicing law in the United States.

I killed my daughter: US woman calls 911, 5-year-old found bleeding from nose, mouth

world.(Ajency)

A five-year-old girl's death in New York City has led to the arrest of her mother, who allegedly told the emergency dispatch that she herself killed the child.

The girl, Fabiana Cabello, was found unresponsive inside the family's home in the South Richmond Hill neighbourhood of Queens.Her mother, Francis Cabello, who is in her early 30s, confessed while calling 911 for help, telling the operator, "I killed my daughter," according to sources cited by the New York Post.The father of the accused woman has claimed that she was battling "psychological issues" and was off her medication when the incident happened.When police arrived at the scene during the evening hours on Wednesday (local time), they purportedly found Francis downstairs. She reportedly directed them upstairs, saying that her daughter was not breathing.The officers found the girl in a bedroom, bleeding from her nose and mouth, police said. She was rushed to a hospital, but was pronounced dead there.

Francis was also taken to a hospital for evaluation. Investigators questioned her late Thursday. Charges were pending against her at the time.Meanwhile, the medical examiner was working toward determining the cause of Fabiana's death. The investigators were treating it as a case of homicide.

'KNEW SHE WASN'T 100% THERE'

Talking about the mental health history of the accused, her father and the victim's grandfather, Franklin Cabello said his daughter had stopped taking her medication and was hospitalised around three months before the incident.

"I knew mentally she (Francis) wasn't 100% there," he said.

"I knew something was wrong. When a person stops taking medicine for the



sickness that she had, the person is going to suffer," Franklin, who was home at the time, was quoted as saying by the New York Post.He said he nevr thought Francis was capable of harming her daughter, describing her as a protective and attentive mother."I never would have thought she would have done something like this," Franklin said.He also said that he had been trying to keep an eye on his daughter as he was worried her mental healt crisis might worsen after she went off her meds.Franklin also said that his daughter had been acting strange lately.

"I knew that she stopped taking the medication. I used to tell her to take her medication.